Differences in College of Agriculture and Life Sciences students' expectations of instructors, advisers, and self during their college experience.

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Background & Setting

- National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that enrollment in degree-seeking institutions has grown by 32% between 2001 and 2011. (Aud, Kewal Ramani, & Frohlich, 2011)

- Higher education has witnessed a new generation of students with more diverse backgrounds. (Renn & Reason, 2013)
  - racial and ethnic
  - socioeconomic status
  - adult students including returning student veterans
  - first generation college students
  - students with disabilities and mental health concerns.

- Attitudes and beliefs of current college students (Renn & Reason, 2013)
  - religion and spirituality
  - political attitudes
  - attitudes toward and experience with civic engagement
  - attitude and experience with diversity – add to the diversity of the student body

- Institutions realized unprecedented financially strain.
  - recession of the early 2000s
  - financial crisis of 2008
  - proportionally, less and less of state and federal budgets were being spent on higher education.
    - Public institutions are relying more on tuition dollars (Baum, 2012)
    - "The steadiest source of new revenue between 1998 and 2008 was from tuition" (Baum, 2012, p. 14)

Problem Statement

- For students, higher education is only one of an array of activities and most likely not central to their lives. (Levine, 1993)

- This competition for time and attention not only impacts student retention, but also student expectations.

- Students whose expectations are exceeded are more satisfied students. (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006)

- Understanding student expectations is a critical in exploring student success. (Collier & Morgan, 2008)

- One way to do a better job is to ask students directly. (Mankin, Boone, Flores, & Willyard et. al, 2004)

Purpose and Objectives

☐ A better understanding of student's expectations can help address retention issues among undergraduate students.

☐ The purpose of this study was to identify student expectations and compare and contrast freshman student expectations with those of sophomores and seniors as well as what those students feel faculty and staff can expect of students.

The following research questions guided this study:

1.)What expectations do undergraduate students have of advisers and instructors?

2.)What expectations do undergraduate students feel instructors and advisers should have of students?

3.)What are the similarities and differences between expectations of freshman, sophomore, and senior students?

Methods
Subjects & Instrumentation

- **Subjects**

  - Full-time, traditional-age, freshman, sophomore, and senior students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at Iowa State University (*N*=2889)

- **Instrumentation**

  - Web-based, researcher-designed survey instrument
  - Likert scale (5=always, 4=most of the time, 3=sometimes, 2=rarely, 1=never)

  - Face validity and content validity established

Methods
Data Collection & Analysis

Data Collection

- Demographic and academic information was obtained from Office of the Registrar.
- Survey was distributed five times during February and March 2013. (Dillman, 2006)
  - 45% response rate (n=1301)
  - Non-response error (Lindner, Murphy & Briers, 2001)

Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics: frequency, mean, medium, mode, standard deviations

- Inferential statistics: ANOVA, Tukey post hoc

Methods
Limitations

- Data collection at one fairly homogeneous College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

- 45% return rate

  - Students who responded were more likely to:

    - female

    - entered the university directly from high school

- **In spite of these limitations, the analysis offers insights for institutions who aspire to increase undergraduate student retention.**

Results

To what extent do you expect your CALS instructors to:	M
be respectful of all students	4.78
be honest, fair, and impartial	4.73
be prepared and organized	4.60
present up-to-date subject material	4.55
be willing to answer students' questions	4.51
provide constructive feedback for continuous improvement	4.42
be actively involved in student academic development	4.33
treat each student on an individual basis	4.06
provide a challenging environment in the classroom	3.88

Results

To what extent do you expect your CALS academic adviser to:	M
be knowledgeable about degree and program requirements	4.70
be knowledgeable about university deadline	4.63
respond to student concerns or problems in a timely manner	4.57
be knowledgeable about career options and expectations	4.52
process course substitutions and other related paperwork in a timely manner	4.50
be knowledgeable about campus student support services	4.45
assist you in developing suitable educational plans	4.44
be knowledgeable about indicators of student's potential and success	4.43
be available with reasonable office hours	4.42
be available to serve as a mentor	4.34
regularly evaluate students' progress toward degree completion	4.26
assist you in clarifying career and life goals	4.20

Results

To what extent can instructors expect students to:	M
be respectful of ISU and the Ames community	4.79
take your academic responsibilities seriously	4.73
take personal responsibility for your education, experiences, and personal development	4.73
be respectful of individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures	4.73
complete all assignments, projects, quizzes, and exams to the best of your ability	4.70
take an active role in seeking assistance if you have a concern about your physical or mental well being	4.36
take an active role in classroom activities, including asking questions	4.26
take advantage of leadership and personal development opportunities	4.15
be actively involved in student organizations and activities	4.05

Results

To what extent can academic advisers expect students to:	M
take an active role in your own educational progress	4.70
be prepared for advising meetings	4.68
professionally make and keep advising appointments	4.67
develop a graduation plan	4.49
consider recommendations made by adviser on classwork, study habits, and academic progress	4.46
be aware of important dates and deadlines involving registrations, add/drops, etc.	4.44
know the degree program requirements	4.41
seek advice and recommendations before making independent decisions	4.10
communicate on a regular basis	3.95

Results
Computed variable

Four variables were computed:

- ☐ Student expectations of instructors

- ☐ Student expectations of advisers

- ☐ What students feel instructors can expect of students

- ☐ What students feel advisers can expect of students

ANOVA was calculated

- ☐ Independent variable – classification (freshman, sophomore, senior)

- ☐ Dependent variables – computed variables for expectations

Results
ANOVA

Student expectations of instructors (9 questions)	*M*
Freshman	40.27
Sophomores	39.39
Seniors	39.56

F test not significant, *p* = .089

Results
ANOVA

Student expectations of advisers (12 questions)	M
Freshman	53.84
Sophomores	53.99
Seniors	52.80

F test significant, *p* = .023

Tukey Post Hoc showed significant difference is between sophomores and seniors, *p* = .034

Results
ANOVA

What students say instructors can expect of students (12 questions)	M
Freshman	55.12
Sophomores	54.82
Seniors	53.61

F test significant, *p* = .000

Tukey Post Hoc showed significant difference is between
freshman and seniors , *p* = .002
sophomores and seniors, *p* = .006

Results
ANOVA

What students say advisers can expect of students (9 questions)	*M*
Freshman	40.40
Sophomores	39.92
Seniors	39.57

F test not significant, *p* = .074

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Seniors had consistently lower expectations and felt that faculty could expect less of them than freshman and sophomores.

- Additional data should be collected and analyzed that examines how instructors and advisers feel about these expectations.

- Communication should occur between faculty/staff and students about expectations.

Questions?

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