

# Troy University Academic Advising Survey

## Executive Summary

June 21, 2007

In Spring 2007, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) conducted a university-wide survey of academic advising. The survey was the first of its kind at the University, and the purpose of the survey was to evaluate the academic advising process to identify the strengths as well as the priorities for improvement in academic advising so that the educational needs of the students may be better served.

The survey instrument was in-house developed, piloted on Dothan Campus two years ago, and revised based on the extensive feedback from various constituents at the University, especially from the University's academic advising committee. The questions of the survey were found to have a high reliability and centered on measuring the academic advising process at Troy University, specifically, student perceptions about the academic advising process at the University; student perceived importance of academic advising; and student satisfaction with the academic advising they had experienced at Troy University.

The survey was administered online and sent to all Spring 2007 students via email on May 9, 2007, after all finals were completed. After two email follow-ups, data collection for the survey was closed on June 11, 2007 with a total of 3,866 responses or approximately 15% of all Spring 2007 students.

In data analysis, descriptive methods were used to identify students' opinions and perceptions about the academic advising they had experienced. Additionally, in order to determine if there were any gaps between the students' expectations and the performance of the University in academic advising, students' perceived importance of academic advising was measured against their satisfaction with the academic advising at the University. Finally, a quadrant analysis was applied to identify areas of top priorities for improvement.

### Major findings

1. Overall, over half (55%) of the students preferred face-to-face academic advising, while about one-third would like to have online academic advising. Although the majority of eCampus students preferred academic advising either online (52%) or via phone (20%), quite a large percent of them (24%) preferred face-to-face academic advising.
2. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the students indicated that they knew their academic advisors, while 65% of students confirmed that an academic advisor was assigned to them soon after they declared their majors.
3. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the students indicated that they would like to consult with an advisor 1-2 times or 3-4 times each term. Currently approximately 38% consulted with

their advisors 1-2 times or 3-4 times each term and approximately 58% met with their advisors only when it was necessary.

4. Student opinions about the academic advising at Troy University were relatively low. Overall, an average of 55% of the respondents “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to the areas measured in Table 1. It should be noted, however, that neutral responses to the items in Table 1 ranged from 22% to 31%. The two statements regarding academic advising at the University that received the highest percentage of ratings of “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” were:

- My advisor provides accurate information about my major and my program requirements. (59.1%)
- I feel comfortable working with my advisor. (58.4%)

Over 20% of the respondents “Strongly Disagreed” or “Disagreed” with the following:

- My academic advisor is readily available. (21.8%)
- My academic advisor is helpful in scheduling my classes. (22.4%)
- My academic advisor is helpful in the registration process. (20.8%)
- The academic advising process at Troy University adequately meets my needs. (25.6%)
- Overall, I am satisfied with the academic advising provided by my advisor. (24.4%)

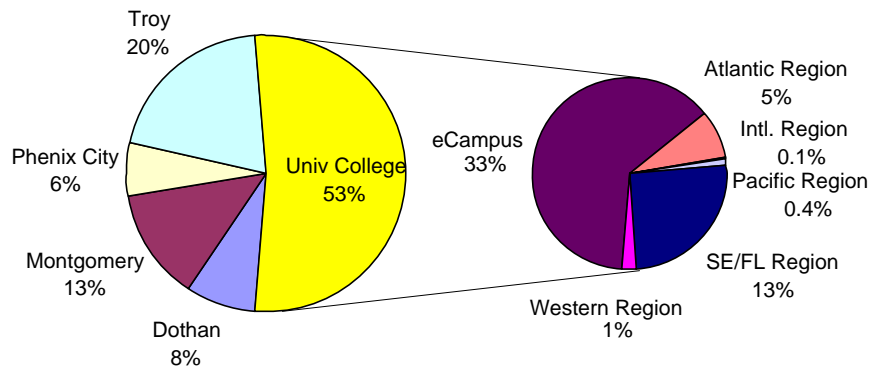
5. Students of Communication & Fine Arts (range 51.3% to 60.7% Agree in Table 2) and Health & Human Services (range 56.8% to 71.0% Agree in Table 2) were found to be more likely to show high levels of agreement and satisfaction with the areas of academic advising measured in the survey (Table 2 and Table 4).
6. College of Business students were found less satisfied with the academic advising they experienced at Troy University: they tended to agree less to the statements regarding academic advising (range 44.7% to 53.2% in Table 2) and their satisfaction ratings were significantly lower than the average ratings of all respondents (Table 4).
7. There was little difference between students of different gender, ethnic background, or academic level in their agreement to the areas measured. However, eCampus students were found more likely than average to show low levels of agreement, and part-time students tended to agree less to the areas measured in the survey.
8. While all respondents shared similar opinions about the importance of academic advising, “Guidance on academic programs” was rated as the most important area in academic advising, and “Using campus/site services and recourses” was rated as the least important. (Table 3)
9. Overall, student satisfaction ratings were low. In a 7-point scale, with 1 as “Least Satisfied” and 7 as “Most Satisfied,” “Scheduling classes” was rated as the highest (mean=4.80) and “Career planning” was rated the lowest (mean=4.33). (Table 4)

10. Significant differences were identified between students' perceived importance of academic advising and their satisfaction with the academic advising they experienced, indicating that the University's performance in academic advising did not meet the students' expectations. (Table 5)
11. "Guidance on academic programs," "Registration procedures," and "Scheduling classes" were identified as the top priorities for improvement in the academic advising process at Troy University.

Respondent demographics:

1. Of the 3,866 respondents, 71.6% were females; 52% were White, 39% were Black, and 9% were other minorities or unknown.
2. Some 60.6% of the respondents were Undergraduates, 3.1% were classified as Other, and 36.2% were Graduate students with 64.3% full-time students and 35.7% part-time students.
3. Approximately 35% of the respondents were students in the Sorrell College of Business, 31% were students in the College of Arts and Sciences, 25% were students in the College of Education, 2.3% were students in the Colleges of Fine Arts and Communication and 6.8% were students in the College of Health and Human Services.
4. 47% of the respondents were enrolled on in-state campuses, and 53% were University College students, including eCampus students, who comprised 33% of the total respondents.

### Respondents by Location



### Implications/Recommendations:

1. Troy University has been implementing a regular and consistent academic advising process to help students grow and achieve their educational/academic goals, and while students have benefited from this academic advising process, there is still room for improvement.
2. Because the University's performance did not meet the students' expectations in academic advising, more efforts need to be directed toward improving the University's academic advising process. At a minimum, Colleges, departments, and programs should assess (in greater detail) the effectiveness of their academic advising process to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), and based on assessment results, build plans to improve academic advising so that students receive the best academic advising possible.
3. At least one objective in the annual planning process for Colleges and the Academic Division should be devoted to quality academic advising for all students to ensure that all students receive superior academic advising while they are studying at Troy University,
4. Because the academic advising work done in some colleges seems to be impacting positively on students' opinions and satisfaction with academic advising, it may be worthwhile for Colleges to communicate and share their best practices in advising.
5. In academic advising, "Guidance on academic programs," "Scheduling classes" and "Registration procedures" are of high importance to the students and should always be given high priorities in the University's academic advising process.