



5-1-2011

The Essential Characteristics of Academic Advisors

Mary L. Ward

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Ward, Mary L., "The Essential Characteristics of Academic Advisors" (2011). *Theses and Dissertations*. 671.
<https://commons.und.edu/theses/671>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, and Senior Projects at UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact zeinebyousif@library.und.edu.

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS

by

Mary L. Ward

Bachelor of Science, Bemidji State University, 1993

Master of Science, Southwest Minnesota State University, 2001

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May

2011

UMI Number: 3480837

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI 3480837

Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This edition of the work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Copyright 2011 Mary L. Ward

ii

This dissertation, submitted by Mary L. Ward in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

Margaret A. Stearns
Chairperson
Deborah J. Weisberg
Cheryl L. Halcrow
[Signature]
[Signature]

This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Joseph N. Bencoit
Dean of the Graduate School
May 25, 2011
Date

PERMISSION

Title The Essential Characteristics of Academic Advisors
Department Educational Leadership
Degree Doctor of Philosophy

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree from the University of North Dakota, I agree that the library of this University shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my dissertation work or, in her absence, by the chairperson of the department or the dean of the Graduate School. It is understood that any copying or publication or other use of this dissertation or part thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of North Dakota in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation.

Signature Mary L Ward
Date April 21, 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of Study	3
What is Academic Advising?	4
Student Advising Needs.....	6
The Role of Advising.....	6
Conceptual Framework	10
NACADA Statement of Core Values	12
Study Limitations.....	13
Definitions	14
Research Questions	15
Organization of Study.....	15
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	17
History of Academic Advising	17

First Academic Advising Period – Colonial Times to the 1840s.....	17
Second Academic Advising Period – The 1850s to 1900	18
Third Academic Advising Period – 1900 to the 1950s.....	19
Fourth Academic Advising Period – The 1960s to Present.....	22
Advising Examined and Defined	25
Organizational Models of Academic Advising.....	27
Advisor Classifications	29
Challenges Facing Academic Advisors	30
Past Research-Academic Advisor Studies.....	32
III. METHODOLOGY	37
Selection of the Delphi Method	38
Introduction of the Delphi Study Research Method	39
Delphi Strengths.....	40
Delphi Challenges.....	42
Participant Identification and Selection.....	43
Survey Instrument and Implementation.....	44
Pilot Study.....	45
Study Rounds Implementation Summary	46
Data Analysis Process.....	48
Reliability, Validity, and Criterion Values	50
IV. FINDINGS.....	52
Study Participants	52

Rounds of Study.....	54
Round 1-Open Ended Survey	54
Round 2-Questionnaire	56
Round 3-Questionnaire	57
Round 4-Presentation of Results	60
Categorical Analysis and the NACADA Conceptual Framework.....	62
Curriculum Characteristics	62
Pedagogy Characteristics	65
What Advisors Need to Have	66
What Advisors Need to Be	68
Student Learning Outcomes – What Will Students Learn?	70
Findings Summary.....	73
V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	75
Summary of Procedures.....	75
Findings to Research Question 1	76
Curriculum Characteristics	77
Pedagogy Characteristics.....	80
Student Learning Outcomes -Characteristics.....	81
Findings to Research Question 2	82
Conclusions.....	84
Implications.....	86
Recommendations for Further Study.....	86

APPENDICES	89
Appendix A.....	90
Appendix B.....	93
Appendix C.....	103
Appendix D.....	109
Appendix E.....	116
Appendix F.....	119
Appendix G.....	121
REFERENCES	123

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. NACADA Concept of Academic Advising, 2006.....	11
2. NACADA Statement of Core Values, 2005	13
3. Study Sequence Model	37
4. Academic Advisor Position Posting	83

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Rounds of Study Time Template	46
2. Participant Demographic Information	55
3. Agreement Percentages of the Top 59 Characteristics	60
4. Participant Responses for Unranked Three Most Essential Characteristics.....	61
5. Curriculum Characteristics of Skills and Knowledge.....	63
6. Curriculum Characteristics and Themes of Academic Advisors.....	65
7. Pedagogy Characteristics of What Advisors Need to Have.....	66
8. Pedagogy Characteristics and Themes of Academic Advisors.....	67
9. Pedagogy Characteristics of What Advisors Need to Be.....	69
10. Pedagogy Characteristics and Themes of Academic Advisors.....	71
11. Advisor Opinions of What Students Will Learn.....	72
12. Advisor Opinions of Student Learning Outcomes Characteristics and Themes	73

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many who deserve words of appreciation for this dissertation study. Much gratitude is given to my parents who allowed me to be who I was, instilled a love of learning and gave to me their faith in God. Profound thanks go to my Lord who sustains and guides me. Great love and appreciation is given to my husband, Bill, our five children, and their families for believing in what I do and who have been there for me to provide words of encouragement and support during all the studying and writing.

Thanks go also to the many teachers I have had throughout the years from elementary to present who questioned, prodded, and guided me. Special thanks must be given to my advisor, Dr. Margaret Healy, as well Jeffrey Sun, J.D., Dr. Barb Oertel, Dr. Jill Abbott, Michelle Frenzel, and my dissertation committee for helping to guide this study and bring it to completion.

Finally, thanks to the professional advising experts who contributed to this study. It could not have been completed without your knowledge and experiences.

ABSTRACT

What started as an activity valued for its oversight, the work of academic advisors have become a means leading to other ends, such as retention, student engagement, student satisfaction, persistence, and time to degree. The purpose of this research was to identify the essential characteristics of academic advisors; this was achieved by asking a Delphic panel of academic advising experts to identify these characteristics. Academic advisor primary responsibilities include but are not limited to academic advising on general education requirements, serving as a liaison between academic units, and maintaining academic records (Tuttle, 2000). In the process of doing these things academic advisors listen, guide, suggest, provide information, and assist students as they adjust to campus and beyond, all in the context of being an advisor. In order to understand how professional advisors deliver on all their responsibilities, this study turned to professional advisors who have been nationally recognized for the work they do.

A panel of 30 expert academic advisors was invited to participate in this study. These experts presented extensive academic advising experience with a range from six years to 28 years as academic advisors. The opening qualitative survey was used to elicit items for consideration in the subsequent rounds of questioning. The items were broken into three categories: what advisors need to know, what advisors need to have and be, and what students need to learn as a result of advising. These categories were also studied for

alignment with the NACADA Concept of Academic Advising and NACADA's core values.

The findings of this study indicate there are relationships between the essential advisor characteristics and the NACADA framework for academic advising. A generalized model of what is essential to academic advisors and the work they do could be written using the findings of this study to guide advising curriculum, inform new professionals or to create an advisor assessment instrument.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As students' complete high school, a plethora of post-secondary opportunities await them. Guide books, fact sheets, and public information portals offer statistics and other points of information to aid the decision. Making the choice about what college to attend is exciting and often perplexing. But an often missing piece of information to guide that choice regards academic advising and the work of advisors. Most institutions do not showcase academic advising or advisors but should because of the role these play in student success. Questions prospective students should be asking are, "What type of academic advising is offered here and how is it supported? How much time does a student receive from an academic advisor? What principles guide the practice?" These questions are equally as important as the "what will this cost" question or questions regarding student/faculty ratios, etc. When it comes time to think about student success, persistence and degree completion, many look to academic advisors as being key personnel.

As a strategy for improving retention, student engagement, student satisfaction, persistence, and time to degree, a mid-sized, four year public university decided to set-up an academic advising center. A broad goal for this center was serving academically at-risk students and other university stakeholders with professional academic advisors. A group of individuals from academic affairs and student affairs worked diligently to bring

the center to fruition. Research and information gathered from peer institutions about their advising centers gave the group the energy to persist. Referred to as the convergence of excellence between academic affairs and student services, the university's expectations of the center's outcomes on student success, engagement, persistence, and time to degree were catalysts in the decision to provide funding for the center.

The research gathered for the proposal presented an opportunity to create the vision the convergence team had developed. The team realized that key to its implementation was putting the right individuals in place. To do this, the team needed to hire a director and retention counselors (the position title given to these individuals) who possessed the advisor characteristics that would align with the goals, values, and objectives of the center. The most difficult decision at this juncture was finding the right fit.

The seed of inquiry was planted: what *are* the essential characteristics of an academic advisor? And if all of them cannot be found in an individual candidate, what are the advisor characteristics that are most vital?

The purpose of this research was to identify the essential characteristics of an academic advisor. This was achieved by asking a Delphic panel of experts who are professional academic advisors. The primary responsibilities of a professional academic advisor include advising on general education requirements, serving as a liaison between academic units, and maintaining academic records (Tuttle, 2000). In the process of doing these things professional advisors listen, guide, suggest, provide information, and assist students as they adjust to campus and beyond. In order to understand how professional advisors can serve large numbers of students and maintain all their responsibilities, this

study turned to professional advisors who have been nationally recognized as outstanding academic advisors by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).

Background of Study

This study encompassed the work of professional academic advisors and what advisor characteristics they considered essential to academic advising. The results yielded a categorical list of essential characteristics that can be used by other institutions that may be seeking to write curriculum for advising, a professional development profile for current professional academic advisors, or to write a professional advisor position description for new advisors. This study gives the reader insight into what professional academic advisors with multiple years of experience in the field say are the crucial characteristics of an academic advisor working with students throughout their enrollment at an institution. It is understood that there are many sub-types of advising such as career advising, incidental advising (occurring at events such as orientation, new student registration days), and situational advising (responding to new student inquiries). This study was not focused on these types of advising but rather sought out the opinions of experts whose work day is dedicated to an assigned group of students.

The purposes of academic advising are multiple and yet unique to each student, each advisor, and to the institution where they work. Advising is often perceived as the educational tool that enables students to find meaning and a pathway for their academic pursuits (Yoduf, 2003). A book entitled *Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds* opens a chapter with the following statement, "Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience" (Light, 2001, p. 81). Tasked to spend time with students to help them through the sometimes

perplexing and worrisome routes of academia and get started on a career, advisors act as a safety net to help them make their way (Yudof, 2003).

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

Just as the role academic advisors play in student success should not be underestimated; neither should the skills, knowledge and values of an academic advisor be taken for granted. These are the impetus of this study, what is essential to academic advisors and the work they do. This chapter will briefly define academic advising, student advising needs, and the role of academic advising. It will also include the conceptual framework of the study, study limitations, definitions, and research questions. Finally, this chapter will provide an overview of the remainder of the dissertation.

What Is Academic Advising?

The history of academic advising discussed in Chapter 2 indicates that over time academic advising has changed significantly. But since the inception of academic advising as a defined activity that began in the 1970s, academic advising has become a studied practice. One of the most widely applied definitions of academic advising is used in this study. It states that academic advising is the interaction of an institutional representative with students to provide direction and insight about academics, social issues and personal situations (Kuhn, 2008). The purposes of this advising may be “to teach, inform, suggest, mentor, coach, or discipline” (Kuhn, 2008, p. 3). Frost (1991) also puts forward that advising, a service provided to nearly all students, involves academic

issues, the greatest area of focus for students. Following are examples of how academic advising has been recognized as playing an important role in student success and institutional effectiveness.

Peer Review, published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), dedicated its winter 2008 issue entirely to academic advising analysis and practice. One of the articles in this issue states, “. . . one strategy that is increasingly being acknowledged for its potential in this regard [student immersion and engagement in learning] is academic advising” (Campbell & Nutt, 2008, p. 4). Academic advising is also addressed in annual iterations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Noel-Levitz Survey of Student Satisfaction, the ACT Survey of Advising, and often, in independent institutional surveys. The attention that academic advising receives from studies and surveys indicate advising is an important dimension to student success and institutional effectiveness. Academic advisors are significant partners in student success and institutional effectiveness as well.

Advising promotes student growth, learning and success when integrated with academic services (Kramer & Assoc., 2003). Academic advising also helps students plan an educational program that matches their educational and vocational goals (McCormick, 2003). In a keynote address to the National Association of Academic Advisors Conference in 1997, George Kuh said, “It is hard to imagine any academic support function that is more important to student success and institutional productivity than advising” (Kuh, 1997, p. 11). With fifty plus years of academic advising experience to back them up, Hunter and White posit that advising “can create a vital connection between students and their education. It helps them be more reflective and strategic about

the choices they are making and the learning they are engaged in” (p. 20). Habley (1994) states that in some cases, “Academic advising is the only structured activity on campus in which all students have the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with a concerned representative of the university” (p. 10). Academic advisors are most often those who provide the one-on-one.

Student Advising Needs

Student advising needs can be grouped into two primary subgroups. These subgroups include situational characteristics and innate characteristics. Both subgroups are important and must be recognized. Situational student advising needs are influenced by student age, enrollment patterns, place of residence, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnic group, disabilities, and learning styles. The educational experiences of students prior to enrollment also play a role in what students need from advisors (Gordon, 2008). Technology and its application are additional situational characteristics that also strongly influence student needs (Kennedy & Ishler, 2008).

In addition to these and changing student demographics, innate student advising needs are influenced by differing attitudes and values, family issues, mental health, physical health, academic preparation, academic misconduct, and accessing, affording and financing education (Gordon, 2008).

The Role of Advising

The role of academic advising is coming to the front of discussions around student success including student engagement and satisfaction, persistence, time to degree, and retention. Student satisfaction is growing in importance in higher education as institutions look for ways to meet the demands of stakeholders and legislators, provide

evidence of institutional effectiveness, and enhance students' learning environments (Schreiner, 2009).

The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) is a survey that measures student satisfaction and priorities for students. The unabridged survey considers twelve effectiveness areas (scales) encompassing all areas of the campus. The list includes admissions and financial aid, academic advising, campus climate, campus support services, concern for the individual, instructional effectiveness, registration effectiveness, responsiveness to diverse populations, safety and security, service excellence, and student centeredness (Noel-Levitz, 2009). From the fall of 2006 to the spring of 2009, the SSI survey was administered at 87 public four-year institutions to 84,638 students. The 2009 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report summary shows students indicated academic advising as highest in importance and satisfaction. With an importance mean of 6.35 and a satisfaction mean of 5.28 on a 7.00 scale, academic advising topped the list of the twelve characteristics measured (Noel-Levitz, 2009). This recent study provides evidence that academic advising and the advisors play a key role for students and their perceptions of the college experience.

Many institutions mandate academic advising through policy, especially for first year students. These mandatory advising interactions are intended to create a relationship between the student and their assigned advisor. Institutions that have this policy report significant student numbers take advantage of academic advising during their freshman year. About half of these list the primary source of advising as their assigned advisor (Kuh, 2008). In the Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP) study, twenty institutions, public and private, four year and two year, were examined to learn what the

institutions were doing to enhance student achievement. Advising was found to be a high priority at schools involved in this study (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Assoc., 2005). The research on academic advising includes student achievement, persistence, satisfaction, time to degree, engagement, and what students report they have learned.

Research shows “academic advising can play a role in students’ decisions to persist and in their chances to graduate” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 404). Strong academic advising is essential for students’ success and retention (Gordon, 2008). In 2004, an American College Testing (ACT) study found that three interventions: 1) academic advising, 2) first-year programs, and 3) learning support were responsible for higher than average rates of student persistence. This research supports the notion that academic advising and those who advise play key roles in student persistence and retention.

Some see advising as the primary transition and affiliation linkage outside the classroom for students to connect with the institution (Frost, 1991). The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a survey used by many higher education institutions to measure the level of student engagement as it relates to learning, asks specific questions related to advising. Aggregate NSSE data gathered in 2010 listed the following reasons why advising plays an important role in the academic lives of students: students are more likely to interact with faculty, students perceive the institution’s environment to be more supportive, students report they are more satisfied with their overall college experience, and students indicate that they gain more from the institution in most areas.

According to the ASHE Higher Education Report entitled *Piecing Together the Student Success Puzzle* (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2007), academic

advising in various contexts such as first year experience, orientation, graduation planning, and student success, is mentioned 31 times in the manuscript. The study posits that academic advising aids in student development, independent thinking and problem-solving, and that academic advising teaches students how to plot a route through the institution and its culture. In addition, it puts forward that academic advisors need to be accessible to students and they need to know how to respond to individual student needs educationally and otherwise (Kuh et al., 2007). An equally important component of academic advising includes institutional support for advisors in the form of pre-service and in-service development programs. These programs define roles and responsibilities, set expectations, and provide opportunities for development and enhancement of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors for working with students (Brown & Ward, 2007).

Hunter and White (2004) state that, while it cannot change curriculum and co-curriculum, academic advising is more relevant than ever before as institutions deal with diminishing resources, rising tuition costs, student retention, limited job markets for graduates, and a changing global economy. The same things that are impacting the importance of academic advising are also being used as rationale for the increased call for higher levels of accountability in post-secondary education.

Post-secondary institutions in the United States are seeing increasing demands from state and federal governments for accountability, most notably in the areas of student academic success, enrollments, and time to degree (National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, 2005). Students and parents likewise are looking to higher education to provide the ticket to a better life, but at an affordable price. All

stakeholders see improved retention and student graduation rates as goals for accountability. Improved retention means that students are moving forward with their academic plans. Shorter time to degree means fewer tuition payments and results in a cost savings for students and governments. Higher education administrators recognize that academic advisors can directly affect the academic progress of their students and present evidence of accountability to institutional constituencies and governing boards. The challenge is that all stakeholders must regard “academic advising as essential, not peripheral” to the institution’s educational practices (Hunter & White, 2004, p. 21).

Considering the complexity of the expectations students, their families, academic administrators, faculty, and others have of academic advisors, questions emerge such as: Who are these advisors? Why do they do it? What is it that they do? What do they need to know to do academic advising? What is absolute in their minds about what is essential to them as an academic advisor? The purpose of this study is to learn what professional academic advisors identify as the essential characteristics of an academic advisor.

Conceptual Framework

The study will use NACADA’s Concept of Academic Advising (NACADA, 2006) and NACADA’s Statement of Core Values (NACADA, 2005) as the conceptual framework. These are being used as the conceptual framework because of the research and background that NACADA has provided to the work of advisors. The first framework presents the three dimensions of advising (Figure 1) including: curriculum, the what of advising; pedagogy, the how of advising; and student learning outcomes, what students are expected to know, be able to do, and value/appreciate as a result of

advising (King, 2006). Figure 1 is a graphic created by NACADA that illustrates the concept of academic advising.

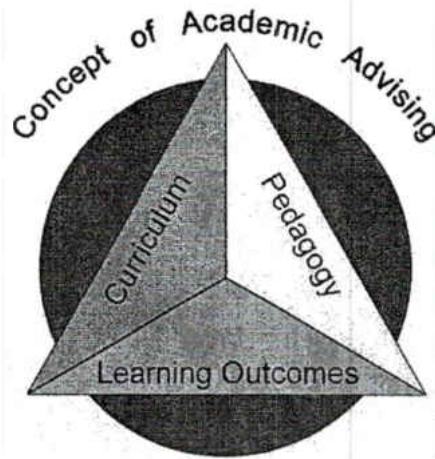


Figure 1. NACADA Concept of Academic Advising, 2006.

NACADA (2006) has written the definitions of the three dimensions below.

The Curriculum of Academic Advising-What an advisor needs to know:

“Academic advising draws primarily from theories in the social sciences, humanities, and education. The curriculum of academic advising ranges from the ideals of higher education to the pragmatics of enrollment. This curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the institution’s mission, culture, and expectations; the meaning, value, and interrelationship of the institution’s curriculum and co-curriculum; modes of thinking, learning, and decision-making; the selection of academic programs and courses; the development of life and career goals; campus/community resources, policies, and procedures; and the transferability of skills and knowledge.” (NACADA, 2006, para. 8)

The Pedagogy of Academic Advising-What an advisor needs to have and be:

“Academic advising, as a teaching and learning process, requires a pedagogy that

incorporates the preparation, facilitation, documentation, and assessment of advising interactions. Although the specific methods, strategies, and techniques may vary, the relationship between advisors and students is fundamental and is characterized by mutual respect, trust, and ethical behavior.” (NACADA, 2006, para. 9)

Student Learning Outcomes of Academic Advising-What a student needs to learn:

“The student learning outcomes of academic advising are guided by an institution’s mission, goals, curriculum and co-curriculum. These outcomes, defined in an advising curriculum, articulate what students will demonstrate, know, value, and do as a result of participating in academic advising. Each institution must develop its own set of student learning outcomes and the methods to assess them.” (NACADA, 2006, para. 10)

NACADA Statement of Core Values

“NACADA’s Concept of Academic Advising is coupled with NACADA’s Statement of Core Values (Figure 2). This study recognizes that the core values of advisors provide the foundation for effective academic advising.

The Statement of Core Values provides a framework to guide professional practice (NACADA, 2005, para. 2). The value statements include:

- Core Value 1: Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise.
- Core Value 2: Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.
- Core Value 3: Advisors are responsible to their institutions.
- Core Value 4: Advisors are responsible to higher education in general.
- Core Value 5: Advisors are responsible to their educational community.
- Core Value 6: Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally.” (NACADA, 2005)

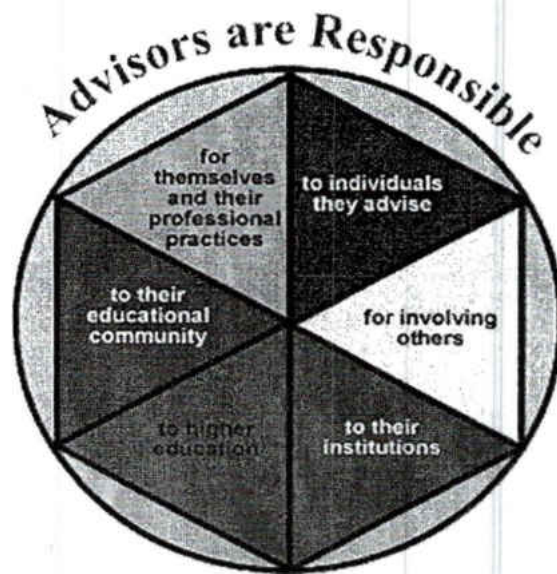


Figure 2 NACADA Statement of Core Values, 2005.

Study Limitations

The limitations of this study include researcher bias and the inability to generalize the findings from the research to all institutional types. Researcher bias is inevitable and undeniable in qualitative research (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985). Although the researcher 1) used the iterative process of member checking strategies, 2) provided opportunities for the experts to ask follow-up questions, and 3) and invited an outside facilitator to mitigate these biases, the researcher's own beliefs about essential characteristics of an academic advisor did play a role in the processing of the qualitative information. In this study, the researcher's 17 years experience as an academic advisor and as a director of an advising center may have helped or hindered the study. At the outset of the study, the researcher assumed that there would be things such as theory, relationship building, college/university policy knowledge, on-going professional development practices and teaching methods that would be prevalent in the data received from the experts. To

overcome these assumptions and to make certain that the data was coded correctly, the researcher referred to the outside facilitator in the study to overcome them. The facilitator was also utilized for validation of the qualitative coding and the quantitative analysis of the subsequent rounds.

The criteria for the NACADA advisor award do provide an expectation that the outstanding advisors nominated meet all of the criteria. This may be considered a limitation of the study since the manifestations of these criteria may be interpreted to mean that all who earn the award share the same advisor characteristics. The researcher acknowledges that, just as students each have unique needs, so advisors have individualized advisor characteristics. Through the aggregation of opinion and response measurement, this group of experts will provide a best practice profile of essential academic advisor characteristics.

Another limitation of the study is the inability to generalize the findings from the research to all types of advisor positions. An additional study limitation is that because the award winners had met NACADA's nomination criteria for this award, these criteria may have predefined advisor characteristics. What the NACADA criteria do not do, however, is categorize which of the criteria are essential.

Definitions

Essential: extremely important, basic, vital, indispensable, and necessary (Merriam & Webster, 2010).

Academic advising: is the interaction of an institutional representative with students to provide direction and insight about academics, social issues, and personal

situations. The purposes of this advising may be to teach, inform, suggest, mentor, coach, or discipline (Kuhn, 2008).

Advisor characteristics: are the knowledge and skills, values and attitudes of advisors that result in distinct student learning outcomes (King, 2006).

Academic advisors primary role: are individuals whose primary role at the institution is the direct delivery of advising services to students (NACADA, 2009). The role of faculty who do academic advising is not included in this definition.

Structural Delphi Method Model: is a research method based on iterative structural surveys. It makes use of information from the experience and knowledge of the participants who are experts in the relevant field(s) and is used to obtain a consensus of opinion about a matter not subject to precise quantification (Stitt-Gohdes, & Crews, 2004).

Research Questions

1. What advisor characteristics are essential to academic advising?
2. Can these expert advisor opinions and NACADA's Concept of Academic Advising and NACADA's Statement of Core Values be generalized to create an organizational model of academic advisor characteristics?

Organization of Study

This study will be organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the topics that will be discussed in the study. Chapter II provides the literature framework on which the study is grounded. Chapter III provides a detailed description of the method used for this study, and it describes the sample and the timeline for data collection. Chapter III also includes discussion of the surveys and how they were

used to measure their results. Chapter IV presents the findings, and Chapter V will provide a discussion of the findings and their implications for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of academic advising and the roles of advisors have changed over the course of the history of higher education. What started as an activity valued for its oversight, advising has become a means leading to other ends, such as retention, student engagement, student satisfaction, persistence, and time to degree. From an activity that was put forward because it was the educationally sound thing to do, it has evolved to become a process that institutions, students, and parents rely on to enable students to graduate in a reasonable time frame. A contextual look at the history of academic advising and the work of advisors breaks it into four periods (Cook, 2001).

History of Academic Advising

First Academic Advising Period - Colonial Times to the 1840s

The first period, labeled as American education before academic advising was defined, had a modality of *in loco parentis* (Bush, 1969). Faculty members performed advising but the role of the advisors did not yet exist. Presidents and faculty were responsible for advising not only a prescribed course of study but also students' moral lives and extracurricular activities (Bush, 1969). Recognizing that students needed some form of guidance in their studies, Kenyon College of Ohio introduced in 1841 the first known formal advising system. Each student was paired with a faculty member who gave direction regarding "academic, social, or personal matters" (Cook, 2009, p. 18).

Second Academic Advising Period - The 1850s to 1900

Academic advising as a defined but unexamined activity, the second academic advising period began in the 1850s. One outcome of The Morrill Act of 1862, also known as the Land Grant College Act, was the establishment of land grant colleges in each state intended to teach practical skills to the citizenry and to accomplish the provision of higher education to the masses (Nuss, 2003). While not a new concept to set aside land for the development of colleges, it created a complex partnership between state and federal governments (Thelin, 2003). According to this enabling act, the land grants were established to encompass agriculture and mechanic arts with education being the legitimatizing factor. The real objective was often something else like speculation, pioneer settlement, or economic development. Student enrollments grew slowly because while the idea was noble, students were not ready for the colleges nor were there the populations in some areas to provide the students to the hastily established institutions (Johnson, 1981). Despite the slower than anticipated growth, the Morrill Act brought a greater number of students, a semi-structured formalized advising process, an elective approach to course selection, and the creation of orientation programs for new students (Frost, 2000).

To address the issues of course and extracurricular activities selection of the growing student population, and to try to bring faculty and students closer together, Johns Hopkins University in 1876 implemented a program of faculty advising as a way to address the needs of the growing student population. The Hopkins model was borrowed from the European model of higher education—namely German. The German or research university model roots go back to the early 1800s and the University of Berlin. This

model emphasized advanced study, original scholarship, and professional publication of faculty. For the first time the hierarchy of the university was defined by the newly-emerging scientific disciplines that supported research and scholarship more than teaching (Veysey, 1965).

In 1885, Harvard University President Charles Eliot introduced the development of a system of choice which evolved into an open-ended curriculum (Nuss, 2003). This system was based on the German model as well. This elective system was a break from the past practice of specifying a student's courses according to the year of college. By the end of the 1800s, more than 50% of all courses offered in American colleges were electives (Denham, 2002). The creation of this elective system "sent the philosophical message that the college had no authority to prescribe a curriculum" (Denham, p. 8) and it also "asserted that all educated men need not to know the same things" (Veysey, 1965, p. 305). This elective approach was adopted by institutions such as Johns Hopkins and Harvard, but there were others such as Yale that did not see its value and consequently rejected the approach (Thelin, 2003).

In 1888, Boston University presented the first extended orientation seminar in its curriculum that integrated advising in a group. Harvard recognized the need to close the gap through student advising and followed suit in 1889 when the faculty "Board of Freshman Advisors for first year students" was created (Cook, 2009, p. 19).

Third Academic Advising Period -1900 to the 1950s

The latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century witnessed the infusion of new money in higher education as a result of the industrial revolution. These new millionaires supported higher education, first its general studies

and then its research. With the focus more on research than teaching, faculty were pulled farther from the classroom and the relationship between undergraduate students and faculty became less interactive and more impersonal (Frost, 2000). To bridge this gap, in 1906, Columbia University created an advisor system designed to supervise the selection of courses and attempted to close the ever-widening gap between faculty and students (Veysey, 1965).

This great advising method that some professors called “man to man” bridged the gaps created through the lack of personalization of the German model. The Slossun report of fourteen universities in 1909 synthesized the critical reaction to the previous century. The report indicated that one of the greatest faults of the universities was the loss of personal relationships between instructor and students (Bush, 1969) that had resulted from the implementation of the German model in American colleges and universities.

Development in the breadth and depth of curriculum created the need for advising specialization and extended counseling. Specialized advising was categorized into three types: personal (psychological), vocational (career) and academic (Cook, 2009). Post World War I saw the training of counselors to augment faculty advising while the vocational needs of students were attended to using psychometric instruments (Cook, 2001).

The period between World Wars I and II witnessed the growth of orientation courses, freshman counseling and freshman weeks. Some colleges used upper division students as advisors to help faculty and counselors (Cook, 2001). During this time more formal academic advising was occurring, and most colleges and universities had recognized advising programs by the 1930s (Frost, 1991). Much of this early advising

actually was more the supervision of students' studies, living environments, and worship services than student development (Frost, 2000).

This time frame also saw the development of the term student personnel work and a 1937 ground-breaking report entitled the *Student Personnel Point of View*. This report was the result of several years of collaborative work by a committee appointed by the American Council on Education whose charge was to study personnel practices at colleges and universities. The resulting report emphasized "the importance of understanding the individual student, the importance of coordinating the major functions of instruction and management, and the notion that student services should be offered and organized in a way to support the mission of the institution" (Nuss, 2003, p. 71-72). The subsequent 1949 version supported and delineated student personnel work even more (Kuhn, 2008). This work, including educational guidance as well as psychological and vocational counseling, was largely undefined (Cook, 2001).

The influx of men returning from World War II and women who had worked to support the war effort changed the look of college and university campuses with their sheer numbers. Doors of higher education were opened to individuals who previously had no hope for attending college (Thelin, 2003). The availability of federal funds allowed for an increased participation and provided the fuel for new growth in higher education larger than the three previous decades (Frost, 2000).

These increased numbers coupled with a declining economy led to the creation of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (the GI Bill). GI funding provided an opportunity for over 2.25 million veterans to enroll at 2,000 different colleges (Cook, 1999). The need for academic advisors grew in relation to the number of students whose

backgrounds, needs, and academic preparations were very different from the traditional college students the colleges had been serving (Habley, 2003).

In 1947, Alfred University's president appointed a committee to examine the existing student personnel programs as they related to freshmen and sophomores. The charge to this representative committee of faculty, deans, directors, and registrar was to make recommendations about changes and additions to advising. The committee proposed among other things the establishment of a personnel office, more time for upper classmen advising, and changes in the advisory system to ensure time for advising and education of advisors. The significance of this decision by Alfred University was the attention it brought to the importance of advising and student personnel work and the management of records. Other institutions observed Alfred's successful implementation of these ideas and used this model to replicate them on their campuses (Geen, 1952).

This era concluded with the first comprehensive federal education legislation. This legislation, entitled the National Defense Education Act of 1958, created funding support for college student loans, graduate fellowships, foreign language studies, vocational technical training, and subsidies to teacher training programs (Brubacher & Rudy, 2002).

Fourth Academic Advising Period - The 1960s to Present

Beginning in the 1960s, the fourth academic advising period is categorized as the development of academic advising as a defined and examined activity. The 1960s brought record enrollments and additional federal legislation. The Higher Education Act of 1965 authorized assistance for post-secondary education including financial aid for needy college students (Brubacher & Rudy, 2002). This was the first federal measure to

provide permanent financial aid to public and private institutions as well as to students (Thelin, 2003). This aid provided much needed support for the rising enrollments and also the rising aspirations of students from every social class (Brubacher & Rudy, 2002).

By the early 1970s these enrollments were rocked with societal changes. Students were questioning and challenging the need for higher education as well as demanding more input on decision making. Unmet student demands equaled higher attrition rates. Higher attrition rates also raised the call for a stronger focus on retention (Nuss, 2003) and the demand for more institutional accountability by federal and state government, accreditation bodies, and taxpayers (Cook, 2001). This accountability agenda included equal access to higher education for women and minority groups, cost regulation, managerial efficiency, codification of internal decision making processes, outcomes for learning, and the decentralizing of educational functions (Brubacher & Rudy, 2002). Retention efforts were being driven by the development of learning environments that stressed quality learning experiences coupled with student success and satisfaction (Gordon, 1992). A recommendation from the findings of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education during this time reinforced the call for an enhanced emphasis on advising (Cook, 2001).

Student populations during the 1970s had many unique characteristics such as first generation, low income, minority students, academically underprepared students, students with disabilities, older-than-average students and a larger population of international students that required individualized services (Cook, 1999). For these groups, academic advising was recognized as “a tool to provide the individual academic adjustment and planning needed” (Gordon, 1992, p. 4).

Student demand for improved advising in the 1970s and 1980s was the catalyst for the establishment of advising centers and a more coordinated advising effort at many colleges and universities (Tuttle, 2000). As institutions worked to meet the requirements of this exploding student population, faculties were unable to fulfill all they were being asked to do on top of teaching, research, and service (Gordon, 1992), and universities and colleges were forced to hire additional staff to meet the increasing student needs (Tuttle, 2000).

About this time, Crookston and O'Banion changed the face of academic advising with their pioneering ideas about developmental advising and the five-stage advising model. These two concepts led the way to the professionalization and the recognition of academic advising as a profession (Kuhn, 2008). Given the relatively short amount of time that these concepts have been around, in comparison to other professions engaged in academia, academic advisors are members of a comparatively new profession (Yudof, 2003).

With the professionalization of academic advising came the development of a professional organization, The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), dedicated to the study and support of academic advising and advisors. NACADA held its first national meeting in Burlington, Vermont in 1977 (Cook, 2001). One of the initial intents of NACADA's establishment was to provide a venue for research and study on academic advising. Chartered as an organization in 1979, the first NACADA Journal was published in 1981. A significant body of advising literature has been created as a result but there is a limited amount of research on professional academic advisors or the essential characteristics of academic advisors.

Advising Examined and Defined

Advising became an examined and defined activity when those doing advising started to compare advising practices between institutions (Frost, 2000). The publication of two articles in the early 1970s pushed the act of academic advising beyond the prescriptive models to a model termed “developmental” (Kuhn, 2008). O’Banion (1972) and Crookston (1972) both published articles that have become classics on advising.

O’Banion defined developmental advising as “a process in which advisor and advisee enter a dynamic relationship respectful of the student’s concerns. Ideally, the advisor serves as teacher and guide in an interactive partnership aimed at enhancing the student’s self-awareness and fulfillment” (p. 63). In developing this definition, O’Banion proposed five steps that are often recognized as the point of origin for discussion of developmental advising: 1) an exploration of life goals, 2) an exploration of vocational goals, 3) student choice of program or major, 4) student course choice, and 5) scheduling classes. These steps were intended to be interactive between advisor and advisee to enable students to choose a program of study that would serve them to develop their total potential (O’Banion, 1972). More concisely, he described the role of the advisor as more than an authoritative form signer but as someone who guides the student along a decision-making pathway that begins with a discussion of life goals and ends with course selection rather than the other way around (O’Banion, 1972). Prior to O’Banion’s model, academic advising had been viewed as primarily prescriptive in nature (Crookston, 1972). Prescriptive advising in and of itself is not a “bad” advising model but it does not provide the type of advising that O’Banion and Crookston believed would best serve the student and the advisor.

Crookston (1972) took this model a step further by creating a theory of developmental advising as teaching. He examined the characteristics of prescriptive advising versus developmental advising and described advising as a teaching function rather than a clerical one. Crookston used the analogy of a doctor-patient relationship to describe prescriptive advising. The student (patient) comes to the doctor (advisor) for help with an ailment (problem). The expert advisor gives the student the advice that solves the problem. In this model the advisor holds all the authority and the student's only responsibility is to take the advice of the advisor.

According to Crookston, the developmental model of advising is vastly different from the prescriptive model. The former he defined as "concerned not only with a specific personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavior awareness, and problem solving, decision making, and evaluation skills" (p. 12). In developmental advising, Crookston posited that both the student and the advisor differentially engage in a series of tasks that, when successfully completed, lead to completion results in "varying degrees of learning by both parties" (p. 13). The tenets of developmental advising are: advisor and student share responsibility, the focus is on potentialities, effort is growth oriented, the advising relationship is based on problem solving that is equal and shared, and the evaluation process is shared (Crookston, 1972). The work of these individuals provided the foundation for the organizational advising models that followed (Kuhn, 2008).

Organizational Models of Academic Advising

There are several different organizational advising models. Looking at the differences between prescriptive and developmental types of advising led Habley in 1983 and 2004 to examine the administrative structure of advising to categorize several different organizational models (Kuhn, 2008). Typically, these models vary by institutional mission, type and student population (King, 2008). Institutional environments for academic advising are often guided by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). These standards identify specific institutional characteristics for academic advising including: advising programs must be structured purposefully and managed effectively; they must include development, evaluation and recognition/reward; and the design of an advising program must be compatible with the institutional structure and its students needs (King, 2008). These standards coupled with the National Association of Academic Advising (NACADA) Concept of Advising and Statement of Core Values “champion the educational role of academic advising in a diverse world” (NACADA, 2006).

How advising services are delivered is determined in consideration of institutional mission, student population, budget, facilities, and organizational structure (King, 2008). The most common organizational models of academic advising are defined as decentralized, centralized, and shared.

Decentralized academic advising refers to an advising design where advising is delivered by faculty or staff in the academic program department. In the *faculty only model*, faculty meet directly with assigned students and advisors are accountable to their department (King, 2008). American College Testing (ACT’s) Sixth National Survey

indicates that 25% of those responding to their survey use the decentralized model. It is most often found at private two and four-year institutions (Habley, 2004). The *satellite* version of the decentralized model, sometimes referred to as the “multi-versity” model, has academic advising offices located in the program area controlled by subunits (colleges, departments) (King, 2008). ACT survey results states that 7% of the institutions surveyed report this model (Habley, 2004).

Centralized academic advising or the *self-contained model* has the advising administrative unit housed in one location. Staffing may be done by faculty, professional advisors, and others and is usually administered by a director or a dean of advising (King, 2008). Of the institutions surveyed by ACT, 14% of all institutions report using this model and it is the second most common model among community colleges (Habley, 2004).

Shared academic advising includes four organizational models: supplementary, split, dual, and total intake. In the *supplementary model*, all advising is done by faculty but there also exists an advising office that acts as a resource or clearinghouse for information, training, etc. (King, 2008). ACT reports this model is used at 17% of institutions responding to the survey. It is the second most popular model at private two-year and public four-year institutions (Habley, 2004).

The *split model* divides academic advising between an advising office and academic units. Specific student groups may be advised by the advising office and then referred to a faculty advisor after a major is chosen. In this model there may be a director or a coordinator that provides training, a handbook, and other information (King, 2008).

This model, according to the ACT Survey, is found at 27% of institutions responding to the survey and is most common at public four-year institutions (Habley, 2004).

The *dual model* of academic advising provides students with two advisors. One advisor is faculty and advises for the major area of study; the other advisor, often times an advising office, works with the student on general education courses, registration, academic policy, etc. (King, 2008). 5% of institutions responding to the ACT survey reported using this model (Habley, 2004).

In the *total intake model*, students are advised through one office staffed by professional advisors, counselors, faculty, paraprofessionals, or peers. Once institutional conditions are met, students are assigned to an academic subunit. The advising office director may have responsibility for curriculum and instruction as well as policies and procedures related to academic advising (King, 2008). 6% of institutions surveyed by ACT identify this as their advising model (Habley, 2004).

Advisor Classifications

NACADA has developed recognition criteria for three types or classifications of positions of those who work in the advising profession. These classifications, which serve to distinguish specific responsibilities, include: academic advisor-primary role (the subgroup to be studied in this research), faculty advisor, and advising administrator. It is noted that there may be others within the institution who act as temporary or short-term academic advisors such as on registration days or at orientation. For the purpose of this study, only the categories recognized by NACADA will be identified.

Academic advisor-primary role is the group whose primary responsibility at the institution is the direct delivery of advising services to students (NACADA, 2009).

Recent growth trends reported by NACADA indicate that members identifying themselves as academic advisors or professional advisors increased from 2,236 in February of 2001 to 5,207 in February of 2007 (Self, 2008).

Faculty advisors are those individuals whose primary responsibility is teaching and who spend a portion of their time providing academic services to students (NACADA, 2009). NACADA membership numbers of this population have increased from 243 in 2001 to 528 in 2007 (Self, 2008).

Advising administrators are individuals who may provide direct academic advising services but whose primary responsibility is as an administrator or director of an academic advising program (NACADA, 2009). Often times, the advising administrator is a convergent point between academic affairs and student affairs (Tuttle, 2000). NACADA membership reports from 2007 indicate an increase from 1,520 in 2001 to 2,312 in 2007 for those identifying themselves as advising administrators (Self, 2008). These reported increases are significant when one considers the call to place greater emphasis on the role academic advisors play (Yudof, 2003).

Challenges Facing Academic Advisors

A professional academic advisor is faced with many challenges in today's world of higher education. One of the greatest challenges is change in how higher education is funded. The shrinking state budgets have meant increasing tuition costs for students (SHEEO, 2011). Increasing tuition costs means more pressure on students to successfully complete course work and graduate on time. For some students it has meant having to leave college, or worse yet, not starting (Merisotis, 2009). This change in funding has put

pressure on academic advisors not only for what it means to students, but also what it means to funding academic advisor positions.

At a roundtable luncheon in 2009, the president of the Lumina Foundation reported that a foundation goal is to have 60% of the American population holding high-quality, two-year or four-year college degrees by 2025. The point of high quality was stressed. This means that the level of attainment must rise by 21% within 15 years. The national rate for the past 30 years has been at the 39% completion rate (Merisotis, 2009). What does this mean to an academic advisor? It means greater numbers of students with higher expectations of completion. It means ramping up institutional productivity and closing the achievement gaps for students and their future employers (Merisotis, 2009). Academic advisors can significantly help to achieve this. This topic points to another challenge of academic advisors, ensuring retention and time to degree for students.

Retention of students is critical for a number of reasons including time to degree completion. Understanding what factors influence retention and time to degree are important responsibilities of academic advisors. In economic terms, a student who starts college but does not finish typically ends up with student loan debt that must be repaid (AASCU, 2005). Without a college degree, this student is likely to earn only 10% more than one who received a high school diploma and no acquired debt (Tinto, 2004). In these times of high unemployment, the likelihood of those who do not have a college degree being under-employed increases as well. The efficiency of earning a college (time-to-degree) diploma in a timely manner correlates highly with the support that students receive from the institution. One of those types of support is academic advising (AASCU, 2005; Schreiner, 2009). The challenge for academic advisors is to serve higher

numbers of students who will be seeking a college degree coupled with the urgency of completion in a timely manner. While these challenges do not encompass all academic advisor challenges, they do represent those that are brought forward frequently (Tinto, 2004; AASCU, 2005; Merisotis, 2009).

Past Research-Academic Advisor Studies

The call for research in advising was one of the primary purposes for the organization of NACADA. While there are more studies done on advising and its impact on students, there are a limited number of studies on professional academic advisors and the work they are charged to do, let alone research on advisor characteristics. Some studies that have provided insight into the work life of a professional academic advisor follow.

In 2002, Susan Bramlett Epps completed a qualitative dissertation study on the work life of the professional academic advisor. Her research, focused on the responsibilities and expectations of professional academic advisors, examined their work life and how employers fulfill these individuals' professional aspirations by creating environments where they are encouraged to maximize their potential. Doing one-on-one interviews with 18 professional advisors, Epps asked them how they experienced or perceived elements of their work life, such as job satisfaction, relationships, organizational commitment, performance, variety, and autonomy in their role as an academic advisor. Second, she asked, how did these experiences relate to their decision to remain in or leave the field of academic advising? Using an interview factor process to conduct her research, the researcher controlled the questioning and kept the interviewee focused on the questions presented for consideration. Member checking was used as one

measure of validity. The study drew the following conclusion: the reason advisors stay in advising is that they appreciate the work life of a professional academic advisor. Factors such as supportive environment, high levels of autonomy and variety, the opportunity to use skills and talents, strong relationships with students and colleagues and their commitment to students were identified as those that kept them committed to the profession.

A 2006 study by Jennifer Wyatt examined the perceptions of alignment with the NACADA goals for advising among students, staff, and faculty advisors. This mixed method study used a survey and open-ended questions developed by Wyatt that examined whether or not there were any differences among student perceptions, staff advisor perceptions, and faculty advisor perceptions of the NACADA advising goals and the relationship among the three perceptions. The quantitative part of the research affirmed her hypotheses that there were no differences among faculty advisors, staff advisors, and students in their perceptions of meeting NACADA academic advising goals. The qualitative research yielded information reflecting that all three study groups felt there was an inadequate amount of time to develop strong advising relationships and there was a lack of training for advisors, in particular when their careers began.

The current state of job satisfaction of academic advisors was studied in a dissertation done by John E. Donnelly in 2006. This quantitative study asked 4,917 members of NACADA who self identified as being academic advisors about job satisfaction. In cooperation with NACADA, The Survey of Advisor Satisfaction was developed. Questions in the survey were directly related to advisor satisfaction. Outcome variables identified were: overall satisfaction, satisfaction which related to students, and

satisfaction related to supervision. Research outcomes reported that academic advisors appreciated teamwork, the variety of working with students, and the empowerment the position gave them. Advisors in his study were least satisfied with salary and benefits, recognition, and support for career development. Findings were not presented regarding advisor characteristics.

Through the use of a traditional survey research method, a quantitative dissertation study done by Kevin Kane in 2007 examined the roles and responsibilities of professional, non-faculty staff at a large public research institution. Academic advising was one of the areas assigned to the professional staff members. Kane examined how the traditional faculty roles that professional staff assume overlap and what were the characteristics of the professional staff taking on these roles. His research questions studied the overlap of the roles and responsibilities in teaching, advising, and research between professional staff and faculty; where in the university's infrastructure does this overlap occur; what classifications of professional staff are most likely to be involved in the overlap and were there commonalities among these individuals; and finally, how did these academic professionals secure these positions.

Kane's study was grounded in two related concepts of the evolving research institution. The first concept was that the mission of the institution expands to meet the needs of a growing and evolving society. The second concept was that of responsibility accrual where individuals or groups of staff gain knowledge and responsibility as the institution grows. His research found three areas of overlap including teaching for-credit courses, providing formal academic advising to students, and performing sponsored research. Where this overlap occurred most often was in the university centers and

institutes. Kane's third question regarding characteristics of professional staff was the most detailed because of the eight characteristics identified. These ordered characteristics were job title, work unit, highest educational degree, funding, term appointment, faculty appointment, supervisor type, and frequency of faculty interaction. This research is important because it shows the increasing responsibilities assumed by non-faculty professional staff that includes advising. Even though this study was related to professional academic advisors, it did not seek to identify the essential characteristics necessary for academic advisors.

The preceding research by Bramlett Epps (2002) provided insight into the work life of professional advisors and why they stay in advising. Wyatt (2006) sought to identify perceptions of students, professional academic advisors, and faculty in alignment with NACADA's goals for advising. Her research determined that the perceptions of the three groups were similar and that all felt there was an inadequate amount of time allocated to academic advising by students, professional staff advisors, and faculty advisors. Donnelly (2006) presented research indicating that academic advisors were most satisfied with their job overall, with students, and with the supervision they received. This confirms that professional advisors are committed to their positions, the students they serve, and those that they work with in advising. Kane (2007) examined how advising responsibilities are being slid over from faculty to other staff and how these responsibilities are being received and achieved.

Although the preceding research included professional academic advisors as participants in the studies, the research did not study the population group about the essential characteristics of academic advisors. There is still much to be learned about

academic advisors. Research is needed to determine what is essential to academic advising from the perspective of an academic advisor. This body of knowledge needs to be gathered to fill the gap. This research study will ask the experts to identify the essential characteristics in terms of 1) what advisors need to know, curriculum; 2) how advisors advise, pedagogy; 3) and what students need to learn and take away from the advising relationship, learning outcomes.

Chapter III continues with a detailed description of the method used for this study, describes the sample and the timeline for data collection. Chapter III also includes discussion of the surveys and how they were used to measure their results. Chapter IV presents the findings, and Chapter V will provide a discussion of the findings, as well as the implications and considerations for further research.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify the essential characteristics of academic advisors according to professional academic advisors. To identify these vital characteristics, data were gathered from experts in the field of academic advising using a structural Delphi method. The experts in the field were professional advisors who had been awarded a NACADA outstanding academic advisor award-primary role within the past eight years. This chapter describes the procedures used to conduct the research study. Figure 3 offers a visual of how the methodology was applied to identify the essential characteristics of academic advisors.

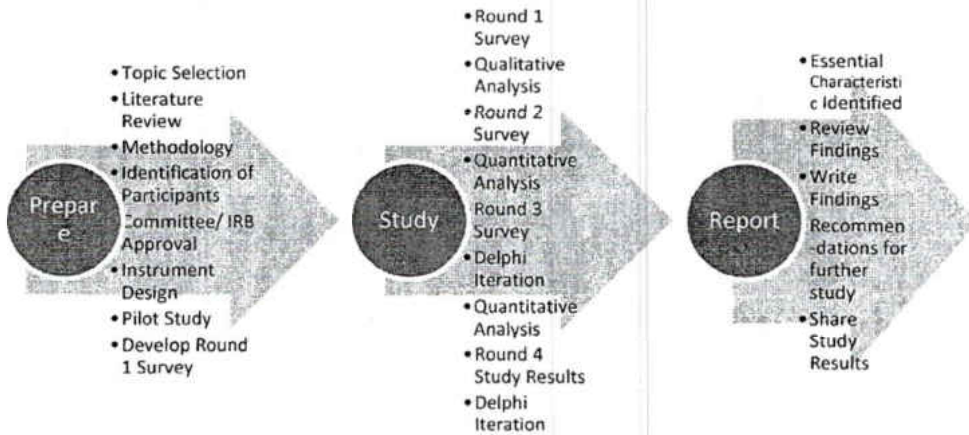


Figure 3. Study Sequence Model.

This chapter includes a discussion of the research method and its application to the study, a discussion of how the participants were identified and selected, an explanation of how the survey instruments were designed and implemented, and a description of the data analysis process.

Selection of the Delphi Method

The Delphi method is a research method based on iterative structural surveys. It makes use of information from the experience and knowledge of the participants who are experts in the relevant field(s) and is used to obtain a consensus of opinion about a matter not subject to precise quantification (Stitt-Gohdes, & Crews, 2004). The Delphi method was selected for the following reasons. The questions were subjective and called for value judgments. The experts in the field of academic advisor-primary role were much dispersed geographically. The respondents represented institutions throughout the United States. The Delphi method allowed for convergence of input from these individuals without the need for travel. The experts were likely to possess the writing and communication skills needed to express their ideas succinctly and would be motivated by their own commitment to the area of study.

Linstone and Turoff (1975) also present the following considerations when deciding to use the Delphi methodology.

1. The question does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques but can benefit from the subjective judgment on a collective basis.
2. The individuals needed to contribute to the examination of a broad and complex problem have no history of adequate communication with one

another and may represent diverse backgrounds with respect to experience or expertise.

3. More individuals are needed than can effectively interact in a face-to-face exchange.
4. Time and cost make frequent group meetings infeasible.
5. The heterogeneity of the participants must be preserved to assure validity of the results, i.e., avoidance of domination by quantity or by strength of personality (bandwagon effect).

Other educational studies that have used the Delphi method include one done by Gliddon (2006) who reported that the Delphi method has been used in more than 50 studies to identify organizational competency models. Delphi was used in his study to develop a competency model for innovation leaders in higher education. Other educational studies that have used the Delphi method include a study that examined student affairs divisions as learning organizations (Scott-Taylor, 2008), strategic communication competencies for county extension educators (Caldwell, 2005), and a study to develop a common definition for work-related education (Droll, 2005). These studies provide evidence that the Delphi method has been used successfully in educational research.

Introduction of the Delphi Study Research Method

The Delphi method was created by Olaf Helmer and Norman Dalkey of the Rand Corporation in 1953 as a forecasting method. Developed to gather information on a specific problem for the military (Helmer, 1983), the Delphi method is used today in education, business, and the social sciences for a number of applications including policy

evaluation, program planning, management decision making, and prioritization of issues or actions (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975). Linstone and Turoff (1975) identified a number of applications, as well, including the planning and development of university curriculum and the assembly of an educational model. These applications demonstrate the versatility of the Delphi method.

The Delphi method seeks the opinions of persons who have attained a level of knowledge and experience in their occupational fields that is respected by others, and they are referred to as experts. It is an iterative process to collect and extract the judgments of these experts using a series of data collection techniques mixed with feedback for validation (Shulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). The Delphi method has also been identified as a way to gather judgments on complex matters where precise information is not available (Linstone & Turhoff, 1975). The intent of this method is to obtain a reliable response to a problem or question. This is accomplished by giving the experts in the group a series of questions that restate the same questions while providing group feedback from previous rounds (Helmer, 1983). Group results are presented in terms of means, medians, modes, level of consensus, and standard deviations. Experts (participants) are given the opportunity to reconsider their responses after receiving group feedback. These statistical analysis tools allow for an intentional, unbiased analysis of the data and its summarization (Yousuf, 2007).

Delphi Strengths

The primary strength of the Delphi method is the old maxim that says, “Two heads are better than one” (Dalkey, 1972, p. 15). In most cases group response will come closer to the truth than one individual. This methodology tends to produce convergence

of opinion—not only towards the mean but also toward the true value as determined by the experts' responses to the questions (Helmer, 1983). Based on the qualities of anonymity, statistical analysis, and feedback (Dalkey, 1967), the participants do not interact with one another, and their responses are anonymous. This eliminates the potential of such things as dominant individual influences, group pressure for conformity, and noise or those things that distract from the topic at hand commonly found in group dynamics (Dalkey, 1972). Another key advantage to the Delphi method is that consensus will emerge with one representative opinion from the group (Yousuf, 2007).

Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson (1975) put forward that the method is advantageous when it is not possible to gather experts together because of time constraints, distance, or other issues that prevent the experts from meeting face to face. They also stated that the flexibility of the Delphi method also allows the experts a time frame that fits their schedule, yet it is important to impose reasonable time parameters for the data collection. Hsu and Sanford (2007) posited that the communication technologies of e-mail and the internet allow the researcher to cast a broader net to gather the experts across geographical areas. They also state that it allows the experts to present their ideas in writing and the act of writing forces the participants to contemplate the subject thoughtfully and tends to produce a high volume of ideas. Furthermore, electronic technology allows the researcher to take advantage of storage, processing and speed of transmission of data, maintain respondent anonymity, and offer the potential for rapid feedback.

As a final strength, the Delphi method has been shown to be an effective research method when the responses being sought are value judgments rather than factual

information. Even though it is more complicated to evaluate the exactness of value judgments, it can be said that value judgments are not all equal but can in fact be more or less supportable by the existing evidence. In 1972, Dalkey and Rourke tested the value of using the Delphi method by conducting experiments in which university students were asked about the objectives of higher education. The outcomes of their experiments determined that the Delphi methods are “appropriate for generating and assessing value material” (p. 57). There is agreement that the Delphi method is useful for studies that call for subjective judgment rather than exact statistical analysis (Linstone & Turoff, 1975).

Delphi Challenges

The Delphi method should not be used when any of the three following critical conditions are not present: “adequate time, participant skill in written communication, and high participant motivation” (Delbecq, et. al., 1972, p. 84). At a minimum, 45 days is estimated to be required to carry out a Delphi study. Participants must be knowledgeable and able to communicate their ideas. As the study proceeds, a high degree of motivation is necessary to offset participant dropout. The lack of direct contact with other participants may create a feeling of isolation or detachment from the process if the participants are not highly motivated and interested in the subject (Hsu & Sanford, 2007).

Some say that bias in Delphi studies can occur from leading questions and poor wording or selective interpretation of the results. It has received criticism for being unscientific, having low levels of reliability of judgments by experts, and the difficulty in assessing the degree of expertise incorporated into the forecast (Yousuf, 2007). It has been noted that these can be overcome by using a facilitation team or an unbiased

facilitator who does not have stake in the study. This also helps to establish trustworthiness of the research (Rodgers & Cowles, 1993).

Participant Identification and Selection

The identification of the experts for the study was made from the NACADA awards list of Outstanding Academic Advisor Primary Role. The award criteria were created by NACADA to encompass all facets of an academic advisor's responsibilities and values. In order to be nominated for this award, professional advisors must meet the following criteria.

This is an award given annually to individuals who are nominated and whose work provides evidence of the following criteria: strong interpersonal skills, availability to advisees, faculty, or staff, frequency of contact with advisees, appropriate referral activity, use and dissemination of appropriate information sources, evidence of student success rate by advisor or department, caring, helpful attitude toward advisees, faculty, and staff, meeting advisees in informal settings, participation in and support of intrusive advising to build strong relationships with advisees, monitoring of student progress toward academic and career goals, mastery of institutional regulations, policies, and procedures, ability to engage in, promote, and support developmental advising, evidence of administering an academic advising program that supports NACADA's Core Values, evidence that the advising program reflects the standards of good practice in the CAS Standards and guidelines for Academic Advising, participation in and support of advisor development programs, perception by colleagues of nominee's advising or advising administration skills, institutional recognition of nominee for outstanding advising or advising administration. (NACADA, 2009, para. 3)

In a Delphi study, 30 experts are often used as a cap number due to limited numbers of new ideas; three or four people are too few, and usually between 10 and 20 people are reasonable (Delbecq et al., 1975). The study invited individuals who received this honor in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. In these years, 36 individuals were presented this award. Of this number, 31 are still working in higher

education; all were invited to participate in the study. In this study, a minimum of 15 respondents was used for the study round to be valid.

Prior to the release of Round 1 questions, eligible participants were contacted by telephone to inform them of the study and its purpose, and to ask their permission to send the study to them. The researcher received consent via the phone from 23 of the eligible study participants; one eligible participant declined. The remaining seven were left voice mails after three attempts to reach them and were also sent emails regarding the study. It is unknown if any of them responded to the surveys.

Survey Instrument and Implementation

The researcher used the Delphi method to first educate and then rate the importance of characteristics presented by professional academic advisors-primary role. In the Delphi method process, an interactive communication structure is created between the researcher and the “experts” in the field. Similar to the nominal group process, process interaction takes place between the group of experts and the researcher with the researcher acting as the group facilitator. The Delphi Study method can be a combination of quantitative and/or qualitative questioning. The researcher used an open-ended survey questionnaire followed by two subsequent questionnaires to gather data. The final round presented to the experts was a summation of the results of the study. While the Delphi method can be continuously iterated until consensus is determined, researchers indicate that three iterations are often sufficient to collect the data and reach consensus (Hsu & Sanford, 2007).

The study consisted of a pilot study and four rounds; the pilot study was offered as a measure to check for time needed to complete the Round 1 questionnaire and also to get feedback on the questions from advisors in the field.

Pilot Study

Before the study was released to participants, a pilot study was conducted to test the survey instrument designed for Round 1 of the study. Three academic advisors agreed to participate in the pilot. All were from the same four-year public campus. These three individuals have a combined 50 plus years of academic advising experience which the researcher considered as demonstrating their qualifications for providing reliable feedback. The invitations to this pilot were extended in person. During this conversation, they were told about the background of the research and the research questions. Pilot study participants were asked to read the introduction to the study carefully for clarity and also to respond to the same open-ended questions intended to be used in the study.

The pilot study participants were asked to make suggestions about the wording of the questions. Within two days of this dialogue with the pilot participants, the survey was sent to them electronically. One of the pilot study participants withdrew after release of the study. He was not able to complete it due to personal time constraints. The pilot proceeded with two participants. Feedback received from these two indicated the introduction to the study and the questions were clearly written. Pilot participants stated the survey could be completed within the one-hour time frame mentioned in the introduction and in their opinion, the survey was thorough and provided adequate guidance to generate the essential characteristics of academic advisors. No suggestions for change to either the introduction to the study or the questions were made.

Study Rounds Implementation Summary

Upon conclusion of the pilot study, the study rounds began. Table 1 entitled Rounds of Study Time Template illustrates the rounds of the study, the instrument type, the dates of release of the study rounds, the close dates, and the number of essential characteristics identified in each round.

Table 1. Rounds of Study Time Template.

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Instrument Type	Open ended questions	Survey Questionnaire	Survey Questionnaire	Results Summary
Date Released	June 9	October 22	November 5	December 1
Date Closed	September 2	November 1	November 15	December 15
Number of participants	21	22	18	23
Essential Advisor Characteristics Identified	94	59	36	36

Round 1 (Appendix A) was released June 9, 2010. This round was offered for the longest period of time in consideration of the experts' work schedules and to allow for more responses to the open-ended questions. The remaining rounds were structured surveys using Likert scales asking the experts to respond according to their opinion on each characteristic.

Round 1 of the questioning was the foundation for the solicitation of specific information from the experts. This round asked them to identify the vital bodies of

knowledge, skills, and values used in their work as professional academic advisors (actual study results are presented in Chapter IV). The participants were initially offered an eight-week window to respond to the first questioning round. During this time eighteen responses were received. The researcher received two email requests by experts that they would like to respond to the survey so it was reopened and three additional experts completed it after the window was extended to September 2, 2010. After closing the data collection on September 2, 2010, reduction and coding of this round began. The researcher converted the information gathered in Round 1 to a structured questionnaire. This questionnaire was used as the instrument for the second round of data collection.

Round 2 (Appendix B) was sent October 22, 2010 to participants and was open until November 1. Twenty-two experts responded. In Round 2, the questionnaire asked the experts to review the items summarized by the researcher from Round 1. To achieve data clarification and reduction, the experts were asked to rank or prioritize the findings from Round 1. In this round, consensus began forming and outcomes began taking shape (Hsu & Sanford, 2007).

Round 3 (Appendix C) was sent November 5, 2010. It was within two weeks of the compilation of information gathered on participant feedback from Round 2. Round 3 consisted of another questionnaire including the items and ratings summarized by the researcher. The experts were given an opportunity in this round to review and revise their responses to the 59 characteristics identified as being very important and essential. The participants were given ten days to complete this round of the survey. Eighteen responses were received.

Round 4 final results (Appendix D) were sent to the experts for validation of the group consensus on December 1, 2010. The panel of experts was offered the opportunity in this round to add additional comments or reflections. The comment window was open for ten days. The fourth round provided the level of consensus for each item and the expert panel's latest mean rating from Round 3. This round gave the experts an opportunity to clarify and comment on their judgments of the final round of data (Hsu & Sanford, 2007). The respondents were informed that if they agreed with the results, no response was needed. The researcher received no responses in this round.

Data Analysis Process

The researcher utilized electronic communication methods to conduct all questioning rounds of the study participants. Electronic communication tools included e-mail and surveys (Survey Monkey) sent via electronic transmission. A distinct advantage to the researcher of using electronic communication methods is that it "eliminates the need to transcribe" (Skulmoski et al., p. 11) and this reduces the possibility of transcription error in collecting data.

The Delphi interaction is designed to promote quick turn-around of information with the participants. This expediency of the questioning enables the researcher to keep the participants' interest, and enthusiasm in the research project (Yousof, 2007). Once Round 1 was completed, the study moved more quickly and aligned with the recommended time for a Delphi study.

The researcher recognized that the success of this study was directly related to the relationship created with the experts (Creswell, 1998). The relationship started with the initial telephone contact and email invitation. Participants were informed of the study and

its intent, how much time the surveys would take to complete, and why they were identified as the experts. Each round of the study invited the experts to call or contact the researcher if they had questions. The researcher contacted each participant involved in the study no fewer than ten times. A few (three) did seek clarification of time lines for the study and to inquire when the results would be provided. The success of building these relationships was relative to the researcher's ability to create an environment of openness and trust with the participants of the study. Openness and trust was established by:

1. Providing background information about the study, its intent, and objectives to the study participants.
2. Providing to the study participants a complete description of the study, the study framework, and timeline.
3. Open communication to the participants throughout the study.
4. Collaboration with the outside facilitator to assure that the information reported by the participants is appropriately synthesized with the other expert participants after it has been analyzed.
5. Assurance to those involved that the study would be accomplished with respect of their time and efforts to cooperate.
6. Assurance that the study results would be provided within twelve months of data collection to participants.
7. Upon acceptance of the study results, the participants were told the study would be closed.

Reliability, Validity, and Criterion Values

Reliability in quantitative research refers to the consistency of the assessment. It also refers to the extent to which responses are free of measurement errors. Although it may have heightened the participants' sense of redundancy, Round 2 and Round 3 questionnaires were constructed using the same wording to minimize random error in the responses to achieve reliable results in this study. While the questions in Rounds 2 and 3 used the same wording, a randomized numbering procedure was used to change the ordinal order of the questions from Round 2 to Round 3.

Validity was incorporated after each phase through the application of the content validity matching the content domain. Content domain refers to the construct of the assessment characteristic. Content validity is the degree to which the assessment question measures what it claims to measure (Sireci, 1998). This was conveyed by the responses from the panel of experts and what they identified as the essential characteristics of academic advisors. Internal validity was achieved using established procedures for the Delphi technique to develop well-founded conclusions. External validity was dependent on the panel of experts as a representative body. The iterative Delphi process used member checking as a measure of validity. The data, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions went back to the participants for review to check for accuracy and credibility. Member checking requires study participants to verify the information for accuracy and authenticity through their own review and interpretations of the narrative (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Criterion Values used in this study were the mean, mode, level of consensus, and standard deviation. These are common to a Delphi study. In Delphi studies, the level of

consensus is assumed to be reached when 60% to 80% of the participants agree on a particular item or point of view (Linstone & Turhoff, 1975) and when there are corresponding values of the mean and mode. The mean provides the central location of the responses to the characteristics. The mode is an indication of the frequency of the same response to the questions being asked. The level of consensus is determined by evaluating the percentages of the levels of response available to a characteristic. In this study the higher the mean, mode and the level of consensus were used as indicators of the convergence of expert opinion.

Before Round 2 the researcher held a discussion with the committee chair and facilitator to identify the cut points of each of these values in the study. In this process, it was determined to use a five-point Likert scale for each of the next rounds. After this it was decided to set the criterion values of the mean, mode, and level of consensus within the upper quartile ranges as a method to establish stronger reliability and validity rankings to the identified characteristics. The three criteria in each round were then used as concurrent measures of the study for each of the characteristics presented. Round 2 to Round 3 mean and mode criterion levels remained at the same even though the numbers changed. This change reflects the application of the weighted five-point Likert scale used in Round 3. From Round 2 to Round 3 the level of consensus was raised from 75% to 80% because 80% represents the higher limit of the level of consensus suggested by Linstone and Turhoff (1975). The researcher considered this to be a stronger measure of the convergence of opinion by the experts.

Chapter IV presents the findings and Chapter V will provide a discussion of the findings and their implications for further research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to identify the essential characteristics of academic advisors in higher education according to professional academic advisors. This chapter begins with an overview of the participants, also known as the panel of experts, and will describe the procedures used and results obtained from the data analyses between rounds and at the conclusion of the study. The findings are presented chronologically. The Delphi Study method used in the study consisted of an open-ended survey followed by three iterative rounds of questionnaires. Each step in the methodology was conducted following the procedure set forth in Chapter III (see Figure 3). No significant variations occurred during the implementation of the study.

Study Participants

The participants (experts) in the study were identified from the NACADA awards list of Outstanding Academic Advisors-Primary Role inclusive of years 2003-2010. Prior to the beginning of the study, eligible study participants were contacted via telephone by the researcher to inform them of the study, when it would be sent and its intended purpose. They were also asked to affirm their participation in the study. Of the 36 award winners, five are no longer working in higher education. Thirty-one experts were invited to participate in the study; one declined. Twenty-three gave verbal consent to participate; seven were left voice mail messages and sent follow-up emails informing them of the

study and asking them to respond to the researcher with questions or concerns about the study.

Institutional characteristics representative of the 30 experts were gathered from the Carnegie website (Carnegie, 2010). Size and setting classifications are determined according to the size of the student body and the percentage of students who live in institutionally-managed housing. Of the 30 institutions, 16 were primarily residential and 14 were classified as non-residential. All were public institutions; 90% of them were categorized as large four-year with enrollments of over 10,000, 7% were categorized as medium four-year with enrollments of 3,000-9,999 and 3% were categorized as small two-year enrollments with fewer than 2,999 students (Carnegie, 2010). Large enrollment, public four-year institutions dominate this NACADA award category. This may be a concern because the number of institutions in this class is smaller than that of the two-year public institutions but may also be an indicator of institutional support for advising by professional advisors. The researcher does not perceive this as a major concern because it is logical that this size of institution has more resources to support the professional advisor positions.

Demographic information was collected from those who responded to Round 1 of the open-ended questions including: years as an academic advisor, title of advisor position, number of students assigned for advising, highest level of credential earned, and area of study in which the credential was earned. These demographic questions are important for a variety of reasons including the implications of authority in advising by title, high levels of expertise gained through years of experience, professional preparation

as identified by credential and area of study, and the level of impact on high numbers of students assigned for advising.

Academic advisor/counselor is the most common title assigned to the 21 experts that responded to this round of questioning. The number of years of experience in an advising role range from 28 years to six years. The respondents' average years of advising was 16. All but three of the professional advisors who responded indicated they advise 200+ students. The most common credential is a master's degree; 67% indicated that their credential is in education, student affairs administration, college student personnel, or higher education. The remaining participants who responded in this round were in the academic disciplines of communication, applied engineering, social sciences, and music. One of the 21 participants in the first round did not respond to this question. Table 2 presents the demographic information gathered from the experts who responded to the Round 1 survey.

Rounds of Study

Round 1-Open Ended Survey

All rounds of the study were sent electronically using Survey Monkey. The first round included a letter of introduction to the study as well as the consent-to-participate agreement. Participants were informed that their responses would be open only to the researcher and that the study would be open for them to return to and revise their responses if they so chose (see Appendix A). Study experts were asked for demographic information in this round. The survey instrument consisted of eight open-ended questions designed to elicit a list of those advisor characteristics important to academic advising. Of

Table 2. Participant Demographic Information.

Position Title	Number of Years in Advising	Number of Students Assigned for Advising	Highest Degree Earned	Area of Study
Academic Advisement Coordinator	25	200+	Masters	Student Affairs
Academic Advisor	14	200+	Masters	College Student Personnel
Academic Advisor	10	200+	Masters	Student Affairs Admin
Academic Advisor	23	200+	Masters	Communication
Academic Advisor	15	200+	Masters	Education
Academic Advisor/	NR	151-200	Masters	Education Counseling
Academic Advisor IV	28	200+	PhD	Higher Education/Student Affairs
Academic Advisor/Career Dev Coordinator	10	151-200	Masters	Student Affairs
Academic Coordinator	22	200+	Masters	Communication
Academic Advisor/FYE Coordinator	28	200+	Masters	Education
Academic Coordinator	18.5	50	PhD	Education
Academic Counselor	25	200+	Masters	Education-Counseling
Academic Specialist	10	200+	Masters	Higher Education
Academic Success Specialist	7	200+	Masters	Humanities/Social Sciences
Advising Coordinator	NR	NR	Masters	NR
Assistant Director of Advising	6	200+	PhD	Higher Education
Director of Academic Services	7	200+	Masters	Education
Director of Program Assessment	18	200+	Masters	Applied Engineering
Senior Academic Advisor	15	200+	Masters	Social Sciences
Senior Academic Counselor	14	200+	Masters	Music
Senior Advising Coordinator	6	200+	PhD	Higher Education

the 30 eligible participants sent the survey, 70% (n=21) responded to Round One. The results from this round of the study are based on the responses of those who completed it.

The researcher used open-coding methods to reduce the data gathered from the panel of experts. Study participants identified 613 characteristics of academic advisors.

These 613 characteristics were sorted into clusters of the same code. The clusters were then sorted by category that reduced the characteristics to 94 (Appendix E).

The 94 characteristics identified after open coding and data reduction from Round 1 (Appendix B) were categorized as curriculum characteristics, what advisors need to know (skills and knowledge); pedagogy characteristics, what advisors need to have and need to be (values and attitudes/personal attributes), and student learning outcomes, what students will learn through the advising process.

Round 2-Questionnaire

In Round 2 of the study, participants were sent a list (Appendix B) of the 94 characteristics presented in random order. Participants were not informed that these questions were categorized and were asked to respond to them from the perspective of a professional academic advisor. In this round, the researcher asked the participants to rate the importance of each of the 94 items on a five-point Likert scale. This round of the study asked the experts to rank the characteristics identified in Round 1 as being 1) not important, 2) slightly important, 3) important, 4) very important or 5) essential. At the end of the survey, they were provided an opportunity to add additional comments. Participants were told that the survey would take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Of the 30 eligible participants sent the survey, 73% (n=22) responded to Round 2. The researcher did not seek to identify which of the experts responded to Round 2.

The mean, mode, and level of consensus were calculated for each characteristic (Appendix E). Consensus is assumed to be reached in Delphi studies when between 60% and 80% of the study participants agree on a particular item or point of view (Linstone

and Turhoff, 1975). In this study round, level of consensus was reached if 75% of the participants rated a characteristic as essential or very important.

In general, the 94 characteristics received high ratings from the participants. The mean ratings ranged from a high of 4.8 to the lowest rating of 2.6. Of the 94 characteristics, 59 received a mean score of 4.0 or higher and the mode for these was either a 4.0 (very important) or 5.0 (essential). Each characteristic was also analyzed to establish what percentage of the participants had categorized it as either essential or very important. Of the 94 characteristics the level of consensus ranged from 100% (received by twelve items) to a low of 23% (received by two items). Among the top 59 characteristics, the consensus level ranged from 100% to a low of 75%, well within the recommended range of consensus for a Delphi study.

Three criteria were used by the researcher to determine which characteristics would move forward to Round 3. These criteria were:

1. Characteristics with a consensus level of 75%.
2. Characteristics that had a mean of 4.0 or higher.
3. Characteristics that had a mode of either 4.0 or 5.0.

The 59 characteristics included in the Round 3 Questionnaire met all three criteria.

Round 3-Questionnaire

Round 3 (Appendix C), sent November 5, 2010, presented the remaining 59 characteristics. These were the characteristics from Round 2 that on a scale of 5.0, had a mean of 4.0 and higher, a mode of 4.0 and above, and a consensus level of 75% or higher. In this round, the 59 characteristics that met all three criteria were presented in random order to avoid the possibility of survey fatigue. Participants were asked to rank

each characteristic as 1) Neither Important nor Essential, weight = 1.25, 2) Important but not Essential, weight = 2.50, 3) Essential, weight = 3.75 or 4) Most Essential, weight = 5.0. At the end of the survey, they were asked in an open-ended question to list the three characteristics from the preceding 59 that they would identify as being most essential and were once again given an opportunity to provide additional comments.

Participants were informed that the expected time for the survey completion was about fifteen minutes. Participants were given ten days to complete the survey. Of the 30 eligible participants sent the survey, 60% (n=18) responded to Round 3. Prior to the study, 15 was identified as an adequate number of study participants for validity. As with previous rounds, the participants were asked to respond to the questions from the perspective of a professional academic advisor.

In Round 3, each of the 59 characteristics (Appendix F) was calculated using the mean, mode, and level consensus or percentage of agreement. A weighted Likert scale was used to maintain a consistent measure from Round 2 to Round 3. Criteria identified in this round were:

1. Characteristics with a consensus level of 80% and above.
2. Characteristics with a mean of 3.75 or higher.
3. Characteristics with a mode of 3.75 or higher.

Characteristics that met all three criteria were determined to be essential advisor characteristics. In this round, the range of mean scores went from a high of 4.51 to a low of 3.13 on a scale of 5.0. Only two of the mean scores went up from Round 2 to Round 3 while the remaining 57 decreased slightly. The mode in this round was 3.75 for the majority of the characteristics. Seven characteristics in this round were given a mode of

5.0. Four of the modes were given a 4.25 (meaning that nine of the respondents ranked it a 5.0 and nine of the respondents ranked it at 3.75). The average standard deviation went from 6.37 in Round 2 to 3.62 in Round 3, an indication of convergence of opinion.

There was also a shift of consensus from Round 2 to Round 3. Twelve characteristics were given 100% consensus in Round 3 with five of these characteristics also receiving 100% consensus ranking in Round 2. All but one (Q14: Advisors need to be attentive to details) of the characteristics that had received 100% consensus in Round 2 remained in the 59 characteristics identified as essential and most essential. Five characteristics, which had met two of the criteria from Round 2 to Round 3, failed to move forward because they fell below the line of consensus (80%) identified for this round. These characteristics were: advisors need to be attentive to details, advisors need to be empathetic, advisors need to know institutional climate for advising, advisors need to know how the institutional mission fits advising, and advisors need to know how to manage time. The median approval rating in Round 3 was 84%, compared to a median rating of 77% in Round 2. A higher median approval rating indicates a convergence of opinion by the experts.

Characteristics presented in Round 2 (94) that moved to Round 3 (59) changed in the percentage of agreement from Round 2 to Round 3. The most noticeable differences occurred in the >90% range in Round 2 and in the >80% range in Round 3. A 5% increase in the level of consensus for these items that moved forward from Round 2 to Round 3 indicates a convergence of opinion by the experts.

Table 3 shows the shift in agreement between Round 2 and Round 3.

Table 3. Agreement Percentages of the Top 59 Characteristics (cumulative totals).

	>80% Agreement	>85% Agreement	>90% Agreement	>95% Agreement	TOTALS
Round 2	2	6	13	12	33 (56%)
Round 3	9	8	3	16	36 (61%)

Participants were also asked in this round to respond to an open-ended question asking them to list in non-ranking order what they considered of the 59 characteristics to be most essential. The intent of this question was to establish inter-rater reliability. Participants in this round listed 51 of the 59 characteristics in response to this question. Of these, one characteristic was identified seven times, four were identified four times, three were identified three times and the others were identified once or twice. Of those characteristics identified in this open-ended question, all of them were in the final 36 (Appendix G) characteristics identified in Round 3 as essential or most essential, an indication of inter-rater reliability. All the respondents identified two or more categories as being essential in this open ended question. The results from the open-ended question are offered in Table 4.

Round 4-Presentation of Results

Round 4 (Appendix D) released on December 1, 2010 provided a summation of the 36 characteristics identified in Round 3.

Table 4. Participant Responses for Unranked Three Most Essential Characteristics.

Responses to Round 3 Open Ended Question <i>n</i> =51	Curriculum <i>n</i> =	Pedagogy <i>n</i> =	Student Learning Outcomes <i>n</i> =
Have desire for student success		7	
Be ethical		4	
Know college/university curriculum	4		
Know students and their needs	4		
Be student centered		4	
How to ask questions	3		
How to listen for understanding	3		
Be authentic		3	
Be dependable		2	
Need to have integrity		2	
How to interpret university policy and rules	2		
Students learn to make informed decisions			2
Students learn to explore options			2
Be approachable		1	
Be available		1	
Be responsible		1	
Be professional		1	
Be engaged		1	
Be patient		1	
Be flexible		1	
How to appreciate differences among others	1		
How to help student fit interests with abilities	1		

The panel of experts was asked to reflect upon the 36 characteristics and to provide comments, if they wished to the final results of the study. The comment window was open for eleven days. Using a read receipt as a way to measure when and if the participants opened the summation indicated all received the electronic message transmission and 23 participants had opened it. Since there were no comments or questions sent to the researcher through the collection box, it was determined that the participants agreed with the study results and data collection closed.

Categorical Analysis and the NACADA Conceptual Framework

In order to further analyze the results of this study, each category will be considered separately. The categories are curriculum characteristics, i.e. what advisors need to know (skills and knowledge); pedagogy characteristics, what advisors need to have (values and attitudes) and need to be (personal attributes); and student learning outcomes (what students will learn). These categories align with the triangle of the NACADA Concept of Academic Advising (curriculum characteristics, pedagogy characteristics, and student learning outcomes) developed in 2006.

Curriculum Characteristics

NACADA (2006) identifies curriculum characteristics as being the range of skills and knowledge to do advising. This includes but is not limited to institutional mission, culture and expectations; the meaning, value, and interrelationship of the institution's curriculum and co-curriculum; modes of thinking, learning, and decision making; the selection of academic programs and courses; the development of life and career goals; campus/community resources, policies, and procedures; and the transferability of skills and knowledge (NACADA, 2006).

Table 5 lists the characteristics from Round 1 that were included in this curriculum characteristics category. It also presents the mean, consensus percentage, mode, and standard deviation from Round 2 and Round 3 questionnaires.

In this category, there were 16 characteristics presented for consideration in Round 3. Thirteen characteristics were identified as being essential to academic advisors. While the mean and mode of these characteristics went down slightly from Round 2 to

Table 5. Curriculum Characteristics of Skills and Knowledge.

Curriculum Characteristics	Mean Round 2	Mean Round 3	Consensus Round 2	Consensus Round 3	Mode Round 2	Stan Dev Round 2	Mode Round 3	Stan Dev Round 3	Essential
Advisors need to know how to interpret and apply institutional policies and rules.	4.68	4.31	100	100	5.00	9.93	3.75	5.51	Yes
Advisors need to know how to relate and work with students and others.	4.68	4.31	100	100	5.00	9.93	3.75	5.51	Yes
Advisors need to know when and how to refer students.	4.5	4.17	100	100	5.00	7.10	3.75	3.74	Yes
Advisors need to know how to listen for understanding.	4.72	4.44	95	100	5.00	10.64	5.00	7.27	Yes
Advisors need to know how to ask questions.	4.68	4.17	94	100	5.00	9.93	3.75	3.74	Yes
Advisors need to know students and their needs.	4.27	4.03	91	100	5.00	3.57	3.75	1.97	Yes
Advisors need to know how to develop trust	3.91	4.17	90	100	4.00	2.09	3.75	3.74	Yes
Advisors need to know how to appreciate and accept differences among others.	4.27	4.38	82	100	5.00	3.57	3.75	6.39	Yes
Advisors need to know college/university curriculum.	4.68	4.24	91	95	5.00	9.93	3.75	4.62	Yes
Advisors need to know how to problem solve.	4.18	4.03	86	95	4.00	2.15	3.75	1.97	Yes
Advisors need to know how to advocate for students.	4.23	4.03	86	86	4.00	2.86	3.75	1.97	Yes
Advisors need to know how to speak to and for students.	4.55	3.89	100	83	5.00	7.81	3.75	0.20	Yes
Advisors need to know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities.	4.14	3.82	100	83	5.00	7.81	3.75	0.20	Yes

Round 3, the level of consensus was 100% for eight of the items. In Round 2 to Round 3, three of the items remained the same (100%) and five rose to 100% in this group of eight. Of the remaining five essential characteristics, two went to a 95% consensus, one stayed the same, and two moved from 100% consensus in Round 2 to 83% in Round 3. The mean in Round 3 for these characteristics ranged from a high of 4.44 to a low of 3.82, and the mode for all but one was 3.75. The spread of 11 consensus points between the essential and important but not essential characteristics creates a strong differentiation point of the characteristics in this category. Standard deviations from Round 2 to Round 3 decreased on all but two of the essential characteristics. The average standard deviation from Round 2 to Round 3 went from an average of 6.72 for Round 2 to an average of 3.60 for Round 3. This reduction is considered to be an indicator of convergence of opinion.

Upon examination, all of these essential characteristics fit under NACADA's curriculum dimension. Of the 13 essential characteristics identified in this category, three are correlated to communication skills, four are related to the application of critical thinking associated with modes of thinking, learning and decision making, and six are the acquisition of specific knowledge about the university, its curriculum, policies, and resources. Table 6 provides a categorical graphic of the following characteristics related to these themes.

The open-ended question in Round 3, asking the experts to list what they considered the three most essential characteristics, indicated seven characteristics of the 13 in this group. These included: advisors need to know students and their needs,

Table 6. Curriculum Characteristics and Themes of Skills and Knowledge.

Know how to listen for understanding	Curriculum	Communication skills
Know how to ask questions	Curriculum	Communication skills
Know how to speak to and for students	Curriculum	Communication skills
Know how to interpret and apply institutional policies and rules	Curriculum	Knowledge
Know college/university curriculum.	Curriculum	Knowledge
Know when and how to refer students	Curriculum	Knowledge
Know how to problem solve	Curriculum	Knowledge
Know how to advocate for students	Curriculum	Knowledge
Know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities	Curriculum	Knowledge
Know how to relate and work with students and others	Curriculum	Relational skills
Know students and their needs	Curriculum	Relational skills
Know how to develop trust	Curriculum	Relational skills
Know how to appreciate and accept differences among others	Curriculum	Relational skills

advisors need to know college/university curriculum, advisors need to know how to listen for understanding, advisors need to know how to ask questions, advisors need to know how to interpret university policies and rules, advisors need to appreciate and accept differences among others, and advisors need to know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities. The high numbers of responses correlating to the essential characteristics in this category indicate inter-rater reliability and the experts' opinion of importance of curriculum characteristics.

Pedagogy Characteristics

NACADA defines pedagogy as the context of instruction, learning, and the strategies of instruction. It is characterized as the fundamental relationship between students and advisors. It encompasses mutual respect, trust, and ethical behavior and

includes training, assistance, and assessment of advising exchanges. The researcher has divided the pedagogy characteristics into two sub-categories because of the distinctiveness between values and attitudes (developed over time) and personal attributes (innately unique to individuals).

What Advisors Need to Have

Table 7 lists the characteristics from Round 1 that were included in this category entitled “what advisors need to have” to accomplish the how of advising. It also presents the mean, consensus percentage, mode, and standard deviation from Round 2 and Round 3 questionnaires.

Table 7. Pedagogy Characteristics of What Advisors Need to Have.

Pedagogy Characteristics	Mean Round 2	Mean Round 3	Consensus Round 2	Consensus Round 3	Mode Round 2	Stan Dev Round 2	Mode Round 3	Stan Dev Round 3	Essential
Advisors need to have a desire for student success.	4.68	4.38	100	100	5.00	9.93	5.00	6.39	Yes
Advisors need to have integrity.	4.73	4.44	100	94	5.00	10.63	5.00	7.27	Yes
Advisors need to have patience.	4.41	3.89	96	83	4.00	5.69	3.75	0.20	Yes
Advisors need to have organizational skills.	4.18	3.96	86	83	4.00	2.15	3.75	1.09	Yes

In this category there were nine characteristics that moved from Round 2 to Round 3. Of this number, four were identified as being essential. The mean of the nine characteristics went down somewhat from Round 2 to Round 3 and ranged from a high of

4.44 to a low of 3.47 with an average mean of 3.86. The modes of the characteristics remained the same or went down slightly. One essential characteristic maintained at 100% level of consensus and, for the remaining three, the level of consensus decreased but remained above the 80% consensus used as a criterion in this round. The standard deviations of the four essential characteristics also narrowed from an average standard deviation in Round 2 of 7.1 to an average standard deviation of 3.73 in Round 3, an indication of convergence of opinion.

Of the responses to the open-ended question about the three most essential characteristics presented in Round 3, two of the essential characteristics are part of this category. These are, advisors need to have a desire for student success and advisors need to have integrity.

Upon examination, all of these four essential characteristics fit under NACADA's pedagogy dimension. Two are related statistically to the facilitation of advising and two are linked to the advisor/advisee relationship. Table 8 provides a graphic illustration of the four essential pedagogy characteristics that academic advisors need to have. Themes assigned to these are motivation and guidance.

Table 8. Pedagogy Characteristics and Themes of Academic Advisors.

Pedagogy Characteristics	Category	Theme
Have a desire for student success	Pedagogy	Motivation
Have organization	Pedagogy	Motivation
Have integrity	Pedagogy	Guidance
Have patience	Pedagogy	Guidance

What Advisors Need to Be

Table 9 lists the characteristics from Round 1 that were included in this category entitled “what advisors need to be” to accomplish the how of advising. It also presents the mean, consensus percentage, mode, and standard deviation from Round 2 and Round 3 questionnaires.

In this category there were 23 characteristics that moved from Round 2 to Round 3. Of this number, 15 were identified as being essential after the analysis of Round 3 responses. The mean of these 15 characteristics went down slightly from Round 2 to Round 3 and ranged from a high of 4.51 to a low of 3.82 with an average mean of 4.09. The modes of three essential characteristics remained the same, one went from a mode of 4.00 to 5.00, and the remaining 11 essential characteristics went down slightly. One of the 11 essential characteristics maintained a 100% level of consensus, two went from 95% to 100%, and for 12 of the 15 essential characteristics the level of consensus decreased but remained above the 80% that was used as a criterion in this round. It is noted that five characteristics in Round 2 dropped from 100% consensus to lower levels of consensus but still remained above the 80% criterion to go forward as an essential characteristic. The standard deviations of the fifteen essential characteristics also narrowed from an average standard deviation in Round 2 of 6.06 to an average standard deviation of 2.81 in Round 3. This is an indication of convergence of opinion.

Of the responses to the Round 3 open-ended question about the three most essential characteristics, eleven characteristics noted are part of this category. These are advisors need to be student-centered, advisors need to be ethical, advisors need to be authentic, advisors need to be dependable, advisors need to be professional, advisors need

Table 9. Pedagogy Characteristics of What Advisors Need to Be.

Pedagogy Characteristics	Mean Round 2	Mean Round 3	Consensus Round 2	Consensus Round 3	Mode Round 2	Stan Dev Round 2	Mode Round 3	Stan Dev Round 3	Essential
Advisors need to be student centered.	4.59	4.51	100	100	5.00	8.52	5.00	8.16	Yes
Advisors need to be committed to students.	4.68	4.44	95	100	5.00	9.93	5.00	7.27	Yes
Advisors need to be ethical (defined as the application of standards of right and wrong).	4.68	4.31	100	89	5.00	9.93	5.00	5.51	Yes
Advisors need to be professional.	4.55	4.10	100	94	4.00	7.81	5.00	2.86	Yes
Advisors need to be approachable.	4.77	4.10	95	100	5.00	11.34	3.75	2.86	Yes
Advisors need to be responsible.	4.50	4.17	86	89	5.00	7.10	4.25	3.74	Yes
Advisors need to be responsive.	4.41	4.14	100	89	5.00	5.69	4.25	3.39	Yes
Advisors need to be dependable.	4.64	3.96	100	83	5.00	2.86	4.25	1.09	Yes
Advisors need to be compassionate.	4.20	3.89	91	95	4.00	2.86	3.75	0.20	Yes
Advisors need to be available.	4.36	4.10	91	94	5.00	4.98	3.75	2.86	Yes
Advisors need to be engaged.	4.20	3.89	86	89	4.00	2.86	3.75	0.20	Yes
Advisors need to be authentic (defined as the real thing, genuine, not fake)	4.64	3.96	100	83	5.00	9.22	3.75	1.09	Yes
Advisors need to be patient.	4.30	3.82	86	83	4.00	4.27	3.75	0.68	Yes
Advisors need to be passionate about students.	4.20	3.96	82	83	4.00	2.15	3.75	1.09	Yes
Advisors need to be flexible.	4.10	3.96	90	83	4.00	1.44	3.75	1.09	Yes

to be approachable, advisors need to be responsible, advisors need to be available, advisors need to be engaged, advisors need to be patient, and advisors need to be flexible. The weight of the responses to these characteristics is an indication of the importance of this category and inter-rater reliability.

Upon examination, all 15 of the essential characteristics identified in this round fit under NACADA's pedagogy component directly correlating to the advisor/advisee relationship and its characteristics. They are also consistent with NACADA's Statement of Core Values.

Table 10 completes the pedagogy characteristics category or "what advisors need to be". This category has the highest number of essential characteristics identified in this study. With the exception of the three motivation themes, all others were advisor values that guide academic advising and its success. They are also identified in the NACADA list of suggested characteristics of the pedagogy relationship between advisors and advisees as well as the NACADA list of six core values.

Student Learning Outcomes - What Will Students Learn?

Student learning outcomes are directed by institutional mission, goals, curriculum, and co-curriculum. These outcomes may be distinct to the institution but state what a student is expected to know, value, and do as a result of academic advising. Assessment processes must be developed at the institutional level (NACADA, 2006). Table 11 lists the characteristics from Round 1 that were included in this category entitled "what will students learn" through the advising process. It must be noted here, that these student learning outcomes are the opinions of the experts in this study. The table also presents the

mean, consensus percentage, mode, and standard deviation from Round 2 and Round 3 questionnaires.

Table 10. Pedagogy Characteristics and Themes of Academic Advisors.

Pedagogy Characteristics	Category	Theme
Need to be student centered	Pedagogy	Motivation
Need to be committed to students	Pedagogy	Motivation
Need to be passionate about students	Pedagogy	Motivation
Need to be ethical	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be professional	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be approachable	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be responsible	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be responsive	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be dependable	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be compassionate	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be available	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be engaged	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be authentic	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be patient	Pedagogy	Guidance
Need to be flexible	Pedagogy	Guidance

In this category, there were 11 characteristics that moved from Round 2 to Round 3. Of this number, four were identified as being essential. The mean of these four characteristics went down slightly from Round 2 to Round 3 and ranged from a high of 3.96 to a low of 3.82 with an average mean of 3.86. The modes of these four essential characteristics all moved to 3.75 from 5.00 and 4.00 in Round 2. One of these essential characteristics increased its level of consensus, two decreased from 95% to 89% and 88%. The lowest consensus characteristic in this round, identified as essential, had attained a 100% level of consensus in Round 2 but was reduced to 83% in Round 3 and stayed within the criterion for this round. The standard deviations of the four essential

Table 11. Advisor Opinions of What Students Will Learn.

Student Learning Outcomes Characteristics	Mean Round 2	Mean Round 3	Consensus Round 2	Consensus Round 3	Mode Round 2	Mode Round 3	Stan Dev Round 2	Stan Dev Round 3	Identified as Essential
Through advising, students learn how to make informed decisions.	4.50	3.89	91	95	5	3.75	7.10	0.20	Yes
Through advising, students learn how to navigate the educational journey.	4.41	3.96	95	89	5	3.75	5.69	1.09	Yes
Through advising, students learn to access university resources.	4.41	3.78	95	88	4	3.75	5.69	2.45	Yes
Through advising, students learn to explore options.	4.55	3.82	100	83	5	3.75	7.81	0.68	Yes

characteristics also narrowed from an average standard deviation in Round 2 of 6.57 to an average standard deviation of 1.15 in Round 3. This is an indication of convergence of opinion.

Of the responses to the Round 3 open-ended question regarding the three most essential characteristics, two characteristics noted are part of this category. These are “students learn to make informed decisions,” and “students learn to explore options”. The prevalent themes in this category are “students know” and “students do.” Both of these themes are identified by NACADA as expectations of student learning outcomes. Table 12 presents these in graphic form.

Table 12. Advisor Opinions of Student Learning Outcomes Characteristics and Themes.

Student Learning Outcomes	Category	Theme
Learn how to make informed decisions	SLO	Do
Learn to explore options	SLO	Do
Learn how to navigate the educational journey	SLO	Know
Learn to access university resources	SLO	Know

Upon examination, the four essential characteristics identified in this round fit NACADA’s student learning outcome dimension that enables students “to demonstrate, know, value, and do as a result of advising” (NACADA, 2006).

Findings Summary

The Delphi study was conducted for the purpose of collecting data to identify the essential characteristics of academic advisors in higher education. The study was comprised of four rounds, including an initial open-ended survey and three iterative questionnaires. A panel of experts, all recipients of NACADA’s Outstanding Academic Advisor-Primary Role, with extensive advising experience, took part.

The first round of the study was designed to collect demographic information about the participants and to draw out a list of academic advisor characteristics to be used in subsequent questioning rounds. Analysis of the demographic data revealed a variety of professional titles, credentials, high number of years in advising (which may be interpreted to indicate advisor satisfaction), and high numbers of student advisees.

A list of 94 characteristics was drawn out from the initial survey responses. In Round 2, participants were asked to rate the importance of each characteristic using a

five- point Likert scale. The characteristics were not presented categorically to the participants. The arithmetic mean, mode, level of consensus, and standard deviation were computed for each of the 94 characteristics. Of these, 59 characteristics met the three criterion of a mean of 4.0 or higher, a mode of 4.0 or 5.0, and a consensus of 75% or above and were maintained to the next round.

In Round 3, participants were again asked to rate the importance of each of the 59 characteristics presented using a weighted five-point Likert scale. Participants were also asked to list in unranked order what they considered to be the most essential of the 59 characteristics, using an open-comment question format. The mean, mode, consensus level, and standard deviation were again computed.

Round 4 presented the final results of the study. The 36 essential characteristics maintained into the final summation round were presented to the expert panel along with the level of consensus and the mean for each. An open dialogue box was offered for them to provide comments after each characteristic with instructions to add comments if they did not agree. They were informed that if they agreed with the results, they did not need to respond. The last question in Round 4 asked them to give comments overall if they wished to. No comments disputing the results were offered and there were no open-ended comments presented.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify essential characteristics of academic advisors in higher education. This chapter gives a summary of the procedures used to carry out the research, an explanation of the findings of the study, discussion of the conclusions and implications drawn from the findings, and recommendations for future research arising from the study.

Summary of Procedures

The essential characteristics model of professional academic advisors derived from this study was developed over a span of two and one half years. Research began in the fall of 2008 with an initial literature review on academic advisors in higher education. This review of the literature did not present any research on the subject of the essential characteristics of academic advisors. The study's methodology was developed during the spring and fall of 2009. The study received committee and institutional review board approval in May of 2010. One pilot study, four iterations using Delphi methodology and data analysis, was conducted beginning May 20, 2010 and ending on December 11, 2010. Analysis, categorization, and ranking of the essential characteristics were completed mid-December of 2010.

This research represents an attempt to fill the gap and to develop a foundation for future research on the essential characteristics of academic advisors. Attention was paid

to capturing the statistical results in a manner easily understood by others and to present the results likewise. The descriptive intent of each of the titles on the Likert scale described the weight of the characteristic and its importance as a statistical measure of participant response. The research questions were:

1. What advisor characteristics are essential to academic advising?
2. Can these expert advisor opinions and NACADA's Concept of Academic Advising and NACADA's Statement of Core Values be generalized to create an organizational model of academic advisor characteristics?

Findings to Research Question 1

A panel of 30 experts invited to participate in this study presented extensive academic advising experience with a range from six years to 28 years as academic advisors. All had received the NACADA Outstanding Academic Advisor Award-Primary Role.

The opening survey of the study was used to elicit items for consideration in the subsequent rounds of questioning. The study began with 613 open codes that were reduced to 94 characteristics and moved to Round 2. The 94 characteristics in Round 2 were reduced to 59. In Round 3, the 59 characteristics were reduced to the final 36 essential characteristics. The items were broken into three categories: curriculum: what advisors need to know (skills and knowledge), pedagogy: what advisors need to have and be (values/attitudes/attributes), and student learning outcomes: what students need to learn as a result of advising. These categories are aligned with NACADA's Concept of Academic Advising (curriculum, pedagogy, student learning outcomes), and NACADA's core values. Participants were asked to rate the importance of each item. As is the

customary practice for a Delphi study, the expert panel responses were aggregated throughout the study. As the study developed, participants were kept informed of the progress. Written responses to the first survey and the open-ended question in Round 3 were analyzed qualitatively. After each subsequent questionnaire and at the end of the study, the researcher analyzed the mean score, the mode, the standard deviation, and level of consensus for each item. Characteristics that met all three criteria for mean, mode, and level of consensus were moved to the next round.

Analysis of the data revealed overall shifts in mean score, level of agreement, mode, and standard deviation between Round 2 and Round 3 questionnaires indicating that some convergence of opinion had occurred. By separating and analyzing items that showed a strong or increasing level of agreement and mean score, and low or decreasing level of agreement, the researcher was able to identify themes that integrated certain features from within and among categories.

Curriculum Characteristics

There are two themes that emerged in this curriculum category of skills and knowledge supported by the experts. These themes are 1) the ability to work with students using communication and relational skills and 2) knowledge of university resources, curriculum, and policies and procedures. The high consensus levels, means, and modes indicate clear support and agreement among the participants that these characteristics are essential.

These curriculum characteristics describe situations where advisors are creating an advising relationship with students and holding themselves accountable to the expectations of the institution and its students' experiences. Both are prevalent in the

literature on the role campuses play in helping students succeed and improving undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, et al., 2005; Habley & Bloom, 2007). Actions associated with these curriculum themes link to many other areas of the campus as well. The 13 (36% of the total) curriculum characteristics identified by the experts emerge as essential characteristics of academic advisors.

Three curriculum characteristics from Round 3 did not emerge as essential because they met only one of the three criteria. Two are related to institutional knowledge. The remaining characteristic, advisors knowing how to manage time, is related to advisor skills. It could be argued that these are essential characteristics but this panel of experts did not identify them as being so in this study.

It is important to note things that are part of the NACADA framework that did not emerge as essential. Missing from the experts essential list are: advising is teaching, theories relative to academic advising, and the transferability of skills and knowledge (referring to use of technology in advising). Seminal works in existing academic advising literature, such as the works of Crookston and O'Banion, position advising as teaching. The NACADA Concept of Academic Advising is grounded (Folsom, 2008) in this as well. The open-ended survey in Round 1 yielded 41 of the 613 open-codes referring to advising as teaching. Yet, this characteristic did not move beyond Round 2 because it did not meet the consensus level of agreement. This calls to question if the experts, given their years of experience and knowledge, take for granted that everyone does "advise and teach" in their academic advising interactions. This question is one that could be answered with another study.

Much of what occurs in education is grounded in theory, but theory is missing from the curriculum list of essential academic advisor characteristics created in this study. Theories presented in open coding from Round 1 included career development theory, student development theory, adult learning theory, and learning theory. None of them proceeded from Round 2 and all were found in the lowest quartile of the 94 characteristics. It is unclear why these theories fell out. Given that the majority of the experts' academic learning background is in the field of higher education, it would be logical that they have studied the various theories related to advising. It may also be that the advisors need to be able to do academic advising but need not know what the theories are. Or it could also be that the students they work with are differentiated, thus they need not know every theory and its application. This question would be a foundation question for another study.

The use of technology and its application in advising was given a significant number of open codes (27) of the original 613. Technology has changed information access for academic advising to include such tools as degree audit reports, course registration access from any place, open access by advisors to information such as student transcripts, records, etc., not to mention better communication tools. One has to question why this characteristic did not emerge as essential. Literature has also identified the influence of technology skills and knowledge on the list of what a student needs from advising (Kennedy & Isler, 2008) and the advising relationship.

Of the curriculum (17/33) characteristics that did not move forward from Round 2, the question could be asked, "Did the characteristics not move forward because they

were not important or because they are not as important as those characteristics that did?”

This could well be a question for another study.

Pedagogy Characteristics

Pedagogy characteristics were divided between two sub-categories in the data analysis. These subcategories are what advisors need to have and what advisors need to be. These sub-categories were created because of the distinction between them. The sub-category of what advisors need to have includes values and attitudes which can be developed over time. The sub-category of what advisors need to be includes personal attributes which may be innate characteristics.

Within these two subcategories, there are two emergent cross cutting themes. Theme one is the intrinsic motivations advisors have for academic advising, and theme two regards the values that guide the academic advisor and the advising process. Both themes may be correlated to levels of position satisfaction (Donnelly, 2006). It should be noted here that the panel of experts spanned a range from 28 years of advising to no less than six years. This may also be an indicator of professional position satisfaction.

The desire for student success, which was the only one of these four characteristics given a 100% level of consensus in Rounds 2 and 3, is a major pivotal point for advisors (Kramer, 2007) and is perhaps the key characteristic of this study. To succeed in the delivery of advising, the experts identified three attributes manifested in the advising process: organization, integrity, and patience. All are in the toolbox needed to work with students (Habley & Bloom, 2007). These four emerged as essential advisor characteristics.

In Round 2, 48 of the 94 characteristics were categorized as pedagogy characteristics. Nineteen essential characteristics or 53% of the total number, identified in the pedagogy category is indicative of their importance to academic advisors. High consensus levels, means, and modes indicate clear support and agreement among the participants that these characteristics are essential.

The NACADA Concept of Academic Advising has three dimensions which may lead one to assume the dimensions are equally weighted. In consideration of the experts' opinion in this study, the pedagogy characteristics seem to have more significance to academic advisors. The question of whether these characteristics are uniquely innate to individual academic advisors or can be studied and acquired is a topic for another study.

The pedagogy characteristics on this list speak first to the motivational factors for student success, the tipping point for advisors (Kramer, 2007), and again are perhaps the key characteristic of this study. The driver value of the list may well be the "need to be ethical". Ethics is the platform of the daily work advisors do and provides the foundation for a consistent approach (Fried, 2003) when working with students.

Student Learning Outcomes - Characteristics

Student learning outcomes characteristics describe the work advisors do. These are often the only direct measure of the advising/advisor experience. Four student learning outcomes or 11% of the total number of essential characteristics came forward in this category. It must be also noted that these characteristics are the opinion of this panel of experts and do not imply that this is all students will learn. Nor does it mean every student learns these things. Assessment of student learning outcomes is a critical piece of academic advisor responsibilities.

Characteristics of what students will learn from the advising relationship encompassed the broadest range of mean scores in the study. None received a 100% consensus in Round 3 but yielded consistency in the mode and the smallest standard deviations of any in the study. It is difficult to say why this happened. There may be a relationship to the variability of the institutions represented in the study and the differences in mission and philosophy (Schuh, 2008).

Considering that the NACADA Concept of Academic Advising has three dimensions, one may assume that each would have similar distribution as being essential. This was not the case in this study. The attribution of fewer essential characteristics for student learning outcomes may be related to NACADA's language that states student learning outcomes are to be guided by the institutional mission, goals, curriculum, and co-curriculum (NACADA, 2006). While the greatest number of experts in this study comes from similar institutional types, the uniqueness of each institution will determine what these learning outcomes need to be. Consequently, we would not expect to see a consensus around what students are expected to learn. It is also noted that methods of assessment of student learning outcomes did not come forward in the study as being essential. A future study could revolve around this topic.

Findings to Research Question 2

The findings of this study clearly indicate there are relationships between the essential advisor characteristics and the NACADA Concept of Academic Advising. Given the criteria of the academic advising award, this could be expected, but consideration must be given that there are some advisor characteristics that are more vital than others. A generalized model of what is essential for academic advisors could be

written using the findings of this study as a guide. An effective way to do this would be to create a position description for an academic advisor. To illustrate, the following example of an advertisement for an academic advisor position is offered.

Academic Advisor Position
<p>Responsibilities: The Academic Advisor is responsible to coordinate and provide academic advising to an unlimited number of students. Additional responsibilities include: representing the university to parents and other stakeholders at orientation registration events; providing support to university offices for transcript evaluation and interpretation; developing programs that enhance student success.</p> <p>Minimum Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's Degree • Experience in higher education • Overarching desire for student success • Knowledge of university curriculum, policies, and procedures • Knowledge of federal and state mandates and their impact • Knowledge of student needs • Knowledge of retention strategies • Capacity to build relationships and trust • Problem solving skills • Evidence of student advocacy • Evidence of respect for diverse groups • Evidence of effective interpersonal skills • Excellent oral and written communication skills • Excellent organizational skills • Leadership behaviors that demonstrate support for student learning, academic progress, and conduct • Must be ethical, professional, approachable, responsible, responsive, dependable, compassionate, available, engaged, authentic, patient, flexible, and possess high standards of integrity.

Figure 4. Academic Advisor Position Posting.

Conclusions

This study focused on the essential characteristics of academic advisors. The Delphi method was employed successfully in this study to identify experts' opinions on what is essential. The following conclusions can be drawn from this study.

Academic advisors need to have the ability and capacity to build relationships with students and other university stakeholders. The process in doing so is collaborative, interactive, and ongoing. The application of relationship building skills may vary according to the advising context and advising approaches (Folsom, 2008). The success of the relationship building is grounded in the ability of the advisor to create an integrative relationship with stakeholders that allows students to take the next step.

Advisor/advising curriculum is interdisciplinary and integrated across departmental lines and divisions. Curriculum dissemination requires not only knowing about the institution and its programs but it is also making the information meaningful to students (Gordon & Habley, 2000). Professional fulfillment as an academic advisor is tied to student success. In the curriculum of advising, the advisor does not need to necessarily have all the answers but can ask the right questions to get them. In this process, trust is developed, problems are solved, and students are shown appreciation for who they are. Informed and guided student success guarantees the provision of appropriate information and resources. This in turn enables students to make choices that are the right fit for them.

The pedagogy of advisors is measured by the desire for student success. Not only is it knowledge based, it is rooted in the intrinsic motivation manifested by inherent values of the advisors. The motivation comes from professional attitudes, a sense of

responsibility, a desire to respond to student needs, availability, dependability, and a desire to be engaged with students. The inherent values are compassion, patience, integrity, ethical standards, and authenticity.

Academic advisor success is measured by what students gain through the relationship and how that is applied during their attendance and when they leave the institution. A primary objective of student learning is the transferability of skills and knowledge from one experience to another. If student learning outcomes were ranked chronologically, the navigation of the educational journey and accessing university resources would be first on the list. When students reach this level of self-efficacy, they often point to the relationship with their advisor as a means that got them there (Schuh, 2008). Evidence of students making informed decisions and exploring their options provides evidence that what they have learned through advisors and advising is being carried forward in their lives.

The use of the Delphi methodology technique in this study allowed a group of academic advising experts to combine their knowledge and insight to gain a better understanding of the work they do. There were several advantages to using this method. First, it allowed for the participation of a number of experts with a minimal amount of time and effort required on their part. Second, the first survey allowed them to determine the elements that were studied, insuring participant output and ownership of the process. Third, since the topic reflected upon was subjective and value-based, the Delphi method was an effective and suitable choice.

There were some drawbacks to the study. As the study progressed from Round 1 to Round 3 fewer experts responded. This participant dropout may be attributed to the

fact that the study extended over a longer period of time than intended. As a final point, there was some overlap in the characteristics that may have caused participant confusion. An additional round clarifying these overlapping items by rating their relationship to each other might have been useful much like the classic Delphi study described by Dalkey and Rourke in 1972. This study investigated the quality of life, where participants were asked to rate the similarity of all possible pairings of items to reduce the number of items from 250 to 48 (Dalkey & Rourke, 1972). In this study, the number went from 613 open codes to 94 and ultimately to 36.

Implications

The findings and conclusion of the study lead to the following implications. The integration of the essential academic advisor characteristics identified in this study is dependent upon the advisor. Institutions that wish to benefit from these characteristics must empower the development and support of academic advisors and advising practices. This may include clear expectations of what advisor responsibilities entail and encompass for the university, the advisor, the student, and other stakeholders.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study may be useful to individuals and institutions looking to guide advising curriculum, to educate new professionals, or to create an academic advisor assessment instrument.

Suggestions for further research include:

- 1) The replication of this study could be done with advisors who have not received an award but have reached a level of advisor competency. Using the characteristics identified in this study and the study replication to compare and

analyze, one could create a competency rubric. This could be then used to establish professional performance objectives for an academic advisor or an academic advisor group.

- 2) The replication of this study could be done with those who have earned the NACADA Outstanding Faculty Advisor award to determine if there is agreement between the two populations.
- 3) The replication of this study may be done with university graduates to seek their opinion of essential academic advisor characteristics and to determine if there is agreement between what professional advisors identified as essential and the graduated student population.
- 4) The exploration of using the essential characteristics to create an evaluation tool for advisor practices of an academic advising center. This could provide a scale useful for academic advisor practices assessment by the academic advisors, the academic advising center, and the institutions.
- 5) Research could be done to determine if the essential advisor characteristics are present in the advising relationships and what impact each had on student success in terms of satisfaction, persistence, engagement, and time to degree.
- 6) The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and the Association College Personnel Association recently drafted studies on professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners. A comparative analysis of the advisor and helping characteristics presented in these reports to the outcomes of this study could be done to determine similarities between the three.

In conclusion, this study affirms the NACADA Framework to a great extent but it also calls for the question of whether certain dimensions are more critical than others to an academic advisor. In this study, the experts put great value on the pedagogy characteristics of academic advisors with over 50% of the essential characteristics belonging to this category. This study does not indicate that the curriculum characteristics and student learning outcomes are less important to successful academic advisors.

As we wrestle with new ways to develop academic advising strategies with less staff time and fewer resources, it would be wise to take into consideration what the experts in this study told us directly and indirectly. What was stated to this researcher was that academic advising takes time, time in the field to develop the right skill set and time with the students and other stakeholders to develop a good relationship. It takes someone who has the desire to see students succeed in and out of the classroom. And finally, it takes someone who cares.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

1. Invitation to participate in study

* 1. Dear Advising Colleague:

Thank you for considering participation in this study. As discussed in our recent phone conversation, you have been identified as an expert of academic advising because you are a NACADA award recipient of the outstanding academic advisor-primary role. As a nationally recognized expert, I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation study.

The purpose of this dissertation study is to identify the essential characteristics of academic advising. The study will be framed using NACADA's Concept of Academic Advising. It is designed to collect information about your knowledge, skills, beliefs and goals about the advising process. This first round, to be completed between June 9 and August 1, could take up to an hour of your time to complete. Subsequent rounds, occurring during September and October of 2010, will take 10-15 minutes.

You may return to any question or to a previous page at any time and you can re-enter the survey to update your responses until the survey is closed. You may answer the questions in any order you choose. You may choose to use bullets or lists instead of complete narrative answers. You may also choose not to answer a question(s). If you choose not to answer, please provide a brief reason for your decision in place of an answer for that question.

Participation in the study is voluntary and all answers will be kept confidential. Results will be presented to others in summary form only, without names or other identifying information. The data will be stored on a secure website accessible by the researcher through a unique name and password. Once the study has been completed, all the raw data will be located in a locked drawer at the researcher's university office.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of North Dakota-Grand Forks Institutional Review Board (IRB). The project is being supervised by Dr. Margaret Healy, Professor and Chair, Educational Leadership, University of North Dakota (701-777-4255).

You may contact me at 218-639-5361 if you have questions or concerns about your participation. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mary L Ward
University of North Dakota

By clicking on the "I agree" button below, I agree to participate in the study of essential advising characteristics. I understand that:

1. My answers will be used for educational research,
2. My participation is voluntary,
3. I may stop at any time without penalty.
4. I need not answer all the questions.
5. My answers and identity will be kept confidential.

By clicking on the "I agree" button below, I am indicating that I have read the information above and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I realize that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

Please click on the "I agree" button to proceed with the questions.

- I agree
- I do not agree

2. What characteristics would you look for if you were hiring/selecting someone to be an academic advisor?

3. What would you tell a new academic advisor is most important to academic advising?

4. What knowledge and skills do you think an academic advisor needs to be a good academic advisor?

5. Please describe from the time of student intake to the point of graduation or release what a typical academic advising relationship entails for you and your student

6. How do students benefit from an advising relationship with you?

7. If you were tasked to create an advising workshop for new advisors, what would you include?

8. Is there anything you do now or will do in the future to be more successful as an academic advisor that you have not had an opportunity to provide through the previous questions? If so, please state.

9. How many years have you been or were you a professional academic advisor?

10. What is your professional title?

11. Number of students assigned to you for advising (please check one).

- 1-50 151-200
 51-100 200+
 101-150

12. What is the highest level of education completed?

- High school diploma Masters degree
 Associate degree Doctoral degree
 Bachelor degree

13. If you hold a doctorate, please indicate type of doctoral degree.

- PhD PsyD
 EdD Other
 JD Not applicable

14. Please state the area of study that best represents your highest level of education.
Ex: Higher education, student affairs, business, science/mathematics/engineering, education, social sciences, etc.

Appendix B

1. Welcome Back!

Thank you for all the valuable information provided in the first round of this dissertation study. In this round of data collection for the Delphi Study of essential characteristics of academic advising, the descriptions and definitions you provided in the first round are presented for your evaluation in terms of importance to academic advising. You will be asked to indicate whether the identified advising characteristic is essential, very important, moderately important, slightly important or not important to the advising relationship. Please consider your responses carefully. An opportunity for you to provide additional comments or information is provided at the end of the survey. Thank you in advance for continuing to be part of this study, your opinion as an advising expert is highly valued.

1. Advisors need to know how to listen for understanding.

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

2. Advisors need to be authentic (defined as the real thing, genuine, not fake).

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

3. Advisors need to have patience.

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

4. Advisors need to know how to ask questions.

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

5. Advisors need to be analytical.

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

6. Advisors need to have a sense of humor.

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

7. Advisors need to know how to speak to and for students.

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

8. Advisors need to be approachable.

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

9. Advisors need to trust others and themselves.

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

10. Advisors need to know how the institutional mission fits advising.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

11. Advisors need to know the institutional climate for advising.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

12. Advisors need to know how to interpret and apply institutional policies and rules including FERPA.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

13. Advisors need to be available.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

14. Advisors need to be attentive to details.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

15. Advisors need to have a desire for student success.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

16. Advisors need to know how to relate and work with students and others.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

17. Advisors need to have balance between personal and professional responsibilities.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

18. Advisors need to have organizational skills.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

19. Advisors need to know how to do intrusive advising.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

20. Advisors need to be committed to students.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

21. Advisors need to have integrity.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

22. Advisors need to know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

23. Advisors need to be compassionate.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

24. Advisors need to have intellect.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

25. Advisors need to know how to teach.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

26. Advisors need to be confident.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

27. Advisors need to know students and their needs.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

28. Advisors need to know student development theory.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

29. Advisors need to be creative.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

30. Advisors need to be passionate about students.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

31. Advisors need to know how to manage time.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

32. Advisors need to be dependable.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

33. Advisors need to have a passion for advising.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

34. Advisors need to know how to appreciate and accept differences among others.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

35. Advisors need to be detail oriented.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

36. Advisors need to have a desire to serve.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

37. Advisors need to know how to advocate for students.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

38. Advisors need to be empathetic.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

39. Advisors need to be energetic.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

40. Advisors need to have prioritization skills.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

41. Advisors need to be engaged.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

42. Advisors need to be encouragers.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

43. Advisors need to be ethical (defined as the application of standards of right and wrong).

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

44. Advisors need to be flexible.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

45. Advisors need to know how to create a holistic experience for students.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

46. Advisors need to be intuitive.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

47. Advisors need to be inquisitive.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

48. Advisors need to be open about themselves.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

49. Advisors need to know how to do advising assessments.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

50. Advisors need to have technical skills.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

51. Advisors need to be organized.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

52. Advisors need to be patient

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

53. Advisors need to know how to multi-task.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

54. Advisors need to be personable.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

55. Advisors need to know how to develop trust.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

56. Advisors need to be positive.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

57. Advisors need to know how to use technology.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

58. Advisors need to be professional.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

59. Advisors need to know how to work as a team.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

60. Advisors need to be responsible.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

61. Advisors need to know when and how to refer students.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

62. Advisors need to be responsive.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

63. Advisors need to know how to be prescriptive with students.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

64. Advisors need to be team players.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

65. Advisors need to know when to use developmental advising techniques.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

66. Advisors need to have social justice training.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

67. Advisors need to be safe (i.e. dependable, secure from risk).

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

68. Advisors need to know how to problem solve.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

69. Advisors need to know adult learning theory.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

70. Advisors need to be student centered.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

71. Advisors need to be inspirational.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

72. Advisors need to be thick skinned.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

73. Advisors need to know career development theories.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

74. Advisors need to write an advising mission and syllabus.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

75. Advisors need to attend professional conferences.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

76. Advisors need to know learning theory.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

77. Advisors need to be learners of new things.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

78. Advisors need to know how to do self-assessment

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

79. Advisors need to know college/university curriculum.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

80. Advisors need to know the history of advising.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

81. Advisors need to know how to access advising resources such as the National Academic Advising Association.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

82. Through advising, students learn to write an academic plan.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

83. Through advising, students learn to access university resources.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

84. Through advising, students know how to critically think.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

85. Through advising, students learn steps to apply to major and/or to graduate school.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

86. Through advising, students learn how to explore options.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

87. Through advising, students learn how to make informed decisions.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

88. Through advising, students learn how to read degree audits.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

89. Through advising, students learn goal setting and planning skills.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

90. Through advising, students learn their strengths and weaknesses.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

91. Through advising, students learn how to navigate the educational journey.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

92. Through advising, students take the responsibility to act

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

93. Through advising, students know what to expect from advisors.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

94. Through advising, students learn how to apply for a job.

- Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Essential

95. Do you note any characteristics missing from this survey? If so, please tell me what they are.

96. Are there characteristics listed that you would restate or expand upon? If so, please state.

97. Please add additional comments if desired.

Appendix C

1. We are almost there!

Thank you all for your input on Round 2 of The Convergence of Excellence-Delphi Study. Your responses have been tabulated using the mean, mode, standard deviation and level of agreement. The 59 characteristics presented in this round, on a 5.0 scale, had a mean of 4.0 and higher; a mode of 4.0 and above; and a consensus level of 75% or higher.

In this round, the 59 characteristics are presented in random order. Please rank each characteristic as: 1) Neither Important nor Essential, 2) Important but not Essential, 3) Essential, or 4) Most Essential. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to list the three characteristics from the preceding 59 that you think are most essential. It is expected the survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. As in previous rounds, please respond to the questions from the perspective of a professional academic advisor. Your expert opinion is greatly appreciated.

1. Advisors need to be approachable.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

2. Advisors need to have a desire for student success.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

3. Advisors need to know how the institutional mission fits advising.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

4. Advisors need to be compassionate.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

5. Advisors need to be responsive.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

6. Advisors need to know how to develop trust.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

7. Advisors need to be analytical.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

8. Advisors need to know how to problem solve.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

9. Through advising, students learn how to read degree audits.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

10. Advisors need to have intellect

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

11. Advisors need to know how to relate and work with students and others.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

12. Advisors need to know college/university curriculum.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

13. Advisors need to be flexible.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

14. Through advising, students know what to expect from advisors.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

15. Advisors need to be empathetic.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

16. Advisors need to have prioritization skills.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

17. Advisors need to be committed to students.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

18. Through advising, students learn their strengths and weaknesses.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

19. Advisors need to be ethical (defined as the application of standards of right and wrong).

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

20. Through advising, students know how to critically think.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

21. Advisors need to be professional.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

22. Through advising, students learn how to explore options.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

23. Advisors need to have a desire to serve.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

24. Through advising, students take responsibility to act.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

25. Advisors need to know how to interpret and apply institutional policies and rules including FERPA.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

26. Advisors need to know when and how to refer students.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

27. Advisors need to be engaged.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

28. Advisors need to have organizational skills.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

29. Advisors need to know how to appreciate and accept differences among others.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

30. Through advising, students learn how to make informed decisions.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

31. Advisors need to have patience.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

32. Advisors need to be detail oriented.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

33. Advisors need to be student centered.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

34. Advisors need to have integrity.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

35. Advisors need to know how to advocate for students.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

36. Advisors need to know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

37. Advisors need to be responsible.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

38. Advisors need to be dependable.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

39. Advisors need to be available.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

40. Advisors need to be passionate about students.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

41. Advisors need to know how to listen for understanding.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

42. Through advising, students learn how to navigate the educational journey.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

43. Advisors need to know how to speak to and for students.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

44. Through advising, students learn goal setting and planning skills.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

45. Advisors need to know the institutional climate for advising.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

46. Advisors need to be attentive to details.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

47. Advisors need to be confident.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

48. Advisors need to know students and their needs.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

49. Advisors need to know how to manage time.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

50. Advisors need to have a passion for advising.

Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

51. Advisors need to trust others and themselves.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

52. Advisors need to be encouragers.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

53. Advisors need to be patient

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

54. Advisors need to be personable.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

55. Advisors need to be positive.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

56. Advisors need to be authentic (defined as the real thing, genuine, not fake).

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

57. Through advising, students learn to access university resources.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

58. Advisors need to know how to ask questions.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

59. Through advising, students learn steps to apply to major and/or to graduate school.

- Neither Important nor Essential Important But Not Essential Essential Most Essential

60. Of the 59 advising characteristics in the preceding questions, please list the three characteristics (in no particular order) you think are the most essential to academic advising.

Appendix D

Convergence of Excellence-Essential Characteristics of Academic Advising

1. We did it, the research is done!

Dear Advising colleagues,

A final thank you for your time and participation in this research study on academic advising. Listed below are the essential characteristics of academic advising you identified in the previous rounds.

The characteristics are presented along with the level of consensus and mean for each one. The criteria used in Round 3 were a consensus of 80% and above, a mean of 3.75 or higher and a mode of 3.75 or 5.0 on a weighted five point Likert scale.

Following each characteristic, you may offer clarification comments in the comment box. If you are in agreement with the findings of the preceding characteristic, you may leave the comment box blank. The last comment box is provided for you to provide overarching comments with the findings of the study. If you are in agreement with the study, no response is required. If you wish to submit comments, please do so before December 11, 2010.

Once again thank you for your time, it was greatly appreciated. Please contact me if you have questions at mary.ward@und.edu or by phone at 218.639.5361.

Sincerely, Mary Ward

Convergence of Excellence-Essential Characteristics of Academic Advising

2. We did it, the research is done!

1. Advisors need to be student centered.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.51

2. Advisors need to be committed to students.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.44

3. Advisors need to know how to listen for understanding.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.44

4. Advisors need to have a desire for student success.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.38

5. Advisors need to know how to appreciate and accept differences among others.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.38

Convergence of Excellence-Essential Characteristics of Academic Advising

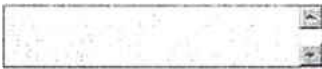
6. Advisors need to know how to relate and work with students and others.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.31



7. Advisors need to know how to interpret and apply institutional policies and rules including FERPA.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.31



8. Advisors need to know how to develop trust

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.17



9. Advisors need to know when and how to refer students.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.17



10. Advisors need to know how to ask questions.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.17



11. Advisors need to be approachable.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.10



Convergence of Excellence-Essential Characteristics of Academic Advising

12. Advisors need to know students and their needs.

Level of Consensus= 100% Mean = 4.03



13. Advisors need to know college/university curriculum.

Level of Consensus= 95% Mean = 4.24



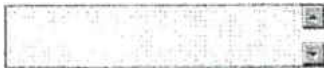
14. Advisors need to know how to problem solve.

Level of Consensus= 95% Mean = 4.03



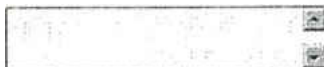
15. Advisors need to be compassionate.

Level of Consensus= 95% Mean = 3.89



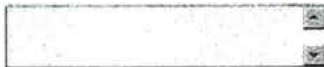
16. Through advising, students learn to make informed decisions.

Level of Consensus= 95% Mean = 3.89



17. Advisors need to have integrity.

Level of Consensus= 94% Mean = 4.44



Convergence of Excellence-Essential Characteristics of Academic Advising

18. Advisors need to be available.

Level of Consensus= 94% Mean = 4.10

19. Advisors need to be professional.

Level of Consensus= 94% Mean = 4.10

20. Advisors need to be ethical (defined as the application of standards of right and wrong).

Level of Consensus= 89% Mean = 4.31

21. Through advising, students learn to navigate the educational journey.

Level of Consensus= 89% Mean = 3.96

22. Advisors need to be engaged.

Level of Consensus= 89% Mean = 3.89

23. Advisors need to be responsible.

Level of Consensus= 89% Mean = 4.17

Convergence of Excellence-Essential Characteristics of Academic Advising

24. Advisors need to be dependable.

Level of Consensus= 89% Mean = 4.17

25. Advisors need to be responsive.

Level of Consensus= 89% Mean = 4.14

26. Through advising, students learn to access university resources.

Level of Consensus= 88% Mean = 3.78

27. Advisors need to know how to advocate for students.

Level of Consensus= 85% Mean = 4.03

28. Advisors need to have patience.

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.89

29. Advisors need to be flexible.

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.96

30. Advisors need to have organizational skills.

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.96

Convergence of Excellence-Essential Characteristics of Academic Advising

31. Advisors need to be passionate about students.

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.96

32. Advisors need to be authentic (defined as the real thing, genuine, not fake).

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.96

33. Advisors need to know how to speak to and for students.

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.89

34. Through advising, student learn how to explore options.

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.82

35. Advisors need to know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities.

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.82

36. Advisors need to be patient

Level of Consensus= 83% Mean = 3.82

37. Please use this space for additional comments.

Appendix E
Round 2 Advisor Characteristics

Round 2 Characteristics	Mean	Mode	Consensus
Advisors need to be authentic (defined as the real thing, genuine, not fake).	4.6	5.0	100
Advisors need to know how to speak to and for students.	4.6	5.0	100
Advisors need to know how to interpret and apply institutional policies and rules.	4.7	5.0	100
Advisors need to be attentive to details.	4.6	5.0	100
Advisors need to have a desire for student success.	4.7	5.0	100
Advisors need to know how to related and work with students and others.	4.7	5.0	100
Advisors need to have integrity.	4.7	5.0	100
Advisors need to be dependable.	4.6	5.0	100
Advisors need to be ethical (defined as the application of standards of right and wrong).	4.7	5.0	100
Advisors need to know when and how to refer students.	4.5	5.0	100
Advisors need to be student centered.	4.6	5.0	100
Through advising, students learn to explore options.	4.6	5.0	100
Advisors need to have patience.	4.4	4.0	96
Advisors need to have a passion for advising.	4.2	4.0	96
Advisors need to be patient.	4.3	4.0	96
Advisors need to know how to listen for understanding.	4.7	5.0	95
Advisors need to be approachable.	4.8	5.0	95
Advisors need to be available.	4.4	5.0	95
Advisors need to be committed to students.	4.7	5.0	95
Advisors need to be empathetic.	4.4	4.0	95
Advisors need to be responsible.	4.5	5.0	95
Through advising, students learn to access university resources.	4.4	4.0	95
Through advising, students know how to critically think.	4.4	4.0	95
Through advising, students learn goal setting and planning skills.	4.3	4.0	95
Through advising, students how to navigate the educational journey.	4.4	4.0	95
Through advising, students take the responsibility to act.	4.2	4.0	95
Advisors need to know how to ask questions.	4.7	5.0	94
Advisors need to know students and their needs.	4.3	5.0	91
Advisors need to be personable.	4.3	4.0	91
Advisors need to be responsive.	4.4	5.0	91
Advisors need to know college/university curriculum.	4.7	5.0	91

Round 2 Characteristics	Mean	Mode	Consensus
Through advising, students learn steps to apply to major and/or graduate school.	4.2	4.0	91
Through advising, students learn how to make informed decisions.	4.5	5.0	91
Advisors need to be flexible.	4.1	4.0	90
Advisors need to know how to develop trust.	3.9	4.0	90
Advisors need to have organizational skills.	4.2	4.0	86
Advisors need to know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities.	4.1	5.0	86
Advisors need to be compassionate.	4.2	4.0	86
Advisors need to be confident.	4.1	4.0	86
Advisors need to know how to manage time.	4.6	4.0	86
Advisors need to be detail oriented.	4.2	4.0	86
Advisors need to know how to advocate for students.	4.2	4.0	86
Advisors need to be engaged.	4.2	4.0	86
Advisors need to be positive.	4.4	4.0	86
Advisors need to be professional.	4.6	5.0	86
Advisors need to know how to problem solve.	4.2	4.0	86
Through advising, students learn to read degree audits.	4.0	4.0	86
Advisors need to know how the institutional mission fits advising.	4.2	5.0	82
Advisors need to know the institutional climate for advising.	4.6	4.0	82
Advisors need to be passionate about students.	4.2	4.0	82
Advisors need to know how to appreciate and accept differences among others.	4.3	5.0	82
Advisors need to be encouragers.	4.1	4.0	82
Advisors need to trust others and themselves.	4.0	4.0	81
Advisors need to have intellect.	4.0	4.0	81
Through advising, students learn their strengths and weaknesses.	3.9	4.0	78
Advisors need to be analytical.	4.1	4.0	77
Advisors need to have a desire to serve.	4.0	4.0	77
Advisors need to have prioritization skills.	4.0	4.0	77
Through advising, students know what to expect from advisors.	4.1	4.0	77
Advisors need to have balance between personal and professional responsibilities.	3.6	4.0	73
Advisors need to be team players.	3.0	4.0	73
Advisors need to know when to use developmental advising techniques.	4.0	4.0	73

Round 2 Characteristics	Mean	Mode	Consensus
Advisors need to know how to do self-assessment.	3.8	4.0	73
Advisors need to know how to access advising resources such the National Academic Advising Association.	3.8	4.0	71
Advisors need to know how to teach.	3.9	4.0	68
Advisors need to be intuitive.	3.6	4.0	68
Advisors need to be organized.	3.9	4.0	68
Advisors need to know how to multi-task.	3.7	4.0	68
Advisors need to know how to work as a team.	3.9	4.0	68
Advisors need to attend professional conferences.	3.7	4.0	68
Advisors need to be learners of new things.	3.8	4.0	68
Through advising, students learn to write an academic plan.	4.0	4.0	68
Advisors need to have a sense of humor.	2.9	4.0	64
Advisors need to know how to create a holistic experience for students.	3.7	4.0	64
Advisors need to be inquisitive.	3.6	4.0	59
Advisors need to be safe (i.e. dependable, secure from risk).	3.8	3.0	59
Advisors need to know how to use technology.	3.6	4.0	55
Advisors need to know how to do intrusive advising.	3.6	3.0	50
Advisors need to know student development theory.	3.5	3.0	50
Advisors need to write an advising mission and syllabus.	3.3	4.0	50
Advisors need to know learning theory.	3.6	3.0	50
Advisors need to be thick skinned.	3.4	3.0	47
Advisors need to be energetic.	4.2	4.0	46
Advisors need to know how to be prescriptive with students.	3.5	4.0	46
Advisors need to be creative.	3.4	3.0	45
Advisors need to know adult learning theory.	3.4	3.0	40
Advisors need to know how to do advising assessments.	3.2	3.0	37
Advisors need to have technical skills.	3.7	3.0	37
Advisors need to know career development theories.	3.4	3.0	36
Advisors need to be inspirational.	3.1	3.0	32
Advisors need to have social justice training.	2.9	3.0	29
Through advising, students learn how to apply for a job.	2.9	3.0	27
Advisors need to be open about themselves.	2.6	3.0	23
Advisors need to know the history of advising.	2.9	3.0	23

Appendix F

Round 3 Characteristics

Round 3 Characteristics	Mean	Mode	Consensus
Advisors need to be student centered.	4.5	5.00	100
Advisors need to be committed to students.	4.4	5.00	100
Advisors need to listen for understanding.	4.4	5.00	100
Advisors need to have a desire for student success.	4.4	4.25	100
Advisors need to know how to appreciate and accept differences among others.	4.4	3.75	100
Advisors need to know how to relate and work with students and others.	4.3	3.75	100
Advisors need to know how to interpret and apply institutional policies and rules including FERPA.	4.3	3.75	100
Advisors need to know how to develop trust.	4.2	3.75	100
Advisors need to know when and how to refer students.	4.2	3.75	100
Advisors need to know how to ask questions.	4.2	3.75	100
Advisors need to be approachable.	4.1	3.75	100
Advisors need to know students and their needs.	4.0	3.75	100
Advisors need to know college/university curriculum.	4.2	3.75	95
Advisors need to know how to problem solve	4.0	3.75	95
Advisors need to be compassionate.	3.9	3.75	95
Through advising, students learn how to make informed decisions.	3.9	3.75	95
Advisors need to have integrity.	4.4	5.00	94
Advisors need to be available.	4.1	3.75	94
Advisors need to be professional.	4.1	5.00	94
Advisors need to be ethical (defined as the application of standards of right and wrong.	4.3	5.00	89
Through advising, students learn how to navigate the educational journey.	4.0	3.75	89
Advisors need to be engaged.	3.9	3.75	89
Advisors need to be responsible.	4.2	4.25	89
Advisors need to be dependable.	4.2	4.25	89
Advisors need to be responsive.	4.1	4.25	89
Through advising, students learn to access university services.	3.7	3.75	88
Advisors need to know how to advocate for students.	4.0	3.75	85
Advisors need to have patience.	3.9	3.75	83
Advisors need to be flexible.	4.0	3.75	83
Advisors need to have organizational skills.	4.0	3.75	83

Round 3 Characteristics	Mean	Mode	Consensus
Advisors need to be passionate about students.	4.0	3.75	83
Advisors need to be authentic (defined as the real thing, genuine, not fake).	4.0	3.75	83
Advisors need to know how to speak to and for students.	3.9	3.75	83
Through advising, students learn how to explore options.	3.8	3.75	83
Advisors need to know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities.	3.8	3.75	83
Advisors need to be patient.	3.8	3.75	83
Advisors need to have a passion for advising.	3.8	3.75	78
Advisors need to be attentive to details.	3.8	3.75	78
Advisors need to have intellect.	3.7	3.75	78
Through advising, students know what to expect from advisors.	3.7	3.75	78
Advisors need to be empathetic.	3.7	3.75	78
Advisors need to have a desire to serve.	3.7	3.75	78
Advisors need to know the institutional climate for advising.	3.6	3.75	78
Advisors need to know how the institutional mission fits advising.	3.6	3.75	72
Through advising, students learn goal setting and planning skills.	3.6	3.75	72
Advisors need to be analytical.	3.4	3.75	72
Advisors need to know how to manage time.	3.6	3.75	71
Advisors need to be detail oriented.	3.5	3.75	71
Advisors need to trust others and themselves.	3.5	3.75	67
Advisors need to be confident.	3.4	3.75	67
Advisors need to be personable.	3.4	3.75	67
Advisors need to be encouragers.	3.6	3.75	67
Through advising, students take responsibility to act.	3.6	2.50	61
Advisors need to be positive.	3.4	3.75	61
Through advising, students learn to read degree audits.	3.3	3.25	60
Advisors need to have prioritization skills.	3.5	2.50	56
Through advising, students learn their strengths and weaknesses.	3.3	2.50	50
Through advising, students know how to critically think.	3.3	2.50	50
Through advising, students learn steps to apply to major and/or graduate school.	3.1	2.50	44

Appendix G
Round 4 Essential Advising Characteristics

Essential Advising Characteristics	Mean	Mode	Consensus
Advisors need to be student centered.	4.5	5.00	100
Advisors need to be committed to students.	4.4	5.00	100
Advisors need to listen for understanding.	4.4	5.00	100
Advisors need to have a desire for student success.	4.4	4.25	100
Advisors need to know how to appreciate and accept differences among others.	4.4	3.75	100
Advisors need to know how to relate and work with students and others.	4.3	3.75	100
Advisors need to know how to interpret and apply institutional policies and rules including FERPA.	4.3	3.75	100
Advisors need to know how to develop trust.	4.2	3.75	100
Advisors need to know when and how to refer students.	4.2	3.75	100
Advisors need to know how to ask questions.	4.2	3.75	100
Advisors need to be approachable.	4.1	3.75	100
Advisors need to know students and their needs.	4.0	3.75	100
Advisors need to know college/university curriculum.	4.2	3.75	95
Advisors need to know how to problem solve	4.0	3.75	95
Advisors need to be compassionate.	3.9	3.75	95
Through advising, students learn how to make informed decisions.	3.9	3.75	95
Advisors need to have integrity.	4.4	5.00	94
Advisors need to be available.	4.1	3.75	94
Advisors need to be professional.	4.1	5.00	94
Advisors need to be ethical (defined as the application of standards of right and wrong.	4.3	5.00	89
Through advising, students learn how to navigate the educational journey.	4.0	3.75	89
Advisors need to be engaged.	3.9	3.75	89
Advisors need to be responsible.	4.2	4.25	89
Advisors need to be dependable.	4.2	4.25	89
Advisors need to be responsive.	4.1	4.25	89
Through advising, students learn to access university services.	3.7	3.75	88
Advisors need to know how to advocate for students.	4.0	3.75	85
Advisors need to have patience.	3.9	3.75	83

Advisors need to be flexible.	4.0	3.75	83
Advisors need to have organizational skills.	4.0	3.75	83
Advisors need to be passionate about students.	4.0	3.75	83
Advisors need to be authentic (defined as the real thing, genuine, not fake).	4.0	3.75	83
Advisors need to know how to speak to and for students.	3.9	3.75	83
Through advising, students learn how to explore options.	3.8	3.75	83
Advisors need to know how to help students fit their interests with their abilities.	3.8	3.75	83
Advisors need to be patient.	3.8	3.75	83

REFERENCES

- ACT. (2004). The role of academic and non-academic factors in improving college retention. Iowa City: ACT. Retrieved May 27, 2010, from http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/college_retention.pdf.
- American Association of Colleges and Universities, (2005). *Student success in state colleges and universities: A matter of culture and leadership*. A report of the graduation rate outcome study. Washington, DC.
- Brubacher, J. & Willis, R., (2002). *Higher Education in Transition*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Bramlett-Epps, S., (2002). *The work life of the professional academic advisor*. (Doctoral dissertation, East Tennessee State University, 2002). Received from researcher electronically October 10, 2008.
- Brown, T. & Ward, L. (2007). Preparing service provider to foster student success. In G. Kramer & Associates, eds. *Fostering student success in the campus community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bush, N. (1969). The student and his professor: Colonial times to twentieth century. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 40(8), 593-609.

- Caldwell, C. (2005). Identification of strategic communication competencies for county extension educators: A Delphi study. (Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2005). Retrieved electronically October 14, 2009 at <http://etd.ohiolink.edu/send-pdf.cgi/Caldwell%20Cassandra%20Denise.pdf?osu1133289155>.
- Campbell, S. & Nutt, C., (2008). Academic advising in the new global century: Supporting student engagement and learning outcomes. *Peer Review*. 10 (1) 4-7.
- Carnegie Classifications and Settings* (2004-2006). Retrieved electronically October 28, 2010 at http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/size_setting.php.
- Chickering, A. & Gamson, Z., (1987). Seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin*. (39), 3-7.
- Cook, S. (1999, May 28). A chronology of academic advising in America. *Mentor*, 1 (2). Retrieved December 18, 2008, from <http://www/psu.edu/dus/mentor/990528sc.htm>.
- Cook, S. (2009). Important events in the development of academic advising in the United States. *NACADA Journal*, 29(2), 18-40.
- Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education and Guidelines for Academic Advising, (2008). In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T. & Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook* (pp 533-545). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. W., (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research: Choosing among the five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Creswell, J. W., (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crookston, B. B., (1972). A developmental view of advising as teaching. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 13 (1), 12-17.
- Dalkey, N. (1967). *Delphi*. Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation.
- Dalkey, N. (1972). The Delphi method: An experimental study of group opinion. In N. C. Dalkey, D. L. Rourke, R. Lewis, and D. Snyder (Eds.). *Studies in the quality of life: Delphi and decision making* (pp 13-54). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Dalkey, N. & Rourke, D. (1972). Experimental assessment of the Delphi procedures With group value judgments. In N. C. Dalkey, D. L. Rourke, R. Lewis, and D. Snyder (Eds.). *Studies in the quality of life: Delphi and decision making* (p. 55-83). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Delbecq, A., Van de Ven, A. & Gustafson, D. (1975). *Group techniques for program planning*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, and Co.
- Denham, T. J., (2002). *A historical review of curriculum in American higher education: 1626-1900*. Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University, Programs for Higher Education.
- Donnelly, J. E., (2006). What matters to advisers: Exploring the current state of academic adviser job satisfaction. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 2006). Retrieved electronically October 14, 2009.

- Droll, M. (2005). Use of the Delphi technique to derive a common definition for work-Related Education. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 2005). Retrieved electronically October 14, 2009 at http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0010111/droll_m.pdf.
- Folsom, P. (2008). *Tools and resources for advisors*. In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T. & Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook* (p. 323-341). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fried, J., (2003). Ethical standards and principles. In S. R. Komives, D. B. Woodard Jr., & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the Profession*. Fourth Ed., (p. 107-127). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Frost, S. H. (1991). Academic advising for student success: A system of shared responsibility. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 3. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.
- Frost, S. H., (2000). Historical and philosophical foundations for academic advising. In V.N. Gordon, W.R. Habley, & Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook*, (p. 3-17). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Geen, E. (1952). With the technicians: General advising at Alfred University. *Journal of Higher Education*, 23(1), 40-58.
- Gliddon, D. (2006). Forecasting a competency model for innovation leaders using a Modified Delphi technique. (Doctoral Dissertation, 2006). *Proquest Dissertation Document ID: 1445033231*.

- Gordon, V. N. (1992). *Handbook of academic advising*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Gordon, V. (2008). *Student diversity and student needs*. In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T. & Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook* (p. 119-121). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Habley, W. (1994). Key concepts in academic advising. In Summer institute on academic advising session guidance (p. 10). Manhattan, KS: National Academic Advising Association, Kansas State University.
- Habley, W. R. (2003). Faculty advising: Practice and promise. In G. L. Kramer (Ed.), *Faculty advising examined: Enhancing the potential of college faculty as advisors*, (p. 23-39). Bolton, MA: Anker.
- Habley, W. R. (2004). *The status of academic advising: Findings from the ACT Sixth National Survey*. (NACADA Monograph Series, no. 10.) Manhattan, KS: National Academic Advising Association.
- Habley, W. R., & Bloom, J., (2007). Giving advice that makes a difference. In G. L. Kramer & Associates (Ed.), *Fostering student success in the campus community*, (p. 171-192). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Helmer, O. (1983). *Looking forward: A Guide to future research*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hossler, D., & Bean, J. P. (1990). *The strategic management of college enrollments*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Hsu, C. & Sandford, B. (2007). The Delphi Technique: Making Sense of Consensus. *Practical Assessment Research & Evaluation*, 12(10). Retrieved online December 3, 2009 from <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=12&n=10>.
- Hunter-Stuart, M. & White, E., (2004). Could fixing academic advising fix higher Education? *About Campus*, March-April, 9(1). 20-25.
- Johnson, E. (1981). Misconceptions about the early land-grant colleges. *The Journal of Higher Education*. 52(4) 333-351.
- Kane, K. (2007). University academic professional staff: Augmenting traditional faculty Teaching, advising and research roles. (Doctor dissertation, Iowa State University, 2007) Retrieved electronically October 28, 2008 at: <http://kkane.public.iastate.edu/Kane%20%282007%29%20University%20academic%20professional%20staff.pdf>
- Kennedy, K. & Crissman-Ishler, J., (2008). The changing college student. In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T. & Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook* (p. 133-141). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- King, M. (2008). Organization of academic advising services. In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T. & Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook* (p. 242-252). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- King, N. (2006). *Advising as teaching*. (NACADA Webinar.) presented online September 26, 2006. Available from NACADA at <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/monographs/audiovisual.htm>.

- Kramer, G., (2007). Fostering student success: What really matters? In
 G. L. Kramer & Associates (Ed.), *Fostering student success in the campus
 community*, (p. 433-448). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Kramer, G. & Associates (2003). *Student academic services: An integrated approach*.
 San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G., (1997). The student learning agenda: Implications for academic advisors.
NACADA Journal, 17 (2), p. 7-12.
- Kuh, G. (2008). *Advising for student success*. In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T. &
 Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook* (p. 68-84).
 Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J., Bridges, B., and Hayek, J.C. (2007). *Piecing together
 the student success puzzle: Research, propositions, and recommendations*. ASHE
 Higher Education Report, 32(5). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J., Whitt, E. & Assoc. (2005). *Student success in college:
 Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuhn, T. (2008). *Historical foundations of academic advising*. In Gordon, V., Habley,
 W., Grites, T. & Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive
 handbook* (p. 68-84). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Light, R., (2001). *Making the most of college: Students speak their minds*. Boston:
 Harvard University.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G., (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
 Publications.

- Linstone, H. & Turoff, M. (Eds.). (1975). *The Delphi method: Techniques and applications*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- McCormick, A. C., (2003). Swirling and double dipping: New patterns of student attendance and their implications for higher education. *New Directions for Higher Education*, (121), 13-24.
- Merriam-Webster, (2010). Online dictionary retrieved November 15, 2010 at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/222435/Funk-Wagnalls-dictionaries>.
- Merisotis, J. (2009). Higher education productivity in the “new era of responsibility”, Lumina Foundation. Presentation at Hartford Consortium for Higher Education, Hartford, CT. Retrieved online December 9, 2009 at http://www.luminafoundation.org/about_us/president/speeches/2009-01-29.
- NACADA (2006) NACADA concept of academic advising. Retrieved-January 20, 2009- From the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Concept-advising-introduction.htm>.
- NACADA. (2005). NACADA statement of core values of academic advising. Retrieved January 20, 2009- from the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* Web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Core-Values.htm>
- NACADA. (n.d.a). *Member Benefits*. Retrieved –January 20, 2009 from the Web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/membership/benefits.htm>
- NACADA, (2009). Outstanding advising award guidelines. Retrieved – March 10, 2009 From the Web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/programs/Awards/guidelines.htm>

- National Commission on Accountability in Higher Education, (2005). *Accountability for better results: A national imperative*. Retrieved online January 29, 2009 at <http://www.sheeo.org/Account/comm-home.htm>.
- National Survey of Student Engagement, (2005). *National Survey of Student Engagement Annual Report 2005*. Retrieved-January 20, 2009. From Web site: http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/NSSE2005_annual_report.pdf.
- Noel-Levitz, Inc. (2008). *2008 National student satisfaction report*. Retrieved Jan 20, 2009 from <https://www.noellevitz.com/Papers+and+Research/Papers+and+Reports/ResearchLibrary/2008>.
- Noel-Levitz, Inc. (2009). *The 2009 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report: Four-year public-Form A-Colleges and Universities*. Retrieved October 18, 2010 at <https://www.noellevitz.com/NR/rdonlyres/BEA34DB2-E473-43A3-A485-38168931FC2C/0/NatSatisfactionReport4yrpublicA09.pdf>.
- Nuss, E. M. (2003). The development of student affairs. In S. R. Komives, D. B. Woodard Jr., & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the Profession*. Fourth Ed., (p. 65-88). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- O'Banion, T. (1972). An academic advising model. *Junior college Journal*, 42 (6), 62-69.
- Pascarella, E. & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students: Findings and Insights from twenty years of research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pascarella, E. & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research. Volume 2*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Peterson, M., Wagner, J. A., & Lamb, C. W. (2001). The role of advising in non-returning students' perceptions of their university. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, 10* (3), 45-59.
- Rodgers, B. & Cowles, K. (1993). The qualitative research audit trail: A complex collection of documentation. *Research in Nursing and Health, 16*, 219-226.
- Schreiner, L. (2009). Linking student satisfaction and retention. Research study retrieved electronically October 18, 2010 at <https://www.noellewitz.com/NR/rdonlyres/A22786EF-65FF-4053-A15A-CBE145B0C708/0/LinkingStudentSatis0809.pdf>.
- Schuh, J. (2008). Assessing student learning. In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T. & Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook*, (p. 356-368). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Scot-Taylor, M. (2008). Student affairs divisions as learning organizations: Toward a conceptual framework for organizational improvement. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh). Retrieved electronically October 14, 2009 at http://etd.library.pitt.edu/ETD/available/etd-05092008-152457/unrestricted/MTaylor_ETD_062708.pdf.
- Self, C. (2008). Advising delivery: Professional advisors, counselors and other staff. In Gordon, V., Habley, W., Grites, T. & Associates (Eds.). *Academic advising. A comprehensive handbook*, (p. 267-278). Second Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shulmoski, G., Hartman, F. & Krahn, J. (2007). The Delphi method for graduate Research. *Journal of Information Technology Education, 6*, 1-21.

- Sireci, S.G. (1998). "Evaluating content validity using multidimensional scaling".
 Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting, April 15, 1998, San Diego, CA: AERA.
- State Higher Education Executive Officers, (2011). *Financing higher education*.
 Retrieved electronically April 8, 2011 at
<http://www.shceo.org/pixpages/financing.htm>.
- Stitt-Gohdes, W. & Crews, T. (2004). The Delphi technique: A research strategy for career and technical education. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 20 (2), 55-67.
- Thelin, J. R., (2003). Historical overview of American higher education. In S. R. Komives, D. B. Woodard Jr., & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the Profession*. Fourth Ed., (p. 3-22), San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Tinto, V. (2004). *Student retention and graduation: Facing the truth, living with the consequences*. The Pell Institute Occasional paper 1. Washington, DC.
- Tuttle, K. (2000). *Academic advising*. In L. K. Johnsrud & V. J. Rosser (Eds.), *Understanding the work and career paths of midlevel administrators*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Veysey, L. R., (1965). *The emergence of the American university*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wyatt, J. (2006). Student, staff advisor, and faculty advisor perceptions of academic Advising. (Doctoral dissertation, North Carolina State University, 2006)
 Retrieved Electronically October 21, 2008 at
<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/resolver/1840.16/5927>

- Yoduf, M., (2003). The changing scene of academic advising. *NACADA Journal*. 23 (1, 2), 7-9.
- Yousuf, Muhammad Imran (2007). Using Experts' Opinions through Delphi Technique. *Practical Assessment Research & Evaluation*, 12(4). Retrieved online from: <http://pareonline.net/pdf/v12n4.pdf>.