

**TO:** Dr. Tony M. Liss, Provost of the City College of New York (CCNY); Ken Ihrer, Vice President of Operations & Chief Information Officer

**FROM:** Istiaq Ahmed, Undergraduate student at CCNY

**DATE:** February 19, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Improvements for online academic advisement

Many CCNY students, including myself, have had issues with getting in contact with our academic advisors for the past several semesters. The current state of the office of academic advisors leaves those who seek aid from them confused and stressed, as they try to wander through the multiple pages of different advisors and struggle with the major delay in response time. To speak on behalf of many students facing the similar issue, we believe that should be swiftly taken care of. Henceforth, I've come up with multiple solutions to address this issue and to hopefully create a less confusing environment for future and current students.

### **The Main Issue:**

Sometimes students are not available to go to campus and meet with our advisors in person, so we have to resort to contacting advisors digitally through email. This is where the problem starts, as our messages are met with long periods of silence. To figure out who to contact is a struggle in itself, but once we decide on who to contact, we are often left with a response days after, or even potentially ignored.

Some of these messages we are sending to these advisors are time sensitive information that we hope to get a reply for, but to be greeted with this kind of response is not only inconvenient, but in more serious cases can jeopardize our academic careers. This is coupled with the confusing system layout of who to contact, as mentioned earlier. When searching for academic advising, we are given confusing results when wanting to address a specific issue to a certain department. The website bombards us with a list of information of who to contact. so we as students are left confused and have to resort to contacting multiple people, hoping that one of them gives us guidance.

### **Possible Solutions:**

- Further organize how the different advisors are presented to students on the CCNY website, clarifying each department in groups rather than all in one section.
- If there is room in CCNY's budget, they should hire more advisors for more students to be able to contact with.
- Have the advisors have separate emails specifically for students. This could potentially organize their emails, clearing clutter for them to see the students' emails.
- Create an automatic replying system which tells the sender the advisor's time of availability, what kind of issues they deal with, and required information. This could help the student know if they contacted the correct advisor and how to send them information that can get their issue addressed quickly.

- Use a public messaging program such as Discord or Slack to streamline general issues for the advisors to see instantly.
  - This can be managed by the advisors themselves, or any students and faculty members who want to volunteer.

We understand the circumstances surrounding these issues, as we are going back and forth between in person and online learning due to the pandemic. However, this is not a full excuse for the issue at hand, as this is a prominent problem that can affect our own academic careers. That is why we must continue to tackle the problem head on for the sake of the students.

As an undergraduate student, the topic of advisement is especially important to someone like me as academic advisors can potentially help guide me through college. Therefore, I would love to continue this discussion thoroughly. You can contact me through my cellphone: (347)-845-5001; or my email [iahmed010@citymail.cuny.edu](mailto:iahmed010@citymail.cuny.edu).