

Academic Advising process Roles in supporting student's success

Dr. Salah Al-Khafaji

General Academic Advisor Head of postgraduate department
Associate Prof, IST Department Sur University College Oman

Abstract

The Academic Advising program is a continued support system that provides supervision to the students for registering, adding and dropping of their selection of courses, according to their chosen study plan. It also shows them how to study effectively and efficiently to gain the academic achievements they desire. By following the Academic Advisors supervision and regulations of this program, they will have a much better opportunity to fulfill their academic achievements to the highest standards possible. Finally, the "Academic Advising guide lines" provided by the Advisors are intended to assist the students in improving their CGPA, and in the graduation process. This is in accordance to the study plan set to be within the mutually accepted period of time to complete the accredited programs, courses and curriculum needed for graduation to enable future employment opportunities. The supporting of the students to acquire the knowledge and skill set required for the students graduation is the "main" goal of the Academic Advising Program and its advisors.

The academic advising process provide guidance to students so that they may achieve their academic objectives, and through a careful monitoring of their degree plans, ensure that they conform to the various rules and regulations and assist them to overcome any obstacles that might impede the successful completion of their degree. In order to progress smoothly through their degree plans, students need to have accurate information about subject requirements and how to fulfill them.

Key words: Academic Advising; Academic Advisor; Student under Academic Probation; CGPA

1. Introduction:

HEPs are committed to provide valuable academic advising to their students. This will provide a good educational experience to the students regarding enrollment, course of study and modes. Many Higher Education Institutions increasingly focused on improving the academic advising process, retention and low CGPA of their students through a variety of programs and services. A number of institutions have developed offices, programs, or departments specifically designed to improve retention rates through orientations or student and academic support services.

Academic advising is considered to be an integral part of the roles and responsibilities of the faculty members, apart from their regular teaching. The HEPs consider the academic advising as one of the major administrative responsibility of the faculty members. The academic advising guides the students to achieve their career goals smoothly in stipulated duration. In educational processes, the academic advising provides the opportunities to the faculty and the student to have face – to – face interaction to get the clear ideas about the curriculum and the study plan to follow.

This paper is dedicated to explain how the Academic Advising Program is administered with the required academic guidance, support and the Academic Observation of its Advisors. This documents intent is also to clarify the content and responsibility of the Academic Advising Program and that of the Advisor. As well the student who is under observation, the implementation of the regulations and the process plans which will help support and enable the students to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for graduation according to the study plan and within the prescribed time frame.

"Academic advising is a dynamic process for obtaining the critical information students need to make the most important decisions about college; decisions affecting academic majors, career goals, and elective

courses, secondary fields of study, and co-curricular activities and life planning. Advising is an integral part of teaching; it is the opportunity to encourage students to engage in a systematic, strategic planning process and to take responsibility for their personal and professional development. The strength of academic advising lies in the commitment of faculty and professional advisors to serve as mentors, to be accessible, and to be a source of information and encouragement in the advising process. Academic intellectual and developmental needs of the students are considered". (1)

"The students should approach their academic advisors for any academic-related assistance during their study duration. The students are advised to contact their respective academic advisors during the registration period for proper academic advising. The cordial relationship between the student and the academic advisor plays a vital role in this academic advising process". (3)

Academic advising program is recommended for all students especially for the students that have acquired a low CGPA average of less than 2.0 or have studied for more than the prescribed time frame to meet their requirements in the General Foundation Program and did not wish to enroll in academic studies. By supporting the students to work within the Academic Advising Program and being kept under Academic Observation with an Academic Advisor, this format will increase the student's ability to enhance their CGPA average. By following an academically strategic plan provided by the Advisor, this will confidently increase the students CGPA in the following semesters. Provided that the student is willing to be accountable and study while following the set academic plan, as directed by the Academic Advisor. (2)

1.1 Statement of the problem:

Most of the students at higher education institution are facing a lot of problems in understanding their study plans, selecting the proper course to study, consider the ways to improve their GPA, and the rules of probation status. These problems can be summarized as follow:

1. Improper selection of courses, and untimely completion of the program.
2. Students unfamiliar with important institution policies or procedures.
3. Low levels of participation in extra-curricular activities.
4. Low intention to develop the kind of study skills and time management skills necessary for their success.
5. Lack the motivation necessary for success in his/her courses.
6. Having difficulty with particular courses; continually retaking and failing the same course can obviously lower his/her overall GPA.
7. Not achieving the right balance between College responsibilities and work and/or family responsibilities.
8. Lack of knowledge about the importance of the GPA and the way to calculate it.

1.2 Purpose of the study

1. To clarify the academic advising process.
2. To help, support and enable the students obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their degree in a timely manner according to their study plan.
3. To assist low CGPA students to select proper courses.
4. To identify the cause of the student's low CGPA.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Do the students understand their study plans?
2. Do the students understand the impact of the academic advising on their academic life success?
3. Can the students utilize the academic advising process with its full potentials?
4. Do the academic advising eased the student's registration process
5. Do the students feel that their CGPA has significantly increased due to proper academic advising provided by the institution?
6. Do the students aware of low CGPA?

1.4 Objectives and Hypotheses

Obj 1: To identify the impacts of the academic advising in a HEI

Obj 2: To know the student academic performance level and classification

Obj 3: To identify the requirement for improving low GPA students

2. Literature Review

Adena et al (2013) conducted a study on evaluating the impact of student advising on their and needs. They conducted study through the major factors such as advisor accountability, empowerment related to advisors and students' responsibility, self-efficacy, study skills and perceived supports related to students. Their studies showed that all the factors have significant impact on academic success of the students.

Erlich and Russ-Eft (2013) identified that there was a positive correlation between academic advising and the student's academic planning. They identified that the student's academic planning processes were significantly increased high based on the proper academic advising by the advisor. Kohle Paul and Fitzpatrick (2015) studied and identified that student's retention and satisfaction increases positively by the appropriate academic advising system.

Gudep V.K. (2007) studied the relationship between the undergraduate student's attitude and the academic advising system on UAE undergraduate students. He identified that the technological changes are making significant impacts on the academic advising. The academic advising has become a part of academic role for the faculties. The proper academic advising increases the student satisfaction.

Barun and Zolfagharian (2016) studied the relationship between the students' participation and the academic advising processes. Their study identified that the students' attribution of failures varies based on the academic advising. The propensity of their participation depends on the advisor. The student participation significantly increases the satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

For this research purpose, both qualitative and quantitative analyzes were conducted. For qualitative analysis, different literatures related to academic advising process and producers were studied intensively. The research outputs were analyzed as considering the impact of academic advising process on the students' academic life at Sur University College. Various secondary data available in the internet were analyzed thoroughly.

3.1. *Primary Data Collection:*

A questionnaire was prepared with 15 closed ended questions and 3 open ended questions which cover basically the requirements of the research. The questionnaire was distributed to 370 students of Sur University College, 150 students at bachelor level and 200 at diploma level fully respond, and 20 papers was ignored for inconsistency. Also various student were observed during the registration period of 2nd semester 2016-2017. The data collected were analyzed with respect to various requirement perspectives. The students were clarified that the study is only for research purposes and no one was compelled to participate in the study to maintain academic integrity

3.2. *Secondary Data Collection:*

Various secondary data available in the SUC general academic advisor annual reports for AY 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017, the SUC quality assurance reports, and the internet, were analyzed thoroughly.

3.3. *Demographic Analysis*

The student's profiles were analysed for the demographic analysis. Out of 350 students, 130 students were male and 220 students were female. 150 students were studying bachelors and 200 students were studying diploma.

Table 1 shows the age profile of the students.

Age Class	No of Students	% to Total
18 to 22	231	66%
23 – 30	105	30%
Above 30	14	4%
Total	350	

Figure 1 shows their place where they originally live in

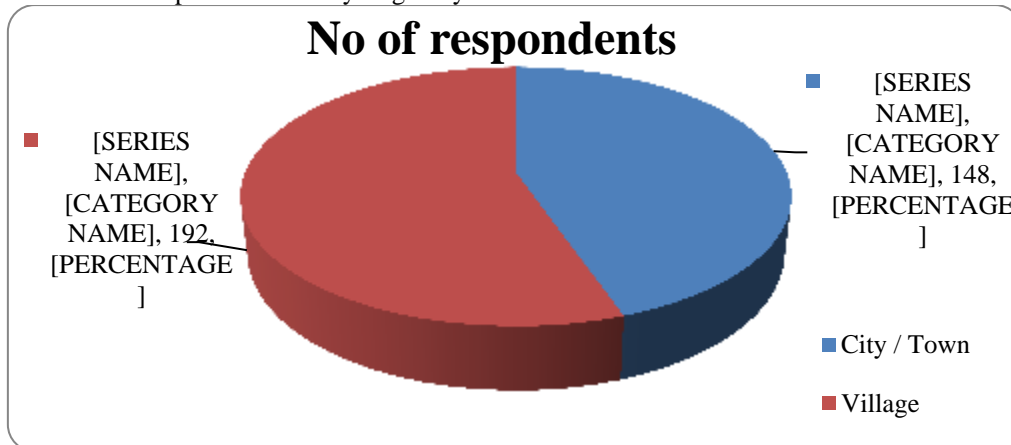


Fig 2: Mode of Study

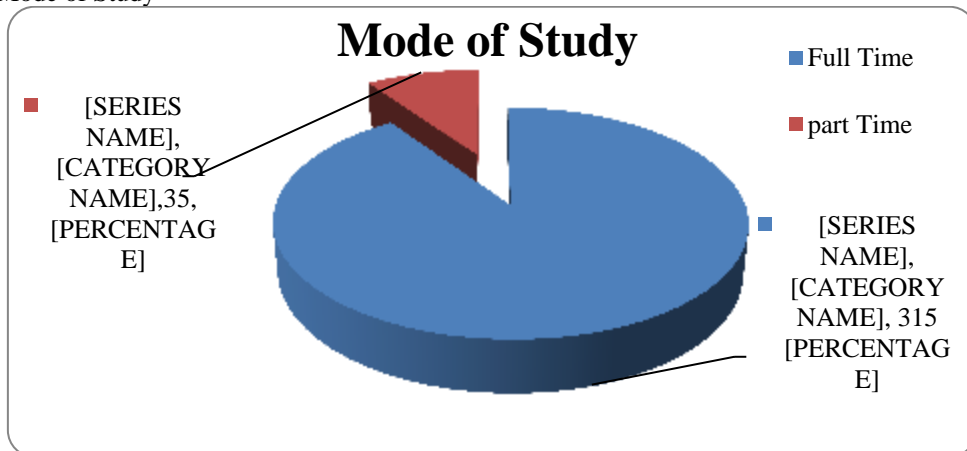


Table 2: shows the respondents specialization analysis.

Specialization	Diploma		Bachelor	
	Morning	Evening	Morning	Evening
Accounting	31	2	12	2
Finance & Banking	12	-	7	-
Management & Marketing	60	10	44	6
Information Technology	50	6	41	4
Information Systems	28	1	21	1
Mechanical Engineering	-	-	5	3
Architectural Engineering	-	-	4	-
Total	181	19	134	16

3.2. Analysis and Interpretation: For the analysis purposes, the students' answers were assessed in the survey with 1 mark for each criterion. (5) Strongly agree, (4) somewhat agree, (3) no comment, (2) somewhat disagree, and (1) strongly disagree.

Following are the statistical results for the major criteria's:

➤ **Academic advising process utilization.**

Table 3: shows the marks obtained by the students in this regard.

Agreement	Diploma		Bachelor	
	Responses	%	Responses	%
Strongly Agree	30	15%	55	36.7%
Agree	40	20%	57	38.4%
No Comments	30	15%	14	9%
Disagree	66	33%	18	12%
Strongly Disagree	34	17%	6	3.9%
	200		150	

From the above table, it is evident that the bachelor level student could understand the impact of the academic advising on their success. It is clear that the bachelor students could utilize from the academic advising process clearly. But, the results show that the only 12% of the students somewhat disagree and 3.9% strongly disagree the utilization from the academic advising process.

While for the diploma level students, more than 50% of the diploma level students couldn't understand the impact of the academic advising on their academic life success, and could not utilized from the advising process. 15% of the diploma level students strongly agree, and 20% somewhat agreed on utilizing from the academic advising process clearly. But 33% somewhat disagree, and 17% strongly disagree about understand the impact of the academic advising on their success, and the utilization from the academic advising process. 15% give no comment about the same issues.

➤ **The academic advising eased the student's registration process.**

Table 4: shows the number of student's responses that the academic advising eased their registration process.

Agreement	Diploma		Bachelor	
	Responses	%	Responses	%
Strongly Agree	34	17%	99	66%
Agree	60	30%	32	21%
No Comments	6	3%	10	7%
Disagree	80	40%	5	3%
Strongly Disagree	20	10%	4	3%
	200		150	

➤ **Proper Academic advising significantly increased the CGPA.**

Table 5: shows that the students feel that their GPA has significantly increased due to proper academic advising provided by the college.

Agreement	Diploma		Bachelor	
	Responses	%	Responses	%
Strongly Agree	30	15%	116	77%
Agree	52	26%	17	11.5%
No Comments	10	5%	6	4%
Disagree	55	27.5%	6	4%
Strongly Disagree	53	26.5%	5	3.5%
	200		150	

- **The academic advising help the students in understanding their study plans correctly and could able to follow up.**

Table 6: shows the responses on the student's agreement whether the academic advising help them in understanding their study plans correctly and could able to follow up.

Agreement	Diploma		Bachelor	
	Responses	%	Responses	%
Strongly Agree	18	9%	53	35%
Agree	40	20%	87	58%
No Comments	22	11%	5	3.5%
Disagree	50	25%	3	2%
Strongly Disagree	70	35%	2	1.5%
	200		150	

4. Findings & Discussions

From the previous results it's obviously clear that the **bachelor students** are aware of the importance of the academic advising process in understanding the study plans, the rules of low GPAs probation.

The students feel that their CGPA has significantly increased due to proper academic advising provided by the institution and they can utilize the academic advising process with its full potentials but they need to have more workshops to better understand the importance of the advising process.

While many students in the **diploma level** especially those in the 1st AY are not familiar with the academic advising process importance, rules, and procedures.

For that it's important that the academic advisor take's the following actions:

- 1- Explain the importance of the academic advising process and its roles to the new students during the orientation week.
- 2- Frequently conduct workshops about the Academic advising process for both students and faculty members.
- 3- Display the study plans, and registration process flow charts for the students.
- 4- Recommend the students to take the necessary steps to improve their performance and to utilize their time at their universities or Colleges efficiently and effectively.
- 5- Stimulate the students to meet with their academic advisor to develop a personal Academic Action Plan. As part of this Plan.
- 6- Encourage The students to utilize the learning resources facilities to improve their academic performance
- 7- Propose a measured course of action to improve the academic goals for the students, including extracurricular (non-class) activities to enhance the student's study plan.
- 8- Coordinate with students to follow the correct study plan and proper course registration.
- 9- Coordinate with the faculty members who is teaching the courses in which the student is studying to check the student's progress.
- 10- Identify the students who have repeated a subject twice or thrice. These students can be given a special treatment by giving opportunity to them by way of submitting assignments and home works in place of practical and theoretical subjects.
- 11- Prohibit the students under academic probation from registering the courses online directly.
- 12- Prepare a schedule for meeting with the student once a month to ascertain if there is any progress in the student's improvement. This will be by checking the marks obtained in Tests/assignments/quizzes etc held during that month.

- 13- Set the necessary strategies for improving the low CGPA students such as:
- I. Explaining the importance of the CGPA and the way to calculate it.
 - II. More Quizzes, Assignments and Homework can be giving for low CGPA students that can help raise their GPA.
 - III. Using a variety of teaching and learning resources (iTools software, group-work, pair-work etc.).
 - IV. Giving mini projects to compensate for low GPA students.
 - V. Giving extra tutoring sessions if necessary.
 - VI. Review sessions before the mid and Final Exam.
 - VII. Increasing the student's interest level by making the students involve in verbal communication during classes.
 - VIII. Closely monitor student attendance.

References:

1. Crockett, D. S. (1985). Academic advising. In L. Noel, R. Levitz, D. Saluri & Associates, *Increasing student retention: Effective programs and practices for reducing the dropout rate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
2. SUC Academic advising handbook v3 2015-2016
3. Adena D. Young- Jones, Tracie D. Burt, Stephanie Dixon, Melissa J. Hawthorne, (2013) "Academic advising: does it really impact student success?", *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 21 Issue: 1, pp.7-19, <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684881311293034>
4. Erlich, R. J., & Russ-Eft, D. F. (2013). Assessing student learning in academic advising using social cognitive theory. *NACADA Journal*, 33(1), 16-33.
5. Kohle Paul, W., & Fitzpatrick, C. (2015). Advising as servant leadership: Investigating student satisfaction. *NACADA Journal*, 35(2), 28-35.
6. Gudep. V.K. (2007). Issues and Challenges in Academic Advising: A Multivariate Study of Students' Attitudes towards Academic Advising in UAE. *Contemporary Management Research*. 3(2).
7. Braun, J. & Zolfagharian, Student Participations in Academic Advising: Propensity, Behavior, Attribution and Satisfaction, *Research in Higher Education* (2016) 57: 968. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-016-9414-2>
8. White, E. R. Developing Mission, Goals and Objectives for the Advising Program. In Gordon, V. N., Habley, W. R. & Associates. (2000). *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.