Exploring the Information Seeking and Sharing Needs of M-STEM Coaches

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Research Focus

The USE Lab is working towards improving *Student Explorer*, a web application used by the M-STEM coaches to help their students improve their work in class. In order to improve *Student Explorer*, we wanted to better understand the type of information that the M-STEM coaches tend to share with their students to help them improve, both academically and personally, and what information they want to share during their meetings but currently lack.

Sample

Our sample consisted of four M-STEM coaches: three current M-STEM coaches and coach who recently left.

Methodology

All four coaches were interviewed during the Fall 2013 term. All four interviews were then transcribed. Once transcribed the interviews were open coded; we read and re-read all of the interviews multiple times in order to determine the themes that emerged throughout the interviews. By doing this we found three main themes.

Sharing Resources Information Most Common Type of Information Shared
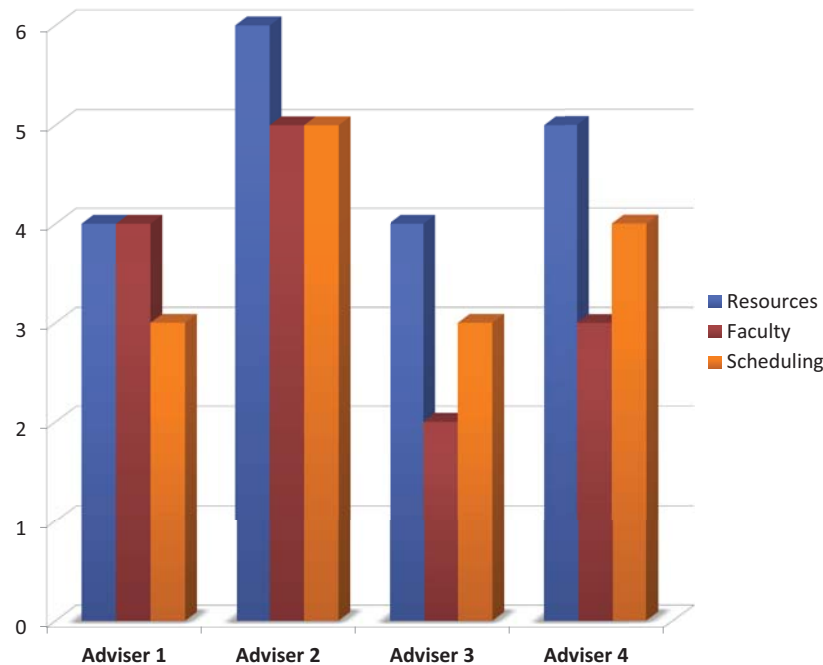
Implications

M-STEM instructors felt the biggest challenge in using the *Student Explorer* tool emerged from difficulties associated with contextualizing the information it provided. If the tool could capture more information about grading curves, for example, then coaches would be able to better help students understand their grades and how to improve their performance in the course. M-STEM instructors also would like to see class data based on only M-STEM students to see how students in the program are doing in comparison to their cohorts.

Results

M-STEM coaches seemed to be accustomed to guiding their students through their first year(s) in the engineering program. During the interviews it was clear that they wanted to equip their students with the tools and skills to help them be better students and become successful professionals.

Through the interviews we determined that M-STEM coaches want to share **resources**, including academic opportunities, research opportunities, summer internships etc.

They also shared that they wanted to help students manage their busy college **schedules**. M-STEM coaches have found that scheduling problems like not sleeping enough and maladaptive study habits have lead to students struggling academically as well as negatively impacting their personal lives.

Finally, M-STEM coaches want to encourage interactive and healthy relationships between students and **faculty** which lead to better information for the students and better results in the course.

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