Analysis of Academic Advisor Survey: Spring 2022

Summary

- 903 of 1669 students (60%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their advising experience in the advising centers.
- The averaged responses showed that the students were mostly satisfied with their assigned advisors, rating them 4.7 on a six-point scale.
- Students preferred the online advising session to the in-person advising session.
- Male students rated their advisors higher than female students on all advising metrics we created.
- Students who majored in NSS and HHS tended to rate their advisors lower than students in other majors.
- We analyzed open-ended feedback and extracted themes. From 217 valid text responses in the Assigned Advisor Survey, we found five notable themes emerged:
    - I wish advisors would reach out to me more/responds to my emails.
    - I wish advisors would inform me about campus events/resources related to my major.
    - Difficulty scheduling meetings.
    - I wish advisors would take an interest in me.
    - My advisor does not explain academic concepts to me.
- Similarly, we found five themes from 766 text responses in the Advising Center Survey:
    - Difficulty scheduling meetings.
    - I wish advisors could offer more resources to them, and do more outreach rather than waiting for me to come to the advising center with questions.
    - My advisors gave me inconsistent information.
    - Advisors are disregarding my schedules and goals when advising me what classes to take.
    - I want more resources and information about career paths.

Introduction

The purpose of this campus-wide survey is to assess the advising experience of all undergraduate students at Cal State LA. In Spring 2022, we administered two surveys to assess student perception of academic advising services at Cal State LA. One survey focused on the advising experience of first- and second-year students in the caseload model and the second surveyed undergraduate cohorts outside the caseload model. The information from the survey will be used to produce validating and constructive feedback to continuously improve the advising experience of students and create opportunities to support the professional development of academic advisors.

Methods

Survey construction and administration

We constructed the *Assigned Advising Survey* to assess the caseload advising and the *Advising Center Survey* to assess the academic advising centers. Both surveys included items designed to determine

preferred methods of advising (i.e., “What is your preferred method of advising appointments?”), *availability* (e.g., “Is available when I need help or have a question”), *progress support* (e.g., “Provides me with accurate and relevant information to keep me on track to graduate”), and *rapport* (e.g., “Shows interest in my life outside of Cal State LA”).

We built the surveys on Qualtrics and sent the survey links to the target populations on April 4th. We sent reminder emails on Mondays and closed the surveys on May 1st. Students who participated were entered into a lottery to win one of six $25 Starbucks gift cards.

Samples

We administered the Assigned Advisor Survey to the first-time freshmen cohorts of fall 2020 and 2021 who continued to enroll in Spring 2022, consisting of 6302 students. The response rate was 14.5% (i.e., 911 responded). In addition, we administered the Advising Center Survey to all undergraduate students enrolled in Spring 2022 who had not applied to graduate as we asked the graduating seniors to participate in a different survey. The response rate for the Advising Center Survey was 16.2% (1788 of 11052 responded).

Table 1. and Table 2. show demographic breakdown by response status. The survey samples resemble the populations of interest, except that women were overrepresented in the samples.

Table 1. Demographic breakdown by response status – the Assigned Advisor Survey

		Did not respond	Responded	Total
	Total	5391	911	6302
Gender	Women	3071 (57.0%)	701 (76.9%)	3772 (59.9%)
	Men	2306 (42.8%)	209 (22.9%)	2515 (39.9%)
	Non-binary	14 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)	15 (0.2%)
Race/Ethnicity	Native American	1 (0.0%)	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.0%)
	Asian	564 (10.5%)	108 (11.9%)	672 (10.7%)
	Black	208 (3.9%)	30 (3.3%)	238 (3.8%)
	Hispanic	4163 (77.2%)	659 (72.3%)	4822 (76.5%)
	Pacific Islander	1 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.0%)
	White	135 (2.5%)	31 (3.4%)	166 (2.6%)
	International	200 (3.7%)	64 (7.0%)	264 (4.2%)
	Two or more	63 (1.2%)	8 (0.9%)	71 (1.1%)
	Unknown	56 (1.0%)	10 (1.1%)	66 (1.0%)
First Generation	First Generation to Attend College	3221 (59.7%)	562 (61.7%)	3783 (60.0%)
	Parent Attended Some College	1121 (20.8%)	165 (18.1%)	1286 (20.4%)
	Parent Graduated College	894 (16.6%)	146 (16.0%)	1040 (16.5%)
	Unknown	155 (2.9%)	38 (4.2%)	193 (3.1%)
Pell Recipient	Received Pell	3720 (69.0%)	658 (72.2%)	4378 (69.5%)
	Did not receive Pell	1671 (31.0%)	253 (27.8%)	1924 (30.5%)
Student Level	Freshman	3088 (57.3%)	497 (54.6%)	3585 (56.9%)
	Sophomore	2022 (37.5%)	369 (40.5%)	2391 (37.9%)
	Junior	269 (5.0%)	44 (4.8%)	313 (5.0%)
	Senior	12 (0.2%)	1 (0.1%)	13 (0.2%)
College	AL	604 (11.2%)	95 (10.4%)	699 (11.1%)
	BE	835 (15.5%)	134 (14.7%)	969 (15.4%)
	ED	77 (1.4%)	25 (2.7%)	102 (1.6%)
	ES	14 (0.3%)	5 (0.5%)	19 (0.3%)
	ET	787 (14.6%)	100 (11.0%)	887 (14.1%)
	HHS	1420 (26.3%)	288 (31.6%)	1708 (27.1%)
	NSS	1280 (23.7%)	213 (23.4%)	1493 (23.7%)
	UN	374 (6.9%)	51 (5.6%)	425 (6.7%)

Table 2. Demographic breakdown by response status – the Advising Center Survey

		Did not respond	Responded	Total
	Total	9265	1787	11052
Gender	Women	4996 (53.9%)	1337 (74.8%)	6333 (57.3%)
	Men	4256 (45.9%)	445 (24.9%)	4701 (42.5%)
	Non-binary	13 (0.1%)	5 (0.3%)	18 (0.2%)
Race/Ethnicity	Native American	10 (0.1%)	4 (0.2%)	14 (0.1%)
	Asian	1016 (11.0%)	212 (11.9%)	1228 (11.1%)
	Black	355 (3.8%)	73 (4.1%)	428 (3.9%)
	Hispanic	6595 (71.2%)	1216 (68.0%)	7811 (70.7%)
	Pacific Islander	10 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (0.1%)
	White	474 (5.1%)	83 (4.6%)	557 (5.0%)
	International	462 (5.0%)	113 (6.3%)	575 (5.2%)
	Two or more	135 (1.5%)	34 (1.9%)	169 (1.5%)
	Unknown	208 (2.2%)	52 (2.9%)	260 (2.4%)
First Generation	First Generation to Attend College	5260 (56.8%)	1059 (59.3%)	6319 (57.2%)
	Parent Attended Some College	1966 (21.2%)	337 (18.9%)	2303 (20.8%)
	Parent Graduated College	1681 (18.1%)	292 (16.3%)	1937 (17.5%)
	Unknown	358 (3.9%)	99 (5.5%)	457 (4.1%)
Pell Recipient	Received Pell	5899 (63.7%)	1201 (67.2%)	7100 (64.2%)
	Did not receive Pell	3366 (36.3%)	586 (32.8%)	3952 (35.8%)
Student Level	Freshman	35 (0.4%)	3 (0.2%)	38 (0.3%)
	Sophomore	354 (3.8%)	35 (2.0%)	389 (3.5%)
	Junior	4005 (43.2%)	760 (42.5%)	4765 (43.1%)
	Senior	4871 (52.6%)	989 (55.3%)	5860 (53.0%)
College	AL	1437 (15.5%)	262 (14.7%)	1699 (15.4%)
	BE	1627 (17.6%)	236 (13.2%)	1863 (16.9%)
	ED	219 (2.4%)	60 (3.4%)	279 (2.5%)
	ES	31 (0.3%)	8 (0.4%)	39 (0.4%)
	ET	1217 (13.1%)	159 (8.9%)	1376 (12.5%)
	HHS	2539 (27.4%)	613 (34.3%)	3152 (28.5%)
	NSS	2187 (23.6%)	448 (25.1%)	2635 (23.8%)
	UN	8 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	9 (0.1%)

Results

Do they know their advisors?

We asked if they knew who their assigned advisors were in the Assigned Advisor Survey and found that 87% indicated they knew their advisor. When disaggregated the data by the demographic factors, students who majored in ET, ES, and HHS were more likely to report that they know their advisors than those who majored in BE, ED, and NSS (Table 3).

Table 3. “Do you know your advisor?” by college

	No		Yes	
College	Count	%	Count	%
AL	11	11.6%	84	88.4%
BE	19	14.2%	115	85.8%
ED	4	16.0%	21	84.0%
ES	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
ET	3	3.0%	97	97.0%
HHS	30	10.4%	258	89.6%
NSS	43	20.2%	170	79.8%
UN	6	11.8%	45	88.2%
Total	116	12.7%	795	87.3%

Preferred method of advising

Most respondents preferred virtual advising. According to the Assigned Advisor Survey, 63% of the FTF cohorts '20 & '21 reported preferring to meet their assigned advisors virtually, and only 8% in person (Figure 1). Similarly, 47% of the respondents in the Advising Center Survey preferred virtual meetings and 17% in person (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Preferred methods of advising among assigned advisees

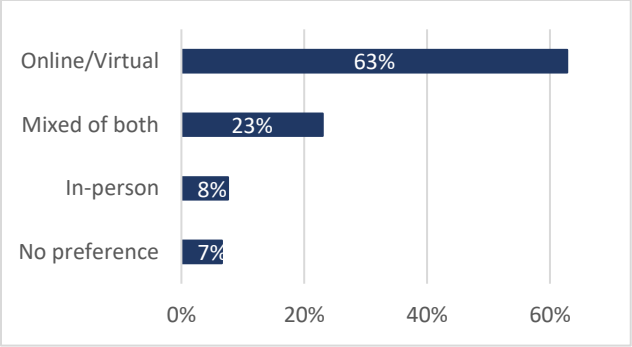
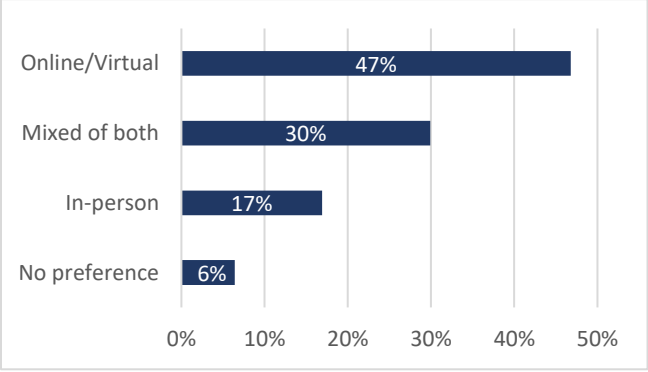


Figure 2. Preferred methods of advising for advising centers



Even though online advising is the most popular method of advising, we found that men were significantly more likely than women to prefer meeting their advisors in person (see Table 4).

Table 3. Preferred methods of advising by gender and survey

	Assigned Advisee		Advising Center	
Methods	Men	Women	Men	Women
No preference	6.3%	6.6%	8.1%	5.8%
In-person	10.1%	6.9%	23.1%	14.9%
Mixed of both	26.6%	21.9%	30.1%	29.9%
Online/Virtual	57.0%	64.6%	38.7%	49.4%

Furthermore, the Advising Center Survey showed that students who majored in ET and ES prefer in-person or a mix of in-person and online advising, while students in BE and ED prefer online advising.

Table 4. Advising method preference by college for advising centers

	In-Person		Mix of both		No preference		Online	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
AL	45	17.2%	68	26.0%	21	8.0%	128	48.9%
BE	33	14.0%	69	29.2%	7	3.0%	127	53.8%
ED	7	11.7%	16	26.7%	3	5.0%	34	56.7%
ES	2	25.0%	4	50.0%	0	0.0%	2	25.0%
ET	42	26.4%	56	35.2%	15	9.4%	46	28.9%
HHS	96	15.7%	182	29.7%	32	5.2%	303	49.4%
NSS	77	17.2%	140	31.3%	36	8.0%	195	43.5%
UN	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
Total	302	16.9%	535	29.9%	114	6.4%	836	46.8%

Overall satisfaction

To assess the overall satisfaction, we created a composite score by averaging all the items in the Assigned Advisor Survey. On a scale of one to six, we found that the students rated their assigned advisor 4.7 on average. In the Advising Center Survey, one item read, “Overall, I am satisfied with my advising experience in the college advising center.” We found that 60% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. Therefore, the students were generally satisfied with the quality of advising by their assigned advisors and those in the advising centers. We did not disaggregate the overall satisfaction scores by demographic factors. We examined *availability*, *progress support*, and *rapport* in the following sections and reported demographic differences.

Availability

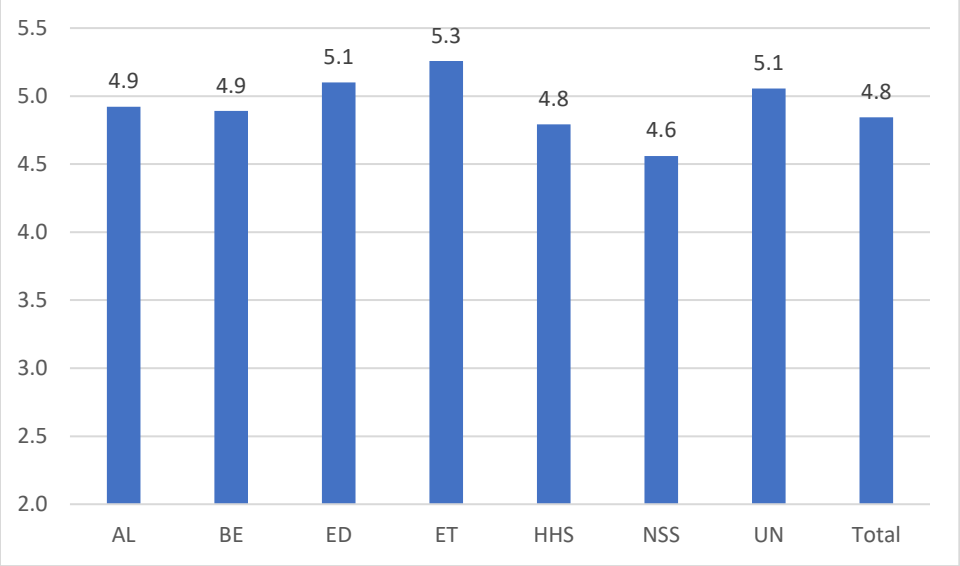
The Assigned Advising Survey included four questions measuring advisors’ *availability*. Most students agreed or strongly agreed that their advisors were available and proactively reached out to them (Table 5). About 76% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the advisors communicated with them at least 2-3 times a year and are available when they need help or have questions. Additionally, 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their advisors reached out to them to schedule appointments. But the students endorsed less strongly the item – “Follows up with me after we meet” – with only 50% of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

Table 5. Availability items in the Assigned Advisor Survey

Survey Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Communicates with me at least 2-3 times per academic year	18 (2.1%)	27 (3.1%)	52 (6.0%)	116 (13.3%)	307 (35.3%)	350 (40.2%)
Is available when I need help or have a question	13 (1.5%)	17 (2.0%)	37 (4.3%)	145 (16.7%)	340 (39.1%)	318 (36.6%)
Reaches out to me to schedule advising appointments	15 (1.7%)	29 (3.3%)	28 (3.2%)	101 (11.6%)	297 (34.1%)	400 (46.0%)
Follows up with me after we meet	35 (4.0%)	91 (10.5%)	96 (11.0%)	210 (24.1%)	231 (26.6%)	207 (23.8%)

We created a composite *availability* score by calculating the average of these four items. Then, we ran the statistical tests on the composite score using the demographic variables. We found that male students (M = 5.0, SD = 0.9) rated their assigned advisors higher than female students (M = 4.8, SD = 1.0) on availability. Also, the students who majored in ET rated their assigned advisors higher than students majored in NSS and HSS (see Figure 3. Note - we excluded ES from the statistical analysis because there are only eight respondents from the college).

Figure 3. Average availability score by college in the Assigned Advisor Survey



The Advising Center Survey included three items measuring advisors' *availability* (Table 6). The students were largely satisfied with the availability. But 28% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement – "Advisor reach out to me to schedule an advising appointment."

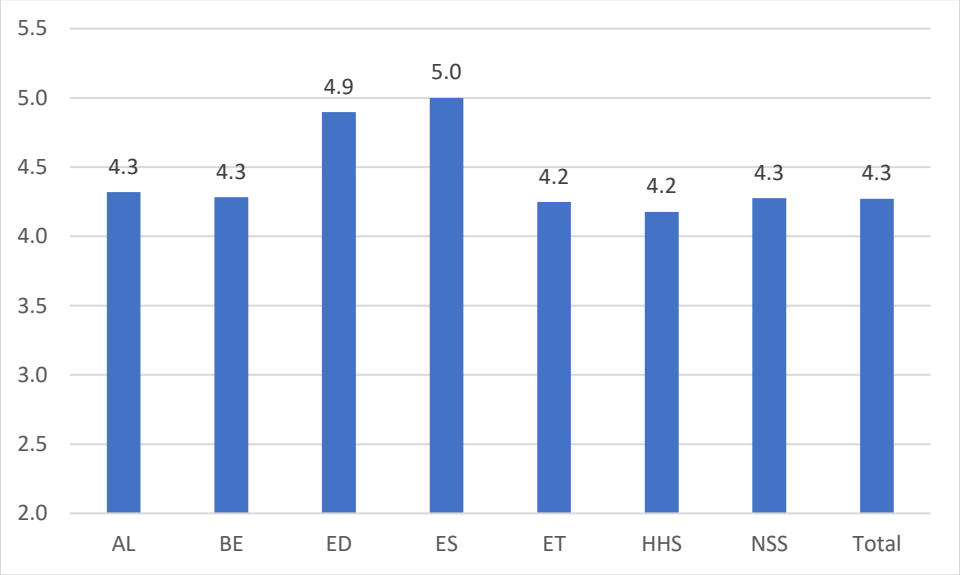
Table 6. Availability items in the Advising Center Survey

Survey Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Advisors reach out to me to schedule an advising appointment	242 (14.1%)	245 (14.3%)	191 (11.1%)	325 (19.0%)	342 (20.0%)	369 (21.5%)
I am satisfied with the availability of academic advising appointments	114 (6.7%)	110 (6.4%)	178 (10.4%)	429 (25.0%)	496 (28.9%)	387 (22.6%)

Advisors spend sufficient time with me for each appointment	71 (4.1%)	69 (4.0%)	114 (6.7%)	340 (19.8%)	580 (33.8%)	540 (31.5%)

We created a composite *availability* score by calculating the average of these items and ran a series of statistical tests on it using the demographic variables. Also, the students who majored in ED rated their assigned advisors higher than students in other majors (see Figure 4. Note - we excluded ES from the statistical analysis because there are only eight respondents from the college).

Figure 4. Average availability score by college in the Advising Center Survey



Progress support

There were five questions measuring *progress support*, defined as the extent to which an advisor supports academic progress by giving insight or direction to a student. We found that about 80% of the respondents in the Assigned Advisor Survey agreed or strongly agreed that their assigned advisors encouraged them to "re-enroll each semester" and provided them with "accurate and relevant information to keep [them] on track to graduate". More than 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their assigned advisors encouraged them to have an active role in their goals and explained clear steps or strategies to "resolve any concerns, issues, or questions". Approximately 52% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their assigned advisors made an effort to connect them to "Cal State LA by sharing campus events" with them.

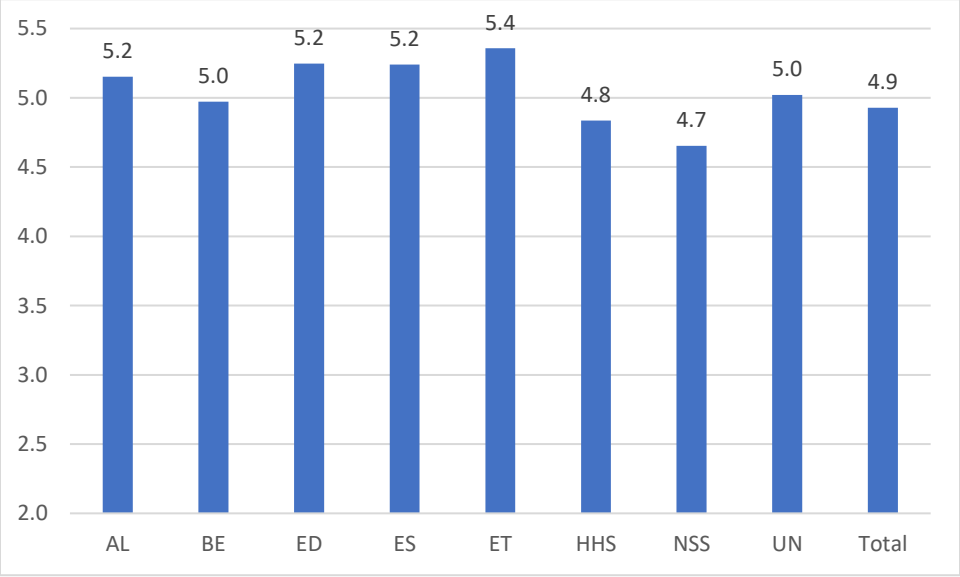
Table 7. Progress support items in the Assigned Adviser Survey

Survey Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Encourages me to re-enroll each semester	17 (2.0%)	22 (2.6%)	25 (2.9%)	109 (12.9%)	291 (34.3%)	384 (45.3%)
Provides me with accurate and relevant information to keep me on track to graduate	14 (1.7%)	20 (2.4%)	24 (2.8%)	106 (12.5%)	285 (33.6%)	399 (47.1%)
Encourages me to have an active role in planning my academic and career goals	11 (1.3%)	23 (2.7%)	42 (5.0%)	138 (16.3%)	287 (33.8%)	347 (40.9%)
Takes the time to explain clear steps or strategies to help me resolve any concerns, issues, or questions	18 (2.1%)	24 (2.8%)	41 (4.8%)	121 (14.3%)	271 (32.0%)	373 (44.0%)

Makes an effort to connect me to Cal State LA by sharing campus events with me	41 (4.8%)	81 (9.6%)	90 (10.6%)	199 (23.5%)	210 (24.8%)	227 (26.8%)

Using the five items, we created a composite score for progress support and compared it across different demographic groups. We found that male students (*M* = 5.1, *SD* = 1.0) rated their assigned advisors higher than female students (*M* = 4.9, *SD* = 1.0) on academic progress support. The students who majored in NSS (*M* = 4.7, *SD* = 1.1) rated their assigned advisors lower than students in AL (*M* = 5.2, *SD* = 0.8) and ET (*M* = 5.4, *SD* = 0.8; Figure 5).

Figure 5. Average progress support score by college in the Assigned Advisor Survey



In the Advising Center Survey, there were also five items that measure progress support (Table 8). The students were generally satisfied with the Advising Center's ability to support their progress toward obtaining a degree. About 58% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the advisors discussed resources and tools to help them succeed. We found that 72% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the advisors discussed the requirements and steps needed to graduate. Furthermore, 61% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the advisors helped them make decisions in their major. Fifty-four percent of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the advisors assisted in "identifying academic and career goals" and sent them "information about services and events on campus".

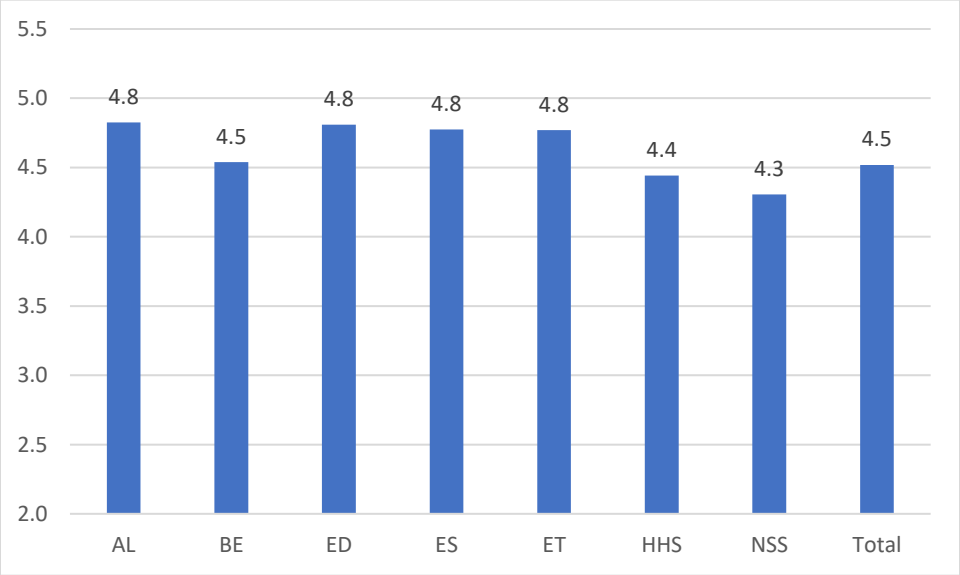
Table 8. Progress support items in the Advising Center Survey

Survey Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Advisors discuss resources and tools for me to be successful during appointments	96 (5.8%)	104 (6.2%)	130 (7.8%)	366 (21.9%)	513 (30.7%)	460 (27.6%)
Advisors discuss requirements and steps needed for me to graduate	63 (3.8%)	48 (2.9%)	79 (4.7%)	281 (16.8%)	563 (33.7%)	635 (38.0%)

Advisors assisted me with making decisions, including identifying options and choices in the major	88 (5.3%)	96 (5.8%)	135 (8.1%)	330 (19.8%)	513 (30.7%)	507 (30.4%)
Advisors assisted me in identifying academic and career goals	116 (7.0%)	141 (8.4%)	159 (9.5%)	356 (21.3%)	460 (27.6%)	437 (26.2%)
My Advising Center sends me relevant information about services and events on campus	110 (6.6%)	115 (6.9%)	178 (10.7%)	363 (21.7%)	483 (28.9%)	420 (25.2%)

We created a composite score using the five items and compared the score across different demographic groups. We found that first-generation students (*M* = 4.6, *SD* = 1.2) rated their assigned advisors higher than non-first-generation students (*M* = 4.4, *SD* = 1.3) on progress support. Also, we found that students with unknown race/ethnic background scored significantly lower (*M* = 3.9, *SD* = 1.4) progress support than the students were Asian (*M* = 4.6, *SD* = 1.1), Hispanic (*M* = 4.5, *SD* = 1.2), and International (*M* = 4.6, *SD* = 1.2). Black and White (*M* = 4.5, *SD* = 1.3) students did not rate the advisors significantly different from other race/ethnic groups on progress support (Note: There were only four American Indian students, thus were not able to compare with other groups). We found that the students majored in NSS (*M* = 4.3, *SD* = 1.3) rated significantly lower than those who majored in AL (*M* = 4.8, *SD* = 1.1) and ET (*M* = 4.8, *SD* = 1.2) on progress support, and students majored in HHS (*M* = 4.4, *SD* = 1.2) significantly lower than those in ET (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Average progress support score by college in the Advising Center Survey



Rapport

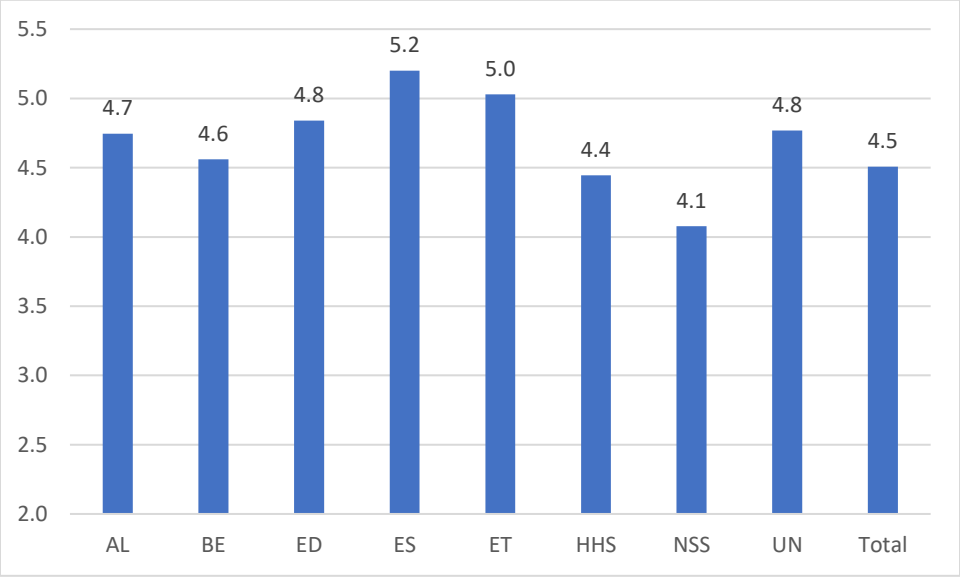
The Assigned Advisor Survey included five items designed to measure *rapport*, which is defined as an advisor-advisee relationship characterized as personable and harmonious (Table 9). We found that 59% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their assigned advisor made an effort to get to know them and their needs and 52% agreed or strongly agreed that the advisors knew their aspirations. The majority of the respondent, 79%, agreed or strongly agreed that their advisors listened attentively to them during the meeting session. However, only 37% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they showed interest in their life outside of Cal State LA. Finally, approximately 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the advisors referred them to the appropriate campus resources.

Table 9. Rapport items in the Assigned Advisor Survey

Survey Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Makes an effort to get to know me and my needs	28 (3.2%)	71 (8.2%)	88 (10.1%)	167 (19.2%)	283 (32.5%)	233 (26.8%)
Knows my aspirations (academic, professional, and/or personal)	38 (4.4%)	75 (8.6%)	86 (9.9%)	220 (25.3%)	260 (29.9%)	191 (22.0%)
Listens attentively to me	19 (2.2%)	24 (2.8%)	29 (3.3%)	108 (12.4%)	343 (39.4%)	347 (39.9%)
Shows interest in my life outside of Cal State LA	81 (9.3%)	108 (12.4%)	138 (15.9%)	221 (25.4%)	186 (21.4%)	136 (15.6%)
Refers me to the appropriate campus resources and services as needed (e.g., financial aid, CAPS, tutoring, career center)	27 (3.2%)	29 (3.4%)	51 (6.0%)	148 (17.5%)	286 (33.7%)	307 (36.2%)

We found that male students (*M* = 4.7, *SD* = 1.1) rated their assigned advisors higher than female students (*M* = 4.4, *SD* = 1.2) on rapport. When disaggregated the data by college, we found that students majored in NSS (*M* = 4.1, *SD* = 1.2) rated their assigned advisors significantly lower than students majored in other colleges and undeclared students on rapport. In addition, students majored in BE (*M* = 4.6, *SD* = 1.2) and in HHS (*M* = 4.4, *SD* = 1.2) rated their advisors lower than those majored in ET (*M* = 5.0, *SD* = 0.9; Figure 7).

Figure 7. Average rapport score by college in the Assigned Advisor Survey



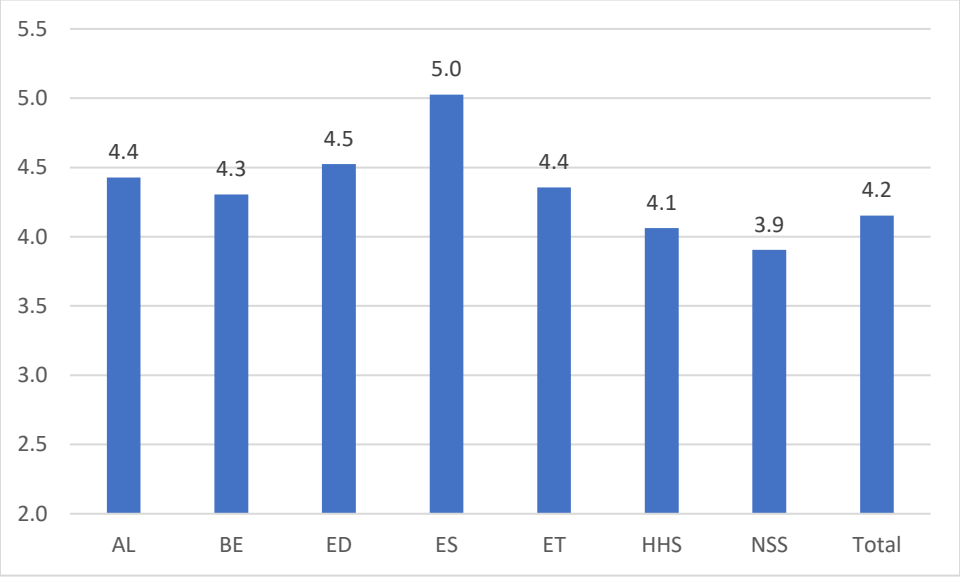
The Advising Center Survey also included five items designed to assess rapport (Table 10). We found that 69% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcomed by the advisors and 60% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt cared for and supported by the advisors. While 43% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have developed positive relationships with the advisors and 38% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable talking about personal issues, only 28% agreed or strongly agreed that the advisors showed an interest in their “outside-of-class activities”.

Table 10. Progress support items in the Advising Center Survey

Survey Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel welcomed by the Advisors in my Academic Advising Center	72 (4.2%)	48 (2.8%)	89 (5.2%)	314 (18.3%)	592 (34.5%)	599 (34.9%)
I feel cared for and supported by Advisors in my Academic Advising Center	88 (5.1%)	65 (3.8%)	139 (8.1%)	401 (23.4%)	515 (30.0%)	506 (29.5%)
I have developed positive relationships with Advisors in my Academic Advising Center	137 (8.0%)	171 (10.0%)	203 (11.8%)	471 (27.5%)	370 (21.6%)	362 (21.1%)
I feel comfortable talking with Advisors about personal issues/concerns that may or may not pertain to academics	200 (11.7%)	214 (12.5%)	261 (15.2%)	380 (22.2%)	331 (19.3%)	328 (19.1%)
Advisors show an interest in my outside-of-class activities	251 (14.6%)	294 (17.2%)	296 (17.3%)	382 (22.3%)	248 (14.5%)	243 (14.2%)

Next, we created a composite score of these five items on rapport and compared the score across different demographic groups. We found that the students whose racial/ethnic identify were unknown (*M* = 3.6, *SD* = 1.4) scored lower than Asian (*M* = 4.3, *SD* = 1.2) and international students (*M* = 4.3, *SD* = 1.3). We found that students majored in students NSS (*M* = 3.9, *SD* = 1.3) rated their advisor significantly lower than those in AL (*M* = 4.4, *SD* = 1.2), BE (*M* = 4.3, *SD* = 1.3), ED (*M* = 4.5, *SD* = 1.3) and ET (*M* = 4.3, *SD* = 1.3). Students majored in HHS (*M* = 4.1, *SD* = 1.2) rated their advisors lower than those in AL (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Average rapport score by college in the Advising Center Survey



Student feedback from the Assigned Advisor Survey

Students were asked to "Please provide additional feedback on how your assigned advisor can better assist you while at Cal State LA". There are 217 valid responses to this question and were summarized into common themes. Five notable themes emerged including:

- I wish advisors would reach out to me more/responds to my emails.
- I wish advisors would inform me about campus events/resources related to my major.
- Difficulty scheduling meetings.
- I wish advisors would take an interest in me.
- My advisor does not explain academic concepts to me.

I wish Advisor would Reach Out to me more/Responds to my Email

Students express how they wish their advisors would check in with them more frequently. Sometimes students could use reminders for important deadlines that they may be unaware of, or to provide assurance that they are on the right track. Additionally, students have difficulty receiving a response via email from their advisors when they have questions.

"To better assist me when I have problems is replying back to some of emails. Sometimes I don't hear back after asking questions and I'm left wondering if I should send another so that I can get a response."

"Need more communication and reaching out. More one-on-one meetings to catch up on students doing a survey to get an idea of where the students find themselves and if some need extra help than others."

"He can respond to my emails in questions that don't need to be meet online Because I have to make an appointment online in order for my answer to be answered when it could be done through email."

I wish Advisors would inform me about Campus Events/Resources related to my Major.

Many students expressed desire for their advisors to inform them about ongoing campus resources or events that may be helpful for their intended career or major. Feeling of missed opportunities are attributed to unawareness of some available internship opportunities, scholarships, or job that have taken place on campus. Additionally, many students express that the advisor seems to be unknowledgeable about how to succeed in their specific majors and only providing generic advice.

"A piece of feedback that I would give is to offer their guidance on things like internships, taking summer courses at a local community college, how to get involved in events and opportunities available for their related major."

"I think that one thing that could of helped me more was maybe recommending me some meetings or events that were related to the careers I had in mind."

"I'd appreciate getting told about more resources or events on campus, and sending follow up messages (because often time I still have questions or concerns yet have to wait awhile to reschedule an appt.)."

Difficulty Scheduling Meetings.

Meeting an advisor can be difficult because they need to be scheduled sometimes months in advance. Additionally, the advisor might cancel on the student or fail to attend at all. Some students have also reported that when in meeting, the advisor forgot about what had occurred during previous meetings.

"I was given notice to schedule an advising appointment for enrollment. However, upon visiting the navigate portal and clicking on the notification, I was shown that there were no available appointments. I could only get an appointment that was already after when I was able to enroll."

"It is very difficult to schedule a meeting in a timely manner, if scheduled at all. Advisors might forget about what happened in last meeting, or not show up to one at all. Lack of follow ups feels like a lack of support."

"My advisor should be more reliable. Often times when I schedule a meeting she does not show up and does not send a message to reschedule. She has only responded when I have messaged her missing a meeting with me."

I wish Advisors would take an Interest in me.

When meeting with advisors, some students notice that advisors do not show interest in their students' career journey. They do not take into account the students personal life and may communicate in a rude or impolite manner.

"Take into account my personal life and outside activities. I did explain to her that I am active at my church so I usually take 12-13 units very semester but instead of understanding and encouraging me, she told me that I need to decide what I want to prioritize, my outside activities or my academics. My sister's past advisors at community college never talked to her like this but instead encouraged her and helped her plan out her future to fit her schedule."

"I think having a more personable connection with my advisor would be preferred… …Overall many of the HHS advisors are very rude, blunt, and don't take the time to understand students needs. Personally, I have gone to meetings where they don't really listen to my concerns, eat or look away while I talk to them, and discourage me by telling me that I am simply not going to be able to graduate."

"My advisor can better assist me by not rushing through our meetings, and by answering all of my questions and concerns."

My Advisors do not Explain Academic Concepts to me.

Students might not be aware of how college systems work and require someone to explain what they need. Sometimes the advisor will not explain academic concepts enough for the student to understand well and comfortably navigate their undergraduate career. The advisor could ask the students if they have an adequate understanding of where they are to see if further explanations are required.

"I would say it's okay to slow down and actually explain things into further detail. I would say he also should recommend more things and classes to me because at the end of the day I am a freshman that doesn't know much"
"My assigned advisor can explain to me what the graduation requirements are so I can graduate on time."

"My feedback would be maybe spend more time asking questions making sure students know certain important details. Additionally I know they spend time with a lot of students but if they could be really engaging that would help as well."

Student feedback from the Advising Center Survey

Students were given the opportunity to share feedback on how their advising center experience could be improved, as well as any positive experiences that they have had with an advisor. Using topic modeling, a machine learning technique that identifies patterns in text, five primary themes were found in what students would like the advising center to prioritize improving upon. There were 766 valid responses to this question. We used R and the stm and tidyverse packages to create this model and find the following themes.

Appointments are difficult to schedule in a timely fashion given limited time slots and unreliable online platforms

Students expressed frustration with long wait times for appointments, cancellations without warning, and glitches in online platforms. As students need to meet with an advisor to be able to register for the next semester, these wait times and cancellations can impede their progress towards their goals.

"Make appointments more accessible in person and online, preferably through zoom. Microsoft meetings are not the most reliable platform to communicate with students as it crashes, doesn't notify if meeting has started, or wait room glitches."

"It should be easier to make an appointment to meet with an advisor. You always have to book an appointment a month in advance."

Advisors could offer more resources to them, and do more outreach rather than waiting for students to come to the advising center with questions

Several students mentioned having never been to campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the advising center could offer or recommend campus tours to students. This could help students feel more connected to the center, and campus in general.

"It would be great if advisors would offer additional resources that a student may need, especially if they've never been to campus due to the pandemic. I never had the chance to explore campus and I graduate this year. It made me feel that the advisors don't value the students' time at the school."

"Maybe reaching out and asking if students if they have any further help. Maybe offer resources outside of the campus. Guiding student not only how to navigate thru the computer but also on campus. An example would be first time people stop on campus giving them tours of the campus where it can be helpful to navigate classes on campus."

Advisors currently give students inconsistent information, leading to confusion and distrust in the system

Due to students potentially seeing a different advisor each time they visit the center, multiple student comments mentioned receiving conflicting information from advisors.

"Making sure that all advisors have the same knowledge of info., as I spoke to different advisors about the same issue, and three different people had different information/answers/suggestions. I was very confused and decided to talk to the director directly."

"I feel there can be better communication there is sometimes inaccurate information given that can be confusing."

"The lack of familiarity can cause confusing. Since we can get different advisors every visit, they can all tell you differently."

Advisors are not working in partnership with them on their schedules, and are disregarding the goals that students bring to the meetings

Students feel as though their goals are disregarded when meeting with advisors, leading them to take classes that do not interest them or do not meet their needs. Multiple students voiced concerns that this guidance has lengthened the time it will take for them to get their degree.

"Advisors should lay out the options for you and not try to convince you to prolong your studies. Ex. I wanted to take summer classes to finish in the fall. I was told to take classes in fall and spring instead. Completely disregarded my goals."

"… I wanted to take a psychology class to get ahead but I was advised to take an art class again, being told that I couldn't handle it. When I insisted, they were hesitant to put psychology and started suggesting art classes. In the end, I signed myself up for a psychology class, and now I managed to finish early, have time for a minor, and focus on my nursing classes easily. Please listen to students if they have a plan in mind …"

Students want more resources and information about career paths and other opportunities from their advisors, but do not feel comfortable enough with their advisors to ask due to lack of relationship building

Multiple students mentioned wanting to ask for information about career paths and opportunities, but feeling uncomfortable due to being condescended to or otherwise treated rudely.

"Establish more relationships with the students by identifying their career goals and being supportive of those even if our current GPA doesn't seem to be the best yet to achieve those goals. Partner with the Student Leadership in connecting with students."

"Some of the advisors can be rude, condescending or even hostile to me when I have questions. They often seem angry at us for asking questions. I do not feel comfortable asking advisors for any help because every other time I go I feel like I am being attacked. Oftentimes the advisors do not seem to know what they are doing or understand any of the requirements for my major. I wish they would understand more about the academic requirements for the CPA and could offer advisement for that process."

Five primary themes were also found in response to the question prompting students to recall a positive encounter they had with an academic advisor in the advising center. There were 963 responses to this question.

Advisors take life experiences in mind to support students in their academic and career goals

Students appreciate advisors considering their lives and unique needs, including taking extra time to review things for students, in supporting them towards their goals.

"I set an appointment up to potential fix transfer credits because I worried about having to re-do classes. I was able to get that cleared up and satisfy transfer credits for required courses, and if I would've set up

an appointment earlier, I could've said another course. After that experience, I always consider going to advising if I ever have an issue or question with my academic progress."

"… She said things to me that I didn't even know was possible. She believed in me. She set up a degree planner for me and told me that I needed to take six classes that semester and that I had to pass them, not just with B's but with A's. Not knowing if I could do it or not, I challenged myself and did just that! I couldn't believe it. To have an advisor believe in me"

Advisors support students in accessing campus resources they otherwise wouldn't know about

Advisors are able to identify gaps in a student's learning experience and guide them towards courses and resources that will benefit them in their academic and professional career.

"My advisor asked why I was trying to avoid in taking a Digital Art course. I told my advisor that I've avoided doing any Digital Art classes only because I was never comfortable with that type of media. She advised me to look into the LinkedIn Learning. She went over with me how the program worked. She also advised me to look over the programs on the subject of Digital art so whenever I get a chance, I'd give myself an idea of where the tools are in the program."

" … I will always remember the time I went into her office because I was thinking of changing my major. I was not sure what I would be doing when I graduate. She helped guiding me to which websites I can use to get a better understanding of what engineers do in their jobs and what type of work I want to go into after I graduate. This motivated me to do better in my classes because it gave me an understanding of what I want to do once I earn my degree. …"

Advisors keep students on track for graduation

Students repeatedly mentioned their appreciation for the resources and knowledge provided by the advising center that supports them in registering for classes and staying on track for graduation.

"My academic advisor gives me options and helps me plan for my future courses"

"They are very knowledgeable and provided the resources and classes needed to graduate."

"My advisor helped me select classes and notified me about deadlines"

Advisors support students in changing majors and navigating unknown situations

When students were faced with new challenges like changing a major or making a big decision, they appreciated the resources and advice that advisors were able to offer.

"Helped me with creating a what if report before I was able to declare my major to help me choose classes what wasn't updated yet because I didn't declare a major at the time"

"When I was a freshman I was very indecisive about what i wanted to major in so my academic advisor helped me figure out what I was passionate about and what majors helped me achieve what i was looking for."

Advisors are reassuring and accommodating

Many students wrote that they felt as though the advisors in the advising center could meet their needs with empathy and a personal touch. Advisors followed up with students, redirected them when necessary, and made accommodations when the situation called for it.

"My Advisor helped me out with something I am stuck on. He answers my question that I am confused on. She reassured me that I can follow up with any more questions by emailing him. When I had a question about my financial aid, he directed me to speak to the financial aid office which I forgot about. Thank you."

"[My advisor] helped me during a hard time in my life with a loss of a family member. This was a few years ago, but the way she handled my emotionally-distressed self at the time was very helpful and much appreciated when I reflect back on it. It was something I very much needed at the time. Not only that, but she also made accommodations for my situation as well"