

# **Graduating Seniors' Perception of College and Departmental Services**

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# Background

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Students are looking for educational institutions that offer such services as:

- Effective advising
- Accessible and helpful faculty, staff, and advisor
- Help prepare for post-college jobs: Internship, study abroad, volunteering, shadow learning, etc.
- Provide timely information about academic matters
- Guide on searching for job

# Roles of Colleges and Departments

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- College and departmental services qualities are important determinants of students' satisfaction (Young and Verbel, 1997).
- Changing demography of students, increasing market forces and competition among educational institutions demand quality services from colleges and departments (Kelso, 2008).
- A good fit between students (their needs, attitudes, goals, and expectations) and the college environments has a positive impact and promotes satisfaction, achievement, and personal growth (Huebner, 1980).
- Being primary consumers students' input on college and departmental services help in effective decision making, allocation of resources, and monitoring (Kelso, 2008).

# Importance of College and Departmental Services

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- Affect students' learning
- Are related to students' retention
- Help students prepare for a post-college career
- Colleges and university departments should know how they are serving their students so that gaps in services could be known and services could be improved

# Study Objectives

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**Goal:** Assess students' perceptions of various college and departmental services in the College of Agricultural and Natural Resources at Michigan State University.

**Objectives:**

- Identify how students perceive college and departmental services.
- Examine whether students' perceptions of college and departmental services differ by their demographics.

# Methodology

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- Population: Graduating seniors in the College of Agricultural and Natural Resources (CANR) of academic years 2009-10 to 2013-14
- 1,534 graduating seniors participated in a web-based survey
- Services were rated on a Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree, 3=neither disagree nor agree, 5=strongly agree
  - College services: Three statements
  - Departmental services: Fifteen statements
- Demographics:
  - Academic major, department, gender, age, ethnicity, residence, residency status
- Data analysis:
  - Descriptive statistics, t-test

## Survey Participation (N=1,534)

Academic Year	n	Percent
2009-10	244	15.9
2010-11	379	24.7
2011-12	329	21.4
2012-13	298	19.4
2013-14	284	18.5

## Perceptions of College Services (Mean Scores)

College Services	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Average
The College sponsored quality study abroad experiences for students.	4.15	4.00	4.13	4.00	4.12	4.07
The staff provided timely information on academic matters that were helpful in making an informed decision about my major.	4.24	3.96	4.04	3.98	3.99	4.03
The career advising and information provided by the College was useful.	4.07	3.94	4.04	3.93	4.08	4.00



## Perceptions of Departmental Services (Mean Scores)

Departmental Services	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Average
In my major department, it was easy to get to know at least one faculty member well enough so that I could ask for such things as letters of recommendation.	4.25	4.29	4.38	4.27	4.22	4.29
I had no difficulty in identifying my departmental/major adviser.	4.34	4.26	4.31	4.29	4.27	4.29
My major/department encouraged me to participate in internships.	4.22	4.22	4.33	4.27	4.25	4.26
My major adviser was easily accessible.	4.30	4.17	4.30	4.17	4.18	4.22
Sufficient opportunities existed to become involved in student organizations relevant to my career/professional interests.	4.14	4.07	4.18	4.11	4.03	4.11
In my major courses, faculty expectations for my performance were clearly defined at the beginning of the course.	4.11	4.07	4.13	4.13	4.08	4.10
My major advisor helped me decide which courses to pursue.	4.12	4.07	4.14	4.00	4.13	4.09

## Perceptions of Departmental Services(Mean Scores)

Departmental Services	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Average
Departmental staff provided timely information on academic matters that were helpful in making an informed decision about my major.	4.09	3.96	4.10	3.96	4.00	4.02
I had no difficulty in obtaining information on internship opportunities.	3.94	3.95	4.08	3.95	4.00	3.99
In my major, departmental faculty were accessible to discuss undergraduate research or extension opportunities.	3.83	3.71	3.85	3.83	3.83	3.80
My major/department encouraged me to participate in study abroad.	3.72	3.66	3.80	3.68	3.78	3.72
My major advisor/career field consultant offered suggestions to prepare my resume.	3.55	3.62	3.74	3.66	3.64	3.65
My major/department encouraged me to participate in volunteer programs or unpaid internships.	3.59	3.50	3.50	3.47	3.45	3.50
My major advisor/career field consultant gave tips on interviewing skills.	3.36	3.37	3.47	3.48	3.40	3.41
<b>My major advisor/career field consultant helped me find my first professional job after graduation.</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>3.01</b>

# Perceptions of College Services by Demographics

Demographics	n	Mean	<i>t</i> value
Male	532	4.08	0.971
Female	805	4.03	
White	1129	4.04	0.603
Non-white	206	4.08	
Traditional	1164	4.05	0.107
Non-traditional	106	4.06	
Rural	553	4.04	0.432
Urban	787	4.06	
In-state student	1205	4.05	0.424
Out-of-state and international	138	4.02	

## Perceptions of Departmental Services by Demographics

Demographics	n	Mean	t value
Male	566	3.95	2.075*
Female	881	3.87	
White	1229	3.91	1.158
Non-white	217	3.85	
Traditional	1263	3.89	2.207*
Non-traditional	115	4.04	
Rural	589	3.89	0.468
Urban	861	3.91	
In-state	1306	3.91	0.683
Out-of-state and international	147	3.87	

\*Significant at 0.05 level.

# Summary

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- Students perceived college and departmental services positive throughout.
- Graduating seniors hold positive perception of college services.
  - Information and services related to academic matters, career advising, and study abroad were valuable.
  - The career consultant was helpful in providing tips on interviewing skills.
  - Students' perceptions of college services did not differ by their demographics.
- Perceptions of departmental services were also positive.
  - Quality of advising and information on internships were highly rated by respondents.
  - Perceptions of departmental services differed by students' gender and age with higher ratings from male and non-traditional students.

# Suggestions

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Academic departments could serve students better by providing:

- More opportunities for research and learning opportunities through internship and volunteering
- Information on job markets through orientations, career counseling, and career fairs
- Help in preparing resume and offer tips for job interviews
- Find out if study abroad would prepare students for employment