

**The Expectations, Experiences and Satisfaction of Students Within a Nutrition and Dietetics
Program Regarding Faculty Academic Advising Using a
Prescriptive or Developmental Advising Lens**

By

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Abstract

This research study examined student's expectation, experiences and satisfaction with faculty academic advising using a prescriptive vs. developmental lens. The intent was to explore the student's expectations of academic advising, determine if their experiences aligned with their expectation and if this led to satisfaction of their academic advising. This study utilized the Systems theory to determine how academic advising is performed by the program and if that experience for the student is how the systems (institution, college, department, and program) are promoting the form of advising. This study utilized a qualitative case study approach, guided by three research questions. Data collected consisted of survey for background information, interviews and artifacts (documents). Data analysis explored themes among student responses to determine if their experiences and expectations were connected to developmental academic advising or prescriptive academic advising and if this led to satisfaction of advising. The finding of this study can be used to inform future decision making about the delivery of academic advising (faculty vs professional) the administrative value placed on academic advising and the time that advisors are dedicating to academic advising.

Keywords: academic advising, student expectations of academic advising, student experiences with faculty academic advising, faculty advisors, satisfaction with academic advising

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the students that took the time to help me to better understand their personal experiences with faculty academic advising. They were open and honest and their willingness to allow me to

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When anyone embarks on a major journey, they should understand that they cannot do this adventure alone. Even though I'm considered a non-traditional student, I'm not unique. There are other students in this program that work full time and many in academia already, just like me. There are many students that are married and have children. With having all the above I have had to rely on a lot of assistance throughout this endeavor. I would like to acknowledge each of these individuals.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Academic advising, in some pretext, has been present since students have been allowed to exercise some degree of choice in their collegiate life. According to Wimbish (1995), administrators, faculty members and staff were jointly responsible for student advisement in the first U.S postsecondary institutions. From the time Yale and Brown started matriculating graduates, institutions became aware of their students' academic and personal needs, and academic advising was a way to attend to those needs. (Gordan & Habley, 2000). As Winston (1994) describes, academic advising “grew from being an integral, seamless part of the teaching-learning process and a surrogate parent-child relationship to an ancillary responsibility, an extra duty (sometimes burden) for faculty members” (p. 112). Academic advising is defined as a systemic and developmental process and involves a student and an academic advisor establishing a relationship to facilitate decision making, resource identification, problem solving and goal setting in the advisee's personal, professional and academic endeavors (Crookston, 1972/1994/2009; Swecker et al., 2013). Because of the rapid changes (enrollment, escalating cost, technological, non-linear pattern of attendance, more diverse population) in higher education over the last decade, academic advisors are expected to lead, adapt, and produce results, all of which can be challenging.

Students' sense of belonging to a university and connectedness with faculty, staff and administrators beyond the classroom impacts their commitment to learning, interdependence, and ability to overcome obstacles. These factors ultimately determine their satisfaction with and success in higher education settings (Braun & Zolfagharian, 2014). Crookston (1994) defines advising as being concerned not only with a specific personal or vocational decision, but also “with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness and problem-solving, decision-making and evaluation skills” (p. 5).

Examples of academic advising models and facilitators

1. Faculty Advising – Faculty advises students on course scheduling, career development and fulfills all aspects of advising duties.
2. Professional Advisors (College based) – Individual colleges have a team of professional advisors to serve all students; they are responsible for all aspects of advising, including mentoring.
3. Professional Advisors (School/Division based) - Each division of a college has their own professional advisor(s). These individuals are responsible for all aspects of advising including mentoring.
4. Blended Advising – The model utilizes both professional advisors and faculty advisors. The professional advisor is responsible for the aspects of advising related to degree completion such as course scheduling, grade monitoring and graduation requirements. The faculty advisor is responsible for the aspects of advising related to career development, such as mentoring, networking and professional goal setting.
5. Designated Advisors – This model assigns a majority of advising responsibilities to one (or a few) select faculty in each program. These faculty members are responsible for all aspects of advising including both the degree completion aspects and the career development aspects.
6. Sequenced Advising – This model is based on credits earned. Freshmen and sophomores have a professional advisor, while juniors and seniors have a faculty advisor. (Pardee, 2004)

Different combinations of faculty and professional advising exist in higher education institutions due to many factors such as institutional size, budget, and organizational philosophy, and the advising

combinations are classified as different organizational models within advising initiatives on campuses. King (2008) reports that 25% of institutions utilize a faculty only model where students are assigned to a faculty member in their field of study, while 27% of institutions utilize a split model where students may see a general advisor, a departmental advisor or a faculty advisor based on their academic progress. An explanation of the ways in which a student could be advised and the administer of academic advising is described below:

Pros and cons exist for all types of advisors and advising models, but the literature tends to focus on the downfalls and problems associated with faculty advising (Smith & Allen, 2008). One of those problems is that faculty members may be “uninterested, unskilled, and unconcerned” (Dillion & Fisher, 2000). Additionally, some of these studies and models suggest the need for students to change advisors during their academic careers. This could be when a student transitions from each class ranking (sophomore to junior, etc.) or if they declare an emphasis within their majo. or their advisor changes from one faculty member to another. Walker, et al. (2017) reported findings from a study that “students mentioned their dissatisfaction with meeting with multiple advisors” (p. 49). Conclusions from Walker, et al suggests institutions should find the model that works most effectively in their departments for faculty/staff and students. With each of the models described above, research has identified two common approaches to academic advising - prescriptive and developmental advising (Smith & Allen, 2006). These two academic advising approaches provide a lens for the way in which advisors are conducting the time they spend with their advisees.

Prescriptive advising involves limiting advising sessions to academic process and procedures such as institutional deadlines, course selection, the process of registration, and explanations of degree curricula (Barbuto et al., 2011). Through prescriptive advising, students receive information necessary for progression in baccalaureate degree programs, but the approach does not typically promote an advising relationship (Barbuto et al., 2011). Students need guidance for course registration, but under a prescriptive approach, they seek assistance from their advisors only for this limited purpose.

Developmental advising focuses on the whole person sitting before the academic advisor and addresses every aspect of the student's life, including academic and personal, in the advising process (Drake, 2011). Because developmental advising focuses on student growth, a deeper commitment to understanding personal, cognitive, career, and psychosocial advancement theories is critical for the advisor to adopt. Advisors use these theories to assist students with goal setting, decision making, problem solving, creating self-awareness, and other areas to promote academic success. One of the founders of academic advising, Crookston defines developmental advising as a decision-making process during which students themselves reach their own academic potential through a communication and information exchange with an academic advisor (Crookston, 1972).

There are no downfalls or negative impacts to a student if they simply want prescriptive academic advising. However, developmental advising can have the greatest impact on students through supporting and challenging students to take advantage of the myriad of learning opportunities outside of their formal classes while forming a relationship with their advisor (Anderson, et al. 2014) Additionally, developmental advising encourages them to use the human and programmatic resources designed to promote development of their talents and broaden their cultural awareness. Finally, Winston (1994) states that “developmental advising has a multiplier effect that increases students’ involvement and impact in institutional programs and services” (p. 114) leading towards the potential of greater student success in college.

Gap in the Literature

The research literature around advising is vast and continues to grow as institutions focus on issues such as student success, time to degree completion, student debt, and other pressing issues (Crocker, Kahla & Allen, 2014; Cuseo, 2003; Hingorani, Askari-Danesh, 2014; Strayhorn, 2015; Hutson, 2013; Zhang, 2019; Allen, Corriero, Rothman, & Baldwin, 2010). Despite the growth in the literature base, little research has focused on the specific role, benefits, and expectations of faculty advising from the student's perspective. Within higher education, the push towards professional advising continues, the

ACT National Survey of Academic Advising found that the number of institutions staffing advising centers had tripled between 1980 and 2000 (Tuttle, 2000) This push potentially leaves some roles behind, without the research from the students' voice to back up the shift. Additionally, there has been little research focusing on the expectations of faculty advising as well as experiences of students.

A large proportion of research on this topic is from survey data and satisfaction data of the student. This research examines the concept of student satisfaction regarding interactions with their advisor, not necessarily if the interactions correlated to the student expectations. Faculty academic advising has a long history in higher education but has not been viewed well and described as poor quality. Wyckoff (1999) highlights “historically, faculty academic advising has stood among the least desired, least encouraged, and least beneficial activities in higher education” (p. 2). More recent, Hart-Baldrige (2020) found that faculty advisors reported a lack of support in advising initiatives and challenges at the institutional and departmental level, thus decreasing the overall desire to perform academic advising. Because this activity can be seen by faculty and institutional administrators as not as important or valuable as teaching and research, some faculty may not provide the experience that students want and need.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on systems theory, which is an area of inquiry through which one attempts to understand the wholeness of scientific and social problems (Bridgen, 2017). The systems movement has been the driving force in understanding the wholeness of scientific inquiry since the 1950s (Checkland, 2000). When using the systems movement as a means of methodology, we can divide into two domains of inquiry. First, Banathy and Jenlink (2004) define

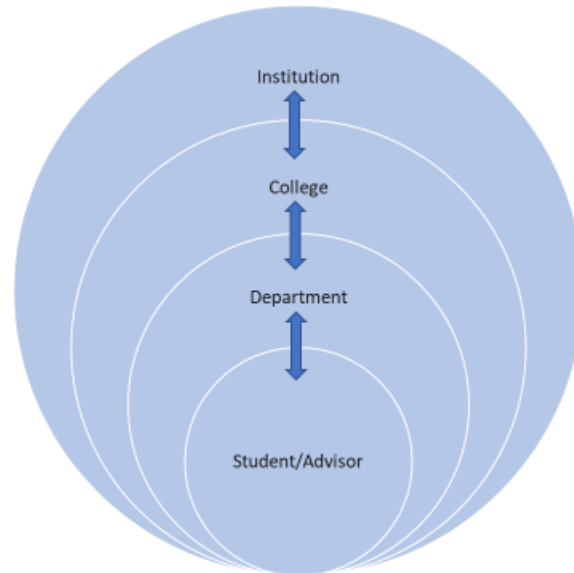
the study of methods in systems investigation by which we generate knowledge about systems in general and second, the identification and description of strategies, models, methods, and tools for the application of systems theory and systems thinking for working in complex systems. (p. 42)

Bridgen (2017) explains that two tenets of systems theory prove relevant to clearing up any confusion about the purpose and identity of academic advising. A systems view will allow exploration and characterize the system of interest, the system's environment, and the components and parts of the system. Using systems theory as a framework, the researcher seeks to identify how academic advising can be misunderstood because of a systems issue. Issues can be anywhere from lack of knowledge and training for the advisor or student, lack of value placed on the act or simply miscommunication regarding the importance academic advising can have for the students, the advisor, and the institution (see Figure 1). Banathy and Jenlink (2004) posit that viewing issues through systems theory can empower researchers to think about their surrounding environment and explore, understand, and describe the following:

- Characteristics of the embeddedness of the educational systems operating at several interconnected levels (institutional, administrative, instructional, learning experience levels)
- Relationships, interactions, and mutual interdependencies of systems operating at those levels within educational systems
- Relationships, interactions, and information exchanges between educational systems and their environments
- Purposes, goals, and boundaries of educational systems as those emerge from an examination of the relationship and mutual interdependence of education and the society
- Dynamics of interactions, relationships, and patterns of connectedness among the component of the system
- Systems processes, i.e. the behavior of education as a living system and changes that are manifested of systems and their environments over time. (p. 47)

Figure 1

Example of Systems Theory Framework in Academic Advising



Significance of Study

The need for continued research on academic advising is critical as many studies indicate that advising is a key factor in the success (graduation) and retention of students (Allen, et al., 2010; Cuseo, 2003; Crocker et al., 2014; Hingorani & Askari-Danesh, 2014; Metzner, 1989; Young-Jones et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2019). Approximately three-fourths of the variance in college student success comes from a combination of factors including that students would be more satisfied with their overall college experience if their expectations of advising are met (Strayhorn, 2015). This can, in turn, increase retention, improve graduation rates, reduce time to graduation, and decrease the financial burden of higher education. This study will be of interest to professional and faculty advisors, advising administrators who are responsible for decision-making regarding advising models and approaches, and advising scholars interested in understanding advisors' roles. The expectations and perceptions of the students may serve to confirm or challenge the reader's beliefs about academic advising.

Study's Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine students' perceptions, expectations, and satisfaction with faculty advising through a developmental and prescriptive lens. Higher education has increased advising expectation to address institutional challenges of increasing student engagement, career development, improving time to degree, maintaining federal compliance, decreasing financial debt, and other outcomes (Baer & Carr, 2015). During this shift to meet institutional challenges, student expectations and experiences are often left to be sorted after the fact. This study seeks to place the student in the forefront of how advising can be reimagined. Lotkowski et al. (2004) consider that without knowing the expectations of students, successfully meeting student needs and build quality interactions to promote satisfaction and retention can be difficult for advisors to achieve.

The research questions regarding this study include:

1. What have been student academic advising experiences? Are students describing their advising experiences more prescriptive or developmental in nature?
2. What are student expectations of academic advising? Which of these expectations have been met? Are students describing their advising expectations more prescriptive or developmental in nature?
3. How are students stating they are satisfied with their faculty academic advising?

Harrison (2009) phrases this concept well in stating: "The faculty-student interaction or advisor-advisee relationship is at the core of advising theory, practice, and research. Uncovering student and faculty expectations and perceptions of academic advising continues, to be a worthwhile pursuit" (p. 230). If faculty members are able to have the information upfront regarding their advisee's expectation of the advising relationship, or simply just an upcoming meeting, both the student and faculty member will benefit. Professionals interested in advising evaluation initiatives may benefit from a better understanding of how a systemic view helps them look at their own advising systems more holistically.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the context of the problem and defined the purpose of this study, which was to explore students' expectations, experiences and satisfaction with faculty academic advising. Also discussed was the theoretical framework, the research questions that guided the study as well as definitions of terms that are important to the context of the study. Chapter 2 will be a review of literature regarding many topics of academic advising.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the body of literature relevant to academic advising including the student perceptions, expectations and satisfaction regarding academic advising. This review will also examine the faculty perspective of academic advising including their perceptions, expectations and satisfaction. This chapter will begin with an introduction to the evolution and history of academic advising and the paradigm shifts from the prescriptive to developmental approach. In addition, the relationship between advisor and advisee will be explored along with the advising's impact on key student success measures such as retention. This review will highlight the previously identified hurdles that both students and faculty can face to effectively advise and lead to student success.

Evolution of Advising

Academic advising has changed over time as higher education has grown, evolving into a discipline of its own. Originating in the nineteenth century to bridge the relationships between students and faculty that were, at times, turbulent, academic advising has seen many forms and has been used for many purposes (Cook, 2009). The initial intention behind the creation of the academic advisor and the subsequent effects on students, faculty and the institutions remain unclear. Many suggest that academic advising is one of the foundations for success of students in college (Young-Jones et al., 2012). In the first U.S. postsecondary institutions, according to Wimbish (1995), administrators, faculty members, and staff were jointly responsible for student advisement. By the 1930s, most tasks were delegated to the dean of students, and as students were viewed as children, the dean of students acted in part as a parental stand-in to the students. Finally, in the 1960s there were changes in societal expectations that stimulated colleges to abandon the "*in loco parentis*" paradigm.

During this time, higher education saw several developmental theories emerge that "advocated the whole student approach to college education" (Jordan, 2000, p. 21). The knowledge of a student's identity is extremely useful to both the academic advisor and the student themselves. This knowledge enables insight that allows the advisor to explain conditions in the lives of the students that can be

confusing, frustrating, and challenging, and also allows the advisor to work with the student to create an effective plan for success and learn from their unique situations (Gordan & Habley, 2000).

Himes and Shulenberg (2016) offer a timeline of academic advising throughout history, dividing the practice into four eras:

1. Prior to 1870, academic advising was a largely unrecognized activity.
2. Between 1870 and 1970, the role of academic advising was recognized, but remained largely unexamined by both practitioners and other stakeholders.
3. Between 1970 and 2003, academic advising gained greater recognition and examination by practitioners.
4. From 2003 to present, academic advising practitioners attempt to intentionally clarify and convey the role of advising, including that of advising as a profession. (p. 2)

While advising scholarship points to the value for students, there has been a struggle for the same value to be seen by all. Grites (2016) states, “The historical development of the field sheds light on the reasons that those in higher education, including those who advise students, do not consistently value the practice or the expertise of advisors. It also points toward opportunities for change” (p. 2). This statement is important because many faculty members are told they will be an academic advisor after they have accepted a position, one in which they planned to do research specifically and had no intention of advising undergraduate students. Faculty focus and efforts are placed where their interests are and not on developing their knowledge regarding policies, curriculum, and degree completion requirements (Dillon & Fisher, 2000). The outcome of this practice can lead to students not receiving the guidance they are expecting from their faculty advisor. Students have a right to receive accurate information for degree completion and institutions/advisors have a responsibility to provide knowledge. In Table 1, Vowell and Fallen (2003) highlight the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

Table 1*Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Advisors and Student Advisees*

Rights of Student Advisees	Responsibilities of Advisors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to accurate information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provision of accurate information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being treated with respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treating student with respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Needs addressed seriously and with confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address student needs seriously and with confidentiality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accurate records of progress at the institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep accurate records of student progress at the institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assistance from advisors in decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist student in decision-making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Referral to appropriate support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refer students to appropriate support services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Obligation to make the final decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow the student to make the final decision
Rights of the Advisor	Responsibilities of Student Advisee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advisees actively participate in the advising process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actively participate in the advising process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advisees are responsible for their own actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responsible for their own actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advisees are on time for appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be on time for appointments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advisees are prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be prepared
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advisees are willing to discuss problems and challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be willing to discuss problems and challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advisees respect advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respect advisors

Student Retention, Graduation Rates, and Academic Advising

Studies have demonstrated a link between academic advising interactions and student retention (Allen, 2010; Drake, 2011; Hsu & Bailey, 2011; Hutson, 2013; Metzner, 1989; Young-Jones et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2019). Effective academic advising includes helping students learn about the current information related to their academic program, assisting students with progression toward their goals and degree completion, developing strategies to avoid academic problems or potential setbacks, possessing confidence regarding a student's decisions, and aiding with course selection (Allen, et al. 2010). By guiding students toward appropriate courses, and specifically at the correct times, academic advisors help prevent failures in classes, lessening frustration and creating more satisfied students and faculty, which leads to better retention (Hsu & Bailey, 2011). Researchers have found that interactions outside the classroom have an impact. Student interactions with “faculty, staff and administrators beyond the classroom ... impacts their commitment to learning, sense of belonging and interdependence, and ability to overcome obstacles, factors... determine their satisfaction with and success in higher education settings” (Hutson, 2013, p. 5). Additionally, Hsu and Bailey (2011) stated that students' satisfaction with academic advising impacts their retention. The Hsu and Bailey (2011) study showed the importance of advising and faculty advisor support on student persistence in which academic advisors play essential roles in advising students, specifically the first year. The authors go on to include: “Retention strategies include improving the student and advisor relationship, having the advisor more accessible to students, making course instructors aware of their role on retention, having a required first-year seminar course, helping students to get involved in the university community, and providing tools for students to obtain social support” (p. 40). Habley (1981) recognizes the relationship between effective advising and student retention and indicates that “in order for academic advising to affect retention positively, it must be a developmental activity” (p. 46). Grites (2013) reflects on Habley's work specific to his advisement-retention model:

Habley identified five dimensions within the educational environment along a continuum that provides reasons that students leave the institution (attrition) and for students remaining at the institution (retention). He further asserted that the environment could be changed along these dimensions to effect positive change in retention. He argued for advising as the critical element for improved retention because students gain the ability to clarify their educational goals and relate them to their educational experiences through the advising process. (p. 8)

A study conducted by Fosnacht et al. (2017) on academic advisor impact on retention reviewed interactions from over 52,000 students at over 200 diverse colleges and universities. The researchers found a positive correlation between the number of advisor interactions with students and their overall performance and retention. Interactions ranged from in-person visits to phone calls. Students that met with their academic advisor at least 3-6 times a year had a 13% improvement in course and degree persistence compared to students that met 0-2 times a year. Fosnacht's research was supported in a study conducted by Swecker et al. (2013). The authors found that for every meeting with an advisor, the odds that first-generation college student is retained increased by 13%. This suggests that advising appointments may be "one of the few institutional mechanisms that consistently connect students to the academic institution in meaningful ways" (p. 49).

Drake (2011) points out that four decades of student persistence research consistently highlights three critical elements: "the value of connecting students early on to the institution through learning support systems (tutoring and supplemental instruction programs, for example), first-year programming (learning communities and first-year seminars), and solid academic advising, with advising positioned squarely as the vital link in this retention equation" (p. 9). Academic advising has consistently been reported as a positive influence on student retention (Metzner, 1989). Academic advisors, whether professional advisors or faculty advisors, are among the few individuals that students can have continued access to while in college. Allen et al. (2010) state that a key to academic advising is centered in the

frequency of meetings. Regularly meeting with students increases their connection to the university. Also, research indicates a significant correlation between this frequency of advising sessions and student satisfaction with the process, which in turn, facilitates retention (Dillion & Fischer, 2000).

Metzner (1989) reports findings from over one thousand freshmen students at a public urban university that showed good advising had a negative association with dropout based on the following: “students’ better academic performance (GPA), their belief that an education at the university had greater value for future employment opportunities, more satisfaction with courses and the role of being a student, and less intent to leave the university” (p. 432). Metzner (1989) continues by suggesting her results are consistent with claims from academic advising literature that “high quality advising can promote student retention” (p. 432).

Another argument for academic advising to be done precisely is that advising can decrease time to completion (Sanders & Killian 2017). Not only are students retained but they complete their degrees on time and have the potential to decrease the burden of student loan debt. Some would consider retention and degree completion the purpose of advising, good advisors simply see them as byproducts of doing their job effectively (Bridgen, 2017).

Light (2004) underscores the value of academic advising and the positive influence on student retention through his conclusion that “good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience” (p. 81). Additionally, Wychoff (1999) suggests that a key challenge that faces higher education as a whole is the development of a strong and effective academic advising program. Through this program, students should have their understanding of the relationship between the theoretical and the practical strengthened. Wychoff (1999) proposes that the students who “understand this relationship are more likely to be retained in higher education” (p. 2).

Regardless of institutional type or the composition of the student body, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) state that solid academic advising has an important impact on student persistence. Students who are the happiest and academically the most successful have developed a solid relationship with an

academic advisor, a faculty member, or an administrator who can help them navigate the academic and social shoals of the academy. This concept applies if the relationship is formal or informal, both having a positive impact on enhanced student learning. How might we then define “solid academic advising”?

Cuseo (2003) states that any definition of advising “must be guided by a clear vision of what ‘good’ or ‘quality’ advising actually is—because if we cannot define it, we cannot recognize it when we see it, nor can we assess it or improve it” (p. 13). Cuseo suggests that assessment of academic advising highlights the significance of advising and reveals the connection to an advisor’s professional development.

The advisor-faculty relationship is critical to both retention and student morale (Hale et al 2009). Students who establish good relationships with faculty members outside the classroom, specifically in a mentor/advisor type role have been shown to make more progress towards graduation than those that have limited involvement with the faculty expect in the classroom (Cuseo, 2003). While historically faculty advising has made up almost 80% of the advising units across higher education (Andrews et al., 1987), there has been a shift due to lack of importance placed on this valuable component. Many institutions are now going to professional advising.

Although student retention is important, student completion should be the main goal of academic advising. Tinto (1975) defined student matriculation as an ongoing process of interactions between the student and the academic and social systems present at the institution. There is little doubt that when an academic adviser gives inaccurate information, the result can be a disastrous circumstance, such as a delay in graduation. Such a consequence could lead to the expenditure of additional money and even, perhaps, the loss of job opportunities (White, 2015). Kim and Feldman (2011) suggest that “effective academic advising ensures that students take appropriate coursework at the appropriate time and helps students graduate in a timely manner” (p. 223). Hingorani and Askaur-Danesh (2014) identify that faculty academic advising has a significant impact on a student’s academic success and that 84% of institutions that require mandatory one-on-one meetings with faculty advising have a positive effect on retention and graduation. While not a direct correlation, Hawthorne and Young (2010) provide support for the

importance of faculty-student connections by demonstrating that satisfaction with faculty support significantly influenced overall satisfaction with the college environment contributing to the students' intention to complete their degree. A mixed methods study conducted by Rosa (2009) concerning nursing students and advising showed that when students were supported by faculty advisors, they were well prepared to matriculate. From data collected through online surveys, in-depth faculty interviews, and document analysis of institutional and program advisement material, Rosa (2009) demonstrated a connection between advising and student success. Additionally, Rosa (2009) found that students who reached graduation successfully typically were advised via a developmental advising model.

Student Expectations

Many higher education researchers identified that besides quality of instruction, academic advising is high on the priority list of students. Many colleges and universities struggle creating the best program to meet their majority of the student's needs. Boers (2001) argued that in the educational process, the only way that students' expectations can be met is for educators to know the exact nature of these expectations. Anderson et al. (2014) identify that outcomes (poor ratings, etc.) are the typical measure examined when attempting to improve advising programs, individualized expectations that student have of academic advising are not explored (p. 28). Anderson et al. (2014) aimed to study the relationship among perceived advisor behaviors, student expectations, and student satisfaction at a state university. Their results indicate that no correlation exists between prescriptive or developmental expectations and behaviors. The lack of correlation between both prescriptive and developmental expectations and behaviors indicate advisors are not perceived as meeting student expectations (Anderson et al., 2014). Most novice advisors will initially utilize a prescriptive advising style (Jordan, 2000). Since many students expect this type of advising (Crookston, 1972; Kim & Feldman, 2011), many advisors never transition to more of a developmental style. While prescriptive advising may be an efficient method of scheduling classes, prescriptive advisors are likely less effective in fostering students' academic and social integration within the institution (Hale, et al. 2009). Additionally, if faculty academic advisors are

successfully advising with a prescriptive model and not receiving negative feedback, there is minimal incentive to progress towards a developmental model that takes more time and is not rewarded through the department's promotion and tenure process or through the institution itself.

While much research suggests that students favor developmental advising, the results of the Hale, et al. (2009) study indicates "meeting student expectations, whether developmental or prescriptive, contributes to student satisfaction" (p. 36). When the advisor's approach aligned with the student's expectation, student satisfaction with advising increased. The faculty side of this equation will be examined later. Smith and Allen (2006) point out, based upon their findings from a study with over 2,100 students, that the delivery of accurate information is central to advising for all students. They relay from their results that "while students value the developmental aspects of advising, they value accurate information above anything else" (p. 62). This statement by Smith and Allen (2006) suggests that academic advising does not need to be separated into "developmental" or "prescriptive", but that effective academic advising has both elements present, and when both are integrated, perhaps satisfaction will be even greater. Additionally, in 2008, these same authors concluded "similar to findings from previous research, faculty and students agree with each other that providing accurate information about degree requirements was more important than any other advising function" (Smith & Allen, 2008, p. 620).

Kim and Feldman (2011) also reveal similar results when conducting focus group interviews with undergraduate students regarding their needs and expectations of academic advising services. They state: "The participants indicated a high level of frustration with the academic advisors' lack of knowledge of upper-level courses and curriculum structures" (p. 224). Also, similar to the Smith and Allen (2006; 2008) findings, Kim and Feldman (2011) report that participants expressed a wide range of satisfaction levels with current academic advising services regardless of which advisor they were interacting with. They go on to explain "the variations in students' satisfaction with the academic advising services may be due to the different needs and expectations each student may have... rather than the variation in the quality of the services or individuals providing the services" (p. 224).

Hale et al. (2009) surveyed undergraduate students to determine satisfaction with academic advising in relation to congruence between the current and preferred advising styles they were receiving. Their findings showed a significant difference in satisfaction with academic advising when students were grouped by current advisor's style and preferred advising style. Additionally, the researcher found that "students who had a developmental advisor and held developmental advising as their preferred style had a significantly higher level of satisfaction than students with a prescriptive advisor who held developmental academic advising as their preferred style" (Hale et al., 2009, p. 321). The importance of these findings is in line with other research studies suggesting that the expectation of students' experiences with their academic advisor can have a positive impact if they align. If advisors have a preconceived mentality that students just want to be told what courses to schedule, misunderstandings will occur. If students are not receiving what they are expecting from their academic advisor, this can result in the student having unfulfilled expectations and leaving the advising appointment feeling that their advisor is not helpful (Bridgen, 2017).

In a qualitative study, Walker et al. (2017) analyzed first year students' perceptions of academic advising. What they found from the 162 freshmen who participated in the study were themes related to advisor communication, students' desire for a relationship with an advisor, and advisor accessibility. When communication was good and effective, students were more satisfied with their advisor. Walker et al. (2017) state specifically, "Good communication between students and advisors involves more than giving students accurate and understandable information" (p. 46). The information is increasingly more effective when delivered in a "personal and caring fashion" (Walker et al., 2017). Additionally, they found students felt communication is a reciprocal process, and they feel important when advisors listen to them. Some students expressed that when they raised questions or concerns to their academic advisor in meetings and they were not addressed, satisfaction decreased. Regarding the advisor-advisee relationship "students reported various expectations for and satisfaction with their current relationship with academic advisors. Although some students expressed contentment with lack of personal connection or felt

comfortable with their superficial relationship, others expected to develop a close relationship (24%)” (Walker et al., 2017, p. 48). Finally, when students were questioned about accessibility to their advisor, results were mixed. Some (10%) reported no problems scheduling meetings or communicating with them via phone or email while others (20%) state they experienced difficulties scheduling meetings with their advisor or did not receive return phone calls or emails (Walker et al., 2017). One important factor regarding the findings of Walker et al. (2017) includes students’ perceptions of whether their advisor spent sufficient time with them did not correlate to duration, but whether all their questions were answered. This study confirms what other studies have found: Students desire individual attention and personal experiences with their advisor, and their perceptions of advising are influenced, informed, and maintained by their interactions of their advisor (Walker et al., 2017).

Ismail et al. (2021) found similar results in a study conducted with 221 students that aimed to examine the relationship between service and satisfaction for academic advising. What these authors found was two variables, reliability and empathy, have a statistically significant relationship with the extent of students’ satisfaction. Gordon (2020) studied student satisfaction within centralized advising office with general, departmental and individual advisors. He found there was statistically significant evidence in student satisfaction when students were placed with an individual advisor, which could be a faculty advisor, and the least satisfied students were those that were assigned to the general group (an advising center).

Understanding that students’ expectations of advising can and most likely will change throughout their academic journey should be acknowledged. Their familiarity and experience with college life, in addition to approaching graduation can be reasons some students may expect a different experience in an advising appointment. Smith and Allen (2006) find that students in the lower ranks value help in selecting general education options more than higher ranked students. Additionally, Berdahl (1995) discusses different stages of a student’s academic process and how their needs can change. First year students are concerned with picking a major and getting into courses. They also may have personal or academic crises

that need to be addressed. Upperclassmen could face similar issues but are more concerned with having their advisor help with specialization, graduate school, and career plans. Conversely, Andrews et al. (1987) found that students' class level did not significantly predict advising expectation, but they did find that students' age in fact did. These results suggested that maturation is a more important influence on perceived need than the length of time a student has been at the institution.

Low (2000) and Light (2001) indicate that student satisfaction with academic advising is an important part of a successful college experience. Noel-Levitz (2006) conducted a nationwide survey of students' satisfaction involving 226,423 undergraduates enrolled in 425 US colleges and universities. The researchers found that, next to quality of instruction, academic advising "is consistently the next-most-important area of the college experience to students ... ahead of registration, campus safety, and support services, to name just a few" (p. 3). Noel-Levitz (2006) also found that while 73.7% of respondents were satisfied with their academic advisor's knowledge of degree requirements, only 67.2% were satisfied with their advisor's concern about their success as individuals and only 59.9% were satisfied with the degree to which their advisor helped them to set goals (Figure 1). This survey was conducted again roughly ten years later to see if there was any change in student satisfaction with academic advising. Levitz (2019) reported a 10% increase at four-year public institutions in student satisfaction regarding their academic advisors' knowledge with degree requirements. Providing knowledgeable advising to students in addition to building solid relationships with students and advisors or faculty can also help with overall student success efforts. If students are satisfied, they may feel more confident and remain persistent throughout college. Finally, Levitz (2019) documented that between 2016-2019 students surveyed reported, "My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major" at a 90% level of importance, but only 71% level of satisfaction (see Figure 1). This highlights the gap that needs to be filled between student's expectation of advising and their satisfaction. Bryant (2016) emphasizes, "It is especially important to pay attention to student satisfaction levels with the advising experience because higher

satisfaction in this area in particular has also been linked to higher institutional graduation rates and higher alumni giving rates” (Bryant, 2016, para. 8).

Figure 2

Student’s Percent Satisfaction with their Academic Advisors

Survey item / student ratings	Four-year privates	Four-year publics
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.		
Importance to students	89%	88%
Student satisfaction	68%	64%
Gap	21%	24%
My academic advisor is approachable.		
Importance to students	86%	86%
Student satisfaction	68%	62%
Gap	18%	24%
My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.		
Importance to students	84%	83%
Student satisfaction	62%	55%
Gap	22%	28%

Note. Levitz 2006 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report, the table above reflect the percentage of students who indicated that the item was important or very important to them and whether they were satisfied or very satisfied in this area.

Faculty Advising

Faculty advisors, with their strong connection to the curriculum and profession are uniquely positioned to provide quality and individualistic advising experiences to their students. Yet the literature suggests faculty advising is not without challenges and criticisms. For example, Kennemer and Hurt (2013) identify essential advising traits by both faculty and students including:

- disseminates accurate information, gives appropriate guidance, and knowledgeable of university and degree requirements,
- understands student development and effectively guides students toward setting and reaching goals,
- guides students to additional campus resources that are needed,

- develops relationships with the student,
- shows courtesy and respect toward the advisee,
- demonstrates interest in advisee's academic program, and
- exhibits approachability and good listening skills.

Smith and Allen (2008) reviewed 30 years of literature and cautioned that increasing the essential proficiency and comprehension needed by faculty to provide the type of advising students require can be lengthy and difficult. They propose that advisors must develop a holistic style of advising, merging the curricular and the cocurricular parts of an education and embedding five distinct domains: (1) integration, (2) referral, (3) information, (4) individuation, and (5) shared responsibility. While the above-mentioned qualities and characteristics for an effective faculty advisor are important, what is also important is to clearly understand that advising students, in most cases, is not a defined or outlined component of their appointment. Additionally, most faculty are not trained by their institutions on how to advise, let alone how to be an effective advisor (Fiddler & Alicea, 1996). Many institutions reward research and teaching accomplishments more highly suggesting these responsibilities have far greater value to the faculty member than academic advising.

Walters and Seyedian (2016) opine that faculty academic advising at large may not be considered as valuable as teaching and research simply because advising is not as valued by faculty or administrators themselves. Many faculty members may not prioritize advising simply because they do not believe administrators consider advising in promotion and tenure decisions (Dillon & Fisher, 2000). A faculty member's appointment can be broken down into three components: research, teaching, and service. Percentages are assigned to these three categories in a faculty member's contract to provide structure and clarify expectations. For example, a contract could be assigned a 60/30/10, with 60 percent of the faculty member's time allocated to research, 30 percent allocated to teaching, and only 10 percent of their weekly time allotted for service. The 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (U.S. Dept of Education, 2005) defined service as number of hours spent on: thesis, dissertation, comprehensive exams, and

certification committees; administrative and committee work; student advising; and office hours (Bowden & Gonzalez, 2012). With this broad definition of service available, a faculty member could engage in a number of activities to contribute to their service component and not necessarily have to rely on advising to achieve their service component requirement. Hunter and White (2004) state that “the challenge is to create an academic advising system that students, faculty, staff, and administrators view as essential, not peripheral, to the educational experience” (p. 21).

Some suggest that academic advising is multidimensional and that faculty advisors do not take responsibility for all dimensions leading to student dissatisfaction. As previously mentioned, Allen and Smith (2008) highlight five domains that should be included in faculty academic advising.

1. Integration of the students’ academic, career and life goals with each other and combining their required curriculum.
2. Referring to campus resources for both academic and non-academic problems or concerns.
3. Information regarding degree requirements, policies and procedure of the institution.
4. Individuation of the student and considering their individual needs and characteristics.
5. Shared responsibility or encouraging students to assume responsibility for their own education but by helping “develop planning, problem-solving and decision-making skills.” (p. 609)

Additionally, Allen and Smith (2008) suggest that for a faculty advisor to complete these tasks, a considerable amount of attention would need to be dedicated to each student for these five domains to not only happen, but to have value for the student and the faculty advisor. With such limited time available to these faculty members to have to advise well, many students may not be receiving this type of quality advising from their faculty advisor.

Expecting a faculty member to be knowledgeable and skilled in their interactions with students for all aspects of academic advising may be unrealistic for administrators especially if the faculty member

also has a teaching and research appointment. Since faculty members teach the curriculum, being knowledgeable in degree pursuant coursework is feasible to accept. Until value is placed on the act of academic advising from higher education administrators with an assessment and evaluation component added to include in promotion and tenure, a faculty member may allot their time to activities they see will assist in career advancement (Allen & Smith, 2008). An examination of the allocation of and breakdown of time is discussed the next section.

Faculty Time and Service

The current situation in the majority of higher education institutions is that the academic advising tasks are assigned to faculty. Yonker et al. (2019) reported findings from a 2016 survey that indicated that faculty provide advising at 89% of 4-year public and 93% of 4-year private institutions. They state that primary faculty advising occurs because “faculty members are assumed to be the campus experts in their particular discipline, understanding both the courses required to obtain appropriate knowledge and the preparation required for employment or graduate school” (Yonker et al., 2019, p. 34-35). These faculty members, who in addition to their research, teaching responsibilities, committees and service work, are assigned a group of advisees to monitor their progress towards graduation. Arum and Roksa (2011) challenge the concept of faculty availability to advise. They state, “On average, faculty spend approximately eleven hours per week on advisement and instructional preparation and delivery” (p. 8). Eleven hours divided between instruction, and preparation of that instruction, in addition to advising students and preparing to advise students may arouse concern as to how equipped faculty actually are to advise.

For effective and successful academic advising, the faculty member/academic advisor must be knowledgeable regarding the institution’s resources, policies, program details, curricula requirements, and students’ performance. In many cases, the faculty advisor is handicapped by the lack of knowledge and experience in advising, and additionally, lacks the time necessary to gain the knowledge to be successful (Loucif et al., 2020). Even though many faculty members exhibit the characteristics necessary to become

an excellent advisor (caring, knowledgeable, skilled in their interactions), expecting these individuals to be familiar with all aspects of academic advising to best support student success in addition to maintaining adequate research productivity and teaching responsibilities could be considered unrealistic. At times, advisors are doing more than academic advising to further complicate the time component. In one study (Bridgen, 2017), an academic advisor reported that she could spend a significant amount of time teaching students' basic skills. While these skills can help students engage in their education, efforts dedicated to tutoring on practical tasks prevent advisors from helping students develop intellectually (Bridgen, 2017, p. 16). King (1988) suggests that faculty members are viewed by students as inaccessible, holding advising as a relatively low priority, and having limited knowledge of student development theory.

The dynamic teaching, research, and service responsibilities faculty have, fluid changes in institutional policy, and shifts in personnel and academic support of students are some of the challenges faculty members can face (Hutson, 2013). Swanson (2006) suggests although advising is crucial to the development of the student, faculty do not regard advising as a priority in their responsibilities as this service is not used as a criterion for promotion, tenure, and/or salary at many institutions of higher learning. This was evidenced in the American College Testing (ACT) Program's Fifth National Survey of Academic Advising as 80% of the responding institutions said students are required to get a faculty signature before registering for classes (Habley & Morales, 1998) yet only "51% of these institutions evaluated academic advising" (Carduner, 2005. p.48). Training was offered by only 35% of the surveyed institutions and a mere 31% provided recognition and/or compensation for advising (Carduner, 2005).

Wychoff (1999) states "to establish a high degree of commitment to the academic advising process, university and college administrators must become cognizant not only of the educational value of advising but of the role advising plays in the retention of students" (p. 3). Faculty need the time and training to advise and advise well. They need resources and up-to-date policy and procedures outlined so mistakes are not made or overlooked. Dillion and Fisher (2000) asked faculty members who participate in

advising duties to list what they considered to be important components to successful advising. Knowledge was reported by 76% of respondents to be what they (faculty) consider the most important by their advisees. Faculty advisors did not feel that personality attributes to successful advising. Vowell and Farren (2003) suggest the need for correcting bad advising, but the correction needs to be done in a way that is effective for the department as a whole. They state that corrections of bad advising on a fully tenured professor can be difficult. Additionally, if the response to this poor advising is to simply reassign the advisees to another faculty member, a true correction is not being made. This leads to the newly assigned faculty advisor being overworked and essentially being punished for being a good advisor. Finally, they state, “Advising administrators need to be aware of this dynamic and seek solutions appropriate within their institution” (Vowell & Farren, 2003, p. 59). Examining this point through the systems theory lens, Bridgen (2017) found in his study that when students have the ability to select their advisor, and not follow a programmatic system of pairing students and advisors, that weak advisors do less work than good advisors. There is a concept that the non-advising priority of faculty’s time is being reinforced. Bridgen (2017) highlights that formal incentives for the faculty are based on research, so if a faculty member is performing poorly at advising, students will not attend meetings, and the faculty member will be able to do more research. Bridgen (2017) also suggests that in some ways “you are being rewarded because you do not want to advise....the faculty members who do not enjoy advising are thus incentivized to practice less-than-excellent advising because students will seek out others deemed better, thereby allowing the uninterested advisor more time to research” (p. 17).

Lack of appropriate time could be a major factor in why some faculty advisors are not considered “good advisors.” Perhaps they do not have adequate time allotted to these services, or perhaps they have realized there is not a value placed on the act of advising by administration. The expectation of time can be examined bilaterally. First, the time for the individual advising, which includes preparation, appointments, and follow-up and secondly, the time spent in relation to other academic activities (Vowell & Farren, 2003). Many faculty members are given the instruction to devote “adequate time” to advising,

the expectation can cause some frustration when advising is treated as another “add-on” to an already full, defined load in the faculty member’s contract. Further compounding this frustration, students expect faculty advisors to be readily available for advising purposes during posted office hours. If advisors are using email to advise, students expect questions to be answered immediately (Vowell & Farren, 2003). This demand for immediate faculty response by students and the institution can lead to many negative consequences, including attrition.

When faculty are fully engaged in the advising process, both advisee and advisor can benefit. Kuh et al. (2005) researched DEEP (Documenting Effective Educational Practices) schools and discovered that when faculty advising is valued, advising can become very successful. Kuh et al. (2005) state, “At FSU, UTEP and WSSU, faculty members told us that advising students is intrinsically rewarding. At these institutions, advising is viewed as a way to connect students to the campus and help them feel that someone is looking out for them. As with other forms of student-faculty interactions, academic advising is encouraged, supported, and rewarded at DEEP colleges and universities” (p. 214).

For effective faculty advising, programs could be developed to serve as a scaffolding so units can see how comprehensive advising can fit their departments. King (2003) points out five vital components for this to be successful:

1. An advising program mission statement
2. A specific individual designated to coordinate the advising activities
3. A systemic training program for all advisors
4. Evaluation of both the advising program and the individual advisors
5. Recognition and rewards for exemplary advising.

Smith and Allen (2008) underscore the notion that “expecting that students will have all of their advising needs met by one faculty member for whom advising is only one of the several responsibilities (not to mention low status and unrewarded activity) may be a disservice to students” (p. 623).

Eric White (2015) gave a slightly different thought to the traditional way academic advising had been viewed for so long. He stated:

For any academic advising program to function optimally, a number of premises should be embraced. One of the most important, those in charge of academic advising should abandon the notion that academic advising is a service. While providing services to students should not be denigrated, the success of academic advising rests with acknowledging that it is as much a part of an institution's educational mission as is disciplinary instruction. In fact, identifying academic advising as a service leads to erroneous expectation and inappropriate assessments. (p. 272)

With such little emphasis and value placed on the service component of faculty contracts, students may not be receiving the guidance and mentoring they expect. When perceived as part of the educational experiences of students, faculty advising can be measured to include more aspects than just satisfaction. Faculty can be assessed on advising content, process and outcomes that align with institutional missions, values and goals. The faculty advising load needs to be strategically assigned using rationale, such as compatibility of interests, and not just equal distribution of numbers of students.

Faculty Expectations

There are many studies that dive into the understanding of students' perceptions and expectation of advising but not many that consider the faculty perspective. Harrison (2009) surveyed faculty to get a better understanding of what their perceptions of advising were and what they thought students wanted and found most important. Knowledge and availability were the two main responses faculty gave as being the most important to becoming an effective advisor. Results indicated that "knowledge was the advisor's primary responsibility and enhancing one's knowledge was the principal means of improving in the role" (Harrison, 2009, p. 231). Additionally, the respondents suggested that a lack of knowledge with policies and advising issues can affect the ability of the advisor to be effective. Changes to curriculum occur regularly, not just in the faculty advisor's department, but in all departments across campuses. Maintaining a working knowledge of all changes, requirements, etc. can become exceptionally time

consuming. When advising is considered service in most instances, the time needed to sustain this valued knowledge may not be worth the faculty advisor's time. A close second to knowledge, availability of the advisor, was next in line for the qualities of an effective advisor. Education research reinforces the notion that good advising takes time and being available to students in multiple ways is one of the five best practices in academic advising (Harrison, 2009).

In addition to time, advising takes intrinsic motivation of the faculty advisor to learn and perform the advisement well as to see the outcomes in their advisees. Hancock (1996) articulates the concept that "the strength of the faculty member's motivation toward student advisement depends on the strength of that faculty member's expectation that effective advisement is accomplishable, and that advisement will result in a valued outcome" (p. 12). In addition, Myers and Dyer (2005) concluded from a national survey data study that only 60% of faculty academic advisors felt that advising undergraduate students was a scholarly activity and that 100% of faculty agreed that advising graduate students was well worth their time. These findings are important to analyze in order to understand what activities are valued. In many institutions, advising graduate students is considered to be a part of research activity, and the outcomes these students produce is also counted towards a faculty member's research. Advising graduate students tends to be valued more than advising undergraduate students and can be interwoven into the faculty members' work. Engaging undergraduate students needs to also be a focus for faculty advisors.

Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) question if faculty members matter in student learning and find that there is an important link in the development of undergraduate students and how the faculty behaviors and attitudes affect this development. Knowing that faculty members can make a difference assisted students in focusing in learning aspects of the undergraduate experience. In an earlier study conducted by Creeden (1990), faculty members indicate that they are in fact interested in assisting students with academic plans and evaluating their academic progress. These same faculty members do not feel they are responsible or do an above satisfactory job assisting students in considering life goals, developing decision-making skills, or enhancing self-understanding. On the other hand, students that were surveyed in this study felt that they "feel a need to discuss broader, more substantive, educational

questions” (Creeden, 1990, p. 34). The findings here highlight that while faculty academic advisors are making sure that students know what classes to take for graduation (prescriptive advising), students want a richer experience with their advisor (developmental advising). Leonhardy and Jimmerson (1992) found that most faculty advisors “felt they were doing a better job carrying out advising functions than did their advisees or their administrators” (p. 40). Again, unless faculty advisors know the expectations of their students, as well as the college/departmental policies, how can the advising process be one which promotes student success?

An advisor has the potential to offer a student a personal connection to their institution that is empirically vital to student retention and student success. Faculty advisors have often viewed advising as a low priority within their heavy workload of teaching, research, and service (Vowell & Farren, 2003). Allen and Smith (2008) discussed how to implement several advising models that assign varying degrees of responsibility to faculty advisors. To investigate different approaches to addressing student dissatisfaction with academic advising, Allen and Smith (2008) surveyed faculty advisors to identify which academic advising responsibilities they perceived as advisor functions. The researchers, based their survey instrument, the Inventory of Academic Advising Functions—Faculty, found that faculty advisors believed that their time was best invested connecting students with major life goals and referring students to other resources; they believed that students should assume responsibility for their own education (Allen & Smith, 2008). Through faculty advising experiences, faculty advisors can become better instructors as they are forced to learn more about the institution and hopefully to see the student in different ways.

The Change of Expectations

Higher education is consistently changing. Notable changes that are relevant to this topic include: budget cuts, technological change, and demands for productivity and accountability (Bouchrika, 2022). Faculty roles and responsibilities have changed since the advent of US higher education, specifically the amount of time faculty members spend advising students. Equally as important, students have changed in their attitudes and behaviors, and the student body on most college campuses are becoming more diverse.

Students are attending part-time, are working, are older, veterans, or parents and could be more career focused than students of the past. Additionally, many students are motivated by financial needs and transfer from one institution to another, live at home, and commute to campus making advising important to help these students keep their workloads and class schedules manageable in order to achieve academic success (Kim & Feldman, 2011). Many of these characteristics have resulted in students being identified as higher risk that may not reach graduation (Smith & Allen, 2006). Modern students grew up in an age of convenience, technology, and fast service, so there is little wonder that students are behaving more like customers than traditional college students (Propp & Rhodes, 2006). Meir (2018) explains that students can be seen as customers of academic advising. Students pay tuition and expect certain services in return from the university. Many colleges are attempting to adjust their advising departments to meet student needs, for example offering web-based advising, extended hours, and drop-in/walk-in advising to make advising a convenient service. To further this point that students are customers, Bridgen (2017) stated “the pressure to retain students seems to result in a customer-service mentality though which the advisors feel discomfort in holding students accountable” (p. 16). Hoffman and Kretovics (2004) synthesize the views of students as customers, products, and employees into the metaphor of students as partial employees. To them, students “enhance their traditional customer role by performing employee-like tasks that facilitate the co-production of the educational process” (Hoffman & Kretovics, 2004, p. 110). Thus, Hoffman and Kretovics (2004) emphasize the need of students to participate in their educational experiences and take ownership so that the greatest possible outcome can be achieved. Similarly, Clayson and Haley (2005) advocate the view of students as partners rather than consumers willing to take responsibility for their education. Hence, suggesting that students do and should play a participative role in their education. On the other hand, Steele and White (2019) disagree with the concept of students as customers and do not see academic advising as a service, but rather a disciplinary instruction. They state, “Identifying the student as a customer in the academic advising relationship ultimately leads to viewing advising as a service, which then leads to the wrong expectations and the wrong assessment and finally to a truncated view of academic advising and academic advising’s place in the higher education enterprise”

(Clayson & Haley, 2005, p.6). Instilling value to academic advising is critical for administrators and leaders of the institutions that has been missing.

Institutional Expectations

The importance of academic advising is often communicated through institutional or departmental missions, division of faculty duties, and recognition for excellence in advising (Kerr, 2000). Joslin (2018) draws attention to the point that “one example of chaotic management of academic advising can be seen at institutions that allow different academic advising systems and student success strategies to exist in different units, departments, and colleges regardless of institutional goals” (p.13). Hart-Baldrige (2020) explains faculty are typically evaluated in their work through research, service, and teaching. Advising is not a component of most faculty appointments. Advising is often considered a part of their evaluated activities. A national study conducted by Myers and Dyer (2005) found that 60% of department administrators regarded advising students and student organizations as important and should be a factor in promotion and tenure. Only 31% of these same administrators reported they are they currently considering advising in the promotion evaluation process. Depending on the institution, or even the department the faculty member is in, advising undergraduates could fall under teaching or service. While advising graduate students typically falls under research. White (2015) continues the conversation stating, “While providing services to students should not be denigrated, the success of academic advising rests with acknowledging that advising is as much a part of an institution’s educational mission as is disciplinary instruction” (p. 272). When faculty advising is an embedded constituent in learning and teaching within the institution, He and Hutson (2017) propose that advising can be “measured to include more aspects than satisfaction, such as advising content, process and outcomes that align with institutional missions, values and goals” (p, 67). This alignment from administrators can demonstrate they value advising and see the connection with retention and graduation. When aligning the mission, values, and goals to advising, tangible steps need to be present for all to succeed. For example, an institution should provide a new faculty member with easy access to trainings and resources so they can be

successful when advising students. Habley (2004) found that only about one-third of higher education institutions provided professional development trainings and activities related to academic advising, and less than one-fourth of these activities had faculty involvement. One can conclude that there are two specific issues to address in this statement: 1) There is not enough training for faculty members to effectively learn and implement proper advising techniques and policies and procedures; and 2) The emphasis of value for faculty members to increase their advising knowledge has not been a priority at the institution.

Institutional leadership can emphasize advising by increasing the number of personnel available to meet with students, formatting advising delivery, placing a higher level of importance in promotion, detailing advising responsibilities in contracts and providing training so advisors are equipped with the knowledge to succeed (Swecker et al., 2013, Vowell & Farren, 2003). The supportive institution will invest time and energy into their advising model and administration, connecting advising to the mission and culture of the university. Additionally, ensuring that the institution places qualified individuals in the positions to advise students is necessary. Moreover, having a reliable means to evaluate these persons is equally necessary. In a higher education setting, student evaluations of faculty instructors are closely related to measures of “customer satisfaction”. Creators of academic advising programs can enhance student satisfaction by employing high quality leadership, having sufficient, qualified and experienced individuals to accomplish the institution’s mission, and by maintaining genuine commitments to legal responsibilities, equal opportunity, diversity and ethics (Hurt, 2004).

Communication regarding not only the importance of advising from administration is necessary, but also the purpose defined by the institution should be transparent and well linked to the behavior of advisors. Bridgen (2017) reported in his findings that “advising administrators expressed the deepest understanding of the purposes of academic advising and their reported perceptions of the purposes of advising most closely aligned with the state goals of the advising literature” (p. 13-14). This study

showed that administrators, but not faculty, staff and students had the best understanding of academic advising at the institution studied.

Steele and White (2019) indicate that many leaders in higher education do not have current policies that reflect the eminent need. These leaders have a misconception of what academic advising is all about. Steele and White (2019) suggest that “many misguided suggestions for ‘improving’ academic advising is focused not on what might help students the most, but rather focus on what is most efficient for the institution” (p.4). These authors believe that many of the “improvement strategies” that higher education leaders are attempting to implement are more in line with the concept that students are customers, and academic advising is a transactions service instead of an educational relationship.

Finally, leadership at any institution wishing to improve academic advising and resources for students and advisors in order to create a culture that values academic advising needs to undertake an advising assessment (Cueso, 2003). Yonker et al. (2019) designed a student survey to assess faculty advising specifically related to student success and retention. One important component of their findings was that when assessment is completed by institution leaders, the emphasis and value on academic advising increases. Inclusion of assessment in the academic advising model is essential.

Assessment of Advising

To facilitate student success outcomes from academic advising, proper assessment should be completed on a regular basis. If assessment of the academic advisor was being completed by all institutions, perhaps satisfaction of student and faculty would improve. Habley and Morales (1998) reported in 1998 that only 29% of higher education institutions were conducting assessment to evaluate advisor effectiveness. This is only slightly improved from 1979 when the first National Survey of Academic Advising conducted by the American College Testing Program reported that approximately 75% of responding institutions had no evaluation of their academic advising programs (Srebnik, 1988). As mentioned previously, value needs placed on academic advising by administration and university

leaders. Linda Darling Hammond stated that “people will do more of whatever they are evaluated on doing. What is measured will increase and what is not measured will decrease” (as cited in Cuseo, 2003, p. 1). This statement highlights how many academic advisors may have inadequately operated while advising their students. Joe Cuseo (2003) posits “evaluating the effectiveness of academic advisors and advising programs sends a strong and explicit message to all members of the college community that advising is an important professional responsibility; conversely, failure to do so tacitly communicates the message that this student service is not highly valued by the institution” (p. 1). How can either a faculty academic advisor or institution know that advising is being done effectively without the intention of measuring quality? Graduation and retention rates should not be the only analysis for quality academic advising assessment.

The root purpose of academic advising assessment is straightforward: to create the deliberate opportunity for dialogue about the extent to which students are achieving the expected outcomes established by the faculty and the various constituents (Palomba & Banta, 1999). Michlitsch and Sidle (2002) stated, “assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional and integrated and when it effects change in specific student performance outcomes” (p. 125). The faculty academic advisors are in the best position to respond to results of assessment by making positive changes in advising programs on the basis of the assessment results.

Powers et al. (2014) surveyed administrators, advisors, and other professionals responsible for advising to determine how many were conducting assessment of advising related to student learning outcomes (SLOs). They found that only 57.8% of participants reported using a formal measure to assess academic advising SLOs (p. 67). A positive finding from this study was that 60% of participants who identified academic advising SLOs also said that they use the data from the results gathered to contribute to decision making.

Evaluation results could also support merit recognition and raises, promote budget changes or increased administrative support, identify areas of concern with needed training, and determine

effectiveness of advisors or of the advising program. With many faculty advisors not allocating appropriate time to learn and perform advising effectively, having concrete results from assessment and evaluation could solve many of these problems. He and Hutson (2017) suggest in assessment of faculty advising that “although the specific criteria and rubrics vary across institutions, we propose three key aspects for higher education administrators to consider when engaging faculty members in the discussion of advising assessment. We focus on assessment criteria and recommended measures regarding the faculty advising content, process, and impact” (p. 68). Assessing these three components either individually or collectively could help improve student satisfaction of advising and would improve the process and information delivered. Providing correct information to the student leads to satisfaction while developing the student leads to retention and graduation, the true outcome of proper advising.

Prescriptive vs Developmental Advising

As previously explained, there are two main types of advising methods, prescriptive and developmental advising. Some describe prescriptive advising similar to a visit to the doctor’s office in which the student receives a “prescription” with the necessary information for progression to graduation. This type of advising does not focus on a relationship; prescriptive academic advising can meet the needs of some students based on their desires and expectations of their academic advisor. An additional explanation of prescriptive advising is characterized by the advisor simply telling the advisee what to do and assuming if this is done, no problems will occur, and the student will be passive and graduate. The interaction is typically a question/answer format and is driven by the advisors’ assumption of advisee’s academic goals (Barbuto et al., 2011). Developmental advising is an advising method in which the relationship is created through conversation with students serving as a catalyst. This model is considered a fluid process in which both student and advisor are sharing responsibilities. The advisee is being encouraged to take ownership of their choices and program. The advisor focuses on the whole person and addresses every aspect of the student’s life in the process (Drake, 2011). Crookston (1972) identified contrasting dimensions to both prescriptive and developmental approaches to advising. When using the

prescriptive approach, the advisor has control, takes responsibility and initiative on fulfilling degree requirements (Crookston, 1972; 1994; 2009). Alternatively, the developmental approach focuses on potentialities, and views students as growing, maturing, responsible, and capable of self-direction. All aspects of the relationship are negotiated depending on an agreement (Crookston, 1972/1994/2009). Prescriptive advising boils down to paperwork, and developmental advising concentrates on intellectual, moral, and psychosocial development (Albana, 2021)

Frost (1993) surveyed academic advisors that students identified as being “developmental advisors,” and the results indicated there were many ways in which these advisors assist students other than class scheduling. Some of the practices that these advisors listed as doing “often” or “always” included but not limited to were:

- familiarize students with the college program by directing them to the college bulletin
- help students choose a major
- help students learn about time management
- engage students in conversation about other than academic matters by having general discussions about outside activities
- help students develop effective study habits, etc.

Davis and Cooper (2001) and Hale et al. (2009) analyzed surveys¹ sent to nineteen hundred and 429 students respectively. Davis and Cooper (2001) found that most faculty and professional advisors practiced developmental advising, and students were pleased with this approach. Also, Hale et al. (2009) revealed from their study that the majority of students at a mid-South University preferred the developmental approach as well. Hale et al. (2009) found that “students experienced congruence between their preferred advising approach and the strategy used by their advisor” (p. 321). While both groups of students seemed overall satisfied, those who were receiving developmental advising “showed a higher

¹ *Academic Advising Inventory AAI*, created by Winston and Sandor in 1984 based on Crookston’s theory of prescriptive and developmental advising approaches

degree of satisfaction than those who received prescriptive advising” (Hale et al., 2009, p. 321). This concept of greater satisfaction could be explained due to those students who want developmental advising also want a relationship with their advisor. Knowing the type of advising style the student favors can enhance the overall advising experience for both advisee and advisor.

Harris (2018) conducted a similar study as well but focused on a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) school in South Carolina. The findings reflect the same results as the previous two mentioned, students prefer and are satisfied with developmental advising. Additionally, Harris explains that “this study contributes to the argument that minority students are satisfied with a prevailing developmental approach. Underrepresented students feeling isolated or uncertain about their role in the campus community may find the needed connection to the institution and the campus community through the relationships established with advisors using the developmental approach” (p. 42).

Smith and Allen (2006) disagree with the dichotomy of either/or related to prescriptive vs. developmental advising. They emphasize “conceiving prescriptive and developmental advising as fundamentally incompatible does not allow students to tell the researcher that both kinds of advising are important to them” (Smith & Allen, 2006, p. 56). They found that while students value developmental aspects of advising, they value accurate information above all else. Academic advising can in fact have both components. The expectations that the students have coming into the advising session could ultimately determine if they are satisfied and if their needs are being met.

Advising as Mentoring

As previously mentioned earlier in this chapter, the interaction and relationships that can occur between a faculty member and a student can lead to many benefits for both faculty and student. In the setting of higher education, these relationships are powerful tools that can aid in students’ personal and professional development (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Baker and Griffin (2010) state the findings of their research on faculty-student interactions “reinforce the importance of these relationships, suggesting they

are critical for everything from building students' capacity as scholars, fostering degree aspirations and retention and promoting the success of students from underrepresented backgrounds" (p. 2).

Being an academic advisor does not automatically make a faculty member a mentor. Having the responsibility of academic advising requires assisting a student in course selection to meet degree requirements. Johnson (2007), suggests that a student's mentor is not necessarily their advisor nor is a student's advisor always their mentor. Advising is built on a series of tasks and the sharing of information, mentorship requires a student and faculty member to choose one another to engage in an ongoing series of interactions (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Mentorship involves an emotional commitment that extends beyond sharing degree requirements and academic information, mentorship relationships are rooted in a mentor's long-term caring about a student's personal and professional development (Baker & Griffin, 2010).

Gordan and Habley (2000) suggest that mentor-like relationship by faculty may help develop rapport with students both inside and outside of the classroom, which could make a significant contribution to the undergraduate experience. They state, "both faculty and students report that they enjoy conversations outside the realm of graded, classroom specific work" (p. 214). While much of the literature regarding mentorship and academic advising relates to graduate and doctoral students, undergraduate student can also highly benefit from mentorship relationship in addition to an advisor-advisee relationship.

Using Student Development Theory for Academic Advising

According to three prominent developmental theories by Chickering (1969), Perry (1970) and Super (1983) the concept of developmental academic advising incorporates their theories of personal growth and development and states that developmental academic advising is:

A systemic process based on a close student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in achieving educational, career and personal goals through the utilization of the full range of institutional and community resources. It both stimulates and supports student in their quest for an enriched quality of life. Developmental advising relationships focus on identifying and accomplishing life goals, acquiring skills and attitudes that promote intellectual and personal growth, and sharing concerns for each other and for the academic community. Developmental advising reflects the institution's mission of the total student development and is most likely to be realized when the academic affairs and the student affairs divisions collaborate in its implementation. (Winston, et al. 1984, pp. 18-19)

Although developmental academic advising is espoused in the literature, the concept and practice is not overly implemented on college and university campuses (Frost, 1993). Grites (2013) implies this is because "faculty members lacked knowledge of student development theory" (p. 10). Additionally, Grites examines how developmental academic advising had evolved over the few decades and who were the key players in assisting with the developments. He states that Frost argued that the "advisor-advisee relationship needed to focus on students' needs and their transition with the higher education environment" (p. 8).

Frost (1993) examined advising practices and attitudes of 48 faculty academic advisors using The Academic Advisor Inventory after these advisors attending trainings between 15-20 weeks. The Academic Advising Inventory is an instrument designed to evaluate advising from a theoretically grounded perspective and allow programs at various institutions to be compared (Winston & Sandor, 1984). Using this tool with a foundation in theory, Frost found that advisors who practice developmental advising use "advising practices that encourage students to explore factors leading to student success include talking about times management, study skills, planning techniques, shared advising responsibilities and problem solving" (p. 19). Additionally, Frost found that participants in this study

stated they rarely make decisions for their students, however they engage the students in the decision-making process and encourage them to take accountability and responsibility for their own education.

Stebbleton (2011) discussed using the developmental nature of the ecology framework as proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1977). He states, “this ecological approach allows for exploration of varied contextual factors from a system-based approach.” (p. 45-46). By doing so, advisors will recognize that their work goes beyond helping register for classes. This process of development focuses on human development, but the foundation is integrated system of human development through which multiple factors of the environment impact the individual (Stebbleton, 2011). When students are dealing with so many factors of college life, having a relationship with their advisor to help guide them while they are making their own decisions from skills learned is a benefit to using theory in academic advising.

Theories of student development are helpful for academic and student affairs professionals in several ways. Theories can explain and describe student behaviors which in turn, can create meaning for students’ individual experiences. Advisors can intentionally design experiences using theories of student development to assist their students in personal growth (Long, 2012).

The application of student development theory in student affairs practice has been more widely used over the last century. Theory-to-practice models provide guidance for student affairs educators as a foundation of their work with students (Patton et al. 2016). Patton et al. (2016) states “Theories provide insights into working effectively with individual students to advise... Student development theories can help to meet the long-standing goal of educating the whole student” (p. 399).

Systems Theory Framework

I will employ a Systems Theory Framework (STF) of Career development for this study. The STF provides a model from which to view the systems of individual (advisee) and practitioner (faculty advisors) that influence career development and guidance. The STF acknowledges three systems that influence the content of individuals’ career development: Interpersonal, Social, and Environmental. In

addition, the STF utilizes three principles that impact the process of the individuals' (advisee) career development: 1) The interaction of influences within the individual in context and between the individual and context; 2) Change over time; and 3) The broader systems that affects the individual's system (Lovasz, 2020).

Hutchins (1996) proposes that all problems can be solved systemically. Most problems are complicated, with no easy solution. Looking at the problem holistically helps us to understand its many causes and possible solutions before we begin to apply a solution. Reducing the problem to one symptom or possible solution causes us to disregard another symptom or solution that actually may be more plausible.

Because we better understand systems in context, case study methodology combined with the Systems Theory Framework (STF) can prove to be an appropriate approach to this study. The Systems Theory provides a useful framework for helping understand the identify of a system. Sean Bridgen (2017) used systems theory to understand the identity of academic advising at a satellite campus of a large university. Bridgen (2017) conducted a review of documents, conducted semi-structured interviews with selected staff and administrator associated with advising, and facilitated a focus group with a retention committee and one focus group with undergraduates. From there, data were analyzed and interpreted through the lens of systems theory. Results of this study indicate that “discrepancies between the way that the advising system is designed to work, as articulated in documented policies and the way in which it functions as reported by participants” (Beridgen, 2017 p. 13). A very valuable piece of the finding was that there was a misunderstanding among the campus community about the purpose and function of advising. More importantly, the professional advisors and the advising administration expressed a shared understanding of the purpose of advising and the way the system was designed to function. They admit that isn't currently functioning the way advising was intended. In addition, faculty, students and staff's perceptions are not in alignment with their understanding (Bridgen, 2017). This study underscores the importance of the current study in that understanding the purpose of academic advising as well as the

perceptions and expectations students have of the advising process can facilitate a better functioning system.

Summary

Decades of research has been conducted on the purpose, organization, and influences of academic advising. Despite the significant research, no clear model or approach has been identified for institution-wide system of advising. Most research agrees that higher education institutions need to create advising model that balances the needs of their students and faculty. For advising to work effectively to meet the diverse student needs, the academic advising ecosystem must be educated about the purpose of advising and related educational theory and institutional philosophy. In a profound statement, Bridgen (2017) says, “The context of university determines the true identity of advising at any specific institution. Prescribing ideal functions, purposes, or goals of advising, must be designed by universities such that the goals can be realized with the systems in place” (p. 19). Understanding what students want and how their expectations can be met should underscore the academic advising model.

In this chapter there was an examination of literature surrounding many aspects of academic advising. This chapter discussed the evolution of academic advising as well as the expectations of academic advising from multiple angles. Finally, there was a discussion of the two types of academic advising, prescriptive and developmental, that will be used to examine students’ expectations, experience and satisfaction.

There is a great deal of research pertaining to academic advising in higher education institutions. Research is lacking that aligns students’ expectations, experiences and satisfaction using a prescriptive or developmental academic advising lens. For this reason, this study is relevant and will contribute to closing the gap in the literature. Chapter 3 will detail the methods that were used in the data collection of this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine students' expectations, experiences and satisfaction with faculty academic advising through a developmental and prescriptive lens. As Creswell (2003) states, a qualitative methodology is most suitable when identifying aspects that could sway a particular result or when examining a specific premise. In this chapter, I reiterate the overarching problem and research questions that assisted in discussing the problem, followed by my positionality and the nature of this inquiry. Next, I describe the methodology and explain the procedures that guided the data collection and analysis. The chapter will conclude with the limitations of this study.

Research Problem and Research Questions

The overarching research problem was to examine students' expectations, experiences and satisfaction with faculty advising through a developmental and prescriptive lens. The research questions regarding this study include:

1. What have been student academic advising experiences? Are these student advising experiences more prescriptive or developmental in nature?
2. What are student expectations of academic advising? Which of these expectations have been met and to what degree? Are these student advising expectations more prescriptive or developmental in nature?
3. How satisfied are students with their academic advising (prescriptive or developmental)? How are the students advising needs being met?

Study Methodology and Epistemological Orientation

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) provide a rationale for qualitative research for "education, health, social work, administration and other arenas of social activity are considered applied social sciences or fields of practice precisely because practitioners in these fields deal with the everyday concerns of

people's lives" (p. 1). Additionally, they state that having an interest in knowing about one's practice and *improving* one's practice is best approached through a qualitative research design, interpretive research "assumes that reality is socially constructed; this is, there is no single observable reality" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016 p. 9). This study employed an interpretive qualitative research design as to understand how to understand and possibly improve the experiences that students are having with faculty academic advising.

Creswell and Poth (2018) define case study research as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents and reports) and reports a case description and case themes" (p. 96-97). While not one standard method of performing case study research exists, the use of case studies among qualitative researchers is plentiful. Yazan (2015) states that case study methodology is "one of the most frequently used qualitative research methodologies in educational research, but the methodologists do not have a consensus on the design and implementation" (p. 134). Case study research is an established design that is used extensively, but particularly in social sciences (Crowe, et al, 2011).

Robert Stake (1994) describes case study research as a way to have a sharp focus of attention on a single case. He also brings to light that "people sometimes study cases because they care deeply about those cases" (p. 34). Finally, Stake suggests that when the primary purpose is to understand a particular case, an "intrinsic case study" design is appropriate.

The volume of research on improving academic advising is plentiful, specifically using case study methodology. Case studies are preferred when "the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated and when the desire is to study some contemporary event or set of events" (Yin, 2018, p. 12). Historically, academic advising has faced scrutiny for improper techniques (delivery of information, correct information, communication to students, lack of value given to the act itself etc.), the case study would be an appropriate methodology to examine the behaviors that could lead to a student being satisfied or

dissatisfied with their experience. Case study research has been criticized for many years and some suggest that results cannot be generalized. Flyvbjerg (2011) disagrees and states “It is correct that one can generalize, and that often this is both appropriate and valuable” (p. 304). While colleges and universities differ in the programs and curriculum across the country, the concept of advising is quite similar. Being able to generalize findings from case study research is applicable. If programs are systematically structured comparable to the program in this study, findings can be useful in making positive changes, specifically aligning advisee and advisors with student development theories that foundationally enhance each other’s experience.

Case Study Design

This research employed a case study design as a single bounded system within the Nutrition and Dietetics department, and I only looked at information provided by students within this major and documents that directly affected this student population. Although, this program only utilizes faculty advisors, these individuals differ in their classification of faculty members. Some of the faculty advisors are Teaching Associate/Assistant Professors (TAPs) while others are Tenure-Track (TT) faculty advisors. No professional advisors or experiences with professional advisors contributed to the data collection, since this department does not employ a professional advisor even though the college that the program is in recently adopted the use of professional advisors for the rest of the programs/majors within the college. Additionally, Yin (2018) communicates that if research questions are generally asking “what” (for example, “What are the expectations and experiences of academic advising?”) then an exploratory case study could be conducted. I wanted to determine what were the expectations students have of their academic advising experiences and were they satisfied after the advising experience has happened. With this exploration of this case, a survey, interviews and document analysis were completed.

Study Context

The research setting of this study took place in the Nutrition and Dietetics (N&D) department at a public R1 research university in the Mid-Atlantic region with a total enrollment of slightly over 28,000, in the summer and fall of 2022. At the institutional level, the mission regarding academic advising states:

The Academic Advising Council is committed to creating and fostering an equitable, inclusive and holistic advising experience that encourages student growth, accountability, responsibility, and success across a diversity of academic and personal pursuits. In addition to supporting the advising experience for students, the Academic Advising Council also supports this advising philosophy by providing relevant and up-to-date information to the advising community, recognizing advisers for their outstanding work and dedication to the student populations they serve, and by providing guidance in the utilization of data for the implementation of advising improvements. (West Virginia University, n.d)

While there is a clear vision for academic advising at the institutional level, there was no such mention at the college or departmental level creating a disconnect as to what advisors should be expected to perform. At the program level (N&D), within the student handbook there was a reference that all students will have a faculty advisor, no mention of the philosophy or culture regarding academic advising and what students should expect to receive from their experience with the faculty academic advisor.

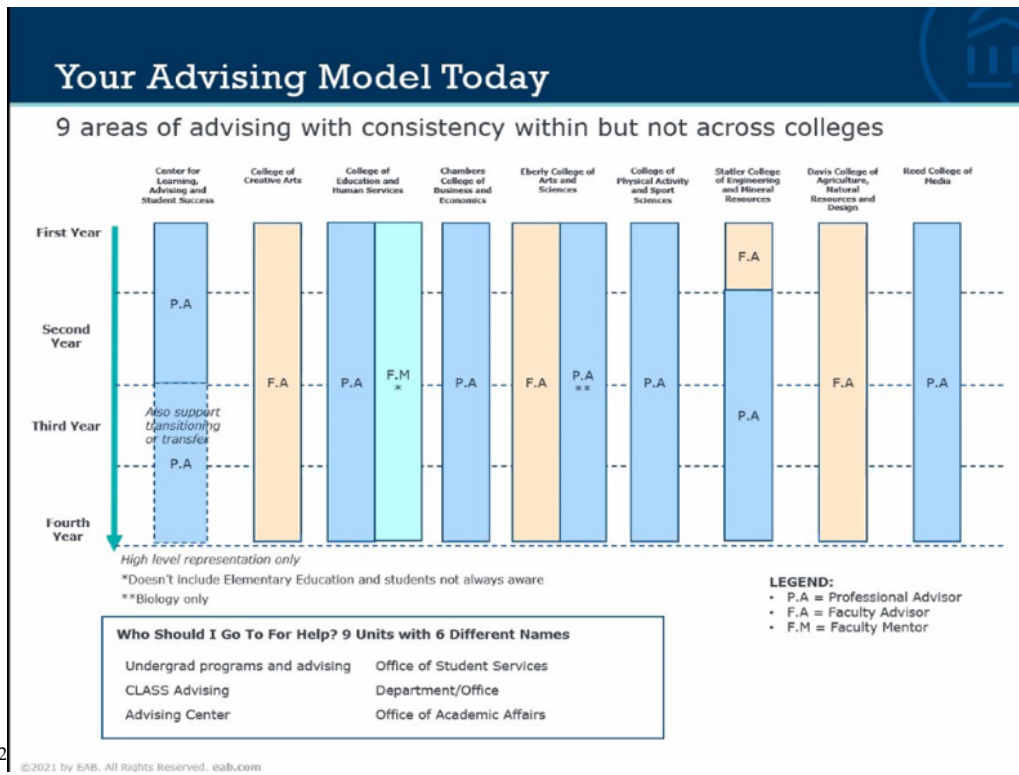
Within the N&D department, there were 100 full-time students and eight full-time faculty members, six were tenure-track faculty and two were TAPs, both with an administrative assignment. Currently, only five of the faculty members were responsible for academic advising duties due to a structural change in the advising model of this department in an attempt to better serve the students.

This information was collected from the institution's information system in May 2022 after commencement. Included in the 100 students coded for the major of Nutrition and Dietetics are the students who have N&D listed as a minor, which equates to 20 students. Demographics are not collected on the minor students, however considering the 80 full-time N&D major students, there are 64 female students (80%) and 16 male students (20%). There were 5 freshmen (6%), 16 sophomores (20%), 15 juniors (18%), and 44 seniors (55%) that made up the total 80 undergraduate students. Seventy-five percent are U.S citizens while 25% are international students. The Nutrition and Dietetics program is a nationally accredited program with a curriculum that is very structured. This department utilized faculty advising as the main framework to provide academic advising to their students during the time of the study. The faculty in this department consists of a combined group of nutrition faculty/registered dietitians (4), nutritional scientists (1), and food scientists (3).

Over the past few years students have complained (senior exit surveys, emails to the Division Director, and to individual faculty members), that they have not been receiving the proper advising instructions and have been seeking out the assistance of other faculty members who are not their advisor to get information on class scheduling, professional development opportunities and general questions. At the institutional level, multiple advising models are utilized to serve students. The diversity of advising models across the institution is shown in Figure 1. At the time of the data collection the Nutrition and Dietetics department follows a faculty advising model only with no professional advising offered to the students.

Figure 3

Advising Models Across the Campus



Through a case study method, and multiple data collection techniques, I attempted to discern what are student’s expectation of their advising experiences, “prescriptive” vs “developmental”. If the experiences align with the expectations does the alignment assist in increasing the overall experience, specifically the students’ satisfaction of academic advising in the Nutrition and Dietetics program.

Participant Selection

The participants in this study were restricted to undergraduate students in the N&D program and not currently assigned as an advisee of the researcher as the only qualifying components for participation. Eliminating students that were assigned to the researcher as a faculty academic advisor does decrease the possible pool as well as decreases the faculty advisors to four. I conducted nonprobability sampling for this qualitative study. Nonprobability sampling methods are logical with the assumption that we are not

² 2021 EAB review of academic advising models of the R1 institution

expecting to answer “how much” or “how often” but to solve qualitative problems such as what occurs and implications of what occurs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, Merriam and Tidell (2016) suggest that our sample should be *purposeful* and “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 98). The minimum sample for the interviews, which will be the main source of data collection, was comprised of fifteen students, attempting to get multiple students from second year through fourth year to get a broader perspective of advising needs throughout the collegiate years. Additionally, obtaining participants from each class rank contributed to purposeful sampling in that the sample is reflective of the average student within the N&D program. First year students were not included in this study because of their limited experience with campus advising (typically just one or session at the time of this study or possibly not meeting yet with their advisor at all). Students participating in any aspect of this study will be asked to complete an informed consent form (Appendix C).

First, a Qualtrics, survey (Appendix A) was distributed via the N&D undergraduate email list serve by the Director of the program in June 24, 2022 to gather background information and solicit interview participation. Students were asked to respond within a week of receiving the survey, and after that first week, on July 8, 2022 a reminder email was sent. Due to lack of response, third email was sent as a reminder on August 10, 2022 and final one on September 20, 2022. Near the end of the survey, students were asked if they would be interested in participating in an interview to further understand their expectations, experiences and satisfaction related to advising in the Nutrition and Dietetics department. The survey asked students to identify their academic advisor so purposeful sampling of the interviewees could occur and results included the entire department and not just a few advisors. The survey remained anonymous with the option to include contact information to participate in the interviews. I did not anticipate difficulty in recruiting students to participate. The initial email came from the undergraduate Director of the program asking for participation in the study which included a letter (Appendix C) detailing who was performing the research, why the research was being conducted and how the results

can benefit the department. Since the program is small and the faculty advisors are also the instructors of courses, they communicated in their classes how participation can be useful for all in the program.

As part of purposeful sampling, the researcher sought to identify one student at each level (second, third, and fourth-year students) for each of the four faculty advisors. For this study, the researcher’s advisees were not considered for interviews, but the students were asked to participate in the survey. A plan was created if the study participants did not reach the 15 student interviewees goals after the third survey reminder, alternates would be selected based on the date and time of the student survey response (first-come, first-selected). Table 1 shows the students, their class ranking and their assigned advisor.

Table 2

Purposeful Sampling of Class Rank and Advisors for Student Interviews

Advisor 1 - Katheryn	Brayden Student 1 (Senior)	Ryleigh Student 2 (Sophomore)	Faith Student 3 (Junior)	Isiah Student 4 (Senior)			
Advisor 2 Suzanne	Caroline Student 5 (Senior)	Maria Student 6 (Senior)	Bailey Student 7 (Sophomore)	Carrie Student 8 (Sophomore)	Meredith Student 9 (Junior)	Megan Student 10 (Junior)	Tessa Student 15 (Junior)
Advisor 3 Mallory	Frances Student 11 (Junior)	Gary Student 12 (Sophomore)	Lydia Student 13 (Sophomore)				
Advisor 4 Joy	Kristen Student 14 (Senior)	Meredith Student 9 (Junior)	Megan Student 10 (Junior)				
Advisor 5 Jacob	Kristen Student 14 (Senior)						

Note. Students 9, 10 and 14 are listed twice intentionally. They changed advisors and contributed answers to interview questions that included both faculty advisors that had.

Positionality Statement

Holmes (2020) defines positionality as “positionality reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study. Positionality influences both how research is conducted, its outcomes, and results”. I understand that my positionality is unique and will impact every aspect of my research. I currently have a large advising load due to students requesting a change of advisor and I am interested in learning why the needs of the students are not being met. Additionally, there is importance for me to state that as a faculty member, with a large advising load that has grown in each of the four years that I have been employed in the department, I do not have a research component to my appointment, but an administrative one. In 2018, when I started my current position, I did not have any advisees. In 2019, 20 students were assigned to me as their academic advisor officially, I would see a much greater number. In 2020 I kept the same number of advisees took over two faculty members loads while on sabbatical (one in fall and one in the spring). In 2021, the department decided to change the advising loads due to complaints and requests to change advisors (forming the context of this study), my load increased to approximately forty undergraduate students in addition to graduate student advising. I am a firm believer in creating relationships with individuals and when those relationships are formed, a higher level of success can be achieved. This philosophy connects with the developmental advising lens and one in which I use when working with my students. I want to understand if students want a broader experience with their advisor or they just want to know what classes to take to graduate. As previously mentioned, Robert Stake (1994) suggests that intrinsic case studies can be completed when someone cares deeply about an issue.

This is an issue that impacts my professional life and the lives of my students, and I am invested in finding an effective solution for both advisor and advisee. I will not turn away a student that asks for help regarding class inquiries, career decisions or life complications, regardless if they are officially assigned as my advisee or not. This has created a time and productivity issue when I am meeting with

many other faculty members' advisees and not completely my own work assignments. Regardless of my interests, I want to understand the main expectations students have in the advising process and help to develop a method and program that can be utilized universally so students and advisors know these expectations prior to an advising appointment and can personalize the delivery.

To provide some separation for this study, the researcher's advisees will not be selected as part of the interview process.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

This case study research used a survey, interviews, and document analysis as the primary data sources. The data sources were chosen because I want to hear directly from the student population, and I could find themes among their responses through the interview as well as the senior exit surveys. Data collection included a survey to collect general background information related to academic advising in the department and to further recruit participants for interviews. Zoom (zoom.us) interviews that were audio recorded and included transcription were completed on an individual basis with each student participant. Finally, document analysis from the university, college and department regarding advising was included in this study. Each of the forms of data analysis are discussed individually.

Initial Student Survey

Qualtrics was used for survey development, dissemination, and analysis (Appendix A). Questions 1-4 were referenced from a nine-year survey of student satisfaction regarding academic advising by Suvedi et al. (2015). These questions were simply to gather background information and provide context for the study. In the summer of 2022 this brief survey was sent to all rising second, third and fourth-year Nutrition and Dietetics students in the department through email via the N&D list serv with a description of the study (Appendix C). The survey collected specific attitudes regarding faculty advising in the department, which included reasons for seeing their academic advisor (course selections or beyond), expectations students have when seeing their academic advisor, how satisfied students were after a

meeting with their advisor, etc. Finally, from the survey, students were recruited to participate in Zoom interviews to further gather information. Volunteers were asked to include their email address and the name of their faculty advisor, which were later be de-identified. Once interview participants were identified through the survey, an email was sent to schedule the Zoom at a time most convenient for the student. As students agreed to participate, they were given a pseudonym to de-identify the participants. A Qualtrics report was used in the analysis of the survey and to inform the results of the interviews.

Student Interviews

Based on the information given in the survey regarding interest in participation of interviews, 15 students were identified and selected for the interview based on their class rank and advisor. The selection process sought to secure one volunteer from each level (second, third and fourth year) across each of the four faculty academic advisors. After the third reminder, additional participants were recruited by an announcement in a sophomore heavy N&D course since this was the class ranking that needed representation.

Once the study participants were identified, Zoom interviews were set up and performed individually for each student. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interview process was further explained to those students who chose to participate in the study, they were told their responses were anonymous and were be used to possibly understand if students' expectations, experiences and satisfaction align with prescriptive or developmental academic advisor. The participants were informed though the initial email, in the survey and in the interview guide that their responses were anonymized and that there will be no negative outcomes due to their participation. During the interview, students were asked open-ended questions regarding their pervious advising experiences and their level of satisfaction regarding their expectation with those experiences. Students were also asked questions regarding why they see their faculty academic advisor, what they considered there best/worst advising meeting and what would be their ideal advising meeting.

After interviews were complete, a review of the transcript was conducted by the researcher and member checking was completed. Each student was sent a copy of the transcription to read and confirm what was collected from the interview is complete and accurate. Additionally, an audio file of the recording and the transcript exported to a Word document was saved under the participants pseudonym/ID on the researcher's password protected computer.

Each interview was a semi-structured format lasting no longer than 30 minutes and followed the interview guide or schedule (Appendix B). Interview questions were followed to avoid leading-type questions that had the potential to influence the answers given by the students. The guide contained several specific questions that all participants answered and open-ended questions to allow them to speak freely. A thematic analysis was conducted because this analysis provided a theoretical and flexible mechanism of studying qualitative data. According to Crowley (2010), thematic analysis refers to a technique for identifying, studying and reporting themes or patterns within data. Themes capture a significant aspect of the qualitative data based on the research questions. This study deployed the description of the data set as an approach to carrying out a thematic analysis.

Document Collection

Finally, document analysis of the department, college and university was collected and examined. Yin (2016) states that "collecting refers to the compiling or accumulating of objects (documents, artifacts, and archival records) related to your study topic" (p. 154). The purpose of examining the documents was 1. To understand the culture of academic advising as experienced by the students. 2. To understand how value is being placed on advising. 3. To determine if advisors were receiving the same message that students are regarding the value of academic advising. And finally, 4. to assist in triangulating the data.

The document collection efforts focused on the following areas:

- Institution, College and Departmental: The researcher conducted a search for advising related information (websites) and policies at all levels of the institution.

- Handbooks: Institutional, college and departmental student and faculty handbooks were reviewed to identify advising expectations.
- Trainings: The researcher sought to identify scheduled advising trainings and attendance patterns.
- Workload and Promotion Documents: The researcher examined institutional, college and departmental workload and promotion guidelines related to advising responsibilities and expectations.
- Exit surveys: Senior exit surveys were examined for information regarding how the students rated their level of satisfaction
- Meeting minutes: Departmental meeting minutes/summaries were reviewed to determine if academic advising appeared to be a focus of the department.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) states that triangulation is utilizing more than one method of data collection and “is a powerful strategy for increasing the credibility or internal validity of your research” (p.245).

Merriam (2016) suggests that using documents as data is not much different than using interviews and observations to collect valuable information. By analyzing documents such as institution policies and procedures, departmental policies and procedures, promotion and tenure guidelines, handbooks, position descriptions, senior exit surveys, email announcements regarding advising trainings and attendance records for those trainings, gave me a better understanding of how prepared faculty advisors have the ability to be. From analyzing exit surveys, student satisfaction could be generalized and in addition, we could determine if changes were made systemically based on the reported data. A determination was made as to where this information was kept and if faculty members have been made aware that the information exists and if the information was easily accessible. This point can highlight if faculty are being encouraged to perform prescriptive or developmental advising based on how the institution, college and department was placing value on training and resources to the faculty academic advisor. Finally, a research journal was kept during the entire process for multiple reasons. This journal helped identify

potential bias and served as an ethical artifact since I am a faculty member in the department of the case being analyzed.

Documents in each category were identified through multiple approaches. First, a web search of the university was done to access any of the public documents. Second, discussions were held with campus advisors to identify potentially related documents. Third, a request of information was sent to the Director of the N&D undergraduate program to access the senior exit survey data, any program advising policies, demographics of the program and recommendations for other institutional documents. Finally, the Division Director was sent a request of information for any departmental and college policies, and identity protected emails from students. There was a change in Division Director during the course of the data collection, therefore no emails were collected. If students referenced a particular document, etc. multiple times during the interview process, analysis of that material was included as well.

Validity

Merriam states, “ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner” (p. 237). Additionally, to have any effect on the practice of advising we need to present insights and conclusion that connect to both students and faculty advisors. Methods of validity for this study included triangulation (survey results, interviews and document analysis), member checking of the transcription of the interviews and adequate engagement in the data collection.

Triangulating is an essential part of qualitative data collection and strengthens the validity of the data (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2016,). Additionally, as mentioned, a research journal was kept throughout the entire process. During and after each interview, thoughts and reflections were recorded assisting with bias and serving as a method of recording memos during interviews.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted on each form of data collection, the initial student survey, the interviews and the document collection. This analysis helped interpret the meaning underlining students’

expectations and satisfaction of faculty academic advising within this program. West Virginia University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was granted for student data for this study, which includes collecting students grades, a comparison of student preparation and GPA were examined.

Analysis for Survey

Qualtrics was used to generate an analysis of survey responses. Answers for each question can be analyzed via the Results section of Qualtrics, which can provide descriptive analysis. Wolcott (1994) breaks down descriptive analysis stating that we can “describe” what is going on here, and “analyze” the identification of essential features and interrelations among them (p.12). The data provided the researcher with an understanding of the student perception of academic advising. Additionally, data explaining what characteristics students expect from their faculty academic advisor was determined. Finally, data showing how students utilize their academic advisor was examined.

Interview analysis

Interviews were coded and themed as the outcome of the coding, for major concepts. A code in qualitative inquiry “is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2013 p. 3). Additionally, in the analysis, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or “translates” data and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, assertion or proposition development, theory building, and other analytic processes (Saldana code book, n.d).

Upon completion of the interviews, continuous analysis of the data was done, and I began to code through thematic analysis. The methodology for this is for me to start becoming familiar with the data through reading and rereading while noting initial ideas immediately following each interview and referencing “jottings” that were taken during the interviews. This was completed in my research journal. This can also be considered “open coding”. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) identify this form of coding when

you are beginning and are open to anything. I was not sure what the students would describe as their expectations or experiences, so I needed to be aware that anything could be communicated. Next, I went through and highlighted sections of text such as key phrases or sentences. Then I pulled-out key concepts from the text that produced shorthand labels or “codes” to describe the content, descriptive coding. This starts with codes or “categories” which will be used to identify patterns and produce sub-themes. These sub-themes will be used to generate even broader overarching themes describing the data. I used these themes to help paint the big picture with sub-themes and categories within to help explain them. Miles, et al. describe descriptive coding as assigning “labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase, the basic topic of a passage. These eventually provide an inventory of topics for indexing and categorizing” (p. 73).

The second cycle of coding included looking at the data (transcripts and documents) again and connecting back to the first cycle to identify broader thematic connection and patterns. Not only did I look back at the transcripts, but also my jottings, from the interviews and the notes in my research journal that following each interview. During the next cycle, the data were coded until exhaustion, with codes turning into theme and subthemes. In addition to reading the transcripts to conduct the coding, I also listened to each interview from the audio recording of the Zoom meeting twice to ensure the data was correct. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) suggest that using just the transcripts “reduces the text to a mere collection of words or single meanings conceived as verbal data.” (p. 218) Codes were considered influences so discussion could occur around not only the theme but the influences as well. The themes and influences help to describe each participant’s experiences and how the data from each participant related to the research questions. The themes that emerged and were examined were: Students are receiving prescriptive academic advising, Students seek individualize attention and care through developmental academic advising, Students expect advisors to relieve their stress, Students expect advisors to be prepared to assist them, Students expect answers to their questions, Students state being satisfied with academic advising when their advisor decreases their stress level, Students state their satisfaction is related to their academic

questions being answered correctly, additionally they state they want their advisor to ask how they are doing outside of classes and, Dynamic academic advising (prescriptive and developmental) creates the most satisfaction for students.

Document Analysis

Documents were analyzed for themes as well. I wanted to understand how academic advising is valued and communicated throughout the program, department and institution that directly impacts the N&D students. For example, are faculty academic advisors being told about the results of senior exit surveys to better suit the expectations of their advisees? Are trainings communicated throughout the department and do faculty attend them. Are students satisfied with their experiences with academic advising? Are students receiving the experience with their academic advisor that they were expecting to. Are student receiving prescriptive or developmental advising from their faculty academic advisor. Conducting a thorough analysis of the material can assist in tying all of the analysis together. The same strategy was used during the analysis of documents as the analysis of interviews. I read and reread the information, highlighting key words and phrases.

Finally, connections will be made between student expectations and satisfaction from survey results, interview transcription themes and document analysis. Table 3 shows the timeline of the start dates and completion dates for the study.

Table 3*Research Timeline*

Step	Start Date	Completion
Student Surveys		
Survey distributed to second, third, and fourth year students	June 2022	September 2022
Selection of study participants	July 2022	September 2022
Student Interviews		
Interview process begins for second, third- and fourth-year students	July 2022	September 2022
Member-checking	July 2022	October 2022
Document Collection and Analysis		
Senior exit surveys	June 2022	August 2022
University advising survey results	June 2022	August 2022
Policies	June 2022	August 2022
Handbooks (student/advisor)	June 2022	August 2022
Trainings offered/logs attended	June 2022	August 2022
Faculty documents (P&T, policies, etc)	June 2022	August 2022
Information mentioned by students during interview – if necessary	August 2022	September 2022
Data Analysis		
Interview transcription review by researcher	July 2022	October 2022
Survey Analysis	July 2022	September 2022

Ethical Considerations

While some students self-identified as wanting to be participants in the interviews, all other responses remained anonymous. A letter (Appendix C) accompanied the initial survey communicating to students that participation was voluntary and individual answers were not disclosed to their advisor. Results of this study could be used to fill a gap in the knowledge of the advising model of this department and while some answers may be sensitive and subjective in nature, the identity of the students and the connection to their faculty advisor will be coded so that no inferences can be made. This was to allow the students to speak freely regarding their expectations as they relate to their experiences. If the experiences that the students were having are considered negative, advisors were not able to identify them as their advisees.

Institutional Review Board Approval

West Virginia University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained before conducting this study. Personnel on the IRB are John Campbell (Principal Investigator) and Nettie Freshour.

Incentives

No incentives were offered or provided to individuals to participate in this research study.

Data Protection

The researchers sought to minimize the risk of utilizing the confidential data. To do so, the researchers utilized the following process.

- Surveys were coded so names of students cannot be linked back to advisors
- The same code was used for interviews if students decided to participate.
- Survey responses were stored and analyzed via Qualtrics which is Duo password protected
- All transcriptions of interviews were stored on a password protected computer

- No student ID numbers, or Social Security numbers were collected.

Contributions

The hope of this research to advance the literature specifically to identifying the expectations of students advising experiences and determine how these can be communicated to not only the advisors, but the students as well to increase satisfaction of students. This could streamline the advising process and allow the needs of the students to be met more efficiently as well as the time the advisors set aside for advising appointments. Faculty advisors traditionally have a small portion of their appointments (contracts) dedicated to advising responsibilities. If these individuals knew prior to an advising appointment that each student wanted prescriptive advising (a list of classes to take for the upcoming semester) or developmental advising (deeper discussions as well as class recommendations) then preparation could be more effective, and the experiences of the students would meet their expectations. Additionally, the assigning of students to faculty members could be done strategically as to disseminate the students that want developmental advising to be placed with faculty members that either have a larger academic advising role or choose to dedicate their service to academic advising. Students that want solely academic or “prescriptive” advising could be assigned to a faculty member that has a larger research appointment and is familiar with the curriculum and degree requirements to be able to deliver a scripted plan of study.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the design and timeline of the study was outlined and how data was collected and analyzed. A description of how the participants were selected was included, as well as how the data were coded and themes developed. Additionally, there was rationale for qualitative research using a case-study methodology. In Chapter 4 there will be a discussion of the participants and the data that was provided by the student’s surveys, interviews and document analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

As stated in Chapter 1, prescriptive advising involves limiting advising sessions to academic process and procedures such as institutional deadlines, course selection, the process of registration, and explanations of degree curricula (Barbuto et al., 2011). Through prescriptive advising, students receive information necessary for progression in baccalaureate degree programs, but the approach does not typically promote an advising relationship (Barbuto et al., 2011). Students need guidance for course registration, but under a prescriptive approach, they seek assistance from their advisors only for this limited purpose.

Developmental advising focuses on the whole person sitting before the academic advisor and addresses every aspect of the student's life, including academic and personal, in the advising process (Drake, 2011). Because developmental advising focuses on student growth, a deeper commitment to understanding personal, cognitive, career, and psychosocial advancement theories is critical for the advisor to adopt. Advisors use these theories to assist students with goal setting, decision making, problem solving, creating self-awareness, and other areas to promote academic success. Some define developmental advising as a decision-making process during which students themselves reach their own academic potential through a communication and information exchange with an academic advisor (Crookston, 1972).

Participants

Ryleigh

Ryleigh is a sophomore in the Nutrition and Dietetics major. She has changed her major more than once, so she had experience with different faculty academic advisor and their specific style of advising. She feels these changes can be frustrating but also lead to new perspectives. Ryleigh prepares before each advising session by writing classes down and speaking to other students that have taken those classes to determine what section and instructor are best.

Ryleigh's expectations of academic advising were contradictory when she spoke about them in her interview. She states that she does not want to be in an advising session long but thoroughly described her best advising session was when her and her advisor spoke for roughly 45 minutes about cooking. Additionally, she mentioned that she would love for her advisor to understand how she's feeling based on her mannerisms when she walked into the room. Ryleigh appears to want a developmental relationship, she even states, "Sometimes my questions are like nothing to do with advising, but at the same time they have something to do with advising". Furthermore, she wants to be able to stop in and "provide a little update rather than like having to type out an email". She specifically says "I'm the type of person that would much rather stop in and tell you."

Brayden

Brayden is a graduating senior for this Fall 2022 semester. He is a male, international student majoring in Nutrition and Dietetics. Brayden explains his need for advising as simply as possible. He feels he is seeing his faculty academic advisor to get his advising hold removed and potentially have a casual conversation. Prescriptive academic advising is Brayden's preferred methods of advising. He would like to just be told or have confirmed the courses that are necessary for the upcoming semester and then progress into conversation.

He feels advising can be done by any faculty member, so would ask questions regarding course and/or requirements after class to any of the Nutrition and Dietetics faculty members. He did feel, and stated many times, that his faculty academic advisor seemed to appear too busy on a consistent basis. However, Brayden was quick to defend the advisor and also mention that he was stopping by unannounced to ask a question or start of a conversation.

Brayden was clear that graduation from any institution is on the shoulders of the student, not the advisor and each student should take accountability of their own education. Brayden made a very candid

statement at the end of his interview that highlights his point but underappreciated by many in the academic advising realm. He states:

Situations are bound to happen when you consider the specification of every particular student given their requirements as well as just the overall workload that a lot of advisors have to deal with. So, I don't really think anything I had was a major issue. At the end of the day, the responsibility of enrollment and ensuring that someone is aware of their requirements to enroll is down to the student, the advisor simply suggests someone to do something.

Faith

Faith is currently a junior within the nutrition and dietetics program. Faith was one of the few students who said that her satisfaction with her faculty academic advisor could improve. She felt that her advising meetings were strictly kept to a question and answer session and unless she asked a question, there was not much information given. There was frustration on her part on a regular basis because if Faith ever had additional questions after the meeting was over and she emailed those questions, there was typically not an answer given. Faith's interview answers were short and direct, mostly indicating a dissatisfaction with her experience, she states "I felt like I had no help, just a few things that I already pretty much knew".

Faith had concerns each semester that she was behind and did not feel like she had guidance. She would prepare a list of courses to take before her meetings and simply be given a thumbs up to register. This left Faith feeling frustrated. An important aspect of Faith's experience is that the majority of her academic advising was conducted via emails and not actually having a face-to-face conversation. While Faith did not come out and state that she preferred developmental academic advising, her answers to questions indicated that developmental advising was her preferred method.

Isiah

Isiah is a senior, male student that had only one advisor during this time and will be graduating Fall 2022. Isiah is considered a very social student and communicates with most of the faculty members as well as his classmates. He comments that he loves his “cohort” of students and they discuss many topics often. He admits that after meeting with his advisor that he considers “not in the program” because she is a food scientist, that he will speak to other advisors to “fact check” to make sure the information he was given was correct.

Isiah appreciates that his advisor is cognizant of him being a non-traditional student that also works a full-time job. He feels that she is respectful of his time and his opinion, specifically when she asks him what classes that he wants to take vs what class that he must take. He loved that his advising meetings would not take up much time speaking about “business” but states “you know me, I’m a talker” so after the courses were discussed, they moved onto other topics and the meetings would last longer. Isiah appreciated that in addition to feeling supported and comfortable with his advisor, his questions were always answered and concerns were addressed and properly solved.

His preparation for meetings was thorough and included talking to students that previously took the same courses and instructors, reading up on the classes and what they entail to determine if he is ready for the content and speaking the advice of his advisor. He stated “I did as much homework and research as I had time for” when asked how he prepared for academic advising meetings.

Finally, Isiah was clear on his expectation regarding academic advising and of his advisor, he stated “I expect to be heard, respected, my questions answered, and I expect my advisor to know”. He finished the interview stating that he was very satisfied with his academic advisor. Isiah’s expectations align more with developmental advising than prescriptive academic advising.

Caroline

Caroline is a senior in the program and is very comfortable just having a prescriptive academic advising relationship with her advisor. When asked to discuss how her advising meeting typically go, she stated “These meetings are basically just what I’m scheduling for next semester, we go through the classes I need and set up a schedule”. Additionally, she directly correlates her expectation and satisfaction to having her questions answered and the classes listed for the upcoming semester. She also likes how quickly her advisor will reply to emails.

Since Caroline explains her experience as positive given that she has always had a course list to schedule classes after each advising session, she feels that evaluation of faculty academic advisors should only be conducted on other advisors and not her own. She stated, “I think the institution could evaluate some academic advisors but not mine specifically because I’ve had positive experiences. But I know some of my friends have advisors and they have mess up stuff”. Caroline makes no reference to developmental academic advising or getting to know her advisor differently and is in fact satisfied with her experiences.

Carrie

Carrie is a sophomore in the program and appears to be eager to form a relationship with her advisor. She initially mentioned that once she heard her classmates were having meetings and their advisors were reaching out, she quickly reached out to hers but stated she was disappointed that her faculty academic advisor did not reach out first. Additionally, she wishes meetings were more often than once a semester. Carrie prepares for meetings by gaining the insight from her classmates as well as students from other majors. She values their experiences from the classes they have taken and from the specific instructors of those courses.

While Carrie seems to value the concept of prescriptive academic advising, she gives the impression that receiving this information from her peers is satisfactory and that she would really prefer a developmental relationship with her faculty academic advisor. For example, she states that she would like to discuss with her advisor topics that interest her. Also, she commented on a time when her advisor said that they were proud of her for taking a difficult math class. Carrie recalled, “She was really proud of me for taking that math class and I felt good about that. It gave me a little confidence boost. She was telling me that others struggled in that class.” Carrie discussed this after she was asked to talk about her best advising session.

Tessa

Tessa is a junior in the Nutrition and Dietetics program. She is interested in course selection from her academic advising meetings, indicating her desire for a relationship with prescriptive academic advising. Currently, she is very satisfied with her experience because she will sit down with her advisor and map out a schedule. She states that she never has any questions at the end of the meetings and feel she has everything she needs. She states, “I think my expectations were met like greatly and like I’m very satisfied after my meetings just because I know what classes I need to take and then I can just schedule it.”

Tessa appreciates a quick advising meeting and quick responses to her questions if she ever reaches out with any. Her only suggestion for improvement is to have multiple options for schedules so that students can pick when (days and times) they have classes.

Bailey

Bailey is a sophomore in the program that has a desire for developmental academic advising. When asked what would be one thing that she would change about her academic advising experience, Bailey stated, “I would just like to be able to get to know my advisor more and talk”. Twice during her interview Bailey stated that she wished her faculty academic advisor would ask her how her semester is going. Bailey

describes examples that she has heard from friends regarding academic advising experiences that she hopes to prevent, so her advisor knowing her and knowing her well is very important to her.

Bailey currently does not prepare anything prior to her academic advising meetings and relies on her advisor to guide her for course selections. She comments that she does not know what she needs to take so she waits for her advisor to tell her.

Meredith

Meredith is another student that experienced a change in her academic advisor. Currently a junior she changed majors her freshmen year into the N&D program. After a year in the program, her academic advisor changed again. Meredith saw this change as a good thing because she felt her first advisor since the major change was not considered in her program. Additionally, she experienced frustrations with questions not being answered and no guidance regarding course selection per semester.

When Meredith's faculty academic advisor switched to her current advisor, she enjoyed her meetings starting off with being asked how her semester is going and if there were any areas of concern. She felt this helped to build a foundational relationship that she explains to be a "two-way street". Her advisor will ask her opinion on course curriculum suggestions and how she learned in a specific class within the department. This led to satisfaction with academic advising after a time where she was not at all satisfied with her experiences. Meredith does not specifically say developmental advising is her preferred method, however she indicated a greater sense of satisfaction when her advisor engaged her beyond her course selection.

Lydia

Lydia is a sophomore in the major but her plans after graduation are different than the other students, she plans to apply to medical school. This is an important piece of information because Lydia highly depends on her relationship with her academic advisor. Early in the interview, Lydia recalls that twice so far she has gone to see her faculty academic advisor because, "I just needed a place to cry for a

minute”. Additionally, she stated that she made the decision to take and register for the MCAT in her advisor’s office.

Lydia is very concerned with making sure she is taking the correct classes at the best times, so prescriptive advising is important to her, however developmental academic advising is her foundation. For example, she commented on how special it was that her advisor sends good luck emails before finals and scheduled outdoor, socially distanced advising meetings during COVID just so they could see each other. She is a very diligent student that relies heavily on the guidance and support of her advisor. Lydia demonstrated a desire for developmental advising.

Frances

Currently a junior in the Nutrition and Dietetics program, Frances initially was very satisfied with her academic advising experience and faculty academic advisor. Being an international student, she stated that her first year specifically was difficult being away from her family, but her advisor was supportive and very responsive to her and her needs. Frances stated “She helped me, it’s so nice to feel like someone is knowing you are struggling and what you are going through and she helped. She believed in me and I feel as like I should know more and try harder”. Her expectations were that she would have her questions answered and that was done in the beginning.

Frances mentioned that her advisor recently gained more responsibilities and that affected her advising. She did not get follow up emails to questions she asked, and she had to reach out to schedule her advising meetings. She stated, “maybe if my advisor didn’t have like a lot of responsibilities, she could follow up”. Although she stated her frustrations, she also stated that she was “100% satisfied, my advisor did a great job”. During Frances’ interview, there was not much discussion regarding academic advising and academics, her answers were related to her advisor assisting with personal issues and attention. She did state that she knew every semester what she needed to take to graduate and that her academic advising kept her on pace to graduate, but Frances satisfaction was correlated to more of a

personal touch, leaning more towards the preferred method of academic advising being developmental in nature.

Maria

Maria is a senior N&D major and her main expectation with academic advising is that her advisor will decrease her stress. She mentioned this multiple times during her interview and also mentioned that her satisfaction with her advisor was high because “I never left an advising meeting more stressed out than I came in”. Maria also stated that her academic advisor answers all of her questions and she can stay and ask more. She values her advising and states “If I needed an opinion on something, I would go to my academic advisor for the opinion”. One comment that Maria made, was she thought that academic advising meetings should be more often in the earlier years of a student’s academic career, so they have as much guidance as necessary.

Like other students have mentioned, Maria has heard many stories from her peers regarding poor academic advising however she states, “I got really lucky with my advisor. I’m never disappointed”. Additionally, when asked what could be done to improve her academic advising experience, Maria commented “I’m not sure, I’ve never thought about how to improve it because it’s been totally fine already”. She ends the interview by stating,

“I just think it’s really important to have an academic advisor who does care about the student like in the student’s well-being though school I just think really prioritizing each specific student for what they want and kind of like helping them through anything is really important.”

Megan

Megan, currently a junior in the Nutrition and Dietetics program, was quick and simple in her responses to the interview questions. She believes her advisor is “pretty great” and always receives the information she needs regarding classes or her questions answered. Megan appears that course

registration is the main purpose for her advising meetings, she also comments that her advisor has helped her through some struggles. She stated, “I was really stressed about it, and she helped me calm down a lot”. When asked about her expectation, she replied “nothing too big, I usually just hope that she can pretty much answer any of the questions I have, and she always does so”. Megan aligns more with prescriptive academic advising.

Gary

Similar to Megan, Gary participated in the study, but did not have a great deal to share. He is currently a sophomore in the major and his expectations with academic advising was to schedule courses, therefore indicating prescriptive academic advising is his preferred method. He mentioned there was discussions around career planning and felt very satisfied with his experience. Gary felt that his academic performance was not a direct reflection of his instructors or his advisor. He stated, “you can have all the help in the world and still get D’s in class”. Gary stated that he prepared for meetings by writing down all the classes he wanted to take but his advisor disagreed and stated it was too much. He recalled “she was absolutely right by say that would be a mistake”. By the time the results of this study were analyzed, Gary contacted the research to say he would be transferring at the end of the semester.

Kristen

Of all of the participants in this study, Kristen appeared the most dissatisfied with her faculty academic advisor and her experience, until an advising change occurred. She recalled how her meetings were always initiated by her and when she would go in, there was never any guidance or suggestions, just a removal of the advising hold. However, once she changed advisor, her outlook on academic advising, and the program as a whole drastically changed. She stated, “someone is actually caring here”. She describes how she loved the way her new advisor conducted meetings in which course selection for the upcoming semester is completed and then personal life is discussed. She said “we sort of transitioned into talking more about person life you know; do you have a job? How is your family?”

Kristen was always concerned about graduate school, her first advisor completely dismissed her regarding the topic, but her new advisor guided her and supplied her with resources. Kristen is a graduating senior and is very satisfied with her academic advising, specifically the developmental component.

Background (from Qualtrics survey)

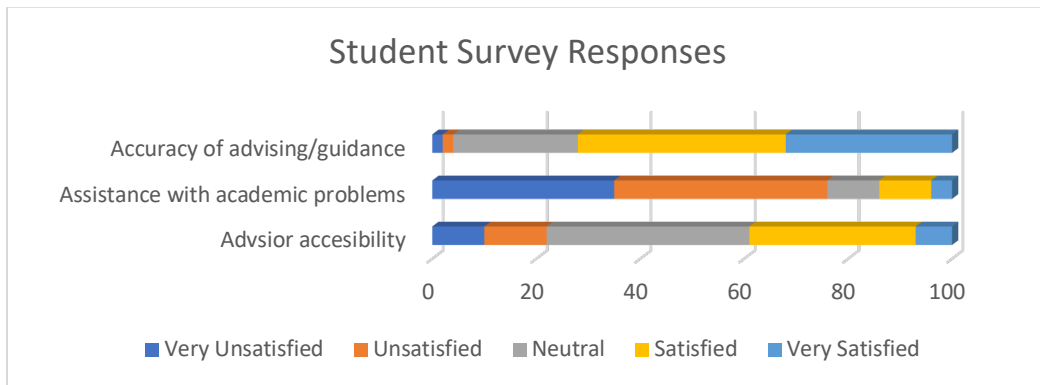
A Qualtrics survey (Appendix A) was designed to recruit students to participate in the interviews, which served as the major data collection tool for this study while also gathering background information. The thirteen-question survey was disseminated by the director of the undergraduate program at four different times in the Summer and Fall semesters of 2022. A total of 54 students completed the survey and with a total of 100 undergraduate students this equaled a 54% return rate. Results of this background information included:

- 87% of students reported that their academic advisor was easily accessible, while 7% responded their academic advisor was not easily accessible.
- 83% of students reported their academic advisor assisted them with academic problems.
- 83% of students stated they were satisfied with academic advising, while approximately 17% were not satisfied or were dissatisfied with their academic advising experience or academic advisor.
- While 84% of students felt they were receiving accurate academic regarding degree requirements, 10% of students specifically stated they were not given accurate degree requirement information. How students identified they were given inaccurate information will be discussed later in this chapter.
- 83% of students reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their expectations being met after leaving an academic advising appointment.

- Figure 1 shows how students responded to how satisfied they were with the accuracy and accessibility of their faculty academic advisor. Also, students responded to how satisfied they were with the assistance they received from their faculty academic advisor with academic problems.

Figure 4

Students' Responses Regarding Satisfaction with Faculty Academic Advisor's Accuracy of Guidance, Accessibility and Assistance with Academic Problems



All students who responded to this survey stated that the primary reason they see their academic advisor is for registration. Additionally, when asked if the primary reason they see their academic advisor is for reasons besides registration, 22% of students responded likely or very likely to meet with their advisor for reasons other than course registration. This could be that the question was interpreted differently by various respondents, or these students hope to receive more out of their academic advising meetings than just registration information. However, students listed reasons that they choose to see their advisor other than for course registration and the reasons included: advising, guidance regarding their future, graduate school, struggling, help, personal problems/life, casual conversation, accommodations, and questions about the major. While these were the main reasons students would seek out their advisor there were many other reasons, as simple as, “If their door is open, I will stop by and say hello just so I can get to know her better.”

Students were also asked to list the three top qualities they felt were important for an academic advisor to possess. Many responses were given (Figure 2) however the top five qualities that students used included: Kindness/caring, Accessible/timely, Knowledgeable, Reliable, and Attentive. All of the qualities that students listed that are important for advisors to possess could be applicable to both a prescriptive academic advisor and a developmental academic advisor. Regardless of the frame of advising being used, prescriptive or developmental, students want their academic advisor to be someone that cares about them and their academics.

Figure 5

Qualities Students Feel are Important for Their Academic Advisor to Possess



Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited via a Qualtrics survey that was distributed by the director of the undergraduate Nutrition and Dietetics program. In addition to the emails, an announcement was made in a 200-level professional development class that is major restricted and had a large enrollment of sophomores in the class, which at the time was the population that was lacking from the results. Finally, there was communication to the researcher that one student who was unable to participate in the interview

portion of this study, sent a mass text message to many of the undergraduate students encouraging them to participate. This student was eliminated in the purposeful sampling because they were an assigned advisee of the researcher. The researcher was unaware this happened until after the message was sent. There was a total of 54 surveys completed from 29 seniors (54%), 11 juniors (20%), and 12 sophomores (22%). Two students (4%) indicated they had less than 30 credits hours, technically making them a freshman, however, they may not have taken 15 credit hours each semester for the fall 2021 and spring 2022 semesters but were beginning their second year of college.

Advisor Representation

A total of five academic advisors were represented from the students that were interviewed. Katheryn (Advisor 1) is a Tenured Full professor, 9-month faculty member that has been at the university for 17 years. She has a 50% research, 50% teaching appointment and at the time of the study was assigned 12 students for academic advising. Suzanne (Advisor 2) is the newest member of the faculty, she is a non-tenured track, teaching assistant professor with a 70% teaching appointment. She had the highest advising load with 33 students during the time of data collection. Mallory, Joy and Jacob (Advisor 3, 4 and 5 respectfully) are all 9-month faculty members also with a 50/50 research/teaching appointment. At the time of data collection Mallory had 15 advisees, and Joy had 7 total students for academic advising. While Jacob was not advising any students at the time of this data collection, he is included for two reasons. First, one of the students that participated in the interviews initially had Jacob as a faculty academic advisor and her comments regarding him contributed to the results of this study. Secondly, he was one of the advisors that had all of their advisees reassigned which is mentioned in the document analysis.

Coding

Coding was completed on each interview transcript and categories and themes were developed from an analysis of the codes. Transcripts were read and coded multiples times until categories and

themes emerged. Recordings were reviewed with the transcripts multiple times to ensure that content of the interviews was being interpreted accurately. For each theme that was identified, there were codes and categories from the data that informed the themes. Those codes and categories will be considered influences in the data analysis.

Themes

Research question #1: What have been the students' academic advising experiences? Are students explaining these experiences as being more prescriptive or developmental in nature?

Theme 1: Students appear to be receiving prescriptive academic advising.

Influences: Time, completed schedule, communication.

Prescriptive academic advising involves limiting advising sessions to academic processes such as course selection and the process of registering for classes, degree requirements and any policies and procedures the institution may have (Barbuto et al., 2011). With this type of advising, a relationship between the student and advisor is not likely to happen (Anderson et al., 2014). However, many students expressed their main reason for seeing their academic advisor is for class registration and course selection. Additionally, in the N&D department, students must see their academic advisor before they are able to register for classes to have an advising hold removed from their account. This departmental policy encourages a prescriptive academic framework unless the student and faculty advisor choose to discuss more than class schedules at the advising meetings.

Time

The first major challenge for this theme is time. Students who appeared to want prescriptive academic advising did not want to spend much time in their advisor's office. For example, Brayden stated that the ideal advising session for them would be, "I walk in, I'm looking to get this amount of work done by this amount of time, what do I need to do? Take this, take this, take this, have a good day." While this

student seemed to be clear on their desires for strictly prescriptive academic advising, other students may not be. Ryleigh explained that they did not expect to be in there (the advisor's office) long. however contradicts by saying:

But usually they (advising sessions) don't last long and sometimes I'm like, I kind of wish I could talk to you more, and get to know you a bit more just so like, I know what's going on with you and you know what's going on with me at least to a professional extent like as in an advisor-student scenario like you know how I'm doing with like classes and things. And how I'm feeling about everything and you know like if I walk into a meeting, you're like, "Ok, today was a really bad day," and I'm like, "Ok, cool, we can talk about this. (Ryleigh, sophomore)

While Ryleigh was stating they do not want too much of their time allocated to academic advising, they are also communicating that they want a relationship with their advisor, to which time would be an important factor in developing. For an advisor to know a student personally on that level, much time could be required to spend with them before they could sense how the student is feeling. Unlike Ryleigh, Tessa explained their ideal advising session is "Quick, something that doesn't take super long."

Regarding meeting times, Faith stated, "We would meet once a semester, usually I'd come in there and then I asked questions about what classes I should take, then we look at them, and then I leave." Additionally, this student mentioned that she needed assistance after the advising appointment was completed while she registered for classes. Faith recalled, "When I went to my advisor for help with a class conflict, her reply was, "Keep trying." This could relate back to the concept of time for a few reasons. First, perhaps time was not taken during the original advising session to ensure the schedule/course selection was accurate and courses did not have a time conflict. Secondly, time may not have been taken after the initial advising meeting was over to assist the student with a scheduling conflict was identified and the student was told to keep trying on their own. While the actions of this advisor did

not fall under either framework of academic advising, this particular meeting the student is recalling was limited to delivery of courses and no follow-up assistance. Isiah also mentioned that they needed their advisor to be available after the meeting and while they are scheduling their course because issues arose, and assistance is needed, and questions needed answered. For Isiah, he was able to get the time he needed from his advisor to get his questions answered and courses scheduled.

In the interview, students were asked two questions that allowed them to elaborate on what they wanted from their academic advising sessions. First, they were asked to describe their best academic session and second, describe their “ideal” advising session, the concept of time was referenced directly or indirectly by all of the participants. However, the references were not interpreted the same way. Some students still described their best and ideal advising experience as being a quick appointment, in which a checklist of classes is gone through, questions are answered, and the end of session comes into focus (Brayden, Caroline, Bailey and Carrie). Ryleigh specifically mentioned that her best advising session took upwards of 45 minutes to address the topics both student and advisor wanted to cover. Ninety-three percent of the students interviewed explained concepts but used the phrase, “They take the time to answer my questions” or “they take the time and ask me questions outside of my personal life.” Meredith had an interesting response to her best/ideal session. She detailed a previous academic advising meeting where her advisor asked her opinion on classes that she was currently in. The advisor wanted the student’s perspective and suggestions for improvement in those classes. She stated, “It was cool that she was like learning from me as well as I was learning from her.” Therefore, after that specific meeting Meredith described her ideal meetings as “a two-way street”.

Time was shown to be a contributing factor with all students either directly or indirectly. They do not want to spend much of their time in an advising meeting, nor do they want to waste their time. There did not seem to be a set time that students believe to be ideal, but more specific to each individual student. They also seem to expect an appropriate amount of time from their academic advisor to ensure that the advice they are receiving is accurate and going to properly assist them in course registration, etc. for the

next semester. This “appropriate amount of time” could be different for each student however, the time appears to be directly correlated to students having all of their questions answered and a list of the classes that they will be taking in the upcoming semester.

Completed Schedules

The topic of completed schedules was not a surprising finding of this case study considering that is why students see their academic advisor, however discussing the findings through the prescriptive advising lens and highlighting the student’s experiences with this type of academic advising is what will be discussed. Ryleigh discussed her first meeting with her academic advisor after transferring into the N&D program as a sophomore, concerned she would be behind. She explained:

We went through the next semester plan, we talked about what the future meetings would look like and how at the next meeting I had with her she would try to have it all completed until I graduate. So, it would be all planned out with the classes that I would need to take, how many I would need to take and everything like that (Ryleigh, Sophomore).

Some students were experiencing their academic advisor being prepared with the upcoming semester planned out, however Ryleigh was experiencing the remainder of her academic career planned out for her. While four-year planning of schedule may be a practice that many academic advisors do for their students, it was a surprise to Ryleigh, and one in which contributed satisfaction to her advising appointment. This theme was also identified within the document analysis as how not only students are told they will be advised through website information, but also in handbooks. Completed scheduled was the focus of the message that students will receive from their academic advisor, insinuating a prescriptive relationship.

Meredith recalled after being asked to discuss her “worst advising session” that her first academic advisor told her, “I can’t really put together your schedule for you, I don’t really know. He didn’t really

give me much advisor (sic) or feedback even though I was asking the questions.” Meredith wanted her academic advisor to assist in completing her schedule for the upcoming semester but did not receive that assistance. Conversely, Caroline explained,

My advisor is really good about having everything set up beforehand, like she has my classes that I need to take, when I need to take them, all of the information. She kind of looks up information about me so she’s up to date on what we’re going to be talking about before we meet so when we do it going really simply. (Caroline, Senior)

Just like Caroline, Bailey explained her experience as, “She has it all laid out for like my entire college experience like so that I otherwise, I won’t have my scholarship for a semester if I don’t take the classes in the right order so everything’s laid out.” Caroline and Bailey experiences were similar in nature because they had the same academic advisor. Faith communicated, “She helped me with my classes, we did my classes, and I never like came across a problem because all of my advisors just went ahead and told me to take all these classes.” Additionally, Carrie explained, “When I met with my advisor, I have only met with her twice just for scheduling solely for scheduling and basically both time I kind of had an idea of what to take and she just suggested a couple of other classes.”

Whether students experienced their academic advisor having every class planned out for the upcoming semester or their remaining academic career, advising appointments were structured around course registration, therefore students should expect to discuss scheduling.

From what Tessa explained, her academic advising meetings were strictly prescriptive advising, she stated, “So, these meetings are what basically just what I’m scheduling for the next semester, so they might be about like 20 minutes. She will just go through what classes I need to take and kind of set up a schedule for me. She tells me what classes I need to take so I can then register for them”. Additionally, when this student was asked what one thing could be done or done differently to improve your academic advising experience, she stated that “having different schedule options would have improved”. So, while

she was satisfied with her advisor creating her schedule, she also felt that having additional options would have improved her experience. This student also commented later in the interview that it would be helpful if your advisor knew your personal goals. This specific student demonstrated that while she appeared to want only prescriptive academic advising, there was also a desire for some developmental academic advising components as well.

Completed schedules could be considered an obvious expectation of academic advising, specifically when examining the expectations under the prescriptive academic advising framework. Therefore, identifying completed schedule as a major influence seemed appropriate. Additionally, from the documents that will be discussed later, the analysis revealed this is the message delivered to faculty as the goal of academic advising as well.

Communication

One main role of an academic advisor is to guide a student through their collegiate journey, and one way to do that successfully, is to help ensure they graduate. Students wanted to know what they needed to complete each semester to graduate “on time”. For many, if they do not graduate in the allotted four-year span, fault tends to land on the advisor’s shoulders. However, Brayden disagreed with that concept and states,

At the end of the day the responsibility of enrollment and ensuring that someone is aware of its requirements to enroll is down to the student, the advisor simply suggests someone to do something but it’s a student in the end that needs to ensure he has all the criteria available to enroll. (Brayden, Senior)

Of all students to be interviewed, this was the only student that held that opinion. Kristen had positive and negative experiences with her advisors regarding communication of schedules. She recalled from her first academic advisor, “He just looked at my schedule and when oh, yeah its fine, if he even looked at and signed off on whatever I wanted”. She explained there was no communication, he did not

reach out to her for meetings, she had to be the one and when she would ask about graduate degree requirements, she said his reply was, “Oh, don’t even think about that you don’t need to worry about grad school, grad school is later.” After the change in advisor, Kristen experienced a shift in communication. She detailed the first meeting with her new advisor, recalling how concerned the advisor was about Kristen graduating on time. She stated,

She told me that I’ll do what I can not to delay you and I’ve been looking over your information and I really want you to graduation on time. She then realized that I was only a junior and not a senior. She was trying to prevent me from leaving a semester late and in that moment, I was like she really really wants me to do well (Kristen, Senior).

While the concept of meeting graduation requirements falls under a developmental and prescriptive academic advising framework, there is an obvious appreciation that goes further than simply checking a box.

Carrie felt a sense of frustration when she had to be the one that reached out to her advisor for an appointment, she recalled, “I was kind of disappointed that she never reached out to me. But I finally reach out to her.” Later in the interview she went on to state,

After I reached out to my advisor, she was basically like saying that I needed to reach out sooner and saying that I should have been more responsible. But I still had the expectation that she was going to reach out to me because of my peers (Carrie, Sophomore).

Receiving information from peers is a theme that will be discussed later in this section.

Tessa appreciated her academic advisor’s ability to communicate through email, she stated, “The best is when we are communicating through email just because if there’s like a lot of stuff that I need to ask about like if scheduling isn’t working, she does respond very quickly and we get it figured out.” Fast communication, assisting with issues and problem solving are points that lead to increased student

satisfaction with academic advising. Faith was receiving the opposite, “Her advising was just telling me what I needed to take and not helping me do anything. I received an email that I was going to lose my scholarship because I wasn’t in enough classes and when I reached out, she said just take a class.” While there was communication, the communication the student was receiving was not meeting her expectations or advising needs. On the other hand, Maria explained how her academic advisor is always open with her and helped her decrease her stress by communicating options and solutions to problems. She stated, “She gives me a bunch of options so it makes me feel a lot more comfortable and I don’t feel doomed if I were to mess up.” Another example was with Bailey who transferred into the program and had her first meeting via Zoom. After the advising appointment she felt that she still had questions, specifically related to the programs the institution used to schedule classes. She recalled,

I didn’t know what was going on. I didn’t know I had to take an elective and I didn’t know how to find them. So, I ended up emailing back and forth with my advisor to help after the meeting. She responded quickly and I got it all figured out. (Bailey, Sophomore)

Communication after the initial advising appointment appeared to be equally important to students for continued guidance.

Theme 2 Students seek individualized attention and care through developmental academic advising.

Influences: Individual advisors, Time, conversation outside of academic concerns.

Although the definition of developmental advising includes academic advisors using theory to focus on student growth, students in this study appreciated the advisor simply asking how their lives were going outside of their academic endeavors and engaged them in conversations that assisted them in areas unrelated to classes. These students wanted a relationship with their academic advisor that goes beyond class scheduling. They wanted to know their advisor cared about them and their future. Kristen explained, “Joy would talk to me about how my classes are going, what path I wanted to take, where I was going with what I wanted to do... she would check in with how I’m doing academically and in my personal

life.” Later in the interview, Kristen stated, “In that moment I was like she really wants me to do well, people actually care here.” This was an important statement to consider because Kristen had previously had a faculty academic advisor that was strictly considered “prescriptive” by all of his advisees and would simply agree the course schedule the student selected was appropriate. Kristen stated, “Jacob would just look at my schedule and went, ‘Oh, yeah, that’s fine’. Even if he looked at it, he just signed off on whatever I wanted.” Meredith was the only student to explain that their advisor first asks about them and how they are, if they were struggling and what is going on in their life outside of academics. After those questions have been addressed and answered, the advisor moved on. Meredith stated, “After that check in, we kind of move forward with the future, like, ‘Okay what you need to take next semester, and this is what you need still to graduate on time.’ Then she would ask if I have any questions and answered them all before I leave”. While there is not one way to conduct an advising session, this student was highly satisfied with the structure of her sessions.

Time was a major influence for many aspects of the advising process as well as total satisfaction of the student. Thirty-three percent of students excused the research faculty in their response time to emails, their accessibility and availability as well as the duration of the advising meeting because they “knew their advisor was busy.” This accommodation was not mentioned with the advisor that was a Teaching Assistant Professor (TAP). There appeared to be an assumption with students that were interviewed that the Tenure-Track faculty, or as students may perceive them as research faculty, had more responsibilities and less time to devote to students. Additionally, Frances excused the late email replies from her advisor because in the past there was never an issue with email responses. Francis stated,

Honestly, at first, when I was a freshman it was a quick response, but later on my advisor had a lot of responsibilities so it was harder to reach her and sometimes there was a very late response. But I feel this was OK, because, you know, she has so much responsibilities. (Frances, Junior)

Brayden also appeared to excuse his advisor, who was a research faculty member, many times throughout his interview. A few comments he made included: “She’s always willing to accommodate me even when she is busy”, “I mean, Katheryn, is busy all the time, sometimes I feel like I’m bothering her”. “Katheryn isn’t free for me to walk in and have a conversation with like I can with you”.

Brayden was not the only student that made comments regarding their perception that their advisor was busy. Ryleigh stated, “I wish I could sit there a little bit longer and talk”. And when Ryleigh was asked what could improve her advising experience, she stated, “I wish I could be able to stop by my advisor’s office and be like hey, I have a really quick question”. Brayden and Ryleigh both had the same faculty academic advisor that was a tenure-track faculty member.

Developmental advising and prescriptive advising are not separated or defined by the amount of time an advisor spends with their students, however when the time is spent on non-academic topics, the experiences align more with developmental advising. Frances details how her academic advisor took the time to listen and help her through some challenging times. Some of the phrases she used were,

When I was a freshman, I had a really hard time adjusting to university life, I went to my advisor and said I’d like to talk about that, she encouraged me, she helped me. It was so nice to feel like someone was knowing I was struggling, and she believed in me (Francis, Junior).

Frances then stated, “I felt like I should try harder to study. It was nice to have someone believe in me, to support me.” Finally, she stated, “Now that I’m older, it was really rewarding to know that my advisor believed in me and she saw the progress, you know, throughout the years it was a really emotional moment.” Advisors who stick to prescriptive advising can also believe in their students, however for a student to describe an advising appointment to be a “really emotional moment” because they recognized at the end of their college journey that they have built a strong bond with their advisor over four years, falls outside of what we might expect from advisors firmly working within the prescriptive framework. A

component worth mentioning connecting Frances's experience with her academic advisor is that during the time of "so much responsibilities" this specific faculty academic advisor was in the process of going up for tenure. However, there was not a mention of meetings that went back to normal, after tenure was awarded.

Lydia specifically stated that while they are required to meet with their academic advisor once a semester for course registration, they typically stopped in 2-3 more times per semester, and commented, "I really like my advisor." When asked to elaborate on the purpose for those additional meetings, Lydia stated, "Once or twice it's been for an emotional breakdown [laughing], yeah I think twice I just needed somewhere to cry for a minute." This would not be possible if there was not a relationship formed that took time and the student felt that academic advisor cared about them as an individual student and not only their graduation requirements.

Faith had mentioned that she met with faculty members for advising related questions that were not her advisor and when asked to add to that she stated, "I felt like whenever I came to her, like it was strictly for class selection and I was hoping to get more than just a class schedule thing." Faith wanted a more enhanced experience with her academic advisor. When asked about the best advising session Ryleigh has experienced, she reflected on a meeting that lasted almost 45 minutes, in which her advisor discussed how much they both loved cooking and her future plans outside of academics. Ryleigh commented, "It was a really good experience".

Finally, Isiah recalled a moment with his academic advisor that appeared to make a positive impact. He explained that he failed a chemistry course and wanted to know what he could do to keep from getting a semester behind. The reply he received has stayed with him since. He stated,

She said, 'What's behind? Behind who?' And I said, 'You know where everyone else is, where I should be.' And she said, 'Well, who decides that?' She basically was trying to

get me to understand there's no set time period that I need to get through undergrad and I was like, 'Man...' I ruminated on that for a while. (Isiah, Senior)

Without the perspective of the academic advisor in this example, the purpose of her statement is unclear however, she created a positive experience for the student and made him feel less guilty over the need to retake a class.

The data collected from the interviews did demonstrate that students are experiencing both prescriptive and developmental academic advising.

Research question #2. What are students' expectations of academic advising? When describing these expectations, are students wanting more prescriptive or developmental advising?

There did not appear to be a distinction between prescription or developmental advising regarding student's expectations of their academic advisor or the advising sessions. However, there were themes that emerged that aligned with prescriptive academic advising such as students expect their advisor to have a plan for their next semester courses. There were also themes that could fall under the framework of developmental academic advising and themes such as relieving stress, that could be a combination of both prescriptive and developmental advising depending on the topic that was being discussed.

Theme 1 Students expect advisors to relieve their stress.

Influences: relieve stress, preparation and time

Stress

Caroline stated, "My advisor set the bar really high by having like my classes laid out ready for me when I came in. So, it takes a lot of stress away." Of the students that were interviewed, 66% stated that their expectation of their academic advisor was to help reduce or eliminate stress and most of the this directly correlated with mapping out the next semester's course selection. While each student may not have communicated it in the same way, the theme was present. For example, Frances stated that her

expectation of her advisor was to “help if I’m like struggling or need any support.” She went on to say that adjusting to college life as a freshmen and international student was difficult, but her advisor helped her then, therefore the expectation of assistance on a personal level remained.

Bailey relayed that her expectations of her academic advisor were the same for each meeting because her advisor was always prepared. The student stated,

I just expect to learn what I need to be taking the next semester and I expect to talk to her about other things that are going on. I’m very satisfied with her because she always has my classes planned out and I know exactly what I need to be doing for the next semester. Each time is stress relieving for me. (Bailey, sophomore)

Bailey communicated many connections with the above statement, her satisfaction with her advisor and a few reasons why she was satisfied. Isiah explained that as they progressed through the major, they became more nervous about the classes they needed to take. However, meeting with their academic advisor regularly helped to dissipate some of those feelings. He stated,

Junior and senior year gets kinda crazy, there’s a lot of questions and not a lot of options for classes, so I’ve got all of these questions, I’m nervous and anxious so I’m writing all these questions down so I can go to my advisor. She was able to field my questions and give me multiple options and resources. (Isiah, Senior)

As previously stated, the N&D program had a very structured curriculum that must be followed in a specific order. Twelve out of the fourteen required N&D classes are only offered once a year, and build on each other, therefore if a student missed a class or a class is full, it could delay graduation. This was because each class served as prerequisites for next course in line for the curriculum. Therefore, relying on their academic advisor to assist in course selection will help alleviate stress since the advisor was fully aware of the requirements.

Maria stated that she did not handle stressful situations well, and that her main expectation for her academic advising meetings was to never leave more stressed out than going into the meeting. She explained,

I always expect to leave with more clarity than I came in with. So, if I'm really confused about something, I really hope to leave refreshed and like maybe not as stressed out, which I usually end up. It's just like that, I don't think I've ever left more stressed out, which is really awesome for me (Maria, Senior).

Megan relayed that the time her advisor spent with her while adding a minor to "spread out the rest of her time in college" greatly relieved her stress. She stated, "I was really stressed out about it, and she helped me calm down a lot." Although Frances did not directly mention she had expectations of her academic advisor reducing stress, she did mention that she expected them to assist her when she is struggling. She stated, "I would like for her to tell me what I should do if I'm like struggling or need any kind of support" and when asked to elaborate on that response she said that when she was a freshman there were so many classes to pick from and she wanted her advisor to assist and finished the statement with "it was so stressful."

When students were being assisted with class selection and course registration by their academic advisor, their stress related to this topic seemed to decrease.

Theme 2 Students expected advisors to be prepared during the advising meeting to assist them.

Preparation

Kristen expected her academic advisor to be more involved in her academic career than he was. She stated that he never had anything prepared, for example Jacob would never look at the courses she was currently in to ask how they were going or he would never look to see what she needed to take the upcoming semester. She also mentioned that she expected him to reach out to her because that was what she heard from other students. Students communicating with each other regarding academic advising is a

theme that was unexpectedly found in many of the interviews and will be discussed later in this chapter. Students communicating with each other informed Kristen's expectation that her academic advisor would be the one to reach out to her since most of her peers stated that was how their advising appointments scheduled. Of the 15 students that participated in the interviews, 14 (93%) of them stated that their advising meetings were set up by their advisor sending them an email. Kristen is including in the 14 students because once she changed advisors, her second academic advisor would in fact, send an email to schedule the advising appointment.

Carrie felt that her expectations of her academic advisor went beyond just the current semester. She stated, "future steps are important. Not just what's happening this semester but also what I can expect for later in my college career and making sure that I'm on track to graduate or graduate early." Carrie was currently a sophomore. Bailey stated that her expectations of advising was "to learn what I need to be taking next semester." This could be interpreted as though she expected her advisor to have it all prepared, or they do it together. Although when asked at the beginning of the interview how her academic advising meetings are set up, Bailey stated. "Whenever we schedule a meeting, she has it all laid out for me". Therefore, the expectation of her advisor being prepared could have been set by the advisor early in the advising relationship. With the advisor preparing for the meeting each time and already structuring the next semesters class schedule, the advisor has created an expectation that this action will be done for every future meeting.

Caroline had a similar situation, when asked if she had any expectations for her academic advising, she replied, "In the beginning I didn't have as many expectations, but then she set the bar really high by having, like my classes, laid out right for me when I came in." The student continued with, "That takes a lot of stress away from me." This student highlights two of the main points on this theme, that her academic advisor is prepared and alleviated stress. While Tessa had no negative remarks regarding her advising experiences but asked what could be done to improve her experience, she stated, "Having different schedule options lined up for me to choose from would improve [my experience]."

Kristen explained that her advisor would have everything planned and since this student had experienced a change in advisors, it was different from her first advisor so there was an emphasis on how much she appreciated the advisor preplanning the schedule so other topics could be addressed. Bailey stated that her expectation of the meetings was that she “expected my advisor to tell me what I should be taking next semester”. Sixty-six percent of the students interviewed felt this way. They could have the expectation, that their advisor would have a planned-out schedule for them due to their assumption that the role of their academic advisor is to create their schedules, and/or the fact that the N&D curriculum is strict and did not allow much freedom with course registration. Meeting with the academic advisors were still required for pin removal and taking the classes in the correct order.

Time

Thirty-three percent of students interviewed were very much aligned with prescriptive academic advising regarding their expectations and the concept of time being a major influence. Carrie commented that being in the advising meeting for too long, unless they have a major issue to discuss, is not what they wanted. Ryleigh stated, “I do not expect to be in there long.” Brayden was direct in that his expectation for his advising session was to get his advising hold (pin) removed, and potentially have a conversation but one that is not related to academics. Conversely, Lydia valued the time that her academic advisor put into assisting her and talking with her about her courses, the course load and whether she is balancing it all. This example can highlight how both prescriptive and developmental advising can occur simultaneously. Lydia recalled a specific meeting with her academic advisor and stated,

There was a semester where I was like going to be in 3 or 4 super high-level sciences classes and like she told me this is going to be hard and she knows I work and you’re going to need to take the time to study and asked if we need to reevaluate the schedule. She looked ahead and saw that I could take an easier class and we bounce ideas off each other for what is best for me as an individual student. (Lydia, Sophomore)

The student concluded by saying that she thought it was nice that her advisor was the type of person that they could bounce ideas off each other and that she did not just go to the meetings and be told what to take each semester.

Theme 3 Students expect answers to their questions.

Major influences: student's preparation, continued assistance after meetings

Eleven out of the fifteen (73%) students stated they would prepare questions and/or a sample list of classes they would like to take prior to meeting with their advisor. Since IRB approval was granted for this study a comparison of preparation and GPA was explored. The study participants had a high GPA overall (3.52). Thus, they were a biased sample. Those students with a GPA above 3.30 all prepared questions to ask their advisor and sample schedules with their advisor. The average GPA of the students interviewed was 3.52 which could be an indicator that those students who agreed to participate in this interview portion of this study were also higher scoring students. An interesting point to note, however, that the students with higher grade points (above 3.3) were also those students who were self-motivated to prepare questions and sample schedules ahead of their advising appointments, rather than waiting to be told what classes to schedule.

Maria stated, "I always expect to leave with more clarity than I came in with. So, like if I'm really confused about something, I really hope to leave like refreshed and like may not be as stressed out, which I usually end up." Frances stated that her expectation of her academic advisor was not only to have her questions answered but to explain what her next steps should be moving forward. Megan felt similarly, they stated, "I usually just hope that she can pretty much answer any of the questions I have, and she always does." Megan stated that her expectations are "not too big" and that she just expected to have her questions answered and that her academic advisor is always able to do that for her.

In addition to their questions being answered during the academic advising meeting, students wanted guidance of their academic advisor to continue through the registration process. Faith described

how her advisor would provide little to no guidance after the required advising meeting was over. They stated, “I would reach out and ask for help because classes were conflicting, and her response would be to keep trying.” Katheryn would tell Faith that she needed to continue to look for classes that didn’t conflict on times, even though together they created a list of necessary classes to take the upcoming semester and those classes were conflicting with each other. Another example from the same student and advisor was when Faith received a notification that she was at risk of losing a scholarship, she reached out to Katheryn for guidance and the response was to take a class she didn’t need just to get the hours that Faith needed to have for the semester that was required by her scholarship. “I took a class that I didn’t need, which was Library, to make up for the hours”. Not only did this experience speak to the student’s expectation of their questions being answered, but also to their advisor being prepared for their individual needs. Without a deeper understanding of this specific situation and the perspective of the academic advisor, finding a better solution would be difficult. The advisor could have in fact given the best alternative but could have communicated to Faith more clearly that this course saves her scholarship and could have potentially fulfilled a general education requirement. Communication in this example could have been expanded and led to Faith being satisfied with the assistance she received from her advisor.

Sixty percent of the students’ expectations of their academic advising are fueled by the experiences of their classmates. The message was clear that students communicated with each other in both a positive and negative distribution of information. If their classmates/friends were having a positive experience with their advisor, they expected to have the same. However, those with positive experiences were openly thankful for that. Isiah described hearing “horror stories of how my friend’s advisor messed them up so badly.”

Research question #3. Are students explaining their satisfaction more related to receiving prescriptive or developmental advising?

Twenty-six percent of the students that participated in the interviews simply stated they were satisfied with their academic advisor and did not elaborate on why. When asked, they would state “she’s

great”. However, when they were asked to explain their ideal advising session or their best advising session with their academic advisor, more themes emerged more clearly defining reasons for their satisfaction.

Theme 1 Students state being satisfied with academic advising when their advisor decreases their stress level.

Major influences: Students are more satisfied with academic advising, regardless of whether it is prescriptive or developmental if their advisor decreases their stress.

Caroline rated her level of satisfaction with her academic advisor as “10/10” and specified that she is always very satisfied with all the aspects of her advising, but moreover when her advisor was able to decrease her stress related to graduate school. She stated that her advisor would provide to her contacts of professionals in the area for her to shadow and volunteer with to increase her chances of being accepted into graduate school. She closed with saying that her advisor was always “super supportive” of her. As mentioned before, Kristen experienced a change in advising and with that change came a shift in satisfaction. Some of the phrases that were used when she spoke about her current advisor were, “She’s a guiding hand,” “I was really happy every time I met with her,” “She showed that she cared.” Kristen discussed how her current advisor had options of schedules planned, but also spoke to her about topics (graduate school, her personal life, how she was doing in her current classes) that her initial academic advisor did not discuss.

Maria stressed that she had always been really happy with her academic advisor, loved their meetings and commented that there was never a bad or unproductive meeting. She recalled, “I was always really happy with the way meetings would go, I got really lucky with my advisor.” She went on to describe a meeting that was after she had failed a class and felt that she had “messed up.” Her advisor mapped out how she would still graduate at the same time. She stated, “she gave me a bunch of options, so it made me feel a lot more comfortable and less stressed, and I liked that I was not doomed from one

mess up.” Gary also stated that his meetings were “wonderful and was always leaving those appointments pretty satisfied.” He mentioned they would talk about the weather, his interests and then “get down to business” which indicated courses for next semester and the approach of the advisor could perhaps be described as both prescriptive and developmental.

Bailey was simple and direct in her response to this question and stated, “I feel very satisfied with my academic advising, I feel like I know exactly what I need to be doing for the next semester each time which is stress relieving for sure.” Bailey implied her satisfaction was related to course guidance or prescriptive academic advising.

Tessa could be described as a direct correlation with prescriptive academic advising and her satisfaction. She stated, “I’ve had a very positive experience” and, “I think it can speak volumes about your academic advisor to know your goals of wanting to graduate quickly, know what classes you can take in the winter, May, and summer because there’s a lot there.” This institution offers 3-week sessions in May and December in addition to summer courses. Taking courses during these times will greatly increase a student’s ability to graduate early, however this is not a common practice, but led to a greater sense of satisfaction with Tessa.

Theme 2 Students state their satisfaction is related to their academic questions being answered correctly, however they also state they want their advisor to ask how they are doing outside of classes.

Eighty percent of students described being satisfied with their advising session simply when their advisor makes time for them, was responsive to emails, and did not seem “overly busy” when they stopped by unannounced. Of the three students that participated in the interviews that had more than one advisor during their academic career, all commented that after a change in advisor their satisfaction increased. There was not one clear reasoning behind this, however all three mentioned that increased time was spent by the advisor to make sure their questions were answered. They all felt that their new advisor simply cared more. Kristen spoke about their experience with both academic advisors stating that their

first advisor (Jacob) was not helpful and when Kristen would reach out for a meeting the advisor would simply lift the advising hold and many times a meeting did not even occur. While no other student had this advisor to contribute to the data collected, it was identified that Jacob was one of the faculty academic advisors whose advisees were reassigned even prior to the restructuring of the college advising model. This relationship led to dissatisfaction and additionally the student stated, “I wasn’t getting any guidance, he would possibly look at my schedule and say, ‘Yeah, that’s fine,’ if he even looked at it at all. But it messed up my path and I needed help”. However, once Kristen changed their academic advisor satisfaction increased. The student explained,

When I would meet with Joy, she would, you know, talk to me about how my classes were going, what path I wanted to take, where I was going and what I wanted to do. She would explore options with me and would do it every session. She would check on me and how I’m doing academically and in my personal life. (Kristen, Senior)

Additionally, Kristen related her satisfaction to questions being answered. She explained that her first advisor would tell her, “You don’t need to think about that, don’t worry about that. No, no, do not worry about graduate school, graduate school is later.” However, Kristen was very concerned about these questions and therefore experienced frustrations. An important fact to note was that the N&D program was a part of a national accreditation effort in which a graduate degree is required. In addition, Jacob, Kristen’s first advisor was not a nutrition faculty member, but a Food Science faculty member. This point highlights many of the student’s comments and frustrations regarding their interpretations of having a faculty academic advisor that was not “in their program.” Consequently, Kristen described this meeting in which her questions were dismissed without explanation from her advisor as the worst meeting she has experienced from an advisor. An important piece of information was that all three of the faculty that were food scientists were also considered faculty in the N&D program. They taught required courses in the curriculum, attended faculty meetings and advised students. They attended the faculty retreats that

provided updates to the curriculum and national accreditation. By all accounts, they were member of the program.

Ryleigh provided a long description regarding her satisfaction with academic advising. This example showed how students can not only be satisfied but also still want more from their academic advisor. Ryleigh stated how satisfied she was, but also wishes for a longer conversation. She stated,

Usually by the end of the meeting I feel pretty good with the advising, at least in the sense that I have an idea of what I'm going to be doing the next semester and getting that all schedule and set up. And in every advising meeting like, the advisors have answered my questions, no matter what like to whatever extent they can and if they can't answer it, they like, write down my question and figure it out and give me an answer later. So, I really appreciate that because sometimes my questions are like nothing to do with advising, but at the same time they have something to do with advising. So, I'm really satisfied with like the lengths they go to to help me get through what I need to get through. And usually other than the fact that I feel like I wish I could sit in there a little bit longer and talk I think my advising meetings went really well because I feel like I'm better prepared for the next semester. (Ryleigh, sophomore)

Without clarifying with this student, one could say that Ryleigh was satisfied with her prescriptive academic advising experience but not overly satisfied with their developmental academic advising experience, they were left wanting more out of that relationship. Meredith simply stated, "I was highly satisfied, I never really had any gaps or questions remaining."

Carrie was not satisfied with the academic advising she was receiving. She stated that her advisor would email her a list of courses that she recommended as well as a few alternative courses. However, Carrie commented, "I kind of would have wished that we met once more." She indicated that there was a misunderstanding how the meetings would be set up. The student thought that she would hear from her

advisor because of “what happened with her friends,” however the advisor expected the student to schedule the meeting. Additionally, most of their “meetings” were not in person meetings, but email correspondence. Carrie would have liked to have met in person and discussed more than just courses. She stated, “I think I just would have liked to talk about the classes I’ve taken, whether I like them or not, make sure this path is good for me. And seeing what interests me.” Carrie wanted more than prescriptive academic advising.

Additionally, Faith stated not being happy with her advising. She stated, “I would like feel she just gave me a list of classes that I already knew I needed to take. Her advising was more just telling me what I needed to take but not helping me do anything.” A previous comment made by this student was that her advisor was not available after the meeting for follow up or additional questions. After the meeting/email was done, there wasn’t further contact, which led to the student not being satisfied with her academic advising experience.

Theme 3 Dynamic academic advising (prescriptive and developmental) creates the most satisfaction for students

Major influences: completed schedules, they are being asked about their personal lives.

While Lydia specifically stated that her best advising session had nothing to do with academics, it was important to include their statement that her advisor held advising meetings outside, with masks and social distancing, just to be able to see the students in person. This student felt this was so important at the time since they had been all virtual the previous semester. It is equally important to explain the same student (Lydia) describes their worst advising session in which her advisor (for her minor, not major) would not listen to her when she wanted to take a class that appeared to be academically harder, but worked better with her major. The minor advisor was simply having her take the easiest path to complete the required hours and was not listening to her needs and interests. Finally, when asked what this student could have done, or what an advisor could have done differently to improve the academic advising

experience, Lydia described, “I have a professor in my major that is not my advisor but she reaches out during finals week and just lets us know that her door is always open and like I care about you guys and I know this is stressful and if you just need somewhere to go to like rant for a minute, I’m here.” She proceeded to say that she knows her current advisor would be there, too, but it would be “nice and sweet to have that email reminder from my advisor.” The comments from Lydia greatly highlighted this student wanted developmental academic advising.

Kristen described an ideal advising session in which the advisor has already preplanned the schedule of courses for the next semester, the advisor has checked their grades to make sure there were not red flags to discuss and discuss anything about her future that needs attention. Next they transitioned to the student’s personal life. This “ideal session” underscores the prescriptive to developmental frameworks that other students have also described.

Faith explained their ideal advising session as, “It’s not just about knowing what classes to take, I want them to ask me about how everything else is going too.”

Hearing directly from students regarding their expectations, experience and satisfaction with academic advising generated many themes and highlighted the concept that academic advising did not need to be either prescriptive or developmental, however can and should be a combination of both. Doing so can greatly serve the students and increase satisfaction. For example, Ryleigh stated that she would like to get to know her advisor better. She goes on to explain.

I want them to know what’s going on with me at least like to a professional extent like as an advisor student scenario. Like you know how I’m doing with like classes and thing and how I’m feeling about everything and if I’m having a really bad. (Ryleigh, Sophomore)

Another point in the interview Ryleigh described how a conversation with her advisor led to how much she liked to cook, and her advisor stated she should come to her house and cook for her kids.

Additionally, Ryleigh made the statement, “I feel pretty good with the advising, at least in the sense that I have an idea of what I’m going to be doing next semester”. These statements were made about the same advising appointment. A clear example that more can be discussed in an advising meeting other than course scheduling. To emphasize this point, Faith’s comment when asked about her ideal advising session was, “Its not just about the classes, it’s about other things. I’m hoping to hear more than just a class schedule thing”.

Meredith’s experience can be another example of how students can easily receive both types of advising in the same meeting. She describes how her meetings begin

I go in and she goes through what classes I need to be taking, what classes I am already taking and she just asks me how they are going, like if I’m struggling in any of them which is good, she kind of checks in and then we kind of move forward with the future. She always follows up and asks what questions I have and if there’s anything else I need.
(Meredith, Junior)

The students in this study were given the opportunity to answer questions regarding their expectations, experiences and satisfaction with their faculty academic advising. Through those interviews, themes were identified that assisted in answering the research questions of this study. The following table (Table 4) represents the students in the study and if they specifically mentioned one of the influences that generated the themes.

Table 4

Student and Major Influences

	Time	Completed	Comm	Non-	Q's	Stress	Advisor	Student	Talk to
		Schedules		Academic	answered		Prep	prep	classmate
Brayden	x	x	x	x	x				
Ryleigh	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
Faith			x		x	x		x	
Isiah	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Caroline	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Maria	x		x		x	x		x	
Bailey	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Carrie	x		x		x				x
Meredith	x			x	x	x		x	
Megan		x			x	x		x	
Frances	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Gary		x		x		x		x	
Lydia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kristen	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tessa	x	x	x		x		x		x

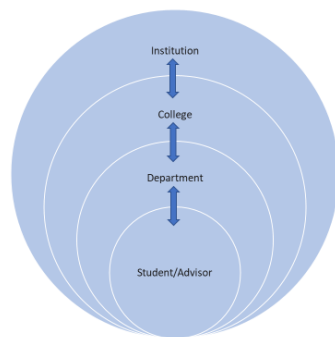
The final piece of data analysis for this study was document analysis.

Document analysis

Review of documents can provide an additional component to an analysis of data. Additionally, using the Systems Theory as a framework to understand systemically how academic advising is being viewed, valued and implemented from a university, college and departmental (Figure 3) standpoint can connect students' responses regarding their expectations, experiences and satisfaction. As mentioned in chapter 1, Banathy and Jenlink (2004) suggest that an institution can utilize the Systems Theory to identify characteristics of the system at interconnected levels, relationships, interaction and interdependences at different levels as well as purpose and goals of the educational (advising) system.

Figure 6

Example of Systems Theory Framework in Academic Advising



For this case study, there were multiple sources reviewed and analyzed for themes, specifically those that connected back to the student interviews. Documents included: University policies and procedures regarding academic advising, College and department policies and procedures regarding academic advising, senior exit surveys from the N&D department, meeting minutes from N&D department, Promotion and tenure guidelines from the division that the N&D faculty are in, student and faculty handbooks, advising resources and faculty meeting minutes from the division that the N&D department is in.

University/Institution information

Theme 1 Promotion of prescriptive advising with mention of developmental at intuitional level only.

Theme 2 No funnel of information from Institution to college to department

Website for undergraduate admission: A search for academic advising was done on the institution's website, the first result was for the undergraduate admission site. Upon selecting the website link, one would find a statement that said:

Your academic advisor will help you chart a plan of study. Depending on your major, your adviser will be a faculty member in your department or a professional adviser familiar with your major and possible career paths. If you haven't decided on a major, you will work with an advisor to narrow your academic and career interests. You can also use the online advising system to get real-time advice and track progress toward your degree.

From the institution itself, there was a strong prescriptive advising framework mentioned. However, if one continued to search the website they would find the Academic Advising Council (AAC) and this site described a mission that detailed the Academic Advising Council was committed to creating and fostering an "equitable, inclusive and holistic advising experience that encourages student growth, accountability, responsibility, and success across a diversity of academic and personal pursuits." In addition to supporting the advising experience for students, the Academic Advising Council also supported this advising philosophy by "providing relevant and up-to-date information to the advising community, recognizing advisors for their outstanding work and dedication to the student populations they serve, and by providing guidance in the utilization of data for the implementation of advising improvements." As the web search continued to funnel from the institutional level to the college level, and then to the department in which the program is housed, there was not another mention of the "whole student," additionally there was not a mention of the Academic Advising Council and their philosophy.

Why the message of the “whole student” stops at the level of the institution and does not funnel down is unclear. Administrators at the Deans and Division Directors level may be unaware of the AAC or of the message they were communicating. Therefore, these leaders may not be collaborating the same message to the college or program level. If a faculty member that advised students did not know the AAC existed, they would not be able to adopt the philosophy of the whole student and simply deliver course schedules.

College Advising information

During the website search there was one reference to academic advising in the College that the N&D program was located. That information stated:

The College has a combined advising group of both faculty and professional advisors.

Your advisor will provide curriculum sheets for your major and work with you to develop a plan of study. If at any point you feel overwhelmed, uncertain of your curriculum or just want to discuss topics related to your major or career plan, reach out to your advisor.

They are here to help you succeed.

Although the message that the college was attempting to send was positive and could be interpreted as both prescriptive and developmental in nature, the message was also vague. Additionally, there was no mention of academic advising on the N&D program website. There appears to be a dilution of information (or importance) regarding academic advising as the focus is narrowed to the program level. The institution provided information regarding the importance of undergraduate academic advising on more than one site, however the college listed a paragraph and the department had nothing. Finally, a document listing all of the N&D’s policies and procedures was available online and while nineteen different topics were discussed, there was no mention of academic advising, therefore perhaps suggesting to faculty, by its omission, that there is not a department policy or procedure for faculty to follow when performing academic advising. The analysis of the institution, college and departmental websites can connect back to Research Question #2 regarding the expectation students have of academic advising.

After reading the aforementioned sites, a current or prospective student could understand academic advising to be a course selection opportunity.

Handbooks

Theme 1 Encourages Prescriptive advising

N&D student handbook: In the student handbook for this department there was wording that almost discourages a student to seek developmental advising from their faculty academic advisor and stay strictly with prescriptive advising. For example, the handbook states: “Academic advisors help guide students towards which classes to take, add minors, change majors or add a double major, meet graduation requirements, and provide career advice, as applicable” (p. 7, N&D student handbook). The handbook also includes, “Students should follow the advisors’ guidance on which classes to register for each semester, but students must register for the classes themselves.” The only other information in this 25-page document for undergraduate students in the N&D program related to academic advising is,

It is important that students meet with their faculty academic advisor early in their academic career. Students are required to meet with their advisor at least twice per year, once in the Fall semester and once in the Spring semester. These meetings are required before you can register for class. If students do not meet with their advisor, a hold will be placed on their student account and they will not be able to register for classes until the hold is lifted, by meeting with their advisor. (N&D Student Handbook, p. 7).

The message was worded in a way that encourages students to meet with their advisor quickly just to lift a hold and does not encourage them to form a relationship with an individual that will guide them through their academic journey. For many of the interviews as well as the survey results, most students see their faculty academic advisor strictly for course registration and removal of the advising hold. However, if both students and faculty academic advisors were encouraged from admission to the program and at

hiring through these same policies there could be greater satisfaction and therefore could lead to greater retention of students.

Faculty handbook for department

In September 2020, a “Guide to a Successful Faculty Career at the R1 institution in the Mid-Atlantic region” was distributed to the division that housed the N&D program. In this 11-page document, there was one reference to academic advising listed under the sub-topic of teaching connecting to the topic of “contents of the performance portfolio.” This reference to advising was that a faculty member should provide in their performance portfolio, “Evidence of excellent student advising, undergraduate or graduate.” Not only was the term “excellent” subjective, but there was also currently not a formal evaluation of faculty advisors in place, something that every student who was interviewed agreed would be important to get the student perspective on how effective their advisor has been. Additionally, there was no reference as to how to be a successful advisor within this document, but there was the indication that to be promoted one must submit evidence of successful academic advising. Unless faculty take the initiative to attend trainings, there was no formal training on how to properly advise an undergraduate student, but faculty are expected to be excellent advisors.

Reference guide for Advisors

After conducting a search on the department website, a handbook for advisors was found, called, “Reference guide for Advisors, 2022-2023”. This 16-page document is filled with useful information for advisors to help them navigate many challenging topics related to D/F repeats, Transient Course requests, Math and Chemistry placements and many others. This document consists of useful ways to solve many advising issues that can occur, but no information on how to set up the meetings, how to positively interact with students, resources to deal with challenging personal or emotional situations, or how to help a student with academic accommodations is given. This document, like most, emphasizes the prescriptive framework of academic advising.

Trainings for Academic Advisors

The institution offers roughly 6-8 workshops per year and these are recorded and posted on-line for advisors to view. However, as the research of this case study and an advisor at this institution for five years, I was unaware that these workshops existed until conducting the search. Within the College that the N&D program was in, the Director of Academic Affairs communicated that two trainings are held each year and while there was between 75-80 total undergraduate advisors at the time of the data collection, the trainings typically attract between 10-15 individuals.

Faculty Promotion and Tenure (P&T) guidelines

The only mention of academic advising of undergraduate students in the department P&T guidelines was a calculation of the ratio of students to teaching credit hours, advising 30 undergraduate students was equivalent to a 3-credit hour course. Additionally, there was specifically a statement that advising students cannot create an overload on a contract. This document does not provide any guidance on successful academic advising or give mention that the advising needs to be successful to contribute to promotion and tenure in this department.

Department Bylaws

There was no mention of faculty academic advising in the department bylaws.

Review of the handbooks and resources that are available for faculty to advise correlate to a prescriptive academic advising framework and connects to Research Question # 1 that students' experiences with faculty academic advising are mostly prescriptive in nature.

N&D Departmental Specific Documentation

Theme 1 A need for changing or fixing academic advising

N&D Department Meeting minutes

Department faculty meeting minutes/summaries are emailed to all faculty members in addition to be saved on a share drive. A review of these documents revealed multiple conversations regarding faculty academic advising. Topics included number of advisees per faculty member, improving advising, properly advising, shifting advisees to different faculty members and removal of advising holds. The majority of information found was related to prescriptive advising. For example, the “Improvement plan for the N&D program” (2018) stated, “Advising recommendation sheets are being developed to assist faculty advisors in providing a more consistent message to students.” Not only does this statement align with prescriptive advising, the context suggests there has been inconsistent delivery of information to students. These documents can connect back to Research Question #1 regarding students’ experiences with academic advising. Additionally, the students that indicated a change in their faculty academic advisor also indicated a change in their satisfaction with their experience. When a student was reassigned to another advisor, their satisfaction increased, connecting to Research Question #3.

Furthermore, minutes from a faculty retreat in 2019 included an entire section for advising and listed as the first topic discussed was “improve advising.” However, this section also included statements such as: “match with most appropriate advisor and mentorship through the student organization” as future goals. This could indicate both prescriptive as well as developmental advising approaches depending on how the individual doing the advising and mentorship perceives their role. However, through the continued document search, there has been no mention of a mentorship program within the N&D undergraduates and their student organization as well as no mention of strategically assigning advisees to faculty members that align interests. Moreover, the 2019 meeting minutes stated, “with the coming faculty changes for the fall semester, there is again a need to shift advisees.” Having multiple advisors during a student’s academic journey has been suggested to both increase and decrease satisfaction depending on their relationship with the original advisor. Results from the interviews suggested that when a change of advisor occurred, satisfaction increased, however there is not a clear understanding if the

“shift in advisees” from the meeting minutes was going to be a change that the advisee had already experienced. Finally, the shift in advisees was also not at the request of the advisee but a departmental necessity. Therefore, knowing if the student’s satisfaction would increase or decrease would be difficult to determine.

Two additional meeting minutes/summaries were collected that listed academic advising being discussed in 2018. Both summaries had multiple topics discussed, especially a summary from October. Seventeen total summary statements were made related to advising some of which included: midterm grades, time ticketing registration, minors, chemistry labs, transfer credits, withdraw policy, and academic suspension/probation. The topics mirrored the previously mentioned document “*Reference guide for Advisors,*” did not include any information that would be considered helpful to a faculty member that wanted to do developmental academic advising. The topics were strictly related to prescriptive academic advising. Additionally, the final meeting minute summary document that include a statement on advising directly stated: “N&D: do not pull PIN# off. Communicate to students that it will be required to see advisor before it can be removed. This will help clear up some confusion surrounding this. Students should also see their official academic advisor, not just whoever they want to see.” Students have advising holds placed on their accounts prior to course registration each semester and these “pins” are only removed once they met with their advisor and discussed the schedule of course for the upcoming semester. However, as mentioned in the student interviews, this wasn’t always the standard practice and this document confirms what students were stating, that sometimes a faculty academic advisor would simply remove the pin without actually meeting with the advisee. Additionally, the meeting minutes summary stated that “students should also see their official academic advisor, not just whoever they want to see”, and this connects back to students stating in the interviews that they have met with other faculty than their own advisor to get questions answered and advice regarding courses and scheduling of classes.

Senior Exit Surveys

Analyzing the results of the annual exit survey from seniors provided another important connection back to the research questions. The N&D department was attempting to make changes based on the satisfaction of the students regarding their academic advising experiences.

Every year in the Capstone course, the N&D program director sends a senior exit survey to the class and completing the survey is a requirement for passing the class. In the final question of the survey students are asked, "Please share any other information or comments (positive or negative) about your undergraduate experience in the N&D program that would help us continue to improve the program, please remember your answers are anonymous." Many answers were provided on the exit survey by students and most were considered positive in nature.

One constructive comment on the exit survey that was also mentioned a few times in the interview response was:

It may be good to have an RDN pathway, and a Food Sciences/Research pathway. This way students have more individualized experience based on what to do after college. I think students should be matched with advisors based on their future career goals. It was quite difficult for me to understand what actions I should be taking to become a dietitian when I was not advised by a dietitian.

Twenty-six percent of students (57% of those that had Food Scientists as advisors), who were interviewed and had the same experience commented they didn't have an advisor within the major even though the same faculty member that was advising them was also teaching them in the classroom. Two students had negative comments to provide, one indicated that their advisor changed multiple times, and the other stated,

The only thing that did not aid in my education was the advising that I was given throughout my 4 years. Some of the advisors seem to be specific to either nutrition or

food science rather than both, which proved to be a hurdle when trying to figure out requirements to graduate, post-graduate things, etc. This is my only complaint (sic) of the program.

While this complaint was the only one this particular student suggested, the same complaint was given multiple times, by multiple students. Not being advised by an advisor “in the program” has become a theme in the interviews as well as the document analysis. One student who commented on their experience explained:

I also felt that I got heavily left behind in advising. For two years I was not assigned an advisor and when assigned they weren't actually in my major and proved to be very unhelpful. I would avoid our meetings. I feel that not once did we have a productive advising experience as they often ended with me leaving feeling frustrated and in tears. I felt they weren't listening to me and never remembered how I was. I felt like my own advisor. However, when I did reach out to the other professors in my major, I was given excellent guidance.

Although the document analysis uncovered a statement in the student handbook that an undergraduate student must meet with their academic advisor a minimum of once a semester to have the academic hold removed, interviewed participants suggested that their advisor would remove it without actually meeting. Therefore, this student may have in fact gone two years without proper academic advising. In addition, this student again mentions what other students believe to be true, that their advisor was not “in the program”, however all food science faculty are indeed members of the N&D program. A promising aspect of the comments indicate that the student was pleased with assistance they received from other members of the program.

When the description of the faculty advisors was introduced earlier in this chapter, there was a total of eight possible faculty members, however two of these faculty members had all of their advising

responsibilities removed from their plan of work prior to the start of this study. A comment from a student in the senior exit survey directly mentions one of these individuals. The student wrote:

A previous N&D Advisor is very difficult to have as an advisor and is either MIA or aggressive about grades or getting meeting times wrong to being late for meetings. Takes a few days + to reply to emails. I have never had issues with any other professors, and I know all of her other advisees also feel like they needed more help. I did not plan on mentioning anything until more of my classmates spoke up with similar stories.

This specific faculty academic advisor would be considered “in the program” but this statement by the student also connects back to many comments that were made by the interviewed participants that students heavily engage each other regarding personal experiences, positive and negative, with advising. This advisor was a faculty member that their advisees were removed from their responsibilities and assigned to another faculty member.

One student praised the program as being challenging and the professors as knowledgeable, however included the following comment, “I would have liked more specific guidance from my advisor, I always felt like I was getting generic answers on how to do it myself, but they were very friendly and trying to help.” This student did not indicate if their advisor was “in the program” or not, just that more guidance would have been helpful.

Finally, while not a direct comment to academic advising, one student states:

Overall, I cherish my experience in undergrad. I think that most of the professors in the department truly care about their students and want to see them succeed. They are very knowledgeable and passionate about what they teach, and it helps us as students see the purpose in our work and drive us to continue learning.

This student quote is relevant because within this department, faculty advising was utilized exclusively, therefore if the professor want them to succeed in the classroom, this could be their advisor wanting to them to succeed.

Summary of Document Analysis

The results of the documents analysis should be examined under multiples lenses. First, the printed guidance (information from website, handbooks, Reference guide for Advisors, promotion and tenure guidelines, etc.) all focus on specifically prescriptive academic advising. There was a strong message that students need direction on their course registration and graduation requirements. Also, there was an emphasis on improvement of academic advising and increasing the accuracy of this endeavor. Many connections can be made from the senior exit surveys to the meeting minutes/summaries to the efforts the N&D department had suggested to improve academic advising among the faculty. It was mentioned previously that the Academic Advising Council encourages students and advisors to adopt the philosophy of the “whole student,” however there was not a correlation in any of the printed material nor a mention of the Advising Council within the N&D program or department, indicating to common vision among the entities involved with academic advising. Furthermore, the guidance for promotion and tenure seem to not align with the mission of the Academic Advising Council. One document states that a component of the promotion process includes “evidence of excellent student advising, undergraduate or graduate” and the other document only mentions how many advisees a faculty member should have to count towards teaching a 3-credit hour course. The message was conflicting and there was not any printed guidance assisting a faculty academic advisor on how to produce this “evidence of excellent student advising.” Additionally, one could argue that training to “adopt the philosophy of the whole student” for faculty members was lacking. Furthermore, without an evaluation of advising, being able to produce evidence of excellent student advising is not feasible.

Also, another frame with which to examine these results was the spoken word of the seniors that experienced the department firsthand. The majority of information that advisors were receiving in regard

to proper advising falls under prescriptive advising, ensuring that students graduate. However, many of the students said they wanted an advisor that was “in the program” so there could be conversation related to post-graduation and what it was actually like to be in the field of N&D. While this could also be considered prescriptive advising, the type of interaction the students wished they would have received goes beyond course registration, graduation and institution policies and procedures, to career guidance--a topic that was not typically covered in the material available for faculty academic advisors.

Students Voice – The Student’s Perspective of Importance for Academic Advising

In addition to the research questions framing this study, there were multiple, reoccurring themes that are important to discuss. These themes seem to be just as important to students when they had the ability to speak freely and not simply answer the interview questions.

Theme 1: Students rely on each other to communicate information

While not a surprise that students communicate with each other but the level of which the communication affects each other became a surprise. Over 60% of the students interviewed made a least one comment regarding speaking to their classmates or hearing from their classmates. Students would get their information for their own advising meetings and from their friends that have already had their meetings. This can serve as a positive component to the advising meeting or a negative component, and even possibly a neutral component. Caroline explains, “I hear horror stories from my friends from the past and like currently, I’m very grateful for my advisor.” Tessa felt that academic advisors should be evaluated on their performance because, “I’ve heard some of my friends say their academic advisor has like messed up their stuff.” Ironically, Tessa, who was a junior, did not feel that her academic advisor should be evaluated because she has successfully advised her and maintained her pace to graduate on time. Additionally, data that was collected from the background survey found that some students felt they were not receiving accurate information to progress them towards graduation. This could be that students share their information from advising meetings and have identified inaccuracies. Carrie stated,

I definitely talk to other people in my major and also similar majors to see what they are taking. And I do prepare especially some of my friends with the same major as me that already have had their advising appointments to kind of see what I should be taking and expecting from mine (advising appointment). (Carrie, Sophomore)

As mentioned, the N&D curriculum was highly structured, therefore many of the students, especially in the same year, would be taking similar classes. Isiah said, “I’ve heard horror stories about some of the more research orientated advisors from my classmates, but mine was never that way.” Frances also had a research faculty academic advisor and while at one point she was slightly frustrated with the advisor’s “amount of responsibilities,” she was also grateful for her advisor. She stated, “I just talk with other students like my friends, they too do struggle a lot with their advisors, like I was always thankful that my advisor was really understanding.” Kristen subtly comments that, “from hearing how the other advisors were, I expected (my advisor) to be more involved in my academic career.” Additionally, Bailey stated, “I know that some people’s advisors do not even respond to emails.” Carrie comment that “some of my peers that have also had that (bad experience) experience with their advisor not removing the pin in time for registration.”

There appeared to be a negative underpinning with the above comments from students, and this could possibly frame their upcoming meeting with their advisor if they are hearing negative comments from classmates. However, there are positive comments as well. Maria stated, “I know that I’ve heard other advisors meet with their students more throughout the year, which might be good for like incoming freshmen and sophomores”. A few students did mention that meeting more in their earlier years could have been advantageous, especially when maneuvering some of the course registration sites and portals of the institution.

Finally, relying on classmates for information about advising and classes can also be very positive. Ryleigh mentioned that “older students have been like, take this class, it’s great with this professor.”

Theme 2: If an advising change happened during the academic career of the student, satisfaction increased.

Faith had a very recent change in advisors (this semester) and had already met with her new advisor, however when answering the questions, she was asked to only reflect on the advisor she has had the previous two years. When asked if the institution should evaluate academic advising/advisor her reply was as follows, “Yeah, because honestly, I didn’t notice she was that bad of an advisor until I got an advisor to actually help me.” Similarly, Kristen’s change in advisor lead to a better overall academic advising experience. She stated, “My satisfaction with her is so much higher and I’ve reached out to her a little bit outside of advising and she’s been really helpful then too. I was really happy every time I met with her.”

Meredith has had multiple advisors during her undergraduate career. Some changes have been due to her switching majors, however other changes were not initiated by her. Meredith’s comment about the change is not only representative of this theme, but also theme 4 to be discussed shortly. She stated, “I didn’t request it, it just happened but I’m glad it did cause it was very helpful to have an advisor that actually was in the field so that was good.”

Theme 3: All students felt academic advising and advisors should be evaluated to give students the opportunity to relay their concerns (if any)

As stated previously, students stated they have heard “horror stories” from friends and other cohorts in the program how badly their advising experiences have been. While a few students mentioned some dissatisfaction with their previous advisors, this demonstrates a weakness in this study that those students that were participially satisfied with their advising experience were the ones that participated in the interviews. One student stated, “Yes, advisors need to be evaluated, not to be mean but I didn’t realize how bad mine was until I got someone that actually helped me.” Along the same lines, another student believed that evaluation should occur, but not for her advisor, because she has never had any problems

with her. Maria remained neutral on her own experience and thought more of others when answering this question. She stated,

If there were some kind of evaluation I don't know if it would maybe be through the actual students who have the advisors, maybe sending out like a huge quiz or something to all student just to see how if they're actually getting advised properly because I know that that was a big issue with other people. (Maria, Senior)

Some students even suggested a survey, like the one distributed for this study, would be simple enough that student could complete. However, Lydia pointed out that a survey could be similar to the surveys that are completed at the end of each semester for the instructor of a class. With that being said, continuing to not evaluate academic advisors should not be the continued practice, especially if departmental documents are asking for examples of excellent advising.

Theme 4: Students did not believe Food Science Faculty were a part of the N&D program.

An interesting theme that arose from 5 out of the 8 interviews from students that were assigned to a food or nutritional scientist, is they want a faculty advisor within their own program. As previously mentioned, the faculty in this department is multidisciplinary consisting of Registered Dietitians, Nutritional and Food Scientists. Even though they are all in the same department, contributing to teaching the accredited curriculum, students felt that if their faculty advisor was not a Registered Dietitian, they are not “in the program”. Ryleigh specifically stated, “sometimes it's frustrating because they don't necessarily know everything that's going on so I have to like explain all of that to them.” What this student was referring to was the post-graduate requirements of a nutrition degree/internship to become a registered dietitian. This theme resulted from the interview question, “Have you met with an advisor that was not assigned as your official academic advisor.” When students would answer “yes” and elaborate that their advisor, which was a Nutritional or Food Scientist, encouraged them to seek out an advisor that was “in nutrition” to be able to answer their questions. Additionally, this comment was made when

describing student satisfaction with academic advising. Meredith explained that their academic advisor did not know the answers to her questions and would consistently send her to another advisor, specifically one in which was considered a “nutrition faculty advisor.” She stated, “food science and nutrition are very different, there are some of the same classes and courses but there’s a lot of stuff with the N&D program that he just couldn’t give me insight on so that’s why I switched advisors, it was very helpful to actually have an advisor in the field so that was good.”

An important note to consider was that this institution does not have a food science degree and all three of the faculty that are food scientists are also considered faculty in the N&D program. They teach required courses in the curriculum, attend faculty meetings and advise students. What was not determined was if the faculty members that encouraged their advisee to seek advice from the Registered Dietitians inadvertently encouraged this mindset of the students, or if the students felt put out that their advisor could not answer specific questions and, therefore, they were deemed not knowledgeable enough and “not in the program.”

Summary

A summary of findings for this case study includes, students are expecting both prescriptive and developmental academic advising even if they are unaware of those expectations. In some cases, students are experiencing developmental and prescriptive, but most prescriptive academic advising. Students that participated in this study were mostly satisfied with their academic advising regardless of developmental or prescriptive. Additionally, their academic advising does not need to be one or the other that many times students are receiving both, with one serving as the dominate framework.

Through document analysis the institution is promoting a prescriptive academic advising atmosphere that funnels down to not much of a promotion of academic advising at all.

Hearing personal accounts from fifteen students in the Nutrition and Dietetics program of their expectations, experiences and satisfaction of Faculty Academic Advising provides greater detail as to

what students want related to advising. Having the understanding that if students' expectations align with their experiences specifically using a prescriptive or developmental academic advising lens, satisfaction can increase. In Chapter 5, I discuss implications of these results as well as a need for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine undergraduate students' expectations, experiences and satisfaction with faculty academic advising in a Nutrition and Dietetics (N&D) program under a prescriptive versus developmental advising lens. Using case study methodology, the students in this study were given a voice, via one-on-one interviews to speak about their academic advising experiences, expectations and satisfaction of their academic advising experience and their faculty academic advisor. The N&D program is in a college that the administration recently decided to change to professional academic advising after the data collection for this study was performed, however the N&D program was one of two programs in the college that retained faculty academic advising. Now, in the N&D program, all advising responsibilities are being completed by Teaching Assistant/Associate Professors (TAP's) and not tenure-track (TT) faculty. This was done because there was an increase in retention rates after a few of the TT faculty assigned advisees were reassigned to TAPs for all advising needs. At this institution, the Office of the Provost collected data for fall to fall retention rates for students that graduated in 2021, 2022 and will graduate in 2023. The data are public and accessible via a departmental website and can be separated into specific academic programs. The retention rates for out-of-state students increased in each of these three years, 25%, 12.5%, and 12.5% respectively for the N&D program. One hundred percent of first-generation students were retained within the N&D program in each of the three years of reported data. (dashboards.provost.wvu.edu, n.d)

The exact reason that retention rates increased is unknown however there was a significant increase in numbers of out-of-state and first-generation students from this program around the same time the as the advising change occurred. This change was enough for the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of this college to allow the N&D program (and one other) to maintain faculty academic advising through TAPs while the remainder of the college transitioned to professional academic advising in the Fall of 2022. Hart-Baldrige (2020) stated that "the potential for student connection through academic advising holds significant implications for retention and persistence of college students within departments and the

institution” (p. 10). There is research on both sides of the argument, positive and negative, regarding faculty academic advising and student satisfaction, however there is also an abundance of research (Allen, Corriero, Rothman, & Baldwin, 2010; Cuseo, 2003; Crocker et al., 2014; Hingorani & Askari-Danesh, 2014; Metzner, 1989; Young-Jones et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2019) with evidence that faculty academic advising benefits students (retentions, graduation rates, success, etc.) but the same research with professional academic advising is difficult to find.

Some experts say that while a student is attending a college, there may be no other individual that a student turns to more often than their academic advisor (Moody, 2019). Understanding what students need and want from their academic advising relationship should be a motivation for institutions. Students being told what they need should not be the angle these institutions and programs take when developing academic advising models. And, as the landscape of higher education continues to change, decision makers need to remain in tune to what benefits students most. These decisions should be made from a student success standpoint and not a budget standpoint. Each student is different, and each academic program has unique parameters that need navigation. Forcing academic advising programs together in a “one-size-fits-all” model can leave many with unfulfilled expectations and lead to students not being satisfied with the guidance they are being given. This can also lead to students feeling disconnected from the institution and their academic programs potentially increase attrition rates. Changing from faculty academic advising to professional academic advising, without the input of students themselves, as this college at this institution is doing, may in fact be moving in the wrong direction to support student success.

Discussion of Students Experiences with Faculty Academic Advising (Research Question #1)

What have been student academic advising experiences? Are students explaining these experiences as being more prescriptive or developmental in nature?

The first theme that arose through data analysis was that student responses best align with prescriptive academic advising. Students are stating in interview responses (100%) and survey results (75%) that they want and are receiving this type of advising. Although students may not have a working understanding of different methods of academic advising, students still infer, based on the answers provided, that they primarily want prescriptive advising when initially asked to explain their expectations from their academic advisor. Students state that they rely on their academic advisors to assist them in course selection to create academic schedules each semester to meet graduation requirements. Students' comments indicated they also want questions answered about courses, adding and dropping classes, scholarship requirements, transfer credits and anything that relates to their requirements to graduate. In some instances, students need their academic advisor to provide services or simply just their signature to progress to the next semester at this institution. If a student is required to enter a success plan, this plan must be "locked" and approved by the advisor for the financial aid office to approve. Prescriptive academic advising is the most efficient way for students to gain this information.

Additionally, when documents and websites were analyzed, prescriptive academic advising was found to be the advertised method of academic advising at the institutional level as well as the college and program level. Prescriptive academic advising helps students focus on the process of progression at the institution. There is not a specific right or wrong way to advise students and prescriptive academic advising can successfully navigate a student throughout their collegiate career from freshmen year to graduation. While advisors that practice prescriptive academic advising can and do exhibit the qualities students state they want to see in their advisors (caring, kind, helpful accessible, etc.), a relationship between the student and advisor may not always be formed when prescriptive advising is the only way a student interacts with their advisor. Especially the type of relationship students are hoping to have with their academic advisor is not a focus of prescriptive advising. More than likely, students are not aware that engaging with their faculty academic advisor regarding more than course work can lead to a deeper connection to the institution and student success. This is why the college or university needs to be the one

creating the foundational practices that guide these relationships that faculty academic advising can generate. Within the N&D program and other program in the college, this is not consistently practiced. Students also want their advisor to engage them with topics related to their personal lives and beyond, that is when developmental academic advising becomes the desire of the student, which became the second theme that was found in the data analysis. Relationships are not the foundation of prescriptive academic advising.

In addition to prescriptive academic advising, students are also explaining their experiences to include many aspects of developmental academic advising. Students need their academic advisor to assist them with course selection and registration, meeting graduation requirements, etc. However, students also want their academic advisor to take an interest in their personal lives. Eighty percent of students interviewed liked when or wanted their academic advisor to ask about their lives outside of academic concerns. There is a body of research (Crocker et al., 2014; Hingorani & Askari-Danesh, 2014; Metzner, 1989, Astin, 1999; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005) on academic advising that illustrates that faculty-student interactions and academic advising are important to the success of a college student. This extends beyond academics to include social interactions and satisfaction and overall satisfaction with their college experience (Hart-Baldrige, 2020).

From the beginning of the institution of higher education, faculty members were coined *in loco parentis*, which translates to parents. In higher education, there has been a long history of the position of the institution as standing *in loco parentis* to its students. Harm (1970) describes this relationship as

The legal concept as it is constituted in the common law of the land applies to both (faculty and college). This concept, that of standing in the place of the natural parent and being made liable, either by delegation or by assumption of some of the privileges, rights, duties, and responsibilities of the parent, long has been established. College and university administrators and faculty members are often looked to, and by law required

to, make certain decisions which have a bearing upon the academic and nonacademic activities of the students (p.1)

Even though this reference is dated, the author highlights that there was an expectation of what the institution of higher education and faculty members were originally meant to be for those students attending the college. If students are now being placed with a professional academic advisor, there could be an interpretation that the institution is potentially taking a hands-off approach to the long-established notion of *loco parentis*. Jordan (2000) speculated that changes in societal expectations stimulated colleges to abandon the policy of *in loco parentis* all the while starting to follow developmental theories that advocated the “whole student” approach to college education. In the age of helicopter/bulldozer parents some students, especially first-generation students may still want and/or need the additional guidance. However, some students may appreciate being treated as a partner in their educational journey.

Faculty academic advisors can have their advisees in the classroom, they could be an advisor for the program’s student organization, or mentor them in undergraduate research, in addition to serving as their academic advisor. All these activities can assist in developing the whole student and not just a semesterly course schedule. Some of the students interviewed commented on either how much they liked their academic advisor or how they go to them when they “need a place to cry”. When academic advising is left to course registration only, this may not create the opportunity for the above to happen or happen to the level that students feel satisfied or feel connected to the institution or even their undergraduate program. A faculty member has more responsibilities than just academic advising, therefore a student stopping by unannounced may not be a good use of either of their time. Fifty percent of the students that had research faculty as advisors, suggested they advisor “appeared busy” and student felt as though they were a nuisance while others did not appear the same. This interpretation of the faculty’s professional demeanor is subjective to each student and should not be used as a benchmark for faculty academic advisor availability. On the other hand, professional academic advisors could have between 250-300

students (*2011 NACADA national survey of academic advising*) assigned to them in any given academic year, one could speculate that possibility of a student just stopping by to say hello or ask a question would be a challenge. This could negatively impact the student's satisfaction and leave them feeling disconnected to their academic program.

As many institutions move more towards the professionalization of academic advising (Moody, 2019; Elliott, 2020), one would wonder what the benefit of these professionals are over the well-known benefits of students being impacted by their faculty academic advisor. According to the 2011 NACADA National Survey, approximately 59% of institutions are relying on a combination of full-time faculty academic advising and professional academic advisors. (Carlstrom & Miller, 2013). How the structure of combining the two forms of advisors is unclear and could be different at every institution, which could lead to different outcomes depending on how the structure is done. A topic for future research could be to identify the best combination (professional academic advising, faculty academic advising/faculty mentorship) for multiple types of undergraduate programs to increase student satisfaction and retention while also increasing academic advising efficiency among both professional academic advisors and faculty academic advisors.

Additionally, recommendations should be to allow students to choose the type of academic advising they want to experience but also giving students a clear understanding of the types of advising available to them, defining the methods along with the pros and cons of each method. From the message that is currently being delivered to students, by this institution as a whole, students should only expect to be experiencing prescriptive academic advising. This can also be done with faculty members by allowing them to self-identify the type of academic advising they feel they can provide and want to provide, with the greatest success. By doing this, departments and programs can match students with faculty academic advisors to assist students in getting the experience they need and want for their academic advising. However, to do this, administration needs to provide the faculty member the ability to perform these duties, providing them the resources to be successful. Perhaps the main resource that deans and directors

could provide is the adequate amount of time to the faculty member to ensure they are able to perform academic advising, regardless of the method, accurately. Proper time can be highlighted as an important resource connecting back to the students that were interviewed and 80% of them mentioned time was an important factor in their satisfaction with academic advising.

There were conflicting results from students' comments regarding their experiences with faculty academic advisors that the students categorized as "not being in the program". Food Science faculty members are a part of the N&D program as full-time faculty members. However, some students felt because these faculty did not always know answers to questions and would suggest visiting with another member of the N&D program, one that would specifically be a registered dietitian, to get their questions answered were not in the program. This notion led students to wanting to be assigned to a faculty member that was, in their mind, in the program. If students are feeling this way about faculty that are teaching required courses they are taking and conducting undergraduate research with, how would they feel about a professional academic advisor that may not have ever taken a nutrition course. While professional academic advisors are accustomed to learning the details of all majors they advise, this may not be enough to properly engage their students to meet their expectations and foster student success.

An important factor that could have impacted the experiences students had with academic advising during this time is COVID. Students expressed they wanted time with their faculty advisor and many liked being able to stop in without an appointment to have a conversation. With all classes and meetings being held virtually for an entire school year for some of these students, their experiences could be slightly impacted and could have been different if they were not in college during a global pandemic.

Discussion of Students Expectations with Faculty Academic Advising (Research Question #2)

What are students' expectations of academic advising? When describing these expectations, are students wanting more prescriptive or developmental advising?

A major theme that appeared in the data analysis was that students expected advisors to assist them in many aspects of academic advising, which does not come as a surprise. However, what was unexpected was that they expect their academic advisor to have their class schedule for the following semester planned out and some students even expect there to be different options of those schedules. Options meant that students were meeting the same requirements with the schedules, but perhaps the classes were offered at different days and times to allow students more flexibility in their non-academic daily schedule. There could be a connection made between why students expect this from their advisor and the message that is communicated not only to students but to faculty members as well. As previously mentioned, while analyzing the documents and publications, results that were found indicated that the information listed on the websites from the institution and department clearly encourage prescriptive advising. Additionally, documents from the department also inform a strictly prescriptive academic advising delivery. Students could have this expectation of academic advising because they are unaware of any other forms and prescriptive academic advising is heavily published as the way the institution will assist in academic success of the student. The advising mission for the college that the N&D program is located within has on their website regarding advising states:

The College has a combined advising group of both faculty and professional advisors. Your advisor will provide curriculum sheets for your major and work with you to develop a plan of study. If at any point you feel overwhelmed, uncertain of your curriculum or just want to discuss topics related to your major or career plan, reach out to your advisor. They are here to help you succeed. (Advising | Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design | West Virginia University (2022, October) wvu.edu)

Not only do the students expect this form of advising, possibly due to the messaging, but the faculty are receiving the same message too, at least on the surface. By stating that curriculum sheets are provided and specifically suggesting that the advisor will help if the student becomes overwhelmed or uncertain of the curriculum continues to highlight the prescriptive academic

advising agenda. There is no mention that the student could schedule a meeting if they were interested in anything else besides curriculum.

Perhaps if the trainings that are offered by the department, college and institution were better attended by those that are advising, they might receive a different message. Maybe faculty would be hearing a stronger push for developmental over prescriptive, or better yet, a combination of both forms of academic advising to increase student success.

Within this college, the trainings for academic advising are announced via email by the Director of Academic Affairs and held once a semester. She states that, “One is typically a general advising /updates session, and the other is more specific (ex. CPoS). Attendance is usually around 10-15 advisers” (A. McLaughlin, personal communication, March 3, 2022). The average number of faculty academic advisors in this college is 100, therefore 10-15% of advisors are attending these trainings. However, unless questions are asked, there appears to be the same consistent message delivered in them as well, prescriptive academic advising. From the correspondence with the Director of Academic Affairs she relays that general advising and updates that academic advisors need to be aware of are the topics covered. These topics are also typically sent via emails from the same individuals on a biyearly basis. Having the information sent to the faculty that is covered could possibly be discouraging those to attend because they will be receiving the information regardless. Faculty members could also be communicating with each other that attending the training is not worth their time since they will be receiving the information anyway.

With that in mind, an unexpected theme that became very prominent was how much students communicated with each other on many aspects of academic advising. This could be a reason why students expect prescriptive academic advising. If one student goes to their advising appointment and has their schedule handed to them without any discussion or questions regarding their performance or personal lives, all other students, that this student tells, could expect the same treatment. Additionally,

they could be disappointed if they are not given a completed schedule upon arrival to their academic advising appointment. The communication between students could have both a positive and/or negative impact on student expectation. If one student who has a very engaged developmental academic advisor that checks on them regularly, discusses personal issues as well as provide any and all academic assistance, discusses these traits to other classmates that do not receive the same treatment, negative feelings could be generated leading to comments such as “my academic advisor does not help me at all” (Faith, Junior). This statement could possibly perpetuate a negative reputation for a student’s faculty academic advisor that they are making these claims against. All the while, the advisor is acting in accordance to what their university, college and department is telling them to do.

When students are expecting their academic advisor to assist in course planning and registration, they are expecting these advisors to have each of the classes planned out, therefore leaving no decision for the students. As previously mentioned, the N&D curriculum is highly structured and does not allow for many classes to be taken outside of the accredited curriculum. This could be a factor in why students rely solely on the suggestions of the advisor. Many of the students discussed emailing their academic advisor after the advising session was over regarding follow-up questions, especially if issues with scheduling arose. These “issues” ranged from classes having a time conflict with another class, students were attempting to register for a restricted section of a class, or a class they discussed was already full and the student was unable to register. Instead of the students finding a solution themselves, they contact their advisor to see if they can assist immediately. When looking at faculty academic advising vs professional academic advising, there would be a challenge for both to respond in a timely manner, but especially for the professional academic advisors to meet the demands of the students in the time between advising meetings and class scheduling. A faculty member could have 30 students to advise leading to dozens of emails with questions, however a professional academic advisor could have 300 students to advise leading to a far greater number of emails to address. This could serve as a disadvantage to not only the

student needed the answers in a timely manner, but also to the professional advisor having time to meet this demand.

With the structured curriculum in the N&D program, one could question the need for an academic advisor. At this institution, a student needs 120 credit hours to graduate. In the N&D program, 114 of those hours are strictly accounted for, leaving only 6 hours (2 classes) of general education classes for students to choose. This leaves little to essential no possibility for the student to explore other disciplines. However, students could be nervous that if they are not confirming with their advisor on every decision regarding courses, that they could be taking a class out of the sequence or missing a class all together. As previously mentioned, some students indicated that they have heard “horror stories” from their classmates on how their academic advisor never initially reached out for advising meetings, never responded to emails regarding questions and were not given or assisted with schedule planning. Instead of the strict and formal curriculum being seen negatively, administration and faculty academic advisor could see the lack of options as a benefit to their meetings with students because with little options of course for students to choose from, the time in the advising meetings could be used for developmental advising. Opportunities to enhance academic advising are limited only by the creativity and will of those in charge of delivering advising. Therefore, advisors could work with students to develop confidence and to be assertive on their own. Advisors can help students to learn and apply new knowledge and “empower them to embrace their own knowing, learning, thinking and decision making (White, 2015, p. 272). Having this type of time and opportunity to build a relationship with the student can make them feel at ease and help them feel comfortable and connected to the institution.

This concept highlights the other two themes that were found with this research question, that students expect their questions to be answered and they expect their academic advisor to relieve their stress. Students receiving answers to their advising questions, is expected and should not come as a surprise as a result of the data collected from this study. However, what was not determined in the analysis was if students are not attempting to answer any questions on their own prior to meetings or after

the meetings during scheduling of classes and are relying on all information from their academic advisor. While one could argue that is a responsibility of the academic advisor, one student (Brayden) did state that ultimately,

at the end of the day the responsibility of enrollment and ensuring the someone is aware of the requirements to enroll is down to the student. The advisor simply suggests someone to do something but it's a student in the end that needs to ensure that he has all of the criteria available to enroll. (Brayden, Senior)

By being a resource that students can rely on to answer questions, create schedules and perform other tasks that assists the student in a successful academic career, academic advisors in turn help students relive their stress. Seventy-three percent of interviewed students mentioned stress. Although faculty academic advisors can play a role in assisting students to decrease stress, they should also be assisting the student to realize they are able to help themselves as well. While stress among college student is not uncommon, these students have expectations that their academic advisor will alleviate their stress specifically related to their courses, graduation requirements and even specific deadlines like notifying students when the application to apply for graduation is approaching. A common practice within the N&D program is for faculty academic advisors to email students when graduation application deadlines are nearing, the final day to withdraw from a course or when registration of classes begins. Therefore, students have an expectation that their academic advisor will be the one that keeps them informed and on track.

If programs and institutions want to change the expectation that academic advisors are specifically in place to create schedules and manage stress for students, a different message needs to be communicated. The message needs to be clear, with expectations highlighted, that students will have the assistance of an academic advisor to develop skills to make them successful in college and beyond. That academic advisors can be a resource for students while planning schedules and meeting graduation requirements but also perhaps in their personal development as a whole student. Additionally, for this to

be a reality, faculty academic advisors need the proper training in both areas. From the document analysis that was completed, there was evidence of little attendance from faculty members at the few trainings a year that were offered within this college. Without the faculty academic advisor's participation in this study having a reason why they did not attend trainings is unclear. Additionally, another point that is not well established is if the faculty member was aware that academic advising was going to be part of their responsibilities upon hire. If they were told, understanding the message of how they were expected to perform advising duties would be an important determinant in solidifying that prescriptive academic advising is the institutional expectation.

Discussion of Students Satisfaction with Faculty Academic Advising (Research Question #3)

Are students explaining their satisfaction more related to receiving prescriptive or developmental advising?

When students are being asked if they are satisfied with their academic advising and/or academic advisor, in this study, they are correlating their satisfaction with their advisor's ability to decrease stress, answer questions correctly and ask them about their personal lives outside of academics.

Most students indicated (through survey results and interview responses) that they were satisfied with their academic advising and their advisor. When asked if they can explain why they were satisfied, many stated that their advisor told them what they needed to take each semester and they always answered questions they had. On the surface, satisfaction with academic advising is correlated to prescriptive advising. Perhaps this is because prescriptive advising is also the expectation of academic advising, and a higher level of satisfaction is related to prescriptive and developmental academic advising. Or, students stating they are satisfied with prescriptive academic advising could be because they are unaware that developmental academic advising exists or even could be an expectation because the advertised methods from the institution is prescriptive academic advising.

Students in this case study stated they had high satisfaction with their academic advisor when they were able to decrease their stress. Decreasing or relieving stress was also an expectation that students had of their academic advisor. University students can experience considerable stress due to the demands of college life and the changes they are experiencing in their lives during this time. Stress can come from leaving home, becoming independent, making decisions on their own, earning good grades and maintaining their health to name a few. Students may lack the skills to deal with stress or stressors and in turn, rely on their academic advisor to assist in this specific area of their lives. While most academic advisors do not have the training to assist with crisis-like stress, in this study students are mostly explaining their stress is related to academics. This could have been accomplished in a few ways. The advisor could have had the advisees schedule pre-planned out and ready for them to register, answering questions that they had, fixing issues with courses or creating alternative class schedules if a student failed a class. If an advisor helped a student not “be behind” after failing a class, this led to the student stating how much the advisor relieved their stress and increased their satisfaction.

Even though, when students were asked in the interviews if they prepared anything prior to their advising meeting, 73% stated they did prepare by looking at the classes they needed to take the upcoming semester, there was still an expectation that a schedule would be prepared for them. There is a possibility that the schedule was partially linked to their satisfaction based on the answers students provided in the interviews. This connection could be made regarding completed schedules and satisfaction because when asked in the interview “what could have been done or done differently to improve your advising experience”, students either answered “completed schedules”, if this wasn’t already a component of their advising appointments, Or, they responded with “maybe options with the schedule”.

This could also be linked to the strict curriculum of the N&D program; however future research could include other programs to determine if a completed schedule for the upcoming semester is key to student satisfaction with academic advising. Albeit academic advising partially, by nature is meeting the objective of course planning for the upcoming semester.

Students describe their best advising session and/or their ideal advising session, one in which both prescriptive advising and developmental advising is being completed. Ultimately, students look to their academic advisor for assistance. This assistance can be described in many ways and falls under either the prescriptive academic advising lens, the developmental academic advising lens or even a combination of both. As previously mentioned, academic advising and faculty connection to students can lead to increased retention rates, a stronger connection to the university and higher satisfaction for students. Therefore, if faculty academic advisors knew that students not only wanted assistance with course registration and progression towards graduation, but also some students may want a relationship with their advisor that goes beyond academics. Faculty advisors could be trained at the beginning of employment and continue to get training on how to identify these students. Advising could be made more efficient, this efficiency could lead to satisfaction. If faculty academic advisors possessed this knowledge, they can be better prepared for each advising session and engage their students in the conversations they are wanting. A topic that will be discussed in the Recommendations section will be to strategically assign students that want both developmental and prescriptive academic advising with those faculty members that are wanting to deliver this type of advising.

Discussion of Teaching Assistant/Associate Professors (TAP) vs Tenure-track (TT)

Within the Nutrition and Dietetics program in this case study, there was clear evidence that students who were advised by the TAP were more satisfied overall, had less issues and experienced consistency among their own appointments as well as across each student's appointments. While this statement can be made in the context of this study, the same statement should not be made for all TAPs in other programs or in general.

Per the document analysis, academic advising within this program is considered a function of teaching, not service like other institutions. Therefore, when Tenure-track faculty members have a small teaching appointment, advising students in addition to being in the classroom limits both activities and could force a faculty member to choose how to allocate their time. With no formal evaluation of academic

advising and more than one way to evaluate for teaching, the allocation of time would make sense for the faculty member to focus on the teaching component and not academic advising. Again, without having the faculty voice as a part of this study, even more so, the tenure-track faculty determining how time is prioritized and why is unclear and considered a limitation.

Larson, et al. (2018) shares a possible explanation. They state “we found that many advisors on the same campus, same college or same department occupy distinct roles. This lack of consistency can confuse students who seek advising and those that provide advising” (p.81). Currently, in this program, and even college, there is not a universal structure of advising that faculty advisors are encouraged to follow. Therefore, an advisor has autonomy, which could be a positive or negative depending on their commitment to academic advising as a component of their position. Without a clear message from the institution, Dean of the college or department head to both the advisors and the students of the expectation of academic advising and the role each advisor plays, regardless of faculty designation, inconsistencies are likely to occur. These inconsistencies can occur when each faculty member is allowed to function independently of any policy or procedure set by the institution, college or department regarding academic advising.

A TAP’s main role at this institution is teaching and in this specific program, academic advising is considered a function of teaching. To continue to increase retention rates and potentially contribute to an increase in student satisfaction, assigning students to be advised by TAPs vs Tenure track faculty could achieve this. Earlier in this chapter, statistics from the Office of the Provost demonstrated an increase in retention rates during a time that an advising change was made. Since data collection occurred in this study, an additional change was made that all undergraduate students within the N&D program will be advised by a TAP. Additional research could be conducted in the following semesters to determine if this change had any impact on student success and satisfaction or retention and graduation rates.

A tenure-track faculty member typically has a high research appointment which could leave little time to meet with 30 students a semester, answer emails regarding issues with class registration, etc as

well as teach classes. When academic advising duties are allocated to teaching faculty instead of research faculty, this could allow both to be more effective and successful in their positions. A comment made by a few students was that when their advisor did not know an answer to a question, the advisor suggested speaking to another faculty member, typically one of the two TAPs. This practice could potentially overburden the TAPs if done repeatedly and during the high-volume of advising season. If all advisees are already assigned to TAPs, they will be meeting with these students regardless and able to answer their questions during their appointments.

Discussion of Professional Academic Advising

Nationally, many higher education institutions are making a push towards professional academic advising in an attempt to increase retention rates among undergraduate students specifically (Moody, 2015; Elliott, 2020). At times, faculty academic advising has been criticized and blamed for students leaving either the major or institution. Wyckoff (1999) highlights, “historically, faculty academic advising has stood among the least desired, least encouraged, and least beneficial activities in higher education” (p. 2). White (2015) suggests that whomever is performing the role of academic advisor, whether faculty or staff, “they are trained, well evaluated, well rewarded, and fully engaged in the role. Expecting anything less jeopardizes the entire academic advising endeavor and shortchanges the students” (p. 275).

The purpose of institutions implementing professional academic advising in place of faculty academic advising is not fully understood. However, some possible explanations could be that while there is an abundance of research that highlights the benefits of faculty academic advising, there are also articles (Allen & Smith, 2008; Braun & Zolfagharian, 2016) discussing the pitfalls of faculty advisors. Additionally, professional academic advisors are hired to advise while faculty are hired for many other purposes and not specifically for academic advising. When high expectations of bringing in outside research dollars and research production are placed on tenure track faculty, one could understand how academic advising inadvertently or intentionally holds little priority especially with no evaluation and holds little weight in the promotion and tenure process. However, institutions could be faced with being

forced to find a solution due to complaints of faculty academic advising and without hearing directly from students. Incorporating an evaluation of academic advising could assist in behavior change for academic advisors. Shifting programs from faculty academic advising to professional advising could possibly forecast a similar outcome since the student to advisor ratio is tenfold that of a student to faculty academic advisor ratio.

The faculty academic advising numbers within the N&D program have fluctuated between 1-50 student's depending on many internal factors. However, to date, the two TAPs that are currently advising 50 undergraduate students each and that is the highest a faculty member in the department has been assigned. Per the department's workload and promotion and tenure document 30 advisees equals teaching a 3-credit hour course, and traditionally the number of assigned advisees was between 1-30 students per faculty academic advisor. As previously mentioned, the college and other departments housed in the same college as the N&D program have transitioned to professional academic advisors. The goal for these individuals is to have 300 undergraduate advisees per advisor. In addition to a large advisor or advisee ratio, the students that each professional advisor is assigned may vary in their majors and will likely not all be within one program. This could create an abundance of work for an advisor that may not have a background in each of the specific disciplines in which they are advising students.

Mentioned earlier, an unexpected theme that became prominent during the data analysis was that students who were assigned to the Food Sciences faculty members for academic advising felt that their advising "wasn't in the program". These faculty members were in fact members of the N&D nationally accredited program. The Food Science faculty taught classes that N&D students are required to take, attend faculty meetings and advised students. Additionally, many of the undergraduate students in this program conduct undergraduate research in the Food Science Faculty laboratories. If students were commenting that they felt slighted by having an academic advisor that they considered not a part of their academic program, how would they feel with a professional academic advisor that may not have a working knowledge of their field.

Implementing professional academic advising within this program could lead to losing certain aspects of faculty academic advising. There is a large body of research (Crocker, et al., 2014; Grites, 2013; Hale, 2009; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Hutson, 2013; Lynch, 2004; Metzner, 1989; Myers & Dyer, 2005; Strayhorn, 2014; Suvedi, et al, 2015; Walker, et. al, 2017; Walters & Seyedian, 2016) that focuses on faculty academic advising and how the interactions with faculty and students increases student satisfaction and student retention. This research is not as robust when examining the same outcomes (student satisfaction and retention) with professional academic advisors. Students mentioned that they want their academic advisors to inquire about them as a person, how things outside of academic are going. While some faculty academic advisors may find this unnecessary or difficult due to time constraints, a professional academic advisor with possibly 300 students would have an even more difficult time discussing anything other than academic related topics. This could impact student satisfaction; however, those students strictly want prescriptive academic advising would find this method of advising in line with their expectations leading to satisfaction. A professional academic advisor at the same institution communicated that with his load of 265 students, as well as an administrative role, he must keep the meetings with students to 20 minutes. During that time, he states,

we discuss post-graduation plans (career, grad, or professional school), building resume to reach that plan, and academic plan of study (what courses to take when, CPOS things, minors, AoEs, Winter term, summer/transient courses, AP credit, how this aligns with post grad plans (i.e., when to take the MCATs/GRE/apply for grad school and jobs), etc.). From here, as appropriate, I will discuss things such as tutoring, Carruth center, test well, and the pre health office). All of this is way too much to cover in the 20 minutes that I have, and I receive a ton of requests for follow up appointments and questions which I do my best to answer and accommodate (Alex Tylka, personal communication, November 15, 2022).

From the data collected from the students in this case study we can say with some certainty that if the students in the N&D program were assigned to professional academic advising and meetings were held to 20 minutes of academics only their satisfaction would not be as high as it currently is. With that said, the students that are in the program from this professional advisor (A. Tylka) could be very satisfied with their advising model. This could be because academic advising within this unit has traditionally been professional academic advisors and not faculty academic advisors.

Discussion of Documents

Including a document analysis in this study was found to be important to understand what is being communicated to the students (current and perspective), the faculty and different levels of administration regarding academic advising. Hart-Baldrige (2020) stated that “the importance of academic advising is often communicated through institutional or departmental missions, division of faculty duties and recognition for excellence in advising” (p. 10). While this is perhaps highlighted in the literature, much of the aforementioned importance is not found at this institution, or not in the way that underlines the importance of academic advising for all. The documents showed that conversations for improving academic advising within the N&D program has been a topic discussed on more than one occasion during faculty meetings. There were notes from those meetings that stated how advisees would be transferred from three tenure track faculty members to other faculty members in the department. Two of the three faculty members that were having their advisees reassigned were Food Science Faculty members. This indicated that changes were made which connected back to some of the answers and comments that students gave during the interviews.

There appears to be some discrepancy between the documents and the communication to faculty academic advisors at the institution studied. Currently, there is no formal evaluation of academic advising. If a student is unhappy, they must take the initiative and speak to either the Division Director and request a change or go even higher to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or the Dean of the

college. Additionally, if a student is happy with their advisor, they can recognize them on “Academic Advisor Day” or nominate them for an advising award, which includes a 25-page application submission (Nicholas Evans Excellence in Advising Award) and is given to only two faculty members across the institution. With that said, academic advisors are not evaluated on their ability to advise students, however, in the department document on how to have a successful career in the department at this institution there is a requirement of providing “Evidence of excellent student advising, undergraduate or graduate”. An academic advisor would not be able to provide this information unless they have been given an award or students have taken it upon themselves to write a praising email or letter of support.

Finally, after the handbooks (Student, faculty and advisor) that were analyzed, the determination was made that there was no mention of developmental academic advising. Only prescriptive academic advising was discussed in these handbooks and mostly from an operational standpoint and not a “best practices” one. Perhaps if students and advisors were aware that they can fully develop the person and that there is more than one way to advise a student, then more would participate in this form of advising.

Limitations

Case study methodology was selected as the methodology for this study however, employing this method is a limitation. While the goal of this study was to understand the experiences, expectations and satisfaction of undergraduate students within one specific program, using case study methodology does not allow for broad comparison or generalization. The participants in this study discussed their personal academic advising experiences and the analysis of the data, what the students explained as their expectations, experiences and satisfaction was done by the investigator. Therefore, full knowledge of the topic is unrealistic.

The sample size of the participants of the study is also considered a limitation. While there was a 54% response rate to the survey, there were only 15 students that completed the interviews. Although there was a considerable amount of data collected in those 15 interviews, one could speculate that those

participants of the interview portion of the study, where the respondents because they were mostly satisfied with their academic advising experience and wanted to share their stories. Results indicated through the survey and the interviews that most students (85%) were in fact satisfied with their faculty academic advisor. The small sample size also does not allow us to generalize the results, even within the N&D department because the interviewed participants only account for 15% of the undergraduate enrollment even though roughly 35% of the students would have been excluded from participation for being the advisee of the researcher.

With that said, the students that self-selected to participate in the study can also be seen as a limitation. The average grade point average (GPA) of the participants that took part in the interview portion of the of study (that main source of data collection) was a 3.33. These students can be considered above average, therefore their relationship with their academic advisor could be seen as an important part in their success. There was not a student that participated in the interviews under a 3.00 GPA. There could have been different results if there were a broader representation of students and their academic standing. Perhaps students with a GPA below a 3.0 would have a different interpretation of how their academic advisor assisted in their success. Or, one could even speculate if a student with a GPA below 3.0 would not be satisfied with their academic advisor or academic advising experience and correlate the relationship. Future research should continue to use purposeful sampling but be sure to include not only a balance of class ranking, advisors but also range of GPA.

In addition to the sample size of the students, another limitation to this study is the sample size of Teaching Associate/Assistant Professors (TAPs) doing the advising. In the analysis of this study there is only 1 TAP represented because within the N&D program, the other TAP is the researcher of this study. Mentioned earlier in this study, the N&D program was one of two programs within the college that was allowed to keep faculty academic advising because all students were assigned to TAPs only. There should be a greater understanding and multiple advisors included to get a broader understanding of how time is allocated specifically related to the Teaching Professor. Having a broader picture of how more than 1

TAP conducts academic advising could shed a better light on if all TAPs advisees that are as highly satisfied as the ones in this study.

Gaining the perspective of the student is important in understanding what they want from academic advising, however another limitation with this study is not having the faculty members perspective as well. While the majority of students that participated in the interviews as well as the surveys indicated they were satisfied with academic advising some were not. Some indicated their advisor did not help them while others added their advisor specifically told them they would not assist building their class schedule. Understanding the faculty side could shed more light on why some advisors practice prescriptive academic advising and why some practice developmental academic advising. Faculty members are not evaluated on their advising of students, therefore gaining insight on how they choose to conduct this component of their appointment could be helpful to identifying ways to increase student satisfaction, retention and graduation rates.

Conclusions

Through interviews of undergraduate students in a Nutrition and Dietetics program, a slightly clearer picture developed in regard to students' experiences, expectations and satisfaction with academic advising. Students appear to be most satisfied when prescriptive academic advising is performed to ensure questions are answered and class schedules are created. However, students also appear to be satisfied when developmental academic advising is also incorporated into their advising appointments. Therefore, the results from this case study can include: Students want both prescriptive and developmental advising and their satisfaction of academic advising increases when their experiences match their expectations.

Recommendations

With the push for full time professional academic advisors at this institution and perhaps at many higher education institutions nationally, remembering the benefits of faculty academic advising could be crucial for retention. An important piece of research from Smith and Allen, 2006 suggests that academic

advising need not be categorized into either prescriptive or development to be successful. Results from this case study fall in line with Smith and Allen's interruption of students' expectations and in this study, time was the most important factor. Findings from this case study demonstrate the institution heavily highlights prescriptive academic advising methods through information on websites to both students and faculty and in written documentation. Hart-Baldrige (2020) suggests that the "body of research that focuses on academic advising illustrates that faculty-student interactions and academic advising are important to a college student's success and this extends beyond academics to include social satisfaction and overall satisfaction with a college experiences" (p. 10). Also, consistent social interaction between advisors and advisees increases student satisfaction and retention (Harrell & Reglin, 2018). There is not a clear idea of the satisfaction, retention and overall success of college students also correlates when they have a relationship with a professional academic advisor, but there is a suggestion that having this relationship is beneficial to the student. Implementing professional academic advising will likely meet the student's needs with course registration, however this type of advising could create more of a separation with the student's connection to the institution.

The results from this case study could possibly be used to inform other discussions at other institutions and even other departments within this institution to change or enhance current academic advising practices. At this institution, there appears to be a discrepancy between what students are saying they want for their academic advising and what is being done. The following are recommendations based off of the results found from this study.

Recommendation #1 - Departments should take the time to identify what type of advisor each of the faculty members are and/or want to be. Doing this can streamline their activities regarding academic advising and when the same procedure is done with the students, matches can be made and advising can become more purposeful and efficient in each program. For example, if a tenure-track faculty member wants to advise but only feels they have the time commitment for 10 students that want prescriptive academic advising, identify those students and assign them to that advisor. Not only can this increase

student satisfaction and retention, the faculty member that wants to engage students in developmental academic advising could have more time to do so since the students that want prescriptive advising are assigned to the faculty member that aligns with their expectations of academic advising. This could also help not over burden a handful of advisors that are consistently being sent other advisors' students to answer questions. Aligning students' expectations with the individuals that can deliver those expectation can increase satisfaction and potentially even contribute to retention and student success.

Recommendation #2 - For change to occur at this institution regarding academic advising, the message that is being communicated throughout the entire university needs to change. The institution must communicate a strong, consistent message on advising and expectations. From the institutional level, college level and departmental level there is a strong emphasis on prescriptive academic advising. Realistically, there is nothing wrong with the message of prescriptive advising, however there should also be a message that communicates to current and perspective students that developing the whole person is also a focus of academic advising. This message also needs to be an expectation for faculty that they understand students may want more than a course list for the upcoming semester. All levels of the institution should follow the same verbiage and communicate options for students. When a perspective student is researching an institution, they should easily know that there is continuity among the message delivered and as they navigate from one program to another.

Additionally, this message needs to be communicated to faculty members when hired and delivered as a consist message that academic advising is an important component to the student experience and can play a large role in student success.

Recommendation #3 - During the document analysis, there was evidence that trainings for academic advisors occur, however the content is strictly procedural, and poorly attended by faculty. Trainings must contain information not only to assist advisors in building schedules, but also building the whole student. While providing faculty academic advisors with the updated information they need to ensure their students are receiving the correct information for matriculation, including information for

them to assist students in developing as a person can be equally beneficial. Trainings should include any and all updates for academic programs but also include ways in which faculty academic advisor can assist students in other ways. Training for academic advisors should be required for faculty at employment and as a continuation of their employment to ensure they are keeping up to date with the curriculum changes that may be occurring in other programs that directly affect their students. By having faculty advisors attend trainings on a regular basis, they will be gaining and or enhancing the knowledge and skills to become a proficient academic advisor regardless of the type of advising.

Recommendation #4 – Institutions must develop an assessment for academic advising/advisors. Currently, in the N&D program and throughout the institution that this program resides in, there is not a formal method of evaluation for academic advising or of the advisor. All the students that participated in the interviews stated that evaluations should be completed. This practice is necessary to ensure accountability of the faculty member and potentially prevent misinformation or mistreatment of the students. Developing a universe tool for evaluation of academic advising/advisor should be a goal for programs moving forward. This tool could be similar to the instructor evaluations that students complete at the end of each class, each semester that many institutions use to track satisfaction and learning outcomes of students in the classroom. These results are automatically uploaded into the instructor's promotion and tenure file. Although more elaborate and inclusive evaluation tools could be created, in the meantime the same electronic form as this evaluation could be completed for faculty academic advisors.

Recommendation #5 - Provide faculty with the time to advise. Academic advising can take a great deal of time in preparation for each, the time spent with each student and potentially follow-up and additional questions to answer for each student. For academic advising to hold value to the faculty member, they must understand that academic advising has value from the administration and their time is being considered. By allocating the faculty member with appropriate time to advise, there could be a shift in how the act of advising students is perceived. By utilizing recommendation #5 (appropriate time) and recommendation # 2 (the importance of the message) as well as placing the emphasis on the importance

of advising, strides can be made. Administrators at all levels and from all departments need join to create a universal mission for academic advising that highlights the purpose, the value that both students and advisors (faculty and professional) feel empowered by. Students stated they wanted time. Their satisfaction was highest when their faculty academic advisor spent time with them, either by helping them with their schedules, answering questions, assisting with issues, or taking time to speak with them about their lives outside of academic, allowing them to stop by and feel connected to the program and therefore the institution.

Summary of Recommendations

Systematically organizing academic advising into a model or process that fits for an academic program, along with administration prioritizing advising to allow faculty the time (similar to teaching and research) necessary to perform these duties can increase student satisfaction. In a time when student enrollment is declining nationally, institutions need to do what they can to keep their students on campus. Building a connection with a faculty advisor, one in which the student knows they can go to for assistance could play a major role in retention.

Discussion of Contributions

The above-mentioned recommendations can serve as a guide for not only institutions to adopt but also areas of future research. Furthermore, using a systems theory approach the findings of this study expands the already existing scholarship of academic advising in these ways.

Research has been conducted on student satisfaction with academic advising for many years, however our findings are highlighting the expectations and experiences that align to student satisfaction. Ultimately, results from this study found that students appear to want a combination of prescriptive and developmental academic advising and their satisfaction does not depend on a specific lens. Additionally, much research has focused on a specific style of academic advising meeting the needs of students, while our results indicated that absent of a specific lens, students appear to what their academic advisor to spend

the time needed. This concept is why the systems theory was appropriate, themes were identified throughout the research that advisors and students were being instructed to complete prescriptive academic advising only. Furthermore, institutions need to place the value on the act of academic advising so the faculty advisor has the ability to take time need to not only assist the student but create an experience for the student that leads to satisfaction.

From our discussion in Chapter 2, Boers (2001) argued that in the educational process, the only way that students' expectations can be met is for educators to know the exact nature of these expectations. Anderson et al. (2014) identify that outcomes (poor ratings, etc.) are the typical measure examined when attempting to improve advising programs, individualized expectations that student have of academic advising are not explored (p. 28). Anderson et al. (2014) aimed to study the relationship among perceived advisor behaviors, student expectations, and student satisfaction at a state university. Their results indicate that no correlation exists between prescriptive or developmental expectations and behaviors. The lack of correlation between both prescriptive and developmental expectations and behaviors indicate advisors are not perceived as meeting student expectations (Anderson et al., 2014). Within our study, similar results emerged, however the theme of time and the establishment of a relationship was clear that assist in student satisfaction of academic advising. Furthermore, Smith and Allen (2006) suggests that academic advising does not need to be separated into "developmental" or "prescriptive", but that effective academic advising has both elements present, and when both are integrated, perhaps satisfaction will be even greater. The suggestion from Smith and Allen was found to be a theme in this research.

Finally, when using a systems theory approach, such as Bridgen (2017), identifying how the institutional environment plays a role in how academic advising is conducted was beneficial. Bridgen found that there was a misunderstanding among faculty, students, staff and administration "about the purposes and functions of academic advising" (p. 13). Findings from our study appear to lead students and advisors to only one purpose of academic advising, specifically through a prescriptive advising lens. Some could argue that the organization is setting limits or constraining the act of academic advising.

However, in this case study, students did appear more satisfied when they felt their academic advisor gave them the time they needed, this area of research in academic advising is under investigated.

Future Research

Faculty Academic Advisor's voice

Continuing to understand how to serve students better and increase satisfaction, retention rates and academic success should remain a priority and more research should be done. However, future research should also focus on the faculty voice to be able to understand what faculty academic advisors expect and experience from conducting advising. Hearing directly from the academic advisors regarding; how their time is spent - time to prepare for each advising session, creating schedules, answering follow-up emails, advising within their contracts, and contributing to the institutions vision on academic advising and how it assist with student retention and success, are all points to consider hearing the advisors side. How faculty members spend their time is important. There are also numerous issues that can arise on a daily basis that students tend to seek the advice of their academic advisor for. Some of these issues can be continued eligibility for scholarships, financial aid, transcripts from other institutions, AP credits, and navigating through the institution's portal for the first time. Additionally, identifying if faculty academic advisors strategically conducts their advising sessions in a prescriptive or developmental advising framework or if they simply conduct academic advising as it seems natural.

Faculty members have many responsibilities that make up their time. Depending on their contract or if they are Tenure-Track research faculty the time they have available for academic advising could change drastically. Also, where academic advising fits in promotion and tenure at the institution and department will play a major role in how much time a faculty member will allot to preparation and actual face-to-face time with each advisee. For example, if a faculty member has an appointment of 50% research 40% teaching and 10% service and at this institution advising falls under teaching, this faculty member could be responsible for 2 classes a semester and advising 30-50 undergraduate students. This could lead to very

little time to prepare for each student. Hearing from the faculty academic advisor as to how this is possible would be beneficial to connecting to the experience of the student. If the faculty member only has 10-15% of their time allotted to academic advising and is responsible for 30 students that will leave very little time for developmental advising and prescriptive advising, but prescriptive advising could in fact still be completed by preplanning and delivering schedules to students.

Professional academic advisors

With much research (Crocker, et al., 2014; Grites, 2013; Hale, 2009; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Hutson, 2013; Lynch, 2004; Metzner, 1989; Myers & Dyer, 2005; Strayhorn, 2014; Suvedi, et al, 2015; Walker, et. al, 2017; Walters & Seyedian, 2016) already demonstrating the benefits that faculty academic advising can have on students, the same amount of research should be conducted to justify this push towards professional academic advising will benefit students in the long run. Also, research from the Professional academic advisor point of view could be enlightening. Understanding the distribution of time to each students, how one manages 300 students while maintaining a working knowledge of the majors they are responsible for while staying up to date on the institutional policies and changes that can occur at any time.

Administrative voice

Finally, a focus for future research could be from the side of the administration. Keeping students at their institution and graduating them is a priority. Identifying how these administrators want that completed and who they want to be the ones to complete these tasks could be helpful for all involved. Research suggests that academic advising does play a role in the aforementioned priorities, therefore administrators should find creative ways to not only legitimize academic advising but incentivize and reward it as well.

If administration wants to move from faculty academic advising to professional academic advising there should be a focus on the roles that the professional academic advisor is expected to complete.

Clearly communicating the mission of academic advising at the institutional level and funneling down to the college, department and individual programs can assist not only the faculty members, but each additional layer of administration understanding the value of faculty academic advising. Hearing directly from the administrators could assist in this process.

Meeting with the Provost and Dean

If the opportunity for a discussion of how academic advising should be structured on this college campus with the institution's Provost or the Dean of the college, some important points that would be addressed include: the current body of research (Crocker, et al., 2014; Grites, 2013; Hale, 2009; Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Hutson, 2013; Lynch, 2004; Metzner, 1989; Myers & Dyer, 2005; Strayhorn, 2014; Suvedi, et al, 2015; Walker, et. al, 2017; Walters & Seyedian, 2016) surrounding the impact that faculty have on university students, encouraging developmental and prescriptive academic advising based on the desires of the students individually and the expertise of the faculty member, allocating the majority of undergraduate academic advising to TAPs in each department, if professional academic advisors were a part of a department, strategically having them advisor first and second year students only while assigning a faculty mentor that will take over their advising in the student's third year.

The above-mentioned research surrounding the benefits of faculty academic advising on college students should serve as a basis when delivering facts to the administration for faculty academic advising. One particular study (Moody, 2019) stated that there may not be a more important influence in college than a student's faculty academic advisor. Eliminating this important resource to students would not serve the institution well. However, as mentioned in the recommendations section, ensuring that both faculty

and students are matched strategically to the student or advisor that meets their expertise (advising method) or expectation (advising delivery) could create an efficient model of advising.

In this program, the major courses are typically taken at the end of the second year and start of the third year. If professional academic advisors were the direction that the college wanted to move towards, these advisors could serve an important role. Many of the general education classes, chemistry, biology and math classes have scores that a student must have from SAT/ACT, etc. before they can take specific requirements for the program. There are also pre-requisites that are important to remember, and many departments will change these without much notice. Having professional academic advisors specialize in the first two years of a college students' academic career and a faculty academic advisor take over when the student is in more of the major restricted course could prove beneficial for all. Additionally, as previously mentioned, if a program is able to identify students and advisors that want strictly prescriptive or developmental academic advising, these individuals could be strategically paired. This pairing could increase efficacy by both professional and faculty academic advisors and satisfaction among students.

Some experts say that during a student's collegiate career, there may be no individual a student turns to as often as an academic adviser (Moody, 2019). Faculty academic advisors have experience within the field their students want to be in, and they have knowledge to help their students succeed. This knowledge is firsthand and could be lost when faculty are no longer responsible for advising their undergraduate students.

Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the purpose of the study and discussed the results as they related to each of the research questions. The results revealed that students are receiving both prescriptive and developmental academic advising from their faculty academic advisors. Participants expressed their expectations are best met when academic advisors spend the time with them to get their questions

answered and alleviate any stress they may have. Results from this case study indicated that most students in this program are satisfied with their academic advising.

Also discussed in this chapter were the documents and how they related back to the experiences, expectation and satisfaction of the interviewed participants. Finally, there was a discussion on steps forward for institutions to systemically improve faculty academic advising.

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Appendices

This study will have the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Student survey
- Appendix B – Interview protocol
- Appendix C – Letter to students for participation/informed consent

Appendix A – Student survey

1. My major advisor is easily accessible

1 2 3 4 5

2. My major advisor gives me accurate information about degree requirements

1 2 3 4 5

3. My major advisor helps me with academic problems

1 2 3 4 5

4. Overall, I am satisfied with the academic advising services I have received

1 2 3 4 5

5. The primary reason I see my academic advisor is for course registration

1 2 3 4 5

6. The primary reason I see my academic advisor is for reasons outside of course registration

1 2 3 4 5

7. The second most common reason I see my academic advisor is:

8. The three top qualities I feel are important for my advisor to possess are:

9. How satisfied are you with your academic advisor?

1 2 3 4 5

10. When you leave your advising appointment, were your expectations met?

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate your class ranking

Freshman (0-30 credit hours earned)

Sophomore (31-60 credit hours earned)

Junior (61-90 credit hours earned)

Senior (91+ credit hours earned)

Please include your email if you would like to participate in a Zoom interview to further discuss your academic advising experience

Please indicate your academic advisor

Appendix B Interview schedule/guide

Thank you for participating in this interview to collect data regarding students' expectation, experiences and satisfaction with faculty academic advising. The results that are ascertained from this research will assist in meeting students' needs for success and/or assist in developing advising protocols for the department.

1. How do you set up an advising meeting?
2. Prior to your meeting with your advisor, do you prepare anything
3. Prior to your meeting with your advisor, do you have any expectations of how the meeting will go
4. After the meeting with your advisor, explain your level of satisfaction with the meeting/advisor
5. After the meeting with your advisor, do you feel as though you received everything from your advisor/meeting that you need to be successful, please explain.
6. What would be one thing you would do to improve your advising experience?
7. What is your class rank?
8. Do you feel you will graduate in the time frame you expected to based on the assistance from your academic advisor?

Appendix C

Dear Prospective Participant,

This letter is a request for your participation in a research project examining the perceptions, expectations and level of satisfaction of academic advising in your department. This project is being conducted by Nettie Freshour, MS, RD, LD in the Higher Education Administration Program at WVU under the supervision of Dr. Erin McHenry-Sorber Associate Professor of Higher Education, Higher Education Programs Coordinator and Dr. John Campbell, an Associate Professor in the College of Education and Human Services, to fulfill requirements for a PhD.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a short survey and potentially participate in a Zoom interview. Your participation in this project will take approximately 10 minutes for the survey and 30 minutes for the interview.

Your participation in this project will be kept as confidential as legally possible. All data will be reported in the aggregate. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer, and you may stop participating at any time. Your class standing will not be affected if you decide not to participate or withdraw. The West Virginia University Institutional Review Board's acknowledgment of this project is on file with the WVU Office of Human Research Protections.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at 304-293-2651 or by email at Nettie.Freshour@mail.wvu.edu. Additionally, you can contact the WVU Office of Human Research Protections at 304-293-7073.

I hope that you will participate in this research project, as it could help us better understand how to connect students' expectations of academic advising to their level of satisfaction. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nettie Freshour