EXAMPLE — FOR DISCUSSION

Table 3 Means, standard deviations, and ranks of importance and satisfaction ratings for total sample

	Importance Ratings				Satisfaction Ratings			
Advising Function	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Rank	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Rank
Accurate information	1,785	5.64	.80	1	1,235	3.87	1.58	1
Major connect	1,818	5.00	1.23	2	1,254	3.69	1.53	5.5
How things work	1,789	4.99	1.28	3	1,231	3.52	1.59	9
Overall connect	1,834	4.95	1.27	4	1,266	3.73	1.55	3
Skills abilities interests	1,779	4.78	1.37	5	1,210	3.63	1.51	8
Know as individual	1,789	4.70	1.44	6	1,224	3.51	1.61	10
Shared responsibility	1,770	4.69	1.46	7	1,200	3.78	1.49	2
Referral academic	1,775	4.57	1.53	8	1,195	3.71	1.48	4
Degree connect	1,792	4.47	1.60	9	1,231	3.67	1.56	7
Gen ed connect	1,787	4.43	1.51	10	1,226	3.42	1.58	11
Referral nonacademic	1,772	4.38	1.67	11	1,175	3.69	1.50	5.5
Out-of-class connect	1,784	4.21	1.68	12	1,203	3.21	1.58	12

Note. For mean scores, 1 = *not important* or *not satisfied* and 6 = *very important* or *very satisfied.*

scale). The top-rated functions showed the least variability. Ratings of satisfaction were in the middle of the scale (i.e., between scale point 3 and 4 on the 6-point scale). The function with the highest mean importance rating, accurate information, was also the function with which students were most satisfied. Students were least satisfied with the least important function, out-of-class connect. Other functions showed discrepancies between rank order of importance and satisfaction ratings. However, the means for the satisfaction ratings are much closer together (range of .66) than the means for the importance ratings (range of 1.43). Thus, differences in the rankings across the importance and satisfaction dimensions may be capitalizing on rather small differences in mean satisfaction ratings.

Importance Ratings as a Function of Student Characteristics

Using multiple regression analyses, we considered student characteristics simultaneously to examine their unique association with importance ratings. The criterion variable for each analysis was the importance ratings for the particular advising function, and the predictor variables were gender, age/cohort, class level (lower vs. upper division), enrollment status (new vs. continuing), financial need, and ethnicity.

The results of the simultaneous regression analyses are presented in Table 4. The table includes only those predictors with an alpha level of less than .05. In general, when student characteristics were taken into consideration simultaneously, gender, age/cohort, financial need, and ethnicity were the predominant characteristics that were uniquely associated with importance ratings. Gender significantly predicted importance ratings of 11 of the 12 advising functions. Although not displayed here, our results showed that the greatest mean gender difference occurred with the function involving referral to campus resources for nonacademic problems (for males, $M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.74$; for females, $M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.59$). Ethnicity significantly predicted importance ratings of 9 of the 12 functions. In general, Asian American students, African American students, and students reporting multiple ethnicities most often rated the functions differently than did White students. Financial need significantly predicted importance ratings of 7 of the 12 functions. Age/cohort significantly predicted 6 of the 12 importance ratings, including 4 of the 5 integration functions and both information functions. Enrollment status and class level significantly predicted importance ratings of 3 and 2, respectively, of the 12 functions.

Satisfaction Ratings as a Function of Student Characteristics

We next conducted simultaneous regression analyses, similar to those run on the importance ratings, using the satisfaction ratings for the particular advising function as the criterion variables for each analysis. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 5. The table includes only those predictors with an alpha level of .10 or less. In general, when student characteristics were taken into consideration simultaneously, age/cohort, enrollment status, and to a limited extent, ethnicity were uniquely associated with satisfaction ratings. Age/cohort significantly predicted the satisfaction ratings of all but the two referral functions. Cohorts born earlier (i.e., older students) rated their satis-

Table 2 Academic advising functions and variable names (abbreviations)

Variable Name	Academic Advising Functions and Survey Items
	Integration Functions
Overall connect (oc)	Advising that helps students connect their academic, career, and life goals
Major connect (mc)	Advising that helps students choose among courses in the major that connect their academic, career, and life goals
Gen ed connect (gec)	Advising that assists students with choosing among the various general education options (e.g., choice of capstone, cluster, courses within cluster) that connect their academic, career, and life goals
Degree connect (dc)	Advising that assists students with deciding what kind of degree to pursue (bachelor of science, bachelor of arts, bachelor of music) to connect their academic, career, and life goals
Out-of-class connect (out)	Advising that assists students with choosing out-of-class activities (e.g., part-time employment, internships or practicum, participation in clubs or organizations) that connect their academic, career, and life goals
	Referral Functions
Referral academic (ra)	When students need it, referral to campus resources that address academic problems (e.g., math or science tutoring, writing, disability accommodation, testing anxiety)
Referral nonacademic (rn)	When students need it, referral to campus resources that address nonacademic problems (e.g., child care, financial, physical and mental health)
	Information Functions
How things work (how)	Assisting students with understanding how things work at this university (understanding time lines, policies, and procedures with regard to registration, financial aid, grading, graduation, petitions, and appeals, etc.)
Accurate information (ai)	Ability to give students accurate information about degree requirements
	Individuation Functions
Skills abilities interests (sai)	Taking into account students' skills, abilities, and interests in helping them choose courses
Know as individual (ki)	Knowing the student as an individual
	Shared Responsibility Function
Shared responsibility (sr)	Encouraging students to assume responsibility for their education by helping them develop planning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills

accessing the survey at their convenience. Upon preliminary examination of the representativeness of the sample, a second follow-up E-mail was sent to those who had not yet completed the survey. This E-mail noted that males, ethnic minorities, and freshmen were underrepresented in the sample, and members of those groups were urged to respond.

Students who indicated that they were not currently getting academic advice from faculty or staff at the university ($n = 666$ or 30.4% of the sample) were not asked to rate their satisfaction with the advising functions.

Student responses to the survey were merged with data from the student information system so information about student characteristics could be included in the study. Students who declined to provide ethnicity information were omitted from analyses in which ethnicity was considered. Because international students' concept of ethnicity may differ from that of domestic students, international students ($n = 39$) were also omitted from ethnicity analyses.

Results

The means and standard deviations of the importance and satisfaction ratings for the 12 advising functions for the entire sample are presented in Table 3. The functions are listed in order of rank scores for importance; for the convenience of the reader, Table 3 also presents the rank score for satisfaction on each function.

All functions were rated on the important end of the scale (i.e., above scale point 4 on the 6-point