

5-2012

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### Recommended Citation

Conver, Andréa (2012) "How helpful are Academic Advisors for College Students?," *Undergraduate Psychology Research Methods Journal*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 14 , Article 7.

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### **How helpful are Academic Advisors for College Students?**

Andréa Conver<sup>6</sup>

“Advising is an essential element of student success,” (Sayles & Shelton, 2005, p. 99). There seems to be a correlation between quality academic advising and student retention among schools that purposely pursue high quality in advising their students (Bahr, P. R., 2008; Fields & Barrett, 1996; Sayles & Shields, 2005). Though there are existing forms of academic advising within colleges and universities, the structures and goals for each strategy seem to differ. For example, local nursing schools were seeking to improve the quality of nursing education and retention through their advisory programs (Sayles & Shelton, 2005). In this article, the schools are advised to assess individuals’ learning styles prior to setting any form of advisory per student. Once the student is placed into the advisory program, he or she is encouraged to get to know his or her advisor and participate in the Learner Academic Action Plan, a devised plan which encourages students to spend at least three hours studying per week. The action plan also assesses the student’s life using two components: FRED (Fun, Rest, Exercise, and Diet) and PAL (Praise, Advice, and Listening). Component FRED (2005) encourages students to pursue fun and pleasure at least four hours out of the week, which seems rather shocking to the experimenter because she hadn’t read any material accessing the importance of leisure time in regards to academic advising or academic success prior to reading this article.

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The author would like to recognize Dr. Nohara-LeClair from the Psychology Department at Lindenwood University, the Institutional Review Board at Lindenwood University, and the Student Life and Leadership Department at Lindenwood University for all of their contributions to this study.

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In addition to gathering research on various forms of academic advising, the experimenter thought it best to research Lindenwood University's (LU) academic advising in the past and compare it to what is occurring throughout the academic advising process in the year 2012. From 1951 to about 1962, LU, then known as Lindenwood College, had both professional counselors and student counselors to assist in advising. Like the other sources, Lindenwood College placed great value upon the freshman class (LU, 1959-1960). Each freshman had at least 15 advisors in regards to registration. They were also encouraged to seek other forms of assistance if they deemed necessary. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of academic advising with undergraduate students at Lindenwood University.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

\_\_\_ Lindenwood University undergraduate participants were selected, by convenience sampling, through the Lindenwood Participant Pool (LPP). There were \_\_\_ male participants and \_\_\_ female participants. \_\_\_ Lindenwood University undergraduate participants were selected by convenience sampling upon the experimenter's personal request. These participants are considered non-LPP participants and partook in this study upon free will.

### **Materials**

The materials for this study included a recruitment letter, signup sheets, an experimenter's list, extra-credit receipts, a 24-question survey (See Appendix D), a consent form (See Appendix C), a feedback letter (See Appendix E), and reserved rooms. The recruitment letter informs the participants of the content within the 24 question survey and the expected amount of time the study will require (See Appendix A). The survey contained questions assessing participants' personal experience with their academic advisors, their college

background, as well as their extra-curricular activities. The signup sheets were provided by the LPP office. Signup Sheet B was chosen in order to recruit and survey multiple participants at one time. The experimenter's list contained a list of LPP participants who partook in the study, their student ID number, and the instructor's name for which class they'd receive the extra credit for participating in the study. The experimenter's list is given in order to help the LPP office accurately distribute the extra credit points

### **Procedure**

\_\_\_ participants signed up for the study on the LPP Board located on the fourth floor in Young Hall. After signing up on the signup sheets, which properly informs them of the date, time and location of the study, the participants arrived to the study, prior to receiving an Informed Consent form (See Appendix C). Once the participants agreed to proceed with the study by signing the consent form, they were given a 24-question survey (See Appendix D), assessing their experiences with their academic advisors, as well as some demographic questions (for the purpose of evaluating any potential correlations). After taking the survey, the participants were then given a feedback letter (See Appendix E), discussing the purpose of the study, as well as their rights to accessing the results of the study. Following the Feedback letter, the participants were given a participation receipt, showing that they had partook in the study. The experimenter made sure each participant thoroughly filled out the slip, signing and printing his or her name, recording his or her student identification (ID) number, the date in which he or she partook in the study, and the name of his or her instructor for whose class he or she will receive the extra credit points. Lastly, the experimenter told each participant to give the participation receipt to the LPP office in Young Hall, room number 407. Throughout the entire

process, all participants were fully aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any point of the process, as stated in the Informed Consent Form.

\_\_\_ participants volunteered outside of the LPP process. These non-LPP participants were informed by the experimenter that she was in the process of conducting a study about academic advising. She further asked each participant if he or she was interested in partaking in the study by taking the experimenter's advising survey. She further explained that she was solely interested in the participants' personal experiences with their advisors, and that the survey was 24 questions long, taking no more than 10 to 15 minutes of their time. They were first given an Informed Consent form (See Appendix C). They were then given the 24-question survey, assessing their experiences with their academic advisors, as well as some demographic questions (See Appendix D). After taking the survey, the participants were then given a feedback letter (See Appendix E), discussing the purpose of the study, as well as their rights to accessing the results of the study. Throughout the entire process, all participants were fully aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any point of the process, as stated in the Informed Consent Form. The participants were then asked by the experimenter if they had qualified for the opportunity to receive extra credit points through the LPP. The participants who did qualify were given a participation receipt, showing that they had partaken in the study. The experimenter made sure each participant thoroughly filled out the slip, signing and printing his or her name, recording his or her student identification (ID) number, the date in which he or she partook in the study, and the name of his or her instructor for whose class he or she will receive the extra credit points. Lastly, the experimenter told each participant to give the participation receipt to the LPP office in Young Hall, room number 407. The participants who did not qualify weren't given a participation receipt, but were shown gratitude for partaking in the study.

### References

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## **Appendix A**

### Recruitment Description:

In this study, you will be asked to complete one task. You will take a survey of 24 questions, assessing your personal experience with your academic advisor, your college background, and your extra-curricular activities. The entire procedure should take no more than 5 minutes of your time.

### Sign-Up Schedule

**Appendix C****Informed Consent Form**

(This Consent form is for both LPP and non-LPP participants)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), understand that I will be taking part in a research project that requires me to complete one questionnaire. This questionnaire requires me to answer questions about my personal experiences with my academic advisor, and provide simple college-related information about myself. I understand that I should be able to complete this project within 15 minutes. I am aware that I am free to skip any questions in the unlikely event that I feel uncomfortable answering any of the items on any of the surveys. I am also aware that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or prejudice. I should not incur any penalty or prejudice because I cannot complete the study. I understand that the information obtained from my responses will be analyzed only as part of aggregate data and that all identifying information will be absent from the data in order to ensure anonymity. I am also aware that my responses will be kept confidential and that data obtained from this study will only be available for research and educational purposes. I understand that any questions I may have regarding this study shall be answered by the researcher(s) involved to my satisfaction. Finally, I verify that I am at least 18 years of age and am legally able to give consent or that I am under the age of 18 but have on file with the LPP office, a completed parental consent form that allows me to give consent as a minor.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Signature of participant)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Signature of researcher obtaining consent)

Student Researcher's Name and Number:

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## Appendix D

### Academic Advising Questionnaire

1. How often do you seek assistance from your academic advisor?  
\_\_\_ times a semester
2. How often has your advisor missed an appointment with you in the past year?  
\_\_\_ times
3. Have you ever mentioned issues with time management to your advisor?  
Yes No Other (please specify)
4. Has your advisor ever given you advice on time management?  
Yes No Can't Remember
5. Has he or she ever recommended that you see a mentor for your academic success?  
Yes No Can't Recall Didn't Need One
6. What is your current college status? (If you are not a senior, skip the three questions.)  
Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
7. Has your advisor ever reminded you of important deadlines and procedures for graduation?  
Yes No Can't Remember Other (please specify)
8. How often does your advisor encourage you to seek to participate in practicums and internships?  
Never Rarely Most of the time All of the time

9. Has he or she discussed the potential benefits or setbacks with choosing practicums or internships?

Yes No Can't Remember

10. How often does your advisor ever remind you of important deadlines in regards to scheduling classes?

Never Rarely Most of the time All of the time

11. How often has your advisor arrive late to any of your advising sessions within the past two semesters?

Never Rarely Most of the time All of the time

12. How often does your advisor seem busy with other things during your advising sessions?

Never Sometimes Most of the time All of the time

13. How often does your advisor forget about scheduled appointments with you?

Never Sometimes Most of the time All of the time

14. Does your advisor post signup sheets for advising sessions?

Yes No Not Sure

15. Does your advisor tend to give you inaccurate information in regards to your major and/or minor requirements?

Yes No Can't Remember Other (please specify)

16. How often has your advisor forgotten to open your portal?

Never Rarely Most of the time All the time Not Applicable

17. Has your advisor ever asked you questions about your grades in any of your classes?

Yes No Not Applicable

18. Does your advisor help you choose your classes?

Yes No Never needed help

19. Have you ever changed advisors? (If you haven't, skip the next question)

Yes No

20. Why did you change your advisor?

21. What is your sex? Male Female Other

22. How old are you (in years)?

23. What is your major?

24. Are you currently active in any of these areas?

A job (out side of the LU Work and Learn program): Yes No

An LU club/organization: Yes No

An LU sport: Yes No

## **Appendix E**

### Feedback Letter

(This Feedback letter is for both LPP and non-LPP participants)

Thank you for participating in my study. The questionnaire was used in order to determine whether or not people believe their academic advisors are helpful. The style in which the questions were given were to help you evaluate the quality of your own interactions with your academic advisor.

Please note that I am not interested in your individual results; rather, I am only interested in the results of a large group of participants, of which you are now a part of. No identifying information about you will be associated with any of the findings.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any portion of this study, please do not hesitate to bring them up now or in the future. My contact information is found at the bottom of this letter. If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the findings of this study at a later date, please contact me and I will make it available to you at the completion of this project.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

Principal Investigator:

Andréa Conver      1-224-441-1324      (ac653@lionmail.lindenwood.edu)

Supervisor:

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