

Assessment Narrative

It was decided that multiple assessment methods should be used to evaluate the SOM Advising Office. The dynamic synergy of qualitative investigation better reveals the perceptions of students toward their experiences. Quantitative data would increase the predictive validity of the descriptions gathered by qualitative means.

The following factors were considered when selecting assessment methodologies.

- Who and what is to be assessed?
- What will be the other assessment experiences of students while enrolled at UTD?
- How universal do we wish the evaluation effort to be among SOM constituents?
- Cost
- The psychometric properties of the assessment instrument. It was critical that each assessment tool measured what it was intended to measure without enhancing bias against any individual or group.

Four assessment procedures are used internally by the School of Management to evaluate the services offered by the Advising Office.

- Advising Office Service Survey
- EBI Tabulated Exit and new Student Evaluations
- In house exit and new student surveys similar to EBI Tabulated surveys
- Undergraduate student exit interviews

Advising Office Service Survey

In 1999, the Advising Office began self-administering a short survey to students as they left the Advising Office after visiting with an advisor. The Advising Office Service Survey is made available to students four times every year. Every student leaving the advising area is given a short service survey that can be completed and anonymously deposited in a sealed container. Each of the four annual survey efforts last for five working days during a one week period.

- a full week towards the end of Spring semester registration, this is an extremely busy period
- the first full week after the conclusion of Fall registration, this is also an extremely busy period

- a full week approximately in the middle of both the Fall and Spring registrations; these two time frames are not as busy as the two time frames listed above

Results from the most recent effort of the Advising Office Service Survey:

11/28/05 to 12/2/05

1=Strongly Agree	2=Agree	3=Neutral	4=Disagree	5=Strongly Disagree
The advising staff assisted me in a reasonably timely manner.				
4(63)	5(24)		1(147)	2(122) 3(108)
The advisor made a reasonable effort to assist me.				
4(12)	5(0)		1(208)	2(196) 3(48)
It was easy to talk with the advisor.				
4(1)	5(0)		1(239)	2(191) 3(33)
The advisor was knowledgeable concerning School of Management's policies, procedures, and requirements.				
4(16)	5(2)		1(204)	2(201) 3(41)
I received the help I needed.				
4(4)	5(1)		1(221)	2(216) 3(22)

Advising Office Service Survey summary, 1999-2005:

Advising Office Service Survey summary, 12/2/05

1=Strongly Agree	2=Agree	3=Neutral	4=Disagree	5=Strongly Disagree
The advising staff assisted me in a reasonably timely manner.				
5(102)			1(3218)	2(1476) 3(613) 4(244)
The advisor made a reasonable effort to assist me.				
5(98)			1(3451)	2(1598) 3(418) 4(137)
It was easy to talk with the advisor.				
5(85)			1(3591)	2(1408) 3(522) 4(231)
The advisor was knowledgeable concerning School of Management's policies, procedures, and requirements.				
5(138)			1(3323)	2(1704) 3(524) 4(164)
I received the help I needed.				
5(76)			1(3410)	2(1642) 3(588) 4(137)

The survey summary has historically indicated a positive trend in satisfaction levels regarding the respondent's most recent advising experience. For four years the average score for each survey question as gathered by the latest

survey effort has consistently surpassed or equaled the average score for each survey question as presented in the cumulative survey summary. Unfortunately, the most recent survey result reversed the trend. Anecdotal evidence explains the dramatic reversal. Six-hundred and thirty-eight students visited the advising office during the week of the latest survey effort. More than 250 of these sought advice on the same day. One-hundred and nine came to the advising office within a half hour period. This is common during orientation sessions. However, no orientation session was scheduled that day. It was discovered that one of the University's international culture groups had scheduled a special event. Most of the group and their friends afterwards decided to visit the Advising Office and register for classes. Waiting time was much longer than usual. It was an unsatisfactory day for everyone.

	Cum. summary	latest
survey effort		
The advising staff assisted me in a reasonably timely manner. 2.3	1.67	
The advisor made a reasonable effort to assist me. 1.70	1.56	
It was easy to talk with the advisor. 1.56	1.59	
The advisor was knowledgeable concerning School of Management's policies, procedures, and requirements. 1.73	1.64	
I received the help I needed. 1.59	1.60	

Common practice during international orientation sessions is to assemble the new international students in classrooms as they arrive for advising. Faculty members and staff provide various group advising activities and refreshments are available. Students are taken to the Advising Office in smaller groups. Though the physical waiting time is not in reality reduced, it is not as noticeable due to the extra planned activities.

EBI Tabulated Exit and New Student Evaluations

The School of Management uses EBI Benchmarking Assessments to identify and address critical issues. The EBI Benchmarking Assessments provide three levels of analysis:

- Internal investigation and study allows individual analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the School of Management Programs and how well the SOM mission is being achieved.
- External contrast allows a comparison analysis with six self-selected participating institutions (Select Six)

- Longitudinal Analysis allows an assessment of the impact of change over time. The EBI Tabulated Survey reports provide up to five years of comparative information.

Part-time MBA Exit surveys

question 47: satisfaction with academic advising by non-faculty

using a rating scale where 1=strong dissatisfaction and 7=very satisfied

	2005	2004	2003
UTD mean	6.61	6.52	6.68
Select 6	5.13	4.81	4.8
Select 6	Georgia State Arizona State George Mason Michigan State UC-Irvine U Washington n=125	George Mason Michigan State Georgia State Arizona State Rutgers - Neward U Mass - Amherst n=111	George Mason Michigan State Arizona State Rutgers - Neward U Mass - Amherst n=81

The EBI Benchmarking Assessment analysis for graduating MBA students indicates a consistently high level of satisfaction with their general advising experience. A slight regression is noted for the 2004 results. The results for 2005 illustrate a marked rebound. The Select Six comparison for each year is encouraging.

The EBI Benchmarking Assessment for graduating undergraduate students indicates similar results.

question 37: satisfaction with advisor's helpfulness of recommendations

question 35: satisfaction with advisor's availability

question 36: satisfaction with advisor's knowledge of requirements

question 38: satisfaction with advisor's interest in students' progress

		2005	2004	2003	select 6 2005
UTD mean	factor	6.57	6.34	6.64	4.83
	q37	6.60	6.31	6.67	4.84
	q35	6.53	6.30	6.56	4.89
	q36	6.58	6.36	6.65	5.06
	q38	6.57	6.43	6.69	4.51
Select 6		U Illinois at Chicago Arizona State	Michigan State U Mass Amherst	Michigan State Texas A&M	

Georgia State U Denver U Colorado at Boulder U Maryland	Texas A&M Internat Arizona State	Internat Oklahoma State Arizona State U Mass Amherst
n=149	n=165	n=143

In house exit and new student surveys similar to EBI Tabulated surveys

Due to the costs involved utilizing the EBI Tabulated Assessments, their use is restricted to undergraduate and MBA exit surveys. In house surveys similar to EBI Assessments are used to gather information regarding students in the following categories:

- MA-IMS students, exit surveys
- MS-MAS and ITM students, exit surveys
- MS-AIM students, exit surveys
- MBA students, new student surveys
- MA-IMS students, new student surveys
- MS-AIM students, new student surveys
- MS-ITM students, new student surveys
- MS-MAS students, new student surveys
- Undergraduate students, new student surveys

University of Texas at Dallas
School of Management
In-House Survey Report on Advising

Sum of AVERAGE		ACAD YEAR					
QUESTION	PROGRAM SURVEYED	99F-00S	00F-01S	01F-02S	02F-03S	03F-04S	04F-05S
How satisfied with admissions advising?	New GR	3.34					
	New UG	3.94					
	New UG Accounting		4.27				
	New UG Business		4.06				
How satisfied with advising process?	New GR Accounting		4.38	4.63	4.55	4.45	
	New GR Business		4.47				
	New GR IMS			4.67	4.67	4.67	

	New GR MAS			4.35	4.58	4.54
	New GR MITM					4.44
	New UG Accounting			4.24	4.47	4.44
	New UG Business			4.29	4.45	4.33
Advising by faculty	Exit GR AIM	3.78	3.68	3.04	3.81	3.74
	Exit GR MAS			3.13	3.60	3.27
	Exit GR IMS			2.33	3.33	4.00
	Exit GR MBA		3.41			
	Exit GR MS/MA	3.39				
	Exit GR MITM					3.70
Advising by non-faculty	Exit GR AIM	4.53	4.72	3.96	4.70	4.53
	Exit GR MAS			4.05	4.55	4.59
	Exit GR IMS			4.00	5.00	5.00
	Exit GR MBA		4.68			
	Exit GR MS/MA	4.46				
	Exit GR MITM					4.50

*answer scale:1~5, 5 very satisfied, 1 very dissatisfied

*GR: Graduate UG: Undergraduate

There is no “Select Six” or external benchmarking opportunity available for this internally generated survey. The results are encouraging. Student satisfaction results for faculty and non-faculty advising have been consistently favorable.

Undergraduate Student Exit Interviews

Dr. Chaffin, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education coordinates exit interview opportunities for graduating undergraduate students. Discussions were open ended and without a specified time limit. Topics covered by the interviews include:

- Advising
- Career Center
- What was your favorite class and why was it memorable?
- What courses were most beneficial?
- What courses were least beneficial?
- Are there things that need to be changed about the curriculums?
- What are the student's plans after graduation?
- Opportunity for any other comments or suggestions

According to Dr. Chaffin summary for the Fall 2005 semester; 47% of the students that responded to the question about the Advising Office had a very positive experience; 39% had a positive experience; 9% reported a neutral experience; 3% reported a negative experience and 2% reported a very negative experience. It is important to note at this time that we are as concerned about the 2% with a very negative experience as we are pleased with the 47% reporting a very positive experience. The Advising Office staff has already met twice to specifically address the issues raised by the students reporting a

negative experience since Dr. Chaffin issued the report. More meetings are planned. Results from the Summer 2005 exit interviews indicated similar responses.

The major issues centered on the following themes:

- Students would prefer to always see the same advisor.
 - Students “sign in” when they enter the Advising Office. The sign in sheet includes a space for requesting a preferred advisor.
- Several students felt we should see students by appointment only.
 - Students that demonstrate special needs (such as restrictive work schedules) are offered appointments during off-peak periods at the advisors discretion. The SOM Advising Office receives regular visits from the students of other Schools within UTD who indicate that they were told an appointment was not available for a week, two weeks, or even a month. We help everyone to the best of our ability that comes to the Advising Office. An open door policy seems to offer the most equitable opportunities for service to students. We address potentially long waiting times during registration periods by:
 - maintaining an upbeat office personality,
 - providing scheduling materials and schedule printouts in the waiting areas,
 - providing computer terminals in the waiting area,
 - providing a pre-registration triage service in the waiting area.
- Consistency.
 - Both legitimate and non-legitimate issues surface regarding consistency of information offered in the Advising Office. A few students claim to have received different information from different advisors. We take this issue very seriously.
 - All visits are noted and summarized in the Advising Web and in the students file that is maintained in the Advising Office.
 - Copies of e-mails are kept in the student’s file in the Advising Office.
 - The Advising Office attempts to remain aware of all changes to curriculum and policy by monitoring catalog changes and web site revisions, and by maintaining beneficial relations with all faculty, staff, and committees.
 - All degree and graduation audits are verified by multiple personnel.
 - Changes to transfer credit awarded by the University to undergraduate students occur. The Advising Offices are not notified. It may be a year or more, depending upon how quickly students accumulate credit hours, before it is noticed during a scheduled maintenance audit by the Advising Office.

- Errors are made by advisors. It is Advising Office policy that regardless of the origin of a student issue, we will do everything possible to “make it right” for the student. Advisors realize that no one will be disciplined for making a mistake. Disciplinary action will only occur if the error is continually repeated or if the advisor attempts to disregard or not accept ownership of an issue. Once a mistake happens or an inconsistency is noted, an advisor must accept responsibility and work as quickly and creatively as possible to resolve it, regardless of the origin of the issue.

Conclusion

Student surveys, exit interviews, and conversations with faculty, administrators, and professional academic advisors all show the existence of concerns having to do with the delivery of academic advising services. The surveys and exit interviews provide a generally positive view of student satisfaction with the School of Management Advising Office. The greatest value of the survey results, however, is in the ability to identify areas of concern for use in planning. The Advising Office will continue in its attempts to personalize the services offered despite the size of the student population. We will continue in the efforts to improve consistency and convenience.

The dominant ambition of the School of Management Advising Office is to deliver a coherent and accountable academic advising system able to assure effective, timely, and accurate academic advising services to all students while remaining a positive influence on the future expansion of the School and University. There is a large portion of pride within the SOM Advising staff members who feel they provide a service unsurpassed on campus. Accompanying such zeal however is always more responsibility. As we strive to accomplish more for the students, it is only natural that the students expect even more. It is a challenge that the SOM Advising Office will continue to accept.