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Advisor Perspectives on the Relationship between Professional Values and the Practice of Academic Advising

John Pharo Morgan III
University of South Florida, jpmorga2@usf.edu

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Advisor Perspectives on the Relationship between Professional Values
and the Practice of Academic Advising

by

John Pharo Morgan, III

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Curriculum and Instruction with an Emphasis in
Adult Education
Department of Leadership, Counseling, Adult, Career, and Higher Education
College of Education
University of South Florida

Major Professor: William Young, Ed. D.
Rosemary Closson, Ph. D.
Thomas Miller, Ed. D.
W. Robert Sullins, Ed. D.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of John Paul Jagodinski, Jr. and John Pharo Morgan, Senior. Both helped make me who I am today.

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As the author of this study, I benefitted from the valuable contributions of many others. Their input and contributions ensured the successful completion of this project. My committee members were especially crucial. They helped me shape and nurture it into something sensible and worth doing. To Dr. Young, Dr. Closson, Dr. Miller and Dr. Sullins, thank you for all that you've done to get me to this point. Each of you have inspired me and served as role model.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study	5
Research Questions.....	5
Significance of the Study	6
Definition of Terms.....	7
Limitations	8
Delimitations.....	11
Organization of the Study	11
Summary.....	12
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature	13
Higher Education in America	14
Student Affairs.....	16
Academic Advising.....	19
Professionalization.....	23
NACADA	29
NACADA SCV.....	32
CAS.....	35
Functions of Academic Advising.....	38
Student Development Theory	40
Summary	54
Chapter Three: Method.....	56
Participants.....	57
Instrument	61
Research Questions.....	67
Data Collection Procedures.....	67
Ethical Considerations	69
Research Design.....	69
Trustworthiness.....	72
Summary	75
Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion.....	77
Participants.....	78

Research Question One.....	84
Research Question Two	90
Research Question Three	96
Research Question Four.....	102
Summary	104
Chapter Five: Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations.....	106
Overview.....	106
Conclusions.....	108
Implications.....	115
Recommendations.....	117
Summary	121
References.....	124
Appendices.....	133
Appendix A: NACADA Core Values of Advising.....	134
Appendix B: Academic Advising Core Values Interview	139
Appendix C: Functional Areas of Academic Advising	146
Appendix D: Invitation to Participate	147
Appendix E: University of South Florida IRB letter	148
Appendix F: Copyright Permissions	150
About the Author	End Page

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Years of Experience.....	82
Table 2: Educational Attainment	83
Table 3: Functions of Academic Advising.....	146

ABSTRACT

Professional academic advisors play an important role in higher education—especially at large, research institutions where their use is more prevalent. This study explored professional advisor perspectives about the impact of the NACADA Statement of Core Values (SCV) on the practice of academic advising. This study explores advisor perceptions about the impact of the SCV on advising practice.

An in-depth, qualitative interview conducted via e-mail was used to discover advisor perceptions about the SCV in relation to advising practice. The interviews addressed advisor perceptions about the impact of the SCV in regard to (a) academic advising in general, (b) their own day-to-day practice of advising, and (c) specific functions commonly associated with academic advising.

Ten professional academic advisors at a large research institution within the Florida State University System took part. The results demonstrate that the NACADA Statement of Core Values (SCV) is important to advising practice—especially those values relating to the fundamental relationship between advisors and the students they serve. The participating academic advisors expressed strong support for the SCV overall while also indicating limited prior knowledge or training. Several themes were apparent in the interview responses, including: the provision of accurate information, the students' responsibility in the advising interaction, the importance of lifelong learning, and advising as a form of teaching.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Higher education is an increasingly complex endeavor employing many individuals in a variety of roles beyond direct instruction. The expansion of higher education, especially in the last 75 years, has been accompanied by the emergence of a number of new roles in the areas of instruction, research, and student affairs. Established roles such as those of professors and top administrators have long been associated with professional status. Many of those occupying some of the newer roles within higher education have pushed for the same professional recognition already conferred upon professors. One role that has emerged—particularly in the latter half of the 20th century—is that of full-time academic advisor or professional advisor (Cook, 2009). The number of professional academic advisors has grown significantly over the last few decades (Self, 2013). Often, academic advisor roles are classified as staff or administrative positions and thus lack the professional status conferred on faculty members. However, on some campuses full-time academic advisors are increasingly the primary providers of academic advising to students.

The scope of academic advising goes beyond the mere provision of course suggestions. It includes both teaching and developmental components. In addition to imparting information about the curriculum and campus resources and communities, advisors help students connect

education and career goals with extra-curricular and informal learning opportunities (Lowenstein, 2005). The advisor is crucial to degree progression, retention and the quality of the student experience of higher education (Habley, 1981; Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Kuh, 2008; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010; McFarlane, 2013; Noel, 1985; Nutt, 2003; Peterson, Wagner & Lamb, 2001; Smith 2004; Tinto, 1999). Because of the important role they play on campus, full-time academic advisors are a critical aspect of higher education.

Given their important role, many professional academic advisors wish to see greater recognition for the field and for their contribution to the higher education enterprise. One avenue that some have pursued is the advancement of the professional status of academic advising (Gordon, 1988; Gordon et al, 1988; Huggett, 2000). To that end, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), a professional organization for academic advisors, established the Statement of Core Values (SCV)—a set of professional values and standards of practice. The SCV is intended to serve as a guide for the practice of advising (NACADA, 2005). The adoption of a code of values or a code of ethics is a trait commonly associated with the professionalization of an occupation (Wilensky, 1964). Professional values are considered an important requirement for the advancement of professionalization within a given field.

One concern associated with codes of ethics and professional values is their application to practice. If the values fail to inform actual professional practice then they may lack significance. The impact of professional values on practice has not received much research attention. Perhaps the dearth of research in this area is partially due to the perception of the intrinsic merit of a code of values such as the SCV. We intuitively understand the importance of delineating values and standards of practice and therefore might not think to question their impact on practice. In addition, academic advising is generally an under-examined aspect of

higher education, particularly in regard to professional academic advisors. This is surprising given the crucial role of academic advising within higher education. Such is the case in particular with professional values for academic advisors. Academic advising has been characterized as a field of practitioners (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). Practice is a major component of academic advising, yet, little research has focused on the SCV or its impact on the actual practice of academic advising. This study adds to the knowledge base about academic advising by exploring advisor perceptions of the relationship between the professional values delineated in the SCV and professional practice within the field of academic advising.

Academic advising is an important aspect of student development within the higher education setting. The theoretical background and rationale for this study originates in the realm of student development theory and research. Of particular importance is Tinto's work on the phenomenon of student departure. Academic advising has an important role to play in mitigating some of the factors associated with student departure. A second important guiding theory for this study is Chickering's theory (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) of psychosocial development especially as it pertains to the importance of peer relationships with regard to the transition to college and identity development. These two theories emphasize the importance of forming connections and relationships during the transition to college and the development of identity. Forming connections within the communities of higher education is an important element of a successful transition to college. Increasingly, academic advisors are key players in the higher education endeavor. One of the tasks associated with quality academic advising is the fostering of connections to the social and academic communities on campus. Academic advisors—in their roles as institutional representatives and guides to the various communities of campus life—represent one avenue for establishing these connections. Academic advisors often connect with

students from the point of orientation and onward. Students have reported greater satisfaction when advised by professional advisors over faculty or peer advisors (Smith, 2004). One reason may be that professional advisors offer a consistent point of contact for students as they progress through classes toward degree completion.

Given the advisor's role in helping students establish connections to campus communities and to connect with a concerned representative of the institution, it is important to develop a thorough understanding of academic advising. One aim of this study is to begin the exploration of the interplay between values and practice in regard to professional academic advising. A few studies (Cooper & Saunders, 2000; Keeling, 2009; Keeling, 2010) consider various aspects of academic advising in relation to the guidelines established by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), but they do not address the relationship of advisor values and practice. This study investigates a fundamental question: how do professional advisors perceive the relationship between the values espoused in the SCV and the actions they take as part of their practice as academic advisors? This study contributes to our knowledge of the increasingly critical role of the professional academic advisor within higher education. While this study is limited to one facet of academic advising, it examines an important aspect of the field—the application of values to professional practice. This study may also add to our general understanding of the impact of professional values on professional practice

This study examined the relationship between professional values and practice using a qualitative approach. The nature of the problem under investigation is most suited for a qualitative approach since there is a great potential for a deep and rich descriptive data set. The information for this study was gathered through an in-depth, qualitative interview conducted via e-mail. The text responses to the interview questions comprise the primary data used for

analysis. Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed to identify themes and meaning. These themes make up the findings of the study. The results demonstrate that the NACADA Statement of Core Values (SCV) is important to advising practice—especially those values relating to the fundamental relationship between advisors and the students they serve.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to explore advisor perceptions of the SCV in relation to their own advising practice. The impetus for the focus on practice originates from the researcher's experiences as a graduate student in the College of Education. Graduate students of higher education frequently engage in classroom discussions that feature debates about the interplay of theory and practice. The relationship between theory and practice is an important one. Because academic advising has traditionally been a field focused on practice, what advisors actually do is perhaps more important than their statements about what they believe or the theories they may espouse. It is thus important to understand the impact of the values on practice rather than simply gauging individuals' beliefs about the values themselves. This study seeks to assess advisor perceptions about the practice of academic advising in relation to the SCV. It is important to note that this study is not designed to measure advisor performance against the SCV. Rather, it investigates the influence of the SCV on academic advisors as well as the SCV's applicability to their daily practice.

Research Questions

This study explores the following questions:

1. What is the nature of advisor perceptions about the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values?

2. How do academic advisors perceive the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values in relation to their own day-to-day practice of academic advising?
3. Do advisors perceive differences in importance among the six values in relation to the functional areas that academic advisors typically perform—especially in relation to their own practice of advising?
4. Do advisors differ in their assessment of the SCV based on experience level as determined by the number of years of experience as an advisor?

Significance of the Study

This study identifies academic advisor perceptions about the role of the SCV in the daily practice of academic advising. The advisor responses provide insight into the relationship of the SCV to advising practice. This research encourages discussion about professional values for the field of academic advising. The information gathered as part of this study contributes to an understanding of the significance of the SCV in relation to advising practice. It may be beneficial to individual advisors seeking a better understanding of their advising values and practice. Advisors may find this research personally useful as they explore the role of the SCV in their own advising practice. In addition, advising administrators can use the information from this study to refine advisor training programs. Lastly, this research advances the discussion about the SCV and the importance of professional values for the actual practice of academic advising. This study contributes to the literature on the application of professional values to practice. Specifically, it considers the interplay between values and practice among professional academic advisors.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this document. For the sake of clarity, the terms are defined below. These definitions are particular to this research study and are not necessarily intended to serve as agreed upon definitions for general use. It is worth noting that the terms *Faculty Academic Advisor* and *Professional Academic Advisor* are artificially dichotomized for the purposes of this study. The actual roles of faculty and advisors vary and do not necessarily fall neatly into the discrete categories used for this study.

Academic advising. A system of shared responsibility between students and advisors featuring planning, teaching and referral functions that aids students as they choose educational, career and personal goals.

Faculty Academic Advisor. A faculty advisor is defined within this research as a member of the faculty whose primary responsibilities include the provision of academic instruction and the pursuit of research. These individuals also provide academic advising but it is not a primary responsibility of their role.

Professional Academic Advisor. A professional advisor is classified as a full-time staff member whose primary function is the delivery of academic advising. This role is distinguished from that of a faculty member who may advise students in addition to other primary duties.

Professional values. A set of agreed upon values, often published by a professional organization or similar entity, that are intended to serve as guidelines for practice within a given profession.

Student persistence. Student persistence is generally defined as the degree to which students remain enrolled while in pursuit of higher education—usually to the point of graduation. This

term is sometimes used interchangeably with *retention* but there is a distinction between the two: students persist whereas from an institutional perspective they are retained (Hagedorn, 2005).

Limitations

This study focuses on professional academic advisors. In addition to the traditional faculty advisor, many universities—especially large research-intensive institutions—employ advisors affiliated with academic and non-academic units. For example, a college or department may employ an academic advisor for a particular major or group of majors while a Student Affairs unit may employ an academic advisor for a particular student support program. The participants for this study were selected from a pool of volunteers from among the different colleges and advising units on the campus that served as the site for this study. Those volunteering to participate in the e-mail interviews may be more invested in the recognition of academic advising as a profession or have other reasons for participating that limit these findings. Furthermore, they may be more invested in the enterprise of advising than a sample attained via random selection or by other means.

The data collection technique introduces another potential limitation. This study relies on e-mail interviews which offer a number of advantages, but also some drawbacks. One of the primary concerns associated with this technique is the absence of non-verbal cues such as body language and intonation. The subtleties associated with non-verbal communication are lost in an e-mail interview. While this is a potential limitation, it is important to remember that non-verbal communication is more subjective than some other forms of communication such as text or transcribed statements. In an attempt to mitigate some of these limitations, the interviews were carefully planned, pilot interviews were completed and participants were offered opportunities to

review and clarify their statements. Chapter 3 offers a deeper consideration of the advantages and disadvantages associated with the e-mail interview.

The NACADA SCV is presented in three sections: an introduction, declaration and an exposition. The exposition provides a detailed explanation of the values. Each of the six values is presented along with multiple bullet points for added depth and explanation. The exposition is over 1,500 words in length. Because of the amount of verbiage, a summarized version was developed for the purposes of this study. The summarized version reduced the word count to slightly more than 250 words. The use of a simplified SCV is a possible limitation. It could be argued that the summarized version did not provide enough depth or stimulate the same amount of thought as the original exposition would have. The decision to use a summarized version was made with consideration to comprehensibility and time. Use of the full exposition might have negatively impacted the completion of the interviews.

In the interest of full disclosure, it is important to raise the possibility of one additional limitation related to the researcher's own history as an academic advisor. The researcher, as a seasoned academic advisor, operated from the standpoint of an insider. The researcher has worked as an undergraduate advisor for over 11 years. This study is inevitably shaped by the researcher's experiences in the field. Given the years of experience, it is unrealistic and impossible to fully set aside one's own values, beliefs and ideas about academic advising and assume the impartial gaze of an outsider. Furthermore, the researcher's past membership in NACADA presupposes some bias in support of the SCV. Given this potential for bias, interview questions were designed to be neutral in tone and without regard to the researcher's own feelings about the SCV. Participants were encouraged to express themselves freely without regard for the researcher's beliefs about the SCV. However, the researcher's personal relationship with some

of the participants may have influenced their willingness to respond as candidly as possible. This may have also been a factor in participant recruitment.

Qualitative research acknowledges the role of the researcher as one beyond that of an impartial observer. Part of the issue is the nature of human perception. In accordance with the tenants of constructivism, reality is mediated through human perception and therefore impossible to discern objectively (Staller, 2010). The researcher, while attempting to be neutral and objective, sees the data under the influence of their own values and perceptions. In keeping with the epistemological position of the majority of qualitative research, this study embraces a constructivist orientation which recognizes the socially constructed nature of knowledge (Staller, 2010). Each researcher is a culturally bound product of their time and place. The researcher is an integral part of the process, sifting through the data to find interpretations and meanings (Staller, 2010). This is not an excuse for complacency or a lack of critical evaluation but rather an acknowledgement that pure objectivity is an impossible task when qualitatively examining the lived experiences of people within a given phenomenon. Often, the context of a phenomenon is critical to understanding. However, context can become a complicated issue when the researcher is closely associated with the phenomenon under study. A researcher in such a situation may lack the objectivity of a more neutral observer.

To compensate for the potential loss of objectivity, qualitative researchers often turn to practices of reflexivity. These techniques allow the researcher to account for the role of the self and the biases and influences brought to bear on the research endeavor (Daly, 2007). As a safeguard against biases, the researcher kept a reflective journal and note-taking throughout the interview process. This practice is further discussed in Chapter 3.

Delimitations

This study focused on professional academic advisors who are not members of the faculty. Consequently, the findings may not be relevant for other types of advisors such as faculty academic advisors. A second delimitation relates to the study's situation at a single institution within the State University System (SUS) of Florida. Given this regional focus, care should be taken when considering the applicability of these results to other institutions, especially those outside the SUS. In addition, the site of the study was a research-intensive institution where the use of professional advisors is increasingly common. Therefore, the findings may be most relevant to institutions of a similar character.

The study is limited to one institution and the findings are particular to that setting. As is typical with qualitative studies, the findings are not meant to be generalizable to other settings. Rather, the aim is to gain a deep understanding of one setting. However, some of the data may be transferable to other institutions of a similar character. It is ultimately up to the individuals in the secondary setting to determine the relevance of the findings contained herein to their particular institution.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters followed by references and appendices. Chapter 1 provides an overview along with the purpose and significance of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature related to the topic and the theoretical framework guiding the research. The method is outlined in Chapter 3 and includes details about the participants, instrument and data collection procedures. Results of the research are presented in Chapter 4. A discussion section concludes this study in Chapter 5.

Summary

In higher education settings, professional academic advisors are increasingly seen as important components of the workforce and of strategies to increase student retention. Within the ranks of these full-time, staff advisors, there has been a growing push for professional recognition. One aspect commonly associated with professionalization is the adoption of standards of practice and codes of ethical behavior. For academic advisors, the NACADA SCV serves as one such guide to the practice of advising. The present study explores advisor perceptions of the SCV as it pertains to their practice of advising. Given the importance of academic advising in higher education, it is necessary to understand as much about advising practice as possible, including the impact of professional values on daily practice.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Academic advising is a complex endeavor. While it has always been a critical part of higher education, it has only recently been viewed as a distinct and significant component. These days academic advising is seen as essential to higher education and as an integral component in strategies to improve student academic performance and retention (Fuller, 1983; Habley, 1981; Noel, 1985; Nutt, 2003). Gradually, academic advising has become a discrete sub-field within the realm of higher education. The number of full-time staff members whose primary role is the delivery of academic advising has greatly increased (Cook, 2009; Gordon, et al., 1988; Huggett, 2000; Self, 2013). As the field has grown in size and specialization, academic advisors have sought to establish the field as a recognized profession. Professional status accords prestige and other rewards. One key aspect often associated with professions is the establishment of professional codes or values. The field of academic advising has one such code—NACADA’s SCV. This study explores advisor perceptions about advising values in relation to advising practice.

The topics establishing the context for this study are presented in brief within this chapter. The first section provides a brief history of higher education, student affairs and academic advising. A discussion of the process of professionalization and professional values in general follows, as well as a consideration of those specific to academic advising: the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), the NACADA Statement of Core Values (SCV) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The third

section explores the functions of academic advising practice and the application of professional codes and values to practice. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the student development theories that provide the theoretical background underpinning this study. Special attention is given to identity development theories. The brief history presented in this chapter is much simplified and, as such, does not fully depict the complexity and diversity found within higher education in America. Nevertheless, what follows will hopefully afford the reader some appreciation of academic advising in the higher education setting.

Higher Education in America

It would be difficult to appreciate the importance of academic advising as a distinct endeavor without first gaining some appreciation for the development of higher education in America. Current beliefs and practices in American higher education were influenced and shaped by those from earlier periods of development. The idea of the college originated in Europe and preceded the colonization of the Americas (Altbach, 2005). The concept of the college was but one of the many ideas the colonists carried with them to America. The colonial colleges initially were a destination for the sons of privilege (Thelin & Gasman, 2011). However, American colleges experienced several periods of expansion and evolution and access gradually increased beyond the elite.

The evolution of higher education in America was not limited to the expansion of access. From the late-18th to the mid-19th centuries, the number of colleges jumped from 25 to well over 200 (Thelin & Gasman, 2011). Despite resistance from college administrations, the period of the mid- to late 1800s was marked by many changes. The demand for a more practical education in the sciences would lead to many changes that would reshape higher education in America. One of the biggest factors that afforded the promotion of science and practical education was the

passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 (Geiger, 2005; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2004). This act formally promoted science education and set the stage for subsequent changes that significantly reshaped American higher education.

The promotion of science and technical education was only one of several important changes shaping American colleges. At the turn of the 20th century, college enrollments grew; many of these new entrants were women attending coeducational institutions (Geiger, 2005). As the colleges evolved toward greater consistency, the idea of the university took hold. The universities added programs of professional preparation for careers which required formal training (Rudolph, 1990). Professional preparation programs and postgraduate professional schools thus became a hallmark of the American university. The professionalization of the faculty occurred concomitantly with the rise of universities and the growth of graduate education. Professors came to be viewed as experts in their fields (Thelin, 2004). Prior to this, professors spent much time engaged in guiding and advising students. With the faculty largely freed from the responsibility of regulating student conduct the student affairs practitioner emerged to fulfill this role (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Thelin, 2004). Roles for student affairs practitioners would increase greatly over time.

The period following World War II was one of tremendous demand for higher education. This demand was fueled in large part by to the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the GI Bill (Geiger, 2005). Along with the GI Bill, the federal government assumed a much greater role in higher education through its funding of research (Geiger, 2005; Thelin & Gasman, 2011). Institutions focused on research greatly benefitted during World War II and the period immediately after due in large part to these investments by various agencies of the federal government.

The increased involvement of the federal government is perhaps the most significant development in the modern age of higher education. Since the 20th century, the federal government has had a major impact on higher education especially in the areas of research funding and access to higher education. The increase in funding led to growth in infrastructure and the expansion of graduate education. In addition, federal involvement in higher education altered the curriculum and the student body. Underrepresented groups such as women and African Americans became a larger part of the higher education environment. Federal funding of research and investment in federal aid programs to promote greater access to education led to growth in other areas of higher education such as student affairs programs. In the following section I review the impact of federal funding on the growth of the field of student affairs.

Student Affairs

The changes mentioned above are all significant, but there are some less recognized aspects of federal involvement that are also important to acknowledge. Some consideration must also be given to the many support units and personnel that work to fulfill the academic mission of institutions. Modern institutions typically operate at least two parallel units—academics and student affairs. While the mission of academic units is obvious, the role of student affairs is less understood. Yet these units play a significant role in support of the academic mission.

The development of student affairs follows the growth and evolution of higher education in general. The persistence of the residential college model was an important contributor to the development of the field (Nuss, 1996). Other changes in higher education such as the growth of the extra-curriculum movement, the addition of athletics and the Greek system also contributed to the development of the field of student affairs. Increased enrollments and the expansion of access to education for women as well as the opening of segregated Black colleges were

additional factors. Over time, the faculty gradually concerned themselves more and more with academics and student conduct became a matter for administrators to monitor (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The focus of the faculty was on cultivating a life of the mind among students; student life outside the classroom was of little concern.

All these factors converged and lead to the emergence and growth in the early 20th century of what was then called the student personnel movement (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Surging enrollments were a major impetus for the development of the field. While it might seem counterintuitive during a period of growing enrollments, the field embraced the core philosophical approach which promoted attention to the unique and individual differences of students. This philosophy would remain a key feature of the field. With the burgeoning enrollments, roles for staff personnel on college campuses expanded significantly. This new cadre of student personnel practitioners soon began to organize and reach out to their colleagues at neighboring institutions, leading to the formation of professional organizations for student personnel administrators and counselors. Graduate programs for professional preparation in student personnel services soon followed (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The field was growing rapidly and student personnel appeared on many campuses, not just the large state schools.

In 1937 the American Council on Education (ACE) published a report looking back on the history and development of student affairs. The organization's report, the Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV) (American Council on Education, 1937), called for a renewed focus on students as individuals and greater coordination and organization of student services in support of and alignment with the mission and character of each unique institution (Nuss, 1996). The report advised educators that a college education was more than academic development; such an education should also contribute to growth in other areas so as to promote the development of the

whole student (Evans, 2010). A follow-up report in 1949 emphasized the need to focus on students as individuals and to recognize that each student arrives at college with a different set of characteristics, skills and abilities. The report stressed the need to focus on well-rounded student development, not just academic or intellectual development (Nuss, 1996). Concern for the development of the whole student was fixed as a central philosophical tenet of the student affairs profession.

As its philosophical foundations developed, the field of student affairs continued to grow. This was especially true during the post-World War II period which saw much greater involvement in higher education by the federal government. As mentioned above, the greater access afforded by various federal investments in student aid created a need for more aid administrators and support personnel charged with facilitating the success of underrepresented groups. It was also during this period that the relationship between colleges and students changed. The policy of *in loco parentis*—in which college personnel acted in place of the parents—ended and student rights were more clearly defined through various legal actions and challenges (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The result was more freedom and personal responsibility for students and a greater need on the part of institutions to be responsive to student demands.

Toward the end of the 20th century, the appellation of student affairs gradually replaced that of student personnel. Student affairs practitioners and their professional associations called for more and better research to support the field (Nuss, 1996). Members of the various professional organizations within student affairs initiated an effort to identify, enumerate and publish a code of professional standards. Out of this effort emerged a new organization—the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) (Nuss, 1996). The first

handbook of CAS standards was published in 1986. The standards served as a guide for professional practice and continue to play an important role in the field today.

The drive to define the professional standards of student affairs practice was accompanied by a corresponding call for further research into student development. Practitioners initiated research and promoted practice supported by evidence-based research and theory. Early student development practice largely focused on vocational guidance by helping students choose occupations compatible with their personal characteristics (Evans, 2010; Nuss, 1996). By the mid-20th century, theories from the fields of psychology and sociology began to be applied to student development (Evans, 2010). Social scientists of the period sought to understand the influence of college attendance on students' development. This search for understanding also began to include an examination of academic advising (Cook, 2009). The next section will review the history of academic advising. It is followed by a brief discussion of some of the relevant theories from the student development research that provides the rationale for this study.

Academic Advising

The history of academic advising is necessarily intertwined with that of higher education in general and student affairs in particular. The developments in higher education are reflected in those of advising. However, advising was not always as integral to the higher education endeavor or as well understood as it is today. The history of advising can be organized into three periods: the initial phase before advising was a defined activity, the second phase when it became a defined but unexamined activity and the present phase in which it is both a defined and examined activity (Cook, 2009; Frost, 2000). The final period is most relevant to the topic of

this study, but it is important to understand the full trajectory of the history of advising to appreciate where we find ourselves at the present moment.

Academic advising was not recognized as a discrete or essential function of higher education during the era of the early colonial colleges. During this earliest period of American higher education, colleges were established to provide an educated clergy and, ostensibly, an educated citizenry (Frost, 2000). The reality is that many of those that enrolled were the young men of the privileged class. The colleges of this period largely followed the residential model in which students were strictly supervised on all matters. Up until the 19th century, college presidents and, in time, the faculty had the task of advising students (Cook, 2009). Advising was focused on moral development and regulation. It was not academic advising as we understand it today.

Toward the middle of the 19th century, coeducation made it necessary for colleges to hire individuals to supervise and counsel the women of the college (Cook, 2009). These individuals were often charged with providing guidance and ensuring the moral decency of the young women. It was also during this period that the first documented system of advising was developed in which students were assigned to a member of the faculty for advising. The growth in importance and prevalence of the elective system also increased the need for systematic advising (Cook, 2009; Frost, 2000). Through the elective system, students gained more course options and there was no longer a single, well-defined curriculum. However, at the same time that students perhaps needed more guidance in course selection, there was a countervailing growth in distance between the faculty and students (Frost, 2000).

At the start of the 20th century, recognition of the divide between students and faculty led to efforts to close the gap. Colleges began to introduce formal systems of advising in which

students were assigned to a specific faculty member. These programs proliferated and were later joined by orientation and other student affairs efforts (Frost, 2000). The curriculum was more complex and colleges became more concerned with student development. It was during this period that student affairs emerged as a field. Academic advising had traditionally fallen within the purview of academic affairs (Frost, 2000). However, with greater curricular complexity and increased attention to student development, advisors and counselors proliferated and specialized (Cook, 2009). Among the many new areas of specialization was counseling for psychological and vocational matters. Many institutions also initiated special programs for new first-year students including special courses and in-depth orientation programs (Cook, 2009). With the appearance of first-year student and career counselors, advising became a shared responsibility rather than a task solely for the faculty. However, advising on academic matters remained largely a faculty concern well into the middle of the century.

In the latter half of the 20th century, advising began to change. It was a period marked by expansion and curricular diversification. Federal funding in the form of research grants and educational benefits to armed services members led to the growth of research universities (Frost, 2000). Increased enrollments and curricular diversity intensified the need for academic advising. It was also during this time that access to college expanded resulting in a much more heterogeneous population of students. The arrival of a more diverse student body and the emphasis of the faculty on research and securing research funding led to further changes in academic advising. New populations of students required new services and new approaches (Cook, 2009). In many cases professional advisors rather than faculty took on these new roles. Centralized advising offices began to appear on some campuses and new sources of advising appeared in the form of peers and paraprofessionals (Cook, 2009). The task of advising

undeclared students and pre-majors—those not yet fully admitted to the academic units that housed their intended majors—was frequently undertaken by advising units staffed by professional advisors. Advising became more formalized and organized as a result of the changes occurring in higher education during this time (Frost, 2000). However, despite all of these developments, faculty remained the primary source of advising for upper-level or major-specific advising.

In the 1970s, academic advising underwent another period of significant growth and development. One sign of the changes occurring in advising was the emergence of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) in 1979. The association formed concomitantly with the expansion in number and variety of academic advisors. NACADA promoted improved advising practice, research and professional development (Frost, 2000). NACADA initially had 429 charter members (Cook, 2009). Membership in the organization swelled to well over 10,000 in 2008—a testament to the significant growth taking place in the field of academic advising (Cook, 2009). During the 35-year period since its inception, the organization has been instrumental in encouraging research concerning academic advising and promoting the development and understanding of the field as a profession.

Around the same time as the emergence of NACADA, concern about the provision of quality academic advising was gaining attention on a national level. Several organizations published reports critical of the state of advising across the nation. The concept of advising also began to evolve as research led to a greater understanding of the field. In 1986, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) issued standards and guidelines for the provision of student services including academic advising (Cook, 2009). These guidelines proposed new approaches to advising that focused on student development rather than the

traditional prescriptive course advising (Cook, 2009; Frost, 2000). In short, academic advising became a much more complex and developmental process.

Professionalization

Among the growing number of full-time, staff advisors there has been a push for recognition of the field of academic advising as a distinct profession. This mirrors the push for professional recognition found in the broader area of student affairs—an area which often encompasses academic advising units distinct from academic departments and faculty-lead advising. The desire for professional recognition is common among many occupations (Houle, 1980; Wilensky, 1964). In American society, one's occupational choice has traditionally been one of the primary means of determining social status; the work that a person chooses to pursue is often associated with a particular way of life (Super, 1953). This has sometimes resulted in greater aspiration toward fields with higher prestige (Deeg & Patterson, 1947). Greater social prestige is associated with occupations granted professional status. There are various personal rewards associated with membership in a recognized profession. The likelihood of economic gain is an incentive for professional status as the professions are generally better paid (Merton, 1960). Given that economic gains are not a guarantee, it stands to reason that other factors contribute to the drive for professionalization. Beyond the potential for monetary gain, Merton (1960) argues that there are two other highly valuable rewards: altruism and autonomy. Acting in an altruistic manner may engender within the professional an enhanced sense of self-fulfillment. There are rewards associated with altruistic behavior which may contribute to a greater sense of satisfaction. In addition, institutional altruism is rewarded on a societal level (Merton, 1960). Professionals are more highly regarded by society because of the expectation that they act on behalf of their clients and with less emphasis on self-interest.

In addition to the higher regard stemming from altruistic behavior, the professions are also associated with greater autonomy. Expertise is the source of the increased autonomy. Professions are granted the ability to define what it is that they do, how it should be done and who is qualified to do it (Merton, 1960). Mastery of a body of theoretical or technical knowledge allows professionals to establish a monopoly over the information because expertise is limited (Wilensky, 1964). Expert status is derived from specialized education, research and practice within the field. The knowledge and skills of the professional are acquired through special training and often licensure thus making it a scarce commodity. There is often an expectation that this knowledge, once gained, will be kept current through continuing education and accreditation (Houle, 1980). This process of continual professional skill and knowledge building is also known as lifelong learning. In the case of some professions, there has been a push for a process of recertification of knowledge and skills in the form of re-credentialing.

Another aspect of autonomy is the privilege of self-regulation. The task of establishing a professional code of ethics or rules of behavior is often connected with professional associations (Merton, 1960). Professional associations establish the standards and obligate the members to adhere to them. Codes of ethics and standards of behavior lend the professions greater ethical credibility and an enhanced perception among the public. Ultimately, Merton (1960) argued that it is the social recognition and the associated rewards rather than the economic benefits that are most desired by the professional. It would seem that the desire for recognition as a profession among practitioners of a particular occupation amounts to more than simple economic benefit.

The field of sociology has given the idea of the professional considerable attention. Many have attempted to define the professions and the factors that distinguish them from other occupations (Moore, 1970). This study does not include a full review of all of these ideas nor

does it seek to establish an essential definition of the professional. However, it is necessary to explore some of the ideas and debates surrounding the idea of the professional to better frame the topic for this study.

There is disagreement among sociologists about what it means to be a professional or the process by which an occupation attains professional status. A common approach has been to study the characteristics of each professional group in hopes of identifying the quintessential elements of a profession. Known as the taxonomic approach, this conceptualization of professions quickly becomes quite complex because of the different trajectories of development occurring within occupations that have achieved professional status (Klegon, 1978). When viewing the professions from a taxonomic lens, inconsistencies abound. Criticism of the taxonomic approach points to the variations in development among the professions as well as the inability to identify and apply an essential definition to the professions as each differs in its own way.

Another approach has been to examine the process of professionalization in terms of stages of development. Some have argued for a fixed and discrete sequence of steps by which an occupation develops into a recognized profession. Among the many authors to pursue a fixed-step approach, Wilensky (1964) is often cited for his traditional model of professionalization. This traditional model of professionalization has four stages. The first stage is marked by the ability of the individual to make a living pursuing a sole activity and is also often associated with the mastery of a body of specialized and often theoretical knowledge. The authority of the professional is based on the mastery of this specialized knowledge. In addition, practice is guided by professional norms which place the interests of the client first (Schaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010). The second phase involves the development of schools for training new

members of the occupation—completion of which indicates competence and offers legitimacy. The growth of professional associations occurs in the third stage. These associations allow members to formulate best practices and to seek legal protections through licensure and regulation (Schaffer et al., 2010). The final stage, and one that is especially relevant to this research project, is concerned with the establishment of a code of ethics to which all members of the profession will adhere.

The professions have been conceptualized in other ways. Frequently, these examinations focus on one or more of the elements said to distinguish the professions from mere occupations. One such approach is to consider the nature of the education and theoretical knowledge required (Klegon, 1978). Still another approach has been to view the professions through the lens of social class. Understanding the professions and the process of professionalization requires an examination of social status and influence (Klegon, 1978). This approach examines the ties of professions to the dominant power structures of society. In Western societies, the professions are typically associated with the middle class (Larson, 1979). In keeping with this approach, the professions have also been viewed through a number of lenses, including from Marxist and critical theory perspectives (Larson, 1979). Each of these approaches has its merits.

Another approach to defining the professions eschews a focus on essential characteristics or a set sequence of development in favor of a more nuanced and dynamic conceptualization of the process of professionalization. A concentration on process is less hierarchical and exclusionary. Instead of trying to determine the quintessential professions, occupations can be evaluated on their development among a set of characteristics (Houle, 1980). This dynamic approach is more inclusive and allows for continued growth and development. The professional ideal is never fully attained; professionalization is a continual process of growth and

development. Development within the characteristics is continual and part of the lifelong learning necessary for the professional.

The process of professionalization is viewed as a continuum rather than as a set of essential qualities or discrete stages. Houle (1980) identified a set of 14 dynamic characteristics constituting the process of professionalization. These characteristics were: define the functions and delineate the central mission of the occupation; mastery of theoretical knowledge; capacity to address real problems; use of practical knowledge through the application of theory to solve problems; self-enhancement through continued study; formal training to convey the essential knowledge and techniques associated with the occupation; credentialing through the evaluation and testing of practitioners perhaps including licensure; creation of a subculture; legal reinforcement; public acceptance and awareness; development of a tradition of ethical practice perhaps outlined in a formal code of ethics; the establishment and enforcement of penalties for unethical or incompetent practice; distinguishing the work of an occupation from that of allied vocations; and, finally, defining the relationship between the practitioners and those who use their services. With 14 characteristics, there is bound to be some argument about which is most important and so forth. However, by focusing on a set of dynamic characteristics, this approach avoids debates about which occupations are true professions. There is no need to fall back on the rank ordering associated with the taxonomic conceptualization. Instead, any occupation can be evaluated on its development within the set of characteristics.

While there isn't space to discuss each of the 14 characteristics in detail, one in particular is critical to the topic of this research project. The eleventh characteristic concerns the ethical practice of the professional and is often associated with a formal code of ethics. This project explores the importance of ethical standards. Many of the conceptualizations of

professionalization discussed in this section recognize ethical conduct and codes of ethics as important aspects in the development of a profession. A code of ethics should not be static, overly detailed or rigid (Houle, 1980). A code of ethics should serve as a guide to the moral behaviors expected of the practitioners within the profession. Importantly, the codes are expected to evolve and change over time. They should also be general enough to allow some degree of interpretation and situational flexibility. The establishment of a code of ethics is often a primary concern for professional associations (Moore, 1970). Once a code is established, it must be communicated to the members of the profession (Houle, 1980). This is a task well suited to a professional organization.

NACADA is the primary professional association for academic advising. The establishment of a professional organization is an important component of Wilensky's (1964) traditional model of professionalization. The establishment of NACADA has been identified as the first step in the move toward the professionalization of academic advising (Cook, 2009). The organization is a key advocate for the advancement of academic advising as a profession. NACADA provides a number of resources aimed at improving advising research and practice and is a strong advocate for standards and professional development. Throughout its brief history, the organization has sought to advance academic advising to a legitimate and recognized profession.

One area where academic advising has seen development is in regards to professional standards or codes of ethics. Professional groups view the establishment of professional standards as one of two criteria necessary for professionalization (Wilensky, 1964). The primary professional group of a profession often establishes and in some cases enforces a code of ethics (Lowenstein, 2005). The purpose of codes of ethics or professional standards is to convert

philosophy and theory into practicable guidelines (Dean, 1992). The prestige and power associated with professions comes with an obligation to also support the public well-being. The professional must balance autonomy with accountability (Frankel, 1998). Professional autonomy is a privilege granted by society. A code of ethics is meant to provide assurance to society that the profession acts in a manner supportive of the public good (Frankel, 1989). There are two organizations that have issued professional standards specific to academic advising: NACADA and CAS.

NACADA

Given its influence on the development and promotion of the field of academic advising, I will now turn to a brief discussion of NACADA in order to lay the foundation for subsequent sections. One of the most significant developments in terms of advancing academic advising was the 1979 formation of NACADA—an association dedicated to encouraging quality academic advising. The organization focuses on the development of academic advising as a profession and emphasizes the advancement of the field rather than the individual interests of advisors (Beatty, 2009). It is not within the scope of this paper to provide a detailed history of NACADA or academic advising, but there are a number of resources that compile a thorough history of events important to the growth and development of the organization and the field (Beatty, 2009; Cook, 2009; Gordon, 1998; Grites & Gordon, 2009). The subsequent section will briefly present a few of the key developments that are especially relevant to this study such as the formation of NACADA, the growth of the organization and the development of the Statement of Core Values (SCV).

One of the earliest developments in the history of NACADA was the establishment of a theoretical basis for developmental academic advising in 1972 with the publication of separate

articles by Crookston (1972) and O'Banion (1972). These authors framed student development theory as central to academic advising (Cook, 2009). Crookston's article focused on developmental advising in general while O'Banion proposed a specific model for advising (Tuttle, 2000). Its support of the linkage of student development theory to academic advising was important because it encouraged a developmental, holistic and student-centered approach to advising that moved far beyond prescriptive advising. The vision for NACADA emerged from the First National Conference on Academic Advising held in 1977 (Grites & Gordon, 2009). The organization was officially formed during the second annual conference in 1979. The annual conference remains an important organizational tradition. Conferences provide not only opportunities for advising colleagues to meet and work together but frequently also occasions for attendees to explore the connection between theory and practice.

Following the formation of NACADA, another important event was the 1981 inclusion of *academic advising* as a descriptor in the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) after a long period of lobbying by NACADA (Beatty, 2009; Cook, 2009). The inclusion of the descriptor was an important indicator of the growth in the literature and research related to academic advising. Also occurring in 1981 was the publication of the first issue of the NACADA Journal. The journal is an important source of scholarship and research specific to academic advising. That same year, advising was closely linked with retention (Cook, 2009). In 1986, rather than leaving the task to another higher education association, NACADA led an effort in collaboration with the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) to create a set of standards for advising program development and evaluation (Beatty, 2009; Cook, 2009; Gordon, 1998; Grites & Gordon, 2009). Toward similar purposes, NACADA created a set of responsibilities and expectations associated with academic advising. The

document was first adopted in 1994 as The Statement of Core Values (SCV) of Academic Advising (Grites & Gordon, 2009). The SCV is intended to provide guidance on the practice of advising in a variety of higher education settings. The standards from CAS and the NACADA SCV are both key resources for academic advising.

Another important facet of NACADA is the Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources. The Clearinghouse was established with a grant from The Ohio State University in 1987 and funded in 1989 through a partnership between NACADA and the Ohio State University (Beatty, 2009). The Clearinghouse—freely accessible through the NACADA web site—contains numerous resources to guide advisors and administrators on the practice of advising and the implementation of advising programs rooted in student development theory.

The same decade that witnessed the establishment of the Clearinghouse, also saw the emergence and growth of graduate coursework specific to academic advising. These were stand-alone courses or concentration areas for degree programs related to advising (Beatty, 2009). NACADA deserves a large measure of credit for helping academic advising grow “from a course scheduling function to an all-encompassing approach to the whole student” (Gordon & Grites, 2009, p.53). In 2003, NACADA partnered with Kansas State University to offer a graduate certificate in academic advising. An online Master of Science degree would follow in 2008 (Cook, 2009). For the first time, advisors anywhere in the nation could enroll in a graduate program specific to developmental advising.

While there were many other milestones, perhaps the clearest sign of the development of academic advising was the growth of the field in terms of the number of professional advisors. This was especially true among the large research universities (Grites & Gordon, 2009). One measure of this growth is NACADA membership data. An initial membership of fewer than 500

in 1979 grew to over 10,000 by 2008 (Cook, 2009). Another indication of the development of the field is the overall growth of support professionals which includes professional advisors. This group is the fastest growing segment of individuals providing advising services (Rhoades, 2001). Data from 2004 and 2011 national surveys of academic advising show increased reliance on professional advisors—especially at large, public institutions (Self, 2013). As a means of addressing retention-related issues, advising centers staffed by professional advisors are increasingly being used on campuses. The ACT National Survey of Academic Advising found that the number of institutions staffing advising centers had tripled between 1980 and 2000 (Tuttle, 2000). Clearly, the field has grown dramatically with the addition of many new professional advisors. This growth has had an important impact on the progression of academic advising toward recognition as a distinct profession.

NACADA SCV

Since its beginning, NACADA has played a major role in discussing and advancing topics of concern to advisors. It has been a strong advocate for the advancement of standards and the move toward professionalization (Grites & Gordon, 2009). The organization collaborated with CAS to develop standards of practice for advising units. NACADA also developed a Statement of Core Values for the field. The topic of a code of ethics for advising first emerged in 1990 at the NACADA annual conference (Simon Frank, 2005). A committee was formed and during the next two annual conferences the code of ethics morphed into the SCV. Rather than creating a code of ethics which required strict adherence from members, NACADA focused on establishing a set of advising responsibilities (Lowenstein, 2005). These values were first published in 1994 and have been periodically updated. While NACADA is comprised of and represents faculty, professional and other forms of advisors, the SCV is

intended to promote professional practice in advising. According to the association, “The SCV provides a framework to guide professional practice and reminds advisors of their responsibilities to students, colleagues, institutions, society, and themselves” (NACADA, 2005, p.1). The SCV is comprised of six values. The questions for the survey instrument used in this study are drawn from these six values. The full text of the SCV can be found in Appendix A. Each of the six values is briefly discussed below.

Core Value One: *Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise.* The first value is the most extensively delineated. This value covers a range of activities related to the advisor’s responsibilities to students and the developmental advising relationship. At its broadest level, this value discusses the advisor’s role in the developmental relationship, while on a narrower level it focuses on legalities and the responsibility to properly document advising interactions (NACADA, 2005).

Core Value Two: *Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.* The second value is largely concerned with understanding campus resources and maintaining relationships with campus constituents in order to assist students. Advisors must also possess an understanding of various campus offices and processes (NACADA, 2005).

Core Value Three: *Advisors are responsible to their institutions.* The third value is concerned with advocating for students in the interest of bettering the institution and the advising process. Advisors work to improve advising and their institutions through service, professional behavior and the pursuit of better modes of operation or understanding (NACADA 2005).

Core Value Four: *Advisors are responsible to higher education in general.* Advisors collaborate with students in a partnership based on appropriate theoretical perspectives and

practices. According to the fourth value, advisors should promote educational achievement and high standards (NACADA, 2005).

Core Value Five: *Advisors are responsible to their educational community.* The fifth value is concerned with promoting the forms of learning that take place outside the classroom such as study abroad and community service experiences. Advisors should also understand transfer processes and assist students in the pursuit of their academic goals (NACADA, 2005).

Core Value Six: *Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally.* Personal responsibility, self-care and the need for professional growth are aspects of the sixth and final core value. This value also promotes research within the field and increased opportunities to interact and understand the diversity within the higher education setting (NACADA, 2005).

The SCV mentioned above is explored in detail in an exposition provided on the NACADA website. Within the exposition, each of the six values is given in-depth treatment with numerous points of explanation. While the SCV is important to the field of academic advising, it is not fully embraced by the profession as a whole. Awareness of the SCV occurs more on an individual basis rather than as a result of institutional policy or intent (Donnelly, 2004). Furthermore, opinions on the SCV are sometimes mixed. While Donnelly found that the use of standards indirectly contributed to greater job satisfaction due to greater role clarification, some advisors felt that the use of standards limited flexibility. Additionally, some advisors expressed concerns over the time and resources needed to train adequately in relation to the SCV.

As the SCV is intended to serve as a guide for professional practice, it is important to ascertain whether the values are relevant to practice. The introduction to the SCV states that the

six values are not of equal weight. Advisors are cautioned to consider the values in relation to the unique character of their own institutions. This raises some questions about the significance of the six values. While it would be interesting to ascertain the relative merit of each of the values across all of the varied institutional settings within in higher education, that study is beyond the scope of this research project. Instead, this study will focus on the perceptions of academic advisors in regards to the significance of the values within a large public institution in the State University System of Florida.

CAS

As mentioned above, NACADA is one of two organizations to issue standards specific to academic advising. The second organization is the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). While the CAS standards were not used as part of this study, they are discussed here due to their relevance in framing the significance of the SCV. CAS was founded for the important purpose of establishing standards and to guide professional practice in higher education. The mission of the council is to “promote the improvement of programs and services to enhance the quality of student learning and development” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2014, p.1). When applied to programmatic efforts the standards represent a means of ensuring quality (Cooper & Saunders, 2000). The council publishes standards for a broad variety of student affairs and student development services, including academic advising units. The standards pertaining to academic advising were developed under the aegis of CAS, though they were written by practitioners in the field of advising. Academic advisors crafted the standards rather than leaving the task to academic administrators from outside the field (Grites & Gordon, 2009). The standards have been periodically reviewed and revised since they were first published in 1986.

As with the NACADA core values, little research has been done to determine the extent to which the CAS standards impact the actual practice of academic advising. Even so, it has been argued that both the NACADA SCV and CAS Standards should be viewed as tools for ongoing self-assessment (Kempland, 2009). Similarly, programmatic efforts at the advising unit level can also be assessed using the two sets of standards. One study (Keeling, 2010) of academic advising units indicated an adherence to the CAS standards. The study sought to determine how the standards influenced the practice of advising. The results were mixed; the study found that some practices are being informed by the standards while no determination could be made about the rationale behind others. Many advisors participating in the study professed little knowledge of the standards. Another study of student affairs practitioners by Cooper and Saunders (2000) found similar results with variance in the knowledge and application of the standards depending upon the generalizability of the standard in question. An examination of the mission statements of academic advising units found little consistency in regards to the inclusion of all the CAS Standards (Kempland, 2009). It is impossible to determine the impact of the CAS standards on the practice of academic advising from such a small number of studies. As Keeling points out, the lack of research leaves many questions unanswered. The few studies that have looked at the application of CAS standards to academic advising indicate that standards add credibility to an advising program. However the standards are broad in scope and can be difficult to put into action.

Another study (Donnelly, 2004) examined the CAS standards and NACADA core values in relation to job satisfaction. Among the findings was that the use of standards provided clear expectations for advisors and contributed to a sense of professionalism. Knowledge of specific standards varied among the participants although most were aware that they existed.

Additionally, respondents from different institutions reported mixed use with some advising units following the NACADA SCV, others following the CAS standards and some adhering to standards associated with a mission statement developed at their institution. Among the questions left unanswered in Donnelly's study was the means by which advisors learned of the standards regardless of whether they were from CAS, NACADA or homegrown. A secondary concern is whether knowledge of the standards had been a component of advisor training. Not much is known about how advisors come to learn about the CAS or NACADA SCV. Anecdotal reports from colleagues at the institution where I work indicate that knowledge of standards is more haphazard with many learning about them at a regional NACADA conference rather than as a job requirement or part of training to become an academic advisor. Granted, these are merely casual statements from colleagues and not part of a research study. However, these statements do raise questions about the significance and transmission of professional ethics.

In a discussion on professional ethics, Dean (1992) points out that people assume a lot of values as they grow to maturity but few of these are internalized and deliberately thought through. He further states that for this very reason training is an important means of integrating a code of ethics into practice. It is through training that people have the opportunity to examine moral quandaries and apply a code of ethics absent the pressures of real life. Training provides a safe space where individuals can practice ethics scenarios.

An additional concern is the process of localizing a code of ethics from a national organization to fit the particulars of an individual institution or advising unit. How do you retain the intent of the codes while tailoring them to the specifics of your particular organizational environment? Institutions of higher education vary considerably as do advising units on any given campus. This raises the question about the importance of the various values of the SCV in

different advising settings. Fortunately, the CAS standards and the NACADA SCV are written in such a manner as to be generalizable to multiple advising settings.

Functions of Academic Advising

Academic advising is a complex endeavor. The field has long focused on practice (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). One way of clarifying the nature of academic advising is to identify the practices associated with advising and to answer the question: “What is it that advisors do?” Fortunately, this issue has already been addressed in the literature. After reviewing the literature of the past 30 years related to academic advising and consulting with practicing faculty and professional advisors, Smith and Allen (2006) identified the dominant themes and developed a list of 12 critical functions of academic advising which they organized into five construct areas. These five constructs are: integration, referral, information, individuation and shared responsibility. The five construct areas and the 12 functions contained within them are arranged in Appendix C. Within the integration construct there are five distinct but related functions: overall connect, major connect, general education connect, degree connect and out-of-class connect. The referral construct consists of two functions: referral academic and referral non-academic. There are also two functions categorized as information: How things work and accurate information. Individuation includes two functions: the skills, abilities and interests category and the ‘know as individual’ category. The last construct consists of the sole function of shared responsibility.

The functions were defined as part of a process to develop survey instruments measuring student and advisor perceptions about the practice of academic advising. Student and faculty versions of a survey instrument—*Inventory of Academic Advising Functions*—were developed based on the list of 12 identified functions (Smith & Allen, 2006). When compiling their list,

Smith and Allen intentionally omitted functions relating to personal counseling as academic advisors may not be properly suited to handle issues of this nature. Limiting the list in this way allowed for a more discrete and generalizable list of functions without confusing tasks more closely aligned with the role of a personal counselor.

The work of Smith and Allen (2006) and Allen and Smith (2008a; 2008b) is of particular importance as the functions they identified are integral to this research study. Their research focuses on differences between faculty and student perceptions of advising practice. Students rate all of the functions as important (Allen & Smith, 2006) but with differences in magnitude according to variations in demographic and personal factors. Both faculty and students tend to emphasize the importance of conveying accurate information through advising (Allen & Smith, 2008a). Correspondence in opinion between faculty and students was also found for factors related to the integration function of advising. While faculty generally rate all of the five areas as important, faculty may feel less responsible for providing those advising functions that are less central to the academic purpose of the institution.

One important area of contrast was found in the information function of explaining institutional rules and procedures. Students viewed this function as very important whereas faculty felt less responsible for providing this sort of information. These results are congruent with Keeling's (2009) findings that some faculty advisors were dismayed by student expectations that they should be well-versed in institutional policies and procedures. Differences between the two groups were also identified within the individuation and referral functions. Faculty advisors placed more weight on the significance of the referral function than did students, whereas students rated individuation as more important. While the differences in student and faculty perceptions of the functions are important, it is worth noting that both populations tended to rank

all of the functions as important to some degree; none were seen as unimportant. This tendency is a consideration for any study that wishes to ascertain differences in importance among the functions.

Advising practice is one of two major aspects of this study. The second concerns academic advisor perceptions of the SCV and its impact on the practice of advising. One of the central questions of Keeling's (2009) study concerns the importance of the CAS standards to the practice of academic advising. Similarly, this study explores the impact of professional values and standards—specifically the NACADA SCV—on advising practice. In doing so, it considers the following questions: Do values defined by a professional organization guide professional practice? Do professional values matter considering the variability found in individual practice?

The next section offers a brief discussion of some of the relevant theories from student development research that provides the rationale for this study. There are many theoretical models related to student development. Because of the complexity of advising and student development, no single theory can fully explain what occurs when students enroll in college (Robbins, 2012). Many of the theories are linear in nature and limited in the scope of the phenomena that they attempt to explain (Jones & Abes, 2011). Some of the models are intended for use in a generalized approach to all students while others are focused on specific sub-populations. For the purposes of this research, I will mention a few concepts which are especially relevant to academic advising and the research project at hand.

Student Development Theory

Before reviewing the student development theories shaping this study, it is important to reiterate that academic advising uses theories and ideas from a variety of fields—most notably education, psychology and sociology. For this study, the most pertinent ideas come from the

student development literature. This study incorporates ideas about the professions and the process of professionalization found in the sociology literature. The ideas framing the significance of academic advising come from the student development literature, which draws from education and psychology. These ideas provide the justification for the focus of this research project and establish the importance of academic advising as a topic worthy of further study.

The day-to-day life of an academic advisor is often spent working with students or completing administrative tasks such as reviewing transcripts or maintaining student degree audits. Due to the frequently large advising loads and an ever-increasing number of administrative tasks, much of an advisor's attention and efforts are attuned to practice. Student affairs practitioners do not rely on scholarship to inform the work they do (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007). It can be argued that many academic advisors are in the same boat. While a focus on practice is important and often necessary, it is not enough to do what simply works or what may be expedient. Sound practice requires the guidance afforded by theory. It is theory that provides a framework for the actions we take to serve students. It has been said that there is no theory of academic advising (Creamer, 2000). As is the case with many fields, there is no single theory that explains all aspects of academic advising. There are many theories from related fields such as education and the social sciences that are applicable to academic advising. Advisors' varied educational backgrounds allow for the influence of multiple theoretical perspectives on academic advising (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). Given the diverse composition of the modern student body on most campuses, advisors need to be familiar with a variety of theoretical perspectives to shape the guidance they offer. These theories provide the basis for contemporary student affairs practice. An adequate theoretical grounding is necessary to guide

sound practice and evaluation. While not focused on one particular theory, my research is shaped by several important ideas from student development research. The following section explores a few of the key concepts and theories relevant to student affairs and the provision of academic advising such as Tinto's (1993) model of student departure and Chickering's identity development theory (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The ideas discussed in this section provide the framework for this study.

In order to appreciate the significance of student affairs and academic advising, it is necessary to possess some familiarity with student development theory. As already mentioned, one of the major goals of student affairs and academic advising is the development of the whole student. Development of the whole student implies growth along multiple dimensions rather than a singular focus on academic achievement. This idea of multiple areas of development has been a part of student affairs since the publication of the Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV) in 1937 by the American Council on Education (Evans, 2010). This document declared that educators must guide students not only in academic areas but also in personal and professional development. In 1947 the SPPV was revised to stress the importance of differentiation between students because of the heterogeneous background characteristics shaping them (Evans, 2010). Development of the whole student is a concept embedded with multiple meanings and subject to multiple interpretations. The time period associated with the college years for traditional-aged students is typically one of great personal growth as young people transition from childhood roles to adult status. Higher education does not occur in a vacuum or reflect a period of stasis. Students develop in many ways during their time in college. The primary aim of universities and colleges is to provide an education and encourage scholastic achievement. However, it would be irresponsible to ignore the other factors influencing student

development since they impact academic achievement in so many ways. Development of the whole student requires institutions of higher education are to guide student growth in a multitude of areas.

One of the most significant issues in contemporary higher education is the matter of student retention. A great deal of research has been devoted to understanding why so many students leave college. A number of theories seek to explain and understand student retention and persistence. These ideas directly relate to student affairs in general and academic advising in particular. Vincent Tinto (1993) proposed a complex interaction model of student departure. The longitudinal model of institutional departure explains the forces that influence a student's decision to discontinue higher education. While space in these pages will not be devoted to a full treatment and consideration of the entire model, it does contain some important ideas relevant to the topic at hand—namely, the factors impacting student persistence and retention.

Student departures are a complex phenomenon. There are students who voluntarily depart and those compelled to do so by the institution because of academic difficulties. Voluntary departures constitute the much larger of the two populations—about 75% (Tinto, 1993). The first year of enrollment—especially the first semester—is a critical time (Tinto, 1993; Tinto, 1999). The majority of departures occur during the first year or before the start of the second. The transition to college can be a challenging task for new students. The critical relationships between students and their teachers and advisors that contribute to persistence often begin forming during the early weeks for first-year students (Noel, 1985). During the first semester, new students often become unmoored from their prior social networks and must integrate into new social and academic settings. This can be a daunting task and not all students are equally prepared to cope with the psychological adjustments. While continuance beyond the

first year is no guarantee of degree completion, it is often during the first semester that students decide whether they will continue or leave (Tinto, 1993).

Numerous reasons account for students deciding against further enrollment. Both individual and institutional factors contribute to the decision to leave college (Tinto, 1999). However, the role of the individual is worth emphasizing. Among the student factors cited by Tinto (1993) are individual commitments in the form of personal goals and institutional commitments in the form of academic goals which may not necessarily include the attainment of a particular degree. Students with unformed or unclear educational and occupational goals are more likely to depart, especially if the uncertainty continues for an extended period of time. These students are unable to connect their courses with a future aim. It has been argued that academic advising offers the best means for helping students clarify academic goals and integrate those with general goals for life after college (Habley, 1981). Uncertainty about goals may cause students to see courses as isolated, irrelevant and boring (Noel, 1985). Those students with higher levels of goal commitment are more willing to exert the effort needed to attain their desired goals. Institutional commitment is the willingness of a student to exert the effort needed to attain desired goals within a particular educational setting. It may be the case that degree attainment is not the goal; many students enroll in one institution with the aim of transferring to another.

Departure rates vary by institutional type and degree of selectivity, as well as by the character of the institution and the collective profile of the student body (Tinto, 1993). Of most interest for the purposes of this research are those factors within a given institutional culture that directly influence a student's decision not to continue. There are two dimensions to institutional culture—the academic sphere and the social sphere. Due to the nature of higher education, these

two seemingly separate spheres can actually overlap. In the best of circumstances they often do. Tinto (1993) points to incongruence between the student and the institution as the source of many departures. Incongruence can be said to occur when a student perceives that they do not fit into the academic and/or the social life of the institution. In such cases, students are more likely to depart.

Within the academic dimension, incongruence occurs when a student perceives that they do not fit into the academic climate at an institution. The environment is either too challenging or not challenging enough or there is some other perceived mismatch (Tinto, 1993). Ultimately, students want learning of substance and value. They want the skills and preparation needed for their futures after the baccalaureate (Noel, 1985). It is important to recognize the importance of perception. If a student perceives a mismatch, it may be difficult for the individual to recognize evidence to the contrary or to commit to greater effort to engage with the communities of the institution.

Perceptions of incongruence can also occur along the social dimension, when a student feels that they do not fit into the social climate of an institution. In this situation, a student may perceive that they do not fit in with any of their peers. Tinto (1993) indicated that a student's interaction with faculty, staff and peers shapes perceptions of the social climate of an institution. Peer-to-peer interactions are especially important, as they impact almost every area of student learning and development (Astin, 1993). Individuals ascertain the collective social climate of an institution through interactions with the various campus communities. If a student perceives a high degree of mismatch between their own personality and the collective culture of the institution, they are likely to depart. This is especially true if they cannot find a niche or subculture on campus within which they can form adequate social connections. A failure to form

meaningful social connections resulting in isolation is another reason for departures. During the transition to college, social isolation is frequently the most significant factor contributing to voluntary withdrawal (Tinto, 1993). An isolated student may appear unremarkable when compared to peers and only differ in the respect that they have not formed any meaningful connections with either the social or academic communities of a college.

Peer connections are essential for student persistence but other relationships are also important. Tinto (1993) emphasized the importance of faculty contact with students both in terms of frequency and meaningfulness. Experiences with the faculty both in and outside the classroom shape a student's perceptions of the academic climate of an institution. These interactions also shape student perceptions about the overall quality of the education (Astin, 1993). Time spent in the classroom constitutes only a small portion of a typical day for a student. Contact with faculty beyond the formal constraints of the classroom is associated with a variety of positive educational outcomes and is therefore critical to student success and persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1995). Educational activities such as discussions, seminars, and demonstrations can reinforce and build off topics raised in a classroom setting. The impact of these activities varies based on the quality and frequency of interactions (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1995). Faculty can also promote interaction among peers through facilitation of non-classroom activities. In this way, an academic issue becomes an opportunity for socialization. Such informal contact with faculty can serve to bridge the academic and social realms of college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1995). Informal learning and faculty-student interactions offer rewarding opportunities for fostering connections to the institution.

The integration of these two spheres—the social and the academic—is crucial. Academic advising is one key venue for bringing them together (Winston, 1994). In fact, students, advisors

and administrators all expect that a personal connection will be an integral part of the advising relationship (Bowman, 2009). On some campuses it may be the only logical choice given the work load of faculty and the size of the student body. Indeed, academic advising may be the only structured endeavor on campus wherein students can sustain meaningful and ongoing interactions with a caring and concerned institutional representative (Hunter & White, 2004). The frequency of advising interactions has been found to impact student satisfaction with advising; more frequent meetings results in greater satisfaction (Lowe & Toney, 2000). This mirrors the relationship between faculty and students. Institutions with low retention rates are associated with low levels of faculty-student interactions (Tinto, 1993). By now, it should be clear that retention is not merely a concern for administrators and enrollment managers; it is also a concern for academic units, the faculty and academic advisors (Noel, 1985). As institutions increasingly focus on student retention, these concerns become a priority for academic units and of course a concern for academic advisors. Student retention is often a special concern for academic advisors who serve first-year and new transfer students.

It is important that students form connections to an institution as early as possible during their first semester to encourage persistence. The transition to college during the first semester is an especially challenging moment for new first-year students. For many students attending residential colleges or institutions away from home, the transition to college is marked by a physical separation from the old peer and support networks of childhood, high school and the family home. At the same moment that students are wrestling with these issues, they are also trying to establish peer networks in a new setting. Many of these students are also living independently for the first time and having to learn all the skills such a change entails. Students vary in their abilities to negotiate all these challenges.

While all students face transition issues, some are affected more powerfully by the process of integration into the social and academic communities of the institution than others. This transition period is when students are perhaps most susceptible to isolation. Voluntary departures occur most frequently during the first semester of the first year (Tinto, 1993). Social isolation is the main cause for many of these departures. Therefore it is important that students form connections with a social or academic community during their first semester. Even if the institution is not a perfect fit on the whole, membership in a community or subgroup can foster feelings of belonging and membership. In addition, meaningful engagement with peers can offset lower levels of engagement with the faculty for some students. These associations can help to dispel feelings of incongruence. However, Tinto (1993) noted that feelings of congruence are stronger the more central one's subgroup is to the mainstream of the campus community. One must feel as though they belong and are a part of some community in order to persist.

If belonging is a critical condition for fostering persistence, one way of increasing feelings of belonging is through involvement. Interactions with peers, staff and faculty engage students in the learning process and with the campus community. Tinto (1993) pointed out that greater involvement with academics and college life seems to positively impact student learning. Not only is involvement beneficial for building connections to campus communities, it also fosters learning. It can result in a greater appreciation and desire for further involvement. The greater levels of participation can also increase the amount of effort exerted toward academic pursuits. As Tinto (1999, p. 6) stated, "Students who learn are students who stay". From this perspective it could be argued that campuses should focus on facilitating opportunities for engagement with campus communities not only for the sake of improving persistence but also in

the interest of improving academic outcomes and greater engagement with the intellectual life of the institution.

Similar to Tinto's ideas about involvement are the concepts of marginality and mattering. One aspect of Tinto's (1993) theory was the necessity that students form meaningful relationships within a niche or sub-community of the larger college community if they are to persist. The transition to college requires the individual to make many adjustments. Students must adapt both academically and socially along with mastering a host of other life skills. Students are more likely to remain if they feel connected and valued by institutional representatives (Tinto, 1999). Again, these feelings are impacted by the number and quality of contacts with institutional faculty and staff. The challenge for institutions is to prevent students from developing feelings of marginality.

Throughout life individuals experience periods of transition or changes in roles. These transitions can provoke feelings of marginality and disconnectedness and can make individuals feel adrift, unimportant and confused about their roles (Schlossberg, 1989). The experience of marginality makes us feel as though we do not belong and may be accompanied by anxiety and discomfort (Evans, 1998). With every role change or transition there is the possibility that feelings of marginality will occur. A greater difference between the former and the new role may result in greater feelings of marginality—especially if expectations associated with the new role are not clearly defined (Schlossberg, 1989). In short, when we undergo a transition in life, we may perceive that we do not matter to others. One such period of transition occurs when a student starts college for the first time or enrolls at a new institution.

The converse of marginality is mattering. Mattering is the perception that we are of significance to others. As Schlossberg (1989) pointed out, when one believes that they matter to

the community they inhabit, they experience greater levels of motivation. There are five aspects of mattering: attention, importance, ego-extension, dependence, and appreciation (Schlossberg, 1989). Attention is the most basic aspect of mattering and it is the feeling that another person notices our presence. Importance is the belief that another person is concerned about us and our fate. Ego-extension is the feeling that others are concerned about us and share in our successes and failures. Dependence is the feeling that we are needed by others just as we depend on them. Finally, appreciation is when we believe our efforts are appreciated by others. During the transition to college the challenge for institutions is to help students overcome feelings of marginality and to foster connectedness to the institution and feelings of mattering. Mattering can motivate students and incite them to greater levels of involvement and learning (Schlossberg, 1989). Institutions of higher education concerned about student retention should focus on environments and programs that promote feelings of mattering among students. Academic advising represents one vehicle for these efforts. Academic advisors can attend to both the academic and individual needs of students because they possess knowledge about academic and student development issues (Habley, 1981). By paying attention to these needs, academic advisors can help students manage their integration into the academic and social communities of the campus. Academic advising can help students understand their interests and abilities in relation to their academic and life goals (Noel, 1985). By assisting students with understanding their goals and connecting to the communities of college, academic advisors play a vital role in student retention.

Another perspective on belonging and building student connections to institutions of higher education comes in the form of student engagement. Students that input time and effort into educationally purposeful activities are more likely to learn and to persist in college (Kuh, et

al., 2010). Student engagement is therefore a critical component for retention. However, student engagement is not a one-sided responsibility. While it is true that students must invest time and energy in pursuit of educational success, it is also true that institutions must promote the conditions that lead to greater student engagement (Kuh et al., 2010). There are intentional practices institutions can pursue to promote engagement and foster student development and achievement. Investment in a robust academic advising program is one way to encourage student engagement and success.

In addition to the factors related to retention discussed above, there are a number of other theories concerning student development that relate to academic advising. One of the most relevant categories of theory is that of psychosocial and identity development. This category encompasses a number of theories that attempt to explain the development of the individual into a competent adult. These theories form the foundation of much of the thought on the developmental orientation of academic advising. The establishment of identity and understanding of the self is the primary developmental task of traditional-aged college students (Evans, 2010). Identity formation in turn allows for subsequent development in other areas of an individual's life. Of the theories that fall into this group, none is perhaps more important to student affairs and academic advising than Thomas Chickering's theory of psychosocial development.

Chickering's theory features seven vectors of development (Evans, 2010). Development within the vectors can vary greatly from one student to the next. Importantly, the vectors should not be viewed as sequential. Rather, they intersect and development can occur within multiple vectors simultaneously, although likely at differing magnitudes. Students may find themselves re-visiting vectors as they progress through the stages of identity development.

The seven vectors are as follows: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose and developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Developing competence was envisioned to include three elements—intellectual competence, manual skills and interpersonal skills. Intellectual competence includes aspects of cultural and aesthetic refinement. Manual skills are related to athletics, wellness and recreation. Interpersonal skills relate to the ability to communicate and work with peers (Evans, 2010). The managing emotions vector focuses on accepting, managing and expressing emotions in a socially acceptable manner. In moving through autonomy toward interdependence individuals first learn to manage emotional independence. They then move on to recognition of our mutual interconnectedness and interdependence (Evans, 2010). In developing mature interpersonal relationships the primary tasks are to learn to appreciate differences, both individual and intercultural, and to develop enduring, mutually satisfying relationships (Evans, 2010). Establishing significant peer relationships is an important concern for traditional-aged college students.

While all vectors are important, this one may hold special significance for those students just arriving to college. The fifth vector, which builds off those preceding it, is establishing identity. It encompasses factors such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social and cultural heritage, self-acceptance and self-esteem (Evans, 2010). One of the tasks associated with this vector is the integration of these various elements into a sense of self. Perhaps of special importance to advising and higher education in general is the sixth vector which is developing purpose. Development in the sixth vector entails the establishment of clear vocational and personal goals and interpersonal commitments (Evans, 2010). The final vector is developing

integrity. It includes three stages: humanizing values, personalizing values and developing congruence. With humanizing values, students transition from thinking based on morals and mores to thinking which recognizes and accommodates the needs of self and others. With personalizing values, one's internal values are solidified while simultaneously recognizing that others may have differing but equally legitimate beliefs. In the last phase, developing congruence, beliefs and values correspond with actions and the needs of the self are balanced with those of society (Evans, 2010). With Chickering's theory in mind, it is clear that institutions of higher education are the setting for much more than the intended purpose of providing an education. Students grow and learn in multiple ways during their time in college.

Chickering's theory remains one of the most popular of the development models. The theory is useful because it addresses many of the concerns faced by traditional-aged college students (Creamer, 2000). One of the theory's strengths is that each of the vectors can "be translated into concrete areas of student growth, including specifically defined behaviors" (Raushi, 1993, p. 11). The vectors can also be used to plan and evaluate student development programming (Evans, 2010). Student development activities can be designed to support growth in the different vectors. Similarly, advising strategies and interventions can be implemented to address development within the seven vectors. Chickering's ideas influenced the creation of developmental advising. Three of the vectors—developing competence, developing autonomy (later renamed "moving through autonomy toward interdependence"), and developing purpose are especially important to developmental advising (Gordon, 1988). These vectors emphasize developmental advising as a relational process for growth (Frost, 2000). However, identity development is a complex process. It is important to remember that development often occurs at different rates in multiple domains and is influenced by many factors (Bowman, 2009). Theory-

informed practice recognizes this fact and equips advisors to meet the needs of students based on their individual development. While there are certainly valid critiques of the theory, it remains influential in student affairs and academic advising practice.

The preceding section provides the theoretical background for this study. The ideas of Tinto, Schlossberg and Chickering highlighted above were critical in shaping this research project. While there is only space to highlight a few of the key concepts, it is worth noting that there is a large body of literature related to student development and a small but expanding pool of research devoted specifically to academic advising. Theory is important because it provides a rationale for practice. Solid theory often emerges from lessons learned through practice; it is not created in abstraction. Theory-informed practice equips academic advisors to meet the diverse needs of individual students within the complex setting of higher-education.

Summary

This chapter traces the emergence of academic advising as a discrete field within higher education. The preceding pages provide a brief history of higher education, student affairs and academic advising with the aim of situating the field of academic advising. This brief historical overview was followed by a review of select theories important to academic advising in general and this study in particular. Much of the chapter is focused on establishing the context of the study by establishing the history and importance of modern academic advising. A key part of that discussion concerns the more recent movement toward the professionalization of academic advising—a key concern among staff advisors who do not hold faculty positions. The preceding section provided some background on the major professional organization for the field of academic advising—NACADA. It also described the professional values and standards of academic advising developed by NACADA. This information was presented to depict the state

of professionalization for the field of academic advising and to help establish a basis for the desire for professional status among academic advisors. There was also some discussion of the actual functions of academic advising. This study focuses on advisor perceptions of the professional values for academic advising. Specifically, the relationship between the daily practice of academic advisors and the professional values that guide said practice. The aim of this research is to better understand the impact of the guidance afforded by the SCV on the practice of academic advising based on the perceptions of working academic advisors.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The last 50 years have been a period of growth for academic advising—especially for professional academic advisors. The number of academic and student affairs practitioners engaged in academic advising activities has increased dramatically (NACADA, 2015). Along with the growth in numbers, there has been an increased diversity in the roles and responsibilities of those who provide academic advising. Many institutions have increased their reliance on professional advisors often in addition to the traditional use of faculty advisors (Gordon, et al., 1988; Huggett, 2000). This growth in the number of professional advisors has been accompanied by a push for greater professionalization (Shaffer, et al., 2010). The adoption of a professional code of ethics or values is one factor frequently associated with the professionalization of a field. In the case of academic advising, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) issued the Statement of Core Values (SCV) to guide the practice of advising (NACADA, 2005). With the growing importance of professional academic advisors to higher education, it is critical to gain greater understanding of this complex field. This study contributes to a growing body of research on academic advising by examining advisor perceptions of the values from the SCV in relation to the practice of advising.

The purpose of this study was to explore academic advisor perceptions of the relationship between the core values of academic advising and the practice of academic advising. Simply stated, this study asked “do the values impact practice and if so, how?” This chapter presents the

research methods used to examine academic advisor perceptions regarding the NACADA SCV and the practice of academic advising. The theoretical justification for this study was derived from student development theory. Academic advising is an important aspect of higher education because it supports student education and development. The work of Vincent Tinto in the area of student persistence and retention is particularly important as an indicator of the need for academic advising. Also significant is Thomas Chickering's theory of psychosocial development which was influential to the emergence of the developmental advising concept. Details on these two theories are provided in chapter two. The following sections detail the method and the rationale behind the particular approach selected for each stage of the study.

Participants

This research used qualitative interviews as the means for data collection. The goal of a qualitative interview is to yield a deep, rich depiction of a particular phenomenon for the purpose of increased understanding. Because of the amount of data to be collected, populations for these types of studies are typically small—especially compared to quantitative studies wherein greater numbers generally produce more dependable data. For this study, the desired population was between 10 and 20 individuals. This number was expected to yield sufficient information to reach a level of saturation through the repetition of responses. Many PhD-level studies use samples that rely on reaching a saturation point in the data (Mason, 2010). A purposeful sampling method was used to select the participants for this study. Specifically, criterion sampling was used because of the narrow focus of this study on full-time professional academic advisors (Patton, 1990). Only volunteers who were currently employed as full-time professional academic advisors at the institution that was the site for this study at the time of the invitation to participate were eligible for inclusion. Given the importance and prevalence of NACADA, it

was likely that many of the participants would be current or past members of the organization. NACADA membership was not a requirement for inclusion in this study. The participants were expected to have a range of experience levels within academic advising. One of the research aims for this study was to determine if there were differences in perceptions about the SCV based on experience level of academic advisors.

With qualitative research, the researcher and the participants often co-create the understanding that emerges from the study. Therefore, it is critical to select participants that have experience with the phenomenon under investigation. Not only must the participants have a lived experience with the phenomenon but they also need to be diverse so as to add a unique contribution to the study (Lavery, 2003). To that end, this research project was situated within the context of the State University System (SUS) of Florida. Many of the universities within the SUS are large and therefore likely to yield a diverse sample. As indicated in the preceding chapter, large, public institutions are more frequently associated with the use of professional advisors (Grites & Gordon, 2009; Self, 2008). These same institutions also tend to be more research-focused. Therefore, research activity can often be associated with an increased reliance on professional academic advisors. According to the Carnegie Classification system (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015), four of the 12 SUS institutions are within the “very high” research activity (RU/VH) category. This study was situated at one such institution.

While each of these four universities in the “very high” research activity category is unique in its own right, institutions within the same category should share enough similarities that findings from one could arguably be transferable to the others. Although qualitative research is often context-specific, transferability is a potential outcome. Ultimately, it is up to

individuals at each institution to determine the transferability of study findings from research to their particular setting.

The institutions within the Florida SUS employ a variety of advising structures and personnel. Among larger institutions such as those in the SUS, it is common to use both faculty and professional advisors (Self, 2013). The focus of this study was on professional advisors whose primary charge is the delivery of academic advising to undergraduate students. The institution that was the site for this study employs a large number of professional advisors. An indication of the number of professional advisors is derived from the list of advisors enrolled in the Council on Academic Advising course group in the institutional Canvas Learning Management System. At the time that this study was implemented, the number of advisors enrolled in the group exceeded 100. The background, education, training and other factors will vary with a group this large allowing for the desired sample diversity.

While not a perfect method, one means of estimating the character of the intended sample is to look at the national population of academic advisors as reflected in the membership demographic information from NACADA. The NACADA membership is self-selected and may not fully reflect the character of the national population. However, the NACADA membership includes a majority of professional academic advisors. Given the large number of professional advisors at the site of the study, it is reasonable to expect that the sample data should be reflective of the national population of academic advisors. The NACADA membership demographic data, therefore, serves as a source for inferences about what to expect within the population of academic advisors at a particular institution. The demographic characteristics of advisors at the research site are expected to resemble those found in the membership data from NACADA. The advisors at the institutional site for this study, representing a subset of the

national population, are expected to generally reflect the trends within the population of advisors nationally as judged by the NACADA membership demographic information. According to the NACADA membership information, close to 75% of the population of advisors is female and almost half are professional advisors (NACADA, 2015). Approximately two-thirds of the membership identifies as White and nearly one-third have been advisors for less than three years.

Per the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), professional academic advisors are expected to hold a graduate degree in a field relevant to their position (CAS, 2014). Some leeway is granted to those in possession of a combination of education and relevant work experience. Increasingly, a graduate degree is recognized as the minimum qualification for entry into the field of academic advising (Taylor, 2011). Based on recent survey data from NACADA and assuming the study population is reflective of national trends, it was expected that at least two-thirds of this group would possess a graduate degree (Taylor, 2011). While a variety of individuals provide academic advising, this research focused on professional values and practices and thus responses were sought from professional advisors. The sample population was limited to those identifying as professional academic advisors at the time the invitation to participate was initiated. It is presumed that this research will be most relevant and salient for professional academic advisors, advising administrators and fellow researchers interested in the field of academic advising.

This study used an e-mail interview. The pool of potential participants was sent an initial e-mail invitation to take part in the study via a listserv for advisors maintained by the Council on Academic Advising at the institutional site. The researcher believed that the study would be able to attain the desired 15-20 participants. It was believed that the researcher's status as an established and respected member of the academic advising community at the institution where

the study was conducted would aid in the recruitment of participants. It was also assumed that a certain number of subscribers to the listserv would be induced to respond based on their desire to benefit the institution and advising in general. Participants were to be offered an electronic copy of the document resulting from this study. No incentives were planned or offered. The researcher believed that advising colleagues would want to participate based on a desire to advance academic advising.

Instrument

While there are multiple techniques for data collection within qualitative research, the interview is one of the most relied upon. Interviews are conducted to elicit information that cannot be gathered from direct observation (Merriam, 2009). An interview allows for greater insight into the internal world of individuals. Participants can provide rich, meaningful responses that convey thoughts, feelings and personal interpretations that may not be readily ascertained through other data collection methods. There is also a great advantage with the researcher's ability to ask follow up questions that clarify initial responses or seek additional information as new issues are discovered during the interview process. This study employed a qualitative interview.

Qualitative interviews vary in purpose and structure. Interviews can range from the highly structured to the seemingly spontaneous and conversational (Seidman, 2006). The three typical forms of the qualitative interview are unstructured, semi-structured and structured (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Qualitative interviews most often take a semi-structured approach (Merriam, 2009). This approach relies on structured questions with open-ended, follow-up questions or probes used to gain deeper insight (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Questions framed in an open-ended manner encourage deeper responses and can reveal information not readily

ascertained from a more structured line of questioning. This research project adopted a semi-structured approach to the qualitative interviews.

With a semi-structured qualitative interview, it is common to begin by asking respondents the same set of questions. Follow-up probes are then asked based on the initial participant responses. Probes are used to seek clarity or additional information (Merriam, 2009). The researcher can anticipate some of the probes that may be necessary based on the information being sought from participants. By anticipating possible responses and the information desired from the basic questions asked of all the participants, the researcher can develop a series of notes or questions which guide the follow-up probes (Merriam, 2009). The standard questions asked of all participants attend to the main points of the study. The probes help guide participant responses so that the desired information is captured.

There are a number of methods for conducting interviews. Traditionally, most interviews are conducted in a face-to-face setting with person-to-person or group exchanges (Merriam, 2009; Neuman, 2014). Other means of conducting qualitative interviews include the telephone interview and the computer mediated interview (Gall et al., 2007). Advancement in communications via the Internet allows for instant messaging services and e-mail interviews (Opdenakker, 2006). In addition, interviews can also be conducted via video chat applications such as Skype. This project conducted qualitative interviews via e-mail. As outlined below, e-mail interviews offer several advantages for the researcher.

There are important differences between traditional face-to-face interviews and e-mail interviews. Each type of interview has its advantages and disadvantages. E-mail interviews can be conducted asynchronously. The participant and researcher do not need to interact

simultaneously, thus freeing them from the constraints of time and place (Meho, 2006). The email interview removes the barriers, concerns, and expenses associated with scheduling an appropriate setting in which to conduct the interview. In addition, the physical presence of a researcher in a traditional interview may introduce concerns related to confidentiality and anonymity among participants or bias related to differences between the researcher and participants in relation to factors such as gender or social status (Bampton & Cowton, 2002; Opdenakker, 2006). Removing the physical presence of the interviewer may also increase response rates to questions that could be perceived as sensitive (Meho, 2006; Opdenakker, 2006). Another advantage associated with e-mail interviews relates to the ease of compiling participant responses. Interview responses will already be in participants' own words thereby eliminating the need for transcription. A record of the e-mail interview is fairly easy to maintain and preserve.

The e-mail interview also offers a greater opportunity for reflection. The asynchronous nature of the communication means that participants need not rush to answer. The interviewer is not watching and waiting for a response—at least in the short-term. Participants can choose to carefully compose and edit their responses prior to submission (Bampton & Cowton, 2002; Meho, 2006). Reflection can be encouraged by asking participants to pause and consider the questions before responding. Reflecting about experience, or, in the case of this study, practice, can be a valuable self-educative opportunity (Houle, 1980). While the e-mail interview affords the researcher several advantages, the format has its shortcomings.

Possible drawbacks associated with e-mail interviews include the absence of non-verbal cues, the potential for a loss of spontaneity in participant responses and difficulty in establishing rapport between the interviewer and participants. With an e-mail interview, participants have

only textual clues from the written questions from which to derive meaning and intent. However, this disadvantage can be partially ameliorated through the use of emoticons (Bampton & Cowton, 2002; Opdenakker, 2006). Emoticons are symbols from text that resemble facial expressions such as a smile represented by a semicolon and the closing curved bracket from a set of parentheses (Walther & D'Addario, 2001). Similarly, Emoji, a term originating from Japan, are small images or icons that express an emotion (Emoji, n.d.). These icons can also convey some aspects of non-verbal communication that might be lost in non-face-to-face communication such as e-mail. As a means of increasing what can be expressed via e-mail, participants should be encouraged to use common acronyms and emoticons in lieu of body language (Meho, 2006). Some of the affect component common in face-to-face interactions can be communicated through the use of these symbols and acronyms. However, emoticons may be best suited as a complement to written communication rather than as a direct replacement for body language or facial expressions (Walther & D'Addario, 2001). In the modern electronic communication environment, internet usage is increasingly widespread. Mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets are now commonly used to access the internet and to communicate (Hurst, Cook, Lindsay & Earl, 2014). With these changes in technology, the use of emoji, emoticons and acronyms are increasingly commonplace.

One concern related to the use of both emoticons and Emoji is that the meanings of these symbols are not universal but rather culturally bound (Aoki, 1995; Opdenakker, 2006). Opinions also differ on whether emoticon use enhances message meaning and interpretation (Derks, Bos, & von Grumbkow, 2008; Walther & D'Addario, 2001). Therefore, the researcher must take care when attempting to interpret the meaning of emoticons or Emoji. Opportunities for clarification were included in the exchange between the researcher and participants. Participants were

encouraged to use common acronyms, emoticons and emoji as part of the interview instructions. However, the use of emoticons by the participants was limited to a few instances. In each of these cases, the emoji used was the common smile icon (☺). The emotion or meaning behind the use of this emoticon was clear. No unfamiliar emoticons, emoji or acronyms were used.

Although the e-mail interview offers opportunities for clarification, it is still important for the researcher to take the time to carefully craft questions. The questions should be tested prior to implementation of the study. Pilot interviews are a recommended step in order to test the suitability of the interview structure and questions (Merriam, 2009). A pilot interview was conducted with academic advisors from the study institution. An invitation to participate was sent to a group of eight advisors. Five agreed to participate in the pilot study to preview the survey questions and the e-mail format. All five completed the interviews.

The e-mail interviews for this study were episodic in nature due to the complexity of the topic and the nature of e-mail as a means of communication which includes intervals between queries and responses. E-mail interviews should consist of multiple iterations (Bampton & Cowton, 2002; Meho, 2006). Too many questions at once may overwhelm the participant. There is no need to add to the risk of an incomplete interview by asking all your questions at once. Multiple question and answer episodes are beneficial because they make the interview more manageable for the participant.

The interview questions for this project were arranged in four sections. These sections comprised the four stages of the interview. The first series of interview questions contained preliminary questions about participant demographics and their role as an academic advisor. The second section sought information about participant knowledge of the SCV and its importance to

the participants' advising practice. The third section was prefaced with a summary of the SCV and each of the six values. This section sought advisor perceptions about the significance of each of the six values from the SCV as well as on advising practice in general. The final section of the interview was also prefaced with a summary of the SCV and each of the six values. The last section was framed around the 12 functions of academic advising identified Smith and Allen (2006). These 12 functions are categorized into five general domains. A full list of the functions can be found in Appendix C. Using the five domains to inquire about specific practices, the academic advisors were asked about the SCV in relation to each function as it pertained to their advising practice. This study assessed the influence of the SCV on academic advising practice in order to gain an understanding of the ways in which the SCV may or may not impact the practice of academic advising.

The interplay of practice and values is a challenging topic to research. Care was taken to craft the interview questions in such a way as to elicit the desired information. They were also written with a focus on neutrality. Despite my own views on the SCV and advising practice, the questions were written to minimize any leading of the participants. The interview instructions include a statement which encouraged participants to freely share their own opinions and thoughts. They were further encouraged to disregard what they believed to be the opinions of the researcher. They were reassured that their responses would be represented fairly, neutrally and without regard to my own opinions. In addition to being neutral, the questions also need to be clear and easy to understand. The questions should be written using common language rather than jargon (Merriam, 2009). The questions for this study used language and terms familiar to advisors.

Research Questions

The interview and procedures outlined above were selected with the aim of investigating several questions in regard to the SCV and the practice of academic advising by professional academic advisors. This study explored the following questions:

1. What is the nature of advisor perceptions about the importance of the NACADA SCV?
2. How do academic advisors perceive the importance of the NACADA SCV in relation to their own day-to-day practice of academic advising?
3. Do advisors perceive differences in importance among the six values in relation to the functions that academic advisors typically perform—especially in relation to their own practice of advising?
4. Do advisors differ in their assessment of the SCV based on experience level as determined by the number of years of experience as an advisor?

Data Collection Procedures

Those individuals categorized with the primary responsibility of providing academic advising whether they be in academic or student affairs units were invited to participate in the study by way of an introductory e-mail message. The invitation was sent out via a listserv maintained by the study institution's Council on Academic Advising. A copy of the invitation to participate in the study can be found in Appendix D. Respondents to the invitation were asked to supply an e-mail address they wished to use for the interview. They were also asked to affirm that they are consenting to participate in the study and were advised of any risks associated with their participation. Participants were selected from among the pool of responding volunteers

after they provided a message affirming consent to participate. Participants were chosen with the aim of including professional academic advisors from the differing academic and student affairs units across campus. One aim of this study is to examine differences in opinions about the SCV and its influence on advising practice based on the experience level of academic advisors.

Selected participants were sent an e-mail with instructions and a timeline for completion of the data collection. The interviews commenced one week thereafter. The questions for each phase of the interview were embedded within an e-mail message simultaneously sent to each participant. Sending a separate attachment with a message increases the chance that the recipient won't open it or will be unable to open it (Meho, 2006). Participant e-mail addresses were not shared. Each of the four interview phases was sent via e-mail using individual messages so as to prevent the accidental sharing of contact information of other participants. The four-part interview and necessary follow up messages were scheduled to occur over an eight-week period with the four phases of the standard interview questions being sent every two weeks until completion. Follow-up questions were to be sent as needed to clarify or seek elaboration on initial responses to the interview questions. One concern associated with an e-mail interview is the potential for a low response rate. When the number of responses is low, reminders should be sent to encourage participation (Meho, 2006). Participants who were slow to respond to the first phase of the e-mail interview were sent a reminder message after five days. A second reminder followed two days prior to the inception of the subsequent phases of the interview. The same procedure was followed throughout the four phases of the interview. Participants who failed to respond to any phase or only responded in part to the interview questions were excluded from the study.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to implementation, this study was reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at the institution that is the site for this study. A copy of the IRB approval is available in Appendix E. Respondents to the invitation to participate were provided details about the study and the risks associated with it. There were no known risks and the identity of participants was kept confidential. To affirm informed consent, potential participants were asked to send the researcher an e-mail from the account they wished to use for the duration of the interview providing consent and their agreement to participate. Selected participants were assigned a code for the study. Their real names and identifying information such as email address were excluded from the study documentation. The original e-mailed interview responses were archived based on the assigned pseudonyms so that the identity of the message-sender remained confidential. A list of the assigned pseudonyms was kept in a separate and secure location apart from the message archive and other documents related to this study. The data collected for this study will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of this research. Any identifying information will be hidden or otherwise excluded from the study and any associated publications.

Research Design

The perceptions of academic advisors in relation to the SCV and the work of academic advising were the primary focus of this research. Academic advising is a complex endeavor. The complexity is compounded by the variety of individuals and entities that are charged with the task of advising students in academic and related matters. Academic advising is not restricted to professors and professional advisors within academic units. There are many support

programs that also have a responsibility to provide advising to students. Regardless of role, the work of advising is not easily measurable or especially suited to quantitative approaches beyond basic information such as satisfaction inventories or caseload data. While a statistic like the number of students advised during a given time period is certainly important, this sort of information does little to describe an advising interaction or the impact it has on the advisee or the advisor. Due to the complexities associated with academic advising any study of the field represents an opportunity to collect rich, detailed data. For this reason, a qualitative approach was deemed the most appropriate for this study.

Qualitative research methods are intended for topics where depth is both desired and necessary for understanding. Qualitative research is best suited for in-depth studies of complex phenomena within a given setting (Neuman, 2014). In-depth information can lead to a richer understanding of a phenomenon that may not be gained from a more generalizable study. One goal for this study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of academic advisors regarding the role of the SCV and its impact on the practice of academic advising. Qualitative researchers do not assume—nor is it their goal—that their results will be generalizable to other settings. However, the findings may be transferable to similar settings through what is termed the extension of findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The results may be applicable to another institution or context. Ultimately, the determination of relevancy of finding from one setting to another must be made internally by the participants within the secondary context (Neuman, 2014). Conclusions drawn from this study may be transferable to other institutions of a similar character but the main purpose was to gain an understanding of the phenomenon within the specific context of this study.

Like most qualitative research, this study assumed a constructivist epistemological orientation toward knowledge creation. As such, the primary focus of this study was to understand the lived experiences of advisors in relation to the SCV and their advising practice. This focus on the lived experience is a key aspect of qualitative research (Staller, 2010). This study focused on the lived experiences of professional academic advisors and their advising practice. Their first-hand knowledge of advising practice informed the outcomes of this study. Per the constructivist epistemological perspective, reality is socially constructed by those engaged in it (Gall, et al., 2007). An individual's perceptions of reality are shaped by the interplay between the physical environment and the society within which they operate. Societies are products of time and place. Those with a constructivist epistemological approach acknowledge the role of the social environment on perceptions of reality rather than trying to determine an objective reality.

The data for this study are in the form of statements in response to interview questions. The statements were produced by the participants and communicated to the researcher via e-mail. This method of communication allows for easy transcription of participant responses. Basic demographic data and information about the participants' status as an advisor were part of the first section of the interview. Descriptive statistics from the demographic data were compared with that of the most recent NACADA data. It was assumed that the sample population would be comparable to that of the national population as measured by the NACADA data. Similarities or differences between the national population and that of the study participants helped frame this research and provide some context.

Trustworthiness

The traditional notions of validity and reliability used in quantitative research are less applicable to qualitative research. Qualitative research relies on the concept of trustworthiness. Ultimately, qualitative research is trustworthy when it provides a true representation of the reality of the participants and the phenomena under investigation (Schwandt, 1997). An alternative scheme for validity and reliability in qualitative research considers ideas of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). For credibility there are a variety of techniques that can be used including prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis and member checks. For transferability, sufficient descriptive data about the context of the study must be present so that others may determine the applicability of the findings to a different setting. For dependability and confirmability there must be an external audit, an audit trail and details about the researcher's beliefs and assumptions (Shenton, 2004). The appropriate procedures to ensure trustworthiness can be associated with a particular research paradigm (Creswell & Miller, 2010). This study uses a constructivist paradigm. The trustworthiness procedures commonly used by those adhering to the constructivist paradigm include an examination of the study data for disconfirming evidence, a prolonged engagement in the field among the participants and findings that provide a thick, rich description of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Creswell & Miller, 2010).

The search for disconfirming evidence occurs after the initial themes are identified. The researcher combs through the data again to confirm the themes or identify evidence to the contrary. A long history with academic advising at the research site and the length of the interview process helped to foster trust and rapport between the researcher and the study

participants. This prolonged engagement in the field aided in the creation of an authentic portrayal of the phenomenon. Time spent engaged with the participants and in the research context also resulted in an in depth description of the phenomenon. The aim was to create verisimilitude and a virtual experience of the phenomenon described (Creswell & Miller 2010). This study provides a deep and detailed depiction of the lived experiences of the participants in relation to their academic advising practice and the SCV.

Another credibility procedure is the practice of researcher reflexivity. The primary aim is for the researcher to self-disclose beliefs and biases relevant to the study. These beliefs and biases are then suspended during the study (Creswell & Miller, 2010). Understanding the process through which the researcher shapes the study is the goal of reflective practice (Daly, 2007). Reflective practice is a process through which the researcher attempts to blunt assumptions and biases that may influence the research findings.

One method for identifying underlying assumptions and influences is to maintain a reflective journal. Journaling is a common technique in the qualitative research process that aids the researcher in reflection and development of a clearer understanding of the phenomenon. The journal is used to log assumptions and influences of the investigator throughout the research process (Lavery, 2003). Journaling can be used as a tool for the self-disclosure of biases as well as a way to keep track of ideas and thoughts throughout the study. Since the researcher and participants are co-creating an understanding of the phenomenon, it is important for the researcher to acknowledge their own experiences with it (Lavery, 2003). In keeping with this idea, the researcher maintained a reflective journal during the data collection and data analysis phases of this study. The journal was used to note concerns with the data collection and issues with the survey questions and responses. It was also used as a means to reflect on the process

and the content generated from the study. The journal was used reflectively as a means of questioning the researcher about biases and assumptions. Before beginning this project, the researcher possessed superficial knowledge of the values from the SCV. While a member of NACADA, work demands and the pressures of a busy advising unit limited the researcher's exposure to NACADA information and research about academic advising. The researcher conducted this study while engaged as an academic advisor. At the outset, the researcher was uncertain about the contribution of the values to the practice of academic advising. Those impressions of the values changed throughout the research process. The researcher's understanding and support of the SCV grew during the process.

One credibility procedure originally considered for this project was member checking. The opportunity to review the transcript permits participants to confirm that they have expressed themselves as intended and may foster a sense of empowerment by allowing them to refine their thoughts (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). Having participants confirm their responses ensures data fidelity and validity by offering an opportunity for clarification. However, there is the likelihood that participants will censor or substantially alter their original comments. Changes can lead to a host of concerns including issues of research integrity and ethical considerations associated with balancing the needs of the researcher against those of the participants (Mero-Jaffe, 2011; Hagens, Dobrow, & Chafe, 2009). Since the data collected for this study were in the form of e-mail messages, no transcription was necessary. In addition, the participants each had copies of the messages they had sent as part of the study. For these reasons, a member check was not implemented.

Upon completion of the interviews, the participant statements were organized and managed using a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). A

CAQDAS package was chosen for this study because of the potential to make the study more transparent and replicable and thus more credible (Hwang, 2008). The Atlas TI software was selected for use with this project because of its flexibility and ease of use. The software can help the researcher manage and explore the collected textual data. It may also aid the researcher in identifying frequency and repetition among the participant responses. While time consuming, one of the most useful aspects of the program is the coding of the data. This is a manual process which requires the researcher to carefully review every word of the interview transcript. Through the coding process, themes emerge and can be organized and grouped.

Summary

Academic advising may seem like a rather straightforward topic to investigate. However, there is a lot more to the field than making course recommendations to students. Careful consideration was given when determining the best method for this study. Due to the complexity of the topic there was a great potential for rich data collection. Therefore, a qualitative approach was deemed the best fit. Another reason for selecting a qualitative approach concerns the researcher's long history with the field of academic advising. The researcher necessarily contributes a great deal to the study and the depth of experience related to academic advising has the potential to be of benefit. The intent of this project was to gain a deeper understanding of the field and to portray some of the complexity associated with academic advising. The research approach used for this project was selected because of its emphasis on the subjectivity of knowledge and the co-creation of knowledge based on collaboration between the participants and the researcher. The opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and to create a deeper understanding of the field was an important factor in the selection of the research method.

The workplace demands on many academic advisors leave little time for professional development or the opportunity to participate in the potentially time-consuming process associated with face-to-face interviews. An e-mail format for the qualitative interviews was used with this study because the asynchronous nature of the format offered several advantages over other methods—especially in regard to time and costs. The e-mail interview is more affordable, more accommodating of busy schedules, and less susceptible to threats associated with the setting or interviewer effects. Importantly, the e-mail interview format promotes the critical element of reflection because the participants are free to reply at their own pace. Lastly, the e-mail interview takes advantage of advancements in communication technology that allows the researcher to conduct interviews with multiple participants simultaneously. This greatly increases the number of interviews that can be initiated. While the data collection still takes time, the ability to initiate the process with multiple participants is a big advantage.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research study was undertaken with the intent to explore advisor perceptions about the NACADA SCV in relation to their own practice of academic advising. The focus on advising practice was deliberate because academic advising has traditionally been a practice oriented field. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the role of the values on advising practice. This study attempts to capture data about behaviors or the practice of advisors rather than beliefs about the values from the SCV. The actions advisors take in their advising practice is perhaps more important than beliefs they may hold about academic advising. The focus on practice was selected with this idea in mind.

This study addresses the following questions:

1. What is the nature of advisor perceptions about the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values?
2. How do academic advisors perceive the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values in relation to their own day-to-day practice of academic advising?
3. Do advisors perceive differences in importance among the six values in relation to the functional areas that academic advisors typically perform—especially in relation to their own practice of advising?

4. Do advisors differ in their assessment of the SCV based on experience level as determined by the number of years of experience as an advisor?

Participants

Details about the participants and interview response rates are presented below starting with information about the pilot participants. To test the e-mail interview questions and timing of the four phases, a pilot study was initiated at the end of the Spring 2016 semester. A small group of advisors from a single advising unit with whom the researcher was affiliated were invited to take part in the pilot study. Eight individuals were invited to participate and five agreed. All five completed each of the four phases of the interview.

The data collection for the pilot study was problematic. The timing strayed considerably from the original projected timeline of four weeks. The interviews were designed in four segments to make them more manageable for the participants. This was done to increase chances of interview completion and to promote greater reflection on the interview questions. The four phases of the interview were scheduled to take place over a four-week period. At the beginning of each week, a new phase was scheduled to occur. Reminders were to be sent at mid-week and the end of the week if necessary. It was believed that one-week intervals between each of the four phases would be a sufficient span of time for completion of the interviews.

Unfortunately, that was not the case. The first phase of the pilot study interviews began in early March—just before spring break at the institution which was the setting for this study. Course registration for the summer and fall terms began shortly thereafter. The registration period is a four or five-week period of non-stop activity for this group of academic advisors. It was quickly followed by the conclusion of the spring semester and the start of the accelerated

summer terms and the start of the busy new student orientation season. In the end, the original four-week study period stretched to 10 weeks as advisors requested delays and extensions. Reminders were sent weekly throughout the research period. The pilot study participants were required to submit responses for one phase before receiving questions for subsequent phases. Some of the participants were not able to complete the interviews within a one-week period and requested time extensions and delays. The participants indicated a number of reasons for the delays but most were due to work demands. The interviews for the pilot study were concluded in the summer during a lull in the busy orientation season.

The responses from the pilot study were reviewed for clarity and content. The data that were collected was clear and understandable. No changes to the interview questions were needed. However, as a result of the experiences with the data collection for the pilot study, the time period between intervals for the main study was extended from one week to two. The time between intervals was increased to provide advisors with more time to complete each interview. The main study participants were given two weeks between each of the four intervals with reminders sent at the end of the first week and another before the scheduled start of the next interval. As with the pilot study, advisors were required to complete each phase of the interview in sequence. No other changes were made and both groups received the exact same interview questions in the same order. The main study was scheduled to occur over an eight-week period. It was initiated in late May after the start of the summer terms.

For the main study, over 100 current academic advisors received an invitation to participate via a campus-wide listserv for academic advisors. The participants for the pilot study were recruited from a single advising unit. For the main study, advisors from across the campus were invited to participate. In addition to the e-mail invitation, advisors were recruited at a

campus event for academic advisors. Advisors who took part in the pilot study were ineligible to participate in the main study. There was no way to exclude these advisors from the population that received the invitation to participate via the listserv. However, no action was necessary since none of the pilot participants volunteered to take part in the main study.

Nine individuals volunteered to take part in the interviews. These participants were from various advising units. One participant left the institution before responding to any of the interview questions. A second participant asked for multiple extensions but ultimately never provided any responses to the first phase of the interview. None of the subsequent phases of the interview were sent to this person. A third individual asked to withdraw upon completion of the second interview. All three of these participants and any responses they provided were excluded from the study. A fourth individual asked for additional time to respond to the third interview. She was mistakenly sent the fourth phase before answers to third were received. All of the other participants had returned their responses by this point. Rather than delaying the data analysis, it was decided that this participant's responses would be excluded.

As with the pilot group, there were issues with the data collection timetable. The addition of a second week between phases seemed to make little difference. Some advisors had no trouble responding to the interviews within the established time period. Others asked for multiple extensions throughout the four phases of the interviews. As with the pilot, multiple reminders were sent—one per week. However, during one particularly challenging work week, no reminders were sent. In total, five participants completed all four phase of the interview for the study. The data collection period for the five completing participants spanned the entire summer with the addition of two-week intervals and the requests for multiple extensions. Due to the limited number of participants, extensions were granted. Reminders were sent following any

requests for an extension. Participant responses were reviewed for clarity and follow-up questions were sent when needed. The interview responses were clear and thorough in the judgement of the researcher; minimal follow-up questions were needed.

The responses from the main study were of a similar character as those of the pilot study. There were no differences in the interview questions or the data collection methods used on both groups aside from the expansion of the interval between phases discussed above. When comparing the data collection for both groups, the addition of a second week between intervals made little difference. Both groups required more time than expected for the data collection. Due to the similarities in responses between both groups, participants from the pilot population were included with the study population for the data analysis. Inclusion of the five participants from the pilot group resulted in a total of ten completed interviews.

The first phase of the four-part interview asked questions largely focused on factual or demographic information about the study participants. The topics included gender, ethnicity/racial background, the number of years of experience as a professional advisor, educational background, history as an academic advisor, current advising role, amount of time delivering advising to students, the nature of the training for preparation as an academic advisor and the values that shaped the advisor. The participants for this study were mostly women and mostly Caucasian. Nine of the ten participants reported a gender of female. The NACADA 2015 membership demographic data indicate that 73.9% of the association's members identify as female (NACADA, 2015). The study population had greater female representation than that of the NACADA membership demographics.

The participants were asked to describe their cultural/racial/ethnic background. The 2015 NACADA membership statistics reveal that 64.4% of the membership reports an ethnicity of White (non-Hispanic) (NACADA, 2015). The population for this study was less ethnically diverse than the NACADA demographics. A more diverse sample would have been preferable. However, for both questions, this is not a completely fair comparison since the NACADA membership data include faculty advisors, licensed counselors and others. A little over half of the NACADA members indicated that they were academic advisors or academic counselors (NACADA, 2015). In addition, advisors from countries other than the United States are included in the membership records. While not perfect, the NACADA membership data do provide one of the few means of comparison available.

The participants were asked about the number of years of experience as a professional academic advisor. The results for this question are presented in Table 1. The experience level of the participants is necessary to address the fourth research question. The mean for the years of advising experience for all study participants was 6.166. There was a noticeable difference in the means of the years of advising experience between the pilot and main study groups. The years of advising experience is included as a means of comparing the study group to the larger population of academic advisors. About half the population of academic advisors from the NACADA membership data has five years or fewer of advising experience (NACADA, 2015).

Table 1

Years of Experience

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>
Pilot	8.4	7	None
Main	3.932	4.5	None
Total	6.166	5.5	None

In addition to the above demographic variables, the participants were asked to describe their educational background. The question about the educational background of the advisor participants was asked as a point of comparison to the national data collected by NACADA. Academic advisors typically come from a variety of educational backgrounds. In many cases, academic advisors are not required to hold a specific degree to practice advising (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). The results for the educational background questions are presented in Table 2. Most of the participants in both groups had at least a Master’s degree. According to NACADA survey data, advisors at public, doctorate-granting institutions are more likely to have a Master’s Degree (Voller, 2011). Among professional advisors in general, the Master’s degree is the most common credential (Taylor, 2011). It is also an increasingly preferred qualification (Gordon et al, 1988). Of those participants with a graduate degree, all were related to Higher Education. A casual review of recent advisor job postings for academic advisors through the NACADA website indicates that the preference for a graduate degree is increasingly widespread.

Table 2

Educational Attainment

<u>Group</u>	<u>Bachelor’s</u>	<u>Master’s in Progress</u>	<u>Master’s</u>	<u>Doctorate in Progress</u>
Pilot	1	0	3	1
Main	0	1	2	2
Total	1	1	5	3

To understand the range and types of advising experiences among the group of participants, the participants were asked about their work backgrounds in relation to academic advising. The study participants revealed a variety of experiences in advising. Many reported

academic advising or a closely related experience as part of their graduate school programs. The participants reported academic advising experiences from a range of institutions including a community college, private college, private university, and several large universities.

The participants were asked to describe their present academic advising role and the population of students they currently served. This question was asked to ensure that the participants work focused on undergraduate academic advising, since this study focuses on professional academic advisors for undergraduate students. The participants listed a wide variety of experiences related to academic advising. All of the participants were currently working with undergraduate students. One of the pilot participants stated, “I am first and foremost an academic advisor, meeting with students to discuss graduation requirements, course schedules, and their goals.” A range of additional responsibilities, besides those commonly associated with academic advising, were reported. The remaining three phases of the interview sought advisor perceptions about various aspects of the SCV and its relationship to academic advising practice. An analysis of the interview responses—organized by the research questions—follows.

RQ1: What is the nature of advisor perceptions about the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values?

The first research question seeks information about the nature of advisor perceptions regarding the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values (SCV). During the interview, participants were asked a series of questions about their affiliation with NACADA and knowledge of the SCV. These were followed by another series of questions about the importance of each of the six values from the SCV.

The participants were asked to describe their affiliation with NACADA in an effort to establish advisor familiarity with the organization. Eight participants were current or former members of NACADA and two reported no affiliation with the organization. The participants were also asked to describe their knowledge of the six values from the NACADA SCV. This question was asked to better understand the degree of familiarity with the SCV among the participants. Nine participants reported some knowledge of the SCV. Only one participant was completely unfamiliar with the set of values. However, one theme that emerged from the responses was the limited nature of advisor familiarity with the values. Among all the participants, knowledge of the specifics of the SCV could be characterized as limited. One advisor commented:

They are probably something that I should have posted in my office somewhere as a reminder and I should look at them more often, but we get very busy in the day-to-day responsibilities of our roles so it's easy to overlook the importance of remembering our core values.

In addition to asking advisors to assess their knowledge of the SCV, the participants were also asked to describe any training they received specific to the SCV. This question served as an additional means of assessing participant familiarity with the SCV. Seven of the participants reported receiving no training specific to the SCV. Two reported that they had reviewed the values in a module delivered online through the Canvas Learning Management System. One of the advisors characterized the module as such: "It basically involved reading over the core values and completing a short quiz on them." The three advisors who reported experience with the SCV training module were also the newest hires.

The participants were asked about the importance of each of the six values from the SCV. Values one through five were each described with terms such as *very important*, *essential* or *crucial*. Opinions of the sixth value (Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally) were mixed. Several advisors affirmed the importance of personal growth and a commitment to lifelong learning, but noted a lack of time to devote to the pursuit of professional development and a lack of encouragement at the supervisory or departmental level. When asked to describe the overall significance of the values in regard to their own practice, one advisor stated, “I think that the values are very significant and should be considered the foundation of an advising organization.” Another advisor described the SCV in these terms: “I think that they provide a baseline understanding of what advisors are meant to do for students and for higher education.” A third stated: “They serve as guiding principles for advisors’ day-to-day practice”. The overall impression from the responses was that the academic advisors in this study perceived the values to be important and significant.

Several themes emerged from the responses to questions about the general significance of the values from the SCV. While acknowledging and supporting their own responsibilities as advisors, a number of the participants also placed some emphasis on the role of students in the advising process. These advisors indicated that students also had responsibilities in relation to the advising process and that the advising relationship was one of collaboration and partnership. Students are expected to take responsibility for their choices after working with an advisor to determine their options (Love & Maxam, 2011). This fits the description of academic advising as a system of shared responsibilities (Frost, 1991). These sentiments align with the shared responsibility function identified by Smith and Allen (2006). They describe this function of academic advising as, “Encouraging students to assume responsibility for their education by

helping them develop planning, problem-solving and decision-making skills.” (Smith & Allen, 2006). One of these advisors stated, “I do also believe that advisor [sic] should foster personal accountability in students though so that they are prepared for the ‘real world’ when they graduate.” Another commented, “I feel that students should play a more active role in advising since we are figuring out a plan of action to finish their degree or come up with a solution to a problem.” One respondent framed the responsibility this way:

While I am not personally responsible for the things my students do or the choices they make related to their academic career, I do believe I am responsible for giving them the best advice possible by knowing, understanding, and communicating university policies as they apply to any given situation.

As part of their responsibility to the institution, several advisors emphasized the importance of providing students with accurate and timely information. In reference to this idea, one advisor stated, “My institution trusts me to stay current and provide the best service to students.” Conveying accurate information is perhaps one of the most obvious aspects of academic advising. However, the information that advisors provide is often bound by institutional policies and plans. In reference to third values from the SCV, one advisor stated:

I take it to mean I am mindful of my institution’s strategic plan while advising students, so for instance, if raising our 4-year graduation rates is a goal of my institution, I am encouraging my advisees to stay on track and take a full class load every semester.

Another advisor stated, “We make sure that students have the correct information on what they need to do to graduate in a timely manner.” Many of the study participants felt that

providing accurate curricular and policy information was a critical aspect of their work for both students and the institution where they worked.

Academic advising is much more than just the provision of information. Another theme that was apparent focused on the relational aspects of academic advising and the important role advisors play as welcoming and knowledgeable campus representatives. Several advisors commented on the fact that they often serve as institutional representatives and intermediaries between students and the campus administration. One advisor put it this way:

As advisors, I think we definitely work as an extension of the university – we are often the first connection that students make with an institution, so we have a responsibility to not only relay correct information, but to provide quality service to our students, to be welcoming and encourage, and be sure that students understand important policies, procedures, and information that they need in order to be successful within our institution.

Another stated, “We are one of their [students] most consistent and personal relationships the students have with a university official so they commonly feel most comfortable coming to us when they have questions, problems, etc.” One of the advisors summed it up this way: “An advisor may be the face of an institution and the impression an advisor leaves on a student, parents, visitors, etc. can remain long after the advisor meeting.” These comments illustrate the important role that academic advisors play as representatives of the institutions where they work. It also relates to value three from the SCV—Advisors are responsible to their institutions. Several advisors indicated that they were mindful of this responsibility when working with students.

Related to the responsibility to their institutions, advisors play an important role in student retention by establishing relationships with students as caring campus representatives. The individuals with whom students interact frequently—such as academic advisors—help students understand their abilities and how to use them (Noel, 1985). Helping students realize their skills and how to use them has a positive impact on retention. Tinto (1999) also pointed to the significance of these types of relationships in regards to retention. He underscored the importance of promoting within students the feeling that they are valued members of the institution through frequent and quality contacts with instructors, staff and peers. Over the span of their higher education careers, students will enroll in many courses and likely encounter many professors. However, as Hunter and White (2004) pointed out, academic advising is one of the few sustained and caring relationships that students will have with an adult that can help them organize and make sense of their college experiences.

The interrelated themes of lifelong learning and preparing students for life or the transition into the workforce were additional findings. Several advisors commented on the need to instill within students the skills necessary for life after college. One advisor stated:

Our students like [sic] critical thinking skills and have been protected and sheltered that they don't have the skills needed in the workforce or community (examples-emotional intelligence, financial planning, soft skills, email etiquette, stress/time management). I feel that I've been having more teachable moments with students to prepare them for life after college.

This advisor also stressed the importance of fostering accountability to prepare students for the world outside of academics. These notions can be viewed as part of the integration

function identified by Smith and Allen (2006). The integration function consists of building connections between academic, career and life goals. Advisors often have to explain that courses, assignments and activities are designed to better prepare students for what is to come later in life—not necessarily for the present moment.

The advisors brought up the theme of lifelong learning several times in their interview responses. One advisor stated, “As advocates of lifelong learning, as advisors I believe we should have an interest in the future (our current students) of our nation. We must continue to serve students with the goal of encouraging higher education to all.” Another advisor affirmed, “I am always on a path on continuous improvement. I am always seeking ways of learning new skills and growing professional [sic].” One advisor mentioned that it was important to model the behaviors associated with lifelong learning for students. Lifelong learning refers to a reconceptualization of education and learning. It is a shift from the system of compulsory education of childhood and youth to learning and skill development that takes place throughout life and is not confined to traditional institutions of education (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). The advisor comments on lifelong learning align with the sixth value from the SCV. Effective training has been described as one of the most important needs in academic advising (McClellan, 2007). The responses of the advisors in this interview show a willingness and desire to learn and grow professionally.

RQ2: How do academic advisors perceive the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values in relation to their own day-to-day practice of academic advising?

Whereas the previous research question sought advisor perspectives about the importance of the values from the NACADA SCV to academic advising in general, the second research

question shifts the focus to the advisors themselves. This research question sought advisor perceptions of the importance of the SCV to their own advising practice. A series of interview questions were asked seeking information about the impact of the SCV on the advising practice of the participants. Several themes became apparent in their responses to these questions.

The most obvious theme to develop from the responses was an emphasis on students. This student-centered focus is perhaps not surprising given the nature of the work of academic advising. The student-advisor relationship is central and fundamental to the role of an academic advisor (NACADA, 2006; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). There was unanimous agreement and support for the prioritization of students among the participants. One advisor stated, “This is the greatest responsibility I have and the priority of my daily work.” Another noted: “We are here for the students. I think our relationship with our students, and our ability to help, support and guide them is the most critical aspect of advising practice.” For this group of advisors, the relationship between advisors and their students was of primary importance. However, several of the participants expressed the opinion that this focus on students also had impacts beyond the interpersonal level.

Several advisors felt that their responsibility to students had an impact at the institutional level and in the broader realm of higher education. One advisor prioritized service to students:

While I think advisors play an integral role in contributing to student success and helping student [sic] reach graduation, I think my first responsibility is to serve my students well, and hopefully by doing that, it will in turn benefit the institution.

Going further, another advisor broadened the scope to include higher education in general, stating, “I know that if I am supporting and guiding my students and putting their interests first, that I am, in turn, contributing to higher education.”

Another aspect of this theme was not only placing the priority on students but also seeing their individual strengths and weaknesses. The individuation function identified by Smith and Allen (2006) includes knowing students as individuals and recognizing their skills, abilities and interests in order to better advise them. Academic advisors often acknowledge the necessity of focusing on the needs of individuals (Astin, 1999; Frost, 1991; Noel, 1985). One advisor put it this way:

In my practice, I believe it is important for students to pursue majors that align with their individual strengths, interests, and personality. This means I pay attention to previous grades, test scores, and listen to what the student is saying. I try to help them understand that having a passion for a particular subject or field is not enough to get them a degree.

These professional academic advisors indicated students were their first priority. This makes sense given that academic advising exists to serve students. In addition to prioritizing students, the participants were also focused on producing competent and effective graduates. Several advisors commented on the importance of fostering student development with the goal of creating successful and productive citizens. Some of the participants spoke of being good role models and modeling behaviors of active citizenship and community service while also encouraging the same in their students.

For a couple of advisors the emphasis on students was also related to locus of control. The SCV includes numerous responsibilities. However, advisors are often limited in their power

to determine all the factors that impact their work with students. One advisor framed these limitations this way:

These are the values that I feel I have the most control over – my relationship to my students, my ability to get them connected with the correct resources, and my ability to take responsibility and initiative for my own learning and development.

There are many other players at the institutional and governmental levels that directly impact the work of professional academic advisors. Advisors do not always have the power or authority to influence all the forces that impact their work. Some of the advisors in this study placed emphasis on the responsibilities from the SCV that they felt the power to control or influence.

Many of the advisors who took part in this study placed an emphasis on collaboration and networking. This was described as an important function of academic advising. Several advisors touched upon the limits of one person's ability to know everything and to be able to provide all the answers that students need. Higher education is an increasingly complex arena. There are many variables that impact the student experience while in college. Campuses offer a growing array of services to meet the diverse needs of students. It is increasingly difficult for one individual to maintain up-to-date knowledge on all these various services and requirements. In regard to the limitations of individuals to serve as a single source of knowledge, one of the study participants stated:

Taking advantage of all the possible resources on campus involves the knowledge and experience of multiple people, and the advisors ability to make and build a network is

crucial in the ability to help students when they need it, especially if the advisor does not necessarily have the appropriate skills or knowledge for the situation.

Acknowledgment of the limitations of one individual to serve as a single source of knowledge on all issues came up several times in the interview responses. One advisor stated, “I am the first to admit that I am not a psychologist, a housing official, or a financial aid counselor. Referrals are often necessary to best serve students.” Another individual commented:

I think it is important to recognize when you need to give a student a referral to another office or department on campus. We will not have all the answers and recognizing when this is necessary is also an important aspect of the advising process.

Advisors sometimes interact with students whose needs go beyond the role of an academic advisor. In these situations, advisors are encouraged to refer to the appropriate resource. Often advisors are best positioned for the role as a referral agent to other campus services and departments (Migden, 1989). Beyond providing accurate information, collaboration also promotes the exchange of ideas. The increased interpersonal interactions with fellow advisors or colleagues from allied student service offices can also help advisors build networks of resources to address student needs.

The theme of lifelong learning was discussed earlier in relation to the advisor comments about the importance of the SCV to advising in general. This theme came up again when advisors commented on the importance of the SCV in relation to their own advising practice. Several of the participants espoused an interest in promoting lifelong learning for themselves and their students. Within the responses to the interview questions a related theme emerged in terms of lifelong learning as it concerns training. Many of the participants expressed an interest in

development opportunities. One advisor commented, “This is on the top of my priority list. I always want to learn and continuously improve. I want to make a difference in higher education and continuing to learn about my field is essential in making positive change.” Academic advising is a demanding and complex field. Training opportunities and content are certainly not limited to the informational aspects of academic advising (McClellan, 2007). One of the study participants stated, “Advising is much more than an informative practice; advisors can and should encourage students to grow, develop, and evolve beyond the selection of courses or monitoring GPA (and other tasks of the same nature).” There is no shortage of topics which could be the subject for advisor training. However, according to the participants in this study, opportunities for training and development are not always encouraged. Many campuses lack consistent training programs and advisors often report inadequate preparation for their work (Brown, 2008). One advisor referenced the sixth value from the SCV when commenting on advisor training:

CV 6 seems to be lost at the Advisor level as budget may not flow top down, and usually conferences and formal trainings may be offered to a select few, and there is no trickle down. Basically, a short overview at at [sic] staff meeting does not relay the information brought forward in a three day conference.

Similarly, another advisor commented, “I wish I had more funding for professional development (6) as I think it is essential to being able to best serve my students.” Several advisors alluded to a lack of departmental support for training. One advisor stated, “It can be difficult to seek out opportunities that can help you grow professionally and personally, especially if your institution or department doesn’t agree that this is important.”

RQ 3: Do advisors perceive differences in importance among the six values in relation to the functional areas that academic advisors typically perform—especially in relation to their own practice of advising?

The final phase of the interview focused on advising practice and the work functions of an academic advisor. The questions for this section of the interview focused on typical functions associated with academic advising. The functions are derived from a list of 12 identified by Smith and Allen (2006). The twelve functions were simplified into five domains. The participants in this study were asked to consider the SCV and their advising practice in relation to these functional domains. The functions of academic advising are included in this study because academic advising has traditionally been a practice oriented field. It is important to consider how the values of academic advising impact the day-to-day work of advisors.

The advisors expressed a good deal of support for the values from the SCV in relation to the five functional domains of advising. The participants frequently identified specific values when responding to the interview questions regarding the functional domains. In reference to the work of advisors, one participant stated, “By doing all the core values, we are supporting higher ed in general, and the educational community of our university.” Within the interview responses for this section, the advisors expressed strong support for first three values from the SCV. Value one (Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise) received the most commentary. While the first value was cited most frequently, often the advisors referenced values one through three as a group. Values four and six were mentioned multiple times though noticeably less often than the first three. The fifth value (Advisors are responsible to their educational community) received the least amount of support and commentary.

Beyond specific references to the six values from the SCV, several themes were apparent in the advisors' responses. One of those concerned the importance of viewing students as individuals. The participants placed a lot of emphasis on this aspect of the first value from the SCV. One advisor stated, "The more I know about my students the better I can assist them." The individuation theme was mentioned in terms of distinguishing students as unique entities rather than viewing them in terms of the group, as evidenced by the following response: "It also helps the student feel like he/she has an advisor who remembers him/her and will provide accurate information and thoughtful guidance." Knowing students as individuals is an important aspect of the advising relationship. Students desire an academic advisor who knows them and can address their needs through a variety of advising approaches (Mottarella, Fritzsche, & Cerabino, 2004). Knowing a student often also means being aware of the unique set of skills associated with the individual. One advisor referenced this sort of individuation with the following comment: "I think we are always trying to help students choose courses that match their skills, abilities, and interests in pursuit of development and growth (CV1)."

Another advisor referenced the uniqueness of each student in terms of their background. This advisor stated, "We must recognize that advising needs to be individualized and cannot be prescriptive – each student has a unique background, academic history, personality, set of skills." Another participant alluded to the role of advisors to promote skill development and learning:

All students have strengths and weaknesses. I make it part of my job for students to be able to point those out for themselves. Once someone can identify areas in which they are weak, they may begin to improve in those areas. As an advisor, we have the opportunity to make those discussions happen for better student self-reflection.

One of the participants framed the importance of individuation in terms of the impact of this approach to the institution. This advisor stated, “Part of working for the success of the institution is doing everything I can to ensure the success of the individual, which means connecting them to additional support resources.” For this advisor, the success of individual students was an important reflection on the overall success of the institution.

Advisors encourage skill development to promote growth and learning, often at the individual level. Several advisors commented on this important aspect of academic advising. One advisor noted, “Advisors routinely make suggestions to students as to building skill sets, participating in organizations that help students grow into the profession and as a person.” Returning to the theme of lifelong learning raised earlier in this chapter, one advisor placed emphasis on skill development for life after college: “We are not just contributing to their success as students but teaching them valuable life skills they will use beyond their degree completion.” Teaching skills and encouraging development is an important aspect of academic advising. The teaching aspect of academic advising was referenced multiple times in the interview responses.

One aspect of the teaching theme consists of guiding students through the systems of the institution. There are many dimensions to this—especially at large state institutions with responsibilities to numerous federal and state level agencies. One advisor emphasized the responsibility of advisors to teach the system:

If we are partners with students in their educational journeys, we as advisors should ensure they are well-informed about policies that dictate their experiences. Higher

education is political, and although students may not understand all of the working parts, advisors should do their best to be transparent with the students they advise.

In many cases, students are bound by policies beyond the direct control of the institutions they attend. In reference to one of these external factors, one advisor stated:

Today, students are making a lot of decisions based around financial aid and if they aren't provided with accurate information from us about policies and procedures they could lose aid or have to stay in college longer which would be a financial burden.

Teaching students how to navigate the system and find the information they need to be successful and in some cases to be able to afford to continue their enrollment is another important aspect of academic advising.

In the commentary from the advisors regarding the impact of the SCV on the functions of academic advising, the theme of advising as teaching came up several times. Advisors referenced teaching the curriculum, teaching skills and teaching the system or how to navigate the institution and its processes and policies. While discussing the teaching aspect of advising, one advisor pointed out that many students arrive on campus without a lot of experience in making their own decisions and schedules. This advisor stated, "I feel like so many of them come here without any skills in planning, problem-solving or decision-making because in many cases their parents have been doing all of that for them." It takes greater effort to teach than to only focus on information provision. One of the participants referenced these costs:

I think, too, that our responsibility to develop the students' problem solving, planning, and decision making skills is ultimately determined by the advisor's personal values and beliefs about the abilities of their students, and a willingness to accept the potential impact

of that responsibility on their work efficiency. For instance, it may take more time and effort to teach a student to advocate for themselves [sic] as opposed to the advisor simply doing for them, but if the advisor understand [sic] that as the their charge then it is an acceptable sacrifice.

Taking the time to teach students the system may come at the expense of greater productivity and efficiency but it pays off in other ways.

Advising-as-teaching is increasingly recognized as an important aspect of academic advising. Advising-as-teaching places emphasis on teaching the curriculum and the importance of learning (Hemwall & Trachte, 2005). Advisors teach the curriculum and the relevance and interrelationships between required courses in a degree program (Lowenstein, 2005). Teaching the structure and organization of the curriculum reveals the logic behind courses and the learning goals within degree programs. Teaching the system and teaching the curriculum are necessary for moving students from interdependence to independence. One of the advisors alluded to this shift:

I believe students should be active participants in their educational journey by understanding their strengths and interests as well as various parts of their curriculum. I do this by teaching the systems and processes rather than just doing it for them.

The preceding comment re-introduces the theme of student responsibility from an earlier section of this chapter. The participants offered several comments about the desire for greater engagement with their education. One advisor stated:

I believe students should be active participants in their college journey, and that means knowing the requirements for their degree and being able to identify courses they are

interested in taking. Some students believe it is my job to tell them exactly what to take each semester, and all they need to do is come to my office to get a list, and they can leave. I want to help the student understand the curriculum, but I want them to begin to understand and think for themselves.

Many of the advisor comments placed emphasis on the importance of students deciding the path and goals of their education. One advisor stated, “I believe that the advisor should inform students of options and make suggestions but that students must make the final decisions for themselves (or in conjunction with their families) and take ownership of their educational processes.” Another advisor commented, “This is essential for them to assume responsibility for their own education.” Placing students in charge of decisions about their education is an important step for promoting ownership and accountability.

In terms of academic advising, many of the participants expressed the importance of fostering student ownership and accountability. While advisors are expected to be caring and knowledgeable, students must ultimately determine the course of their educational pursuits. In relation to the role of the student as the decider, one advisor commented:

As advisors we are expected to be experts in our given area and to know when to refer students to other professionals in order to get the best information for their decision making process. Of course the responsibility ultimately lies with students to make the decision, but in a student support role we must be aware of our own values and responsibilities when providing information.

Another advisor focused on the role of the student as the decider in terms of an advisor’s responsibility to students, stating:

Providing information and support and allowing the students to make to make their own decisions is an important part of the educational process. If we're responsible to the individuals we advise, we must help to foster their growth instead of enabling them.

While students are encouraged to take ownership of their education, one participant referenced the tension that can sometime arise as students assume more responsibility. This advisor stated, "Students must take responsibility for themselves as Advisors are not police officers and actions from advisors should be seen as supportive not punitive or as harassment." This comment also seems to touch on the fact that advisors are responsible to multiple parties including students and the institutions whose policies they must uphold.

RQ4: Do advisors differ in their assessment of the SCV based on experience level as determined by the number of years of experience as an advisor?

The third question from interview one asked advisors how long they had practiced as a professional advisor. The number of years of advising experience is presented in Table 1. The mean of the years of experience for all participants was 6.166. Five of the ten participants had six or more years and five had less. The interviews were analyzed based on this split. Three individuals from the pilot group and two from the main study had six or more years of experience advising. The other five participants had fewer than six years of advising experience.

Among the group of advisors with six or more years of experience, the majority described the SCV as significant or very significant. One of these participants described the SCV as guiding principles for the profession. Another stated, "I think that the values are very significant and should be considered the foundation of an advising organization." Another experienced advisor stated, "I think the role of an academic advisor varies from institution to

institution, so the values have to be broad enough to capture all possible roles.” One of the most seasoned advisors, perhaps dissenting a bit, described the SCV as standard rhetoric that adheres to expectations. Opinions among the group with less experience were unanimously supportive of the SCV and considered it valuable to the profession. These advisors referred to the SVC in terms such as *fundamental*, *rules of thumb*, *baseline understanding* and *guiding principles*. One of these participants stated, “The core values should serve as the foundation for academic advising practice.”

When asked to describe the significance of the six values in relation to each of the others, three of the advisors from the more experienced group described the values as equivalent in significance. One of these advisors commented, “I can envision the relationship between the values as a circle—that they are all equally important, and interconnected, you can’t have one without the others as they are all needed within the profession of advising.” Another indicated that the values were complimentary. Two other experienced advisors expressed strong support for values one through four but were less certain about the fifth and sixth values. One of these advisors viewed the fifth (Advisors are responsible to their educational community) and sixth values (Advisors are responsible for their professional practice and for themselves personally) as less significant, stating that “Core Values 5-6 are more of a goal than an expectation.” Another experienced advisor indicated that the last two values seemed to be intended to cover any other overlooked areas from the first four values.

Aside from expressing overall support for the SCV, the group of advisors with fewer years of experience described the values as interconnected and complimentary. One of these advisors characterized the values in the following manner:

I see the first almost as a hierarchy that starts with the student and broadens out to the community in general. The sixth I think then cycles back around to the others because advisors must continually grow professionally in order to be successful in the first five.

Another stated, “I think the values complement each other while clarifying specific areas to focus for practice.”

Among both groups of advisors, two themes emerged. The first was an overall expression of support for the SCV. While there was some difference in the assessment of the SCV based on experience level, it was not remarkable. The most notable difference was uncertainty from two seasoned advisors in regards to values five and six (5: Advisors are responsible to their educational community) (6: Advisors are responsible for their professional practice and for themselves personally). The second theme regarded the complimentary or interconnected nature of the SCV. All of the advisors from the group with fewer years of experience viewed the values as complimentary and fundamental to advising. Two of the advisors from the group with greater experience expressed these sentiments.

Summary

The advisors from this study generally agreed that the values from the SCV were useful and applicable to advising practice. The first three values received stronger support in regards to the practice of the participating advisors. One of the participants stated:

I would say I utilize or cover all core values in my practice. Not all at once or even all every day, as it depends on the individual student and his/her situation. But I have touched on all of them in my advising experience.

Many of the comments from the participants went beyond merely indicating whether a particular value was perceived as relevant or useful. A number of themes emerged from the interview responses in relation to the values and their impact on practice. Those themes have been reviewed in the above sections. One additional theme that appeared in several sections of the interviews was a perception by some of the participants that academic advising was not equally valued by the administration and faculty. The participants offering these comments were from the same advising unit. Several of the advisor comments alluded to feelings of marginalization and to criticism or an underappreciation of academic advising. One advisor commented: “Advising is a very fulfilling activity, though it is undervalued by many in the educational arena.” This comment reveals a lot about the nature of academic advising as an endeavor. The subsequent chapter will address some of the issues raised by the study participants and the questions that resulted from their commentary.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Professional academic advisors play an increasingly important role in higher education. Advisors are more than a source of information and guidance. For students, the advisor often serves as a caring and consistent representative of the institution who helps them navigate not only the institution but their educational career as well. As their role in higher education becomes more significant, it is only fitting that researchers try to better understand more about the impact of professional academic advisors. As their numbers have grown, there has been a push for greater professionalization and recognition of the contribution of professional academic advisors. The establishment of a code of ethics or code values is often part of the professionalization process. The primary professional organization representing academic advisors is NACADA. This organization has published a Statement of Core Values which was intended to serve as a guide to advising practice. This study was created to explore professional academic advisor perceptions about the NACADA SCV in relation to their own practice of academic advising. Chapter 5 is organized into three sections. The first section presents a series of conclusions based on the findings. Implications drawn from the findings are then presented. The chapter concludes with a series of recommendations drawn from the study results.

The purpose of this study was to explore advisor perceptions about the impact of the NACADA SCV on the practice of academic advising. Over 100 professional academic advisors at a single institution within the State University System (SUS) of Florida were invited to participate. Professional academic advisors from various academic advising units at a single research-intensive institution within the SUS of Florida participated in this study. Qualitative interviews were used to capture advisor perspectives about the NACADA SCV in relation to advising in general and to their own advising practice in particular. In all, ten academic advisors completed the four-phase e-mail interviews for this study. The participating advisors responded to open-ended questions about the SCV in relation to advising practice in general, their own advising practice in particular and the relationship of the SCV to the different functional areas of academic advising. Their responses were analyzed for themes based on the research questions.

The study consisted of a four-phase e-mail interview. The advisors were asked a series of open-ended questions about the SCV and its applicability to the work they do. The questions from the first phase of the interview largely concerned demographic information. The second phase sought advisor opinions about the applicability of the SCV to academic advising in general. The third phase of the interview asked questions about the SCV in reference to the advising practice of the participants. The final phase of the interview concerned the relevance of the SCV to the functional domains of academic advising.

This study was designed to address the following questions:

1. What is the nature of advisor perceptions about the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values?

2. How do academic advisors perceive the importance of the NACADA Statement of Core Values in relation to their own day-to-day practice of academic advising?
3. Do advisors perceive differences in importance among the six values in relation to the functional areas that academic advisors typically perform—especially in relation to their own practice of advising?
4. Do advisors differ in their assessment of the SCV based on experience level as determined by the number of years of experience as an advisor?

All of the data for this study were collected via the four-phase e-mail interviews. The interview transcripts were reviewed to address each of the research questions. Each interview response was reviewed to identify themes and references to the SCV. The interview data were organized with the aid of Atlas TI software. This program is a form of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software. The software aided in organization, identification of trends and repetition of concepts and ideas. Conclusions about the study results are presented below.

Conclusions

The e-mail interviews that comprise the data for this study were carefully reviewed to identify themes and references to the SCV. Analysis of the demographic information and interview transcripts led to the identification of several themes regarding the nature of the participants' perceptions of the SCV as they pertain to advising in general. Several themes pertaining to the SCV in regard to the participants' advising practice were also identified. Analysis of the study data resulted in the conclusions identified below.

The participant responses to the questions from the initial phase of the interview show that these advisors possessed little or limited familiarity with the SCV. Many of the participants

indicated an awareness of the values but could not provide details about them. A couple reported no exposure to the SCV. These interviews also demonstrated that these advisors, especially the more seasoned ones, received little training specific to the SCV. None of the participants indicated that they had received any training on how to incorporate the values into their practice. The lack of training would seem to indicate a low degree of institutional emphasis for the values. The individual advisor may be more apt to possess awareness of the standards than to work in a place where the standards are adopted for use at an institution level (Donnelly, 2004). A decentralized advising system obviously complicates efforts to institute campus-wide advising training and policies. However, the participants did espouse broad support for the NACADA SCV. The advisors were especially supportive when speaking of the applicability of the SCV in general terms to the field of academic advising. These study results give evidence of a limited awareness of the SCV. Knowing of the existence of the SCV is quite removed from being able to incorporate the values into your daily advising practice. When these academic advisors gained familiarity with the SCV, they were supportive of it and the ideas contained within.

The interview responses indicate strong support for the SCV when referencing academic advising in general. When asked about the applicability of the SCV to their own advising, the participants were less unanimous in their support for each specific value, although there was still broad support for the set of values. The results show that support for each of the values was not equal. The advisors were especially demonstrative in regard to value one (Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise). This specific value received the most references in the advisor comments. The second value (Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate in the advising process) received slightly fewer mentions, though it was still well supported in the advisor comments. The third value from the SCV (Advisors are responsible to

their institutions) received half as many mentions as the first value in the interview responses. The remaining values (four, five and six) each received much less commentary. The total number of references for values four, five and six combined were equal to less than half of the mentions for the first value. The least supported value was the fifth—Advisors are responsible to their educational community.

The number of years of experience did not greatly impact opinions about the SCV. There were differences but they were not great. Uncertainty about the significance of the values five and six (Advisors are responsible to their educational communities and Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally) was higher among the advisors with more years of experience. Otherwise, opinions about the SCV were very similar when compared by the years of experience as an advisor.

The study participants emphasized the first value from the SCV (Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise). This value received the strongest support. The main task of professional academic advisors is to advise students—often in one-on-one interactions. The study results demonstrate that the participants were focused on service to students as their top priority. For students, it is a priority that their advisors provide a caring and supportive advising relationship (Mottarella, et al., 2004). Often, this means providing accurate information and knowing the student as an individual. The provision of accurate information is seen as critical by students, faculty and often the advisors themselves (Allen & Smith, 2008a). The notion of providing accurate information was repeated often in the advisor responses.

The second value (Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate in the advising process) was also considered highly important. Both deal directly with advisors’

responsibilities to the students they advise. These two values directly concern the primary role of an academic advisor. Also well supported but with half as many direct references as the first, was the third value (Advisors are responsible to their institutions). The responses indicate that these participants were highly committed to their students and their institution. Their primary focus was on the individuals they advise. However, as the focus of each subsequent value grew more distant from a focus on the student, support for the value decreased. The least supported value (Advisors are responsible to their educational community) was perhaps too abstract for advisors to connect it with their work. The advisor comments show that there is a need for further training, especially in regard to incorporating the SCV into advising practice. The results also demonstrate that the need and desire for training is not limited to new advisors; seasoned advisors also stand to benefit. Additional training can benefit multiple parties including students, advisors and the institution as the use of standards has been shown to indirectly contribute to job satisfaction by providing clear expectations (Donnelly, 2004). Training should focus on practice but also foster an increased understanding of the SCV and the reciprocal nature of shared responsibilities that go beyond the level of the advisor and students.

The participants offered many comments specific to the individual values from the SCV. Several themes were present within their interview responses. One of these themes concerned student responsibilities related to the educational process. The values from the SCV enumerate the responsibilities of advisors. However, one of the recurring themes throughout the interviews was an emphasis on student accountability and the need for greater personal responsibility. The advisors acknowledged their responsibilities but many also wished for students to assume greater responsibility for their own education and related decisions. The participants' call for greater student responsibility and accountability may have been a reaction to the emphasis within the

SCV on advisor responsibilities. Advising has been described as a system of shared responsibilities (Frost, 1991). Advising is a collaborative effort between students and advisors. Advisors encourage greater student responsibility by helping students build skills focused on planning, problem-solving and decision-making (Smith & Allen, 2006). One of the goals of advising, then, is to help students move from a state of interdependence to independence (Chickering, 1994). Ultimately, advising is a relationship—built on trust and support—between students and a caring professional (Fox, 2008). One of the goals of advising is to support students and help them grow and develop to a point where they can assume responsibility for determining their own life plan and goals (NACADA, 2006). The responsibilities for student education and development occur on multiple levels but the relationship between advisor and student is primary. One way to address this issue is to establish a set of student expectations as they engage in the advising relationship. This is especially necessary for new students who have no experience with higher education. These students may have had limited experience in making important decisions and selecting methods to best meet the goals they establish. New student orientation or student handbooks are just a couple of resources that can be used to explain the shared responsibilities associated with the advising relationship. Like with many new experiences, knowing what is expected helps reduce stress and confusion.

The advisor responses also emphasized the importance of lifelong learning, both for themselves and their students. For their students, the advisors espoused a desire to produce engaged and competent members for the workforce. For themselves, many advisors wished to continue their professional development. Almost half were engaged in additional educational pursuits. Many professions are sufficiently complex as to require additional learning beyond the professional school. In many cases, this learning occurs over the span of a career and requires a

lifetime of learning (Houle, 1980). The study participants recognized that learning does not end after degree attainment. They encouraged this same realization in their students. One of the main purposes of academic advising should be to help students take control and chart the course of their own lifelong development (Chickering, 1994). For several of the study participants, this meant modeling lifelong learning behaviors and supporting further education and development beyond the time spent pursuing an undergraduate degree.

In regard to lifelong learning, a couple of the participants also mentioned advisor training. Many of the advisors expressed support and the desire for professional development. Some also expressed frustration at the limited opportunities for additional training. The interviews demonstrated a lack of advisor training on the SCV. The experienced advisors were more likely to report poor or little training and also less familiarity with the SCV. Some of the newer advisors reported experience with an online training module. The training received by the participants specific to the SCV, especially on integrating the values into practice, could be described as little to none. The inconsistency—and sometimes absence—of advisor training impacts the quality of academic advising (Brown, 2008). Adequate advisor training remains a pressing need, but it is still absent on many campuses (Koring, 2005). Advisors need ongoing support in the form of training and development throughout their careers. Yet, despite the need, very few institutions offer comprehensive training programs that support advisors at every level (Voller, 2011). A system of advisor training was in place at the institution that was the site of this study but the advisor comments indicated that more was desired. The comments also seemed to indicate that it was more of a resource for new advisors. Established advisors were not as familiar with the resource. The advisor comments indicate that improved access, systematization and development of advisor training is not only needed but wanted. It is needed

at all levels of advising—not just for new advisors. One way to address this issue would be to establish an expectation at all levels of the institution that advisors will engage in professional development. A system of rewards and recognition could incentivize greater participation. Based on their interview responses, a variety of factors impacted advisors' ability to participate in training. These factors include limited opportunities, advisor inclination to participate, and lack of support from superiors. But perhaps the most critical element was the need for time set aside for this important activity.

Another dominant theme within the advisor responses was a focus on the individuation of students. Several advisors commented on the importance of recognizing the individual and their unique attributes, skills and background. Knowing students as individuals and recognizing their particular skills, abilities, and interests are the main aspects of the individuation function of academic advising identified by Smith and Allen (2006). This is an important role for academic advising. NACADA (2006) indicates in the *Concept of Academic Advising* that through participation in academic advising, students should be able to create a reasonable educational plan based on their abilities, interests and goals. A number of the study participants indicated that an individualized approach was an important aspect of their advising practice.

Recognition of individual skills and abilities helps advisors suggest ways in which students can strengthen and improve their skills. Suggesting ways for students to enhance their abilities demonstrates the importance of the teaching aspects of academic advising. The interview responses show that promoting student growth and skill development is an important part of the participants' academic advising. Advisors can help students develop skills and understand how these skills connect to their academic, career and life goals (Appleby, 2008). Advisors teach students how to organize and plan their experiences. In addition, they educate

students on the logic of the curriculum, the relationship between courses and how each fits into the overall plan of study (Lowenstein, 2005). Academic advising and teaching are interconnected and equally necessary. While faculty still performs both roles on many campuses, the emergence of professional academic advisors has resulted in an increased awareness of the importance of academic advising and the many functions associated with it.

Implications

The interview responses demonstrate the importance of the relationship between academic advisors and students. Advisors serve as sources of information and guidance. They also offer one of the few ongoing relationships with a caring campus representative (Hunter & White, 2004; Noel, 1985). Academic advising is important because of this relationship and the support advisors can offer—especially for new students transitioning to the institution. In addition, advisors play a critical role in retention efforts. An interesting implication drawn from this study but not directly examined, concerns the limits of automation efforts in relation to academic advising. As an example of these automation efforts, some institutions have developed online degree-audit systems for students. These audit systems, while perhaps helpful when well-supported and implemented, are only supplementary to advising. Perceptions about automation are impacted by the quality and utility of the systems being used. There is certainly a role for some automation, especially the more prescriptive aspects of academic advising such as course scheduling and the mechanics of course registration. However, what is missing from these efforts is the critical relational component. An online degree audit cannot offer support or encourage students to examine options critically. The participants in this study emphasized the fundamental nature of the advising relationship. This is reassuring in an age of increased automation. Advisors, as caring institutional representatives, play a critical role in guiding

students and often their families. Given the importance of this role, greater emphasis should be placed on advisor recognition and training as central to the educational mission of the institution.

The second interview began by asking about the participants' affiliation with NACADA and their familiarity with the SCV. All but one of the advisors reported some exposure but described their knowledge as limited or minimal. Most of the experienced advisors indicated a lack of training specific to the SCV. These comments imply that there is a need for re-training or opportunities for more exposure for established and seasoned advisors. Training should not be reserved for newly hired advisors. Re-training opportunities serve to reinforce and refresh knowledge. Within many professions, there is an expectation of continuing education on the part of the members of the profession and the public as well (Houle, 1980). Continuing education opportunities would help address the desires for lifelong learning expressed by some of the participants.

The need for continuing education and training opportunities is not limited to experienced advisors. These opportunities would also facilitate the transition from pre-professional to professional. According to the NACADA, nearly a third of the membership comes from advisors with less than three years of experience. Nearly half of the membership has less than five years of experience (NACADA, 2015). Several of the newest advisors in this study reported exposure to the SCV as part of an online training module. However, their comments indicated that the impact of this training was limited. This suggests a need for different avenues of training and exposure to the SCV for both newer and seasoned academic advisors.

Recommendations

Over half of the NACADA membership is comprised of professional academic advisors (NACADA, 2015). All of the participants in this study were professional academic advisors from a single institution in the State University System (SUS) of Florida. This study was conducted on the campus of an institution rated as having the highest level of research activity (R1) by the Carnegie Classification of institutions of higher education. Professional advisors are more frequently employed by large research intensive institutions (Self, 2013). As with institutions of higher education in general, each institution has its own mission and purpose. Within the SUS of Florida, not all institutions are as focused on research. It would be prudent to conduct this study with advisors at other institutions to see how the results compare. If the results for this study are generalizable, it is probably to other research-intensive institutions that rely on professional advisors. An argument can be made for additional research on this topic at other research institutions both within the SUS and in other states. Even within a single institution, there may be differences in advising roles by college or discipline. Additional research is needed to explore to whether these differences impact advisor perceptions of the SCV. Related inquiries could also examine the impact of educational background on advisor perceptions of the SCV. Advisors with educational backgrounds in their area of advisement may differ from those whose backgrounds lie outside the areas in which they advise.

This study was conducted by a practicing academic advisor. The experiences of the researcher help shape this study. The knowledge that results from this study is a co-creation of the researcher and the participants. Despite the inherent subjectivity, the researcher must set aside personal biases and draw conclusions from the data, not his or her feelings on the matter being investigated (Houle, 2009). This researcher engaged in multiple techniques to keep biases

in check. One example was the reflective journal. However, it may be worthwhile to conduct additional studies with an independent researcher who is unaffiliated with academic advising. This would perhaps yield a different perspective.

This study focused on the perceptions of academic advisors on the SCV and its impact on their practice of advising. Their perspective is important since they are providing a direct service to students. Other stakeholders connected to academic advising may have a valuable perspective on the SCV to offer as well. For instance, academic advising administrators or other institutional administrators may be able to offer a different perspective. Future studies may wish to explore the perspectives of these administrators on the impact of the SCV on the practice or other aspects of academic advising. Would administrators value the advising responsibilities differently than advisors? Would their opinions of the values differ—especially for the last three values which were not as highly rated as the first three by some of the academic advisors? For additional perspective, it may be worthwhile to explore student perceptions of the SCV. Future studies could seek examine whether and how advisors demonstrate the SCV in advising interactions.

Another avenue for investigation concerns a potential limitation associated with this study. The researcher had a working relationship with many of the participants. Personal affiliation may have influenced participant response. The participants may have been more committed to responding or responding in a way that they felt would please the researcher. It could also be argued that personal affiliation led to greater participation than otherwise would have occurred with a different researcher. Agreeing to participate in an interview, even an-email interview, is a time commitment. This is a difficult dilemma to resolve. One way to attempt to address this issue is to conduct additional research with academic advisors who have no personal or institutional affiliation with the researcher(s).

The gender and racial make-up of the participants in this study was of a limited range. The majority of the participants were Caucasian women. Males were underrepresented in the population of participants of this study. According to the NACADA membership data, women do constitute the majority of academic advisors. The participants were also less ethnically diverse than what is reflected in the NACADA membership data. Further research on this topic should be conducted using a more representative sample.

The work life of an academic advisor can be demanding and hectic. Of course, work demands differ among advising units. Many factors can impact an advisor's work including case load sizes, mandatory advising requirements and supervisory oversight. Using my own experiences as a guide, this study was conducted using a simplified version of the NACADA SCV. The full version of the SCV is just over 1500 words in length. That is a lot of information to digest in a short time frame. By providing too much text, there was the risk that participants would skim or gloss over the details. The choice to use a condensed version of the SCV was made out of mindfulness and respect for the busy schedules of academic advisors. The interviews were structured in four phases with minimal text. However, it would be advisable to conduct additional research using the full version of the SCV. It is not clear that the results would differ substantially if the full version had been used. However, in the interest of accuracy, validity and, to some degree, reproducibility, it would be an avenue of investigation for future studies.

A qualitative interview was selected for this study because of the potential to collect a deep and rich data set. This study asked advisors to describe the importance of the values overall and then each value individually. The participant commentary indicates that some of the academic advisors viewed the values as equal in importance whereas others did not. Additional

research on advisor opinions about the merits of each value may be warranted. One avenue of investigation might have advisors rank-sort the values or to use a Likert-type scale for each of the values. Another strategy would be to ask advisors to rank-sort the values at the outset of a study and at the conclusion to see if any changes might be present.

Perhaps one of the trickiest issues to address with this study may be the perception on the part of participants that there is implied support for the NACADA SCV built into the study. If advisors assumed tacit or overt support, that may have encouraged them to provide more supportive answers. In the instructions, the participants were asked to express their opinions fully and without regard to what they felt might be the opinions of the researcher. Despite this precaution, the participants may still have been influenced simply by the subject matter of the questions and the inclusion of the NACADA SCV as part of the interview. Perhaps other researchers can investigate this topic without explicitly naming the SCV. One approach may be to present the values from the SCV without identifying that they are from NACADA.

Another avenue of investigation concerns NACADA membership. The majority of the participants in this study were either present or past members of NACADA. It might be worthwhile, assuming a sufficient population could be identified and contacted, to explore opinions about the SCV among academic advisors who had no past or present affiliation with the organization. It would be interesting to see if the opinions of such a group would yield different results as compared to the present study.

In terms of actions that could be taken by the institution that was the host for this study, one suggestion would be to centralize and further develop the basic advisor training with an emphasis on application—especially in regard to the SCV. Some of the study participants indicated experience with an online training module which did include coverage of the SVC.

However, many also expressed dissatisfaction with this delivery method. Many of the more experienced advisors were not exposed to this module though it was available to them online. The development of centralized advisor training should take into consideration the different experience levels among academic advisors. At least one study participant implied that the SCV was not emphasized within their advising unit. Several mentioned that professional development opportunities were deemphasized within their particular advising unit. There are challenges with a decentralized approach to advisor training. There will be variation in the delivery and content of training. With a centralized advisor training program, the institution would be able to ensure the coverage of some basic content. Advanced training on specialized topics could continue within the departments and individual advising units.

Summary

Professional academic advisors have an increasingly important role to play in higher education. Formerly, faculty members were the primary providers of academic advising. This was only one of their many obligations. However growth in enrollments during the 20th century led to greater demands for academic advising. One development was the appearance of full-time staff academic advisors. The primary work of these individuals was advising and counseling students—often on more than just academic matters. The numbers of professional academic advisors have continued to grow—especially at large, research-focused institutions.

As the field expanded and developed, there has been a call for professionalization and greater recognition of academic advising. The process of professionalization is complex and perhaps unique to each field. Recognition as a profession is desired because it often confers benefits and prestige. One aspect of professionalization is the development of a code of values

or code of ethics. NACADA, the professional organization for academic advisors, has published the Statement of Core Values (SCV) which is intended to serve as a guide for the practice of academic advising. Because of the growing impact of professional academic advisors, it is important to develop a solid understanding of the field. This study explored advisor perceptions about the impact of the NACADA SCV on academic advising practice.

The advisors who participated in this study provided their opinions about the SCV and its applicability to academic advising in general and in regard to the professional practice of the participants. The results demonstrate that the NACADA Statement of Core Values (SCV) is important to advising practice—especially those values relating to the fundamental relationship between advisors and the students they serve. Many of the participants had limited familiarity with the SCV. Most had received limited or no training on the values or their application to advising practice. However, most of the participants felt that the SCV was relevant and important to academic advising. They were less certain about the applicability of each of the six values to their own advising. The participants were strongly supportive of the first and second values (Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise and Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process) which are focused on the responsibilities of advisors to their students. There was some uncertainty in regard to the last three values from the SCV. These values concerned the expansion of responsibilities beyond the primary relationship between advisors and students.

On the whole, this study found broad support for the SCV when speaking generally of academic advising. Differences and uncertainty emerged when the values were applied to the specifics of advising practice. Based on the study, further training opportunities on the SCV are warranted if these values are to truly become a guide for advising practice. Additional training

opportunities should focus on the application of the SCV to practice. Given the work demands of many advisors an emphasis on practice is priority. It is advising practice and work with students that remains a critical focus for many in the field.

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APPENDICES

National Academic Advising Association

THE STATEMENT OF CORE VALUES OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

EXPOSITION

Core Value 1: Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise.

- Academic advising is an integral part of the educational process and affects students in numerous ways. As advisors enhance student learning and development, advisees have the opportunity to become participants in and contributors to their own education. In one of the most important potential outcomes of this process, academic advising fosters individual potential.
- Regular student contact through in-person appointments, mail, telephone, E-mail, or other computer-mediated systems helps advisors gain meaningful insights into students' diverse academic, social, and personal experiences and needs. Advisors use these insights to assist students as they transition to new academic and social communities, develop sound academic and career goals, and ultimately, become successful learners.
- Advisors recognize and respect that students' diverse backgrounds are comprised of their ethnic and racial heritage, age, gender, sexual orientation, and religion, as well as their physical, learning, and psychological abilities. Advisors help students develop and reinforce realistic self-perceptions and help them use this information in mapping out their futures.
 - Advisors introduce and assist students with their transitions to the academic world by helping them see value in the learning process, gain perspective on the college experience, become more responsible and accountable, set priorities and evaluate their progress, and uphold honesty with themselves and others about their successes and limitations.
 - Advisors encourage self-reliance and support students as they strive to make informed and responsible decisions, set realistic goals, and develop lifelong learning and self-management skills.
 - Advisors respect students' rights to their individual beliefs and opinions.
 - Advisors guide and teach students to understand and apply classroom concepts to everyday life.
 - Advisors help students establish realistic goals and objectives and encourage them to be responsible for their own progress and success.
 - Advisors seek to understand and modify barriers to student progress, identify ineffective and inefficient policies and procedures, and work to effect change. When the needs of students and the institution are in conflict, advisors seek a

resolution that is in the best interest of both parties. In cases where the student finds the resolution unsatisfactory, they inform students regarding appropriate grievance procedures.

- Advisors recognize the changing nature of the college and university environment and diversity within the student body. They acknowledge the changing communication technologies used by students and the resulting new learning environments. They are sensitive to the responsibilities and pressures placed on students to balance course loads, financial and family issues, and interpersonal demands.
- Advisors are knowledgeable and sensitive regarding national, regional, local, and institutional policies and procedures, particularly those governing matters that address harassment, use of technology, personal relationships with students, privacy of student information, and equal opportunity.
- Advisors are encouraged to investigate all available avenues to help students explore academic opportunities.
- Advisors respect student confidentiality rights regarding personal information. Advisors practice with an understanding of the institution's interpretation of applicable laws such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Advisors seek access to and use student information only when the information is relevant to the advising process. Advisors enter or change information on students' records only with appropriate institutional authorization to do so.
- Advisors document advising contacts adequately to meet institutional disclosure guidelines and aid in subsequent advising interactions.

Core Value 2: Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.

- Academic advisors must develop relationships with personnel critical to student success including those in such diverse areas as admissions, orientation, instruction, financial aid, housing, health services, athletics, academic departments, and the registrar's office. They also must establish relationships with those who can attend to specific physical and educational needs of students, such as personnel in disability services, tutoring, psychological counseling, international study, and career development. Advisors must also direct students, as needed, to experts who specialize in credit transfers, co-curricular programs, and graduation clearance.
- Because of the nature of academic advising, advisors often develop a broad understanding of an institution and a detailed understanding of student needs and the resources available to help students meet those needs. Based upon this understanding:
 - advisors can have an interpretative role with students regarding their interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, and fellow students, and
 - advisors can help the institution's administrators gain a greater understanding of students' needs.

- Students involved in the advising process (such as peer advisors or graduate assistants) must be adequately trained and supervised for adherence to the same policies and practices required of the professional and faculty advisors and other specially trained staff advising in the unit/institution.

Core Value 3: Advisors are responsible to their institutions.

- Advisors work in many types of higher education institutions and abide by the specific policies, procedures, and values of the department and institution in which they work. When circumstances interfere with students' learning and development, advisors advocate for change on the advisees' behalf with the institution's administration, faculty, and staff.
- Advisors keep those not directly involved in the advising process informed and aware of the importance of academic advising in students' lives. They articulate the need for administrative support of advising and related activities.
- Advisors increase their collective professional strength by constructively and respectfully sharing their advising philosophies and techniques with colleagues.
- Advisors respect the opinions of their colleagues; remain neutral when students make comments or express opinions about other faculty or staff; are nonjudgmental about academic programs; and do not impose their personal agendas on students.
- Advisors encourage the use of models for the optimal delivery of academic advising programs within their institutions.
- Advisors recognize their individual roles in the success of their institutions and accept and participate in institutional commitments that can include, but are not limited to, administrative and committee service, teaching, research, and writing.

Core Value 4: Advisors are responsible to higher education in general.

- Advisors accept that one goal of education is to introduce students to the world of ideas in an environment of academic freedom. Advisors demonstrate appreciation for academic freedom.
- Advisors base their work with students on the most relevant theoretical perspectives and practices drawn from the fields of social sciences, the humanities, and education.
- One goal of advising is to establish, between students and advisors, a partnership that will guide students through their academic programs. Advisors help students understand that learning can be used in day-to-day application through exploration, trial and error, challenge, and decision making.
- Advisors advocate for student educational achievement to the highest attainable standards and support student goals as they uphold the educational mission of the institution.

- Advisors advocate for the creation, enhancement, and strengthening of programs and services that recognize and meet student academic needs.

Core Value 5: Advisors are responsible to their educational community.

- Many institutions recognize the importance of integrating classroom learning with community experience, study abroad, and programs that bridge the gap between the academic and off-campus environments. Where such programs exist, advisors help students understand the relationship between the institution and local, regional, national, and international communities.
- Advisors advocate for students who desire to include study abroad or community service learning into their co-curricular college experience, and they make appropriate referrals to enable students to achieve these goals..
- Advisors understand the intricacies of transfer between institutions and make appropriate referrals to enable students to achieve their goals.

Core Value 6: Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally.

- Advisors use the Statement of Core Values to guide their professional actions.
- Advisors seek opportunities to grow professionally. They identify appropriate workshops, classes, literature, research publications, and groups, both inside and outside the institution, that can keep their interest high, hone professional skills, and advance expertise within specific areas of interest.
- Advisors seek cross cultural opportunities to interact with and learn more about ethnic communities, racial groups, religions, sexual preferences, genders, and age levels, as well as physical, learning, and psychological abilities and disabilities found among the general student population.
- Advisors recognize that research topics are embedded in academic advising practice and theory. Advisors engage in research and publication related to advising as well as in areas allied with their training and disciplinary backgrounds. Advisors' research agendas safeguard privacy and provide for the humane treatment of subjects.
- Advisors are alert to the demands surrounding their work with students and the necessity of taking care of themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually to best respond to high level demands. They learn how to maintain a 'listening ear' and provide sensitive, timely responses that teach students to accept their responsibilities. Advisors establish and maintain appropriate boundaries, nurture others when necessary, and seek support for themselves both within and outside the institution.

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The Statement of Core Values provides the guidance academic advisors seek from the National Academic Advising Association. The Statement is reviewed periodically to ensure its alignment with current professional practices and philosophies. The National Academic Advising Association encourages institutions to adopt the Statement of Core Values and support the work of those who provide academic advising.

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- See more at: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Core-values-exposition.aspx#sthash.rvK8YRqa.dpuf>

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APPENDIX B: Academic Advising Core Values Interview

Advising Values Interview: Preliminary Information

Your participation in this study will be anonymous. All participants will be assigned a pseudonym for the protection of your identity. Only the author shall know the actual identity of participants. At no time will your real name or e-mail address appear as part of this or any future publication in relation to this study.

This interview will be conducted in four parts. Interview questions will be sent via e-mail to the address you provide every two weeks over an eight week period. Reminder messages will be sent periodically if your responses are not received after five days. Thank you for your willingness to share your time and knowledge. You have my sincere gratitude.

Interview One: Your Role as an Academic Advisor

Instructions: Please respond to the questions below. While not all of the questions require a lengthy response, I encourage you to elaborate and be as descriptive as possible when answering. You may receive follow up questions if additional information or clarity is needed. While completing this survey, you should feel free to express your opinions fully on the topic without regard to what you believe to be the opinions of the researcher.

1. What is your gender?
2. How would you describe your cultural/racial/ethnic background?
3. How many years of experience do you have practicing as a professional academic advisor?
4. How would you describe your educational background and preparation for your role as an academic advisor?
5. How would you describe your history and background as an academic advisor?
6. How would you describe your advising role and the population of students that you currently advise?
7. How much of your work time is spent directly advising students versus completing other duties?
8. How would you describe the training you received in preparation for your role as an advisor?
9. Consider for a moment, the values that have shaped you as a person. Are there any values in particular that you think have shaped you as an advisor or your advising practice?
10. Is there any question about your advising role that I failed to ask but should have?

Interview Two: Your Values as an Advisor

Instructions: Please respond to the questions below. I encourage you to elaborate and be descriptive as much as possible when answering. You may receive follow up questions if additional information or clarity is needed. Some of the questions below refer to the NACADA Statement of Core Values (SCV). These values will be provided in the third phase of the interview. Please do not use outside resources to familiarize yourself with the values at this time. The SCV will be provided in the last stage of the interview.

1. How would you describe your affiliation with the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)?
2. NACADA has published a Statement of Core Values (SCV) of Academic Advising. These six values serve as a guide to the practice of academic advising. How would you describe your knowledge of these six values?
3. How would you describe any training that you have received in relation to the SCV?
4. How would you describe the importance of your responsibility to the students you advise as part of your advising practice?
5. How would you describe the importance of involving others in the advising process as part of your advising practice?
6. How would you describe the importance of your responsibilities toward your institution in relation to your advising practice?
7. How would you describe the importance of your responsibilities toward higher education in relation to your advising practice?
8. How would you describe the importance of your responsibilities toward the broader educational community in relation to your advising practice?
9. How would you describe the importance of your responsibilities toward your own professional and personal growth in relation to your advising practice?
10. Is there any question about your advising responsibilities that I failed to ask but should have?

Interview Three: Your Advising Practice (Part One)

Instructions: For the third phase of this interview, please read the Statement of Core Values provided below and then answer the questions that follow. While not all of the questions require a lengthy response, I encourage you to elaborate and be as descriptive as possible when answering. You may receive follow up questions if additional information or clarity is needed.

The NACADA Statement of Core Values

The NACADA Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising consists of six statements which are meant to serve as a guide for the practice of academic advising. The values are listed below along with a brief paraphrased explanation for each. **Please read the statements below. They will be discussed in the next section.**

Core Value 1: Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise.

Academic advising is a complex task requiring knowledge from a variety of areas in order to best support individual student growth and development. Advisors support student learning and development by focusing on the goals and abilities of individuals.

Core Value 2: Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.

Academic advisors connect with a broad array of campus personnel to meet the needs of students whether as a referral agent, an interpreter of policies and rules or as an advocate for the students they serve.

Core Value 3: Advisors are responsible to their institutions.

Advisors work within their particular institutional setting, advocate for the benefit of the students they serve and work for the success of the institutions for which they work.

Core value 4: Advisors are responsible to higher education in general.

Advisors promote learning and the world of ideas. They encourage students to seek intellectual challenges and to apply knowledge and ideas to day-to-day life.

Core Value 5: Advisors are responsible to their educational community.

Advisors encourage and support student engagement with the broader community in which the institution resides as well as on a national and international level when those opportunities are present.

Core Value 6: Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally.

Advisors seek opportunities to grow personally and professionally through cross-cultural, research, and training and development opportunities.

Now that you've had a chance to read the NACADA SCV, please keep these values in mind as you answer the questions below. One of the primary concerns of this interview is to explore the relationship between the values and the practice of academic advising. In other words, how do these values impact what you do as part of your work as an academic advisor? The following questions refer to the practice of academic advising in general.

1. How would you describe the significance of the values from the SCV in relation to academic advising in general?
2. How would you describe the significance of each of the six values from the SCV in relation to each other?
3. How would you describe the significance of the six values from the SCV in relation to your advising practice?
4. Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise. How would you describe the significance of this responsibility to your advising practice?
5. Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process. How would you describe the significance of this responsibility to your advising practice?
6. Advisors are responsible to their institutions. How would you describe the significance of this responsibility to your advising practice?
7. Advisors are responsible to higher education in general. How would you describe the significance of this responsibility to your advising practice?
8. Advisors are responsible to their educational community. How would you describe the significance of this responsibility to your advising practice?
9. Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally. How would you describe the significance of this responsibility to your advising practice?

Interview Four: Your Advising Practice (Part Two)

Instructions: For the fourth and final phase of this interview, please read the Statement of Core Values below and then answer the questions that follow. While not all of the questions require a lengthy response, I encourage you to elaborate and be as descriptive as possible when answering. You may receive follow up questions if additional information or clarity is needed.

The NACADA Statement of Core Values

The NACADA Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising consists of six statements which are meant to serve as a guide for the practice of academic advising. The values are listed below along with a brief paraphrased explanation for each. **Please read the statements below. They will be discussed in the next section.**

Core Value 1: Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise.

Academic advising is a complex task requiring knowledge from a variety of areas in order to best support individual student growth and development. Advisors support student learning and development by focusing on the goals and abilities of individuals.

Core Value 2: Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.

Academic advisors connect with a broad array of campus personnel to meet the needs of students whether as a referral agent, an interpreter of policies and rules or as an advocate for the students they serve.

Core Value 3: Advisors are responsible to their institutions.

Advisors work within their particular institutional setting, advocate for the benefit of the students they serve and work for the success of the institutions for which they work.

Core value 4: Advisors are responsible to higher education in general.

Advisors promote learning and the world of ideas. They encourage students to seek intellectual challenges and to apply knowledge and ideas to day-to-day life.

Core Value 5: Advisors are responsible to their educational community.

Advisors encourage and support student engagement with the broader community in which the institution resides as well as on a national and international level when those opportunities are present.

Core Value 6: Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally.

Advisors seek opportunities to grow personally and professionally through cross-cultural, research, and training and development opportunities.

For the last series of questions, please consider the six values from the SCV as they relate to your advising practice. There are a number of functions typical of academic advising practice. These functions have been simplified in five domains below. Consider the impact of the SCV on these five domains, especially in relation to your advising practice.

1. Academic advisors assist undergraduate students with choosing courses, majors, degrees and out-of-class activities that connect their academic, career, and life goals. How do the values from the SCV impact this aspect of your own advising practice?

2. Academic advisors refer undergraduate students, when they need it, to campus resources that address academic problems (e.g., math or science tutoring, writing, disability accommodation, test anxiety) and non-academic issues (e.g., child-care, financial, physical and mental health). How do the values from the SCV impact this aspect of your own advising practice?

3. Academic advisors assist undergraduate students with understanding how things work at the university by providing accurate information (understanding time lines, policies, and procedures with regard to registration, financial aid, grading, graduation, petitions, appeals, etc.). How do the values from the SCV impact this aspect of your own advising practice?

4. Academic advisors know students as individuals and take into account undergraduate students' skills, abilities, and interests in helping them choose courses. How do the values from the SCV impact this aspect of your own advising practice?

5. A function of academic advising is to encourage undergraduate students to assume responsibility for their education by helping them develop planning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. How do the values from the SCV impact this aspect of your own advising practice?

Finally, after considering the SCV, the functions of advising and your own advising practice, please answer these last two questions.

6. If you were writing the SCV, is there a value you would add?

7. Is there any question about advising practice that I failed to ask but should have?

APPENDIX C : Functional Areas of Advising

Table 3

Academic Advising Functions

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Academic Advising Functions</u>
	<u>Integration Functions</u>
Overall connect	Advising that helps students connect their academic, career, and life goals
Major connect	Advising that helps students choose among courses in the major that connect their academic, career, and life goals
Gen ed connect	Advising that assists students choosing among the various general education options (e.g., choice of capstone, cluster, courses within cluster) that connect their academic, career, and life goals
Degree connect	Advising that assists students with deciding what kind of degree to pursue (bachelor of science, bachelor of arts, bachelor of music) to connect their academic, career, and life goals
Out-of-class connect	Advising that assists students with choosing out-of-class activities (e.g., part-time employment, internships or practicum, participation in clubs or organizations) that connect their academic, career, and life goals
	<u>Referral Functions</u>
Referral academic	When students need it, referral to campus resources that address academic problems (e.g., math or science tutoring, writing, disability accommodation, testing anxiety)
Referral nonacademic	When students need it, referral to campus resources that address nonacademic problems (e.g., child care, financial, physical and mental health)
	<u>Information Functions</u>
How things work	Assisting students with understanding how things work at this university (understanding time lines, policies, and procedures with regard to registration, financial aid, grading, graduation, petitions, and appeals, etc.)
Accurate information	Ability to give students accurate information about degree requirements
	<u>Individuation Functions</u>
Skills abilities interests	Taking into account students' skills, abilities, and interests in helping them choose courses
Know as individual	Knowing the student as an individual
	<u>Shared Responsibility Function</u>
Shared Responsibility	Encouraging students to assume responsibility for their education by helping them develop planning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills

Smith & Allen, 2006

APPENDIX D: Invitation to Participate

Dear Academic Advising Colleague,

I am a fellow academic advisor and a doctoral candidate in Adult Education at the University of South Florida. I am interested in developing an understanding of the impact of the NACADA Statement of Core Values on the practice of academic advising. As you know, academic advising is an increasingly critical aspect of higher education. While we both agree about the importance of the field, there is a great deal of research that needs to be done to advance our understanding of academic advising. To that end, I am writing to request your participation in a research study. The interviews for this study will be conducted through e-mail. There are no in-person requirements. The interview will be divided into four sections with an interview occurring every two-weeks. Breaking up the interview into four intervals will allow for reflection and make the process more manageable and less time consuming. If you volunteer to participate, you will receive a follow-on message with details about the timeline of the study and information about informed consent.

There may be no direct benefit to you through your participation with this study. However, this interview will incite you to think about the values of academic advising and your advising practice. Your participation may provide greater insight into advising values and practice at this institution. It may also have value for the field of advising through increased understanding of the role of advising values on advising practice.

Time is a precious commodity in academic advising and this interview will require some of your valuable time. I understand if you choose not to participate. Please know this is an entirely voluntary study. There is minimal risk associated with your involvement. Unfortunately, this is an unfunded research project and no compensation is available to pay for your participation. Your participation will be kept confidential and your responses will be reported using assigned pseudonyms for the protection of your privacy.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact John Morgan by e-mailing jpmorga2@mail.usf.edu. You can find detailed information about your rights as a study participant on the Research Integrity and Compliance website: (<http://www.research.usf.edu/dric/hrpp/irb-hrpp.asp>). If you have concerns, complaints, questions or wish to discuss your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB Office at (813) 974-5638 (IRB Study Pro#00024647).

Thank you for your time and consideration in relation to this project. If you are willing to participate, please respond to jpmorga2@mail.usf.edu with an e-mail address where you wish to conduct the interview. I look forward to our conversation. Thank you.



Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

Pro # 00024647

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. Please review the information below regarding informed consent. It is important that you understand your rights as a research study participant. Once you have reviewed the information, please reply to this message indicating your consent to participate.

I affirm my consent to participate in this research study.

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. This form tells you about this research study. We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called: Advisor Perspectives on the Relationship between Professional Values and the Practice of Academic Advising. The person who is in charge of this research study is John Morgan. This person is called the Principal Investigator.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore professional academic advisor perspectives on the NACADA Statement of Core Values in relation to advising practice. This study is a qualitative interview conducted in four parts via e-mail.

Why are you being asked to take part?

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are an academic advisor at the institution this is the site for this study.

Study Procedures

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to respond to e-mail interview questions which have been divided into four intervals. You may also receive a limited number of follow-up questions based on your responses at each interval. You will be asked to provide an e-mail address where you would like to be contacted for the purposes of this research. You will be assigned a pseudonym to protect the confidentiality of your name and e-mail address. No more than 25 subjects will be included in this study.

Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer; you are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study.

Benefits and Risks

There are no known benefits associated with taking part in this study.

This research is considered to be of minimal risk.

Compensation

You will not be paid for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Your study records will be kept confidential. Your communications throughout the interview process are expected to remain confidential. It is possible, although unlikely, that unauthorized individuals could gain access to your responses because you are responding via e-mail. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet. However, your participation in this e-mail interview involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the Internet.

Certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are the: Principal Investigator, his Advising Professor and the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Contact Information

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the USF IRB at 974-5638. If you have questions regarding the research, please contact the Principal Investigator at 813-974-5648 or jpmorga2@usf.edu.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name or e-mail address. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are. You can print a copy of this consent form for your records.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by proceeding with this interview that I am agreeing to take part in research and I am 18 years of age or older. Please respond to this message if you wish to participate in this study. Your response will serve as verification of your informed consent and intent to participate. Thank you!

APPENDIX F: Copyright Permissions

From: Publish NACADA publishing account <publish@ksu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 4:35 PM
To: Morgan, John
Subject: RE: copyright

John

Your email request to utilize a table published in the NACADA Journal for your dissertation was forwarded to me for reply.

Yes, you may use Table 2 from the Smith and Allen article in issue 26(1) of the NACADA Journal for your dissertation and may reprint it in the appendix of your dissertation.

Good luck with your dissertation! Marsha

From: Morgan, John [mailto:jpmorga2@usf.edu]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 3:14 PM
To: NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising <nacada@ksu.edu>
Subject: copyright

Dear NACADA,

I wish to request permission to use the content of a table appearing in the NACADA Journal for my dissertation. My NACADA membership has currently lapsed.

This is in reference to Table 2 appearing on page 59, from an article by Smith and Allen in Volume 26(1) from Spring of 2006. If permission is granted, the content will appear as an appendix to my dissertation.

Sincerely,

John Morgan
Undergraduate Academic Advisor
Computer Engineering, Computer Science & Information Technology
jpmorga2@usf.edu

Computer Science & Engineering
4202 East Fowler Ave., ENB 118
Tampa, FL 33620-5350
(p) 813.974.6006
(f) 813.974.5456

USF eScheduler (current students)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Morgan was born in Perry, Florida. His early years were spent in rural North Florida. During his school-age years he lived in Palatka with many summers spent in St. Petersburg. His first foray into higher education began at St. Johns River Community College/Florida School of the Arts where he earned an Associate of Arts in Graphic Design in 1989. He then attended the University of Central Florida where he earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in Anthropology and in Motion Picture Technology in 1994. After a brief career in film and television production, he returned to higher education. In 2003, he completed a M.Ed. degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on Student Affairs.

He has worked in higher education since 2001. For the majority of that time, he has served as an academic advisor. In 2009, he began additional studies toward a Ph. D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Adult Education. His research interests include: the many aspects of academic advising; peer connections during college; transition to college; international student adjustment; living and learning communities; women in STEM; and the role of class, gender and sexuality in higher education.