Student and Alumni Stories: Advisor Qualities & Practices that Increase Student Success

Andrews University Faculty Celebration of Research
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The odds of being engaged at work are:

- **2.6x** Higher if … [College] prepared me well for life outside of college.
- **2.4x** Higher if … [College] passionate about the long-term success of its students.
- **2.2x** Higher if … I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams.
- **2.0x** Higher if … I had at least one professor at [College] who made me excited about learning.
- **1.9x** Higher if … My professors at [College] cared about me as a person.
- **2.3x** Higher if … graduates experience all three.

The odds of being emotionally attached to alma mater are:

- **8.7x** Higher if … [College] prepared me well for life outside of college.
- **8.1x** Higher if … [College] passionate about the long-term success of its students.

[2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report]
Continuous Improvement

- Data tracking at-risk students
  - Mid-term to final grade analysis
  - Academic probation status
  - Student status changes
  - Success advising transitions
  - Distance student yield & retention
  - Disability percentages
  - Annual UG advisor evaluations
New Research Questions

- How might alumni connect advising with their well-being and work engagement years later?
- What advising or mentoring aspects are memorable to alumni?
- How do student and alum perceptions of advisors compare, using the Servant Leadership model?
- What aspects of the Adventist philosophy of education are reflected in student and alum comments?
2016 Advising Research

UG Advisor Evaluation
- 20 scaled items, 5 demographics
- 2 reflection items
- All UG enrollees emails Feb 2016
- 604 usable responses
- 58% advisor award nominations
- 96% bachelors level

Alumni Advisor Survey
- 15 scaled items, 9 demographics
- 2 advisor reflection items
- 6090 alumni emailed May 2016
- 657 usable responses
- 75% with comments
- 61% undergrad, 35% grad
- 50% (345) volunteered to mentor!
Servant Leadership Questionnaire

- Altruistic Calling
- Emotional Healing / Holistic Support
- Organizational Stewardship
- Persuasive Mapping
- Wisdom
Altruistic Calling

- AC did all to serve me
- AC considered abilities
- AC respected my opinion

UNDERGRAD, A&SA
- 96%
- 69%
- 71%

GRAD, A&SA
- 74%
- 73%
- 72%
Student Satisfaction with Advisor

- Underprepared
- Accommodations
- Academic Probation
- Online Only
- All Students

2015 vs 2016
Altruistic Calling

UG Advisor Evaluation

- Goes far beyond what I would expect ... helping me figure out everything. (462)
- Truly seems to care about my progress and aspirations. (465)
- Door is nearly always open... even at rather hectic times. (135)
- He is very patient with my many fluctuating ideas and goals. He is one who you want to listen to when he speaks.

Alumni Advisor Survey

- Seeing how they were very caring to us students encouraged me to help others too. Also, they were involved in many projects where they were not going to profit at all and I felt that I could do the same too. (340)
- Never did she act as if I was an interruption... So many years later her example still pulls up from my memory as a reminder of the Adventist professional I want to be. (374)
Holistic Support

- HS friendly, caring interest
- HS respected confidentiality
- HS supported my decisions

83% 81% 55%
86% 83% 62%

UNDERGRAD, A&SA
GRAD, A&SA
Holistic Support

UG Advisor Evaluation

- Very compassionate… helped me to make the best decision in my life to stay… (105)
- Easy to talk to, great for advice. Influenced my SM decision...
- Like a mom, a friend who cares me a lot. [international] (515)
- Before and after every appointment we pray. She is … not afraid to ask the Lord for guidance… (447)

Alumni Advisor Survey

- The faculty and the staff at Andrews University did little or nothing to assist me with my academic endeavors and my career ambitions. I'm still suffering to this day. (164)
- Demonstrated genuine concern for students with encouragement to live up to a potential they did not know they had. (679)
Organizational Stewardship

- OS believed AU mission
- OS motivated vocation
- OS connected me to resources
Percent YES in UG 2016 Advisor Evaluations

- My advisor has informed me about help centers on campus.
- I make appointments with my advisor.
- I understand the requirements for my degree.

![Bar chart showing percentages for different categories: Underprepared: 100%, 95%, Accommodations: 77%, 84%, 89%, 93%, Academic Probation: 79%, 79%, 89%, Online Only: 91%, 97%, All Students: 79%, 88%.]
Organizational Stewardship

UG Advisor Evaluation
- He really helped me understand how college works and what to do to get all my required classes finished. (387)
- She's willing to go further to … find the answer. (274)
- Could be more knowledgeable about the general education courses I need. Though he is well versed in the [major] requirements. (114)

Alumni Advisor Survey
- She made it clear from day one of my freshman year that her main concern was that nothing would fall through the cracks, in terms of my graduating at the expected time. (190)
- She knew each of the programs and what courses I needed to take to finish my degree in the 4.5 years. (141)
Persuasive Mapping

- PM helped me value AU ed: 71% (UNDERGRAD, A&SA), 72% (GRAD, A&SA)
- PM motivated my best: 59% (UNDERGRAD, A&SA), 74% (GRAD, A&SA)
- PM helped clarify my goals: 61% (GRAD, A&SA)
Persuasive Mapping

UG Advisor Evaluation

- Incredibly knowledgeable in my field & inspires interest & drive in me. (421)
- She took her time to list everything for each semester and school year. (579) I feel comfortable now. (98)
- Nearly every time I stop by his office, he lets me know about a new thing to look into and will regularly email things... [including] career leads. (135)

Alumni Advisor Survey

- He was important to my career. I got a PhD because of him. (109)
- This advisor influenced my knowledge of the profession and allowed me to assist him in developing one of his classes. He also listened to my excitement about a research project ... and offered good guidance. (168)
- When I had doubts about continuing grad school, his diligence in giving me time and thoughtful conversation motivated me to keep going. His faith and personal views on ethics were influential at times of my own doubts. (251)
Wisdom

- WI answered my questions
- WI knew degree req +
- WI available to discuss

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<tr>
<th>UNDERGRAD, A&amp;SA</th>
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Wisdom

UG Advisor Evaluation

- He leads me in the direction that is best for me, still taking my interest into consideration.
- He gets distracted and doesn’t listen to what I ask. (327)
- He went above and beyond in working with me to complete my program [on] a 4-year time table for graduation. (117)
- Gives advice on everyday life if asked. He’s full of God-given wisdom and I’m thankful. (391)

Alumni Advisor Survey

- [Faculty advisors] commit critical errors that cause the student both time and monitory loss and leave AU with disgruntled student sponsors, students, and alumni. (102)
- She had a way of helping me see ... the person I would be a little while later. She was a very dedicated Adventist Christian who made it obvious that being a servant to God was her first calling. (374)
Persistence to Graduation Initiatives

1. 3rd semester transition from Success Advising to major advisor to retain underprepared students (74% to 91%, 2014-2016)
2. Probation status appointments during the summer help students register earlier
3. Students with disability accommodation files are reminded to request accommodations early in the semester
4. Proactive communication with distance students encourages completion and next registration
5. Low mid-term grade follow-up has raised passing semester grades
6. Students who marched with credits to complete are contacted and encouraged to finish
7. Advisor training to increase faculty advisor preparedness
So What?

“Heisserer and Parette (2002) observe that ‘the only variable that has a direct effect on student persistence is the quality of a relationship with a significant member of the college community’ (p. 72).

Thus the advisor is often the person best suited to form a significant relationship with the student. At-risk students, in particular, may benefit greatly from the intrusive approach as they may not be aware of how to move forward when unexpected situations arise.”

Intrusive Advising, J Varney 2007 NACADA article
Application

Next Steps

- Work from strengths
- Pick one area to improve now
- Training needs
- Engage alums ready to mentor!

Servant Leadership Model

- Altruistic Calling
- Holistic Support
- Organizational Stewardship
- Persuasive Mapping
- Wisdom
Faculty Advising Action Steps

- Track data to more proactively retain these students
- Train in proactive & appreciative advising strategies
- Cross-train to be able to answer 75%+ of questions about any aspect of student’s experience at AU
- Know policies and procedures re admission, registration, financial clearance, support services, student life
- Advise holistically – undergrad degrees are 50% general education so know and positively incorporate in student’s value of AU education
Globally Engaged Advising

- Globally engaged advisors take the time to research the student’s prior learning to be sure credit is recognized to minimize waste of time and money on classes.

- International students appreciate efforts to creatively fit in courses through summers and vacations to finish in less time.

- Understand domestic and international students’ financial situation to creatively help them minimize strangling loans.

- Learn about credit for prior learning policy and processes to support more students staying at Andrews to complete a degree.