



STRUGGLES OF UNIVERSITY ADVISING

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Struggles in university life know no bounds. But if there is one aspect that affects our lives the most then it is course registration, more commonly known as "advising".

Just to be clear, this article is applicable for the student of private universities.

Contrary to popular belief, private university students don't get everything handed out to them. Advising is probably the most glaring example for that.

For those of you who do not know what it is – academic advising is a decision-making process by which students realise their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchanges with an advisor. It is ongoing, multifaceted, and the responsibility of both the student and the advisor. In non-Wikipedia terms, advising is basically students cluelessly choosing academic courses within a very short window of time and later regretting it for the rest of the semester.

Different universities have different advising policies and procedures but they more or less follow a common trend,

making it harder for you to finish your university life in the promised four years. Students get assigned a particular time of a day when they can log into their student accounts and choose courses for the next semester. Sounds simple right? Well, not so much.

Firstly, in some universities, the time slot you are provided is often very short. In some cases, it is as short as 10 to 15 minutes. You also don't get to choose the timing for your slot. Which means your advising slot can start as early as 6 AM in the morning. Even though you might get multiple slots in a day, which means you could get the second slot in the afternoon and perhaps another in the evening, it's really hard for students to keep a track of these arbitrary timings. And if you miss advising in an earlier slot, thanks to sleep or bad internet, you might not get the courses you want because all the sections may have been filled up by your next turn.

Most universities have a criteria for determining which students get to do advising earlier and which students get the later slots. The first criteria is generally the number of credits that a student has completed. The more credits a student has

completed, the more priority they are given. Hence, students nearing the end of their degrees get priority in the advising hierarchy.

Second comes the cumulative grade point average – CGPA. Students who have a higher CGPA may get to complete their advising before those who have comparatively lower grades.

Lastly, if a student requests the department head or advisors for a particular course beforehand, they are also given priority while making the advising slot list.

There is also something called "pre-advising" in some universities which gives students the opportunity to inform the administration which courses are on their priority list and in which order. However, this does not prove to be very effective in most cases because most universities have a limited number of sections which offer one particular course for a semester.

So even if you selected, let's say, BUS 200 as your number one priority for next semester, if the students who had advising slots before yours and they filled up all the available seats, you can't get BUS 200 in the next semester. Some universities

require you to have a certain credit number before you will be eligible for pre-advising. This prevents the new students from starting off with the courses that they require.

This causes a few problems for students. Firstly, it gets really hard for them to complete their graduation in four years' time because they don't get the desired or even the minimum necessary courses they need to finish. Secondly, they are forced to pick courses they don't want only because the ones they *do* want are taken.

Sometimes students take courses that probably aren't even a part of their degree due to lack of instructions or a proper course guide.

However, from a student's perspective, a lot of these problems could be avoided by simply having a better communication medium between students and university administration and creating a revised advising policy that gives all students equal importance.

Megha is a student who has accepted and internalized the oppression of the system. If you have given up too, share your experience with her at megharahman26@gmail.com