

Academic Advising in the Context of Modernization of Higher education of Kazakhstan

Asesoría académica en el contexto de la modernización de la educación superior de Kazajstán

Zhazira ABDYKHALYKOVA [1](#); Kadisha SHALGYNBAYEVA [2](#); Tolkyn SLAMBEKOVA [3](#); Abdimazhit SAIPOV [4](#); Karylgash KAZHIMOVA [5](#)

Recibido: 26/10/2017 • Aprobado: 25/11/2017

Contents

- [1. Introduction](#)
 - [2. Methods](#)
 - [3. Results](#)
 - [4. Discussion](#)
 - [5. Conclusion](#)
- [References](#)

ABSTRACT:

The current changes in the structure and content of higher education in Kazakhstan no longer meet the requirements for the preparation of future specialists. The need for modernization of higher education is determined by the objectives set out in the Concept of modernization of Kazakhstan education till 2020, inner laws of development of higher education and future development needs of the individual, society and the state. The leading idea of modernization of Kazakhstan education is the transition from knowledge-based to competence-based education. Since 2001 Kazakhstani universities implementing requirements for the European Bologna process, which provides opportunities to use the credit system education. The credit system gives Kazakhstan students the opportunity to build a route of personal and career development, to take an active position regarding their future, which will further contribute to their learning throughout the life. Based on these changes academic advising and student support of students are new phenomena in Kazakh

RESUMEN:

Los cambios actuales en la estructura y el contenido de la educación superior en Kazajstán ya no satisfacen los requisitos para la preparación de futuros especialistas. La necesidad de modernizar la educación superior está determinada por los objetivos establecidos en el concepto de modernización de la educación de Kazajstán hasta 2020, las leyes internas de desarrollo de la educación superior y las necesidades de desarrollo futuro de la persona, la sociedad y el Estado. La idea principal de la modernización de la educación en Kazajstán es la transición del conocimiento basado en la educación basada en competencias. Desde 2001 las universidades de Kazajstán implementan los requisitos para el proceso de Bolonia europeo, que ofrece oportunidades para utilizar la educación del sistema de crédito. El sistema de crédito da a los estudiantes de Kazajstán la oportunidad de construir una ruta de desarrollo personal y profesional, para tomar una posición activa con respecto a su futuro, que contribuirá aún más a su aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida.

higher education. This paper describes the implementation and realization of academic advising of students in the context of modernization of higher education of Kazakhstan.

Keywords: higher education in Kazakhstan, student academic support, academic advising

Basándose en estos cambios, el asesoramiento académico y el apoyo estudiantil de los estudiantes son nuevos fenómenos en la educación superior de Kazajstán. Este trabajo describe la implementación y realización del asesoramiento académico de los estudiantes en el contexto de la modernización de la educación superior de Kazajstán.

Palabras clave: educación superior en Kazajstán, apoyo académico estudiantil, asesoría académica

1. Introduction

Academic advising is becoming more relevant at the present period due to the changes in the structure and content of higher education in Kazakhstan and higher requirements for the qualifications of future specialists. The need for modernization of higher education is determined by the objectives set out in the Concept of Kazakhstan education modernization till 2020, internal regulations of higher education development and the needs of the individual, society and the state in the future. The leading idea of modernization of Kazakhstan education is the transition from knowledge-based education to competence-based education. In 2001, Kazakhstan universities started introducing the credit system as an experiment based on the European Bologna process (Kulekeev, Gamarnik, Abdrasilova, 2004; State Education Law of RK, 2007).

The credit system gives Kazakhstan students the opportunity to build an individual trajectory of personal and career development, to take an active part in forming their own future, which will further contribute to their learning throughout the life. However, as many Kazakhstan researchers have indicated, students are often not prepared to determine their educational needs, opportunities or plan a learning trajectory to achieve their goals (Asanov, Kaldiyarov, Minazheva, 2010). Kazakh students, especially the first-year students, do not fully understand what the credit system means and how to study at the university within this new system, since they have just gone out of secondary school system with different study rules and, often, different expectations of academic rigor. Unfortunately, according to the student survey conducted in 2011, 35-42% of Kazakh students were unfamiliar with characteristics of learning within the credit system until the graduation from the university (Levshina, 2011). In order to bridge this gap, since 2010 the Kazakhstani universities have formally started to implement an academic advisor program.

2. Methods

The following research methods were used during the study: *theoretical* (analysis, synthesis, classification, generalization, deduction, induction, analogy and modelling); *empirical* (observation, survey, questionnaire and interview); *experimental* (stating, developmental and diagnostic experiment); *statistical* (statistical analysis of the data, qualitative and quantitative analysis of the study results). Research sources included government documents in the field of education, national and international literature, materials of scientific-practical conferences, methodical seminars, training programs, textbooks, and manuals.

3. Results

The student satisfaction is growing in importance in higher education, and also the institutions look for ways to meet the demands of stakeholders and legislators, provide evidence of institutional effectiveness, and enhance students' learning environment (Schreiner, 2009). The role of academic advising is coming to the front of discussions around student success, including student engagement and satisfaction, persistence, and retention. A book entitled "Making the Most of College: Students speak Their Minds": opens a chapter with the following statement, "Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of successful college experience" (Light, 2001, p.81).

Pascarella & Terenzini (2005, p. 404) stated that “academic advising can play a significant role in students’ decision making, retention at university and changing learning objectives”. Strong academic advising is essential for students’ success and retention (Gordon, 2008). Some see advising as the primary transition and affiliation linkage outside the classroom for students to connect with the institution (Frost, 1991). According to the Higher Education Report entitled *Piecing Together the Student Puzzle* (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2007), academic advising in various contexts such as the first year experience, orientation, graduation, planning, and student success, is mentioned 31 times in manuscript. The study posits that academic advising aids in student development, independent thinking and problem-solving, and that academic advising teaches students how to plot a route through the institution and its culture. In addition, it puts forward that academic advisors need to be accessible to students and they need to know how to respond to individual student needs educationally and otherwise (Kuh et al., 2007).

Crockett (1985) explained that academic advising evolved from a simple perfunctory activity where advisors prescribed required courses, to a more comprehensive and purposeful activity that emphasized student development. O’Banion (1972) was the original theorist who made this distinction between prescriptive and developmental advising. Five steps of O’Banion’s model were listed as 1) exploration of life goals, 2) exploration of career goals, 3) selection of a major or program of study, 4) selection of courses, 5) scheduling of courses.

The final role of the academic advisor is that of personal mentor. This involves establishing and sustaining rapport and trust while focusing on the student’s individual needs and personal growth requirements (Wade & Yoder, 1995). Frost (2000) asserted that the recognition of the student’s individuality makes this relationship responsive to pluralism through the encouragement of students to explore their differences as positive factors. Fiddler and Alicea (1996) concurred and stated that the abilities to communicate and counsel, rest on respect for the individuality of each learner and the goal of establishing and sustaining rapport and trust with a richly diverse population of students. The role of mentor involves commitment of time and demonstration of a caring attitude towards the student (Beasley- Fielstein, 1986).

Academic advising is an integral part of each students’ educational experience at the Kazakhstan universities. Advisors assist students in developing an academic and career plan, in obtaining support from other offices of the University. This includes informing students about possible scholarships, program of academic mobility. They also encourage students to enrich their experiences by becoming involved on campus via social, political, academic, cultural, sport student organizations and activities.

Student advising needs can be grouped into two primary subgroups. These subgroups include situational characteristics and innate characteristics. Both subgroups are important and must be recognized. Situational student advising needs are influenced by student age, enrollment patterns, place of residence, gender, disabilities, and learning styles. The educational experiences of students prior to enrollment also play a role in what students need from advisors (Gordon, 2008). In addition to this, and changes in student demography, informal student advising needs are influenced by differing attitudes and values, family issues, mental health, physical health, academic preparation, academic misconduct, and accessing, affording and financing education (Gordon, 2008).

Through academic advising students learn to be a member of the higher education community, to think critically about their role and responsibility as students, and are preparing to be citizens of a democratic society and the world community. There is no limit in academic support of students which allows them to master their skills in learning, and also broadens their self-awareness by recognizing at the same time, their individuality, values and motives during the training and at the end of the university.

Academic advising as the key moment in the process of teaching and learning presupposes education that combines the preparation, facilitation, documentation and evaluation of consultative interaction. Also, it includes individual methods, strategies and techniques that can

change. Relationships between advisors and students are fundamental and characterized by mutual respect, trust and exemplary behavior.

Academic advising services are based on the achievements of social and human sciences and the theory of education. The program of academic advising is realized within the ideals of higher education from the process of enrolling students to the university. This program includes the implementation of the university mission, involves the development of a culture, outcomes from learners, understanding the roles of students and advisors, differences in relationship between training and additional programs, the development of appropriate forms of thinking, learning and decision-making, selection of academic programs and courses, development of life and career goals.

The results of the training of students in the process of academic advisors are evaluated, guided by the mission, objectives, training and additional programs. These results are defined in the program of counseling. The following criteria are prescribed for students: how to demonstrate their knowledge and skills based on the results of academic counseling. These criteria make a result of participation in academic advisory. Each institution should develop its own sets of criteria for students' learning outcomes and methods for assessing them (Nacada, 2016).

It should be noted that the activities of an advisor include:

- helping students to understand and apply their academic knowledge, strengths and skills;
- promotion of the idea of academic and personal success;
- motivation of students for self-improvement;
- provision with organized and sensitive position of academic advising;
- building respectful and professional relationships with students;
- helping students in solving personal and academic problems, applying available resources on the territory of the university, whenever possible;
- assistance to students in career planning and individual educational trajectory (Nacada, 2016).

In order to determine the academic problems of Kazakhstani students, our research group conducted a survey with the first-year students of the Eurasian National University. This survey was anonymously conducted among the first-year students of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Foreign Languages Department. This in turn allowed students to openly express their opinions to the issues of research, and thus it facilitated acquisition of the reliable data. The questioning took place in a free environment, and if students had questions during the completion of the questionnaire, the necessary clarifications and interpretations were given.

As a result, we identified four blocks of problems faced by students in the learning process at the university:

- adaptation at the University (lack of knowledge about the University: the structure of the University, the educational process at the university, educational environment at the university);
- self-organization in the educational process (issues related to the time management, lack of readiness to solve the problems in the educational process of university);
- self-study at university (problems associated with the implementation of various types of independent work);
- the choice of the educational process at the University (problems with planning individual educational trajectory, shaping one's professional life and making plans, setting goals, strategies, implementing choices, reflecting on the experience).

We would like to note that in Kazakhstani universities academic advising is a new direction in education that was introduced in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna Process. In this regard, this sharply raises the question of training staff and conduct of training programs for the practical application of academic advising techniques.

In summary, it should be noted that in the conditions of modernization of higher education in the Republic of Kazakhstan, a number of new roles for the university staff are identified, among which the academic advisor is the main one, which according to our research is a necessary

condition for building an effective individual trajectory of students.

Since academic advising is a new phenomenon in higher education of Kazakhstan that comes with the reform of universities, many educators, who should function as faculty advisors, had problems due to the absence of methodological and theoretical training.

Considering the above-mentioned problems of students, many universities of Kazakhstan, including the Eurasian National University, conducted refresher courses for faculty advisors. Within the framework of our research for theoretical training of the faculty advisors, we developed a modular training program for faculty advisor "Academic advising of university students".

The program of training advisors included the following components: individual-oriented educational process at the university, a place of academic advisor in higher education, academic counseling model in universities, academic advising as an essential part of academic support to students, academic problems of students.

Within this course the program educators, who are to perform the functions of an academic advisor, get more information about the opportunities provided at the university (infrastructure of the University, university services, individual-oriented educational process at the university), get acquainted with the activities of the academic advisor (academic counseling, models, techniques, methods of interaction between students and a faculty advisor). Furthermore, the participants of the training program practice solving the problems through applying efficient methods and techniques of academic advising for university students (Jigsaw, "Focusing four", "Card Sorting", "Continuum", "Carousel Brainstorming"), which are used to solve the problems of students at different year-groups in the design and implementation of individual educational trajectory. During modular program through the joint work of staff, the following work was done: clarifying the purpose of academic advising of the university, clarifying the content of academic advising, making recommendations to the academic advisors.

At the end of training course, which was organized as part of our study, we can conclude that the course has helped academic advisors to cover the main areas of their professional activities, solve the problems of students in selecting and implementing their individual educational trajectory, organize the technology interaction with the students.

In addition, participants of training course have been given the following recommendations for improving the effectiveness of faculty advisors:

- systematic training of faculty advisors at the university that will contribute to their professional development;
 - development of educational and methodological handbook for a faculty advisor with students of different levels of training: Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate;
 - preparing professional academic advisors at the higher educational institutions.
-

4. Discussion

According to Kazakh higher education reforms, academic advising is provided by a faculty member, who serves as a student's mentor from the relevant specialty, assists in the selection of learning trajectory and development of educational programs in the period of study (Regulation of organization educational process on credit technology in institutions of Kazakhstan, 2011). On the one hand, in a short period of time, Kazakhstani universities created rules and policies for academic advisors, and on the other hand, many of them are not well-equipped with educational resources (academic advising handbook or guide) and work without training. Academic advisors work for promoting students' growth, learning and success. Academic advising also helps students to plan an educational program that matches their educational and vocational goals.

Service advisors were needed for establishing communication between students and teachers in order to create favorable conditions for quality education. In Kazakhstan universities formal faculty advising is usually the responsibility of course coordinators and program managers.

Advisor usually works with a group of 15- 25 students. The purposes of academic advising are multiple and yet unique to each student, each advisor, and to the institution that enables students to find meaning and a pathway for their academic pursuits (Yaduf, 2003).

Kazakhstan universities put high demands on the activities of the academic advisor. The job description of advisor is guided by:

- the requirements of the Education Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- regulations on education by the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan and the State educational standards of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- the University Charter;
- policies and objectives for the quality of the university;
- Quality Assurance guidance of the University;
- the requirements for the quality management system;
- internal procedures, orders and directives of the university.

The main functions of a faculty advisor include the following: assisting students in identifying individual educational trajectory of learning and development of educational programs, orientation and adaptation to the educational process within the entire university, in shaping the future of a professional orientation of students. The students are formally introduced by assigned advisor to academic life on campus, content of core curriculum, the requirements for obtaining a degree, the opportunities to choose academic modules. Moreover, the advisor helps students to choose the educational path at the university in accordance with the inclinations, abilities, interests and goals.

According to the work of The Global Community for Academic Advising, advisors are required to have a broad range of skills, knowledge, abilities, and values. Educational theory, psychological theory, sociology theory, knowledge of cultural studies, and other disciplines (NACADA, 2006) are on the short list of what an advisor needs to know.

The situation regarding academic advising in Kazakhstan is quite different from the USA, where academic advising is (a degree) considered as a university degree, and this means that american academic advisor is well-educated professional. In general, there is no Kazakhstan tradition of specialist advising as in the USA, nor is there a tradition of personal tutors as there is in Britain (British Council, 2007). Academic advising process in the context of Kazakhstani higher education does not have a systematic procedure, and also the basic methods of work of academic advisor in higher education have not been defined yet.

Introduction of international experience in the implementation of new type of academic support can lead to poorly organized training based on confusing methodology. Borrowing educational policies from both the US and European models makes huge changes in higher education of Kazakhstan regarding student learning, which means that student plays a key role in the educational process. There are problems in post-secondary support services in Kazakhstan. One of the issues is the language, Russian is still the standard language of instruction, although many students are educated in their national language. The other problems: lack of experience with Western pedagogical models, knowledge about choosing courses in a accordance with the credit system, as well as the usual challenges of socializing new students into their collegiate experience.

5. Conclusion

Academic advising as a new form of academic support to students in the context of higher education in Kazakhstan will satisfy the needs and meet the conditions of transition to individualization of the learning process and variability of educational programs. Still, most faculty advisors of Kazakhstani institutions have had very little formal advising training and have gained their skills by the learn-as-you-go method and one-on-one observations with more seasoned faculty colleagues.

Proceeding from the above mentioned regarding academic advising in Kazakhstan, we conclude

that Kazakhstani colleges and universities should offer more advising and support services to their students, which are currently found in only a few major universities. The government should financially support the development of these services.

Academic advising can be performed by both faculty members and by student affairs' professionals in special academic support centers similar to those at the US universities. Faculty can help students to interpret their disciplines and explain the institution's policies and procedures that govern degree requirements. Academic support centers can offer the first-year students an extended academic orientation to integrate the first-year students into the institutional environment. This initiative is of vital importance to students, especially today when academic society and all its participants are transiting to the unfamiliar three-level educational system, establishing new undergraduate curriculum, integrating the credit system, and reforming other aspects of higher education.

References

- Asanov, N.A., Kaldiyarov, D.A. and Minazheva, G.S. (2010) Organization educational process on the basis of credit technology. Almaty
- Beasley-Fielstein, L. (1986). Student perceptions of the developmental advisor-advisee relationship. *NACADA Journal*, 6(2), 107-117.
- BRITISH COUNCIL (2007). Education UK, United Kingdom, Hotcourses, viewed on. Date View June 29, 2017 <http://www.educationuk.org>
- Crockett, D.S. (1985). Academic advising. In L. Noel, R.S. Levitz, D. Saluri, U. Delworth, & G.R.Hanson (Eds.), *Increasing student retention: Effective programs for practices for reducing the dropout rate* (pp. 244-263). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Fiddler, M.B., & Alicea, M. (1996). Use of a collective narrative process to articulate practice-based advising competencies. *NACADA Journal*, 16(1), 14-20.
- Frost, S.H. (1991) Academic advising for student success: A system of shared responsibility. ASHE- ERIC Higher Education Report No.3. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development
- Frost, S.H. (2000). Historical and philosophical foundations for academic advising. In V. Gordon & W. Habley (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 3-17). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gordon, V. (2008). Student diversity and student needs. In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T.& Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook* (p.119-121). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey – Bass.
- Kuh,G., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J., Bridges, B., and Hayek, J.C. (2007). Piecing together the student success puzzle: Research, propositions, and recommendations. ASHE Higher Education Report, 32(5). San Francisco: Jossey- Bass
- Kulekeev, J.A, Gamarnik, G.N. and Abdrasilova, B.S. (2004) Fundamentals of credit system in Kazakhstan. Almaty
- Light, R., (2001). Making the most of college: Students speak their minds. Boston: Harvard University
- Nacada (2006) Nacada concept of academic advising. Retrieved- January 20, 2015- from the Nacada Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources web site. Date View June 29, 2017 [www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Advising Issues/Concept-advising-introduction.htm](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Advising%20Issues/Concept-advising-introduction.htm).
- NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. NACADA concept of academic advising. – 2006. Date View June 29, 2017 www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Concept-of-Academic-Advising-a598.aspx
- National Academic Advising Association. (2006). NACADA concept of academic advising.

O' Banion, T. (1972). An academic advising model. *Junior college Journal*, 42 (6), 62-69.

Pascarella, E. and Terenzini, P. (2005) *How college affects students: A third decade of research*, Volume 2. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Regulation of organization educational process on credit technology in institutions of Kazakhstan, 2011. Date View June 29, 2017 www.edu.gov.kz

Schreiner, L. (2009). Linkin student satisfaction and retention. Research study retrived electronically Oktober 18, 2014. Date View June 29, 2017 <https://www.noellevitz.com/NR/rdonlyres/A22786FF-4045-A15A-CBE145B0C708/0LinkingStidentSatis0809.pdf>.

Wade, B. and Yoder, E. (1995). The professional status of teachers and academic advisers: It matters. *Teaching Through Academic Advising. New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 62*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Yoduf, M., (2003). The changing scene of academic advising. *Nacada Journal*, 23(1,2), 7-9

1. L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Kazakhstan, 010008, Astana, Satpayev Street, 2. E-mail: zhazkenti@mail.ru

2. L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Kazakhstan, 010008, Astana, Satpayev Street, 2. E-mail: kadisha1954@mail.ru

3. L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Kazakhstan, 010008, Astana, Satpayev Street, 2. E-mail: tolkyn_1969@mail.ru

4. L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Kazakhstan, 010008, Astana, Satpayev Street, 2. E-mail: saipov1954@mail.ru

5. L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Kazakhstan, 010008, Astana, Satpayev Street, 2. E-mail: kkr_1980@mail.ru

Revista ESPACIOS. ISSN 0798 1015
Vol. 38 (Nº 56) Year 2017

[Índice]

[In case you find any errors on this site, please send e-mail to webmaster]

©2017. revistaESPACIOS.com · ®Rights Reserved