

# **Academic Advising Assessment**

## **Summary of Student Perspectives**

**September 2020**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**TENNESSEE**  
KNOXVILLE



# About the Survey

This report summarizes the outcomes of the undergraduate academic advising assessment survey completed in May 2020 by the Postsecondary Education Research Center at the University of Tennessee. The survey was designed to gather student perceptions on their advising experiences, including access to advisors, quality of advising, and satisfaction. The Center for Career Development was also addressed.

The survey instrument aligned with methodology used in past assessments to allow for comparison over time. Trends are presented to evaluate the effectiveness of recent efforts to improve advising at UT, including advising 2020 and other initiatives.

It is important to note that the survey was deployed after UT transitioned to virtual learning as a result of COVID-19. Additional questions were included to gauge intentions to return and advising effectiveness in distanced environment.

---

## Areas of Focus

- Access to Advising
- Advising Experience
- Student Satisfaction
- Campus Partners/ Center for Career Development

# Context

## Background

Advising 2020, a multi-year initiative to improve the state of academic advising at the University of Tennessee, began in 2017.

The initiative established a new advising model that emphasized self-development, career exploration, academic planning, and experiential learning. The plan also supported an increase of professional advisors over three years to address previous imbalances in student-to-advisor ratios across colleges.

UT appointed a Vice Provost of Student Success in 2019 and re-organized to support a sustained commitment to student success.

2017  
**Advising 2020**  
Advising 2020 adopted  
New models of advising launched in colleges  
First year increase in professional advisors

2018 - 2019  
**Increase in Advisors**  
Two additional years of increase in advisors

2019  
**Student Success**  
Vice Provost for Student Success appointed  
New student success organizational model

Academic Advising Assessment

# Summary

## Access to Advising

- 95% of students were able to meet with advisors prior to registration, an improvement from 90% in 2018
- 66% of students made appointments online, an increase from 60% in 2018
- 75% met with advisors assigned by colleges, most met twice per year
- Email from advisors was most effective form of outreach

## Advising Experience

- 82% of students prepared for their advising visit in advance
- Academic planning remains the primary reason for advising
- Attention to academic progress and listening identified as strengths
- Integrated components of advising model (strengths-based, career exploration, experience learning) is an opportunity for improvement

## Campus Partner/ Center for Career Development

- One-stop, student success center, and center for career development are the top advising referral partners
- 58% used CCD; resume walk-in hours as highest use
- 72% agree that CCD services empower action on career goals
- Advisor referrals and emails were more effective outreach methods
- 49% of students aware of services

## Student Satisfaction

- 79% satisfied or very satisfied with access to advisors
- Students rating “very satisfied” increased from 42% in 2018 to 52% in 2020
- 81% rated advising experience as good or excellent
- Students rating “excellent” increased from 49% in 2019 to 62% in 2020



# COVID-19

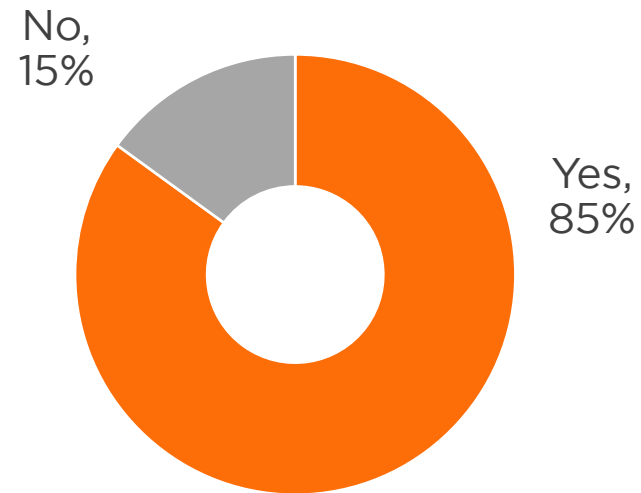
## Intention to Return

Due to COVID-19, questions were added to the survey related to retention and effectiveness of support as UT transitioned to a virtual environment.

85% of respondents stated an intention to return in fall 2020.

- Graduating students were 95% of respondents in indicating no plans to return.
- Only 1% plan to transfer to another university

## Do you plan to return to UT in fall 2020?



## If you do not plan to return, what is the reason?

I plan to graduate	95%
I plan to transfer to another university	1%
I plan to leave the university	< 1%

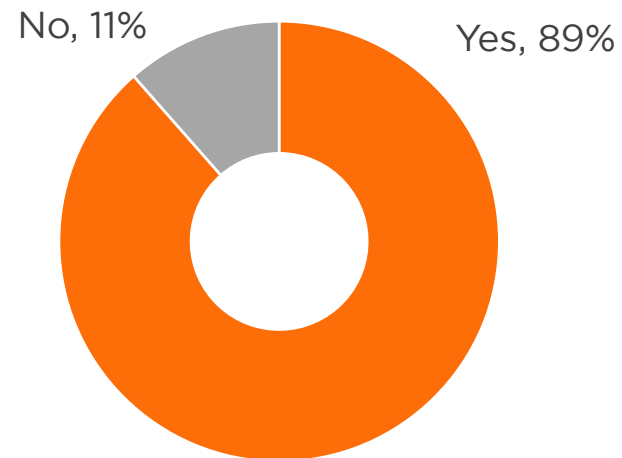
Note: Responses to “other” not shown

# COVID-19

## Academic Advising and Support

89% of students affirmed that they received academic advising and support needed during the transition to a virtual learning environment.

## Are you receiving the academic advising and support you need during this time?



# Academic Advising Assessment

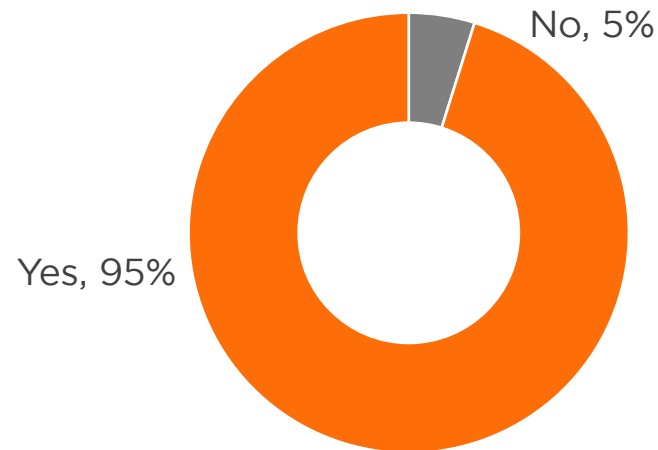
Access to Advising  
Advising Experience  
Student Satisfaction  
Campus Partners/ Center for Career Development  
Student Feedback

# Access to Advising

## Access

- **95%** of students were able to meet with an advisor prior to registration
- **66%** of students scheduled appointments online
- **12%** of students used walk-in options

## Were you able to see an advisor prior to registration?



## How did you get to see your advisor in person?

Online Scheduling	<b>66%</b>
Scheduled by Phone or E-mail	<b>10%</b>
Walk-in with No Appointment	<b>12%</b>
Advisor Contacted Me to Make Appointment	<b>2%</b>
Other	<b>1%</b>

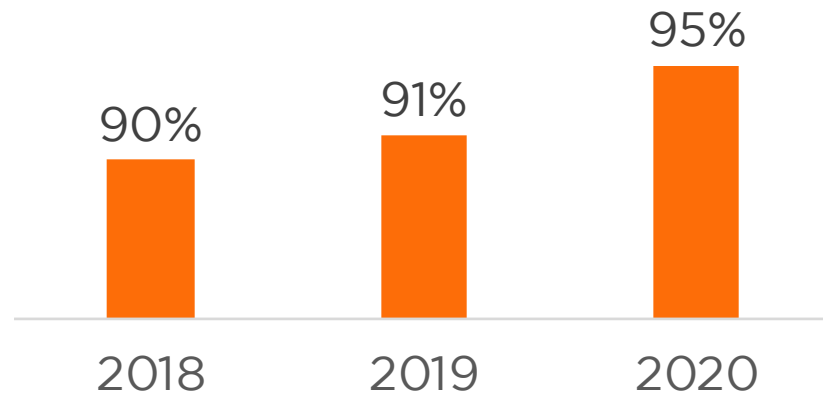


# Access to Advising

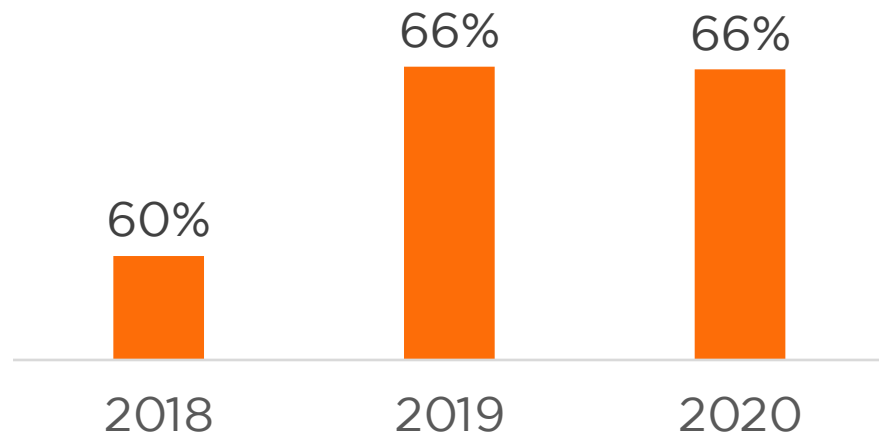
## Access - Trends

- Increase in students able to see an advisor prior to registration from 90% in 2018 to 95% in 2020
- Growth in use of online appointment scheduling from 2018 to 2020

## Percentage of students able to see an advisor prior to registration



## Percentage of students scheduling appointments online



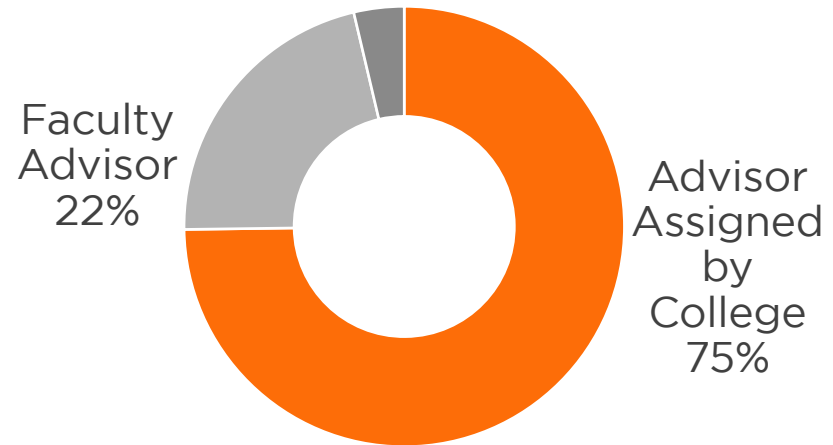
Academic Advising Assessment

# Access to Advising

## Advising Visit

- **75%** of respondents met with an advisor assigned by their college
- Most students met with their advisor **2x** per year

## Who did you see during your academic advising visit?



## How often do you meet with your advisor?

One Time Per Year	14%
Two Times Per Year	63%
Three Times Per Year	13%
Four Times Per Year	9%
I Have Not Met with an Advisor	1%

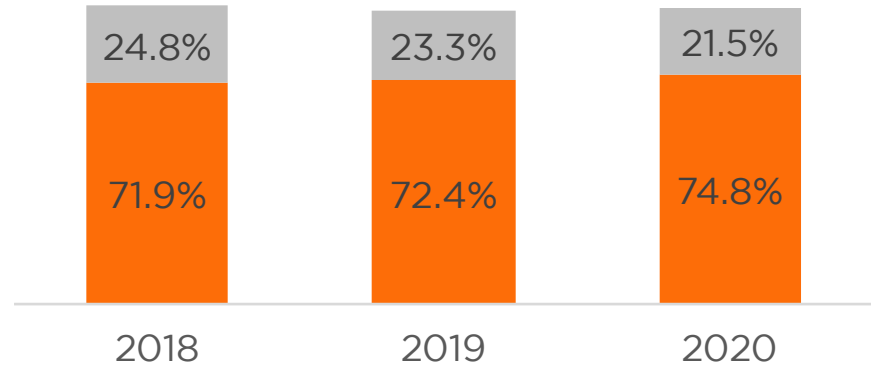
# Access to Advising

## Advising Visit - Trends

- Increase in meetings with advisor assigned by college (vs. faculty advisor)
- Consistent volume in students meeting with advisors twice per year

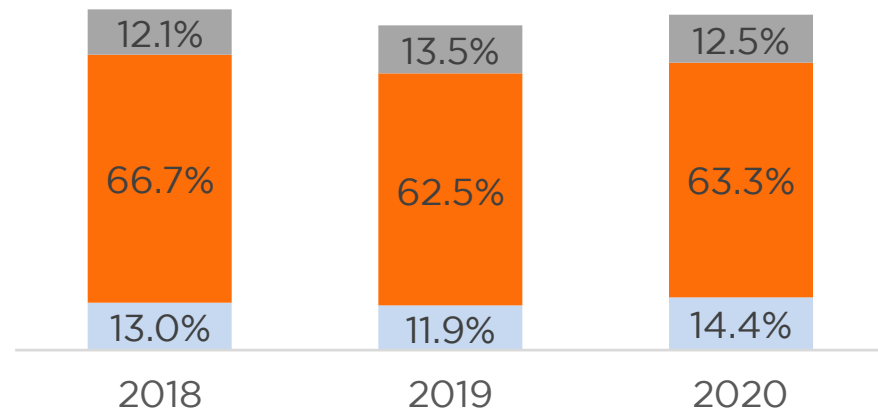
## Who did you see during your academic advising visit?

■ Advisor Assigned by College ■ Faculty Advisor



## How often do you meet with your advisor?

■ 1x ■ 2x ■ 3x



Academic Advising Assessment

# Access to Advising

## Outreach

- **73%** of student learned about advising through email, the most effective means of outreach
- Over 20% learned about advising from departments and through GradesFirst

## How did you learn about your need to schedule advising?

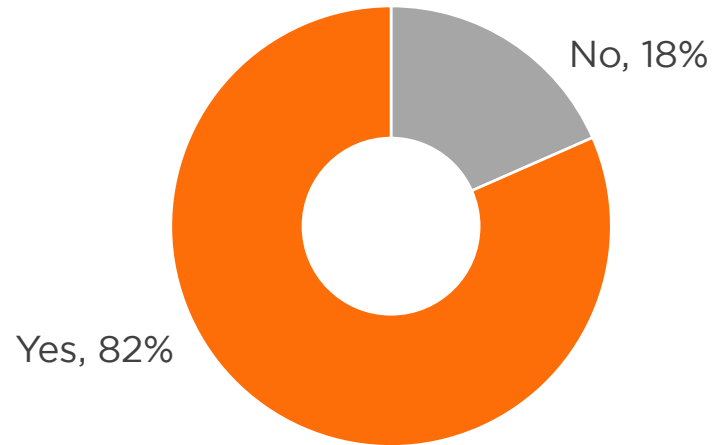
Advisor e-mail	<b>73%</b>
Email from my department	<b>26%</b>
GradesFirst e-mail	<b>25%</b>
Another UT student reminded me	<b>17%</b>
Message on myUT	<b>16%</b>
Learned at new student orientation	<b>11%</b>
Advisor reminded me in person	<b>10%</b>
Faculty member reminded me	<b>5%</b>

# Advising Experience

## Preparation

- **82%** of students prepared for their advising experience
- Making a list of questions and planning a tentative course schedule were most frequent methods of preparation
- Less than half of students reviewed DARS and other tracking reports

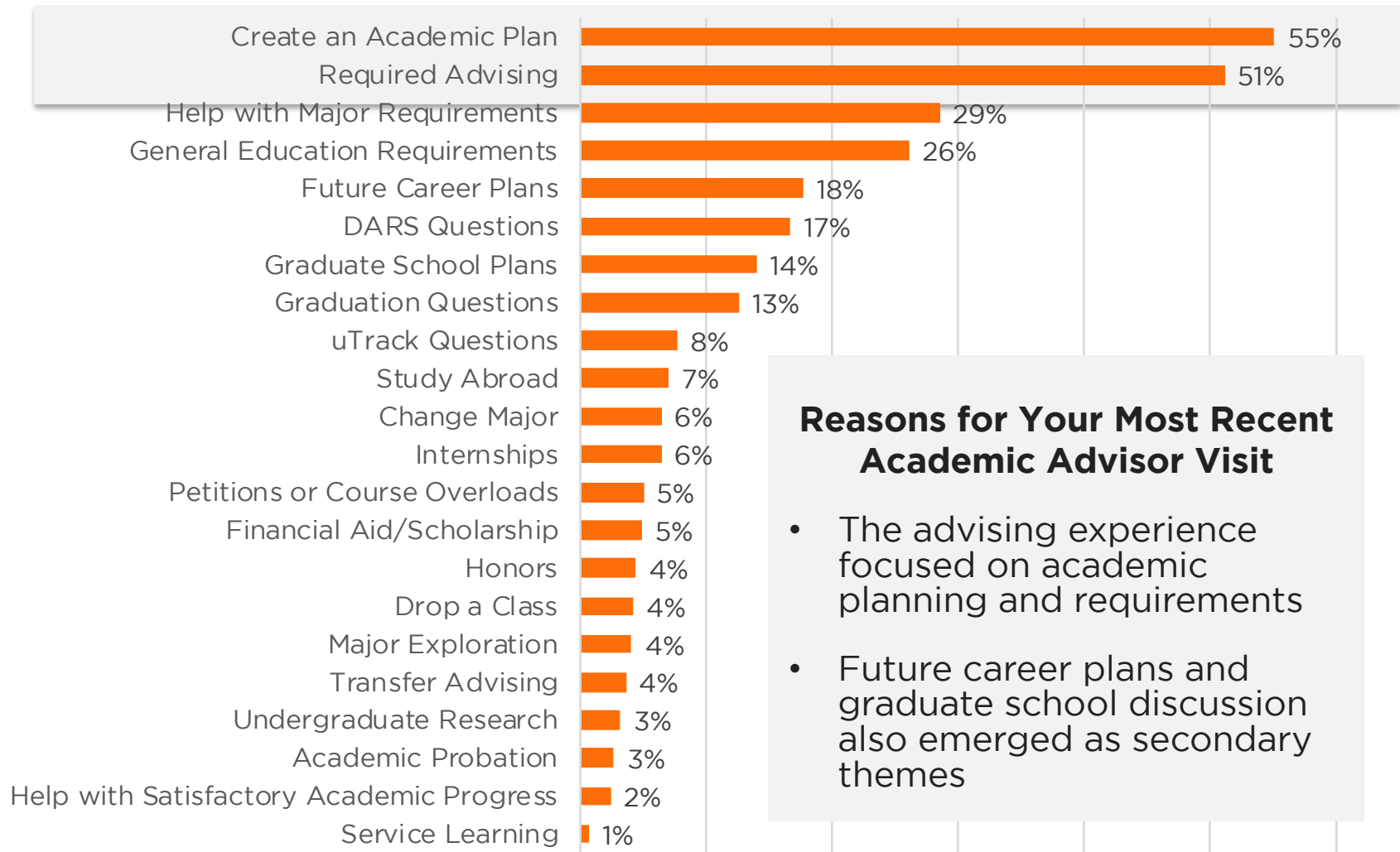
## Did you prepare for your advising visit?



## How did you prepare?

Made a list of questions	<b>68%</b>
Planned a tentative course schedule	<b>62%</b>
Reviewed DARS report	<b>47%</b>
Reviewed information in the catalog	<b>48%</b>
Reviewed major guides	<b>49%</b>
Reviewed notes and/or academic plan from last advising session	<b>27%</b>
Reviewed uTrack reports	<b>20%</b>

# Advising Experience



**Reasons for Your Most Recent Academic Advisor Visit**

- The advising experience focused on academic planning and requirements
- Future career plans and graduate school discussion also emerged as secondary themes

Academic Advising Assessment

# Advising Experience - Comparison

More students used their advising visit to create an an academic plan in 2020 than in 2018.

## Top Five Reasons for Advising Visit 2018

- 1 Required Advising (51%)
- 2 Creating an Academic Plan (43%)
- 3 General Education Requirements (30%)
- 4 Help with Major Requirements (28%)
- 5 Future Career Plans (18%)

## Top Five Reasons for Advising Visit 2020

- 1 Creating an Academic Plan (55%)
- 2 Required Advising (51%)
- 3 Help with Major Requirements (29%)
- 4 General Education Requirements (26%)
- 5 Future Career Plans (18%)

Academic Advising Assessment

# Advising Experience - Strengths

Students rated their recent advising visits as strongest on attention to academic progress and listening.

## Tell Us About Your Most Recent Advising Experience My Advisor...

	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Asked about academic progress	90%	6%
Listened effectively	87%	6%
Gave you accurate information about course requirements, prerequisites, and electives	86%	8%
Was responsive to you	86%	7%
Was accessible to you	86%	8%
Supported you in your academic development	86%	6%
Informed you about procedures for registration, adding/dropping courses, etc.	86%	7%

Academic Advising Assessment



# Advising Experience - Opportunities

Student feedback indicated that integrated components of the advising model may not have fully developed (personal strengths, career, experience learning).

## Tell Us About Your Most Recent Advising Experience My Advisor...

	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
Communicated effectively with you	84%	9%
Assisted you in developing a long-term educational plan	83%	10%
Helped you make important educational decisions (e.g., selecting elective courses)	82%	11%
Considered your personal strengths, interests, and values when advising	76%	13%
Facilitated opportunities to further discuss your career development	72%	16%
Helped you to connect with campus resources to support your academic progress	71%	13%
Challenged you in your academic development	69%	12%
Facilitated opportunities for your development through experience learning	68%	16%

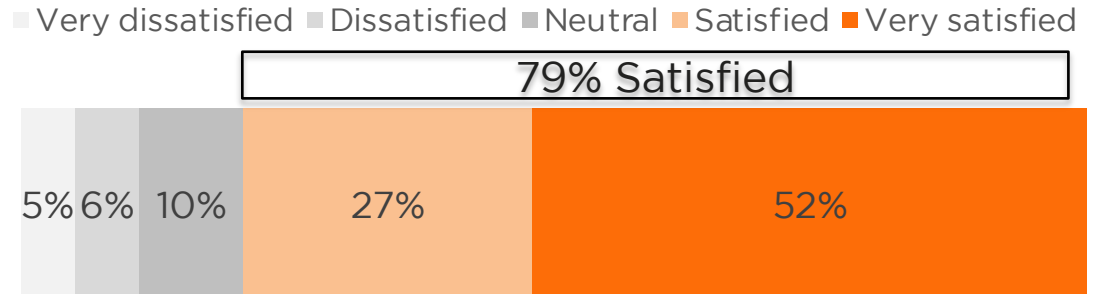
Academic Advising Assessment

# Student Satisfaction

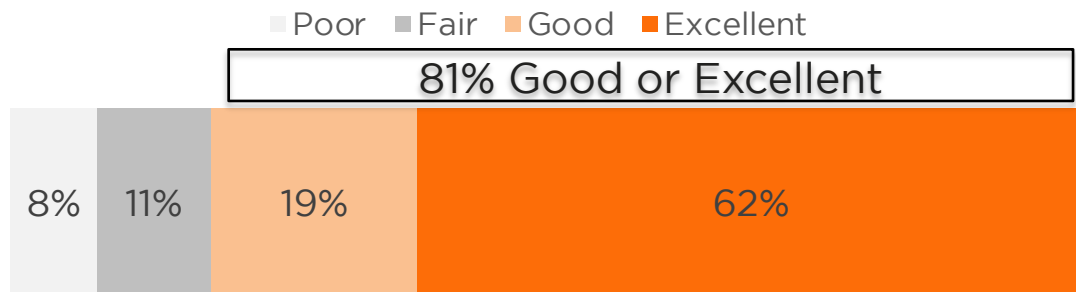
## Satisfaction

- Strong overall student satisfaction levels
- **79%** of students were satisfied or very satisfied with advisor access
- **81%** of students rated their advising experience as good or excellent

## How satisfied are you with your level of access to your advisor?



## How would you rate your overall experience?



Academic Advising Assessment

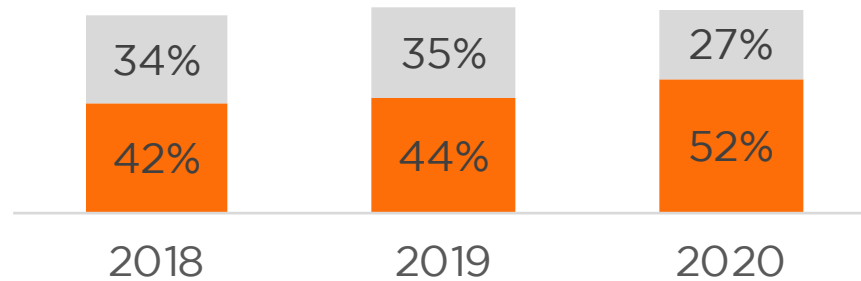
# Student Satisfaction

## Satisfaction - Trend

- Satisfaction with **access** increased from 76% in 2018 to 79% in 2020 (very satisfied and satisfied)
- Satisfaction with the **advising experience** remained consistent at 81% from 2018 to 2020 (excellent and good)
- Students rating “excellent” increased from 49% in 2018 to 62% in 2020

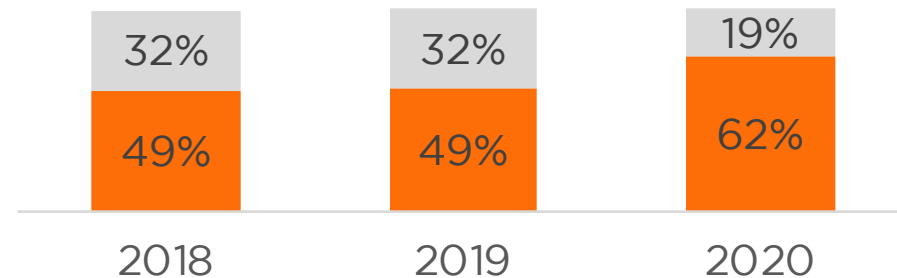
How satisfied are you with your level of access to your advisor?

■ Very Satisfied ■ Satisfied



How would you rate your overall experience?

■ Excellent ■ Good



Academic Advising Assessment

# Campus Partners

## Campus Partners

- One-stop, student success center, and center for career development are the top areas of referral from advisors

## Which of the following campus resources has your primary academic advisor referred you to?

One-Stop	48%
Student Success Center	36%
Center for Career Development	35%
Study Abroad Programs	27%
Student Activities	19%
Tutoring	16%
Graduate School	16%
Undergraduate Research	13%
Writing Center	12%
Honors and Scholars Program	12%
Supplemental Instruction	9%
Center for Health, Education, and Wellness	6%
Center for Leadership and Service	6%
Counselling Center	6%
Student Disability Services	4%
Office of National Scholarships and Fellowships	4%
Veteran Student Services	1%
Transition Coaching	1%

# Center for Career Development

## Overview

- The academic advising assessment gathered student perspectives of the Center for Career Development
- **58%** of respondents used the Center for Career Development

## Have you utilized the UT Center for Career Development?



# Center for Career Development

## Outreach

- **44%** of students used resume walk-in hours
- Presentations, career counselor appointments, web-based resource, workshops and job fairs were also frequently used services

## Which of the following services have you utilized?

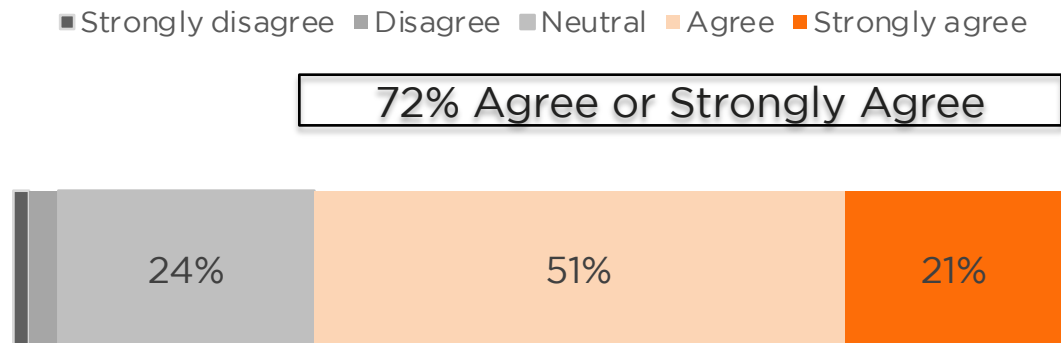
Resume walk-in hours	<b>44%</b>
Attended a presentation by CCD	<b>30%</b>
Appointment with a Career Counselor	<b>29%</b>
Utilized resources on career.UT.edu	<b>28%</b>
Attended a workshop or event	<b>25%</b>
Attended job fair(s)	<b>25%</b>
Appointment with a College Consultant	<b>17%</b>
Used Hire-A-VOL	<b>10%</b>
Strong Interest Inventory	<b>9%</b>
Enrolled in a class taught by CCD staff	<b>8%</b>
Part-time jobs assistance	<b>2%</b>
Disability, Diversity, Veterans Consultant	<b>1%</b>

# Center for Career Development

## Outcomes

- **72%** of students agree or strongly agree that they felt empowered to advance their career goals as a result of Center for Career Development services

**As a result of utilizing the Center for Career Development, I feel empowered to take action in my personal career goals.**



# Center for Career Development

## Outreach

- Academic advising referrals was the most effective outreach method
- Students also identified emails as a source of information

## How did you hear about the Center for Career Development ?

Academic Advisor	<b>53%</b>
E-mail	<b>42%</b>
Class Presentation	<b>37%</b>
Faculty	<b>31%</b>
Orientation	<b>30%</b>
Friend	<b>20%</b>
Staff	<b>20%</b>
Student Success Center	<b>18%</b>
Web Search	<b>11%</b>
Parents/ Family	<b>3%</b>

Academic Advising Assessment



# Center for Career Development

## Awareness and Use

- **49%** of students were aware of services offered, but did not have a need at the time
- **27%** of students were not aware of CCD services

I can identify the available services but have not needed them at this point. **49%**

I plan to utilize the center in the future. **34%**

I am not aware of the Center for Career Development or what it offers. **27%**

I do not know where the Center for Career Development is located. **18%**

# Student Feedback

## Student Feedback

Students were offered the opportunity to provide feedback and ideas for improvement in the survey.

Over 650 students provided comments. While themes are highlighted in this section, all feedback is available for further review.

**What would be the single most important suggestion to improve undergraduate advising ?**

## Common Themes

- Access to Advising/ Responsiveness
- Personalized Advising
- Support for Great Advisors
- Knowledge Base of Advisors
- Challenges with Multiple Advisors
- Alternative Appointments
- Integration with Career Exploration
- Tools to Improve Advising
- Outreach

# Student Feedback

---

**Access to Advising/ Responsiveness**

- *I wish the advisors were not so booked so that we could have more than 30 minutes with them. Sometimes that allotment of time feels very rushed.*
- *Have advisors make sure they respond to emails. Have advisors post notes from appointment to grades first.*

---

**Personalized Advising Experience**

- *...for it to be more personable, and to be notified of progress/requirements before it is too late...*
- *Create a program or way to make the advisor more connected to the students... I do not feel like students feel comfortable with their advisors or that they have a personal connection*

---

**Support for Great Advisors**

- *I'm taking this survey solely to brag about my advisor, Alexandra Brewer.*
- *Have all advisors be as great as mine! The nursing advisors are great!*

---

**Knowledge Base of Advisors**

- *Being aware of possible changes to major requirements and warning the students of them*
  - *Consistency with petitions and communications across DARS, Utrack, graduation applications, etc. I had to consistently check and recheck and confirm and reconfirm things that had been discussed over and over again....*
-

# Student Feedback

---

## Challenges with Multiple Advisors

- *I have had a different advisor every time I've gone to an advising appointment. I never knew who to contact with questions and each time I got a new advisor it was like starting over.*
- *During the time of being at UT, I have been bounced around between advisors throughout the entire time...*

---

## Alternative Appointments

- *For people like me - a non-traditional student - different hours for advising would be best either before or after work, during lunch breaks, etc..*
- *I want to be able to schedule a meeting for Arts and Science advising without having to wait for them to email me.*
- *Fixing online appointment system*

---

## Integration with Career Exploration

- *I would recommend taking more time to consider what study abroad, co-op, or internship opportunities that students may be interested in and, more importantly, how they could be fit into already crammed schedules.*
  - *Undergraduates should be informed by advisors of all of their options including career options within their field of study before it's too late. ... I was never told how to do so and now I am going to graduate in the next year with no experience under my belt.*
  - *Exploring new careers in the medical field without thinking that we must need a chemistry or bcmb major to achieve that*
-

# Student Feedback

---

## Tools to Support Advising

- *I've never had an adviser help me figure out what to take or go over DARS with me. I do all of that myself in advance, and then my adviser will say it looks good. This is fine but I would love someone to help a little more. I check my DARS and major requirements frequently because I am very nervous I missed something...*
- *I would suggest having a form students can fill out before the advising meeting that guides students on how to prepare for an advising meeting.*
- *I do not really like the way that the course catalog is. I wish there was something online that was similar to the book that I received at orientation.*

---

## Outreach

- *If a student isn't enrolled in enough credit hours for the semester, it would be helpful if an advisor would communicate thoroughly with them and let them know what they need to enroll in.*
- *If a student becomes off track, advisors need to make sure the student is aware. Otherwise, the student might not know anything is wrong until later when the situation becomes more critical to his/her tracking status.*
- *Having advisors actually reach out to their students, because honestly - I'm not even sure what I should go to my advisor about. I know they have a lot of students to shuffle through, but maybe the university could create listservs for their advisor faculty so these advisors could reach their students in mass.*

## Survey Methodology

The advising assessment survey was distributed to the UT undergraduate population in May 2020..

1,394 students participated in the survey, resulting in 1,148 completed responses.

Demographics:

- 36% male, 64% female
- 80% White, 5% Hispanic, 3% Black, 4% Asian
- 3% two or more races

Additional information on methodology available upon request.

## Postsecondary Research Center (PERC)

The Postsecondary Research Center at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville was established in 2018 as research center in the College of Education, Health, and Human Service.

The mission of the Postsecondary Education Research Center (PERC) is to identify, conduct, and coordinate research on initiatives and ideas designed to enhance higher education at the institutional, state, and national levels to enhance policy and practice.

Contact:

Dr. Patrick Biddix