Parents of First Year Students: Expectations of Academic Advising

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Who are we?

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Director of Advising
College of Social & Behavioral Sciences
- Oversees 24 advisors, 36 majors, and over 7,000 undergraduates
- Leads Transfer and First Year Orientations
- Coordinates all student-centered initiatives

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Student Success and Retention Specialist
College of Social & Behavioral Sciences
- Tracks student success in the College
- Analyzes student success data
- Assesses outcomes of various interventions
- Instructs Academic Eligibility intervention for the College

The University of Arizona sits on the original homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded this Land since time immemorial.
Participants will...

- Review past work about parents and advising
- Learn about data from a study we conducted on first year students’ parents’ expectations for advising
- Explore how best to work with parents with an activity and discussion
What words come to mind when you think about parents in academic advising?
In a separate study, we asked 54 advisors what comes to their minds when thinking about the parents of our students

- Helicopter (10 times)
- Concerned (16 times)
- Caring (6 times)

"Helicopter. Pushy. Intense."

"Caring and concerned. Want the best for their children."
Why is it important to understand parental involvement? Theoretical Background

- Developmental Theory – important part of development in adolescence is individuating from parents and creating own identity.

- Attachment Theory – healthy attachment with trusted caregiver. Parent as a secure base.
Increases in Parental Involvement (Wartman & Savage, 2008)

- Technology – always "reachable"
- Cost of college – decreasing investment from federal/states and increasing loans
- Changes in parenting – expectations of parenting have increased
- Demographics- more students from high SES families with college degrees
Research on Parents and Advising

- **Students’ Views** (Ewing-Cooper & Merrifield, 2016)
  - 35.1% reported talking to their parents about their education once a week
  - 6.2% reported their parent had contacted their academic advisor
    - 68% of these students reported the contact was helpful
  - 9% reported their parent had contacted university administration
    - 79% reported it as helpful
  - 90.3% reported satisfied with their parent(s)’ involvement
    - Other studies found students are happy with involvement (e.g., Higher Education Research Institute, 2008)
Research on Parents and Advising

**Advisors’ Views** (Ewing-Cooper & Merrifield, 2018)

- Most reported interacting with parents once a week (32%), once a month (23%), or twice a month (23%)
- Most interactions helpful or very helpful (57%)
- Most interactions very positive or positive (68%); negative 11.32%
- 53% indicated parental involvement has increased since they started advising (needed at least three years of advising experience)
- 47% reported parents should be involved as much as they are; 43% reported parents should be involved less
The Current Study - Our Survey

- 330 parents at First Year Orientation
  - Parent defined as biological, step, adopted, or legal guardian
- 87.5% belonged to Generation X
- 81.2% identified as female
- 86.9% had a bachelor’s degree or higher
- 25.5% were launching first child to college
- Average 2.5 children
What do you think are the responsibilities of your student's academic advisor at the University of Arizona? (check all that apply)
What is the most important thing your student’s academic advisor can do for them?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep him on track with classes for graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage them to use all the great resources at the university to help them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achieve their goals. We're paying for them!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide them to graduate in 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to him regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be supportive, encouraging and help with career exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a &quot;one stop shop&quot; for student's academic needs to minimize being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bounced from office to office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be personable, relatable, caring. Engage and inspire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice him! Feel as if he has a relationship with someone who cares about and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is invested in his academic experience at UA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you know what the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is?

Yes: 81.9%
No: 19.1%
About how often should your student visit their academic advisor?

- Once a week: 4.2%
- Once a month: 47.6%
- Once a semester: 47.9%
- Once a year: 0.3%
- Once during college career: 0.3%
How often do you plan to communicate with your student about their education?

![Bar chart showing communication frequency]

- **Daily**: 6.7%
- **Weekly**: 70.5%
- **Monthly**: 20.1%
- **Once a semester**: 2.4%
- **Once a year**: 0.3%
- **Never**: 0.3%
In which ways do you plan on being involved in your student's education? (check all that apply)

- Financial Support: 97.6%
- Emotional Factor: 98.8%
- Guidance with internships/careers: 64.2%
- Help choosing major: 37.6%
- Help choosing classes: 40%
- Help with social activities: 19.7%
What did we learn?

- Parents plan to be involved, mostly emotionally and financially, but sometimes more.
- Some education around advisor roles seems necessary.
- Parents want the same thing as advisors, so let’s work together to support students.
Activity

- What do you want parents to know?
- Get into groups of 3-4 and create a slide, elevator pitch, or entry in an electronic newsletter, informing parents about the role of academic advisors.
- How could you leverage parent engagement for the benefit of your students?
Best Practices

- Involve the student and parent

- Make parents allies. Parents can help with student engagement and retention

- Attachment theory and individuation – encourage parents to think about healthy ways to encourage students' growing independence

- Don't hide behind FERPA
References


Thank you! Questions?

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