

ACADEMIC ADVISING: PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS IN A LEBANESE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

A lot of researchers have stressed the impact of academic advising on students' retention, academic success, and satisfaction (Soria, 2012; Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon & Hawthorne, 2013; Hsu & Bailey, 2011; Nasser, Khoury, Abouchdid, 2008 among others). However, several students at a Lebanese private university do not seem to value academic advising as they do not usually seek it. Therefore, this study investigates students' perceptions of their academic advising. More specifically, the researcher examines (1) students' awareness of the process of academic advising, as well as the role of an academic advisor, (2) their attitudes towards the academic advising they receive at the university, and (3) the impact of gender, major, and academic status on their attitudes. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researcher surveys a purposively selected sample of 185 students of different majors, gender, and academic statuses and complements the survey with 3 focus groups. Triangulation of methods is used to ensure validity of the findings. Major findings reveal that a lot of the participants seem to perceive academic advising negatively as they had unsatisfactory experiences with their academic advising and advisors. Gender, major, and status did not impact on the participants' attitudes. They seem to be aware of the important role the advising process and the academic advisor could have on their university life. However, their expectations of academic advising did not match with what they received from their advisors. The researcher suggests several changes that are likely to ensure effective academic advising at the university.

Keywords: Academic advising, Higher education, Students' perceptions, Students' attitudes, satisfaction, Student awareness, University students, Lebanon