
■ **Major Advising**
Class of 2007

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Major Advising: Class of 2007

Introduction

When students officially declare a major at Loyola, they are assigned to a faculty member from the department of their major who serves as their academic advisor. Students meet with their major advisors to plan their course schedules and discuss their academic progress. The advisor acts as a mentor and discusses various issues with the student such as internships, study abroad, and career plans.

The Center for Academic Services and Support (C.A.S.S.) provides additional academic resources and services for the students such as drop/add, advising, tutoring, sixth course registration, and assistance with leaves of absences or withdrawal from the College.

The College and its various departments are interested in knowing how well the services provided by the major advisors and the C.A.S.S. are meeting students' needs. This study examines whether students' expectations about advising were met, what role students played in the advising process, and students' satisfaction with the advising experience.

Methodology

Data for this study were drawn from the online 2006-2007 Major Advising Survey. The survey was administered in April 2007 to 775 seniors who had declared their intent to graduate. The survey was advertised in Newshound, a daily e-zine which is distributed to the campus community, and through postcards placed in seniors' mailstops. In addition, publicity was generated through emails and word-of-mouth help from the Senior Class President and the Student Body President. Responses were tracked and email reminders were sent to students who had not responded to the survey. The students had 2.5 weeks to complete the survey, which contained Likert-scale and open-ended questions.

Incentives were offered in an effort to encourage a high participation rate. A drawing for senior week ticket packages and individual tickets to senior week events (Senior Ball and Hail and Farewell) was held for those who completed the survey and included their contact information. In all, 19 prizes were awarded.

At the end of the administration period, 341 students had completed the survey for a 43% response rate. Based on these data, the sampling error for proportions is $\pm 4\%$. With regard to the comparative analyses that have been conducted, all group differences reported are statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level unless otherwise noted. This report provides a summary of the Likert-scale items only. The verbatim responses to the open-ended questions are available under separate cover.

Executive Summary

- Large percentages of students *agreed/strongly agreed* that they took an active role in various aspects of the advising process.
- Most students had contact with their advisors once or twice each semester.
 - A greater percentage of Business majors—the vast majority of whom were Finance students—indicated they never had contact with their major advisor than students overall.
- While students were generally satisfied with advising, their expectations are not being met with regard to advisors' knowledge of careers in their field of interest.
- Nearly all students indicated that their advisor treated them with respect and more than eight in ten stated that their advisor was available for consultation, used Degree Audit in helpful ways, and was knowledgeable about the curriculum of their major.
 - Students in Economics, Math, and Speech-Language Pathology/Audiology indicated that they were more satisfied with many components of major advising than were students overall.
 - Business and Communication majors indicated they were less satisfied with all areas of major advising than students overall.
 - Students in Accounting and Management tended to be more satisfied with major advising than Business students overall. Business majors with a concentration in Finance were not as pleased as other Business students were with several aspects of advising.
- Nearly nine out of ten students visited the Center for Academic Services and Support (C.A.S.S.) at least once during their academic careers at Loyola.
- Most students *agreed/strongly agreed* that they received good customer service from the front office staff in Academic Services, indicating that they were helpful, polite and respectful, and responsive and available in a timely fashion.
- Forty-one percent of the students had a meeting with an Academic Services administrator during their time at Loyola.
 - Large percentages of these students were satisfied with the various aspects of advising services provided by the C.A.S.S..

Detailed Findings

Personal Responsibility in the Advising Process

Students responded to a series of questions about their personal role and responsibility in the advising process. As seen in Table 1, large percentages of students reported that they were active participants in the advising process from planning their course schedules and studying Degree Audit, to consulting with others at the College in addition to their advisor.

Table 1. Students' Personal Responsibility in the Advising Process

Personal Responsibility Item	% of students who agreed or strongly agreed
I planned my course schedule before attending my major advising sessions.	98%
I studied my Degree Audit to plan my academic schedule before coming to my major advising appointments.	93%
I came to my major advising appointments prepared to discuss my curricular needs.	93%
When necessary, I consulted with other professors, department chairs, or members of other College offices for additional assistance (i.e., course scheduling, questions about my major, etc.).	84%
I regularly consulted the College catalogue to learn about my major and minor requirements.	81%

Communication with Major Advisors

Students were asked how often they were in contact with their major advisor. As seen in Table 2, next page, the majority of students were in contact with their advisor one to two times per semester. Overall, only 12% of the students indicated they never had contact with their advisor. Among Business students, however, 21% (N=20) stated that they never had contact with their major advisor; eight of these students had a concentration in Finance.

Table 2. Frequency of Contact with Major Advisors

How many times each semester were you in contact with your major advisor (i.e. face-to-face meetings, e-mail, phone conversations, etc.)?		
	Frequency	Percent
Never	41	12%
1 – 2 times	195	58%
3 – 4 times	59	17%
5 – 6 times	19	6%
7 or more times	25	7%

Satisfaction with Major Advising

A gap analysis was performed to determine if major advising is meeting the students' expectations with regard to knowledge and friendliness of their advisors. Students were asked to rate both the importance and their satisfaction with these aspects of advising. By looking at the gap between satisfaction and importance, one can easily see where advising is or is not meeting students' expectations in these key areas. The area with the greatest discrepancy between satisfaction and importance was "My major advisor was knowledgeable about careers in my field of interest and/or was able to refer me to appropriate resources." See Figure 1, next page.

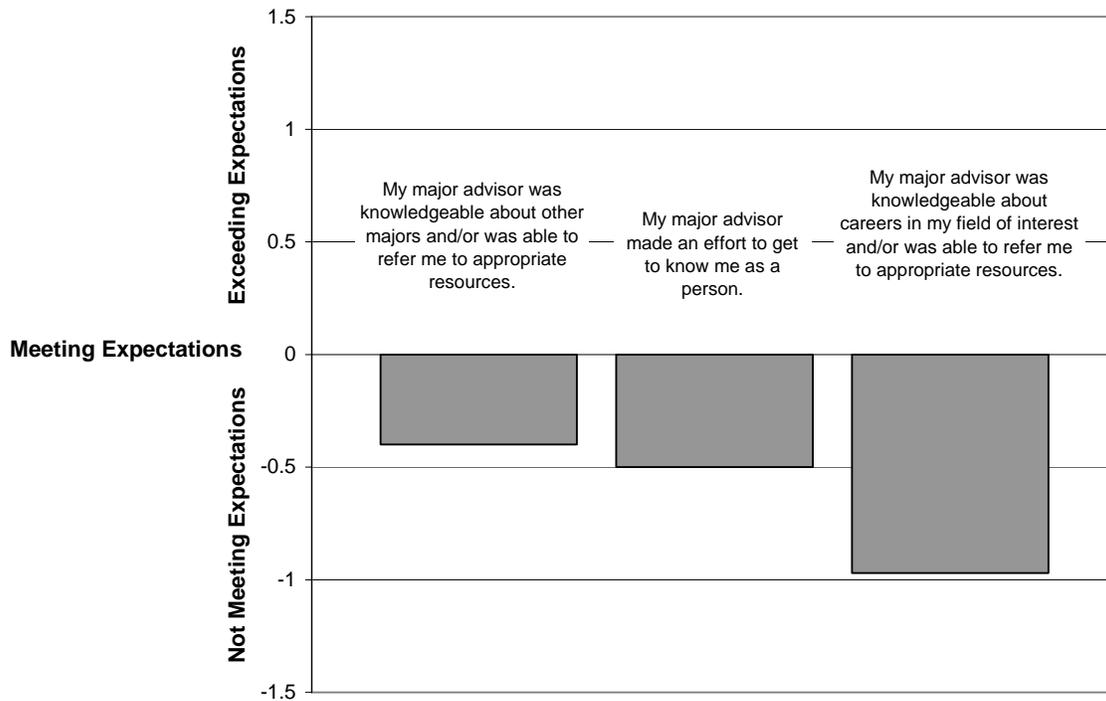


Figure 1. Advisors' performance relative to students' expectations¹

Table 3, next page, shows the percentages of students who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with various statements about advising. The first column contains percentages based on all survey respondents; each additional column shows the responses of students in various majors. Asterisks indicate responses among majors that are significantly different from those in the "All" group.

As seen in Table 3, a large majority of students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that their major advisors were knowledgeable about the curriculum of their major, were available for consultation, and treated them in a respectful manner.

In general, students in Economics, Math, and Speech-Language Pathology/Audiology were more pleased with major advising than students overall. On the other hand, Communication majors indicated they were less satisfied with major advising than students overall. See Table 3.

¹Students responded to each item on an importance scale of 1 = *Not important at all* to 5 = *Very important*, and on a satisfaction scale of 1 = *Not satisfied at all* to 5 = *Very satisfied*. The gap was determined by subtracting the mean score for importance from the mean satisfaction score. The closer the gap is to zero (0), the more successful advising is in meeting expectations.

Table 3. Summary of Responses to Major Advising Items by Program – Class of 2007

<i>% of students who responded “never”</i>	<i>All</i> <i>N=341</i>	<i>Bio</i> <i>N=15</i>	<i>Bus</i> <i>N=90</i>	<i>Com</i> <i>N=60</i>	<i>CSci</i> <i>N=6</i>	<i>Econ</i> <i>N=5</i>	<i>Educ</i> <i>N=7</i>	<i>Eng</i> <i>N=12</i>	<i>Hist</i> <i>N=11</i>	<i>Math</i> <i>N=6</i>	<i>Poly</i> <i>N=14</i>	<i>Psyc</i> <i>N=35</i>	<i>Soc</i> <i>N=8</i>	<i>Spch</i> <i>N=19</i>
How many times each semester were you in contact with your advisor?	12%	7%	22% *	23%	33%	0%*	0%*	0%*	0%*	0%*	0%*	0%*	13%	11%

<i>% of students who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the following statements</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Bio</i>	<i>Bus</i>	<i>Com</i>	<i>CSci</i>	<i>Econ</i>	<i>Educ</i>	<i>Eng</i>	<i>Hist</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>Poly</i>	<i>Psyc</i>	<i>Soc</i>	<i>Spch</i>
My major advisor was knowledgeable about the core curriculum.	76%	79%	63% *	65%	75%	100%*	71%	75%	90%	100%*	83%	81%	67%	88%
My major advisor was knowledgeable about the curriculum of my major.	88%	92%	79%	67% *	100%*	100%*	86%	100%*	100%*	100%*	92%	94%	100%*	94%*
My major advisor was helpful in answering questions about schedule planning (course times, sequencing, and prerequisites).	74%	85%	60% *	60%	67%	100%*	86%	75%	60%	100%*	67%	77%	67%	94%
My major advisor was available for consultation.	84%	79%	77%	64% *	100%*	100%*	86%	75%	100%*	100%*	83%	88%	100%*	100%*
My major advisor treated me in a respectful manner.	92%	93%	91%	79% *	100%*	100%*	100%*	83%	100%*	100%*	83%	97%	100%*	100%*
My major advisor used degree audit in a way that was helpful in planning my curriculum.	81%	75%	67% *	79%	75%	100%*	100%*	83%	70%	83%	83%	84%	71%	94% *

<i>% of students who were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with respect to the following statements</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Bio</i>	<i>Bus</i>	<i>Com</i>	<i>CSci</i>	<i>Econ</i>	<i>Educ</i>	<i>Eng</i>	<i>Hist</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>Poly</i>	<i>Psyc</i>	<i>Soc</i>	<i>Spch</i>
My major advisor made an effort to get to know me as a person.	59%	50%	43% *	44%	75%	60%	100%*	50%	56%	100%*	50%	59%	71%	88%*
My major advisor was knowledgeable about other majors and/or was able to refer me to appropriate resources.	43%	43%	28% *	28% *	25%	40%	57%	50%	44%	100%*	33%	47%	29%	71%*
My major advisor was knowledgeable about careers in my field of interest and/or was able to refer me to appropriate resources.	53%	43%	43% *	28%	75%	100%*	100%*	42%	56%	100%*	33%	59%	43%	82%*

* Significantly different compared to “All” respondents.

Note: Majors with fewer than 5 responses were not included in this table. For majors with small numbers of responses, results should be viewed with caution.

The majors of Chemistry and Fine Arts were removed in 2007 as they had less than 5 responses. The majors of Computer Science and Sociology were added in 2007 as they had 5 or more responses.

Table 4, next page, displays the percentages of students in the Sellinger School of Business and Management who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with various statements about major advising. The first column contains percentages of all the Sellinger School students combined; other columns contain the percentages for the various concentrations and majors within the Sellinger School. Asterisks indicate responses among students in specific concentrations that are significantly different from those in the “All SSBM” group. Caution should be used when interpreting these data since several concentrations had very small numbers of respondents.

As noted previously, more Finance majors than any other student group indicated that they had had no contact with their advisors.

Table 4. Summary of Responses to Major Advising Items for Business Majors – Class of 2007

	<i>All SSBM</i> N=90	<i>Business Major Concentration</i>				<i>Accounting</i> N=13
		<i>Finance</i> N=16	<i>Intl Bus</i> N=12	<i>Management</i> N=7	<i>Marketing</i> N=36	
<i>% of students who responded “never”</i>						
How many times each semester were you in contact with your advisor?	22%	50%*	25%	14%	14%	15%

<i>% of students who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the following statements</i>	<i>All SSBM</i>	<i>Business Major Concentration</i>				<i>Accounting</i>
		<i>Finance</i>	<i>Intl Bus</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Marketing</i>	
My major advisor was knowledgeable about the core curriculum.	63%	25%*	44%	100%*	59%	82%
My major advisor was knowledgeable about the curriculum of my major.	79%	63%	78%	100%*	69%	100%*
My major advisor was helpful in answering questions about schedule planning (course times, sequencing, and prerequisites).	60%	13%*	56%	83%	55%	82%
My major advisor was available for consultation.	77%	50%	67%	83%	81%	91%
My major advisor treated me in a respectful manner.	91%	57%	100%*	83%	97%	91%
My major advisor used degree audit in a way that was helpful in planning my curriculum.	67%	25%*	67%	67%	77%	73%

<i>% of students who were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with respect to the following statements</i>	<i>All SSBM</i>	<i>Business Major Concentration</i>				<i>Accounting</i>
		<i>Finance</i>	<i>Intl Bus</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Marketing</i>	
My major advisor made an effort to get to know me as a person.	43%	13%*	33%	33%	48%	73%*
My major advisor was knowledgeable about other majors and/or was able to refer me to appropriate resources.	28%	0%*	44%	33%	27%	27%
My major advisor was knowledgeable about careers in my field of interest and/or was able to refer me to appropriate resources.	43%	0%*	44%	67%	42%	73%*

*Significantly different compared to all respondents.

Note: Majors with more than one advisor in two different concentrations were not included in concentrations. For majors with small numbers of responses, results should be viewed with caution. In 2007, there were no MIS concentrations represented in the survey results.

Satisfaction with the Center for Academic Services and Support (C.A.S.S.)

Of the students responding to the survey, only 11% indicated they had never visited the C.A.S.S.; most students (55%) visited between one and four times (see Table 5).

Table 5. Frequency of Visits to Academic Services

How many times have you visited Academic Services?		
	Frequency	Percent
Never	37	11%
1 - 2 times	79	24%
3 - 4 times	102	31%
5 - 6 times	71	22%
7 or more times	35	11%

Overall, students indicated they were satisfied with the level of customer service provided by the C.A.S.S. Large percentages of students indicated the front office staff members were helpful, polite, respectful, and responsive. See Table 6.

Table 6. Students' Assessment of Customer Service Provided by Academic Services' Front Office Staff

Academic Services Item	% of students who agreed or strongly agreed
The members of the Academic Services front office staff were helpful.	84%
The members of the Academic Services front office staff were polite and respectful.	79%
The members of the Academic Services front office staff were responsive and available in a timely fashion.	78%

Students were asked whether they had ever had an individual meeting with one of the Academic Services administrators. A total of 41% of the survey respondents indicated that they had. These students were then asked to respond to a series of items about the quality of advising services provided by the C.A.S.S. In general, students' responses indicate that they were satisfied with the services provided by the C.A.S.S. As seen in Table 7, large percentages of students agreed or strongly agreed with all the items presented on the survey. More than nine out of ten respondents indicated that their advisors were knowledgeable about the Core curriculum and treated them in a respectful manner.

Table 7. Students' Assessment of Services Provided by Academic Services

The Academic Services administrators...	% of students who agreed or strongly agreed
were knowledgeable about the core curriculum.	96%
treated me in a respectful manner.	94%
were helpful in answering questions about schedule planning (e.g., course times, sequencing, and prerequisites).	86%
were available for consultation.	85%
were knowledgeable about the curriculum of my major.	84%
were knowledgeable about other majors and/or were able to refer me to appropriate resources.	75%
made an effort to become familiar with my individual needs.	67%

Summary

In their senior year at Loyola College, most of the Class of 2007 reported that they had taken an active role in their own academic planning. While there were some departmental differences, most students indicated that major advising is working well in supporting their academic goals. At the same time, students' expectations of their advisors' knowledge of careers and/or career services in their field are not being met.

Particularly noteworthy were the responses of Communication and Finance students. Within the College of Arts and Sciences, it appears that major advising is not serving the Communication students as well as students on the whole. The Communication majors displayed lower rates of satisfaction and agreement than the total group of students on all survey items. Within the Sellinger School of Business and Management, a high percentage of the Finance students indicated that they never had contact with their major advisor. Moreover, those Finance majors who did have contact with their advisor provided less positive responses about several aspects of advising than did other SSBM majors. It appears that not only are the Finance students not being served well in certain areas, some are not being served at all.

Students who had visited the Center for Academic Services and Support provided positive responses about the customer service provided by the front office staff and the advising provided by C.A.S.S. administrators.