

Working Together Effectively: Online Collaborative Advising From Faculty Advisors' Perspective

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Advising for students should be a collective effort that involves multiple advisors. As more students come from diverse backgrounds, they need support from not only their own faculty advisors, but also different stakeholders (e.g. staff from departments and different consulting units) across the organization (Tukey, 1996; Weiner, & Murawski; Baldrige, 2020). To form a collaborative environment, these advisors from different sectors require a place to work together, to increase accessibility, and to share information. This need is even more urgent during emergent situations like the COVID-19. To form a collaborative environment without limitations of time and space, National Taiwan University (NTU) built an online platform that supports online collaborative advising (OCA) function allowing faculty advisors as well as stakeholders to share advising records (e.g. interviews and referrals) and track advising progress. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effectiveness of the platform from faculty advisors' perspective. Forty-seven of the 166 faculty advisors who used the online platform in Fall semester 2020 participated in our survey. The results suggest that there is a significant difference between faculty who used the OCA and faculty who did not in their combined perceptions of its effectiveness ($F = 4.54$, $P = 0.025$). The follow-up analysis show that the differences mainly appear in faculty's perceptions of whether OCA efficiency ($Z = 2.75$, $P = 0.02$) as well as makes them more willing to dedicate themselves to advising ($Z = 2.45$, $P = 0.06$). Based on the survey results, we conclude that for the part of engagement, positive relationships, and accomplishment, faculty advisors who have experienced OCA consider that the collaboration effectively benefits their advising work, and their perceptions are obviously more positive than their counterparts who have no collaborative experience. Since faculty advisors' perceptions about the effectiveness of OCA are not significantly affected by their seniority, it seems their prior advising experiences and familiarity with online tools might not be influential to their perceptions of OCA. While academic advising is an important issue to students' learning experience and might influence their learning outcomes, the results of this study can be used to provide suggestions for other educational institutions who are interested in the OCA design and implementation in the future.