Assessment of Advising at Washington State University Vancouver

Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the student’s experience of academic advising relative to their expectations. We believe strongly that by examining how our work matches up with student expectations we can be better advisors and more effectively serve our students and Washington State University Vancouver. The results of this are designed to inform internal improvement of advising practice with no intent of comparing one department to another. As each area of the university has different challenges and different solutions to those challenges, such comparisons are inherently inaccurate. We do hope that the process of assessing our work will help us identify areas for improvement and best practices that can be shared across the campus.

Timeline

In order to avoid survey fatigue, we intend to survey students every other academic year, starting in the fall semester of 2013. This provides several advantages:

1) It allows us to collect data across an entire year and compare results from Spring, Fall, and Summer advising.
2) We will have data that we can compare across academic years that align with a traditional academic calendar. It allows us to “follow” a freshman cohort from 2013 to their junior year in 2015 and compare results.
3) We have the ability to capture data from incoming freshman, transfer students, and outgoing seniors.

Figure 1 (below) shows the proposed rotation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2013 | ON         | Fall 2013  
assessing student experience during Fall advising for Spring 2014 |
| 2014 | ON         | Spring and Summer 2014  
assessing student experience during Spring and Summer advising for Fall 2014 |
| 2014 | OFF        | Fall 2014  
no assessment scheduled |
| 2015 | OFF        | Spring and Summer 2015  
no assessment scheduled |
| 2015 | ON         | Fall 2015  
assessing student experience during Fall advising for Spring 2016 |
| 2016 | ON         | Spring and Summer 2016  
assessing student experience during Spring and Summer advising for Fall 2016 |
| 2016 | OFF        | Fall 2016  
no assessment scheduled |

Figure 1
Survey Instrument

The complete survey instrument is attached to the end of this document, see [Attachment 1]. It employs a gap analysis style question which asks the student to first rate the importance of various types of advising as well as whether that type of advising was provided at the most recent advising appointment. This type of assessment allows us to determine how effectively we are providing the type of advising that students are evaluating as most important. Students are also asked about their preparation for the advising appointment and the overall experience with their most recent advising appointment.

Method of Delivery

The proposed survey would be delivered online through a WSU-developed application called Skylight. Skylight is used in Pullman as the primary means of delivering end of class assessments and is being tested on the Vancouver campus for use in class assessments. As such it offers us several key advantages.

1) Skylight is secure and internal. Students sign into Skylight using their student network ID and authenticate using their network password. Students can only take surveys that have been assigned to them, and they can only complete a survey once.

2) Skylight is free. No other solution we examined offered the kind of student data protection and authentication we require without a significant price tag.

3) The survey landing page is the same for every assessment the student takes in Skylight; any marketing materials we develop to promote survey completion will still be relevant in future semesters.

4) Students will be using a system that is already familiar to them from previous class assessment surveys.

5) Skylight does not have any technical limitations that require altering the survey we developed.

Dissemination of Results

After the survey is complete, we envision that a report will be prepared that includes aggregate information regarding advising at WSU Vancouver and if possible, reports for individual departments. Ideally, each advisor and academic director will receive a copy of the aggregate report and a sub-report for their department. As departments and advisors identify areas they wish to improve, VAC will serve as a facilitator to discuss results, as well as identify and help implement best practices.

Limitations and Concerns

Survey Response Rate

Our primary concern with moving to an online survey is that response rates will drop significantly. This is a concern that must be addressed and we offer the following proposed solutions.
Proposed solution:
A set of marketing materials that include:

- Emails to send to students designed for simplicity and mail merging see [Attachment 2] for an example
- Flyers that feature QR, Datamatrix, and potentially HCCB barcodes, which students can scan using a smartphone and which link directly to the Skylight survey see [Attachment 3] for an example

Individual department surveys
Skylight does not allow for “if, then” question types which means every student gets the exact same survey. In the past, we have included departmental questions on our advising survey, and it will not be possible to include these in the current version of the advising assessment. This means that departments will have the opportunity to develop and distribute their own surveys if they require additional or different questions.

Proposed Solution:
Skylight does offer an almost unlimited ability to develop surveys for a specific population (all Vancouver nursing students, for example) and surveys can be assigned to any pre-defined group (nursing majors, students in ACCTG 330, etc). Departments who have a need for additional survey questions can use Skylight to develop and execute these survey needs. The individuals in Pullman who work with Skylight have been extremely willing to help us develop this proposal and expressed a willingness to work with any department that wanted to develop a major/departmental/class-specific survey.
This survey on your experience with academic advising should only take a few minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, and your advisor will only receive aggregate data not individual responses. Please think about your most recent advising session when you complete the following questions. We value your thoughtful feedback.

1. What is your current grade level?
   - Freshman
   - Sophomore
   - Junior
   - Senior

2. Did you transfer to WSU Vancouver from another school?
   - Yes
   - No

3. How many hours in a week do you normally work?
   - 0
   - 1-15
   - 16-25
   - 26-39
   - 40 +

4. How old are you?
   - Under 21
   - 21-29
   - 30-39
   - 40-49
   - 50 or older

5. Which department did you most recently receive advising from?
   - Student Resource Center
   - College of Education
   - College of Business
   - College of Arts and Sciences
   - College of Nursing
   - Human Development
   - School of Engineering and Computer Science

6. What type of advisor did you most recently work with?
   - Faculty Advisor/Mentor
   - Academic Coordinator
   - I don't know
7. What was the format of your most recent advising session?
   - Individual Appointment
   - Group Session
   - Phone
   - Email

8. How did you prepare for your most recent advising session? Please check all that apply.
   - Checked Zzusis and worked to resolve registration holds
   - Created a list of topics to discuss with my advisor
   - Met with the career counselor or reviewed career goals
   - Reviewed Academic Requirements in Zzusis
   - Reviewed progress in courses this term
   - Reviewed course offerings for upcoming term
   - Reviewed information on department and/or campus advising webpage
   - Reviewed notes from prior appointments
   - Other: __________________________

9. How much do you agree with the following statements regarding your most recent advising session? Please use the scale provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 Disagree completely</th>
<th>2 Disagree somewhat</th>
<th>3 Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>4 Agree somewhat</th>
<th>5 Agree completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted advising that helped me clarify my goals (educational, career, etc.)</td>
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<td>I wanted advising that helped me choose among needed courses</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I wanted advising that helped me choose a major/minor</td>
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<td>I wanted advising that helped me choose relevant out-of-class activities (internships, student activities, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I wanted advising that referred me to campus resources</td>
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<td>I wanted advising that helped me develop stronger academic habits</td>
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<td>I wanted advising that assisted me in understanding how WSUV works</td>
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<tr>
<td>I wanted advising that taught me how to keep track of my degree requirements</td>
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<th>4 Agree somewhat</th>
<th>5 Agree completely</th>
<th>Did not discuss</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This advising session helped me to clarify my goals (educational, career, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>My advisor treated me with respect</td>
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<td>My advisor listened to me</td>
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<td>I had enough time with my advisor at this appointment</td>
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<td>I left this appointment with a solid understanding of my next steps</td>
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<td>My advisor showed concern for my growth and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>My advisor was able to address the specific topics raised in this appointment</td>
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<td>My advisor understood my situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>My advisor gave me accurate information</td>
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12. Was there anything that was not covered in this advising session that you wish had been?

13. What else would you like to share about your academic advising experience at WSU Vancouver?

14. What is your biggest obstacle as a student at WSU Vancouver?

We greatly appreciate your input and value your feedback. (Student hits submit button…) Thank you! Your survey has been successfully submitted.
Hello [Student Name],

I am writing to remind you to complete the survey I mentioned during our meeting this week. Your feedback regarding the advising you received is extremely important to me. The survey on your experience with academic advising should only take a few minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, and I will only receive aggregate data, not individual responses.

You can connect directly to the survey using the links below:

https://skylight.wsu.edu/student

Thank you again for your participation!

Best regards,

[Email Signature]
Your Feedback is Important!

Please take a moment to complete a survey regarding your most recent academic advising experience: https://skylight.wsu.edu/student

All survey responders will be placed in a drawing for an extremely effective incentive.