TRANSITION INTO HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE STRUCTURE AND PRACTICE OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

By

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ABSTRACT

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Research suggests that academic advising has great significance for students' personal, academic, and social lives in the U.S., and advisors impact first-year students' social integrations and retention. Although the ratio of advisor to student remains low, scholars assert that if advising programs succeed, they increase the number of graduates. For these reasons, researchers emphasize positive influence of academic advising on students' persistence, skill acquisition, development, aspirations, and satisfaction with both academic and career decisions.

As a result, it is a general wisdom within the U.S. that universities must offer academic programs, services, and academic advisor assistance that will enforce student success, retention, and completion. However, previous research has not been abundantly concentrated on exploring how academic advisors and supervisors acknowledge their roles with regard to their knowledge, competencies and qualifications; skills and abilities; the importance of the contribution they may make in student transition into higher education.

In Azerbaijan the education system is centralized, and the higher education system remains essentially not much changed since its inception. Four-year institutions do not provide undergraduate students, including freshmen, with academic advising. Students oftentimes struggle during the first year because of missing academic support. Students are not ready for the space and community; they do not know where to go to get support or help of any kind. Instruction alone does not help students grow in the ways that will help them to be successful.

Through the dissertation, I argue that academic advising is a missing social structure that needs to be established in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan.

Using constructivist and interpretivist frameworks, I have conducted a qualitative exploratory and descriptive interview-based study to understand the organization and delivery of academic advising in a four-year public institution in the U.S..

I found there were not any fixed or long-established ways to advise first-year students, except Academic Orientation Programs and First-year seminars. A few years ago, the organizational change happened in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery. Loosely coordinated and decentralized advising practice in the college transitioned and moved under the Undergraduate Studies Office. There was a big shift in the structure to make academic advising delivery somewhat consistent and centrally coordinated and overseen at DSU.

The academic specialists' evaluation and assessment of advising delivery were not completely centralized and unified across DSU's campus. There were not fixed or established benchmarks and evaluation forms or templates either. The leadership conducted centralized student surveys and analyzed the data for the future to be used as the base for changes by a task-force. The departments individually launched student surveys to measure student satisfaction on academic advisors' performance. Professional development activities, academic advising training programs, and delivery of advising were aligned with NACADA core competency areas. In addition, recently launched a brand-new Advisor Portal was not used by all academic advisors as it was supposed to be.

Based on these data, I have also developed an advising model to be embedded in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan. I am certain that academic advising will help students gain clarity of expectations and get ready to achieve academic, personal, and career goals.

To my dear father, Sabir Yunusov,
my late mother, Sayyara Asgarova-Yunusova,
and my family.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Research consistently highlights academic advising has great significance for students' personal, academic, and social lives in higher education (HE) in the U.S.. Light (2001) states, "It is hard to imagine any academic support function that is more important to student success and institutional productivity than advising" (p. 81), because advising services in HE assist first-year students to choose courses and appropriately schedule them, help select a major, and plan a future career. In this respect, the academic advisors' impact on the first-year students' social integrations (Robbins et al., 2009) and retention (Gordon et al., 2011) in higher education is essential.

Gordon et al. (2011) assert that if the advising programs succeed, they not only positively influence students' retention but also increase the number of graduates, which entails graduates' educational and career goals achievement. Uhlik (2004) emphasizes positive influence of academic advising on students' persistence, skill acquisition and development, students' aspirations, and their satisfaction with both academic and career decisions. Similarly, Tinto (2006) stresses the importance of academic advising that provides a "road map to completion" (p. 2) and how academically supported students gain clarity of expectations and readiness in achieving personal and career goals.

1.1. Definition

The overall aims of academic advising as a social institution are to promote the students' self-exploration, self-awareness, and self-evaluation; to assist students in recognizing the value of successes and also failures; to help students to explore choices and make reasonable choices according to interests, skills and abilities; and to sustain "the centrality of the academic curriculum" (Hemwall & Trachte, 1999, p. 7). The advising institution considers the students' values, beliefs, aspirations, goals, and interests and helps to construct knowledge, synthesize the knowledge learned, and apply the knowledge by means of developed skills. Such social and academic capital contextualizes the students' everyday life, social, and academic experiences.

O'Banion (1972, 2013) highlights, "Academic advising is the second most important function in the college," and defines as "a process in which advisor and advisee enter a dynamic relationship respectful of the student's concerns" (2013, p.3). This assertion implies that an advisor and an advisee interact as partners. The advisor takes the role of a teacher, guides the student, and assists in responding to his concerns.

Similarly, Noel-Levitz (1997) defines advising as "a process of giving students guidance, support and encouragement"(p.3), whilst Grites (1979) asserts that advising is "a decision-making process during which students realize their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchanges with an advisor" (p.1).The social interaction and partnership that occur during the advising process may increase student expectations, and the students become more conscious about their potential, strengths, and weaknesses.

Becoming more conscious about their own potential, strengths, and weaknesses triggers students' minds and develops more self-awareness. Noel-Levitz (1997) argues that this advanced self-awareness is "helping students diminish the confusion that comes with a new environment,

clarify their goals, and get the most out of their education" (p.3). As a result, student performance may be positively impacted by advising.

All three scholars Grites, Noel-Levitz, and O'Banion while defining advising, stress *process* as an important component. In other words, academic advising does not mean a simple action, one meeting, or one event. Academic advising goes beyond this simplicity and embeds a series of fixed, routinized procedures, actions, meetings, and events that occur in the course of bounded time (e.g., one semester, a year, two or four years, etc.), generally between two individuals when they converse and share.

Correspondingly, when the researchers define an academic advisor, they relate academic advising to teaching and learning process when advisors contribute to students' understanding of the curriculum, constructing meanings and connecting them, fastening their academic, career, and life goals, and learning and developing as a whole (Hemwall & Trachte, 2005; Lowenstein, 2005, 2013; Smith & Allen, 2006, 2008). Undoubtedly, the academic advisor plays a significant role in transfer students' and freshmen's social and educational lives because advising as an intellectual process concentrates on teaching and learning and integrating each student's curriculum.

Consequently, the curriculum is highlighted as it encompasses a well- designed, planned program of identified objectives, required courses based on various subjects, academic content, skills and experiences that lead the students to accomplishment. In regard to a well-designed program and student accomplishment, Hagen and Jordan (2008) consider advisors as academics who can teach curriculum, assist students in understanding and relating curriculum to their personal, social, and academic lives, and help students become lifelong learners.

1.2. Problem Statement

Over the past decades, concerns related to college transition and students' psychological, personal, social, and academic lives have triggered the evolution of academic advising as a profession in colleges and research universities in the US. The evolution of the profession has established structures such as academic services and student affairs in those education entities, although Bailey et al. (2015) highlight the "current organizational structures, hierarchies, and cultures are too powerful and well entrenched to be threatened by abstractions, no matter how ambitious" (Bailey et al., 2015, p. 12).

A survey conducted among more than 225, 000 undergraduates in over 425 US higher education institutions has revealed that academic advising is the second most important component of student's college experience after the quality of instruction (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009). Previous researchers discovered that in 947 HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) countrywide, students expressed satisfaction with academic advising, and they placed academic advising among the three most encouraging factors in retention (Beal & Noel, 1980). In contrast, Allen and Smith (2008) and Keup and Stolzenberg (2004) claim that students have expressed dissatisfaction with academic advising. However, the other researchers prove that academic advising is significant to student success, learning outcomes, and retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Tinto, 1998; Hunter, McCalla-Wriggins, & White, 2007). Given that many HEIs may develop and maintain effective advising services that enable them to promote student satisfaction and increase retention.

Undoubtedly, academic advising has been playing an irreplaceable role in student achievement and accomplishment in the US. although commonly the ratio of academic advisor to student remains not high (Brock, 2010). Vianden and Barlow (2015) assert that when student and adviser have a strong connection with each other, it may result in positive student outcomes. For

this and aforementioned reasons, Bailey et al. (2015) state colleges and universities should reevaluate their academic advising services and offer programs and advising assistance that could decrease the advisor-student ratio and enforce advisors to afford more comprehensive support for students. Redesigned academic programs, services, and academic advisor assistance may enforce student success, retention, and completion.

1.2.1. Need for the Better Transition into Higher Education in Azerbaijan

In contrast to the U.S., the higher education system in Azerbaijan is centralized, the organizational structure is highly hierarchical, and the educational leadership executed is traditionally based on the top-down authority (Boer et al., 2017). Additionally, the four-year higher education institutions (HEIs) do not provide undergraduate students, including transfer and first-year students, with academic advising that may assist in designing meaningful personal, social, and educational goals and foster student's whole growth and development. Consequently, when Light (2001) highlights the importance of advising and at the same time its underestimation as a vital higher education experience, it resonates with the situation in the higher education system in Azerbaijan, which has not been utilizing this practice.

As academic advising services have not been embedded in HEIs' culture in the country, I assume the administration of HEIs are even not aware of the importance of academic advising services. Lack of awareness has resulted in missing efforts to embed this pivotal component in the education entities' culture. In fact, faculty advisors are currently appointed only to students who pursue a Master's or a PhD degree. Ultimately, academic advising that is conducted in HEIs is fragmented and such mediocrity exists in the education system in Azerbaijan.

Besides, students do not have the opportunity to benefit from prior academic support at high school, either. Although officially every school should have one psychologist at best, in most schools either the vacancy is not occupied, or a non-professional staff member performs this role. Because of this deficiency, students admitted in HEIs on the basis of a centralized entry exam, and who are currently transitioning into HE, are not supported with any academic advisors' assistance and academic advising services.

1.2.2. Need to Institute Academic Advising Services in Azerbaijan

I believe academic advising as a social structure should be recommended to the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan Republic (MoE) so that the practice can be established in HEIs. Furthermore, this recommendation may align with the goals of education reform initiatives in Azerbaijan Republic launched on the presidential decrees for the last 18 years.

In Azerbaijan, students oftentimes struggle in the first and second semesters of higher education because there is not adequate academic support. Newly enrolled students are not ready for the space and community; they do not know where to go to get support or help of any kind. Instruction alone cannot help these students grow in the ways that will help them to be successful.

In Azerbaijan, applicants who receive the relevant state certificate on secondary, vocational or higher education are eligible to be admitted to HEIs based on the results of the admission examination conducted by the State Examination Center (SEC) of the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to the independent education expert Asadov, currently, 51 state and non-state universities serve more than 167.677 students, of which 70 percent are studying at their own expense and placed in the self-paying seats. Although the average tuition fee for a major for one academic year is 2,000AZN ($1177), the most popular and favored majors cost 6500 ($3824), 5000 ($2941), 4300 ($2529) AZN (Asadov, 2018). The education expert asserts that the tuition fees in local HEIs are higher than that for many universities and colleges around the world while the quality of education is much lower. High tuition fees and low quality of education remain as the most compelling problems that possibly generate student drop out and transfer in Azerbaijan (Asadov, 2018).

In the recent past, to change major or type of education (from higher to vocational) was a hard task, and it still remains challenging. The only authority in the country is the Ministry of

Education (MoE), and MoE is tasked to transfer both domestic students that studied abroad and domestic students who studied in local HEIs to various higher education entities across the country. The students who studied at colleges and universities that are not accredited in foreign countries are not allowed to be transferred to HEIs in Azerbaijan (Valekhov, 2017). I searched for hard data in the released 2016 Annual Report from Ministry of Education in Azerbaijan and the other relevant reports from MoE. The reports were vague in their descriptions of various points of data, and there was not any information on drop-outs and transfer students. I also sent a letter and officially requested the State Exam Center (SEC) to report on any available data related to those students. SEC did not present any data on drop-outs and transfer students and justified that recording that kind of data was not under SEC's purview.

According to the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan Republic (SSC, 2019), in the year 2016, 36126 students were admitted to the state and non-state universities based on the results of the admission examination conducted by SEC and 31138 students graduated with a Bachelor's degree from HEIs across the country. Likewise, SSC did not report any data on drop-outs and transfer students. However, the head of department for work with NGOS (non-governmental organizations) and the media of MoE, Valekhov (2017) reports that in 2016 via the online application submission platform, which was launched in the same year (www.transfer.edu.az), 233 students were transferred to various HEIs, including students who were studying abroad and only 46 students transferred to vocational schools because of poor academic performance (Valekhov, 2017). According to another department chair of MoE Aliyev (2019), via that online application submission platform all in all 1484 students were transferred to other HEIs since the portal started to function in 2016. He also underlines that 805 students from local HEIs and 21 students who were studying abroad used the portal and transferred to the local universities. Only four students with Master' s Degree submitted their application to the

portal for transfer. In addition, 107 students from the secondary vocational institution or specialty submitted their applications to the portal so that they could transfer to other secondary special education institutions across the country (Aliyev, 2019).

The reality is that not all students, particularly first-year students, are informed about the online submission platform. They are not necessarily aware of any other possibilities or ways to solve the problems they encounter because of a missing academic advising structure in an education entity in which they study.

Universities, colleges, or vocational schools do not provide any academic advising services to direct those students to resources and guide them so that they can succeed. Missing academic advising structure may create a number of problems, including student transfer, drop out, and even expelling from the HEIs in Azerbaijan. Additionally, I assume even when many students in HEIs in Azerbaijan attain a degree, they are often not well-prepared and able to succeed in their careers or be engaged in citizenship.

Speaking about the demand in the labor market for the graduates from HEIs in our country, the education expert Asadov emphasizes that the quality of education in colleges and training in specialized secondary schools is not at a high level. The expert clearly emphasizes that the key indicators of university graduates are low, and colleagues do not meet the requirements of the labor market. Therefore, the university graduates' employment rate is low in the country. Accessibility and content knowledge in HEIs of the country needs to be reformed to expand the scope. There are many technical specialties that provide staff training, and it would be more appropriate to implement them in their facilities (Asadov, personal communication, 2019).

I argue that this problem needs to be attended to by the MoE as there is a need for the establishment of academic advising services, and especially for training academic advisors to

ensure that students can smoothly transition into HE, easily navigate through the university structures, and gain clarity of expectations to achieve academic, personal, and career goals. As a result, more students will be likely to successfully graduate with achieved educational and career goals.

Academic advising structure and practice will also contribute to the sustainability of capacity-building in HEIs. The HEIs will ensure that graduates achieve efficient and necessary skills set that will assist them to succeed in their future career lives. There will be professional development and peer-learning opportunities for all stakeholders within the HEIs that will develop new lines of communication, opportunities for networking and leadership development. HEIs may create new organizational plans or they may assess and reexamine the old ones. HEIs will collaborate with other non-profit partners in- and out of state, and this collaboration may increase and develop new sources of support.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The overarching aim of this qualitative study is to understand how U.S. institutions assist students in transitioning into higher education, navigating through the campus, attaining success, persisting in their disciplines, and getting a degree. The explicit purpose of the study is to better understand how the individual characteristics, knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences (i.e., qualifications) of both academic advisors and administrators in student affairs and other academic services help diverse students, particularly transfer and first-year students, transition into HE and successfully navigate through the campus.

Evidently, higher education comprises not only direct instruction facilitated by the faculty, but teaching is also employed in academic staff's and academic advisor's responsibilities (Crookston, 1972; Hunter & White, 2004). Hence, Appleby (2008) states, "Advising is teaching" (p. 85). When academic advisors advise students, they strive to explore their interests, weaknesses and strengths, and the impact of classes students favor. They inquire about students' coursework and curriculum engagement without any tension and in a friendly manner outside the classroom. Academic advisors direct students to resources on campus and encourage them to socialize with others. Academic advisors converse with students about ethics, what they believe, and what they value, positioning students' academic engagement and socialization in a straight line (Bigger, 2005; Campbell, 2008).

Given the importance of facilitating student development inside and outside the classroom, O'Banion (1972, 1994, 2009) asserts that instruction alone does not guarantee that students will achieve the program of study. They may succeed, avoid failure, and graduate in four years if academic advising is effectively conducted. In this regard, Self (2013) notes that the academic advisors' role is increasing and their positive affect on student accomplishment augments their number in academic services and student affairs in the research universities.

For all of these reasons, this study will help me acknowledge how academic advising is organized in a four-year public institution and how it is delivered. This research will contribute to my better understanding of the individual characteristics, knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences (i.e., qualifications) of both academic advisors and administrators in student affairs and other academic services. This study will assist me to understand how academic advising services are structured, what those procedures are, and what strategies and practices are employed in academic advising process that helps diverse students, particularly transfer and first-year students, transition into HE and successfully navigate through the campus.

1.4. Academic Advising in U.S. Institutions

According to Times Higher Education's World Rankings Data (2019), more than 170 U.S. universities and colleges are placed among the best universities in the world. These universities and colleges offer thousands of academic undergraduate programs. The academic undergraduate programs proffer education opportunities for students, so they get accurate, comprehensive, and authentic information on current world innovations. Besides, these universities and colleges provide the students with flexible services and rich resources that help them to enroll, successfully transition, easily navigate through the curriculum, and complete a degree.

Undoubtedly, academic advising services in U.S. institutions remain one of the most common academic organizational structures that provide academic support and social assistance to students. Hence, academic advising is expected to facilitate student learning and augment student satisfaction, which support student retention and degree completion. In this respect, academic advisors are considered a source of expertise and enlightenment for the students on college and university campuses across the U.S.

1.5. Strategies and Systems to Be Implemented in Azerbaijan

I am highly motivated to study the academic advising system and particularly an academic advisor's role in academic services and student affairs in a large U.S. university. I strive to learn whether academic advisors have already acquired or still lack important qualifications (i.e., skills, knowledge, competencies, and experiences) for helping diverse students, particularly transfer and first-year students. I am eager to understand whether they have already developed and utilize any procedures or instruments to academically advise those students.

Additionally, I strive to grasp how administrators define advising and what the historical context of academic advising is within a big public university in the U.S.. I desire to perceive the purpose of academic advising, how the advising system is structured across a huge campus, what role a university's culture plays in the establishment of required academic advising, who the authority is to make changes in the academic advising system, and in what ways the academic advising system and especially academic advisors at individual colleges help students make a smooth transition to college, persist in college, and successfully complete a degree.

In this respect, I assume the previous research has not been abundantly concentrated on exploring how academic advisors and supervisors acknowledge their roles with regard to their personal characteristics and qualifications; the importance of the contribution they may make in student transition into higher education; and how they benefit student identity development, success achievement in coursework and career goal clarification. I am assured that an academic advisor is a crucial bond in student's connection to the campus and this bond will be better understood if my study considers both academic advisors' and administrators' perspectives.

1.6. Why a public U.S. institution?

Referring to my own experiences as a current graduate student and former visiting scholar in two public universities in the U.S., I assume public universities differ from private universities because of funding, tuition, and scholarships. Public universities are not necessarily supervised by states' governments but publicly funded; the funding comes partially from taxes and state subsidies. These universities offer various favorable scholarships, in-state students may benefit from tuition at discounted rates, and there is a tendency to connect tuition discounts with academic excellence and student capacity (Brewer, Gates, & Goldman (2002) as cited in Dill, 2005, p. 6). Besides, public universities utilize almost standard requirements within the same state (Lattuca & Stark, 2009). Diverse students enroll in public universities because of affordability and accessibility, but public universities generally depend on a particular state's *official rules, standardized processes, procedures, and requirements* (Daniels, 2016; Thelin, 2011).

Similarly, in Azerbaijan, public universities are funded by the government. The funding may come from other sources, but these sources should not contradict with the legislation of the Azerbaijan Republic. According to the European Commission (2017), the government supports students to proceed to higher education and exempts them from the tuition charges. Prior to 2010, only in public universities students were exempted from the tuition charges. At present, students who score high at the university admission exam can get a tuition remission in private universities as well (Aliyev 2011; Guliyev 2016; Silova et al. 2006).

In tuition-free programs in Azerbaijan, students who maintain good academic standing during the academic year can benefit from a monthly stipend. A limited number of outstanding students benefit from a Presidential stipend. The Education Law allows HEIs in Azerbaijan to obtain resources from various national and international projects, real estates, and consultancy

services. Thus, students do not have the opportunity to benefit from a loan mechanism, although the Ministry of Education signed an order to create a loan-allocating system in 2015. The order has not been adequately implemented in HEIs yet (European Commission, 2017).

In the U.S., public universities are supposed to foster students to work collaboratively and promote inclusiveness. Public universities are expected to facilitate a dynamic, robust, interactive learning environment on their campuses and proffer a plethora of research opportunities and study-abroad programs. Comfortable facilities, computer networks, libraries on campuses, and medical care centers offer quality service to students who study and do research (Dill, 2005; Kuh, 2009; Thelin, 2011). In contrast, these characteristic features may lack in public universities in Azerbaijan that may affect accessibility and the quality of teaching and learning, as Petrov and Temple (2004) assert that "the structure of the [higher education] system remains essentially unchanged since Soviet times" (p.89).

Organizational structures such as academic student services and student affairs offices, common in U.S. institutions, deliver academic help and proffer rich resources on campuses (Hill et al., 2003; McInnis, 2004; Tinto, 1993). Academic student services and student affairs offices provide students with academic advising and opportunities to freely communicate with the administration and build their leadership skills. Open access to the administration and academic advising adds more reasons to study such practice in public universities. I consider the opportunity to benefit from academic advisors' assistance and interact with the administration is one of the most appreciated sides of universities in the U.S., which is a missing trait of HEIs in Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, students' learning and succeeding in college depends on the level of their involvement (Astin, 1993). When a university campus is functioning on the basis of a sustainable dynamic atmosphere, students gain multiple chances of social integration in the community.

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Students do co-curricular activities that assist in building and sustaining the community. Co-curricular activities encourage students to gather together, communicate, share ideas, exchange thoughts, and discuss issues of interest or of concern. Social interaction relieves tension, creates comfort, enhances learning and various skills acquirement, including critical thinking ability. As a result, student persistence improves, and it positively influences retention and academic achievements (Tinto, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzine, 1991).

Astin (1993) asserts that when students are involved in any type of activity, they meet with peers, including international students and diverse people across the globe. Students build not only relationships, but they also obtain the chance to increase their personal and educational experiences. Besides, doing co-curricular activities positively affects emotional, cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal development, and behavior. Students' improved behaviors generate learning, and they strive to negotiate and to make a compromise while communicating with diverse individuals. Students appreciate diverse ideas and thoughts and learn to effectively solve problems and to build leadership skills. Leadership skills students acquire help them gain self-confidence and succeed in conflict management. When students are involved in leadership activities, their self-esteem also increases (Astin, 1993).

Considering all the aforementioned reasons, I entered this study highly encouraged that I would be able to obtain valuable insights, important acknowledgement, and sufficient information on academic advising, academic services, and student affairs at Dream State University, the choice of my research site in the mid-west of the U.S..

1.7. Research Questions

I sought to understand and acknowledge the contexts where the academic advisers and administration function and whether they recognize the importance of qualifications while performing their roles and fulfilling their responsibilities. I strove to understand how students, particularly transfer students and freshmen, succeed with the help of university academic advising services and student affairs. I wanted to know how these services are structured and what strategies and practices are employed in academic advising process. I sought to learn what procedures academic advisors follow and whether they find them effective or not. I particularly desired to grasp what technologies, instruments and/or tools academic advisors utilize in advising and how they communicate with freshmen and deal with behavioral issues. I wanted to know whether they direct transfer and first-year students to other resources and services and how they get access to and use student information for advising.

The following three explicit research questions guided this study.

1. How is academic advising organized in a four-year public institution?

2. What structures, procedures, strategies, practices, resources and instruments, if any, do academic advisors and their supervisors utilize in supporting the first- year students in making a smooth transition into higher education?

3. What qualifications and skills do academic advisers and their supervisors perceive they have that allow them to help students succeed in higher education?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

I assume that knowledge may be created, shared, and improved. I also believe that when students collaborate, social and cognitive processes such as perception, learning, reflection, and reasoning occur simultaneously. These processes justify knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and improve the acquired knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). Higher Education (HE) is considered one of the sources that constantly creates knowledge. The knowledge HE creates and widely distributes drives economic growth and improves the world's countries' socioeconomic conditions (Davenport, 2001; Salvioni, Franzoni, & Cassano, 2017). Given that, the knowledge economy based on HE becomes prosperous and remains sustainable (Dill & Van Vught, 2010; Walton, 2011). Indisputably, HE grants both innovation and human capital growth through knowledge creation.

Given the importance of knowledge HE creates and disseminates, transfer students and freshmen need assistance and support to be able not only to create, share, and improve their knowledge during their time in higher education institutions (HEIs), but they should also acquire skills and grow a whole potential in order to navigate, persist, and achieve academic success to earn a degree (Handel & Strempel, 2016; Herrera & Jain, 2013; Grites, 2013; Laanan, Starobin, & Eggleston, 2010; MacGeorge, Samter, & Gillihan, 2005; DeBerard et al., 2004; Peach, 2005). HEIs in the U.S. provide students with support through established academic advising services and student affairs structures. Research advocates that academic advising services and student affairs positively contribute to student learning and success (Tinto, 1993; Hill et al., 2003). These services improve the quality of teaching and learning and help meet students' constantly growing and diversifying needs. Academic advising services and student affairs assist students in tightly

connecting to an education entity and the community and becoming academically, emotionally, and socially satisfied, secured, and confident. Consequently, students are less likely to fail and more likely to gain various experiences to succeed (Hill et al., 2003; McInnis, 2004; Tinto, 1993).

2.2. Transition into Higher Education

Herewith, transition into higher education remains as one of the most challenging stages for students in their adulthood in the U.S.A. (Arnett, 2006; Aseltine & Gore, 2005; Cleveland et al., 2012; Huynh & Fuligni, 2012; Liberman et al, 2014; Staff et al., 2010). Higher education (HE) provides opportunity and to realize this opportunity, colleges and universities strive to make access affordable for students. Once students obtain access to HE, one of the requirements for students is to gain appropriate knowledge. In addition, students should acquire adequate competencies and develop additional skills. Newly gained knowledge, competencies, and skills help them navigate, interact, collaborate, and develop credentials for successful graduation.

2.2.1. Issues College Freshmen Face

Tinto (1993) asserts that new college students go through three developmental stages: *separation, transition, and incorporation*. Initially, they leave their homes and experience separation, feeling homesick. After overcoming this challenging stage, students proceed to the transition stage where they feel under the pressure of both home and a new campus environment. Because of the dual pressure, transition remains the most challenging and emotionally stressful stage. Students still strongly belong to their home environment, but they have to adjust to a new campus. They strive to belong to the new environment and search for ways to interact and spaces to socialize with others on campus. Then, students reach the third stage of incorporation. At this stage, they may have various opportunities to join student organizations, get membership to various clubs, participate in social events and responsibility projects. The realized opportunities entail socialization and acceptance by others on campus.

Considering the challenging social and academic aspects of HE, transition into HE needs to be perceivable and functional. Students need to be directed to useful resources and obtain valuable information and be able to adequately utilize them for academic success. Moreover, the resources should be available, and the information should also be easily utilized, as both enable students to effectively navigate through established systems, structures, and processes in an education entity (Tinto (1993) as cited in Bigger, 2005).

Other Researchers critique Tinto's conceptual model, arguing that does not translate well to the freshmen experience in higher education. McCubbin (2003) highlights three criticisms with Tinto's model. The author considers Tinto's model "an inadequate model of student attrition", and he asserts the model does "not generalize beyond traditional students" and "academic integration is not an important predictor of student attrition" (McCubbin, 2003p. 1). According to Grites and Gordon (2000), students vary because of their "motivations, values,

abilities, and other personal characteristics" (p. 120). Taking into consideration various levels of student motivation, recognizing transfer students and freshmen's values, assessing their abilities, and respecting their personal characteristics, HEIs need to contribute to a student's knowledge construction (Brennan & Teichler, 2008). The transfer students and freshmen should be exposed to the innovations to increase their social capital in the form of gained knowledge, adequate competencies, and additional skills development.

2.2.2. Needs of College Freshmen

Diverse students transition into higher education in the United States public universities, and they encounter various challenges in their freshman year (MacGeorge, Samter, & Gillihan, 2005; DeBerard et al., 2004; Peach, 2005). Yet, as Jackson (2010) advocates, "for most of them the change from a familiar environment into an unfamiliar one represents a period of disequilibrium" (p.341). Access to an education entity should be predictable because transfer students and freshmen differ due to their level of understanding of proceedings and academic requirements (Renn & Reason, 2012). The academic language of the materials, tutorials, manuals, and the technology may sound unfamiliar. Students need predictable and accessible assistance and support to be able to understand and fulfill admission and academic requirements (eg., to fill out special forms, submit documents, accomplish assignments, etc.) (McDonough (2004) as cited in Renn and Reason, 2012, p. 34). In this sense, first-year seminars, orientation programs, and summer bridge programs yield positive results and augment student persistence (Barefoot (2000); Barefoot (2005); Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) as cited in Renn and Reason, 2012, p. 67-69).

Likewise, Colyar and Stich (2011) view the 3-6 week-summer bridge programs (SBPs) as essential because they aim at easing the students' transition and acclimatization to "campus, curricula, and culture" (p.126). It is believed that SBPs also benefit the reduction of remedial courses that students have to take in HE (Maggio, White, Molstad, & Kher, 2005). Hence, being prepared and supported for college in advance may increase transfer students and freshmen's future social integration and retention and successful degree completion.

Prescott and Hellsten (2005) assert that while transitioning, students proceed from a familiar environment to another uncertain domain: this progression necessitates the acceptance of cognitive, cultural, and social challenges. Because of the challenges transfer students and

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freshmen may encounter, access to higher education should be robust. Higher education institutions should provide transfer students and freshmen with equal access and adequate experiences, assisting and supporting them as much as possible.

Given the importance of assistance and support, researchers believe that academic advising should be available and accessible in HEIs. Once an education entity establishes required academic advising structures, particularly academic advising services and student affairs, and its policies and resources, including a mission statement, a website, online tools are properly designed, students of this particular institution are likely benefit from such academic support and assistance. Similarly, academic advisors and administrators should be assigned with mandatory and appropriate roles and responsibilities, and they should be knowledgeable, interested, concerned, and available to help and provide students, including transfer students and freshmen, with academic support and assistance. In case all aforementioned issues have been attended by an education entity, academic advising may help students smoothly transition into HE (Appleby, 2001; Creamer & Scott, 2000; Frost 1991). The students should get assistance and support through academic advising systems, and this systematic assistance may enable transfer students and freshmen to overcome the new challenges they may encounter.

Transition makes the students undergo changes that affect their minds, feelings, emotional and physical well-being. Ellis (2002) states, "The students are not sufficiently prepared to cope with the lack of familiarity at university and they can feel both academically and physically lost" (p.3). During the transition, transfer students and freshmen like other undergraduates encounter new expectations, social issues, education structures and processes, teachers and peers. The transition period may overwhelm transfer students and freshmen and make feel insecure, anxious, and frustrated.

To ease transfer students and freshmen's challenges, McPhail (2011) argues that it is important for "faculty, staff and students to work together in new and productive ways," and there should be "strategic changes in institutional policies and practices" (p. 3) that may entail more academic advising support. No matter what backgrounds, prior knowledge, and experiences the transfer students and freshmen possess, HEIs need to identify the challenges they encounter, and then offer policies, strategies, and certain requirements that encourage achievement of desired results (Varney, 2007). HEIs should also improve academic advising systems so as to guarantee diverse students can easily navigate through college and succeed.

O'Shea (2008) claims that transition is "a period of significant adjustment, development and change which requires significant adaptation on the part of the student" (p.15). The definition implies that transfer students and freshmen need adequate time to adjust to the new university settings. During the adjustment, students learn how to navigate through structures and negotiate this adjustment, and they possibly undergo transformations.

O'Shea's definition aligns with Perry and Allard's (2003) definition of transition as "a process or period in which something (or someone) undergoes a change and passes from one state, stage, form or activity to another … a series of related transformations" (p.75). The definition implies that transition comprises a movement from certainty to uncertainty that triggers physical and emotional transformations related to space, time, capacity, and mood. Certainly, students encounter anxieties, dislocation, and difficulties when they undergo transformational changes related to culture, social issues, and academics as well (Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice, 2008). Hence, in advancing the transfer students and freshmen's academic, social, emotional, and physical development, it is essential to prepare them so that they can easily adjust to the transformational changes and adapt to distinctive teaching and learning contexts.

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Denovan and Macaskill (2013) indicate, "Student can experience disappointment and greater stress when the university does not meet their expectations". This may happen because students "have anticipatory beliefs regarding attending university" (p.1011). No matter what transformations the students undergo, similar or different related to their background and previous life experiences, their expectations and beliefs should be attended rather than undermined. As Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012) stress, "A transition has no end point; rather, a transition is a process over time that includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal as people move in, through, and out of it" (p. 59).

In this regard, if the transfer students and freshmen are intensively supported and regularly directed to the adequate resources by the academic services and student affairs, and academic advisors appropriately advise them and help carefully identify the sources of valuable information, these students may academically succeed and become socially engaged (Hale et al., 2009). Such a strategic approach may benefit students' assimilation, adjustment to the campus, and persistence over time (Booth et al., 2013; Scrivener et al., 2012;).

Generally, the newly enrolled students arrive at campus with the diverse needs, and they require advanced services and authentic approaches (Cook 2009; Frost 2000). Thus, colleges and universities offer brief academic orientation programs for those students to ease their transition and attend to their needs at the entry. In this sense, academic advising is the primary source of curricular and academic guidance, regardless of major students choose and academic advisors are the chief workforce who provide this service within the frame of the programs, sharing insights and guidance on academic, social, and/or personal matters.

Given the importance of immediately attending to diverse student needs, effective universities revise not only the advising services and structures, but they also attempt to update academic advisors' roles and responsibilities. The research suggests that orientation programs

present education policies of the universities, rules and regulations on safety and security on campus, and requirements on academic performance (Mayhew et al., 2010).

2.3. Academic Advising

In the U.S.A., academic advising as a common practice is utilized in higher education institutions (HEIs) (Gordon et al., 2008; Kuhn, 2008). The research reveals that student retention, persistence, and progression to a degree depend on the effectiveness of academic advising and academic advisors' performance (Campbell & Nutt, 2008; Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009; Habley, 1981; Kuh, 2008; McArthur, 2005; Tinto,1999). Some scholars assert that advising is a process while the others focus on the profession itself and mainly highlight the importance of social and academic support that academic advisors provide. As a profession, academic advising is evolving, and academic advisors have to meet diverse student body's constantly changing needs (Reinarz, 2000). In the Concept of Academic Advising, which comprises three fundamental pillars - *pedagogy, curriculum, and learning outcomes* (National Academic Advising Association [NACADA], 2006), the preamble states, "Academic advising is integral to fulfilling the teaching and learning mission of higher education" (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008, p. 523). Academic advisors continue to impact students' academic, personal, social, and career development. Given the continuous impact of academic advising as a major contributing factor, colleges and universities use this workforce to direct students about academic, social, and personal issues (Harding, 2008; Kuhn, 2008).

2.4. Advisors' Job Responsibilities

Academic advising is an interactive process. This process involves two individuals: one is responsible to offer some assistance and guidance while the other is a recipient who may or may not seek help. Thus, academic advising occurs when an individual in academic services and student affairs enlightens a transfer student and a freshman with "academic, social, or personal matter" (Kuhn, 2008, p. 3). In other words, academic advisers offer those students assistance not only to plan for their studies with defined goals and ways to reach them, but they also assist students in overcoming social issues and personal problems.

While interacting with "an informed and interested representative of the institution" (Frost, 1991, p. 1), students identify attainable goals, establish objectives, and make purposeful efforts to achieve them. Respectively, Alexitch and Page (2001) assert that the students grow intellectually and academically, and they reach personal maturation. Hence, academic advisors support students to make responsible decisions that align with academic requirements, personal abilities, goals, and interests.

Researchers believe that if academic advising service is well structured on a campus, it enables productive interaction of the academic advisors and students. Milem, Berger, and Dey (2000) state that it is an academic advisor's responsibility to provide students support outside the classroom. In addition, Light (2001) states, "good advising can have a profound impact" (p.15) on both the students and the whole campus. Supporting the previous scholars, Lowenstein (2006) asserts that likewise, teachers teach courses to provide students with their entire education, advisors assist students in experiencing the curriculum as a whole that enhances their academic learning (2006). Thus, academic advisors are responsible for guiding students to the resources and available services on campus and encouraging them to obtain appropriate information (Noel-Levitz, 1997; King, 1993). They should reach out to students, and they should not miss a single

opportunity to timely and properly advise the students who need their assistance and support, which means academic advisors enable students to acknowledge the structure and rationale for their entire education in HEIs.

By personalizing the advising process, academic advisors may advise transfer students and freshmen to consider special needs. Those students possibly may not know about the existence of special services in the education entity. Consequently, the academic advisor may direct students to special services that are available on campus. Kuhn (2008) highlights the essence of guidance and direction in academic advising and states, "This direction might be to inform, suggest, counsel, discipline, coach, mentor, or even teach" (p.3).

Academic advisors should inform the students about diverse occurrences and processes on campus. They should also guide students to possible opportunities on and off campus, and they constantly give students valuable advice. For instance, academic advisors monitor students' academic performance and progress toward degree completion, and they may advise students how to appropriately behave, or if needed, they even may initiate immediate counseling in challenging and unexpected situations. Academic advisors also provide support when students feel stressed, alone, or under the pressure of uncertainty. Academic advisors are supposed to inspire students to properly decide on their current and future careers. Moreover, they may even give directions so that students continue studies in graduate school (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008; Campbell, 2013; Kuhn, 2008; Lowenstein, 2014; Varney, 2013).

Huber and Miller (2013) share some insights on the results of the academic advisor's job responsibilities based on a NACADA survey conducted countrywide among the 2- and 4 - year institutions in the U.S. in 2011. The survey results highlight the six most important responsibilities of the academic advisor. They can differ because of size and type of the education entities. As in the past, the academic advisor is responsible for course scheduling.

Course scheduling is followed by course registration. Another most desirable responsibility is to assist in developing a plan of study and help with new student orientation. Both responsibilities are placed in the middle of the list. The responsibility to serve on committees is followed by assistance in selecting a college major, which is placed at the end of ranking. The survey has revealed the deficiency in career advising. A number of institutions generally provide career planning interventions at career development and counseling centers. The survey results have proved that not all of them do it effectively. Academic advisors may generally help students select their majors, but they are not responsible for giving students directions about how to search information on future careers or how to develop career plans (Brown & Krane (2000) as cited in Huber & Miller, 2013).

The authors assume that the result of the survey may enforce the academic advising services and student affairs at institutions to consider some changes in the academic advisors' responsibilities to accommodate the students' challenges in career planning. Given to the possible changes in the academic advisors' responsibilities, the academic advising involves extensive information on social and academic issues and career planning. Abel (1980) asserts in the past the academic advisor's role was to help the students choose courses and set a schedule, but currently the academic advising programs require the academic advisors to assist the students to develop their full potential.

Correspondingly, current academic life necessitates the academic advisors to possess a wide range of competencies, a set of skills, and far-reaching experiences so as to provide the students with relevant support. The students need to be academically advised because the interaction with the academic advisors generates relations that enable the students to easily connect to the university. The students may find the constructive relationship and trustful communication as the sign of a caring environment. This interaction may assist the students in

relating to the experiences they gain in and outside the university classroom, and it may also generate a strong connection to the university (Alexitch, 2002; Davis & Cooper, 2001; Light, 2001).

Hence, an academic advisor's responsibility is to create a caring atmosphere and "meaningful relationships" that may "increase the intrinsic value that students place on learning" and ease their "adjustment to the university, with academic difficulties, and with decisions concerning academic programs and careers" (Frost, 1991, p.1; Alexitch, 2002, p. 5,). Both responsibilities are essential for the students in defining realistic goals, recognizing their needs, and neatly corresponding these needs to the available resources on campus (Kadar, 2001). Kramer and Gardner (1983) stress the availability of academic advising on campus because the process itself is continuous and academic advisors can advise students in a periodic manner. Therefore, not only time, space, and information should be available on campus, but also academic advisors should be available and acknowledge their own and students' responsibilities required by the academic advising structures in the education entity.

2.5. Qualifications for Advisors

Taylor (2011) comments on the statement by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and Guidelines for Academic Advising Programs, "Professional staff members must hold an earned graduate or professional degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience" (CAS, GAAPs, (n.d.), p.10). Taylor (2011) highlights the language of the statement and sates it does not spotlight the importance of holding a graduate degree. Yet, the author attempts to clarify the point and states that there is a strong message embedded in that statement. The embedded message conveys the significance of a graduate degree.

Taylor (2011) asserts that holding a Master or Doctorate degree is important in case the advisors perform in academic departments where the chance to engage with the faculty remains high. The interaction with the faculty may increase the presentability of these professionals (e.g., academic administrators); the prestige of the profession (e.g., academic advising); and their access to more resources, course instruction, and leadership position, and their chances to be part of decision making within the institution may also grow.

Given the growing respect for the profession of an academic advisor and the considerable need for academic advising, the NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies Model (2017) has identified three main content domains: the conceptual domain that incorporates ideas and theories; the informational domain that includes knowledge; and the relational domain that comprises skills. The academic advisors should acknowledge, incorporate, and utilize three core competency areas in the advising process so that the universities recognize them as accountable for the profession (NACADA, 2017).

Donnelly (2009) concludes that the survey on job satisfaction administered to NACADA members in 2005 has revealed there were not *resource centers* for advisors in degree offering institutions. The academic advisors mainly utilize a developmental rather than prescriptive advising approach and "have 3 to 6 years of experience … work full-time in the role of academic advisor/academic counselor, have a master's degree" (p. 6). Donnelly (2009) highlights, "Twenty-one percent of advisors disagreed or strongly disagreed that their institution was supportive of professional development (62% agreed or strongly agreed; 17% gave neutral ratings)" (p.12). Therefore, institutions that target developing student's full potential should concentrate on academic advising and academic advisors' professional development. If institutions make significant contribution to academic services and student affairs offices, students may persist and succeed (Gardner 2001; Keeling, 2003; Tinto, 1999).

Given the significance of academic advising and the academic advisor's role in student achievement, institutions should advance academic advisors' expertise in academic services and student affairs so that they will be able to display profound knowledge, well-developed inter and intrapersonal skills, and clearly acknowledge the needs of the diverse student body on campus. In this respect, Light (2001) conveys an important message to students, faculty, academic administrators, and academic advisors. Light emphasizes the internship a biology major student had and how that practice provided the student with "a new purpose, and perspective to design and plan her academic coursework" (p.16). Hence, Light (2001) highlights the importance of academic advising as social capital that needs to be invested in the students at the very beginning of their social and educational lives.

Certainly, the academic advisors' role is high because they are one of the first adults after the admission and orientation staff that communicate and interact with students who transition into HE. They help the students make choices, benefit from the activities in and outside the

classroom, become responsible for their own social and academic lives, improve already

acquired skills and develop new ones, and find effective ways to navigate the curriculum, persist,

and succeed.

2.6. Approaches or Styles of Advising

Research claims that students retain and succeed if they get the quality academic advising (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013; Drake, 2011; Smith & Allen, 2006; Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013; Zhao, Golde, & McCormick, 2007) and if advisors utilize various types or styles (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013; Grites, 2013; Varney, 2013). Students academically benefit and gain good experience if advisors develop appropriate relationships with them. Academic advisors may demonstrate various styles and may be grouped according to the types or approaches of academic advising they facilitate (Gordon et al., 2008). A review on the related literature elucidates a number of approaches or styles of academic advising or advisors. Below I introduce six approaches or styles of academic advising and advisors, and I discuss each of them.

2.6.1. Pragmatic Approach

One of the academic advising types is the pragmatic view. Borgard (1981) argues, although "a pragmatic view of advising sees the college student as an active thinking organism" (p.45), the college students cannot comprehensibly define what they want and need, connect information and communication to the available services on the campus. Consequently, the pragmatic academic advisor's responsibility is to help the students clarify their interests with efficiency, encourage them to think autonomously, and actively socialize on campus.

The pragmatic academic advisor should be ready "to give the learner experience in effective experiencing" (J. Donald Butler (1951) as cited in Borgard, 1981, p. 46). The pragmatic approach implies that the students are guided by the academic advisors to relate the curriculum to their interests through exploration. The students are assisted in searching available social resources, and they learn effectively in order to grow intellectually.

Pragmatic academic advisors tend to equip the advisees with the adequate tools that help them comprehend the depth and meaning of the content and enable them to envision new realties. Hence, the core of pragmatic advising is exploration and experience. Pragmatic academic advisors are responsible for arranging and interpreting the experience that entails not only the advisees' but also their own growth. Although the pragmatic advising style is authoritative, it supports interaction and discussion that allow an advisor and an advisee to participate in experiencing the student's interests.

2.6.2. Prescriptive Approach

The scholars define a prescriptive advising style as more traditional (Barron & Powell, 2014) and less authentic. The prescriptive academic advisor has authority like "the doctor makes a diagnosis, prescribes something, or gives advice" (Crookston, 1972, p.6; 1994; NACADA, 2006), and the advisee is expected to follow the given advice. This assertion implies that "prescriptive advising mandates that a student's performance follow set prescribed curriculum requirements, rules, and regulations" (Earl, 1988, p. 29). Hence, the academic advisor makes suggestions and offers the advisee possible ways to navigate the curriculum and tells them what to do or not to do, and the advisee either attends to the advice or does not take it.

Meanwhile, Appleby (2001) asserts that prescriptive advisors do not help advisees "develop a sense of responsibility for their academic choices" (p.1). With regard to motivation, it "is secondary to required performance since the student is not in a learning mode" (Earl, 1988, p. 29) because the prescriptive advisor expects students to not want to perform well or to appropriately accomplish the task. For that reason, prescriptive academic advisors consider students as "immature, irresponsible, [and] needing close supervision" (Crookston, 1994, p. 7). For the prescriptive academic advisors, oftentimes students do not like work and they are less likely to score high credits or complete a degree. They make these judgements referring to students' prior credentials and test results and start to monitor students, decide directions, and initiate interventions. Prescriptive advisors believe that if they take actions and intervene, they can motivate advisees and students perform better (Crookston, 1994).

The prescriptive advisor's relationships with the advisee are not based on strong trust. Because of that, they may necessitate interventions, attempt to control students' behaviors, and initiate directions for the students so students can perform well or do the task properly. Prescriptive advisors think students are responsible either to take the advice or reject it. In

contrast, students believe that prescriptive advisors will help them solve problems and provide them with the right answers to their questions. Students highly rely on prescriptive advisors (Crookston, 1972). Prescriptive advisors' authority and students' false assumptions do not make this style very authentic.

Similarly, King (2005) claims that to "address more comprehensive academic concerns" (p. 3), academic advisors should pay intense attention to students' concerns and problems, attend to their diverse needs, and provide them with relevant support. Academic advising should not be simply filling out and signing forms or delivering the information about the university's political strategies, formalities, and demands (Winston, Miller, Ender, Grites, & Associates, 1984; Laff, 1994). Academic advising needs to be meaningful for students, and prescriptive advisors should attend to student fears and worries about the course-work and social interaction on campus. Therefore, neither the pragmatic nor prescriptive academic advising style may result in student retention and success.

2.6.3. Developmental Approach

Comparing developmental academic advising to prescriptive, Earl (1988) highlights that the former is fostering face to face interaction based on motivation whilst the latter may not consider motivation as the predictor of student performance and retention. Developmental academic advisors tend to effectively encourage interaction with the students they advise. Developmental advisors acknowledge that they should assist students in deciding upon *specific personal* or *vocational* matters. Besides, they are also responsible to help students make rational decisions upon campus proceedings, interact with others in an education entity, and integrate into the community. Developmental advisors should have a strong behavioral awareness, they should possess problem solving, decision making, and evaluation skills (Crookston, 1972; 1994).

Developmental advisers firmly believe students are potentially able to act maturely and that they can find the right directions and be proactive rather than reactive. Developmental academic advisors are not concerned much about directing students to opportunities, so they can pursue their ambitions or make right decisions. They avoid giving students personalized advice. Developmental advisors attempt to guide students, so they are able to set smart goals in their personal and educational lives. They believe the guidance they provide may assist students in attaining those goals (Kadar, 2001). Developmental academic advisors view students to be open to collaboration, they anticipate that students may independently initiate negotiation and tend to share their concerns and needs. They presume that via collaboration students are likely to search help.

Trust is ingrained in the relationships at the entry point, once developmental advising is offered or requested. Covey (2006) asserts, "It all starts with trust" (p.1). Developmental advisors are energetic, and they can easily engage students' attention and invite students to vigorous conversations. The constant exchanges help developmental advisors build relationships

that generate more trust. The more students trust their academic advisors, the more interested they become. Curious students become more involved and they enthusiastically interact and participate in social and academic life on campus (Appleby, 2001). Developmental advisors may search a student's talents and abilities if they can build and maintain continuous trusting relationships with students. Trusting relationships encourage students to interact and participate in social and academic life on campus utilizing their talents and abilities (Covey, 2006). As a result, students sincerely strive to learn, to grow, and to develop their full potential (Appleby, 2001). Therefore, the developmental advisor and advisee may collaboratively identify expectations, hopes and dreams, make plans for completing a degree, find ways to avoid failures, anticipate problems and solve them.

Essentially, developmental advising is based on trustful relationships and quality experiences (Covey, 2006; Frost, 2000) that hold the advisee responsible for developing appropriate competencies, becoming autonomous in making decisions, identifying purposes, and improving inter- and intrapersonal skills. Crookston (1972) asserts that developmental advising is based on the intensive interaction between two parties and mainly concentrates on potentials of the advisee.

The developmental academic advisor assists the advisee in advancing self-direction, and decision making, and problem-solving skills. Given to the importance of the developmental academic advisor's assistance, the transfer students and freshmen may want or need more direction and guidance at the beginning of their social and educational lives on campus. Both the academic advisor and the advisee should acknowledge their own responsibilities and share control over the whole advising process. Consequently, developmental academic advising may be a more appropriate and necessary style in a sense.

2.6.4. Intrusive (Proactive) Approach

In contrast, according to Earl (1988), intrusive (proactive) advising is intentional and cautious (Glennen (1975) as cited in Varney, 2007, 2012, para. 2), and intrusive or proactive advisors elaborately consider possible problems that may encourage students to find ways to solve them. In this respect, Earl (1988) states intrusive academic advising has three conceptual principles: intrusive academic advisors have to assist the students in socially and academically integrating on campus so they will persist, they believe that the students' limits and deficiencies may be pushed and handled, and there is no need to wait until students get motivated to search for help, so the academic advisors should identify the students' educational needs and respond to them. These propositions imply the intrusive academic advisor is proactive, attempts to provide the students with information and support without waiting for the students to ask for help. Earl (1988) believes that intrusive academic advisors may assist in developing students' academic skills that may entail increase in retention.

Varney (2012) asserts that proactive academic advising comprises intentional interventions that motivate students to acknowledge the value of the curriculum and clarify the goals. For this reason, intrusive (proactive) academic advisors through interaction with the students seek for the curriculum needs, identify them as early as possible, and teach orientation skills. Garing (1992) states that intrusive (proactive) academic advising means to help the students build relationships, enhance the students' social and academic integration, and encourage them to seek assistance.

The proactive academic advisor utilizes various strategies in advising and these strategies enforce the students to recognize how engaged the advisors are and to what extent they are interested in helping them. Frost (1991) highlights the intrusive (proactive) academic advisor's predetermined controlling alerts and interventions at specified times. This type of advising is

intensive and anticipates that the students may succeed. For this reason, proactive academic advisors provide help or instruction to find out problems. They encourage students to consider all possible options to enable them to solve problems that may occur (Varney, 2012).

Like, developmental advising, the intrusive (proactive) style is concerned with initiating contact with the students and requiring regular meetings with the advisor (Garing, 1993), supporting personal and academic growth by means of the developed plan, discussing failures, achievements, and further progress. This style may attempt to determine diverse goals of students. Frost (1991) and Kitchen (1995) also state that intrusive advising may positively impact two groups: the students at high risk as they struggle to succeed academically and traditional students.

2.6.5. Appreciative Approach

Bloom, Huston, and He (2008) assert that appreciative advising, like the intrusive (proactive) type, embeds a system of general propositions and methods that are applied via specific practical instruments. Integration of theory and practical tools enables appreciative advisors to perform their roles and fulfill their responsibilities based on evidence. This advising style embeds a social-constructivist philosophy. The appreciative advising can be utilized in various settings either one-on-one or in groups. The core is to advance student advisor interactions in various settings (Bloom et al., 2008). This approach aims at the students' growth as a whole and reaching their full potential. Appreciative academic advisors intentionally encourage the students to work jointly.

Through inquiry, appreciative academic advisors assist students in clarifying goals and augmenting their knowledge, resolving their doubts about the course work, and solving problems. The positive collaboration improves the relationship that results in confidence. Amundsen, Bloom, and Hutson (2006) state the students may ask "open-ended questions" and "the experiences" earned via inquiry may enhance the desire to "achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials" (p.16) as bright ideas and strong arguments are likely the positive outcomes of well stated and correctly answered questions.

Given the importance of inquiry, Bloom et al. (2008, 2013) have introduced the Appreciative Inquiry Model, which is based on disarm, discover, dream, and design stages (Cooperrider,1986, 2005). Four stages have been developed into six phases (disarm, discover, dream, design, deliver, don't settle). Moving through six phases, the students enhance their personal and academic growth as a whole by the appreciative academic advisors' intensive assistance. Bloom et al. (2008) stress it is possible to change students' minds in a positive way

moving through six stages. The process may be either linear or nonlinear, and it embeds to build trust, provide support, encourage, seek for opportunities, and ask open-ended questions.

The first stage Disarm involves soothing the student's fears and worries. At this stage, the academic advisor is responsible for making positive and long-lasting impressions on the student. It is pivotal to be open to the dialogue and to show favorable attitude toward the student. The advisor's position should be inviting at the first advising meeting as it establishes a trustful atmosphere.

The second stage Discover incorporates mutual understanding. The academic advisor initiates inquiry and reveals the student's weak and strong sides, their abilities and acquired skills. The appreciative academic advisor's guidance enables the student to discover her concerns, interests, and purposes.

The third stage Dream comprises the revelation of the student's hopes and dreams. The academic advisor should be able to discover them once the student starts to converse and claims her future dreams and plans. Hence, the academic advisor contributes assistance, and the student learns how to connect their discoveries to their future goals. The appreciative advisor cares and strongly believes that the students can do better and achieve more.

The fourth stage Design requires the academic advisor and the student to make plans on the revealed hopes and dreams, which helps student achieve social and academic goals. Both the appreciative academic advisor and advisee continuously contribute to making plans for the future.

The fifth Delivery phase starts after the plans are made. The academic advisor encourages students to realize their plan and provides them assistance when needed. Academic advisors acknowledge their influence on students and learn with and from students via constant interactions. In this regard, appreciative academic advising is responsive and comprises

continuous reflections. Appreciative academic advisors reflect on the students' and their own perceptions.

At the sixth stage Don't Settle, the student takes responsibility for her own failures and achievements. The academic advisor and the student re/evaluate the realized plans, anticipate possible results or changes, and set new expectations and goals to succeed and reach full potential. Moving through six phases the academic advisor supports and encourages the student, and together they make positive changes in the student's mind (Bloom et. al, 2008).

2.6.6. Dialogic Advising

In academic advising, the role of dialogue and relationship is essential. Within this context, dialogic advising is a newly emerging style at universities. Colgan (2017) underlines the importance for advisors to analyze theory and practice, and Buber's idea of dialogic self, I-You (Buber (1996) as cited in Colgan, 2017, p.66) may play tremendous role in building relationships with advisees over the course of time. Via conversation and developing relationships, the academic advisor and the student move forward and align their backgrounds and perspectives. As part of the ongoing process, each exchange with the academic advisor enables the student to take responsibility for his learning, construct new knowledge, and develop new skills. Constant exchanges make the academic advisor and advisee relationship stronger and enhance co-learning.

Colgan (2017) believes the academic advisor needs to deeper engage in students' world through dialogues and relational exchanges and discover the meanings and realities they contextualize. The constant "relational encounters with the other" (Colgan, 2017, p. 66) and the conversations enable the academic advisors to recognize the advisees' uniqueness and adjust their academic styles, advice, and assistance to the students' needs rather to initiate *deliberate interventions or mandatory prescriptions* because of time or space constrains. The academic advisors are expected to acknowledge that students' knowledge and assumptions should be engaged in these conversations.

In other words, the academic advisors should be critical to their own selves and perceive the student's self. They need to be careful with the other's opportunities and to not let the other overlook or miss them because ''every advising contact is a precious opportunity for meaningful interaction'' (Kuh, 2008, p. 79) and enables the student to potentially grow as a whole.

Recognizing realities of the other is the core of this advising style. I and You should work closely together and construct new realities so as to timely attend to the needs. The academic

advisor should be open to alternative perspectives, backgrounds, and realities. They should also tolerate the student's occasional negative attitudes or cultural differences, which are not directly related to the advisor's personality or advising style.

The academic advisors should also manage their own misconceptions, negativity, and oppositions so that the student can take responsibility, fully participate in his learning, and become responsive and reflective in each conversation or exchange. Dialogic advising may succeed if the academic advisor acknowledges the other, builds and sustains the relations via consistent exchanges with the student, timely and properly attends to the student's needs, and constantly provides help.

In conclusion, there are six theoretical perspectives, approaches, and styles that academic advisors may choose from to create their own styles and a personal philosophy to provide students advising. Given the importance of variety, two perspectives in a real-world context may make academic advising effective, which is how students understand themselves from their own perspective and from the academic advisors' perspective (Creamer, 2000). Therefore, the academic advisor's awareness of those perspectives is pivotal. When they apply theories, utilize techniques, and ask questions, advisors should align them with the students' needs and the institutional mission, goals and values. Besides, the academic advisors' awareness of the role of theories, techniques, and questions they ask may impact their personal philosophy, approaches, and personal styles. For these reasons, academic advisors should do their best to align three components: theories, tools, and evidence.

2.7. Seven Models of Academic Advising

Pardee (2004) claims the effectiveness of an academic advising program depends on how it is structured within an education entity, whether the academic advising program is structured at the department level, at the college level, and at a campus or institutional level. Once such a framework is established, it is pivotal to scrutinize allocated resources and to evaluate academic advising programs. The more effective academic advising services become, the more students may be retained. The researchers presume that if academic advising services are not well established and they do not fit to an institutional mission and students' and faculty's needs, they may fail to be effective and both the institution and its constituents may become unsatisfied (Gordon et al., 2008).

In this sense, to determine the right organizational structure for academic advising is important (Gordon et al., 2008). When the chosen academic advising model is well integrated and does not oppose an institution's mission and characteristics and effectively serve the constituents, the model is likely to succeed (Pardee, 2004). Miller (2012) emphasizes academic advising in the 21st Century may seem complicated and meaningless unless discussions about academic advising models yield answers to the questions of who we advise, who advises, where we deliver academic advising, and how we divide responsibilities.

The literature review reveals the research has not decently considered the impact of advising structures in the institutions on student achievement, although it introduces different organizational models that are utilized in colleges and universities (Tuttle, 2000; Pardee, 2004; Kuhtmann, 2004). Habley (1983) indicated seven separate models (1983, 1987, 1993). These models are: 1. Faculty Only 2. Supplementary 3. Split 4. Dual 5. Total Intake 6. Satellite 7. Self-Contained.

Faculty Only Model comprises one faculty member in a major program and field of study who delivers advising for a student. The university or college usually does not have any advising office and any professional advisor. Students are advised in the department offices because many faculty members show a great enthusiasm to work with undergraduates. Faculty shares their time and knowledge outside the classroom, which makes the education body reliable and accountable for the students. The undergraduates get an easy access to excellent resources so that they can make academic, career, and personal goals. Faculty Model contributes to the prestige and credibility of an education body (Gordon et al., 2008).

Supplementary Model generally includes a faculty member who provides advising for all students but is administratively assisted by the advising office. As an administrative unit, the advising office refers students to the resources and support services across the campus, which holds advising staff less accountable. The advising office generally provides trainings, evaluation, and some other clerical services and supplements the faculty member with the general information about students, but the faculty member is responsible for approving all proceedings. Supplementary Model does not provide special services for students with special needs (Gordon et al., 2008). In addition, Habley and McCauley (1987) state that in the individual academic subunits the faculty advisors' supervision is not centralized.

Split Model encompasses the advising office that serves the undecided, underprepared, low SES students, and some other types of students. According to Gordon et al (2008), students who have not declared their major, including undecided, non-preference/exploratory, prelaw or premed, underprepared students and athletes are initially divided between advisors in the departments and advisors in a central office. These students take advantage of the special advising services that are available on campus. Such advising practice supports and increases the students' chances to academically succeed. They make an appointment with the faculty member

once their academic statuses are assessed and they meet general education requirements, and then they become eligible for benefiting from the faculty advising. These students benefit from developing relationships with a faculty member and their major advisor in the department, but they can also experience challenge of various advising skills and access to resources such as time, commitment, and desire (Gordon et al., 2008). The Split Model is prevailingly utilized in public institutions across the U.S. although the validity of this model has not been established with ample evidence or effective evaluation (Habley, 2004; Pardee, 2004).

Dual Model involves two advisors; one from the faculty who is a department advisor from the major and the other is a professional from the advising office (Gordon et al., 2008). The faculty member provides advising on the student's major program, curriculum, and overall coursework. The professional from the advising office helps with the university's or college's policies, rules and regulations, and academic requirements. The supervision is based on shared responsibility while each student benefits from academic advising (Habley & McCauley, 1987). Students' graduation plans should be monitored and approved by the faculty member and the professional advisor. The credibility of Duel model depends on how clearly the communication of responsibilities is delivered (Gordon et al., 2008).

Total Intake Model comprises advising delivery by the administrative unit at university or college (Gordon et al., 2008). The staff in the advising center facilitate advising for the students during the first year. Total Intake Model offers the students well-trained staff and central access to advising resources in their academic departments. When the students meet all the specific requirements, the administrative unit transfers them to the assigned faculty member. Habley and McCauley (1987) identify three areas of responsibilities with regard to this model, which are curriculum instruction, academic policy, and academic advising. There is a shared responsibility between the staff in the advising center and the faculty who are department advisors. The

department advisors take responsibility to monitor whether students are ready for their chosen major and continue to advise them (Gordon et al., 2008).

Satellite Model employs subunit satellite advising offices scattered across the campus. The satellite advising offices are supervised, directed or coordinated by the school, college, or division. Professional advisors and specialists respond to students' needs in these satellite offices. When students complete certain criteria, the professional advisors and specialists in the satellite offices direct students to the faculty advisors. The deans of colleges and directors of satellite advising offices in subunits are autonomous in decision making. As they function in isolation, to coordinate how they deliver advising and how they provide resources and professional development remain challenging (Gordon et al., 2008). The responsibility of the subunit satellite offices is to advise students from the beginning of their university studies until graduation (Habley & McCauley, 1987).

Self- Contained Model covers the centralized advising unit, which provides students with advising starting at the entry point and finishing when they leave the education entity. Although this model offers well-trained staff, the staff delivers the quality academic advising, the services are easily accessible for the students with special needs, and advising delivery is effectively supervised in the centralized unit, Self- Contained Model lacks to provide frequent faculty advising. Additionally, the professional staff has to manage with a huge caseload (Gordon et al., 2008). This model is commonly utilized in community colleges because most of those colleges were built at the same period of time (Kuhn, 2008).

2.8.   Three Models Grouped by Pardee

Pardee (2004) has grouped Habley' s Seven Models of Academic Advising Services as centralized, decentralized, and shared.

2.8.1. Centralized Model

The first organizational structure offered by Pardee (2004) incorporates one entralized academic or administrative unit that provides advising service for the students by professional and faculty advisers. The advising delivered in the Centralized Model is consistent, and the professionals who advise are well-trained, their job is highly appreciated, and they are regularly rewarded for the service. It consists of only the Self-Contained Model suggested by Habley (Gordon et al., 2008). The Centralized Model remains one of the most popular models that is utilized in community colleges (King, 2008).

2.8.2. Decentralized Model

In contrast, Pardee's (2004) second organizational structure decentralizes the advising delivery and holds each academic department responsible for providing the students with the professional or faculty advisor's assistance. The Decentralized Model incorporates Habley's Faculty-Only and Satellite Models. Similar to the Shared Model, the Decentralized Model lacks coordination and supervision and the advising delivered remains inconsistent. The coordinators may not have much authority over the academic advising process and academic advisors. As a result, little coordination and authority may challenge their credibility and negatively impact the consistency and quality of the academic advising process (Gordon et al., 2008).

2.8.3. Shared Model

The third organizational structure Pardee (2004) suggests encompasses an advising center in a central advising unit and in each academic department with regard to the students' major programs. This dual overlapping advising practice may create misconception of advisors' roles and responsibilities. The misconception of advisors' roles and responsibilities may also challenge the credibility of the whole advising process because of lacking coordination or supervision. The Shared Model embeds Habley's total Intake-Model, Supplementary, Split, and Dual models (Gordon et al., 2008).

Kramer (1995, 2003) states that each model depends on the extent of the faculty's involvement in the process. King (1993) indicates four primary components that influence the academic advising process in the institutions such as "the mission of the institution, the nature of the student population, the role of the faculty, and the programs, policies, and procedures of the institution" and asserts that all four components should be considered to make the system function in a sufficient way (p.47). Tinto (1993) believes that when the faculty engages and contributes to the advising process, the university benefits as this help may increase quality of the education and their decisions may have a positive impact on the students' social and academic involvement.

Thus, Turtle (2000) asserts that in the past academic advising was considered a "faculty function" (p.15), and Habley (2003) stresses "the role of a faculty advisor is not a casual and informal relationship" (p. 245). Accordingly, King (1993) questions the extent of the faculty involvement in advising and of their interest in advising, whether the faculty perceives the mainstream problems in advising at the education body and attends to the problems, whether they are ready to improve their skills, and whether the administration emphasizes the evaluation, recognition, and rewards system to make the faculty's contribution efficient.

Currently HEIs in the U.S. are establishing various academic services and increasing their number because of the legal laws and federal and state legislation on HE education (e.g., budget shortcuts, funding mechanisms, and decreasing support by state) (Kot, 2014). As the legislative pressure is constantly increasing, HEIs are challenged to address the issues that relate to student demographics, students' academic preparation, their environmental experiences in education entities, the number of credits they are required to take, and students' living conditions. In regards to the increasing legislative pressure, the faculty may not be well-informed about all these issues because they have other responsibilities (e.g., teaching load, academic publishing, attending conferences, conducting research, etc.).

Because of various influential factors, HEIs have been creating centralized units and staff these units with professional advisors who are perceived to be well informed in this area due to their training and experience. These professional advisors serve specific student groups (Kot, 2014). Ultimately, these institutions become more concerned with upgrading the quality of teaching and learning and achievements via enhancing college outcomes (Smith et al., (1992) & Robbins et al., (2009) as cited in Kot, 2014).

The results of the Sixth Survey of Academic Advising conducted by ACT display the augmented number of advising centers on campuses, which has increased "from 14 % of institutions in 1979 to 73 % in 2003" (Habley (2004) as cited in Kot, 2014, p. 528). Kot (2014) asserts that the growth of academic advising delivered by non-faculty should be considered a positive sign and refers to the results of the survey of the full-faculty conducted in five states of the country which comprises "70 %" of survey respondents. The figure proves that the faculty either has not delivered any advising services or they have occasionally done advising (Baum & Payea (2005) as cited in Kot, 2014, p. 528).

Pardee (2004) assumes that in academic advising the organizational structure determines the effectiveness of the advising program. In case the organizational structure at various levels (e.g., department, college, campus, and/or institution) does not meet the requirements of the program's delivering services, it may negatively impact the students, the faculty, and the overall effectiveness of the education entity. Hence, the academic advising administrators' responsibility is to identify which organizational model to choose, how to allocate activities and tasks that need to be coordinated, directed, and supervised so that the structure achieves the aim, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of the structure (Pardee, 2004).

To conclude the literature review on academic advising, advising structures and specific advising models, it is pivotal to consider different levels within an education entity that encompass them: department, college, campus, or institution (Pardee, 2004). The institutional level remains the most complicated. As an academic administrator or coordinator within various departments, colleges, or schools may choose a structure or model that is more appropriate to that particular unit and differ from the institution because of variables (characteristics of the unit, students, the extent of faculty involvement, the subject of the program, advising philosophy, etc.) (Gordon et al., 2008). Miller (2012) states that HEIs desire to utilize programs that meet increasing and diversifying student needs and serve students well. In addition, Miller (2012) asserts that only benchmarking may not grant positive outcomes. Via discussions with others and questioning existing structures, it is possible that advising administration may restructure these services or create better structures that serve diversely growing student body. In this sense, it is important to highlight the urgent need in inquiring the possible significant impact advising structures and specific advising models may have on academic outcomes of the institutions (Cuseo, 2003; Grites et al., 2008; Habley, 2012).

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Introduction

In this qualitative study I aimed to understand the contexts where university academic advisers and their supervisors functioned and whether they recognized the importance of knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences while performing their roles and fulfilling their responsibilities. My personal reason for conducting this qualitative research was to explore, understand, and describe advising processes and empower academic advisors and supervisors in the context of the phenomenon. I strove to learn how academic advising services were structured, what those procedures were, and what strategies and practices were employed in academic advising processes in a four-year public university.

Initially, I built my base of knowledge from the reviewed scholarly literature and interaction with the academic advising community on Dream State University's campus. Hence, I was able to build my understanding on the academic advisors' and their supervisors' existing multiple meanings and knowledge about the phenomenon that was academic advising.

Chapter three presents the research method used in conducting this study and research questions to obtain data. The decision covers research design that is constructivist and interpretivist frameworks and implications of study frameworks. This chapter also introduces sample, method of collecting data, and data analysis. It also covers my positionality, research validity, and reliability, and limitations.

3.2. Research Questions

The following three explicit research questions guided this study.

4. How is academic advising organized in a four-year public institution?

5. What structures, procedures, strategies, practices, resources and instruments, if any, do academic advisors and their supervisors utilize in supporting the first- year students in making a smooth transition into higher education?

6. What qualifications and skills do academic advisers and their supervisors perceive they have that allow them to help students succeed in higher education?

3.3. Qualitative Research Methods

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) assert that one cannot define qualitative research comprehensively as it does not possess any theory or paradigm that is exclusively its own, and also this type of research does not own a distinct set of methods or practices. Diversity of interpretive topics helps build a more visible world and assist in transforming this world. Qualitative researchers tend to study objects in their natural settings. Their attempts to make sense of objects are generated with the meanings people attribute to the objects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

In fact, various forms of inquiry are veiled under the concept of qualitative research, and it facilitates the researcher's understanding and contributes to elucidating the essence of social occurrence, although the context of the phenomenon may remain relatively un-interrupted (Merriam, 2001). Qualitative researchers are fascinated to understand the realities human beings construct. They tend to describe interactions of those individuals, the experiences they go through, and the meaning they make within "social worlds." Qualitative researchers are concerned with experiences research participants have gained, realities they have interpreted, knowledge they have constructed, and the transformations they have gone through (Sherman & Webb (1988) as cited in Merriam, 2001).

In this respect, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) clearly affirm that a research method embraces certain beliefs and feelings about a particular part or aspect of human life or nature and about how researchers understand and study them, while Patton (1990) emphasizes the quality and type of my research questions. In other words, the scholars highlight the researcher's subjectivity that needs to be managed. This emphasis is also relevant to the participants' realties and interpretations that may be subjective also. Considering the quality and the type of research questions, it was vital for me to balance them so as to embrace both academic advisors' and their

supervisors' and my own perspectives and to minimize biases and prejudices.

As a researcher practitioner who was considered "a primary instrument of data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 2001, p.11), my goal was to search for the answers to the posed research questions, to elucidate the academic advisors' and their supervisors' understandings, meanings, and interpretations and to describe the rich findings with utmost efficacy. I strongly valued the notion that a well-designed study provided the best answers to the posed research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; 2011) because it could augment not only the sources of the study but also data collecting and analyzing methods.

I used the qualitative methods for this study based on educational inquiry (Maxwell, 2013), and this study drew primarily on interviews (Kvale, 2006). I interchangeably applied the constructivist and interpretivist frameworks. I acknowledged that the research I was going to conduct was a process that required systematic inquiry from the stakeholders. The systematic inquiry designated me as a researcher to collect data, analyze it, interpret it, and utilize it.

3.3.1. Constructivist Framework

Patton (2002) states that the essence of constructivism as a study is multiple realities that individuals construct, and when they interact with others, these constructions have implications for their lives. Guba and Lincoln (1989) state that the constructivist framework integrates naturalistic, hermeneutic, or interpretive stances as all three are somewhat similar in a sense. This paradigm embeds hermeneutical methodology that integrates interpretative understanding or a way to interpret meaning from a particular perspective or case. Ultimately, it leads to a notion that knowledge is interpreted, and it reinterprets itself (Eichelberger, 1989; Heidegger, 1962).

Ontology, that is knowing the reality or nature of being, admits that reality is socially constructed, with subject and object interdependently existing, but for the subject to know the real essence of the object generally remains impossible. Ultimately, the realities people construct may oppose (Bryman, 2008). The realities individuals (academic advisors and supervisors) perceived may have changed over the course of time or throughout this research as well, which means various people, including research participants, could have acknowledged socially constructed phenomena in different ways.

Most people believe their minds actively construct knowledge as mind impacts people's impressions, triggering them to form abstractions or concepts (Schwandt, 2000). Amenably, based on epistemology, constructivism means humans do not simply find or discover knowledge; rather they create or construct it. Through dialogue, individuals reach intersubjective agreement and reasoning (Kvale, 2006) and via exchanges and conversation, they construct realties and knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln, Guba, & Lynham, 2011; Phoenix et al., 2013).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) believe a researcher who inquires and an individual who is inquired engage in an interactive process via exchanges, dialogues, and conversation. Both

parties become impacted, and objectivity replaces confirmability (Kvale, 2006). In my proposed study, stakeholders' involvement was core. Knowledge and all meaningful realties were constructed based on human experiences that academic advisors and their supervisors might gain, develop, and transmit via interaction within a social context, which was academic advising services and student affairs in this four-year university (Crotty, 1998). As a research practitioner, I concentrated on understanding rather than explaining human experiences (e.g., advisee's experiences) and contexts (e.g., academic advising process, space, time, and content) where these practices occur. I was sure that an understanding of the context and background could sufficiently contribute to this research (Patton, 2002; Seale et al., 2007).

Another belief about constructivism is based on axiology, that is the nature of ethical behavior. In this respect, constructivism assists in representing varied views in a balanced way, elevating research participants' awareness (e.g., advising structures, models, styles, etc.), and building community rapport (e.g., interaction, trust, respect, dialogue, assistance, support, self-esteem, self-confidence, etc.) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Morgan, 2007).

I presumed academic advisors' and their supervisors' experiences assisted them in creating subjective meanings that were diverse and abundant. I acknowledged the subjective meanings might lead me to search for complexity of varied viewpoints. I agreed with Crotty (1998) who claimed, "Constructivism is not subjectivism. It is curiosity, not conceit" (p.52). I desired to understand individual advisors' and their supervisors' life and work. I strove to know how the natural settings of academic advising as a research phenomenon and conditions affected academic advising structures and services. I was also interested to know how experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and values I contributed as a research practitioner to this study impacted my own positionality.

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As a constructivist researcher, I predominantly used semi-structured interviews and as secondary methods, observations and document review, with assumptions that reality was socially constructed if I only interacted with research participants. Such interaction helped me obtain and understand academic advisors' and supervisors' diverse and abundant perspectives via exchanges, dialogues, and conversation (Kvale, 2006). These exchanges yielded more effective interpretations of meanings academic advisors and their supervisors attributed to their everyday activities and how these activities were connected to their behavior (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Eichelberger, 1989). I also developed memos that helped me as a researcher to reflect on my own participation in this study and how interactions with research participants impacted my own positionality and generated creation of new knowledge and construction of new realities (Charmaz 2014; Saldaña, 2016).

3.3.2. Interpretivist Framework

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert that researchers should not prefer one methodological practice to another because qualitative research encompasses "a set of interpretive activities" (p.6) that include believing, valuing, evaluating, and considering viewpoints and perspectives. This assertion led me to the idea that for the sake of multiple realities, as a subjective knower (e.g., a research practitioner with long-standing educating background), I should understand the potential stakeholder's (e.g., academic advisor and supervisor) interpretations of reality through qualitative inquiry in a real-world context, as "realities are whole that cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 39). I was also able to construct knowledge based on a wide variety of experiences that academic advisors and their supervisors shared. I was able to gain insights while interacting with the research stakeholders and navigating different situations in the natural settings (e.g., a research site, department, office, social space, etc.) that were interpreted (Punch, 2005).

Creswell (2009) argues, "Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p.4). I acknowledged that it would be challenging to generalize conclusions that I derived from the interpretations the participants attributed to the research phenomena (Maxwell, 2009). Therefore, I did my best to provide plausible explanations to "describe as accurately as possible the status of contemporary fact" (Wehlage (1981, p. 212) as cited in Peshkin, 1993, p.26) that could create generalizations, elaborate on existing notions, and/or provided insights in identifying possible problems (Peshkin, 1993). Yet, I made my best efforts to be systematic and rigorous and to provide evidence to support claims to address potential validity.

According to Merriam (2001), the positivist considers education or schooling as an object, phenomenon, or delivery system to study. Based on that, I searched for *reality* that was

"stable, observable, measurable" although "multiple realities are constructed socially by individuals" (Merriam, 2001, p.4), and I questioned the positivist expectations for an "evidence based" approach (Maxwell, 2005, p.105; 2009). I attempted to search for the meaning that was rational and apparent. These attempts fostered me to better understand how the advisors and their supervisors performed their tasks and believed they were doing proper advising.

As an interpretivist who believes "education is a process and school is a lived experience," my interest was to understand academic advisors' and their supervisors' experiences and the meaning of the advising process that "constitutes the knowledge" the first-year students gained in an inductive way (Merriam, 2001, p.4). In other words, I sought to understand advisors' roles and how their supervisors acknowledged their roles in advising services to "provide insights" and also "clarify complexity" (Peshkin, 1993, p. 24) of the studied phenomena.

I was striving to grasp what individual characteristics, competencies, expertise, and experiences advisors possessed to advise the first-year students. Besides, I explored whether they needed further professional development that could contribute to their qualifications and knowledge.

The interpretivist research theory contributes to perceive "the world of human experience" (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 36). Referring to Erickson, Stake (1995) argues that all types of research are mainly composed of interpretations and a qualitative researcher should "clearly maintain vigorous interpretation," which enforces the researcher to arrive at "assertions" that are a form of generalization (Erickson cited in Stake, 1995, p.9). Moreover, Mertens (2005) believes "reality is socially constructed" (p.12) and this notion strongly resonated with my own understanding of the world.

Similarly, Creswell (2003) and Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2011) claim the interpretivist

research and researchers tend to trust the discoveries of reality through a participant's lens or the way he views the situation. I presumed the academic advisors and their supervisors recognized how their own background, knowledge, skills, and experiences impacted the role they performed. I precisely searched for and described the academic advisors' and their supervisors' roles and experiences to understand how they created meaning through their own manifested intuitive impressions and insights.

For these reasons, I interacted with research participants via emails and text messaging and also met with them before actual interviews to make my beliefs and values explicit and seek for their beliefs and values and to help them be more aware about their life and work and created knowledge and realities. Such interaction helped me build trust and positive relationships, created a friendly rapport, and contributed to participants' understanding and acceptance of me as a researcher. I applied systematic inquiry to make exchanges more dialectical and provided more detailed description of contextual factors that were embedded in research questions and incorporated into the study.

3.3.3. Application of the Frameworks in the Study

I acknowledged that in the process of comprehension, context was vital. I systematically considered the contextual factors to be able to understand the participants' beliefs, viewpoints, and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morgan, 2007). The contextual factors such as organizational structure, interactions, communication, access, support, collaboration, assessment, professional development opportunities, networking, and some other features contributed to my deeper understanding of the studied phenomena.

I anticipated I could also get exposed to academic advisors' and their supervisors' abundant expectations of academic advising as a profession rather than behaviors that were consistent with recognized practices but not clearly defined in the literature and not well-established in the profession (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015). Although the interpretivist research theory forced me to focus on "the subjectivity of reality…on how humans view themselves and the world around them" (Willis, 2007, p.53), I admitted that the academic advisors and their supervisors could also be forced to understand the phenomenon in an efficient way through the process of inquiry.

I acknowledged the multiple perspectives that might come into play via interaction and communication with the academic advisors and their supervisors in research settings. I deemed my status and power as a research practitioner to co-construct understanding, knowledge, interpretations, and conclusions with the participants as equally as possible (Cleaver et al., 2014).

I was well-informed about the possible biases that may have rooted from my own personal characteristics and preferences as an educator and a graduate student (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Shenton, 2004). My personal and educational backgrounds, views, cultural awareness, communication style (e.g., accent, wording, body language, gestures, etc.), learning style, competencies, and professionalism may have seemed unfamiliar to the research

participants.

I searched, recognized, and identified the possible biases and kept my prejudices at a minimum by providing enough contextual data about myself and the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Hence, the academic advisors and their supervisors may have related those provisional findings to their own contexts, and it may have accelerated their viewpoints to occur (Fischer, 2009).

Given the study design, I used the exploratory and descriptive interview based qualitative research to cohesively and constantly conduct the inquiry. Yin (2018) highlights that no matter what research methods the researchers utilize, their aims are "exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory" (p.8). Having used the exploratory and descriptive interview based qualitative research, I concentrated on gaining a deep understanding of academic advisors' and their supervisors' contributions to the first-year students' transition into higher education and of the academic advising they provided.

This understanding helped me generate an ample number of insights and interpretations about academic advising, academic advisors and their supervisors, and advising processes (Merriam, 1998). My aim was to understand in-depth the explicitly chosen phenomenon, academic advising. I was not striving to reveal what other constituents or researchers found as universally true (Meriam, 2001). I understood that I would not do any interventions or improve the situations as it was out of the scope of this research. Yet, I might have drawn the stakeholders' attention to the studied phenomenon in its natural settings and could have empowered the research participants.

Bachiochi and Weiner (2004) believe that researchers gain more strengths when they obtain rich data, which allow them to receive greater insights and draw more plausible

conclusions. I recognized the value of the quality of two interview protocols that considered both academic advisors' and their supervisors' perspectives, and the data I collected via semi-structured interviews, observations of two different Academic Orientation programs and three first year seminars, studying documentation, and strategies that I utilized in analyzing the obtained data. I gained rich data by means of two piloted interview protocols, the field notes, the documents, the memos, and the artifacts that the research participants granted me. It was absolutely necessary for me to contemplate the circumstances that involve 'actual humans', to seize the academic advisors' and their supervisors' diverse beliefs, viewpoints, interpretations, using various research instruments, and obtain data from various sources (Yin, 2018, p.110). The data came from different sources such as semi-structured interview transcripts, screened websites, program flyers, and brochures, and observations in context specific settings. I did not prioritize one source or prefer one to the others. I relied on different sources. As a research practitioner it was my responsibility to consider the possible benefits and drawbacks of each of those sources (Yin, 2018).

I was aware of "intensive descriptions and analysis" that the qualitative study might have yielded while analyzing the excessive amount of data that could incorporate a wide range of views, practices, and experiences (Smith (1978) as cited in Merriam, 2001, p.12). I did not concentrate on describing the trivial details and nuances. I carefully searched for the reoccurring patterns and identified them, and then appropriately categorized and clearly described the findings. I was able to derive a wide range of inferences from the obtained data while doing analysis (Flyvbjerg, 2006) by means of multiple sources and to gather and then to present. The rich sources and a variety of data collection means contributed to managing my researcher subjectivity, and I also attempted to decrease my own presence in presenting the research findings (Stake 2005).

3.4. Research Site – Dream State University

The rationale behind my choice of Dream State University (DSU) in the mid-west of the U.S. is this university's specific characteristics. First of all, DSU owns a big green campus and cites, three values – quality, inclusion, and connectivity, which interdependently encourage the campus and community to build a dynamic, robust, interactive learning environment. DSU offers to the students, scholars, and scientists a plethora of research opportunities. Secondly, DSU has a democratized higher education system and brings science and innovation to its auditoriums and classrooms. Thirdly, a large body of diverse in-state and out-of-state students including international students, scholars, scientists, educational leaders, athletes, and artists are welcome and served at DSU. Overall, the number of students enrolled at the time of this study was approximately 50,000 and represented all 50 states in the U.S., including Washington, D.C., and 150 countries across the globe. In 2018, DSU welcomed more than 9,000 freshmen. Faculty and academic staff consisted of more than 7,000 educators. DSU offered more than 190 undergraduate, graduate, and professional study programs. The students' outstanding achievements and the nationally and internationally earned prestigious scholarships make this public university unique. Fourthly, the freshman class was admitted with high school GPA, and the profile in terms of achievements and credentials were impressive at the time of this study. The high school GPA of admitted students was 3.5 – 4.0, the SAT combined score was about 1140-1300, and the ACT composite score remained between 25-30. Finally, DSU also supported more than 280 Education Abroad Programs in 65 countries around the world. Considering all the aforementioned reasons, I was highly encouraged I would be able to obtain valuable insights, important acknowledgement, and sufficient information on academic advising, academic services, and student affairs at DSU.

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3.5. Participant Sampling and Recruitment

There are a number of methods for identifying study participants. For this study, I used purposive or purposeful sampling, as both terms were used interchangeably in the research literature (Chein, 1981; Patton, 1990 as cited in Merriam, 2001). This method allowed me to identify and select the participants for this research who possessed solid knowledge about academic advising and who could provide me with comprehensive information (Patton, 1980). Purposeful sampling also assisted me in determining the participants with regards to the needs of this particular study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Morse, 1991; 1994) and who were experienced enough in academic advising (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Purposeful sampling also enabled me to utilize my scarce data collection resources in the most effective way (Mason, 2002; Patton 2002). In addition, I chose among both women and men academic advisors and supervisors considering their articulation of their experiences and unique expertise as professionals in their respective fields related to the phenomena being investigated. I was confident careful recruitment would yield a heterogenous sample.

Literature suggests researchers should conduct purposive or purposeful sampling before they collect data for their studies (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, I recruited the participants for this study focusing on casual relationships and making generalizable connections between them before collecting data. For that reason, I started the interviewee recruitment with the common "snowball" strategy (Merriam, 2001, p. 63, Creswell, 2005, Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009), which was a direct analogy of a rolling snowball that was increasing in size. I started recruiting a small pool of initial informants for this study. Then, through these individuals' social networks, I recruited other participants who were eligible and who could potentially contribute to the study.

The *snowball* sampling strategy assisted me in finding individuals who had rich information and with whom I was able to discuss the phenomenon from diverse perspectives.

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This tactic revealed cases that interested participants and were rich with information, and when I had a previous participant who was supportive and trustful, I requested that they assisted me in finding new potential participants who could inform the research and feel comfortable to participate in the study (Punch, 2005).

Thus, I acknowledged saturation to be applied in participant sampling and because of that I continued to recruit participants until I found distinct knowledgeable individuals (Francis et al., 2010; Guest et al., 2006, Sandelowski, 2008).

I recruited 24 academic specialists,12 academic advisors and 12 supervisors to participate in this study. The small size of the sample, the recruited participant group, did not concern me, as I was more conscious about the appropriateness and adequacy of the sample (Bowen 2008; O'Relly & Parker, 2012). Creswell (2007) notes that if a researcher chooses a purposeful sampling it allows them to "select individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125). Table 1 below presents an overview of the sample with assigned pseudonyms.

Table 1. An overview of the sample with assigned pseudonyms

#	Name/Gender	Education Background	College/ Department/ Unit	Position	Appointment term
1.	Katerin/ female	M.A. in EHEIP/ Ph.D. candidate in HALE	College of Teacher Education	Director of Undergraduate Student Affairs	Continuing 4 years as an advisor; 6 years as an assistant director; 6 months as a director
2.	Stephanie/ female	Ph.D. in Hearing a& Speech Science & Neuroscience	College of Teacher Education	Assistant Dean	Continuing 10 years retiring
3.	Estelle/ female	M.A. in Student Affairs & Administration	Knowledge Academy	Advisor	Continuing 2 years and a half
4.	Simon/ male	M.A. in CSPA	Knowledge Academy	Advisor	Continuing 6 years
5.	Jacob/ male	M.A. in International Studies	College of Sir. Adam Smith	Assistant Dean	Continuing 12 years
6.	Ellen/ female	M.A. in International Human Rights, International Development	College of Sir. Adam Smith	Academic Advisor/Recruit ment Coordinator	Continuing 3 years as an advisor 7 years as a Coordinator

Table 1 (cont'd)

#	Name/Gender	Education Background	College/ Department/ Unit	Position	Appointment term
7.	Lidia/ female	B.A. in Social Relations	College of Sir. Adam Smith	First-year Advisor	Continuing 11 years
8.	Abigail/ female	M.A. in Student Affairs Administration Ph.D. in HALE	College of IT, Technology, and Machinery	Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Student Affairs	Continuing 10 years
9.	Jasmine/ female	M.S. in Social Work: Advanced Generalist Practice and Programming	College of IT, Technology, and Machinery	Assistant Director of Advising/ Advisor	Continuing 6 years as an advisor 3 years as an assistant director
10.	Claire/ female	M.A. in Student Affairs Administration	College of IT, Technology, and Machinery	First-year Advisor	Fixed 2 years
11.	Jasper/ male	M.A. in Student Affairs Administration	College of IT, Technology, and Machinery	First-year Advisor	Fixed 1 year
12.	Shailey/ female	M.S. in Experimental Psychology Ph.D. in HALE	College of Business and Marketing	Director of Undergraduate Academic Services/Advisor	Continuing 8 years as an advisor 4 years as a director
13.	Amber/ female	M.S.W. in Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy	College of Business and Marketing	Department of Multicultural Business Programs Coordinator/ Advisor	Continuing 13 years

Table 1 (cont'd)

#	Name/Gender	Education Background	College/ Department/ Unit	Position	Appointment term
14.	Dayne/ female	M.A. in Administration Ph.D. in HALE	College of Plants, Soil, Wilde Life, Food Industry & Nutrition	Assistant Dean for Academic Advising & Student Success/Advisor	Continuing 19 years advising + a director 1 year as an assistant dean
15.	James/ male	M.S. in Wildlife & Ecology	College of Plants, Soil, Wilde Life, Food Industry & Nutrition	Undergraduate Program Coordinator/Advisor/ career Assistance	Continuing 20 years
16.	Rachel/ female	M.A. in Counseling	College of Plants, Soil, Wilde Life Food Industry & Nutrition	Undergraduate academic advisor	Continuing 13 years retiring
17.	Virginia/ female	M.A. in Family Life Education	College of Humanities	Assistant Director of Academic and Student Affairs	Continuing 9 years advising 1 year as an assistant director
18.	Gregory/ male	Ph.D. in Geography	College of Humanities	Undergraduate Advisor & Instructor	Continuing 5 years

Table 1 (cont'd)

#	Name/Gender	Education Background	College/ Department/ Unit	Position	Appointment term
19.	Gabriela/ female	M.A. in Counseling Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration	Student Success Coaching Program	Assistant Dean for Student Success Office & Director of Student Success Coaching Program	Continuing 1 year
20.	Elizabeth/ Female	M.A. in Urban, Regional Planning	Student Success Coaching Program	Director of Student Success Coaching center	Continuing 3 years
21.	Helen/ female	M.A. in Student Affairs Administration (counseling-oriented program)	College Nature & Science	Director of Undergraduate Studies	Continuing 5 years in administrativ e position on campus
22.	Dakota/ female	M.A. in Clinical Social Work	College Nature & Science	Assistant Director of Student Success Academic Student Affairs	Continuing 7 years advising 2 years as a coordinator 3 years as an assistant director
23.	Addison/ female	Ph.D. in Counseling	Student Support Program	Director of Student Support Program	Continuing 12 years
24.	Andrea/ female	M.A. in College & University Administration	College of Media & Journalism	Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education	Continuing 21 advising + a director 1 years as an assistant dean

The purposeful sampling assisted me in identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals among the academic advisors and supervisors in academic services and student affairs within different colleges across the campus. They all were well- informed and/or involved in the phenomenon studied (Creswell, Plano, & Clark 2011). Besides knowledge and experience, I concentrated on the academic advisors and their supervisors for interviewing who were available and eager to participate. I was particularly careful in selecting the ones who were adept in academic advising and who were able to thoroughly reflect on their experiences (Bernard, 2002; Spradley, 1979). I selected academic advisors and their supervisors from eight different colleges within the university, including student affairs and student services across the campus to conduct one-hour semi-structured interviews with each of them.

I strove to find participants that varied in gender, years of experience, and the position they held. I emailed the participants and invited them to participate in an individual interview so as to get consent. I provided IRB approved consent letters for the interviewees to sign before the actual interviews started once I arrived at the location where I conducted the interviews. Please see the participant consent form in Appendix A.

3.6. Data Collection

3.6.1. Individual Interviews

I conducted the most commonly used inquiry technique in qualitative research, semi-structured individual in-person interviews (Shuy, 2003). When I interviewed research participants, the stories they shared were worthy of interest (Seidman, 2013). Seidman (2013) asserts that to understand the experiences of others, their reflections on their own lived stories, and the related issues of great significance or value in education or in any other field, this tool remains extremely effective. The author states, "Interviewing is most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language" (Seidman, 2013, p. 13), and making meaning or sense is the chance for the interviewees to reflect on aspects of their experiences, their current positions, combining the present and the past events and describing them within the context in an efficient way (Shuy, 2003).

Each of my 24 interviews lasted an hour, 60 minutes. I used two semi-structured interview protocols to elicit academic advisors' and their supervisors' reflections on their own experience with academic advising. I applied for IRB review and got IRB approval for both two interview protocols and a participant consent letter. The interview protocols helped me handle time management (Weiss, 1994). If researchers use well designed interview protocols, they can select participants adequately (Weiss, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013). Besides, interview protocols assist in establishing interviewer's confidence and making the atmosphere during the interview trustworthy (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interview protocols helped me reach the order, quality, and clarity of questions (Patton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and also allowed participants comprehensively anticipate the interview process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Patton, 2015).

The semi-structured interviews enabled me to enter interview settings with predesigned questions. This type of interview ensured I allocated particular attention to the key areas of the research during the conversations and allowed me to generate appropriate follow-up questions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Rubin and Rubin (1995) define asking follow-up questions as a skill that researchers should possess. These questions are also known as probing questions that help the researcher clarify answers or fully understand interviewees' vague or ambiguous responses. Probing depends on how research participants respond to the major interview questions (Seidman, 2013). Seidman (2013) asserts that the word probe itself embeds power. It seems that interviewers see interviewees as "an object" and put pressure on them. He suggests that it is better to change the term probing into exploring, as interviewers explore the subject together with interviewees (Lincoln & Guba (1985); Rubin & Rubin (1995) as cited in Seidman, 2013 p. 86). Legard et al (2003) relate probing to saturation and state that the researchers should proceed with probing unless they are able to clearly interpret the meanings made by the interviewees. Although it was not that easy to specify all possible follow-up questions beforehand, during the in-person interviews (Shuy, 2003), I was able to ask appropriate follow-up questions to comprehensively explore the research phenomenon of academic advising.

Seidman (2013) highlights that the interviewers should be good and active in listening, should not engage in talking too much, should be able to ask authentic questions without leading participants toward particular responses, manage frequent interruptions, and encourage the interviewees to tell their stories not relying on their memories (Tagg (1985) as cited in Seidman, 2013) but rebuilding their stories piece by piece. The researchers should also manage personalization and minimize their involvement. They should make the interviewees concentrated on the specific points and also sustain silence if needed, but Seidman (2013) warns that the interviewers should not allow too much silence to continue. When the interviewers

permit a long pause to remain, the interviewees feel embarrassed to talk, and pause may grow into silence (Gordon (1987) as cited in Seidman, 2013). I did my best to minimize the pauses that occurred by means of asking follow-up questions to not allow the interviewees to miss the important ideas or thoughts. Asking follow-up questions, I could reach cohesion in the interviews' replies and in the flow of the ideas I was seeking.

The follow-up questions encouraged participants to thoroughly think over the ideas and thoughts that emerged during the interview. Hence, the semi-structured interview format is more standardized, and it allows researchers to analyze the perspectives and interpretations across the participants in a consistent way (Kvale,1999b; Mason, 2002). Still, the semi-structured interviews with the half-open question format helped me to elicit the academic advisors' and their supervisors' multiple experiences, perspectives, and the meanings they constructed.

Seidman (2013) asserts that it is vital to pilot the interview protocols before the actual interviews are conducted. Likewise, Baker (1994) emphasizes the importance of "trying out a particular research instrument" (pp. 182-183) as piloting secures the researchers from the unexpected challenges of the proceedings and helps them adjust to the difficulties of relationship building during the actual interviews (Kvale, 2006, Seidman, 2013). As I was warned in advance, I became risk averse. I conducted 4 pilot interviews and utilized the designed interview protocols to assess possible concerns in advance. Please see the academic advisor interview protocol form in Appendix B and the supervisor interview protocol form in Appendix C.

I also acknowledged that time, exact day, and the physical space of interviews could play a significant role in their success. I was also aware of safety issues before the actual interviews (Smith (1992) as cited in Seidman, 2013, p. 53). I made my best efforts to be flexible, cognizant, and also accurate with re/scheduling, contact visits, and emailing.

In order to make contacts with the potential interviewees before the actual interviews, I decided to send emails, requesting permission and fixing the date of the visit. Then, I made contact visits to meet potential study participants before my actual data collection in an effort to try to build trust via dialogue, which was the basis for accurately disclosing the research participants' world and acquiring complete satisfaction from the process and outcomes (Gleshne & Peshkin (1992) as cited in Kvale, 2006). I was able to build trustful relations with the perspective research participants that helped establish a "foundation for the interview relationship" and provided the potential interviewees the chance to "internalize" the research I was going to do (Seidman, 2013, p. 50). All in all, I met with 40 individuals from various colleges across DSU's campus between April 1 and June 5, 2018.

The contact visits enabled me to avoid two types of participants, the one who was not motivated or interested in participation and the other who disturbed me with overwhelming engagement or inadequate information to share. While meeting with the potential participants, I decided whether to include or exclude a particular individual from the interviewees list (Dean & Whyte (1958) & Richard et al., (1965) as cited in Seidman, 2013).

Consequently, I had the chance to review the research topic, the rationale behind it, and my future perspectives as an international research practitioner who desired to explore and grasp the essence of academic advising in an institution of higher education in the U.S..

3.6.2. Observations

I also conducted observations (McLeod, 2015) as a secondary tool to collect data. The observation is defined by Marshall and Rossman (1989) as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p.79). I observed four academic advisors and two supervisors during two Academic Orientation Programs in the summer of 2018 and two academic advisors who taught three first-year seminars in the Fall of 2018. All together I observed three first-year seminars in two different colleges across campus. The observations helped describe the existing situations that I studied. I used all five of my senses to write field notes from those observations. I took notes about seen objects, watched behaviors, heard exchanges, feelings, and meanings constructed in the interpretations of both the participants' and mine (McLeod, 2015, Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen,1993).

Since observation is a process for learning about the research participants' endeavors in their real work place, this process also allows the researcher to participate in those activities. I was an overt observer: I asked permission from the advisors and their supervisors to observe Academic Orientation Programs and the first-year seminars, they knew my true identity and the purpose of the study (McLeod, 2015). Such fieldwork involved "active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes, and perhaps importantly, patience" (Dewalt & De Walt, 2002, p. vii).

Ultimately, observations yielded the context and time for improving the sampling, planning, and elaborating on the interview questions (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). Yet, an observation is a process that requires the researcher to manage their deceptions and intensive impressions (Bernard, 1994). Considering the aforementioned aspects of observation, I had chosen to observe two Academic Orientation Programs and three first-year seminars in two different colleges on DSU's campus. The observation format encompassed the following parts:

being in the observation sites at least five days, taking field notes, and collecting artifacts. I had

scheduled the visits through direct contact (e.g., staff directory) via emailing and requesting

permission from the gatekeepers who had authority to ensure access to the sites and people

(Seidman, 2013).

3.6.3. Documentation

Qualitative research considers document review, "documentary information," relevant as a secondary tool for collecting data. The documentation comprises hard copies and electronic, which includes "administrative documents and personal documents," programs, "proposals," newspapers, journals, emails, letters, "minutes of meetings" (Yin, 2018, pp. 113-115), "advertisements, agendas, attendance registers, manuals, brochures" (Bowen, 2009, pp. 27-28), and "memos, background papers, application forms, final reports" etc. (Kline (1981) as cited in Merriam, 2001, p. 120).

Yin (2018) states that this tool may not always be accurate, and it may also embed some bias (p.135). Similarly, Merriam (2001) asserts that it is pivotal to determine "the authenticity and accuracy of the documents" (p.121) and whether they may or not be "yielding knowledge and insight" (p.124) that is potentially complete, "stable, unobtrusive, specific, broad" (Yin, 2018, p.114). Therefore, the documentation needed to be carefully chosen and utilized because the documents I had reviewed feasibly contributed to my discoveries and constructions of new meanings. Document review advanced my understanding and revealed new insights that were appropriate to the phenomenon I studied (Merriam, 2001).

Similarly, Yin (2018) highlights that documents produce evidence or clues and clearly show that something exists. They amplify the possibility of drawing logical inferences that enable researchers to continue analyzing the data. Meriam (2001) emphasizes that it is challenging to assess the authenticity and reliability of the documents while Yin (2018) stresses the accessibility of them, particularly e-documents that may be deliberately removed from the sites because the creators may not have developed them to be utilized in research. The author also mentions the amount of the accessible documents on the Internet and asserts that to utilize such big data is time consuming and demands the researcher to possess a strong sense of the

phenomenon and "concentrate on the relevant and efficient data that is evidently central to the research inquiry" (Yin, 2018, p. 117).

The rationale for this type of analysis is to strengthen the study and utilize data triangulation (Yun, 2018). Denzin (2012) highlights that using various tools and techniques, including triangulation, the researchers seek to grasp the complexity of the phenomenon and profundity of thought in inquiry. Flick (2007, 2002) asserts that applying triangulation, researchers alternatively validate research findings. I applied triangulation that enabled me to not only do cross validation of the data, but it also facilitated my ability to capture various aspects or features of the same phenomenon adding accuracy and depth and addressing complexity during the investigation (as cited in Denzin, 2012, p. 82).

Data triangulation assisted in drawing the evidence from multiple sources, which contributed to addressing and establishing the construct validity and reliability of research findings (Yin, 2018), securing allegations (Patton, 1990) and converging facts or clues to prove similarity and ensure credibility of data (Eisner, 1991). Given to the importance of the documentation information, I did document review on the academic advising association NACADA, which was being used for guidance and the manuals, programs, brochures, booklets, and flyers of the various Colleges at DSU.

3.6.4. Validity

I explained clearly the sufficient details and the ways I selected the people and the locations (Remler & Van Rysin, 2015). I used a checklist to not miss or lose any data and cover important procedures (Creswell 2013). In order to reach qualitative validity, I checked the findings for the accuracy employing iteration (Hartley 1994, 2004). I visited and revisited patterns, themes, and categories trying to reconnect them; to refine new emerging insights; and to ask question such as What do I know?; How do I know what I know?; How do those studied know what they know?; and How do those who receive my findings make sense of what I give them? A reflexive process of "iteration" assisted in sparking new insights and creating new meanings (Patton, 2002, p. 495; Berkowitz, 1997).

I did triangulation to capture and fix the social phenomenon and to construct coherent justification for the themes (Denzin, 2012). Triangulation forced me to realize more accurate analysis and explanation. I used triangulation to intersect the data obtained from various sources because "data triangulation" strengthened "the construct validity" (Paton, 1999; Patton (2015) as cited in Yin, 2018, p. 128) and augmented my confidence in the phenomenon I studied and did it in a proper way. In fact, triangulation contributed to better understanding of the phenomenon by me.

I did cross checking for the audio recordings, utilized field notes which I had taken during the observations in the context-specific settings and wrote reflection memos (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). Memo writing should be a priority because memos ensure the retention of ideas that the researcher may lose (Glaser, 1978; Saldaña, 2016). The memos that I had written through the research process initiated and maintained productivity in me as a research practitioner.

3.6.5. Reliability

Merriam (2001) asserts that to establish reliability is way more challenging and problematic in social sciences, including education because the researcher cannot predict the participants' behaviors. Human behavior is inherently unstable. I acknowledged to constantly expect similar answers to the same question was a false assumption as reliability meant to accept one single reality. My aim was to seek multiple realities that academic advisors and their supervisors constructed, interpreted and/or experienced. In this sense, it remained challenging to rely on the assumption that it was possible to generate the same results in case outsiders replicated the research.

Yin (2018) defines reliability as the opportunity to reduce misconceptions and prejudice in research. In fact, the author believes that the researcher should be reflective about the reliability even if in reality the same case study may be rarely repeated, and the researcher should precisely record the research proceedings. For that to happen, I designed a research protocol for indicating detailed documentation and created a study data base (Yin, 2018).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the researcher should not attempt to seek for the responses whether the results of the study may be repeatedly yielded or not. I made my best efforts to make the findings of the research be consistent with obtained data, which incorporated consideration of "dependability" or "consistency" of the findings (as cited in Merriam, 2001, p. 206).

Merriam (2001) suggests that the researchers should consider their positions as a tactic to reach dependability and elaborate on their assumptions, the theory behind the studies they conduct, the rationale for recruiting the participants that integrates the description of the participants' and also the natural settings of the phenomenon (LeCompte & Preissle (1993) as cited in Merriam, 2001, p. 207).

Patton (2015) asserts that triangulation, which is to utilize multiple methods for qualitative data collection and comprehensive analysis, may secure both the reliability and internal validity and strengthen them.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest an audit trial to trace the researcher's path, and for that to happen, I tried to precisely describe the whole process of data collection, the strategies I used for obtaining the categories, and how I made decisions on findings while conducting inquiry (Dey (1993), as cited in Merriam, 2001, p. 207).

3.7. Data Analysis

I started the data analysis process by getting to know the data. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) emphasize that the researcher should take several steps to analyze the data that is organizing the collected data, splitting the obtained data into multiple parts, identifying important parts, revealing the new knowledge, and imparting this knowledge to the others. I followed the aforementioned steps to be systematic and rigorous. I first listened to the tapes and transcribed interviews from tape to paper. Then, I read over the written transcripts as the qualitative analysis required solid analytical competence and skills. Thus, a human engagement in the qualitative inquiry and data analysis made it both authentic and delicate (Patton 1990). Step-by-step data analysis assisted me to have a general feeling or idea of what academic advisors and their supervisors expressed and what the results looked like. It also helped begin a systematic and rigorous analysis.

Based on the literature review and my experiences as a language teacher and graduate student, I anticipated the emergence of some patterns related to academic advisors' and supervisors' characteristics, education, and personal traits, because Saldaña (2016) suggests "explor[ing] intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions, especially in matters of social relationships, ... judgement and risk taking" (p. 125).

I used coding techniques in order to "identify salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 114). Marshall and Rossman (1995) highlight that this intellectually arduous and effort-requiring phase demands more proactiveness and the researcher should be ready for full engagement in the analyzing process. Hence, I acknowledged that validation should be an ongoing principle throughout the entire research process. Coding enabled me to discover and to mark the underlying meanings, insights, and ideas in the data, to group them by categories and to label the

categories (Charmaz, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) applying information to check for similarity.

Then, I associated the ideas and themes that differed (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Hence, I also acknowledged that I should consider saturation. I reached the momentum in coding when I was not able to discover new codes (Urquhart, 2013) or even the further information did not originate a new theme (Given, 2016; Birks & Mills, 2015). This technique helped me build overarching themes in the data and find possible and plausible explanations for findings through interpretation.

Despite the fact that the data generally came in various formats, either in audio or in written documents, I read the transcripts over and over, no less than two times (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Reading over the text remained extremely helpful to find themes and handle them. While coding the data, I also wrote memos; a memo is "a brief or extended narrative that documents the researcher's reflections and thinking processes about the data" (Mile, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 95).

According to Miles and Huberman (1984), researchers should be flexible with data collection procedures as they may not prevent the emergence of brand-new ideas or patterns, because data collection and analysis generally intersect. Because of that, I analyzed quasi- open-ended qualitative responses by reducing the data. I systematically selected parts of the data that answered specific facets of my research questions (e.g., pulling out all of the information on the characteristics of advisors). I then looked for patterns across the relevant data and simplified those patterns by pulling out representative pieces of data and summarizing patterns and trends across the full sample (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Spradley, 1979). I also displayed the data in a table and matrix so that I could draw reasonable conclusions across the various data sources and participants, and I applied triangulation to distill my findings (Berkowitz 1997; Miles &

Huberman, 1994).

I searched for missing information that the interviewees might have deliberately or unconsciously avoided sharing (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). In fact, searching for missing information was considered challenging. I attempted to identify any thought, idea, or interpretation that seemed odd or did not align with the topic (Ryan & Bernard 2003). Therefore, I had to read a text over and over. On the first reading, I searched for the most striking major themes and immediately highlighted them.

I proceeded to the next stage to research themes that remained unmarked in the data. This strategy forced me to seek original and ambiguous themes during the second reading. I intentionally analyzed linguistic features of the interviewees' speeches and searched for "metaphors, transitions or connectors" (Lakoff & Johnson (1980) as cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 90) because oftentimes speakers used them to convey messages, to display their manners, and to share their lived experiences. Besides, Agar (1983) concludes that when natural speech involves two or more actors, transitions continually occur. Given the analogues, metaphors, and transitions, I intensively sought them out.

3.8. Positionality

My unique and reflexive positionality stemmed from my experiences as a longstanding educator, a language teacher, and trainer of trainers of at the university level. Additionally, my current identity as an international graduate student and my feelings of vulnerability had also played a crucial role in deciding to study academic advising. In this sense, four years of graduate school had immensely impacted my personality, perspectives, and way of thinking. I had been constantly searching for help, academic assistance, and social support. These experiences generated genuine interest in this research topic.

I recognized that educational security and collegial relationships with peers, the faculty, and the whole community influenced my identity. I also acknowledged the difficulty in advocating on my behalf while communicating my personal, educational, and competing cultural perspectives that were my gender, age, background, abilities, competencies, and experiences. I acknowledged my sensitivity to cultural bias, nationality, religion, and even hidden prejudice. I also recognized that salient privilege embedded within my cultural identity (e.g., the languages; Azerbaijani, Russian, English, Turkish) impacted this study in a particular way.

My memory flashes reminded me of my undergraduate years, when I had not had the opportunity to benefit from academic advisors at the Azerbaijan University of Languages. The awkward times of frustration, concerns, and not determined personal, social and academic goals had overwhelmed me though I successfully graduated making a lot of efforts.

The second exposure to the academic advising occurred when two years ago my niece enrolled in Azerbaijan Medical University. She was feeling insecure and she was unsure how to navigate through the institutional structure. Right after secondary school, she transitioned to a new unfamiliar environment that she hardly found friendly and supportive. She constantly consulted with me and tried to seek answers for her questions. I initiated some interventions,

tried to guide her, and gave some directions. Although the time zone and distance between us prevented me from supporting her in an efficient way, the communication process itself notably contributed to my interest and desire to do this research and understand the role of academic advising in student success, retention and completion of a degree.

The similar scenario repeated when my nephew in September 2018 was admitted to Azerbaijan University of Languages, which is my alma mater. Although the family has paid 2,000 AzN ($1,177) tuition fee per year, he has been feeling insecure and unsure how to do coursework and how to navigate through the institutional structure. He has also been transitioning to a new unfamiliar environment that he has hardly found friendly and supportive. His parents have to pay a tutor out of the university for the Italian language classes because the classroom instruction has not been high quality, office hours have not been provided, and there has not been any help rooms or tutoring centers established in the education body. My nephew with the English language background, English is his second language, has been struggling. He has been majoring in Italian without any prior knowledge to it. His parents are also frustrated because they have been charged twice.

The past and current experiences had been the turning point in deciding to study this phenomenon, academic advising, in its real-life context. I expected to succeed in exhibiting a good ability to conduct research and communicate the study results. My ambition was to acquire a set of robust skills for this qualitative research and advance my knowledge in both theory and practice. I was confident that I had already acquired new ideas and practices, and the experiences helped me grow as an educator and a researcher, improve my professionalism, and contribute to student success, retention, and degree completion in higher education in my own country, Azerbaijan.

I anticipated obtaining rich data and stark examples and then I would encourage the administration at my university and other HEIs (higher education institutions) to buy into this idea and to implement this practice. I was assured that I would be able to demonstrate solid knowledge and convincingly communicate the importance of academic advising based on the research findings that may have improved the student services at colleges and universities here in the USA.

Three years ago, ADA University, which I was representing in the U.S.A., promoted a new School of Education and in May 2018, successfully graduated the first cohort of Master of Arts students in Educational Management Program. The school aspired to prepare a new generation of educational leaders and high-quality teaching professionals. My aim was to recommend to them that they incorporated an academic advising component in that program.

I assumed this qualitative study may have also helped the Ministry of Education in Azerbaijan as well as HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) to think over the idea of academic advising and in future perspective to embed it in HEIs. I was assured that if this idea was realized, the colleges and universities in Azerbaijan would experience positive changes at the content and structural levels.

I acknowledged I had introduced enough and even more information on my own experiences, thoughts, and needs with advising and that of my family members and my intention in going into this study. I recognized my positionality could embed some bias and prejudice that were my own challenges, hurt feelings, and lived negative experiences and that of my family members. The data I had could make it challenging, if not possible, to separate myself from that past and current backgrounds. To avoid my positionality to somewhat affect my research, I found other sources of data to verify the findings. More data sources supported my interpretations, so I could have more confidence what I had found was valid. I checked for alternative explanations

for making my interpretations stronger and considered the reasons why I obtained my research data. Being reflective, I strove to engage in an internal dialogue and attempted to critically evaluate my positionality. I was specifically reflexive to how my experiences, knowledge, and social positions might impact the process and data. I did my best to think about myself in relation to the participants of my research and be thoughtful about ethical dilemmas during the research. I activated my ability to take other's perspectives as well and perceived advising from my research participants' perspectives. It helped me obtain additional information, for instance, stereotypes or specific information about the others. Being reflexive, I scrutinized my interactions with the participants, studied my thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Reflectivity and reflexivity could improve and increase the accountability of my research.

3.9. Limitations

This qualitative study had a few limitations. The first limitation was the small sample size that was based on purposeful sampling across two groups: academic advisors and supervisors. The constraint was that to make the sample diverse in terms of competencies, abilities, skills, positions and to reach balance was not an easy task. The representativeness may have constrained the entire professional academic advisors' and supervisors' perspectives within Dream State University. There was a possibility that there would be some disproportion in the numbers of female and male academic advisors and supervisors, the colleges involved across the campus, including the academic services and student affairs. The possibility changed into reality when I finalized the sample. My research sample incorporated five male and nineteen female participants. The second limitation was generalizability of the study results. The findings from the study sample may not have been applied to the larger population. It may have provided only the basis to originate comprehensive generalizability.

Another issue was related to the contexts of the study and how they impacted the findings, whether the same study would yield the same results in case it was conducted in different settings or sites. This qualitative study was conducted on one campus, and the policies, rules, regulations, and practices may not have been applicable in other university settings, particularly in Azerbaijan, which is very different from the U.S..

Furthermore, researcher sensitivity, integrity, and subjectivity may have constrained the study findings. My background, competencies and abilities mattered. I was an international student, English was and is my third language, and I was the primary instrument for collecting data and the data analysis, which made me vulnerable and influenced my credibility as a research practitioner. I had to manage all research proceedings on my own and demonstrate abilities that were accountable.

My subjective perspectives, biases or prejudice may somehow have impacted data analysis while doing the interpretation of the participants' beliefs, ideas, thoughts, and interpretations. My integrity closely related to the research ethics that involved ensuring participants' privacy and security (Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2018). To keep anonymity of the participants was my ethical responsibility. My presence and behavior may somehow have embarrassed, disturbed, and created ethical dilemmas for the participants and myself. I needed to be as clear as possible in my utterances, body language, and gestures so that I did not allow myself to be misunderstood and let misconceptions occur.

I was cognizant of the time constraint of the research as another limitation. I had to manage the study within a certain time frame, which made it tense, fast-paced, and stressful for me and possibly for the participants. Scheduling interview times, the participants and I were a bit pressed for time, this disturbed regular working hours, there were overlaps in dates, and events and unexpected situations occurred. Three academic advisors had to change the interview times because of overlaps in their schedules. Once I had to reschedule the interview time. Two academic advisors and one supervisor refused to be interviewed at the last minute although they had agreed to be part of the research. Two of the academic advisors whom I had a contact meeting with and who shared great insights during that visit, later did not reply to any follow up emails to schedule an interview time. Finally, I included 24 academic advisors and their supervisors in the sample and conducted interviews with them. Although I conducted 4 more interviews (two academic specialists from Admission Office; one academic specialist from Career Services; one academic specialist from Student Success Initiatives), I decided not to utilize those interviews because I considered the content not efficient and relevant to the study. Besides, one of four participants stepped out of the position of the Director of Student Success Initiatives and moved to a faculty position as an assistant professor prior to the data analysis. The

flexibility definitely came to play and urged the participants and me to be more exact and time conscious.

Despite these limitations, the research methods in this study are robust, and I undertook the study with great care. My sincere interest in answering my research questions drove me to utilize various methods and obtain large amounts of data. I included my assumptions of qualitative research and the rationale for using a qualitative approach. To do this exploratory and descriptive interview-based qualitative research I used semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. I explained my role as the researcher, including the setting, the participant sampling and recruitment method, the number of participants, data collection and data analysis procedures. I took several steps to analyze the data. I organized those data, split the obtained data into multiple parts, identified important part, revealed new knowledge, and meticulously imparted this knowledge to the others. This chapter also incorporated verification procedures and ethical considerations. I acknowledged my positionality, seriously recognized my biases and prejudice embedded in my multiple identities of being an international researcher, educator, student and so on. At the same time, I was aware of my hidden salient privilege of those identities. I reached qualitative validity of my research via checking the findings for accuracy employing iteration. My best efforts enabled me to make findings of my research be consistent with obtained data and establish qualitative reliability.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the organization of academic advising at DSU's campus, to understand the contexts where university academic advisers and their supervisors functioned and whether they recognized the importance of knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences while performing their roles and fulfilling their responsibilities. I aimed to learn the academic advisors and supervisors' realties, perceptions, and interpretations on the contexts of academic advising delivered. I strove to learn how academic advising was delivered, how academic advising services were structured, what those procedures were, and what strategies and practices were employed in academic advising process in a four-year public university. The findings of the data analyses for each research question posed in the study introduce the knowledge and information about how academic advising is organized and delivered, the culture and purpose of academic advising, the roles and responsibilities the professional advisors and supervisors possess, the resources and tools they utilize when they advise the transfer students and freshmen.

Before delving into the research questions, it is important to consider where some of my assumptions did not play out. I expected to find that there were specific processes for serving first-year students, and I framed the study with this expectation in mind. However, I found there were not any fixed or long-established ways to advise first year students. The two exceptions were New Student Orientation, which incorporates Academic Orientation Programs in fall, spring, and summer terms, and first-year seminars that introduce students to social and academic life at campus, which is a beneficial support for the first-year students' transition and experience of doing small-group activities.

Interestingly, my research happened to occur right in the middle of a year of significant change in advising at DSU, which meant participants were able to speak both to how things were

in prior years and how things were under the new changes. For example, the organizational change happened at the college level, in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery a few years ago. Loosely coordinated and decentralized advising practice in the college transitioned and moved under the Undergraduate Studies Office.

In relation to the previous finding, the roles and responsibilities the professional advisors and supervisors fulfill within the shared academic advising model (centralized and decentralized) at campus aligned in many ways. Both groups were equally cognizant of the importance of knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences they should possess and academic advising styles they should utilize when they were advising students. The academic advisors and supervisors acknowledged the way the advising system functioned at campus was changing, and there was a big shift in the structure to make academic advising delivery somewhat consistent and centrally coordinated and overseen across the campus.

Nevertheless, the academic advisors and supervisors' evaluation and assessment of advising delivery were not completely centralized and unified across DSU's campus, and there were not fixed or established benchmarks either. Human Resources Office required everybody, including faculty, academic specialists, and other staff in job classification, to be evaluated at least once a year. However, really colleges and departments determined how to evaluate academic advisors and supervisors. The evaluation forms and templates differed from college to college, even departments. It was generally conducted as an annual review, and once a year the academic advisors wrote reports on the goals, strengths and challenges, and the work done. Still, the rewarding component was incorporated into the assessment process. It was established in the form of Outstanding Academic Advising Award for new and established academic advisors, a faculty advisor and an administrator a couple of years ago. The recipients of this award and the

rest of participants of this study showed a clear preference for being rewarded for the work they did.

Regardless of how evaluation and assessment was conducted, leadership tended to conduct centralized student surveys and analyze the data for the future to be used as the base for changes by a task-force, and the departments individually launched students survey to measure student satisfaction on academic advisors' performance. The leadership was also prone to align professional development activities, academic advising training programs, and delivery of advising with NACADA (2017) core competency areas.

The findings suggested that academic advisors and supervisors utilized some home grown and other technologies, instruments and tools in delivering advising. In addition, a brand-new Advisor Portal was recently launched for fast, constant, and sustainable virtual interaction and communication across campus community and networking. Communication among parties was occurring at the campus level, college, department and even group levels. To a great surprise, not all academic advisors were using and benefiting from the new portal as it was supposed to be.

This chapter contains four sections that present findings to the research questions. They are Organizational Structure; Advising Styles and Strategies; Academic Advising Delivery; Academic Advisors and Supervisors' Knowledge, Competencies, Skills and Qualifications. In each section, I will address the findings divided as subsections.

4.1. Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of academic advising is decentralized across Dream State University's (DSU's) campus, which means undergraduate academic advising is delivered by each academic department or unit within eight particular colleges and programs. The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies office does not define services but may develop the tools or set rules or guidelines in the form of academic advising core expectations aligning them with NACADA academic advising core competencies, 2017. The distribution of services and how they are chunked into big or small units depend on the organization of the work in different colleges, departments, units, or programs. Figure 1 below presents Colleges and programs included in this study.

Provost of DSU

Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education & Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Assistant Dean for University Advising Commission

Director Office of Student Support

Assistant Dean for Student Success Office & Director of Student Success Coaching Program

Dean College of Plants, Soil, Wilde Life Food Industry & Nutrition

Dean College of Humanities

Dean College of Teacher Education

Student Success Coaching centers

Dean College Nature & Science

Dean College of Media & Journalism

Dean of Knowledge Academy

Dean College of IT, Technology, and Machinery

Dean College of Business and Marketing

Dean College of Sir Adam Smith

Figure 1. Colleges and programs included in this study

In some colleges, including the ones that apply limited enrollment, undergraduate academic advising is conducted in a centralized unit. Thus, the organization of the work is

centralized or decentralized at the college level regardless of degrees the colleges grant. Consequently, there is a single model for each college. In another setting, the organization of the work might be centralized at the program level. There is an issue of governance, who controls, which is different from the size of the unit. With regard to centralized units, Stephanie, the assistant dean in the College of Teacher Education, asserted:

> It's changing, varies from college to college. In our college, Student Affairs is centralized. Advisers are housed in this suite, nine in this suite, they serve all the floors and all the departments here, and all the undergraduates, but in the College of Humanities, it is decentralized. There might be one adviser in the Department of Economics and one adviser in the Department of Political Science who answer to their departments.

Figure 2 presents a centralized Student Affairs Unit in the College of Teacher Education and a decentralized academic advising organization structure in the College of Humanities.
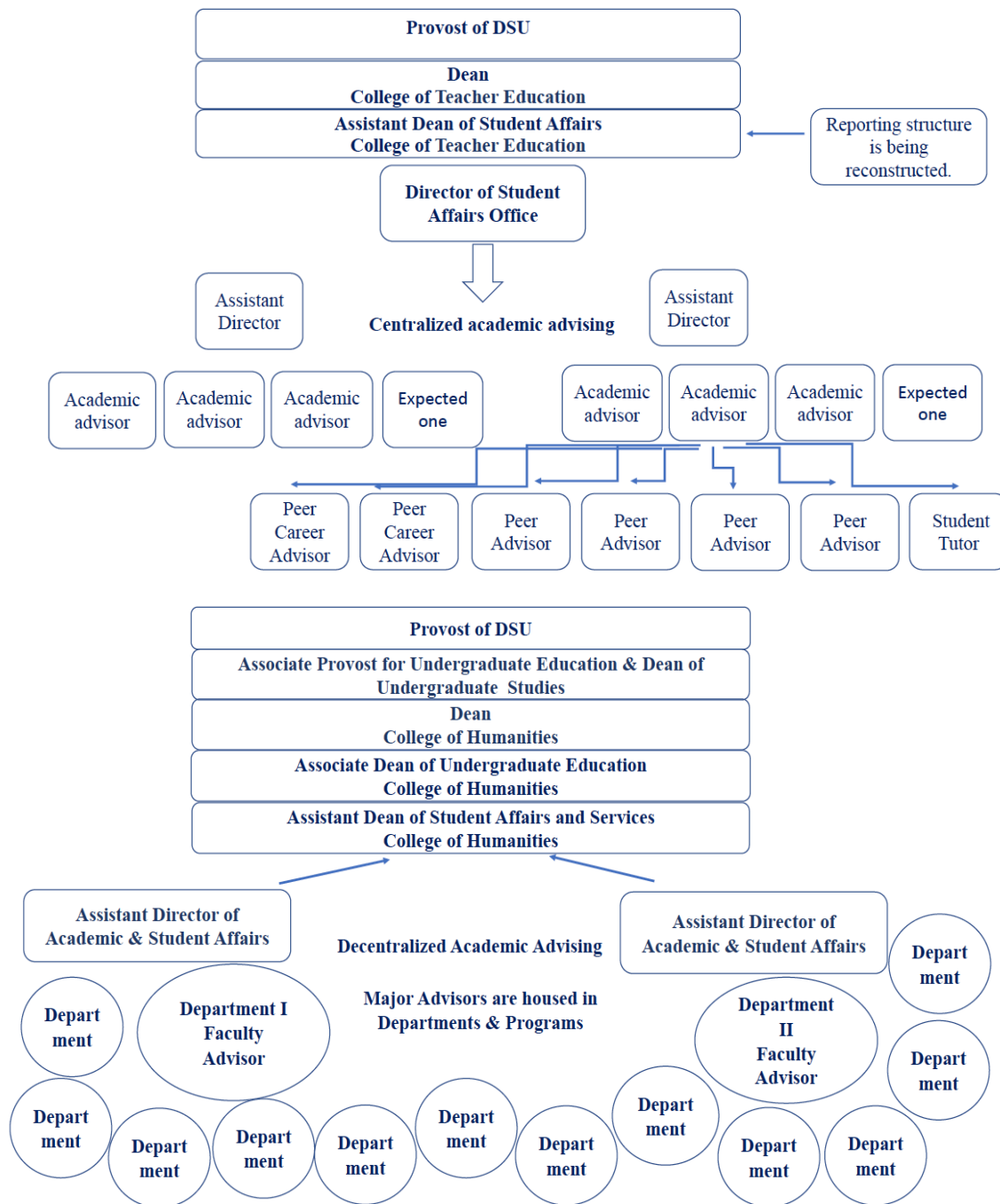
Figure 2. A centralized Student Affairs Unit in the College of Teacher Education and a decentralized academic advising organization structure in the College of Humanities

According to Stephanie, in colleges both a centralized or decentralized undergraduate student affairs and services office or undergraduate academic services office is a common structure. Generally, bigger colleges such the College of Nature and Science or the College of Humanities are highly decentralized and academic advisors are housed in the departments. Instead of the college, the departments hire advisors to advise students for them. All the colleges are responsible for advising for all the majors though each college is self-structured differently. In the College of Teacher Education, there is a centralized Student Affairs Unit. All the advisors are housed in this unit and serve all the undergraduates and graduates in all departments in the college. The Director of Student Affairs Unit has two direct reports who are assistant directors. Each of them supervises three academic advisors. Also, the unit will be getting two more advisors next year. Right now, the director supervises eight constituents below her, including two assistant directors. Eight professional advisors, including the director and two assistant directors, have backgrounds either in student affairs or counseling. The unit has a Peer Advising Program, which one of the advisors oversees. Four peer advisors, two peer career advisors, and a student tutor help eight professional advisors advise undergraduates for all majors in the college. The unit is undergoing some restructuring right now. Currently, the Director of the Student Affairs Unit reports to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. At the end of the year, because of undergoing restructuring, she will report to the Associate Dean, who directly reports to the Dean of the College of Teacher Education.

In contrast to the College of Teacher Education, in the College of Humanities advising is decentralized, and the staff is divided by departments or majors. Each major has its own major advisor. The college does not have peer advisors. Students with majors in the college are assigned to academic advisors within their major department or program. Hence, in the Dean's Office of Student Affairs, there is an Assistant Dean under whom two assistant directors

function. Only in two departments, there are faculty advisors. The Assistant Dean reports to Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, and then the Associate Dean reports to the Dean of the College of Humanities. Consequently, there is some centralized advising practice at the college level, but then it goes out into the departments. In fact, most on the ground advising happens within the departments, and then certain decisions are made at the college level. The college has so-called dotted line authority over the departmental advisors. The relationship in dotted-line reporting is developed between an advisor and a secondary supervisor or leader. The secondary supervisors or leaders provide additional oversight and guidance to advisors while they are executing their work. The dotted-line relationship is added with the intention to ensure that the secondary supervisor or leader has the authority to provide some level of influence and leadership over advisors. To some degree, the college has had some input in departmental advisors' performance evaluations, but it is also obligated to provide some sort of professional development training and support advisors.

The programs that are independently functioning based on grants call have offices of supportive services and student success coaching centers. For example, the Office of Student Support houses a program called TRIO which is funded by the Department of Education and serves Pell (Federal Student Aid) eligible students whose income indicators are below or at the poverty line and assists them to be admitted to the university. The Director of the Office of Student Support is supervised by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education who is the direct report of the Provost of DSU. Yet, the program receives guidance from the Council for Opportunities in Education (COE), which is a nonprofit organization. COE is dedicated to furthering the expansion of college opportunities such as achieving access and attain success for low-income students, first-generation students, minority students, and also students with disabilities. The Director of the Office of Student Support supervises and oversees five advisors

who are primarily responsible for a student cohort from a major city and the program Untimely Bridged. Furthermore, the unit is not contained within any degree granting college on DSU's campus. The program is more of an advocacy position as they do not provide students with a degree. In relation to the organization of advising for undergraduates, the Director of the Office of Student Support, Addison stated:

> The academic advising system structured across campus is not centralized or decentralized, it is more shared. I'm supervised by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, we are not contained within a degree granting college at the university. The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education reports to the Provost at the university, and then the Provost to the President.

As the examples in these last few paragraphs suggest, the names and functions of the offices that deliver academic advising differ across DSU's campus. In addition, there is a big unit called Student Success Coaching on campus. The unit is directed by the Assistant Dean of Student Success Initiatives and Director of Student Success Coaching. She reports to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

A few years ago, a new structure with an Assistant Dean for University Advising Commission was established under the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Office, and it was a big shift to make academic advising delivery somewhat consistent, and centrally coordinated and overseen across campus.

The decentralized model incorporates Habley's faculty-only and satellite model. Still, the constituents believed the academic advising model at DSU was mixed or shared, which was partially or completely centralized in some colleges and mainly decentralized across campus. According to Abigail, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Student Affairs in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, the academic advising model at DSU was not centralized:

I mean in different colleges it's possibly kind of centralized or maybe mixed, shared or decentralized. I've always reported directly to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies. That's been the same my entire 10 years here, regardless of what my title's been or what my role is. He then reports to the Dean of the College. The Dean probably reports to the Provost. There are 14 or 16 different undergraduate colleges and a couple of other support units. There are probably 14 or 16 different systems. They still … they do a mix… some report centrally, some still are out in their department. So, yeah, I know kind of what we have here, but.

Given the insights shared by Abigail, the organizational changes happened at the college level as well. In the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery there was some transition about a few years ago, most of the advisors used to be employed by individual departments, six or seven different advisors worked for six or seven different departments, and all of them were loosely coordinated through undergraduate studies. It was very decentralized and challenging to oversee and supervise all of them. Then, all the academic advisors administratively were moved under the Undergraduate Studies Office. For instance, all the economic advisors started to report to one central person, and they were paid through the Undergraduate Studies Office. The academic advisors physically stayed in their departmental location. Although there are academic advisors scattered all around the building physically, they all report and are paid through this office that evaluates their performance as well.

DSU's advising structure is so unique, complicated, and well-blended into the structure of the whole institution that it integrates features of centralized and decentralized advising models. The advising structure as a whole combines various workforce's expertise and skills, which incorporates mainly professional advisors, faculty and peer advisors in two colleges

included in this study. In regard to the uniqueness of the structure, the coordinator and advisor in Multicultural Business Programs, College of Business and Marketing, Amber commented:

> DSU is a very decentralized system driven by college and departments' full-time professional academic advisors, faculty advisors, and peer advising that is formalized through some colleges, student service fellows, and fellow undergraduates.

DSU relies heavily on the use of professional academic advisors. In most units that have been operating that way for decades, there are still a lot of units that used undergraduate faculty advisors up until quite recently. There are different undergraduate colleges and a couple of other support units, and they utilize different systems.

The top authority over academic advising is the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Students who reports to the Provost of DSU. This office oversees university-level undergraduate initiatives that support and enhance the undergraduate experience. It also provides direction to a number of university-wide programs that serve undergraduate students and coordinates the development and implementation of academic policies and procedures related to undergraduate education. The staff engages in welcoming newly enrolled students during the academic orientation programs through the academic year and enhancing their growth. The office oversees selected academic programs and manages and maintains co-curricular activities that enable students to develop. The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Students has two direct reports that are the Assistant Dean for University Advising Commission and Assistant Dean for Student Success Office & Director of Student Success Coaching Program. The office of the Assistant Dean for University Advising Commission participates in supporting student success at DSU and executes ongoing professional development and training opportunities for advising workforce across the campus. The staff constantly develop tools and collaboratively manage activities to enhance

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student success. The office undertakes assessment of academic advising from the students' perspectives that enlightens the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Students and then the Provost of DSU to initiate change throughout campus when it is needed.

With regard to the organization of advising, the College of Nature and Science utilizes shared structures (Habley's Split and Supplementary models), which incorporates centralized (Habley's Self Contained Model) and decentralized (Habley's Faculty Only Model) delivery of advising services. Now, the College of Nature and Science still predominantly utilizes a split model. Figure 3 below presents an academic advising organization structure in the College of Nature and Science. The college has faculty advisers in some departments and some departments deliver advising services hiring professional advisers. There is also a centralized advising center in the dean's office for a few majors. But then, the rest of the departments all have at least one advising representative so that they can be working on issues specific to that particular department. Ultimately, it's a very mixed model. It has been their goal in the college to move more towards the professional advising model. Using shared structures, the college attempts to see how it can benefit students and student success, supporting them in different ways. Advisors are supposed to spend more time getting training and working on how to make sure that the students are their focus in that advising capacity versus the faculty who are splitting their time up over research, teaching, and service. And part of the administrative shift does definitely link to that because the college does not have only professional or only faculty advising. A centralized advising center in the dean's office has professional advisers, and they represent a major or sometimes two depending on the size of the major. Although departmental advisers actually report to their chairs or undergraduate program directors, depending on the structure, they need

to come to the director of the centralized unit in the dean's office for problems, concerns, and other stuff they may have.
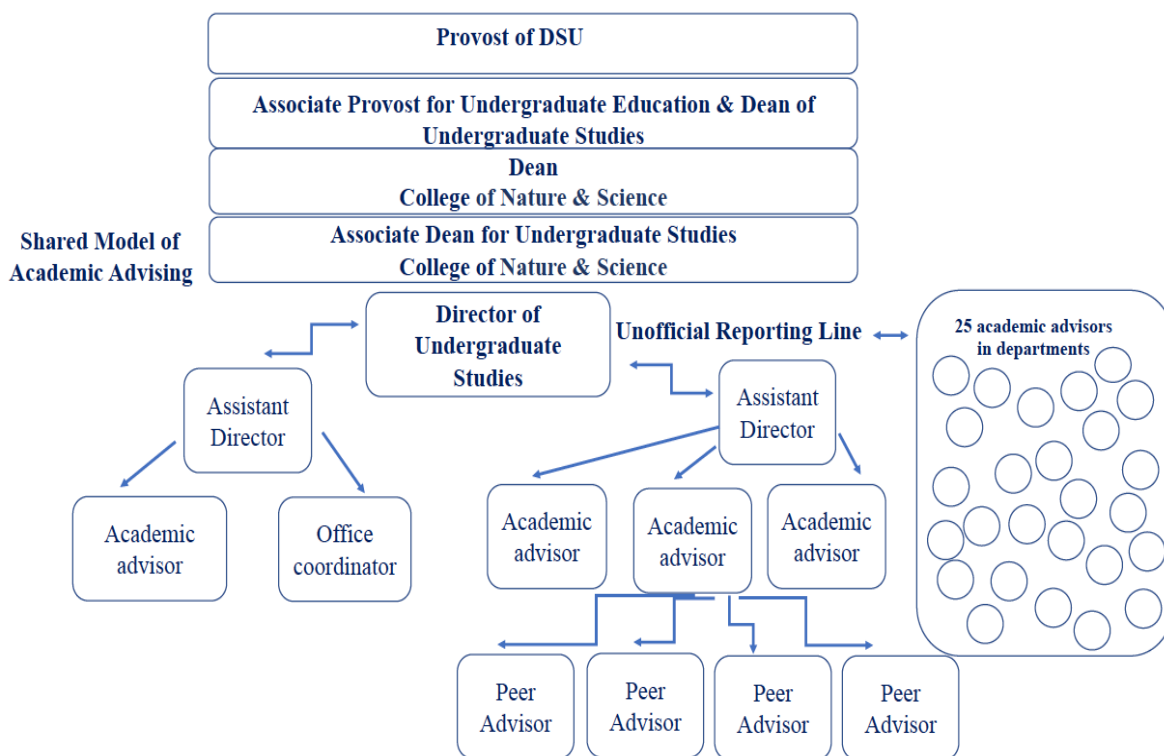
Figure 3. An academic advising organization structure in the College of Nature and Science

In the College of Nature and Science, the centralized unit in the dean's office has had its own peer adviser program since either 2011 or 2012. They call students involved in this program preprofessional peer advisers because the unit advises anyone who is going onto a health field, which is not a vet school or nursing school. The unit hires four peer advisers. The purpose of the peer adviser program is to provide students a real-life experience. They also target to get some more advising availability out there due to heavy advising loads. The preprofessional peer advisors, who are juniors and seniors, observe advising appointments with the professional advisors. They work at the Academic Orientation Program, which offers a huge training ground and leadership experience for preprofessional peer advisors. In fact, during the academic year,

they are on the advising system, and students are able to sign up for appointments a half an hour at a time with them. In order to become a preprofessional peer advisor, students have to have earned at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA at the time of their application, and they are supposed to maintain that score. The preprofessional peer advisors are paid as any job on campus, but they are on an hourly rate wage.

Significant changes were made in the advising system over the last summer, and it was done by a task-force. In the past, freshmen and sophomore advising was administratively centralized in the UUD (Undergraduate University Division), which is now called the Student Success Coaching Program. Juniors and seniors were advised in their colleges. Now, colleges are administratively responsible for all advising of all students at all levels. And also, the responsibilities of Student Success Coaching are shifting. Currently, academic advisors are required to advise only no-preference/exploratory preference students who have not declared a major. Based on the changes, the Assistant Dean for Student Success Office & Director of Student Success Coaching Program, Gabriela delineated:

> The structure of advising is absolutely decentralized and academic advisors deliver advising in the particular colleges. UGAAD (Undergraduate Assistant/Associate Deans Group) is where all of the advisers across campus come together monthly to talk to be updated about policies, procedures, and institutional initiatives. Townhall is advising summit, which is another opportunity for our advisers to get together. In both spaces, we'll provide institutional data about different things pertaining to student success and advising in particular. Two Assistant Deans work with advisers, and both report to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and then, he reports to the provost.

As reported by Gabriela, she oversees five directors of Student Success Coaching centers. Five directors supervise academic advisors in those five centers. However, the Assistant Dean for

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University Advising Commission has the broader advising group as she works with the academic advisers in the colleges. The Assistant Dean for University Advising Commission tends to get the academic advisors together around professional development and developing networks amongst them so they can work more collaboratively. Hence, there are a number of spaces where academic advisers come together, talk about challenges, and identify barriers to student success. They look at systems and the organization, make recommendations, and resolve some of the challenges they may see with students and the organization.

4.1.1. Human Resources, Hiring, and Training of Advising Workforce

The history of academic advising as a nation came from the faculty advisors, many years ago when students would be taking classes and then faculty would advise. The faculty had too much of a workload to be able to do advising. Therefore, student affairs came out of that area. Advising was one of those pieces that could be taken away from the faculty responsibility, so they could focus on teaching, research, and service. Then faculty could really focus on the needs of the students in some different ways. Given the importance of the history of academic advising, the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the College of Nature and Science, Helen remarked:

> I mean if you go back and look at academic advising as a field itself, historically, it goes back to being in loco parentis, when we were in charge of the students and making sure they were doing exactly what they had to do. And so, there would be people, usually the faculty, that were designated to watch out for these students and make sure that they're doing their stuff the way they should.

As Helen comments, research universities aspired the faculty to concentrate on their teaching and their research not necessarily the nuances of academic advising, and the faculty did not really tend to know all the nuances of academic advising, they did not attend to know all the policies or what they meant. Likewise, DSU for a long time relied on the use of professional academic advisors working in relation to the faculty. The first-year advisor in the residential College of Sir Adam Smith, Lidia described her professional identity as the following:

> We are professionals with a lot of institutional knowledge and a lot of resources at our fingertips. We do care about other people [students] and their success and want them to have a really positive experience, and we also try to develop a relationship. We try to weed out bigger problems and deal with more specific things that we can fix later.

In agreement with Lidia's thought, the professional advisors were people who had enough knowledge on institutional policies, rules and regulations, comprehensive level of expertise. They could think, create, distribute, and apply that knowledge and they could assist students to navigate through complex structures across campus. The professional advisors could also find out information on various resources and distribute that information. They were critical to student knowledge, experience, and success. Similarly, the Assistant Dean in the residential College of Sir Adam Smith, Jacob shared valuable insights:

> Well in our program, the advisors' role has been defined since the foundation of the college. So, professional advisors in our structures advise first-year students, and then the faculty advise the upper level students. Once they [first-year students] declare a major, they get assigned to a professor in a major. Often what happens is that because of the students' former relationship with their first-year advisor, they still come back and talk to that person whenever they want to, and we encourage them.

From these comments it was clear DSU relied heavily on the use of professional academic advisors for a long time. Although most units operated for decades using faculty advisors, and there may still have been two or three units that would use faculty advisors so far, the academic advising delivery was primarily conducted by the professional advisors.

At DSU academic advisors were categorized in a different way than the categorization one could find in many other institutions. The academic advisors were considered academic specialists on campus. They actually fell under the faculty line, but they were not under the tenure track. All advisors were titled under the name of academic specialist or senior academic specialist. Although academic advisors were not recognized or considered as faculty, but they were under all faculty type levels. They got compensation and vacation time although they were technically the academic specialists. As this category could not be found in most other

institutions, the academic advisors were hired in another way, they all were still considered academic specialists, whether they were on a fixed-term and/or continuing appointment. The academic specialists had to go through two three-year probation periods to be promoted to the continuing term appointment. The continuing term appointment was somewhat similar to a tenure track. The advisors who were hired for one year were on a fixed-term appointment. They were promoted yearly. In regard to a fixed term appointment, the first-year advisor in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, Claire expressed her concerns:

> I suppose that with faculty or even higher-level administrators at DSU, there's not a lot of understanding of the work that we are doing, and that's even true with other advisors. Yet, I don't think that they want to lose us, because day to day they need people here. At the same time my position is fixed term, which means that I have to resign a contract every year based on the evaluation by my supervisor. It also means that my retirement benefits were different during these first two years. I appreciated that the college and my supervisor were very supportive and absolutely fine with funding me and even paying the nonmember admission fee for a NACADA conference. That is something that I would say some frustrations with being fixed term versus continuing.

Given the different hiring terms and concerns shared, it was clear upper level advisors who advised second, third- and four- year students, especially people who worked for a specific department in colleges, had continuing positions. They signed a service contract every three years based on the evaluation conducted by the department chairs and received retirement benefits immediately. Importantly, the data revealed each of those advisors was evaluated differently. James, the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and senior academic advisor in the College of Plants, Soil, WildLife, Food Industry & Nutrition, was happily sharing his hiring and evaluation process:

Fortunately for me, my department treats me almost the same as a tenured faculty member. So, I've gone as high up within the ranks that I can. So, within the system that I'm in, it's called the continuing appointment system, or the specialist system. So, I'm now currently a senior specialist adviser. I came in as just a specialist adviser and I had a three-year probation period. Then, I had another three-year probation period. Once I was promoted and past that, it was kind of like having tenure. Six years later, I think, I was able to come up for a senior specialist which is almost somewhat analogous to a full professor. It doesn't have the same security, but it's kind of the same process.

Likewise, Dakota, the Assistant Director of Student Success and Academic Student Affairs and advisor in the College of Nature and Science, shared some concerns because of different types of hiring and the recognition of the work she was doing:

As an academic advisor in my position, I feel like it [my role] is valued only in this direct line, by the director and the Assistant Dean. But as a college, as a whole and as a university, I think faculty are valued more because students and faculty have the voice, but staff and specialists are not valued. So, in last sentence, I wanna say that I feel valued a little bit more over here, because I'm on a continuing-term appointment.

Both comments revealed senior academic specialist or academic specialist appointments are made in departments and units. They directly or indirectly report to the provost. Hence, academic specialists regardless of types of appointments, on a fixed term or continuing basis, may be full-time or part-time. Such division means they may be appointed with either an academic year, which is nine-month, or an annual that is a twelve-month duty assignment. Academic specialists on the continuing appointment were initially going through a probationary appointment, and then the probation time finishes, they were awarded with continuing appointment. For that reason, the academic specialists on continuing appointment felt more guaranteed and assured unless they

misconducted or unsatisfactorily performed, and unprofessionally fulfilled their responsibilities. Unlike the academic specialists on the continuing appointment, the fixed term academic specialists were appointed with either an end date on an academic year or annual basis. Hence, they were appointed even for shorter periods. Generally, even the fixed term appointments were repeated. Yet, it did not mean an academic advisor was passing to the continuing appointment. There were particular positions funded with grant or other non-general funds that were also fixed term in nature. The academic specialists with an academic year appointment did not have a vocation opportunity, they only had a vocation during the official University holidays. If the academic specialists were appointed on an annual basis, their duties were for a full calendar year or the specified period of appointment, they become eligible for stipulated vacation periods and official University holidays.

As the hiring of academic advisors differed across campus, the termination of an advisor service was within the purview of supervisors. The supervisors in some particular offices had the authority to change the contract for a year service to a two-year service contract. This chance gave the academic advisors hired on a fixed-term appointment some longevity in the office. Addison, the director of Student Support Program, clearly explained the termination of academic advisors' service who were on a fixed-term appointment:

> If I am not happy with the performance of an advisor, then that's the time for that
> performance review to address those issues. I'm doing this on a quarterly basis. So, if
> they don't fit, if I've noticed issues they haven't improved, then our conversation
> escalates to these things haven't been done. The contract is not gonna be renewed at the
> end of the year. So, hiring process is different across the campus. I have authority to
> make it a two-year contract and I have authority to terminate their service.

As noted in this quote, it was clear changing the contract for a year service was not a common practice at the colleges included in this study. However, if any office or unit applied such a practice, then academic advisors' two-year contracts were evaluated at some point. If the supervisors noticed issues that negatively impacted the performance, the contracts were not renewed at the end of the year.

Overall, academic advising for undergraduates was mainly delivered by professional advisors and major advisors across campus. Faculty advising was not common for undergraduates. The paid undergraduate peer advising was executed in two colleges included in this study. The selected and trained peer advisors offered academic advising services to their peers. Jasper, the first-year advisor in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, shared some insights on the types of academic advisors:

> It's primarily professional advisers. I'm not aware of any faculty members that do formal academic advising as a part of their role. We don't utilize peer advisers for academic advising but do utilize peer advising or at least a peer sort of model in a co-curricular setting. So, we've had advising on one side, then there's another separate program which is called CORE. It's basically focusing on the social and emotional engagement, career and academic development of students. There are core peer leaders that live, I believe, assigned to students in the residence halls.

In programs like CORE, the peer advisors or peer leaders helped the first-year students meet various needs and explore the spaces where co-curricular activities were offered. They assisted the first-year students in finding answers to their questions and concerns, in doing community service and in seeking volunteering opportunities. The peer advisors helped them connect to the student organizations, engagement and recreational centers that provided academic, counseling, and health support. In addition, Helen, the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the College

Nature and Science, defined various types of advisors she hired in her office, and how she oversaw them:

> We have half time and fulltime professional advisers, faculty advisers, and undergraduate peer advisers. We don't have graduate student assistantship advisers like other colleges do. We do not have limitations, necessarily, on our professional advisers or our faculty advisers, but we do very closely monitor, train, and limit our peer advisers as to what they can talk about and what they can't say. They can't sign things for approvals. All of their appointments are recorded and documented in the electronic student folder.

I found that in the colleges where peer advisors were hired, the supervisors tended to be intensive and professionally aware how to educate, assist, and monitor them. These supervisors encouraged the peer advisor to give students accurate information, provide tutoring support with classes, admission tests, filling out applications, and to get the right follow ups to the students. They were applying a team approach to peer advising, and if they found missing information or any advising appointment needed to be improved, they constantly collaborated and advanced their service.

4.1.2. Academic Advising Culture

Certainly, there were many cultures at the university, and one of those cultures was the overarching culture of DSU that was inclusive for different cultures. And then, each college would have a different culture and even at various departments the culture would be different. Hence, that did make a big difference. The constituents aspired to connect all different cultures, bridge the gap, and make it so there was more equity for the students. They strove to get the students to the right resources and to the right places.

In regard to the academic advising culture, it was predominantly student-centered and devoted to helping students develop a sense of belonging and be successful. This culture provided academic support, resources and community connections, and ensured students to believe in an inclusive campus. Shailey, the Director of Undergraduate Academic Services in the College of Marketing and Business, stated:

> So, when it comes to advising culture, I think there's a lot of value added around creating relationships with students, and even if the relationships aren't with us because we're pretty frontline list. As well, we're not a culture that likes to fail, and even if there's something we don't think is the best idea ever, but we're moving that way, the staff that I work with not just within the college but across the campus, we will work our darndest to make sure it's the best experience for students.

From the quote shared, it became clear the academic advising culture at DSU was currently under revision, and the leadership was changing the belief of one size fits all. The leadership took another look at how to become more efficient with the work that was being done, to make the best impact with all students, strived to meet student needs, and give an adequate response to their questions. With regards to the changing culture of academic advising, Andrea, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education in the College of Media & Journalism, asserted:

I think that the culture of academic advising in our college is pretty phenomenal because of the advisers. If you're the lead adviser for a department, you sit in the faculty meetings in that department and serve on the curricular design committee. So, while the faculty owns the content, the advisers are all about helping them build a structure for their curriculum that students can actually manage and get classes to graduate in four years, if that's what they decide to do.

I supposed the leadership was changing the naivete part of the academic culture in some ways. The leadership may have thought all was good and they were doing well. Hence, current changes and the proceedings might be stressful, and it might also be anxiety inducing at the same time. But it would probably lead to cultural change and add some more transparency in the academic advising culture so that it could proceed forward. Dayne, the Assistant Dean for Academic Advising & Student Success in the College of Plants, Soil, Wilde Life Food Industry & Nutrition, particularly emphasized that moment:

Well, you know I think there is no way that DSU's culture is not connected to academic advising, it's inherent there. No, you know the culture is that you will be welcoming of all races, ethnic, ethnicities, religions, and that transverses right over to the academic advising community. It's the focus of lots of professional development activities with the advising community to make sure they're in alignment with that. The culture of success is being embedded and established across the board. We want to focus on success, retention and persistence, and knock down barriers for students to succeed. And then, as soon as you establish the culture that this is what will happen, when the individuals here feel the passion of it, and then they change attitudes and behaviors to get in the alignment with that, and that's currently underway.

The data revealed the academic advising culture was undergoing some changes right then. The academic advising community became more visible, the leadership inclined to hear their voice and publicly acknowledged the academic advising culture was committed to the student experience and success, student retention, persistence, and graduation.

In addition, the missing part in academic advising culture was to not advocate for academic advisors as oppose to advocate only for students. The academic advising community acknowledged they should advocate for themselves as well. For instance, the initiated bigger institutional buy-ins such as the Student Success Coaching program and the block tuition were a big push that came out of the President and Provost offices. After shifting to the Student Success Coaching program, all advising and administrative responsibility moved to the colleges.

The academic advisors on five Student Success Coaching Centers undertook full responsibility only to advise all no-preference/exploratory preference students who had not declared a major. Also, the block tuition decision was made by a task force. The students were going to be charged a fixed amount for taking between 12 and 18 credits each semester. The students who took less than 12 credits were going to be charged on a per-credit basis, and the students who took 19 and more credits were going to be charged the block rate plus a per-credit cost for each credit over. The Assistant Dean for University Advising Commission asked the academic advising community-all the advising directors across all the colleges, particularly the Undergraduate Assistant/Associate Deans Group (UGAAD) for input to add to the policy so academic advisors would send the message that was understandable for students to navigate college and succeed.

On the whole, academic culture was undergoing some changes. The leadership became aware one size did not fit all. The leadership was prone to hear academic advisor's and supervisor's voices, and they acknowldged the importance of advocating for both the academic

advising community and students. The academic advising community strove to become more visible. Academic advisors and supervisors tended to help students develop a sense of belonging. They seemed to focus on student-centered advising and to contribute predominantly to the student experience and success, student retention, persistence, and graduation. The academic advisors and supervisors were certain the academic advising culture was providing adequate academic support, resources and community connections, and ensured students to believe in an inclusive campus.

4.2. Advising Styles and Strategies

Various academic advising styles were applied across campus not depending on the college type: prescriptive, developmental, intrusive (proactive), and appreciative. As a general approach, the intrusive (proactive) advising style was utilized. This style incorporated deliberate interventions to motivate students, anticipating the challenges, approaching students before the situations develop, and creating support systems. A number of academic advisors used a holistic approach as well. Utilizing this style, academic advisors considered students' backgrounds, their personal, social, emotional, academic life, and contributed to students' overall development.

Different academic advising styles applied across campus seemed to help students learn their responsibilities, become independent, and understand requirements. The holistic approach may have encouraged students to learn who they were, what their interests and strengths were, and make all that personal and social experience and emotional development. The academic advisor in the College of Knowledge Academy, Estelle stated:

> I don't necessarily follow a method as prescribed by my supervisor. I have a method that I have set for myself and most closely aligns with appreciative advising. I have kind of outlined my own academic advising philosophy, and that's what I try to commit to in relation to appreciate advising and trying to enact my three directives: students first; encourage authenticity; and facilitate connection and fit.

In this quote, Estelle may have tried to express academic advisors were free to choose whatever style they thought was appropriate to conduct academic advising, or it may have been her concern the leadership was not providing enough guidance and professional development to newly employed advisors.

In colleges included in this study, academic advising was not one dimensional. Academic advising did not have a solid ground in terms of fixed or established advising approaches, or

academic advising delivery was not just the role of the advisor. The academic advisors

performed in many roles. Academic advisors were guiding, directing, advocating, modelling, and

teaching, and most importantly at some point they asked the simple questions to start a

conversation with a student: How are you? Dayne, the Assistant Dean for Academic Advising

and Student Success in the College of Plants, Soil, WildLife Food Industry & Nutrition,

commenting on her professional identity, stated:

> I think advisors wear many hats and advocate for students. Sometimes they are just role
> models and educators, or teachers. And then in other instances, student might need that
> pep talk, they grew up with that pep talk at home. Now they're in college and going "I
> need a pep talk" so that advisor can be a motivator or mentor if you will.

As Dayne's comment conveyed, academic advisors reached out to the students, provided place

and cared for students so they were able to share what was going on in their lives with an

advisor, who could help, facilitate, and get them in contact with the resources and the

professionals in those areas. According to Andrea, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate

Education in the College of Media & Journalism, it was important to navigate students through

their university life:

> I'm all about the whole person, not just what they do in this environment, because if
> things are rough in their outside world, it makes focusing here really hard and I need
> them focused here. Students have too many issues to not have someone that's responsive.
> So, there's that formal piece. Life continues to happen for students, so we have to be able
> to navigate that.

As Andrea revealed in this comment, academic advisors had to not only attend to students'

academic life that happened only on schedule, but they had to consider students' personal and

social lives. They were supposed to holistically provide adequate help and support so that they

enabled students to balance their priorities, manage the complexity of the curricular, focus on

acquiring professional skills and career development, and also get connected to their peers and to

the college.

In some colleges, academic advisors followed an intrusive (proactive) advising style.

They met with students at least three times a semester versus once a year or once a semester. The

academic advisors interacted with students and provided them assistance and support. Based on

that, Amber the Multicultural Business Programs Coordinator and Advisor in the College of

Business and Marketing, assumed:

> We follow an intrusive or proactive advising model. We do not see students only once,
>
> we do it as frequently as possible. Students need more high touch and more interaction.
>
> They tend to be first generation, low socioeconomic status, or students who just need
>
> more support. We want more of that personalized on a high touch environment rather
>
> than relying as much on the technology.

Applying an intrusive (proactive) approach, the academic advisors seemed determined they

could provide students support and assistance before the students knew they needed it. The

academic advisors believed that if they initiated interactions with the students before the

challenging situations occurred, they would fix the situation. They were certain they could

motivate their students to explore resources and services they could use. They thought the

intrusive (proactive) approach would improve the students' study skills and assist in attaining

success. Correspondingly, the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the College of Nature and

Science, Helen supposed she applied an intrusive (proactive) approach once it was needed:

> We've been traditionally appreciative advisers, but not everybody has their spin on it,
>
> everybody has their twist on it and stuff, but it depends on the particular student or the
>
> population that you're working with. If you have a student that is chronically missing out

on classes, all of a sudden, you're gonna fall into proactive advising because you're gonna be contacting them. So, we start to look at some of the different theories and we're adapting. I wouldn't say we necessarily stop and go, it does vary according to the student.

As Helen's comment revealed, it was pivotal to be flexible in utilizing various advising approaches and adapting one's style to a particular student's needs and concerns. Attending to students' needs and concerns and adequately supporting them depended on how knowledgeable and professionally developed academic advisors were.

In regard to flexibility, knowledge, and professional development, academic advising styles differed depending on the academic advisors' personal styles and preferences. The academic advisors independently chose their styles and advised students. The academic advising styles varied from the advisors who preferred students coming without any assumptions, preparation, or questions, and they did everything for students to the ones who encouraged students to come with specific questions drafted beforehand. The Assistant Director of Advising and advisor in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, Jasmine described her personal style:

> I always told my personal style in advising is a two-way process, a two-way relationship so that I will equip students well, so that they can hear and see what I write. I also need them to come in with questions and think about some things. I try to connect students with other students so that they can ask about their experience. It's something tangible that I do on a regular basis. You have to be proactive and engaged, and you have to listen, and you have to take care because you can hear probably.

According to Jasmine and a few others, sometimes the students had to run around something that academic advisors were not able to access. At those moments, they could only give tips, but sometimes that was how they assisted with curriculum or changes that were happening.

The academic advisors in some colleges who applied limited enrolment were more proactive and conscious about students' weaknesses and strengths, and they monitored students' grades and progress within majors in the course of time. Academic advisors did work around academic probation and they were not necessarily meeting with the students frequently. They looked at the data, sought information on whether low grades were based on age, race, preparedness, and background, or certain races were more overrepresented on academic probation, or certain majors were overrepresented. Even some courses students took might be constituting a difficulty or presenting a problem. Eventually, they might quit those courses at least in the first, toward the second or third semesters. The Director of Undergraduate Academic Services, Shailey articulated the following:

> We' re trying to do some proactive reach out for students to grade wise, maybe they're sitting between one point eight and two point three, and we call it the murky middle. But how we keep those students from teetering off or not progressing, it's getting back to the conversations about what student strengths are, how they align with Major they' re talking about, how to explore it that means maybe they need to take another class.

Applying intrusive (proactive) advising initiatives, the academic advisors aimed to reach more students as they concerned and cared for students. Their purpose could be to support fist-year and academically at-risk students, first-generation or low – income students, provide them information and some help so those students could avoid possible problems. Intentionally being proactive and strategically reaching out to a large number of students, who even did not seek academic advising help, could provide the academic advisors with the opportunity to monitor scheduling appointments, intervene, and assist the students in overcoming obstacles.

Academic advisors seemed to make efforts to cultivate holistic advising. They were not only looking at some classes the students took or making sure that they were answering the

students' questions, but in addition to those things they were inquiring about students' feelings right then, and whether the students were involved in any student organizations or any service work and volunteering. I found the academic advisors were more focusing on academic and transferable skills as well as academic coaching. A lot of what they did would be teaching the study skills, transferable skills, and assisting in institutional navigation. The academic advisor in the College of Knowledge Academy, Estelle described her advising style and added some specific insights on holistic approach:

> Considering a holistic approach to advising appointments, I review a checklist with students whether meeting with them for the first or fifth time. My primary consideration is to make sure they are having quality experiences within and beyond the classroom, connect them to resources designed to ensure their success, and create a supportive environment inclusive of their aspirations, interests, and identities. We spend time during each meeting exploring academic success resources, the specific college curriculum requirements, and co-curricular engagement and opportunities, and short- and long-term goals within and beyond their time at DSU.

Estelle's quote implied that developing the comprehensive understanding of who the students were as people allowed her to effectively guide the students through various experiences. Estelle encouraged the students to pursue activities reflective of their authentic self.

Summing up many theories of advising, academic advising at DSU was most often delivered from one, two, or even more different perspectives. The academic advisors primarily utilized an intrusive proactive style. Often times, the intrusive proactive style was combined with the holistic approach to shape and develop students as whole individuals. The academic advisors aspired to combine various approaches, which seemed possible. Utilizing combined advising styles may have enabled the academic advisors to bring knowledge, variety of academic and

inter-and intra-personal skills as well as and transferable skills together. Such an intersection of teaching and learning was supported with the attitudes. I assumed academic advising as a profession may have been in progress at DSU, and the advising styles academic advisors and supervisors utilized might have been simultaneously progressing, merging, and changing in the course of time.

4.3. Academic Advising Delivery

Various configurations of meeting structures were established in the departments, colleges, and across DSU's campus. All undergraduates, including transfer students and freshmen applied for an appointment online to have a one-on-one meeting with an academic advisor. Walk-in and drop-in appointments were realized by approaching front desks in some units included in this study. Across DSU's campus one-on-one advising remained the primary mode of delivery as the academic advisors and supervisors preferred individual advising appointments in person. The coordinator and advisor in Multicultural Business Programs, College of Business and Marketing, Amber, commented on the one-on-one meeting:

> So, if I'm meeting with a student for the first time, and it's a thirty-minute meeting, this is another difference between our office and undergraduate academic service. Our students don't come through online appointment portal, they have to come to our front desk or call for making an appointment. The other office does walk-in appointments. First, students just come, and then they sign up and wait their turn.

As revealed in the quote, many advisors believed meetings should be very individualized. Especially in colleges with limited enrolment, if students are in their first year, the academic advisor's primary concern should have been to give students knowledge, strategies and skills that would enable them to gain admission to the college and get into a major. Then through that whole process, the academic advisors would have to talk about career and professional development and student organizations. Given the in-person meetings delivery, the first-year advisor in the residential College of Sir Adam Smith, Lidia delineated:

> I want the students to know just there is someone here who cares. I can't fix everything, I can't make policy they think is unfair go away. I can't change when a student can't afford to be here or some of the bad things that happen in their families, or the places that

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they're coming from, but I can be kind and helpful in the moment, because I can listen. I

can give them their meeting time, respect, and help make the most of whatever the

situation is, whether it's a wonderful perfect situation, or one as a really less than

desirable and challenging. We have to find a way to make it the best.

Based on the data, the academic advisors encouraged the students to seek out information on

their own, try to build some independence and problem-solving skills that were proved to be

important for them to automatically implement later. In challenging situations when it was just

not in academic advisors' purview, or it was not their job to know what that information was,

they were directing the student towards the people who had more information and administrative

power or authority.

I found the academic advisors in-person meetings primarily helped the first-year

students with transition, support students with institutional navigation, and some sort of the nuts

and bolts that is re/scheduling, a course enrollment, connecting them to the resources and

services so that the student succeed, retain, and graduate. Gregory, the undergraduate advisor and

instructor in the College of Humanities, somewhat supported previously shared thoughts about

in-person meetings and stated:

I believe that advising starts with the relationship and the conversation between the

student and the adviser. What the student wants to do, why he wants to do that, what his

strengths are, and what challenges he has. So, I think relationship and conversation are

core of advising, as it should be like any teaching relational. The model I took is

teaching, very old one that we learned from our grandmothers, which is you're there with

someone who cares and talks about things that are important.

Gregory's quote implied academic advisors in-person meetings tended to coordinate

undergraduates' campus experience. They predominantly provided efficient information about academic programs and degree requirements. They also informed the students about education abroad and leadership development opportunities. The topics discussed at in-person meetings covered the following: choosing a major, explore career options, explain policies and procedures, and resources and services that were available in the colleges included in this study and across campus.

The academic advisors also utilized other approaches such as group advising, which enabled academic advisors to impart adequate and timely information to the first-year students at once. At DSU, pre-law, no-preference/ exploratory preference students benefited from first-year seminars. I asserted there was not any specific way or ways to advise first-year students was different from advising other undergraduates, except New Student Orientation, which incorporates Academic Orientation Programs in fall, spring, and summer terms and first-year seminars that introduced the first-year students to social and academic life at campus. The admitted students were helped to enroll in the first term courses. The campus resources were introduced to them within a short campus tour. I found AOPs were a beneficial support for the first-year students' transition and experience of doing small-group activities.

The observation data suggested the first-year seminars were small groups of students from a number of majors in the colleges. The topics ranged from creating an action plan, writing reflections, dealing with time management to how to use campus resources such as learning centers, writing and math tutoring centers, the resource center for persons with disabilities (RCPD), the counseling and psychiatric services (CAPs), and student organizations. In the first-year seminars, the students were learning how to apply for student financial aid, how to make an appointment and talk to a professor or career advisor, how to engage in undergraduate research with faculty members, and how to create study groups.

Another academic advising delivery mode was using technology services while advising. It had a great impact on academic advising on DSU's campus as academic advisors and supervisors used web sites, e-mail, listservs, and career guidance programs. The academic advisors used Electronic Student Academic Folders where all the education records, the whole transcripts with grades and classes of undergraduates, including first-year students and no-preference/exploratory preference students, were stored. There were   readmission or reinstatement forms in that system. The system had a note feature on it, where after every appointment an advisor left a note about the talk with the student. Jasper, the first-year advisor in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, commented on this tool:

> When students are scheduling an appointment, an email comes to my inbox. I can see the notes that they've written. If they didn't include a PID and the reason why they're scheduling an appointment, it's likely that their appointment will be canceled. As long as nothing is sticking out as being an immediate concern or a mandatory report or anything urgent in the notes, I go into my calendar and turn them to green, so that I know that I've looked at that appointment. And then, I basically try to think about whether this student gonna be something that I need to research beforehand.

As Jasper suggested, using technology eased academic advisors' work, especially helped them get prepared for the one-on-one meetings. It was more important for them to know how, why, and when to utilize tools because that way academic advisors could identify potential issues and reach out to students and for support before the problems occurred.

The academic advisors also used EASE reports, a system where the professors were recommended to leave a note about a student who failed to meet requirements. The academic advisors read the notes, reached out to students, let them know about the notes and worked with the students to improve their cases. The academic advisors also utilized Degree navigator and

Degree audit, which assisted them in checking degree status, making any edits to students' degrees, and also updating their degree. The academic advisors could identify undergraduates' general, major and minor requirements and count their transfer credits, so they could confirm the students' degree.

The supervisors found the Educational Advisory Board Dashboard (EAB Dashboard) as a useful online system. The supervisors had data on if a student was on probation at the end of the first semester, the likelihood they would never graduate there. They could find the percentage of likelihood was actually much greater for a student who was African American, or who was Hispanic and why that was. They could think over what kind of things they needed to do to help those specific populations better navigate what was happening at DSU, or how to engage those students so they could feel comfortable there. The supervisors considered the EAB dashboard as part of freshman outreach and very much freshmen orientated.

The academic advising delivery was also supported by EAB system - Student Success Dashboard for scheduling appointments. It also housed a lot of students' information in terms of predictive analytics, which were some factors associated with the students. The EAB system had success markers, which provided an early alert to the academic advisors so that they knew students needed some attention on high-priority courses that led them to completion and performance level. Accordingly, each college set success marks that meant they tracked the students on graduating from their majors and degrees. If a student did not register for a critical course within the set credits threshold or the student received a grade below the recommended threshold, success markers automatically fell into the "missed" category. In addition, it was possible to set student success markers without grade thresholds. It was done only for progression purposes only. Another feature of the student success marker was notifications on a student profile. For instance, if students' transfer credits for a success marker course were not

added to the SIS, the advisors disabled the success marker and prevented the students to appear on the list. The academic advisors could also re-enable notifications. Overall, the EAB system helped the academic advisors make an academic progress plan together with the students.

There were also a few other systems that facilitated academic advising. Some of the academic advisors and supervisors also used old fashioned SIS - Student Information System, which was mentioned above. When students started or applied for admissions, their information was imputed in SIS. Hence, student's number, name, or their date of birth, and their test scores were kept in SIS. The academic advisors and supervisors could pull out a student's information before the one-on-one appointment and prepared for the meeting with the student. In addition, SIG - student information generator helped the academic advisors see major requirements for a specific subject or class, because a lot of students took the university general class. SIG helped the academic advisors see if any student in the lower level subject class in that specific major needed the higher-level class in any subject as well. SIG also assisted the academic advisors to set the parameters on that search, to pull and tell whether any of students were in the wrong class, or to send emails, or confidential messages saying the student needed to come in for advising and talk about how that might impact to pursue and complete an undergraduate degree.

All in all, one-on-one in-person advising was delivered at DSU. Using various online tools in conducting advising was another mode of delivery that eased academic advisors' work. Technology use assisted academic advisors and supervisors in obtaining information they needed prior to walk-in or drop-in advising meetings. Additionally, online tools and technology implementation helped academic advisors and supervisors search the resources required to advise students.

4.3.1. Academic Advisors' Responsibilities

According to the DSU Academic Specialist Handbook, depending on the status, academic advisors and their supervisors' appointment term was ranked at two levels: academic specialist or senior academic specialist. Their role definition was based on the responsibilities grouped in three functional areas: do academic advising, teaching, and involving in curriculum development; assisting in conducting research; doing service and outreach work.

The data analysis revealed academic advisors meet one-on-one with students during advising appointments, help students schedule courses, assist them in course registration and explain prerequisites for courses, help craft an academic plan, advise the transfer students and freshmen into the major and connect students to major advisors, do admission and recruitment for the first-year students and no-preference/exploratory preference students, work with the students on probation, readmit and reinstate students, teach first-year seminars, and do academic orientation programs.

At DSU traditionally emphasis was on the role of professional advisors for advising the transfer students and freshmen rather than the faculty advisors. The academic advisors worked with the students on academic probation, and the ones who returned to campus after a recess or a period away. To be specific, Virginia, the Assistant Director of Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Humanities, reflected on her responsibilities:

> The number of students I see varies, the target group that I work with are the students on probation for the entire college. Along with that I work with the students who are trying to readmit or be reinstated to the college. I work with them closely, deal with crisis management, making sure that they are staying on track, and connecting them to the resources. I do recruitment in the city area for freshmen students. I do freshmen

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orientation all summer, so I work with the students initially discussing what the

requirements for the College are, and then I connect them with their advisors.

As this quote revealed, students were assigned to advisors within their major departments or

programs. All students had to meet with their major advisors on a regular basis. The academic

advisors helped undergraduates construct their course of study so that they could meet their

special concerns, needs, and interests. The academic advisors' assistance also contributed in

students' selecting specific courses that satisfied major, college, and university requirements,

getting work experiences, preparing for their future career, and being directed to resources and

co-curricular activities.

An important issue emerging from the findings suggested that the academic advisors

assumed that they were able to make a difference in a student's life. Because even if

occasionally, they encountered a critical time in students' lives that made them deal with crisis

management. Some of the academic advisors shared there was the highest rate of anxiety and the

highest rate of depression among the students across campus. Although the academic advisors

constantly supported the students who needed their help with crisis situations, some of them

confessed missing a counseling education background made their work challenging. In fact, they

should not do counseling as it was not part of their job responsibility. Still, the academic advisors

were certain they were being there for the students and walking alongside them on the journey to

their degree was valuable for them.

Notably, the academic advisors not only ran or coordinated academic orientation

programs all summer, including fall and spring terms, but they also advised transfer students and

first-year and international students, worked with the athletes, and students who pursued teacher

education certifications. In regard to responsibilities, the first-year advisor in the College of Sir

Adam Smith, Lidia mentioned:

First, I started doing admissions and recruitment for three years. And then, I took an advising role. So, I run, coordinate our freshman orientation programs. I work with about one hundred and forty first-year students in the college and transfer students as their primary advisor. I work with all of our students who are on academic probation, or who have returned to campus after a recess or a period away, where things had been going super well before they left, who are pursuing a professional certification and with our athletes, too.

In that particular smaller undergraduate, residential college with the small student population, out of four academic advisors, who were advising the first-year students, only Lidia was doing full-time academic advising. Because of being the only person performing a 100 % advising role, her job was to pick up a lot of little pieces and ends and perform various roles. The other three had dual responsibilities. One was a recruiter who was also doing advising. Another was a diversity and student engagement person who was advising the first-year students at the same time. The third was an internship coordinator who was advising as well. Depending on the colleges' features, the academic advisors' responsibilities varied, and a majority of them had to perform various roles.

As found, in that undergraduate, residential college, the academic advisors did outreach to connect various people to the colleges across campus. They participate in different programs, some of them even did visit days at the colleges, went out on school visits and/or college fairs. They were responsible to do individual appointments with families to inform them about the programs in the colleges. Given that, the academic advisor and recruitment coordinator in the College of Sir Adam Smith, Ellen described her responsibilities in the following way:

So, our general approach is trying to work with consistent person as long as you're able to build trusting relationship and work collaboratively. Anybody can advise any student. I

do visit days here at the college, participate in the State Visit programs, go out on school visits and college fairs. I do individual appointments with families who wanna come and learn about the programs in our college. So, I am doing outreach and connect with some people who might not have known about our programs.

In another limited-enrollment college, the academic specialist performed somewhat similar responsibilities as Ellen did. The Multicultural Business Programs coordinator and advisor in the College of Business and Marketing, Amber informed her position evolved because she was the first person hired for it and doing 50 % advising and 50 % outreach:

The program I am coordinating is connected to the residential community, so I do recruitment for the freshmen. Besides, I do outreach in particular for college to high schools and middle schools building a diverse pipeline of students to the university.

In addition to these responsibilities, the academic advisors in some other colleges and departments included in this study taught the students study strategies, served on various curriculum committees, helped students use the resources that a particular college provided, or directed students to an additional office that might be more specialized for their needs because of a disability or disabilities, and they also helped the students with finding jobs and/or helped students craft their resumes. James, who held a dual position as the coordinator of a program and an academic advisor in the College of Plants, Soil, WildLife, Food Industry & Nutrition, commented on his responsibilities:

It's been, for the most part, just trial and error. My primary job and responsibilities are the day to day functions of the academic advising center and working with the undergraduates in our department, helping with finding jobs and helping them with resumes, anything that an undergraduate might need. As I serve on various curriculum

committees, I am helping students set up their semester by semester schedules and their curriculum. Our department has a curriculum and our students have to follow it.

The academic advisors' main responsibility was to meet one-on-one with students for a 30-minute scheduled appointment. They typically met with the students of the majors. The academic advisors were also required to send emails to the students on academic probation and meet with them. They regularly spent one day a week doing walk in advising, when they could see the first-year students who came in with a quick question no matter what their major was. In the spring semester, some of the academic advisors did 20-minute appointments to accommodate more students. They primarily helped the-first year students think through what classes they were going to register for and explained prerequisites for courses.

The academic advisors also helped the first-year students think over how they were going to finish their degree requirements. For some students, the academic advisors had to go through study strategies talking about what to do in order not to fail in the courses, how to find additional resources, how to apply for office hours, and how to navigate the university as a first-year student. The academic advisors referred the first-year students to a more specialized office for their needs to get an immediate accommodation. Claire, the first-year advisor in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, reflected on job responsibilities:

> At one-on-one meetings, I explain to the students the prerequisites for courses and in what order to complete them. For some students, I go through study strategies, talk about how to be successful in the courses, whether that's visiting resources, help rooms, or tutoring services. We also talk about how to visit office hours, how to talk to a professor, and how to navigate the university as a first-year student. I do also give quite a few referrals to additional offices that might be more specialized for students' needs, for

instance, a testing accommodation because of a disability. I didn't mention that earlier, in summer I do participate in Academic Orientation Program.

Claire shared some valuable insights related to being in an advising position and emphasized she valued the fact that she was not an instructor. She assumed when the students came to her they were not worried about what she was going to think of them in class. Yet, her biggest concern was emailing with the students. She supposed they needed to practice treating e-mail as a formal communication. As in the future, the students were going to do internships, jobs and other professional opportunities, the people who they were going to work would be less forgiving than her.

Many student's lacking professional writing skills, which was shared by Claire, was another piece of education that came into advising. She had to informally teach the students to write emails in an appropriate way, no matter if she liked it or not. She unintentionally confessed she was not just doing administrative work, and she sometimes informally had to teach the students she advised on a daily basis, and then she offered the students to take a writing course or rely on the writing center to get a tutor's help. Claire was certain she devoted the time for appointments strictly to support the students, make sure that they did have a good transition, help them strategize what to do next, and ultimately graduate from DSU.

In addition, Claire emphasized the moments when students came in and eventually talked about some social issues that were happening with them. Claire highlighted at those moments she needed to make sure the students were safe and directed to the counseling office, or if necessary in the moment the police would have to get them involved. I found her worried because she was not a counselor, and that was just not her background to step in and improve the situation.

Similar concerns were shared by a few more academic advisors, it was clear the academic advisors in similar situations kept their supervisors in touch as a follow-up, because that was a safety issue and sent an instant message in an e-mail to inform them about happenings. For instance, in the College of Knowledge Academy for high achieving students, the academic advisors not only did one-on-one appointments with the students, but they also had some specific responsibilities. Given that, the academic advisor, Estelle commented:

> So, my primary responsibility is to serve the students during the appointments. Also, I do some work with degree processing, granting the College notation, and reviewing substitution requests, because we have some requirements, and we make the flexible arrangements for our students.

Estelle and her counterparts in that particular college advised two kind of students. They worked with the students of College of Knowledge Academy and the students of the program within the college Scholars of Future (SOF), which was a one-year program. Simon, the academic advisor in this particular college, shared the following insights:

> So, currently our college houses around four thousand students. We have four advisors who advise them but we're not their primary advisors. Our primary responsibility is to meet with students one-on-one, help them craft the academic plan, to have them understand this college's requirements and how to use its resources.

The program mentioned was supposed to be a bridge program. Once the incoming first-year students across the campus finished the requirements for Scholars of Future (SOF), these academic advisors helped them transition into College of Knowledge Academy. They worked with the students with strong academic records. Generally, those students sought for advanced academic opportunities in their first two college years. Such a specifically designed program advanced students' individual course of studies. The academic advisors assisted the first

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generation and Pell eligible students, and low-income students in applying and being the part of the SOF program. The academic advisors also helped students to apply for the various fellowships and scholarships. There was the national and international fellowships and scholarships office for the students who were interested in Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell, and many other prestigious awards.

The academic advisors in the colleges and in the major departments maintained collaborative work that helped the transfer students and freshmen fulfill university, college, and degree requirements. The academic advisors also advised the first-year students and no-preference/exploratory preference students from all majors about general university requirements.

4.3.2. Supervisors' Responsibilities

At DSU, the supervisors were responsible to oversee academic advisors and help to advise the transfer, freshmen and sophomores, including no-preference/exploratory preference students. They helped through the students' academic transition, their major exploration, their academic probation conferences, and with institutional navigation. In regard to the supervision component, the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the College of Nature and Science, Hellen delineated the following:

> So, all in all, I'm responsible for 12 people within my unit, two of them are assistant directors. I also supervise four preprofessional peer advisors and have kind of an unofficial reporting line with 25 advisers out in the departments, who go through me for approvals for the dean's office and have to talk to me if they have questions.

The supervisors also oversaw and monitored the directors of academic advising units or centers. They maintained advising centers on student success and took responsibility for student advising, student orientation, degree certification, commencements, recruitment, and student retention in the colleges. Stephanie, the Assistant Dean in College of Teacher Education, commented on her responsibilities as a supervisor:

> So, my responsibilities include, and of course, I don't do all of this myself, but the people I supervise, we are responsible for all student advising, student orientation, degree certification, commencements, recruitment, student retention, and settling of student disputes or problems.

In situations in which there was a need to provide analytics and tracking for undergraduate students with academic support and to move them toward completing degrees on time, the supervisors held more authority. They supervised the director of an academic advising unit or center in the college, ensured consistency in academic advising practice, and developed adequate

expectations and accountability standards for academic advisors' performance. The supervisors may have collaborated with other counterparts in colleges, academic affairs and student affairs, or student success centers across campus to identify, design, and enact policies, programs, and practices that enhanced improvements in undergraduate studies and achievements.

Correspondingly, in big units or centers, the supervisors applied a role division and delegated their responsibilities to the directors of the units, and then directors shared some of their responsibilities with the assistant directors. In regard to delegation responsibilities, the Assistant Dean for Student Success Office & Director of Student Success Coaching Program, Gabriella stated:

> I supervise five advising directors. Because of levels between me and the advisers, I
> directly do not supervise them. I have one of the directors who works with the advising
> staff on an ongoing basis. So, she deals with all day to day challenges that the academic
> advisors have to work through in terms of policy and procedure and practice. It's the
> bigger issues with the advising team or the broader team that I have to step in and
> address, publicly acknowledging their strengths, that they do well, which hasn't always
> happened either, that is pivotal to confess.

It was clear the supervisors relied on the support provided by the directors and assistant directors, and academic advisors when there was a need for that. In a similar way, the supervisors stepped in at times when the staff encountered the situation that was not under the staff's purview, when administrative action was needed to be taken. The Assistant Dean in College of Teacher Education, Stephanie commented on that issue and admitted:

> We have a hand in administrative actions with the university for students. So, we have
> anything to do with students other than their coursework per se. So, if a student during
> the semester becomes ill and needs to withdraw, I would determine whether a withdrawal

request is appropriate, how it would be best accomplished, and I do that processing with a

student Medical Review Board with review which is comprised for University

Counseling and the University Doctor. But sometimes, students will talk with their

instructor or their advisor, and they will refer the student to me, but often students write

to me directly.

As this quote revealed, assistant deans may hold responsibility for administrative university

policies related to enrolment and commencement that was adding or dropping courses, late

drops, medical withdraws, and repeat credits. Their responsibility may have expanded on

grading, academic dishonesty, probation, recess, dismissal, reinstatement, readmission, and even

dean's list that affected student's academic standing. The assistant deans may have appealed for

financial aid and primarily resolved student's personal, social, and academic issues. They may

have managed data and made reports on them. They may have also been responsible to verify

certificate requirements or communicate qualifications of graduates with other officials

depending on the type of the college across DSU campus.

The data obviously revealed there was transparency in performing the responsibilities to

some extend because the students benefitted from the direct correspondence between them and

the higher administration. Also, the supervisors had more authority than the academic advisors to

deal with extreme student needs, and they acted as a life coach for both the students and the staff

with crisis management. The Director of Undergraduate Studies in the College of Nature and

Science, Helen precisely visualized that moment:

I meet with students on a regular basis if they've had a crisis, they come to me, and we

kind of establish a relationship. I will have them to continue to meet with me and work

together on their success, like how they're gonna make sure that things are going well.

Just kind of, checking in, while at the same time, referring them back to their advisors for

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the more scheduling or career assistance. So, I take on more of that life coach type of thing, certainly not as intensified basis as a true-life coach.

In relation to working with the academic advisors and students, Helen and a few other supervisors often times engaged to settle student disputes or problems and provided academic coaching. It was clearly uttered those supervisors tended to take on more of that life coach type of supervising.

In regard to administrative action towards the staff, Elizabeth responded as director of the academic center who was supervised by the assistant dean:

Because I haven't yet had to do any disciplinary action as some issues are not under my purview, I just really make sure that the advisors are doing their work. But if there is an instance where somebody is not reporting to work, then I need to definitely make sure that I'm following up with them, that they're reporting aware, and that there are meeting the expectations set for them at the beginning. I just never had that problem or challenge where it would be like I do. I have authority to fire them. That's what you mean by authority I have, and I would have to take that to the assistant dean.

What I found was leverage authority, when the supervisors according to their position had some measures of authority either earned or given, or otherwise.

It was clear that as any resource, authority that was the position over another could be used in multiple ways and interpretations. There would be the supervisors who opted to use position to individually take measures or step in, but there were the ones who used their sources as a way or opportunity to give, help, and support academic advisors. Gabriela, the Assistant Dean for Student Success Office & Director of Student Success Coaching Program was clear about the transparency and leveraging her authority:

To talk about authority and transparency is to give the staff all the opportunity, if they had questions or concerns to come and ask me directly, which they don't do very often. I don't think they felt like they always had the opportunity to speak, not just to their boss, being an adviser as well would also often turn into this commiserating together, so not just going to the director but having the ability to come directly to me as the assistant dean.

As Gabriela's quote stated, the supervisors leveraged their influence and authority. They intentionally delegated some of their responsibilities to motivate the academic advisors, trusting and believing in them as strong advocates for academic advising and for undergraduate students.

Many supervisors strongly conveyed the following message they would always back their staff up. Even if there may have been an error, they would correct it with the advisor afterwards. The supervisors would never tell a parent or anyone else involved in the university their advisor didn't know what they were talking about. Instead, they would support their advisors and stick up and advocate for them. Abagail, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Student Affairs in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, well-versed her thoughts on advocating for her staff:

Even if something is coming from the Dean's office or the Associate dean's office that impacted the staff, I can say to people across campus or the dean's office or whatever hey, this is going to impact my staff, and if you do that here's what's at stake, or if you want my advisors to do this here, what's going to sacrifice because they are already managing full workload, so. My staff is pretty well capable and well equipped to deal with those things on their own, a lot of times they will.

It was obvious most advisors were prone to advocate for the students and the supervisors tended to advocate for their staff and students. Katerin, the Director of Undergraduate Student Affairs in the College of Teacher Education, shared similar thoughts advocating for her staff: "We all are

authority to be honest to change advising in general and to constantly adjust our practice in ways we can empower our advisors to serve students better." The supervisors seemed to be ready at the table to say some initiatives or changes were going to impact the academic advisors' workload, or their job functions, and it needed to be talked through. They did not blindly lead in a leadership position, most of them felt they had that voice to speak up and advocate.

The academic advisors and supervisors considered themselves as a liaison who was not only knowledgeable about department, college, and university requirements but served as a point person for referral and an advocate within or without certain limitations. They identified their professional identity and responsibilities in the way that allowed for a consistent and reciprocal relationship between and among the faculty and student. The academic advisors and supervisors thought they provided effective collaborative relationships so that students became assured more than one college constituency was caring about them and contributing in their success. The Director of Undergraduate Academic Services in the College of Business and Marketing, Shailey was brief and exact in her identity and responsibility description:

> My role specifically is that I'll connect tightly with efforts that are going on in the college and at the university level. So, I would sit on a good number of committees to represent our college. I personally have a seat on our undergraduate program committee. I'm not a voting member, but I need to sway and ask good questions that make sure the students are heard in the curriculum change.

One thing was clear that the supervisors did program-specific leadership and served on committees, where they tried to help mold advising for the campus and work with the direction. It was not that all the advising specialists were in charge, and some of them did it on their own initiative, or they were invited to the meetings. In fact, the faculty were responsible to oversee curriculum or issues related to academics. The faculty were required to meet the outcomes and

have a better accreditation, make sure the academic specialists who were on the team were in line with the values and the curriculum, or student progress and success. The Assistant Director of Advising in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, Jasmine was not sure of her involvement in the committees:

> Advisors are part of the committees. I used to have to coordinate one of them. I had to get the faculty to come, talk, and review a syllabus. I would bring up issues or concerns with the curriculum, and they look further into it, because sometimes it was based on need, sometimes the faculty were in charge. As an advisor you learn the curriculum, for instance, how much seats we need in a certain class, or what's the demand. Now, I'm on a steering committee with one of the organizations, but I feel like I'm so busy at work, and also you can be on committee for the conference, so.

The assistant director Jasmine did not seem happy to be involved in the committees as she would think it was not her responsibility to have a seat there because as a rule, academic specialists did not have a right to vote for curriculum change or anything related to academics or policies.

> By contrast, Dakota as a woman of Color and as an assistant director was enthusiastic to be heard and valued and being responsible for serving on committees:

> I am happy with the opportunity to be invited to the table and have a seat to be a person of color and a woman, and to be involved more in policy discussions and initiatives that are happening on campus. At the same time, I know that we have a lot of work to do here, including myself just reading more literature and understanding of how the system operates, how long things were in place, and how long there hasn't been much change. So, I'm trying to be more effective in different positions.

Although there was some inconsistency with insights shared on the responsibilities, especially on serving on committees, the positive moment was the assistant directors were valued and invited

for the participation in discussions related to academics and policies and heard. It was clear the academic advisors and supervisors could not give feedback about content of the courses or curriculum. They could not tell the faculty what to teach or how to teach because the faculty on the curriculum were competent experts and in charge. But the supervisors were confident they could raise issues.

Much of data revealed there was a collaborative partnership happening. The academic advisers would be called together to weigh in on issues, problems, and things that had gone well in advising. They had an opportunity to contribute to, for the most part, those changes that were made. Those changes would come in two different directions from the Office of the Associate Provost and also from the academic units that were responsible for their particular set of advisers.

The supervisors developed communities for academic success and managed the budget identifying students for participation in specific programs, who fitted a particular financial income level and federal student aid. Addison as the Director of Student Support Program shared her responsibilities:

> My responsibilities include managing the budget, making sure that the programs are set up to be able to identify students who have met the federal guidelines for participation, that they are Pell eligible, or that they have some income indicators that suggest they're below the poverty line or at the poverty line.

Likewise, Shailey shared some clear insights on those responsibilities: "Everything else that I do, it is much more strategic budget in nature, helping my staff align with mission and vision of a college as well as mission and vision of the university." Relatedly, other supervisors did programming that required grant funding. They prepared proposals, and they submitted them to the federal government for funding when the competition opened up nationally.

As part of their primary responsibility, the supervisors hired and trained the academic advisors for the units and programs they supervised. The individuals who were hired went through common onboarding proceedings and were provided access to online systems. The academic advisors got training, learned about all the systems, and mainly did some shadowing of their colleagues to start independently advising the first-year students and all undergraduates. They were provided with a manual called Advising One-on-One and PowerPoint slideshow called Academic Advising 101 for getting on board. Helen, the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the College of Nature and Science, helped to conduct training for a newly hired academic advisors: "I often sit on hiring committees and for all of those folks as well. I help in training them. So, those are kind of direct advising things I do as a supervisor." In some units, the academic advisors went through a special training.

Abigail, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Student Affairs in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, narrated the hiring process trying to clearly explain how the proceedings were in her office:

> It's a pretty intensive training process. When I have new advisors start, I will have them basically just shadow other advisor for at least two or three weeks depending on whether they're brand new to advising or their experienced advisors. Even if I hire someone from another advising position on campus, I still want them to do some shadowing just to see what students are asking, what the types of issues are that we have here, and how we handle certain situations.

As this quote showed, the supervisors were mainly prone to make the onboarding process organized and monitored the process. They trained newly hired academic advisors providing guidance and resources so that they became ready for performing their roles and fulfilling their duties.

Another important finding was some of the supervisors oversaw student academic affairs and student success initiatives, helped undergraduate research, and helped the staff managing New Student Orientation (NSO) at DSU when needed. NSO was a carefully planned event that involved advisors across campus. The event helped students transition into college life at campus and provided them with a strong foundation for achieving their goals. The students who were admitted for the spring semester attended New Student Orientation in early January. For students who were admitted in summer and fall, New Student Orientation was organized in May, June, July, and August. Enthusiastically, Shailey, the Director of Undergraduate Academic Services in the College of Business and Marketing, commented on the responsibility she had to take at times when needed:

> When it comes to things like Summer Orientation, I may step in on days where our numbers are really high, when it's just too much for my team to manage it all themselves. So, I'll do day to day summary, and when we do drop-in advising for the first two weeks of a semester, when it's what we call hands on deck, I can jump in and see 15 or 30 students and do some just standard advising during heavy times.

What Shailey shared was the sign of collaboration between supervisors and academic advisors, and the time when they supported one another, no matter they had to step in or not based on their responsibilities. All in all, there seemed to be collaborative efforts on campus to support academic advising and the profession of advising.

4.4. Academic Advisors and Supervisors' Knowledge, Competencies, Skills and

Qualifications

According to the NACADA (2017) core competencies, the academic advisors and supervisors were required to be acknowledged in three content components: the conceptual, informational, and relational. When advisors acknowledged the importance of knowledge and skills, they developed competencies that contributed to their effective advising delivery. Gained knowledge and developed skills and competencies may have enabled academic advisors and supervisors to be responsive and accessible, and effectively contribute to student's learning and professional development. They may have become able to maintain a student-centered approach and mindset, so they could have supported and empowered students. Consequently, the students could have respected values, recognized their potential, been ready to overcome challenges, remain engaged, and succeed.

4.4.1. Backgrounds and Competencies

The conceptual component related to understanding about student and about where advising should be conducted (NACADA, 2017). According to NACADA, the advisors and supervisors needed to be aware of what advising was, about student development theories, and also student and their own rights and responsibilities. Data on the sample profile of this study revealed the academic advisors and supervisors' education background varied from Bachelors, Masters degrees to Ph.D. degrees in student affairs and administration; college student and personnel administration; hearing, speech science, and neuroscience; international studies; social relations; social work; experimental psychology; clinical social work, marriage, and family therapy; natural and social science; counseling; regional and urban planning; college and university administration.

Out of 24 participants, only one held an M.A. and one held a Ph.D. in counseling. The rest held an M.A or Ph.D. in other fields. Only one of the participants had a Bachelor' s Degree in social relations. The programs also varied according to their specializations for instance, more practitioner based or academically rigorous, and so on. Jasper was sure his prior experience as an undergraduate prepared him well for his current job as an academic advisor in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery:

> I was interested in working with academic advising. While I was an undergrad, some of the student affairs job experience that I had included being a tour guide for the admissions office. I was recruiting students who tried to come to the University, and also being a resident assistant helped me get my job in graduate school. My assistantship paid for my schooling, which was an assistant community director. I supervised resident assistants and managed the operations of a building along with a couple colleagues and a supervisor. And I think those experiences prepared me well.

This quote and detailed analysis of the participants' background and their replies suggested academic advisors with the graduate school experience were more confident about relationships and working with the students. They seemed more prepared coming into the position and managing the personal aspect. They emphasized the administrative portions of the job that required them to have some technical knowledge, or to know the reasons why accreditation was important, and how it could help form curriculum. Some of the participants were confident they were prepared enough to understand how decisions were made at an institution or college and why certain courses were determined to be adequate or inadequate for accreditation purposes. The majority looked confident in that particular context to prepare students to meet the challenges of the real world that was a more professional setting when they graduated.

The senior specialist Gregory, the coordinator of the undergraduate program in one of the departments in the College of Humanities held a position of a half time adviser and a half time teaching faculty shared his own history of becoming an advisor:

> Doing Ph.D. at 56, I was going to be needing a job. The adviser this department had was retiring. Because of my experience, I was asked if I wanted to take this position. So, I accepted and much of my training was just my experience in dealing with students. It largely consisted of the mechanics, the nuts and bolts of what the tasks were that I had to do. I had to keep track of familiarity with the university systems and have a student graduated with all the things checked in the right places. I don't often deal with the first-year students as we get very few freshmen in this department.

The particular participants' thoughts implied there were the academic advisors or supervisors who took the position without any prior preparation or their previous supervisors handed their position to them. Stephanie, the Assistant Dean in the College of Teacher Education, was offered the position and took over it.

I have a Ph.D. in neuroscience and I had been a professor before I took this job. It was

outside my academic discipline. But this was an administrative position, different than

anything I'd done before. I had applied for another position, and I was interviewed by an

associate dean, and she felt like I was very well prepared. She was in this position at the

time but has since retired. I felt I was well prepared to take on this work, and so we

worked together. When she retired, I stayed on. So, it wasn't something that I aspired to,

it was something that somebody kind of pulled me into.

The data suggested the participants were aware of their own prior preparation,

acknowledged their own identities, possible biases and privileges being either academic advisors

or supervisors. They might anticipate how their backgrounds and prior preparation might impact

the way they interacted and communicated with the students who were different while advising

them.

I found both the academic advisors and supervisors were interested in staying up-to-date

with the literature that informed them about the advising approaches and gaining adequate

knowledge to be utilized in practice. Some of the participants made efforts to go to conferences,

engage in scholarly inquiry and research, and create networks in order to be able to meet students

constantly changing needs. In this sense, the first-year advisor in the College of IT, Technology,

and Machinery, Jasper felt happy and encouraged:

I'm constantly trying to focus on how I can be a better adviser. And that's being

encouraged from my supervisor and her supervisor. I try to learn the things that I'm

interested in, like analysis of data. What we are seeing in the data and how can that

improve our service to students. Maybe, there are any groups of students that we could be

serving better. I've been doing a lot of work around academic probation in that sense, and

she's genuinely excited working and trying to improve delivery of service to students. I believe her encouragement holds me accountable for this job.

In these types of instances, academic advisors and supervisors seemed to be cognizant of the importance of their backgrounds and competencies that greatly impacted student success and the overall mission of DSU. They were certain in their understanding of the guiding principles of academic advising and the structure of academic advising within the institution. They felt confident their backgrounds and competencies enabled them to adapt an academic advising approach to the diverse student body they were expected to advise.

4.4.2. Knowledge, Qualifications, and Professional Development

The informational component incorporated the academic advisors and supervisors' prior knowledge and the knowledge they gain while advising as it was an ongoing learning process (NACADA, 2017). The professional development opportunities supervisors provided academic advisors particularly based on their interest was the valuable finding. Also, DSU provided professional advancement of supervisors and administrators. The Director of Student Support Program, Addison assisted her advisors to professionally develop according to his interest:

> I ask the advisers what is important to you, and it might not lend itself directly to what they're doing. But in terms of their professional development broadly, it is important. We sent a young man to the Virgin Islands, in continuing to pursue his doctorate in math and physics, to attend a conference, which directly related to his personal interest and also being the tutoring coordinator of the program. It was a benefit for us that he could take advantage of that conference and bring information back to serve our students better.

The quote implied the supervisors assisted the academic advisors in updating their qualifications and skills that would positively impact the advising services their particular college, unit, or center delivered. What I found positive was the leadership held both the academic advisors and supervisors accountable by offering them various opportunities to develop and improve their expertise in that particular profession. It was worth emphasizing that the academic advisors and supervisors were not forced to take advantage of professional development, but they were encouraged to improve their skills and competencies. Dayne, the Assistant Dean in the College of Plants, Soil, WildLife, Food Industry and Nutrition, reflected on her observations related to her own professional development and updating leadership skills and qualifications:

> There's a professional development working group and the tools and assessment working group, under the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of

Undergraduate Studies (APUE). DSU provides academic specialists with clear cut

activities to enhance their professional skills, but also the advisors can have other

professional development activities, maybe sign up for course or go to Academic

Advancement Network (AAN) for increasing capacity to help students. Some of it they'd

pay for or the university pays for. I attend professional development workshops, session,

and administrative activities on campus. I also go to national conferences for

administrators, that assist me in keeping my skills up here, present, share, listen, get

feedback, bring back what I've learned, absolutely.

Dayne conveyed an important message there were various opportunities, professional

development activities, and tools available and easily accessible from the leadership and the

registrar's side to do one's job on campus. It depended on the individuals employed by DSU

whether to utilize all different opportunities provided or not to use. Whether the academic

advisors and supervisors did that or not was back on an individual, but the activities and tools

never left the place. They already had the authority to use it.

In relation to Dayne's insights, Andrea, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education

in College of Media & Journalism, shared some important thoughts:

Leaders Encouraging Academic Development (LEAD) is for administrators, but the

advisors can go and sign up to the services that the group of Assistant Dean for Advising

Commission puts together out on campus all of the time. Two advisers actually have their

graduate work in counseling, and so they tend to go to counselor and counseling kinds of

conferences and come back with the data on mental health issues in higher education. So,

some of what they attend is driven by what they're passionate about, that couples with

advising. It's kind of requirement, but that's a more me issue. It's part of the goal setting

process for what kind and where that would be appropriate.

The document review revealed AAN in collaboration with Academic Human Resources organized an orientation for new administrators. The new administrators received a formal invitation to that event. Over a few days, they obtained an overview of DSU and many offices and units across campus.

In addition, a Leadership Institute delivered mentoring sessions for administrators with other administrators across campus. It was the sign of maintaining the collaboration of supervisors and assisting to make the advising delivery somewhat connected, improved, and collaboratively practiced. Estelle, the first-year advisor in the College of Knowledge Academy, shared her observations:

> I honestly would say there is a team of folks that are working on an on boarding tool for new advisors just started last year. But I was not provided any resource on learning about advising or my job other than that handbook. I was connecting person to person with other advisors. There are events, professional development activities, professional conferences, or webinars sponsored by the university advising system rather regularly on campus. So, there's a lot of formal update opportunities.

In relation to what Estelle stated, also the document review and some other participants' replies showed the resources were available and accessible across campus. For instance, Leadership Node (LN) focused on training and mentoring the advanced leadership, management, and service skills and responsibilities. LN was available in a variety of formats. The academic advisors and their supervisors chose to use those resources or not, it was a difference. Estelle also touched on her experience being trained as a mentee:

> I think there is limited people signed up to be a mentor. I think there are plenty of us who want to receive a mentor and be a mantee, but in comparing the folks that I saw at the

event last year and this year there is some overlap, but there is a distinct lack of the next level of administration.

Estelle expressed there were not many upper level supervisors and administrators who were present at the training she attended who would be helpful for the academic advisors who were planning a long-term career. There was a lack of leadership in advising and interest to share experiences with the new advisors.

The updates on professional development opportunities on campus were available and came from the Registrar's office and the office of Financial Aid. There were different Advising Summits organized on campus, such as Townhalls, Brown Bag lunches, various workshops, speaker series, and Webinars. Advisors were also updated and got professional development in their department and units, colleges at weekly, biweekly, or monthly meetings. There was the Hub on campus for students, faculty, staff and stakeholders in and off campus, which facilitated new ways of collaboration, learning, doing research, and delivering instruction.

The colleges and departments included in this study provided academic advisors with funding to present at local and national NACADA or other conferences. The University designated a certain amount of money for certificate obtaining and degree pursuing for both the advisors and supervisors.

I also found there was not a centralized academic advisor's and supervisor's evaluation. Hence, Human Resources Office required everybody in a job classification to be evaluated at least once a year. In reality, the offices independently determined how to evaluate the academic specialists they employed. The evaluation forms or templates differed from college to college and even departments. It was generally conducted as an annual review, and once a year the academic advisors and supervisors wrote reports on the goals, strengths and weaknesses, challenges and the work done, but there were not real benchmarks for assessment.

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Based on this vision, a professional assessment committee was established at the university, and the leadership was looking at how to assess the academic advising system and evaluate the advising specialists' performance. The leadership aspired to make evaluation somewhat structured and aligned to NACADA core competencies.

4.4.3. Skills and Abilities

The relational component, included communicative and interpersonal skills, helped the academic advisors and supervisors communicate and build relationships with students (NACADA,2017). The academic advisors and supervisors were supposed to help students learn more and make the most of their college years. They were not required to help students merely complete requirements and get a degree. They were expected to assist students in growing intellectually and developing their identity from various aspects. The professional advisors or faculty advisors as a nation who were old and new to the academic advising profession could do more than help students register for classes. If they did have opportunities and motivation to improve their skills and advising delivery strategies from the starting line, they would develop their own advising philosophy and serve the students better.

The findings of this study proposed skills the academic advisors and supervisors should demonstrate, including the ability of how they communicate and build relationships with the students, based on their assumptions, beliefs, and intentions. The majority clearly emphasized and commonly underlined the importance of active listening and hearing skills, strong communication skills, inter- and intrapersonal skills, organizational and time management skills, critical thinking skill, knowledge, transferable skills, empathy, compassion, care, emotional intelligence, and emotional awareness that were key in advising delivery. Andrea, the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education in the College of Media & Journalism, precisely outlined the skills:

> So, you need to be a phenomenally good listener. You have to like puzzles and problems because you will spend a lot of time trying to navigate helping students solve things. Not everybody is an extrovert, but I would argue that it helps when you deal with students in crowds. You have to have a comfort level in talking to groups of people, not just

individuals. Boy, empathy skills, very effective communicator … The ability to manage

and track a lot of details. We only hire academic advisers that have graduate degrees. I do

believe that a graduate education makes a difference in how people think about and

understand how students learn and develop. How to build pathways to meet the students

where they're at versus how the infrastructure of the university might be.

The quote implied, and it was equally supported by the rest of the participants' insights that the

ability to understand the rules and policies of the institution was pivotal. Yet, the advisors and

supervisors also had to be very empathetic to the students' needs, wants, and make sure that they

were attentively listening to what the student was telling. Both skills were important as it would

be a good way the advisors and supervisors could provide better guidance to which courses to

take, scheduling and crafting a plan, what possible internships, or study abroad opportunity to

take.

The ultimate goal would be to assist the students toward graduation with a degree but

provide information and opportunities that were interesting to them so that the students could

make an informed decision. Simply, it seemed the academic advisors and supervisors really

wanted a student to leave DSU not saying if I had known about this program or that opportunity,

I would take advantage of it. The Director of Undergraduate Studies in the College of Nature and

Science, Hellen thought her staff would better have these skills:

Obviously listening skills are essential, the ability to see the big picture and have just a

little bit more broad vision, and to stay calm, patience that's a good way to put it.

Empathy is huge, and all those things that are in a counseling program we have to

consider, try, synthesize, come up with success plans. Critical thinking goes into that a

lot. A good memory has been essential for me personally, especially with policies and

procedures piece, and knowing where to do that. Being unafraid to work with people in

multiple capacities and admit when you don't know. Another essential skill is to be able

to say I'm gonna find out instead of having that bravado of I know everything. That it's

better to make sure you're getting the right information.

The quote made clear that for all advisers showing a general interest and care about

the students were pivotal. There was not a real repetition when the academic advisors and

supervisors were advising because each student was different. The academic advisors and

supervisors were expected to be prepared to handle each student as an individual. They were

expected to make the appointment as productive as possible to answer all of the questions the

students might ask.

The biggest take away was to make the students feel comfortable and be assured

somebody cared and was ready to help. Virginia, the Assistant Director of Academic and Student

Affairs and an advisor, shared almost similar thoughts:

I think good communication skills and being able to understand policy but also making

sure that you're taking to consideration what's going on with students. So, we're trying to

look at the student in a holistic way, personally, academically, and professionally what

their goals are, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and how we can bring that all

together, so they can be successful here.

Virginia's comments revealed a need for ability to establish a rapport and communicate with the

students. Importantly, to communicate and establish a relationship with the students would allow

the students to know they could come to her and she was there for them, and she would help

figure it out. Relatedly, the Assistant Dean for Academic Advising & Student Success in the

College of Plants, Soil, Wilde Life, Food Industry & Nutrition, Dayne shared:

The skill for a person advisor in any situation is to be able to make sure they are looking

at his or her biases and keeping them in check and balance. All students from a diversity

and equity point of view need to know that they're being heard, no matter what their academic background is. I think that's a skill set to recognize that you do have biases, everyone has them but not let that interfere with you helping students. Especially, if you might say to yourself a student doesn't need to be in that major, think about how you can help them, instead of shutting them down.

The insights shared made me think of the academic advisors and supervisors' ways of thinking and using care and cultural awareness interchangeably. I found academic advisors and supervisors perceived being able to engage the students at their level of comprehension, with some level of empathy and understanding the diversity of their experiences was extremely critical. They were certain if they did not hear the challenge the student was experiencing, they would be giving them the wrong recommendation which would not help them solve their problems and troubleshoot that situation. Willingness to hear and then to communicate were equally important skills for both groups. The academic advisor in the College of Plants, Soil, WildLife, Food Industry and Nutrition, Rachel underscored the more salient skills:

Someone who can listen, that what it comes down to, someone who can understand that students bring more to a campus than just their backpack and their lap-top. They've got all kind of issues that they're dealing with. They bring their financial concerns, roommate and relationship concerns. Struggling academically, some students have difficult time with time management and organizational skills. So, someone who can listen and help them sort out those kinds of issues, who is sensitive, who is not judgmental, who is approachable, and who can pay attention to details.

It was clear throughout the data that academic advisors needed some level of care to be prepared to handle each student as an individual. They also needed to be sensitive about developmental processes and from cultural perspectives. The academic advisors and supervisors needed to have

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a full undivided attention to be able to not just listen but also hear what an individual student

needed at that particular appointment meeting time.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary of Findings

The aim of my study was to explore and describe the organization of academic advising at DSU's campus, to understand the contexts where university academic advisers and their supervisors functioned and whether they recognized the importance of knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences while performing their roles and fulfilling their responsibilities. My personal reason was to understand the academic advisors and supervisors' realties, perceptions, and interpretations on the contexts of academic advising delivered, to explore and describe advising processes and empower academic advisors and supervisors in the context of the phenomenon. I strove to learn how academic advising was delivered, how academic advising services were structured, what those procedures were, and what strategies and practices were employed in academic advising process in a four-year public university.

What I found was the roles and responsibilities the professional advisors and supervisors fulfilled within the shared academic advising model (centralized and decentralized) at campus align in many ways. Both academic advisors and supervisors showed they were equally cognizant of the importance of knowledge, skills, and competencies they should possess and academic advising styles they should utilize when they advised students. The findings suggested the academic advisors and supervisors acknowledged they were experiencing the change of advising system at campus, and there was a big shift in the structure to make academic advising delivery somewhat consistent and centrally coordinated or overseen across the campus.

The findings did not propose any specific ways to advise the first-year students, except New Student Orientation, which incorporated Academic Orientation Programs in fall, spring, and summer terms and first-year seminars that introduced students to social and academic life at

campus and that was a beneficial support for the first-year students' transition and experience of doing small-group activities.

I found the academic advisors and supervisors' evaluation and assessment of advising delivery were not completely centralized or unified across DSU's campus. At DSU, Human Resources requires everybody, including faculty, academic specialists, and other staff in job classification, to be evaluated at least once a year. However, really colleges, departments, and even units determine how to evaluate academic advisors and supervisors. The evaluation forms or templates differ from college to college, from department to department, and from unit to unit. It is generally conducted as an annual review, and once a year the academic advisors write reports on the goals, strengths and challenges, and the work done, but there are not real benchmarks. Hence, the rewarding component was incorporated into the assessment process. The rewarding was established in the form of an Outstanding Academic Advising Award for new and established academic advisors, a faculty advisor and an administrator a couple of years ago. The recipients of academic advising award who were among the interviewees and the rest of participants of this study showed a clear interest and preference for being rewarded for the work they did. Although academic advisors and supervisors strongly believed that in the direct line they were visible and valued, particularly some academic advisors were not sure whether their work was sufficiently valued by the upper level administration or not.

What I found was there was a tendency to conduct centralized student surveys and analyze the data for the future to be used as the base for changes by a task-force, and the departments or units individually launched student surveys to measure student satisfaction on academic advisors' performance by the leadership. The leadership was also prone to align professional development activities, academic advising training programs, and delivery of advising with NACADA core competency areas.

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Another major finding was a new structure with an Assistant Dean for University Advising office that was established under the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Office, and it was a big shift to make academic advising delivery somewhat consistent and centrally coordinated or overseen across campus. A few years ago, the organizational change happened even at the college level, in the College of IT, Technology, and Machinery. Loosely coordinated and decentralized advising practice in the college transitioned and moved under the Undergraduate Studies Office.

The findings suggested academic advisors and supervisors utilized some home grown and other technologies, instruments, or tools in delivering advising. The data also proposed the ways academic advisors and supervisors communicated among them and with students, and how they attended to those students' personal, social, and academic needs. The data collected on the communication of academic advisors' community suggested it was occurring at the campus level, college, department and even group levels, which was supported by a brand-new Advisor Portal. The portal had been recently launched for fast, constant, sustainable virtual interaction and communication across the campus community, and promoting networking. The results revealed not all academic advisors were using and benefiting from the new portal as it was supposed to be. The academic advisors and supervisors clearly expressed they preferred emailing, using listservs, and instant messaging, and they needed some time to adjust to using the Advisor Portal. The findings also informed about the academic advisors and supervisors' access to the resources and usage of student information for advising.

5.2. Discussion in Relationship to Advising Literature

Although the findings are generally compatible with the literature I have reviewed, there are several areas in which they differ from it. As Cook (2009) and Frost (2000) argued the newly enrolled students arrived at campus with the diverse needs, they required advanced services and an authentic approach. In this sense, at DSU, academic advising is the primary source of curricular and academic guidance, regardless of students chosen majors and academic advisors are the chief workforce who provide this service within the frame of the programs, sharing insights and guidance on academic, social, and/or personal matters.

Each of eight colleges and two programs included in this study was different, and there was not a real method right then at the university, and that was kind of an individual performance of each academic advisor and supervisor. As mentioned previously, advising focused on all undergraduates and did not specifically focus on the first-year students, except two-day Academic Orientation Programs and first-year seminars. The prior research states that first-year seminars, orientation programs, and summer bridge programs regardless of their size and form as a common curricular strategy positively contribute to students' growth and somewhat academically and socially enable them to transition to college. They help students meaningfully learn and increase their abilities to persist (Barefoot 2000; Barefoot 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) as cited in Renn & Reason, 2012, p. 67-69). Likewise, Colyar and Stich (2011) view 3-6 week-summer bridge programs essential as they assist students in transitioning to college and acclimatizing to "campus, curricula, and culture" (p.126). Yet, DSU offers a number of similar programs that can help students transition from high school to college in summer and fall. These programs are differently called and differ because of their purposes. Some of these programs offer credit toward one's degree and called Bridge, the others may serve as a community and

help the students who are eligible for those programs succeed and called first-year and transition programs. All these programs were not under the purview of this study.

Supporting the claim higher education institutions should contribute to student's knowledge construction (Brennan &Teichler, 2008), this study illustrates some specific strategies academic advisors and supervisors used to help students build an adequate knowledge base. In the College of Sir Adam Smith with limited enrolment and College of Nature and Science, four academic advisors in each of them were particularly working with the first-year students, and only four of eight academic advisors were interviewed. Those academic advisors tried to figure out how much students know about DSU and the resources on campus, so they could determine how much information to share with students and how quickly they should go through all the information. If students came in extremely confused, overwhelmed, or upset about something, they decided students were not ready to process 100 different websites, other online or on campus resources, and talk through all the available information. They attempted to adjust the pace and how many resources to share with them. To do a better job in serving the first-year students and maintain flexibility in a residential College of IT, Technology, and Machinery, the academic advisors focused on improving and offered evening advising times to meet students at 6 pm, 7 pm, or even 8 pm instead of 9 am. The unit was trying to adjust its service delivery so academic advisors could meet student needs better. The initiative was encouraged and supported by the supervisor, who was the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Student Affairs.

Additionally, in Knowledge Academy with limited enrolment, the freshman councils were made up of the first-year students who would come up with initiatives to help fellow first-year students. Those councils offered leadership experience for their fellows. The college offered a program that students could attend a week before joining classes. The students would go to different parts of the community and understand what policy meant in the community, and they

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could use that experience as a learning opportunity, and then they had a class in the fall, where the students could talk about what systems of poverty or inequality were in the community or some other current issues. In addition, that particular college geared services towards helping students adjust to college life at campus and providing more social opportunities for them. The college had a freshman seminar class for the first-year students where academic advisors talked about the different resources that were available on campus, they also talked about things related to time management and how to plan things out, how to develop a sense of purpose, and how to get involved in diverse occurrences on campus.

Similarly, in the residential College Sir Adam Smith, the academic advisors connected students with upper-class students who were majoring in a language, who could offer help, when there were not necessarily formal programs available in the late hours in the residential halls. They also had writing consultancy staffed by upper-class students for all first-year students, where students could go to get assistance with their writing assignments for the common course. The college offered student assistants in classes that held office hours to particularly help first-year students in the evenings or on the weekends when faculty were not necessarily there to review for exams or ask questions if they did not understand a lecture, or they were assisted to meet any study related need. I supposed all those proceedings could assist students to have an easier transition into the university and reach the third stage of incorporation (Tinto, 1993).

In regard to the three stages Tinto (1993) found, academic advisors and supervisors at the colleges and programs included in this study focused more on transition and incorporation stages. The topic of separation did not come up very often. I observed STEM program's two-day residential Summer Orientation Session and another academic orientation program, offered by the College of Nature and Science in 2018. Both summer orientation sessions were mandatorily required, as they were considered one of the first steps in the transition process. Approximately,

60 students spend two days together in one of the residence halls. Those students learned about STEM, and they were introduced to the structure of math and chemistry courses. The students explored campus, and started to make connections and friendships, they had the opportunity to participate in resource fair, bookstore fair, and some other events that were held on campus at that time.

As Bloom et al. (2008) assert that integration of theory and practice enables appreciative advisors to perform their roles and responsibilities in various settings either one-on-one or in groups. Relatively, at colleges and programs included in this study, students were provided with group advising sessions that may have generated students' growth as a whole, and students could have reached their full potential. With regard to group advising, during STEM summer orientation sessions, 60 students together learned about DSU, the requirements specific to their colleges, and course selection. The professional academic advisor introduced a more general overview about how to engage in relevant research, job/internship opportunities, student clubs, and organizations to the group. That professional academic advisor helped those students to do scheduling, provided them some important tips such as how to schedule an advising appointment online, how to log in D2L and StuInfo, and how to use a Degree Navigator, and how to navigate through them. The professional academic advisor also talked about how to apply for financial aid and scholarships. The students had the chance to talk to that particular academic advisor one-on-one. It was the first 15-minute scheduled academic advising appointment for the students. In addition, four mentors-peer advisors shared their experiences, presented one of the courses' syllabus, and explained grading procedures. Then, each mentor took a group of students to a campus tour. During the tour, the students were tasked to find the Colleges, residential halls, student success coaching centers, and other resources available on DSU's campus using a campus map. My conclusion was both the professional advisor and four mentors tried to

integrate three advising styles based on prescriptive, developmental, and appreciative approaches so they could advise students within such a short time period.

In terms of academic advising styles, Appleby (2001) claims prescriptive advisors do not help advisees "develop a sense of responsibility for their academic choices" (p.1.). Likewise, King (2005) emphasizes the importance of intensive attention to diverse students' concerns that academic advisors should comprehensively consider and provide students with relevant support. At DSU, academic advisors and supervisors generally placed a considerable importance on motivating students and helping them overcome challenges that inferred with their concerns and needs. In such a short time frame and during the first meeting with the advisor and mentors, that group of students could get only a sense of benefitting from advising and mentoring. Thus, it was not possible to comprehensively attend to those students' diverse needs during the two-day STEM Summer Orientation Session. In fact, for those students it might have been the first time of acknowledgement of a major life transition. They did have the chance to somewhat learn that making mistakes was a part of the learning process. In a short period of time, when they met new people, they tried to make friends and feel comfortable, made efforts to learn to speak to their peers, recognize difference, and respect diversity. The students learned how to meet with a professor as they had Math and Chemistry lectures, and they were given the chance to participate in group work. They were also provided with the opportunity to stay with a roommate who they shared their time and new experiences with during that time. Some of those students for the first time in their lives were left by their parents for two days, and they may have made attempts to belong to a new environment, interact, and socialize with new people within various spaces on campus. I assume that for many it was their first step to feel and get connected to one another and to a huge campus. In regard to the three stages Tinto (1993) highlighted (separation,

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transition, and incorporating), the two-day STEM Summer Orientation Session was obviously designated to the transition and partially incorporation stages.

Mayhew et al. (2010) assert orientation programs should present education policies of the universities, rules and regulations on safety and security on campus, and requirements on academic performance. The academic advisors and supervisors seemed to consider the importance of orientation programs to students' introduction to the campus and how successful they might become as undergraduates over the course of time. They attempted to apply some specific strategies, so they could help the students overcome challenges that may have associated with student safety and security needs, uncertainty, or motivation. For instance, during another two-day Summer Orientation Session held by the College of Nature and Science the students did have the chance to experience a large lecture, and they were also introduced to safety, security, and medical issues via presentations done by the representatives of related offices. I believe to apply various advising styles rather than mainly prescriptive and partially developmental and appreciative approaches was simply not possible due to time constraints and a large amount of information. Hopefully, there would be different advising philosophies applied if situations were different. The advisors would be proactive versus reactive, or they would apply holistic or any other approach to make sure the students get on the right trajectory. I suppose for the students those two days may also have been overwhelming as they were provided with an enormous amount of information, those students should have to make great efforts to digest it. Also, for the advisors, that time may have turned out as a dilemma, how much information to give the students and foresee at what point it would become overwhelming for all of them.

In fact, I observed that during the two-day STEM Summer Orientation Session the advisor and four mentors-peer advisors attempted to build a friendly rapport and establish trust, so they could develop closer relationship with students later (Bloom et al., 2008; Covey, 2006;

Frost, 2000). Likewise, in talking about their commitments, advising practice, and advising styles most advisors and supervisors interviewed expressed a strong intention to develop very close relationships with their students so that they could trust them, come and tell them about their academic, personal, and family problems. In regard to the previous points, Kuhn (2008) highlights the essence of guidance and direction in academic advising and states, "This direction might be to inform, suggest, counsel, discipline, coach, mentor, or even teach" (p. 3). Although those advisors and supervisors admitted they were not counselors, coaches, or mentors, they acknowledged the importance of providing accurate information about counseling services, the career service networks, the resource center for people with disabilities, and other services that were available on campus. They seemed supportive and involved in personalizing students' special needs and wants.

According to Appleby (2008), "Advising is teaching" (p.85), at DSU, academic advisors engaged in teaching first-year seminars offered in the colleges with limited enrolment and residential colleges. I had the chance to observe two first-year seminars in the College of Knowledge Academy. Another first-year seminar observed was offered by the College of Humanities. For the first-year and no-preference/exploratory preference students, those seminars were the opportunity to receive information on social and academic life in a small-group configuration. Such experience assisted those students in engaging in small learning communities. The topics of first-year seminars ranged from college transition and off-campus issues to global problems, and students were involved in creating an action plan and writing reflections. Students were dealing with time management, and they were taught how to use campus resources such as learning centers, writing and math tutoring centers, the resource center for persons with disabilities (RCPD), the counseling and psychiatric services (CAPs), and how to obtain membership to student organizations. In the first-year seminars, students were learning

how to apply for student financial aid, how to make an appointment and talk to a professor or career advisor, how to engage in undergraduate research with faculty members, and how to create study groups. I presume academic advisors teaching first year seminars may have developed students and contributed to their continual growth. In this way, advisors at DSU were not only advising but also teaching, as Appleby argued.

I suppose academic advisors could also benefit from their own commitments if they could "continuously look to improve" (Covey, 2006, p. 184), learn to keep up-to-date, regularly seek feedback from students, and refine their advising skills. In this sense, there was ongoing developmental training available for advisors and supervisors campus wide. Updates on professional development opportunities on campus constantly came from the Registrar's office, and the office of Financial Aid. There were different Advising Summits organized on campus, such as Townhalls, Brown bag lunches, various workshops, and Webinars. Advisors were also updated and get professional development opportunities in their departments and units, colleges at weekly, biweekly, or monthly meetings. The colleges and departments provided academic advisors and supervisors with funding to present at local and national NACADA conferences. The University designated a certain amount of money for certificate obtaining and degree pursuing. There is the Hub on campus for students, faculty, staff and stakeholders in and off campus, which facilitates new ways of collaboration, learning, doing research, and delivering instruction. Besides, the Leadership Institute delivered mentoring sessions for administrators with other administrators across campus, and supervisors get the chance to professionally develop and learn from one another. I assume professional training and mentoring may have helped supervisors advance their leadership, management, and service skills and responsibilities.

With respect to advising styles and providing students with needed support, Hale et al. (2009) state students may academically succeed and become socially engaged when they are

intensively supported and regularly directed to the adequate resources by academic services, student affairs, and if academic advisors are able to carefully identify the sources of valuable information. At DSU, academic advisors and supervisors reported that they constantly connected students to financial aids or to Registrar office to work out some related issues, and they oftentimes directed students to CAPS (Counseling & Psychiatric Services) for mental health services as that was becoming an increasingly big need for academic advisors. Academic advisors and their supervisors emphasized a mental health problem as one of the current issues they consistently encountered when they conducted one-on-one meeting with students during the advising appointments.

In addition to facilitating connections to established resources, understanding students' needs and identities could motivate discussions of support networks on campus and also off campus. The academic advisor in the College of Knowledge Academy could research resources not only for monoracial identities, marginalized groups, or minorities, but she could also have reached out to multiracial students at DSU and advocated for those students. The prior research reveals that when multiracial students are involved in activities with peers or attempt to capture their attention they have to adapt their racial identity so that they are included to monoracial surroundings (Ford & Malaney, 2012; Hyman, 2015). In these attempts, multicultural students' identities may lead to discussions and experiencing bias, and while their identities are externally defined they may become marginalized on campus (Bergerson & Huftalin, 2011; Franco, 2015, Chang, 2016). Given the prior research findings, I assumed that type of research would empower and support those who wanted their voices to be heard on campus in the future. In addition, that particular advisor was going to voluntarily advise a new student organization whose goal was to provide space and support for multiracial students. Given that, I suppose the multiracial first-year students needed to have more and various opportunities to join student organizations, get

membership to different clubs, and participate in social responsibility projects to socialize and be accepted by others on campus.

Bailey et al. (2015) assert, "Colleges must undertake a more fundamental rethinking of their organization and culture" (p.12), and Gardner (2001) and Keeling (2003) argue if institutions made more contribution to academic services and student affairs, students could persist and succeed. Supporting those scholars, Self (2013) notes that the academic advisors' role is increasing and their positive affect on student accomplishment augments their number in academic services and student affairs in the research institutions. In the College of Plants, Soil, WildLife Food Industry and Nutrition and College of Humanities where academic advising was organized in a decentralized way, academic advisors' work seemed somewhat integrated or overlapped. Overall, the interviewed academic advisors and supervisors defined student affairs as the structure that provided more support with student life such as engaging in co-curricular activities, getting membership to student organizations, creating campus community, and campus culture. They defined academic services as the structure that was dealing with only coursework for degree completion, that focused on study abroad, leadership, career, and professional development. In the College of Business and Marketing, for instance, one of the academic advisors was helping a student get into the college, into an accounting major, but she also enthusiastically wanted that student to get experience outside the classroom in accounting, leadership, and communication skills. She seemed more involved and strove to provide the student academic assistance and do coaching. Essentially, performing various roles, that advisor gave the student opportunity to grow and achieve success. In fact, the student could get such help via student affairs being involved in extracurricular activities, community or volunteer work. Although some academic advisors could not clearly separate academic services and student

affairs, they acknowledged the importance of students' needs and all of those issues that students needed to be successful.

I supposed there were not the clear-cut rules about who students should see in order to get advising assistance. Hence, students were free in their choices and could see any academic advisor who they felt comfortable with, who listened to and heard them, who students were willing to share their concerns, thoughts, and aspirations in the colleges, departments, units, and Student Success Coaching centers across campus. Most academic advisors confidently emphasized they were trying to create a good rapport, build trust and develop relationships with students though they may have advised a pretty diverse student body. Supporting the statement by Bloom et al. (2008), "using positive, active, and attentive listening and questioning strategies to build trust and rapport with students" (p. 11), academic advisors could guide and nurture students and may have applied an appreciative advising style, especially the Discover phase. I assumed academic advisors may have been "uncovering students' strengths and skills based on their past successes" (Bloom et al., 2008, p. 11). Ultimately, some students because of the appreciative style and previous relationships could make appointments and come to them again and again, or they may have been referred to them. In addition, Boom et al. (2013), Grites (2013), and Varney (2013) highlight that if advisors utilize various styles, student may academically benefit and gain good experience. I could claim based on the inferences I derived that a majority of advisors were cognizant of various advising styles and made efforts to be an attentive listener, a positive and supportive adult who were available and approachable to provide students adequate assistance and support. Their intention was to develop meaningful and trustful relationships, so they could serve students better.

I also noticed some academic advisors were somewhat uncertain of their responsibilities depending on where they were housed, in the departments or in centralized units, and the

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characteristics of colleges, and whether they were tasked to help student at the end to be ready to find or get a job or not. I supposed uncertainty could emerge because of a reporting line to career services outside, particularly because there may have been a couple of colleges with limited enrollment that integrated with companies, which may have financially supported them.

McPhail (2001) argued faculty, staff, and students should work innovatively and productively together, and the institutions should make strategic changes in policies and practices. At DSU, leadership was prone to provide appropriate academic advising support, and a new structure with an Assistant Dean for University Advising was a structural change and an attempt to coordinate and oversee academic advising. Such changes in polices and practice may have generated collaboration that could foster faculty and staff to work together, identify challenges students encountered, and then apply practices and strategies that could ease students' navigation through college and ultimately succeed. For instance, sometimes, during the educational professional development time, some faculty would come in and talk to the advisers about what students in their majors needed to have when they got their first professional job so that the advisers had a better understanding of what a particular profession was. Consequently, academic advisors and supervisors could better direct the students into electives or group opportunities that would get them some experience fostering appropriate skills. If a handful of students expressed a concern within their class and it was deemed necessary, academic advisors and supervisors had a particular experience to expand on that and e-mail the faculty and asked for an appointment with them just to talk about and share the concerns that they had heard. Both academic advisors and supervisors actually considered that experience very beneficial. In the College of Sir. Adam Smith, academic advisors, supervisors, and faculty were functioning as a close team, and for them it was just across the hall to communicate and put together some project

and run it by the financial person. Their collaboration was extremely strong, and the communication among them was casual, fast, and effective.

In addition to McPhail's claim, Denovan and Macaskill (2013) emphasize students' unmet expectations and "anticipatory beliefs" that may be stressful and lead them to experience disappointment (p.1011). In regard to students' expectations, I supposed academic advisors and supervisors tried to attend to them, and they were looking at providing students assistance and support as a very individualized student by student process. Mainly, the academic advisors and supervisors wanted the first-year students to receive tutoring opportunities. Providing all undergraduates with academic advising, including the first-year students, had very much been delegated to the colleges recently. Because of the delegated responsibilities, academic advisors directed undergraduates as well as the first- year students to math, writing, computer science, or engineering one-on-one, and some other tutoring programs more than before. They wanted the students to be best positioned so they could gain admission to colleges with limited enrollment. They assumed tutoring programs were very critical for students, particularly in the classes that had the most impact on students' admission to the colleges. Academic advisors directed students to the resources that were very much student learning and student success focused courses in the departments. For instance, the College of Business and Marketing with limited enrollment was responsible for its students who were business preference, even though they were not admitted to the college yet. Administratively, the academic advisors in that college were required to advise those students as their primary advisors. During the interviews, they seemed certain to clearly deliver a message to the first-year students that the first semester was the biggest and most important time. I suppose they were assured no matter what or who the first-year students were, what school they came from, what background they came from, they needed to have a solid first semester, because that established their academic competence and academic identity at DSU.

Ellis (2002) states, "The students are not sufficiently prepared to cope with the lack of familiarity at university and they can feel both academically and physically lost" (p. 3). In additon, O' Shea (2008) emphasizes a transition period that requires significant adaptation of students to the new settings. Supporting Ellis' and O' Shea's claims, the academic advisors and supervisors' thoughts and insights obviously conveyed the following message, which was that even the most academically successful student from high school could struggle with transition, there in a new living environment where their parents or guardians were not around, no one was there to make sure they were doing what they needed to do. Obviously, socially and culturally students needed to have the right academic, social, and financial support network, which may have helped them get employment when they graduated. In this sense, the academic advisors in the Student Success Coaching Program were responsible for delivering advising to no-preference/exploratory preference students who were taking general education courses and the courses that helped students figure out what major they should take or wanted to take. In terms of giving students ideas on courses within their programs that would help them with their professional skill building, their primary or major advisors would be the ones who could provide them with appropriate advice. For example, the primary or major advisors would refer students to the career consultants in student affairs and services who directed them to Handshake, which was their online management system, that was where employers posted internship and job opportunities for students. Students could make advising appointments with the employers, and they also could go to market events posted on Handshake. There was a mentoring tool that was published every summer for DSU students, which was considered as a starting point for students to receive employment opportunities through Handshake. Students were supposed to get experience finding jobs through that online management system. Throughout the year, a number of career fairs were held for them. Those career fairs worked as networking events and connected

students to the resources outside DSU. Additionally, the career consultants referred students to certain websites that were the network prescribes so that students could subscribe to. Career consultants also helped with interview practice or job search strategy based on the topics that students were interested in and related to their major, document review, creating resumes and cover letters, and assisted students to search internships, community, and/or volunteer work as well.

Colgan (2017) underlines the importance for advisors to analyze theory and practice and also believes if academic advisors deeper engage in students' worlds through dialogues and relational exchanges, they may discover the meanings and realities they contextualize. Supporting Colgan's claims, academic advisors and supervisors' approach seemed shifted in the direction of understanding students from both their own and students' perspectives. They seemed to remain current with the changes, ideas, transformations in the academic advising field and become professionally developed attending trainings on and off campus and presenting at summits and conferences not only at local but also at national level. In addition, advisors expressed that they definitely felt valued in the direct line within departments and the colleges, and they believed their role in promoting student success was undeniable.

5.3. Implications

This study addressed my personal need for research on academic advising in a four-year public university to explore the ways how academic advising was organized with a description of the organizational model and the delivery system in place and spaces where academic advising was conducted. The study provided me an opportunity to pursue an understanding of the research phenomenon in real settings and contribute to the limited literature that could support and benefit the further research on academic advising models, delivery, and the location where the first-year students were provided with academic advising services.

Ultimately, this research would empower academic advisors and their supervisors to articulate their professional achievements, contributions, and future needs. DSU could consider this qualitative research finding that specifically relates to the colleges utilizing decentralized or sharing both centralized and decentralized academic advising, which does not make coordination and monitoring of the academic advising performance effective and accountable. Furthermore, DSU could reconsider its evaluation and assessment strategies and establish a structure that could conduct centralized or unified evaluation based on the collaboratively designed assessment instrument or tool, which particularly would incorporate defined and established benchmarks for assessing only academic advising specialists rather than both faculty and staff with the same evaluation form. The data obtained by means of that structure would inform the leadership on the issues related to the academic advising system that need to be attended to, and the data would assist the leadership to enhance mandatory professional development trainings on campus for supervisors and academic advisors, major advisors, advisors in Student Success Coaching centers and Student Support Program, including peer-advisors, so that constituents could upgrade their service and teaching styles not only based on their choices and preferences but also based on institutional academic advising philosophy or approach. All the future initiatives would

contribute to improve academic advising itself as a valuable source to assist the first-year students to succeed and attain their personal, educational, and career goals.

The findings of this qualitative research would also contribute greatly to the benefit of improving the higher education system in Azerbaijan. Currently, there is urgent need for effective support, assistance, and life changing approaches in HE in Azerbaijan. This study addresses to a particularly important issue that is academic advising, which is missing as a social institution in this system. If the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan Republic (MoE) tends to consider academic assistance and support as the greater demand for students who enrolled in HEIs in Azerbaijan, establishment of advising services in HEIs will be justified.

I believe if HEIs in Azerbaijan establish academic advising services, academic advising as a social capital may contribute to the leadership of HEIs better understanding of diverse student body, their personal, social, and academic needs. Acknowledging students' various needs and attempting to meet them may assist HEIs in improving both academic proceedings and staff and faculty's professional development. I am aware of challenges that either MoE or HEIs may face, as academic advising of undergraduates may require them to review the outdated approach to faculty advising, which is completely resisting. Such resistance drags HE to more inertia and to overcome standstill and initiate changes in the system become challenging. Furthermore, MoE may have been challenged in educating professional academic advisors or retraining staff and faculty so that they could be transformed to academic advisors, or coaches, or mentors. Yet, student retention, persistence, and graduation mainly depend on to what extend HEIs are able to attend to intensively diversifying student body and student needs. The reviewed academic advising models and approaches, the experiences academic advisors and supervisors shared may have contributed in designing an adapted academic advising model and establishing an academic advising system in higher education in Azerbaijan. Such a model could facilitate a quality

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academic support to students in future. In addition, administrators of HEIs would also be instructed on what they should emphasize while designing mission statements of higher education entities' so that they may have improved student achievement, retention, and completion of a degree.

5.4. Significance of the Study

By developing a better understanding of how the first-year students were academically advised and supported in DSU and how academic advisors' and administrators' qualifications impacted student accomplishment, I could make a number of contributions to the field. First of all, I could provide an overview description of DSU's academic advising system that incorporated academic advising services and student affairs in eight colleges and two programs across a huge campus. The description would contribute to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education & Dean of Undergraduate Studies at DSU review the structure of academic advising system and the delivery of advising. It may also advise the MoE and the administrators in HEIs in the Azerbaijan Republic how to academically serve the first-year students in an efficient way in a public university. Second, while conducting this study, I sought for the specific aspects of academic assistance and support that were most associated with academic advisors' and administrators' qualifications, specifically the professional identity, organization structure, context, culture, and communication. Third, as a long-standing educator and ADA university faculty, I could personally benefit from this study and improve my qualifications and educating strategies. In addition, as a faculty member, I could contribute to the advising delivery and student service so that students may benefit from and eventually succeed. I may also assist in designing training programs for future professional advisors who may serve in HEIs once academic advising as a social structure is established in HE.

Given the importance of academic advising, out of eight colleges and two programs included in this study, I have chosen three colleges as the best practice of organizing advising services. The rationale behind of my choice is a centralized one-stop-shop service where students receive help and support. The College of Teacher Education runs a centralized Student Affairs Office whose objective is to facilitate student academic success and career exploration, to build

community engagement, to foster global and cultural awareness, and to promote leadership and involvement. The College of Nature and Science has a centralized Office of Undergraduate Academic and Student Affairs who provides a one-stop location for career consulting, study abroad planning, and advising for preprofessional education and health students along with major administration through the college. Also, the office has unofficial reporting line of advisors in the departments. The College of Media and Journalism has a centralized Academic and Student Affairs Office which is composed of student-centered advising professionals. These professional advisors empower undergraduate students to undergo a diverse education experience. The office incorporates a career center with career consultants who help with major, internship, or full-time job search. All three colleges hire either full-time or part-time professional advisors. The College of Nature and Science hires preprofessional peer advisors. The College of Teacher Education benefits from peer advisors, career peer advisors, and a student tutor. Hence, in the College of Media and Journalism, the Career Center hires only peer career advisors and benefits from them in career consultancy.

All three colleges observe consistency in reaching the institutional learning outcomes, which are to develop students' analytical thinking, cultural understanding, integrated reasoning, and to promote effective citizenship and successful communication. For that reason, they are hiring professional advisors, who provide consistent and continuous support. These adults are able to address the complex and more time-consuming issues that faculty may not be able to due to their focus on teaching, research, and other responsibilities. The professional advisors enable faculty to spend more time in their roles as student mentors. Although professional academic advisors are often considered a primary resource for students and administrators, they cannot be all things to all stakeholders. Consequently, hiring professional advisors requires significant financial commitment from the institution as well.

The College of Teacher Education has four peer advisors who are trained and paid to advise their peers, and the college has also two career peer advisors and a student tutor in the office for undergraduates. They call this type of advising as a first-stage or first-level of advising. In the Office of Undergraduate Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Nature and Science, a team approach to advising is utilized, the office has a peer advisor program and also benefits from faculty advising. The Office of Undergraduate Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Nature and Science calls peer advisors preprofessional peer advisors. The preprofessional peer advisors are hired in the spring semester on the payroll, on an hourly wage. The professional advisors train them. The preprofessional peer advisors do observation shadowing the professional advisors. Their names are on the system and they work with the students who are signed up for a half an hour appointment at a time. Their appointments are recorded. The director oversees them, monitors their work, and provides feedback on their performance. In two departments of this college, faculty are responsible not only for the academic mission and the curriculum of the institution and also for advising. In those departments, faculty are central to how students understand connections between what they learn and the overall purpose of their academic programs.

In the College of Media and Journalism, the centralized Academic and Student Affairs Office use professional advisors to advise undergraduates. The Career Center in this office utilizes peer career advisors to serve undergraduates. Students visit the Career Center in order to begin building a network and seeking a real-world experience. Undergraduates can do it through internship opportunities that are available by means of alumni connections and the resources that are available in the Career Center.

As a whole, these insights from these three colleges can contribute valuable insights to academic advising proceedings in DSU and assist in establishing academic advising system in

HEIs in Azerbaijan. By identifying the most promising structures and practices of an Academic Advising Model that was implemented in DSU, I offer the MoE an adapted academic advising model to be established as a structure in HEIs. Figure 4 below presents a centralized Academic Advising Model. The model will assist HEIs to best ensure the first-year students have equal access to quality studies and academically support them in the future. This model will be adapted from the Student Affairs Office in College of Teacher Education, the College of Nature and Science, and also Academic and Student Affairs Office in the College of Media and Journalism. This model should be a combination of academic services and student affairs that is a centralized advising unit in which professional academic advisors and faculty are housed in one office.
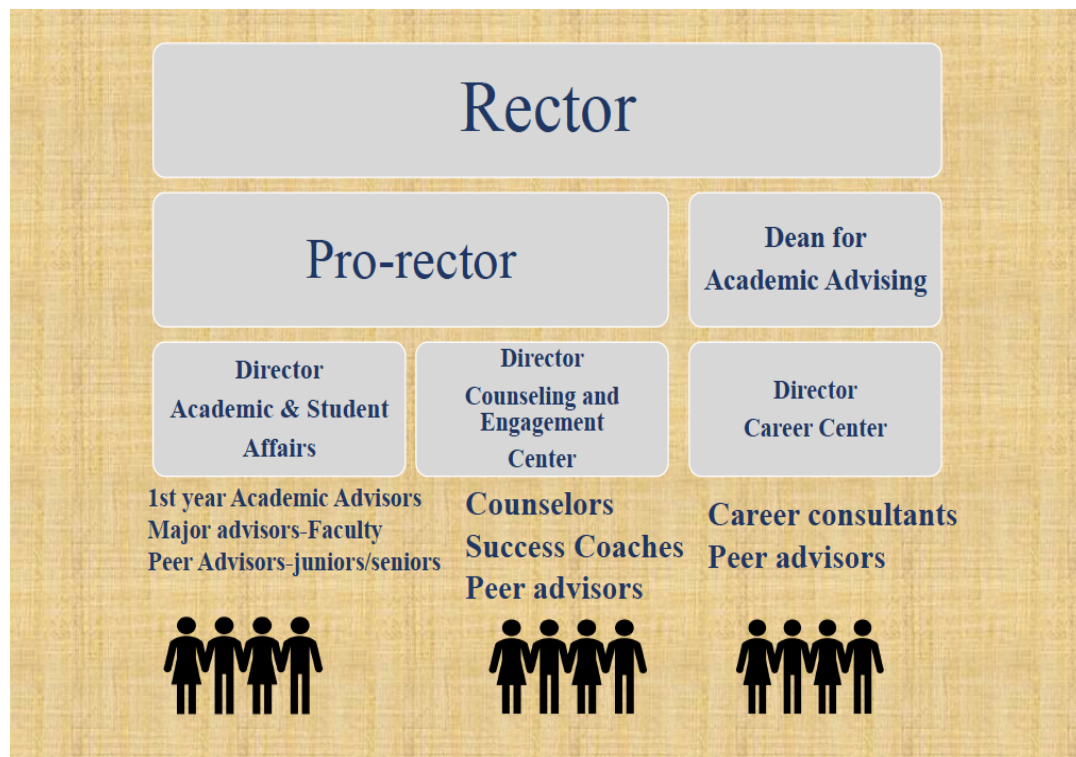

Figure 4. A centralized Academic Advising Model

As none of eight colleges and two programs included in this study mandatorily hire only counselors, they direct undergraduates to the Counseling Center, which is part of Health, Wellness, and Safety, in the Office of Vice President for Students Affairs and Services at DSU. Given that, I have decided to place counselors in the Counseling and Engagement Center in the model I designed. There is a growing tendency to commit suicide among the students at secondary schools and in higher education in Azerbaijan. Obviously, at both education levels students need to benefit from counseling services when they are seeking help but not able to assess the situation, their serious emotional and academic problems, relationship problems, particularly bulling, that is constantly happening. They need adults, who are counselors, who may assist them to adjust their concerns and manage stress and more serious issues ranging from anxiety and depression. Some students in Azerbaijan may face and go through some other issues such as gender identity and substance abuse, which they may hide from their family members and peers because of lacking trust not to be adequately understood. Another big problem that needs to be attended to is the students with disabilities, who actually do not get any assistance during their study time. The only help they receive is provided by their families. The buildings are not adjusted for their disabilities, programs do not embed any instructional adaptable components, and there is not any teaching tool or application that enables this group of students to enroll in higher education institutions, persist, and succeed, especially the ones who live in the remote areas and regions. Even if they do, it is because of their families that are obliged to scarify a lot. The mentioned sensitive issues and problems may negatively influence the first-year students' retention and academic success unless they are timely attended to.

Hence, all academic advisors should have backgrounds in counseling, teaching, or education so that they can advise all majors in the college and offer a tutoring service. The unit should have one or two career advising consultants as well. The unit should have a peer advising

program so juniors and seniors can provide the first-year students assistance and support. I assume peer advisors may positively influence the first-year students' achievements. In fact, peer advisors may help the first-year students change their attitudes towards their studies and improve their behaviors. As students gain knowledge both in and outside the classroom, they need to develop their competencies and diverse skills that enable them to apply knowledge they receive in the classroom in real life. In the local context of Azerbaijan, young people tend to be closer to each other rather than with their parents and other adult members of their families, or faculty and administrators. In this sense, peer advisors' support and assistance may benefit the first-year students' personal, emotional, academic growth and skill-set development as they can find communality in their goals and interests, easily and freely communicate with each other about their wants and needs. They can also discuss sensitive issues that the first-year students cannot share with their family, faculty, or administrators.

Furthermore, the students who come from remote areas and regions and also the students from orphanages need more support and assistance in their first year at college. Those students do not have the opportunity to receive immediate support and assistance from their families as they have to live on their own renting a room or house. In Azerbaijan, most colleges and universities are not residential, and they do not offer any college housing or apartments. Even if they offer dormitories to students, there is almost not any student affairs office or engagement center within them, exception may be ASAU (Azerbaijan State Agrarian University), Nakhchivan State University, ADAU, and Baku Higher Oil School that may have library and some space in the dormitories for students to study after classes. Peer advisors' contributions may help the first-year students become accountable for their personal, social, and academic life during their time at college and work life after graduation. We can see in Figure 4 the Centralized Academic Advising Model housed in one office.

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Azerbaijan is experiencing a big human capital crisis in knowledge and skills. I believe Azerbaijan has a university system, especially old education entities inherited from the former Soviet Union, in which degrees do not necessarily transmit adequate knowledge and skills. Exceptions are newly established UFAZ (French-Azerbaijani University), ADA University, and Baku Higher Oil School that target to assist students in obtaining practical experience along with theoretical knowledge. Although the leadership in the country and also in the higher education system tends to recover substantive teaching and learning happening in these universities, their attempts do not improve the situation to a certain extent. The aforementioned model can be transferred to the Azerbaijan context as long as some specific factors of Azerbaijani culture are considered.

Traditionally, when students transition into higher education, particularly in the first two terms, they do not have adults outside their families to talk to and process the changing world. The changing world positively or negatively impacts their emotional attachments as human beings, their spiritual identities, their daily norms or routines, and their process of thinking. Collective conversations, new discourse patterns, and notion of choice, ambiguity, and time constraints may bring uncertainty and push them out of their comfort zones. First-year students may feel challenged to develop new identities around their new interests and things they are good at and beyond their already possessed ones. As their sense of identity and belonging can be impacted by various factors, including new experiences, new relationships, and environments, their problems may not be fully understood and addressed in their families. It may happen because there is a distance between parents and their children in traditional Azerbaijani families. Consequently, students may emotionally feel alone and not courageous enough to talk to their parents about their needs, concerns, and problems related not only to their well-being but also their studies. They may struggle until they get to the content, think about connections, think close

and beyond, build networks, integrate to a real world of college life, and learn to be self-advocates.

First-year students may get challenged in finding common grounds with the faculty, peers, and the staff in educational entities because of lacking soft and hard skills, not well-developed competencies, attitudes and values. For instance, knowledge of foreign languages may be a big challenge the first-year students, particularly from remote regions, encounter. There may be lack of specific content knowledge in STEM areas, or students may need more in-depth knowledge of math. First-year students may feel challenged in communicating their knowledge and experience because of missing confidence in their own abilities. Due to not well-developed creativity skills first-year students may not succeed in finding multiple or workable solutions to their problems or decisions. Obviously, they may not be ready to stand against bullying happening at secondary schools and in higher education in Azerbaijan, which resulted in two fatal and other suicide attempts lately. First-year students may not keep their personal safety and develop personal resilience. Due to the above-mentioned nuances and barriers, first-year students need people to talk to. Faculty do not have time, they are not much informed or feel qualified enough on university and college policies and procedures, or they are not interested to work with undergraduates outside the classroom. Academic advisors could fill this critical role.

5.5. Directions for the Future Research

Conducting this study, I acknowledged how complicated and decentralized the organizational structure of DSU was. I was cognizant about how it was challenging to reflect on the organization of academic advising within the organization that incorporated various types of colleges and programs. The complexity of such context was because of the long-standing academic advising practice that was delivered in those long-established structures of different types. In addition, the academic advisors and supervisors were aware of changes that were occurring in the academic advising system by a task-force. I did not have the chance to research the practice of shifting undergraduate advising responsibilities from Student Success Coaching Program to colleges that were occurring on campus then. I assume designating Student Success Coaching Program to only advise no-preference/exploratory preference students would yield outcomes that were worth studying. I suppose it would be vital to study the process of designating colleges to hold responsibility for advising all undergraduates. This process may also yield important outcomes that may contribute to improve academic advising system in future.

Because of time constrains and the scope of my research, I was not able to observe how effective or ineffective those changes were, or how the changes affected the academic advisors and supervisors' roles and responsibilities. It would be beneficial for me to research the possible structural changes that might occur, whether the College of Humanities would shift from completely decentralized advising to centralized or the College of Plants, Soil, WildLife Food Industry and Nutrition would attempt to shift from sharing partially centralized and decentralized advising structure to completely centralized as in both colleges supervisors were assured that it may not be possible because of the size and different departments and programs that were in both colleges.

I am certain there is a need for more research on the impact of academic advising models and delivery in student persistence, retention, and a degree completion in a four-year institution. The future studies may be qualitative and quantitative as well and focus on exploring advisors and supervisors' roles and responsibilities within an organizational framework for delivering academic advising services to students from both perspectives in other similar four-year public universities. The qualitative and quantitative research should also be focused on the evaluation of effectiveness of the academic advising programs at different levels: at the department, at the college, on campus, or the institutional level. Such research may contribute to identifying whether the organizational structure does fit for the institution or its student body and faculty. It may also be important to research the effect of task force decisions that impact academic advising organization structure and delivery in four-year public institutions.

5.6. Conclusion

Academic advising has significantly impacted students' personal, educational, and social lives in higher education in the U.S.. Researchers have considered this social institution as the one of the most important factors that has contributed to the first-year students' success, retention, and institutional productivity. It is believed that if the advising programs succeed, they positively impact not only student retention but also increase the number of graduates, which entails the graduates' academic and career goals achievement. The positive influences of academic advising impact on the students' persistence, skill acquisition and development, aspirations and satisfaction of both academic and career decisions, which provides a "road map to completion" (Tinto, 2006, p. 2), and the students gain clarity of expectations and readiness in achieving personal and career goals.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONCENT FORM

Dear research participant,

I, Vafa Yunusova, a doctoral student, kindly request your participation in a doctoral research study. I am conducting a study that investigates the transition into higher education. In particular, I am interested in academic advising and how Michigan State University (MSU) supports students so they can successfully navigate and persist in their freshmen year. I am interviewing academic advisors, academic specialists, and administrators at MSU.

The objectives of this study include:
1. to identify the role of academic advisors/specialists (including, qualifications, knowledge, skills, and experiences) and how advising aids in retention for the diverse group of freshmen students at MSU
2. to ascertain the structures and procedures, strategies and practices, and instruments employed by MSU to help students deal with institutional or academic challenges, feel a sense of belonging, and develop a new identity

If you decide and agree to participate in this study, your involvement will take about one hour of your time. The time and location of the interview will be based on your preference and convenience. You will be participating in a one-on-one interview to share information about your work experiences, perceptions, and interactions with freshmen students at MSU.

Your participation is voluntary. I will keep all information strictly confidential. I will not record your name or include it in the study. I will use a pseudonym in place of your name. Your interview will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy. I will store all recordings in my locked and secure computer. At the conclusion of the study, I will destroy all recordings.

After your interview, I may contact you via e-mail or telephone with follow up questions or for clarification. It would last no more than 10 minutes of your time.

Risks, Discomforts, and Confidentiality:
I believe the risks and discomforts involved in this study are minimal. Yet, you may feel discomfort talking about certain aspects of your career. Additionally, your confidentiality might be breached if you indicate revealing data that might be difficult to mask. To minimize the risk of discomfort, I stress that your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. To reduce the risk of breaching confidentiality, I will replace a participant/s' name/s and the names of any other person referred to with pseudonyms in the interviews, in the transcribed data, in data analysis, and in final reports. In addition, I will not specify any identifying information, such as disciplines or demographics.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw from Study:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty.
Use of Research Results:

I will use the data collected and analyzed in this study in the following ways: (1) for my dissertation to earn my PhD, (2) in scholarly articles for academic journals, (3) in articles for practitioner journals/websites, and (4) during presentations at conferences and institutions.

Institutional Review Board Approval:
MSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research have approved this research study. If you have any concerns or questions about this survey, please contact Vafa Yunusova (yunusova@msu.edu) or Dr. Kristy Cooper Stein (kcooper@msu.edu). Phone: 517-353-5461. 620 Farm Lane, 403 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, or if you would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

Subject's/ Participant's Agreement:
I have read the information provided above and voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I further understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form.

Name of Participant (Print)	Signature of Investigator

Signature of Participant	Date

APPENDIX B: ACADEMIC ADVISOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Professional Identity
1. What position do you hold, and how many years have you been in this position? (P)
2. How do you describe your job and responsibilities? (P, O)
3. Can you tell me about your educational experience and the training or preparation you have received for your current position? (P)
4. Generally speaking, what qualities and competencies do you think are most important for your position? (P)
5. In what ways do you think you are an ideal fit for this role or position? And in what ways, do you think you need to improve? (P)

Organization Structure / Academic Advising
6. What do you see as the purpose of academic advising at MSU, particularly in your college? (O, P)
7. What services does the academic advising system provide? (O)
8. What resources, methods, or techniques are available to provide these services? (O)
9. I'm particularly interested in advising for transfer students and freshman and how you help them be successful. What technologies, resources, and tool/s do you use for advising freshmen? (O, P)
10. What are some of the things transfer students and freshmen need to know to be successful at MSU? (O)
11. What are some of the challenges students face in their freshmen year? (O)
12. In what ways, do you think academic advising help students make a smooth transition to college? (O, P)
13. Can you describe a typical advising meeting? (O, P)
    a. How are academic advising meetings structured?
    b. How do you prepare for an advising meeting beforehand?
    c. Do you only focus on academic issues or do you discuss social issues, personal interests and future career aspirations?
14. Can you describe a situation where you had to work with a low SES student? (O, P)
15. Who helps you with advising issues in challenging situations? (P)
16. Research has identified pragmatic, prescriptive, developmental, proactive/intrusive, appreciative, and dialogic advising styles. Which/what advising style/s do you utilize? (Skip if unfamiliar.) (O, P)
17. How do you know students you advise will be successful with your assistance? (O, P)
18. How is academic advising evaluated at MSU, and particularly in your college? (O)

Community & Communication Among Advisors
19. How do you communicate with your supervisor, your colleagues, and faculty? (C, O)
20. Do you think that communication with other colleagues across the campus change your interests and competencies and how does this communication differ from the communication you do in your department or college? (C, O, P)
21. How do you update your skills? (C, O, P)
22. What kind of professional development opportunities does MSU, particularly your College, provide you? (C, O, P)

23. What working conditions (e.g., collegiate, space, reward, etc.) does MSU, particularly your college, provide you that impact to sustain in this job? (C, O, P)

APPENDIX C: SUPERVISOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Professional Identity

1. What position do you hold, and how many years have you been in this position? (P)
2. How do you describe your job and responsibilities? (P, O)
3. Can you tell me about your educational experience and the training or preparation in academic advising/ academic services you have received for your current position? (P)
4. To what extent were you ready to take this position? How did you feel? Did you feel that you made a right decision? (P, O, C)
5. Generally speaking, what qualities and competencies do you think are most important for the individuals involved in academic advising and services, particularly your position? (P)

Organization Structure / Academic Advising

6. What is the historical context of academic advising at MSU? (O)
7. What is the purpose of academic advising at MSU, particularly in your college? (O)
8. How is the academic advising system structured in your college and across the campus?
   a. Is it centralized, decentralized, or shared?
9. What role does MSU's culture play in academic advising? (O)
10. What services, resources, methods, techniques or tools does the academic advising system provide advisors/specialists? (O)
11. What specific tools or technologies are used with freshmen?
12. Who is the authority to make changes in the academic advising system? (O,C)
13. In what ways do you think the academic advising system, and particularly academic advisors/specialists in your college, help students make a smooth transition to college? (O)
14. Research has identified pragmatic, prescriptive, developmental, proactive/intrusive, appreciative, and dialogic advising styles. Which advising style/s do academic advisors utilize at MSU, particularly in your college? (O, P) (Skip if unfamiliar.)
    a) I am particularly interested in advising transfer and freshmen and which/what advising style/s do you think academic specialist should utilize in order to match freshmen's needs?
15. Do you help academic advisors/specialists with advising issues in challenging situations? If yes, how? (O)
16. Can you describe a typical meeting you conduct with academic advisors/specialists you supervise? (O, P)
    a) How do you structure this meeting?
    b) Is it individually, formally, or informally conducted?
    c) What do you focus on? (academic advising issues, personal interests/matters, academic advisors/specialists' social activities, or future professional development, or career aspirations, etc.)
17. How is academic advising evaluated at MSU, and especially in your college? (O)
18. Who has the authority to make changes in the academic advising system? (O, C)

Community & Communication Among Advisors

19. How do you communicate with academic advisors you supervise and with other administrators across the campus? (C, O)
20. How do you feel your role is valued at MSU, particularly in your college? (C, O)
21. Are you satisfied with contributions you have made to academic advising as an administrator? What are these contributions? (C, P)
22. How do you update your administrative and academic advising skills? (C, O)
23. What kind of professional development opportunities does MSU, particularly your college, provide you and academic advisors you supervise? (C, O)
24. What working conditions (e.g., collegiate, space, reward, etc.) does MSU, particularly your college, provide you and academic advisors you supervise that impact to sustain in this job? (C, O)

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

August 29, 2018

To: Kristy Cooper Stein

Re: **MSU Study ID:** STUDY00001036
        Principal Investigator: Kristy Cooper Stein
        Category: Exempt 1
        Exempt Determination Date: 8/29/2018

Title: Transition into Higher Education: The Role of Academic Advisors,
Administrators and Academic Advising services

This project has been determined to be exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b) 1.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities: The Principal Investigator assumes the
responsibilities for the protection of human subjects in this project as outlined in
Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Manual Section 8-1, Exemptions.

Continuing Review: Exempt projects do not need to be renewed.

Modifications: In general, investigators are not required to submit changes to the
Michigan State University (MSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) once a research
study is designated as exempt as long as those changes do not affect the exempt
category or criteria for exempt determination (changing from exempt status to
expedited or full review, changing exempt category) or that may substantially
change the focus of the research study such as a change in hypothesis or study
design. See HRPP Manual Section 8-1, Exemptions, for examples. If the project is
modified to add additional sites for the research, please note that you may not
begin the research at those sites until you receive the appropriate
approvals/permissions from the sites.

Change in Funding: If new external funding is obtained for an active human
research project that had been determined exempt, a new initial IRB submission will
be required, with limited exceptions.

Reportable Events: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such
as unanticipated problems that may involve risks to subjects or others, or any
problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects and change the category
of review, notify the IRB office promptly. Any complaints from participants that may
change the level of review from exempt to expedited or full review must be reported
to the IRB. Please report new information through the project's workspace and
contact the IRB office with any urgent events. Please visit the Human Research
Protection Program (HRPP) website to obtain more information, including reporting
timelines.

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Regulatory
Affairs**
**Human Research
Protection Program**

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MSU is an affirmative-action,
equal-opportunity employer.

Personnel Changes: After determination of the exempt status, the PI is responsible for maintaining records of personnel changes and appropriate training. The PI is not required to notify the IRB of personnel changes on exempt research. However, he or she may wish to submit personnel changes to the IRB for recordkeeping purposes (e.g. communication with the Graduate School) and may submit such requests by submitting a Modification request. If there is a change in PI, the new PI must confirm acceptance of the PI Assurance form and the previous PI must submit the Supplemental Form to Change the Principal Investigator with the Modification request (http://hrpp.msu.edu/forms).

Closure: Investigators are not required to notify the IRB when the research study is complete. However, the PI can choose to notify the IRB when the project is complete and is especially recommended when the PI leaves the university.

For More Information: See HRPP Manual, including Section 8-1, Exemptions (available at https://hrpp.msu.edu/msu-hrpp-manual-table-contents-expanded).

Contact Information: If we can be of further assistance or if you have questions, please contact us at 517-355-2180 or via email at IRB@ora.msu.edu. Please visit hrpp.msu.edu to access the HRPP Manual, templates, etc.

Exemption Category. This project has qualified for Exempt Category (ies) 1. Please see the appropriate research category below from 45 CFR 46.101(b) for the full regulatory text. [123]

Exempt 1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

Exempt 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Exempt 3. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

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Exempt 4. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Exempt 5. Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

Exempt 6. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

[1]Exempt categories (1), (2), (3), (4), and (5) cannot be applied to activities that are FDA-regulated.
[2] Exemptions do not apply to research involving prisoners.
[3] Exempt 2 for research involving survey or interview procedures or observation of public behavior does not apply to research with children, except for research involving observations of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed.

APPENDIX E: RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How is academic advising organized in a four-year public institution?
2. What structures, procedures, strategies, practices, resources and instruments, if any, do academic advisors utilize in supporting first-year students in making a smooth transition into higher education?
3. What qualifications and skills do academic advisors and their supervisors perceive they have that allow them to help students succeed in higher education?

Based on the research questions the interview questions are designed in the following areas:

P: professional identity
O: organization structure/academic advising
M: community and communication

Academic advisor Interview Protocol	Supervisor Interview Protocol
Professional Identity	Professional Identity
3. What position do you hold, and how many years have you been in this position? (P)	1. What position do you hold, and how many years have you been in this position? (P)
4. How do you describe your job and responsibilities? (P, O) - Job title, everyday responsibilities, number of students you serve	2. How do you describe your job and responsibilities? (P, O) - Job title, everyday responsibilities, number of advisors you supervise
5. Can you tell me about your previous educational experience and the training or preparation you have received for your current position? (P)	3. Can you tell me about your previous educational experience and the training or preparation in academic advising/ academic services you have received for your current position? (P)
6. Generally speaking, what qualities and skills do you think are most important for your position? (P)	4. Generally speaking, what qualities and skills do you think are most important for the individuals involved in academic advising services, particularly your position? (P)
Organization Structure / Academic Advising	Organization Structure / Academic Advising
7. What is the purpose of academic advising at the university? (O)	5. What is the historical context of academic advising at the university? (O)
8. How is academic advising organized for the students you serve here and who provides academic advising? (O, P) - Faculty, professional advisor, or peer advisor	6. What is the purpose of academic advising at the university? (O)
9. Who supervises you, what is the title of your supervisor? Who does your supervisor report to: academic services, student affairs, or other? (O, P)	7. How is the academic advising system structured across the campus? (O) a. Is it centralized, decentralized, or shared?
10. What resources, methods, techniques or tools does the academic advising system at the university provide advisors? (O)	8. What role does the university's culture play in academic advising? (O)
11. How do you learn about the resources, methods, or techniques that are available on campus? (O, P)	9. How is academic advising is organized for the students you serve here and who provides academic advising? (O, P) - Faculty, professional advisor, or peer advisor
12. How do you get access to the resources, methods, or techniques on campus? (O, P)	10. Who supervises you, what is the title of your supervisor? Who does your supervisor report to: academic services, student affairs, or other? (P, O)
13. What services does the academic advising system provide student here? (O)	11. What services does the academic advising system provide student here? (O)

14. What services, resources, methods, or techniques are available to provide academic advising to adjust to students' needs? (O)
 	
15. What services, resources, methods, or techniques are most helpful in advising students? (O, P)
 	
16. I'm particularly interested in advising for first-year students. How do you help them and what technologies, resources, and tool/s do you use for advising freshmen? (O, P)
 	
17. What percentage of your time do you spend advising first-year students? (O, P)
 	
18. In what ways do you think the academic advising system, and particularly you as an academic advisor here help students make a smooth transition to college? (O)
 	
19. Can you describe a typical advising meeting? (O, P)
  a. How are academic advising meetings structured?
  b. How do you prepare for an advising meeting beforehand?
  c. Do you only focus on academic issues or do you discuss social issues, personal interests and future career aspirations?
 	
20. Who helps you with advising issues in challenging situations? (O, P)
 	
21. How is academic advising evaluated at the university, and particularly how are you evaluated? (O, P)
 	
Community & Communication Among Advisors
22. How do you communicate with your supervisor, your colleagues, and faculty? Is there any online tool for conducting this communication? (C, O, P)
 	
23. How do you feel your role is valued at the university, particularly here? (C, O, P)
 	
24. Are you satisfied with contributions you have made to academic advising as an academic advisor who serves students, particularly first-year students? What are these contributions? (C, O, P)
 	
25. How does the academic advising system at the university assist you in updating your qualifications and skills and improving services, resources, methods, or techniques and tools? (C, O, P)
 	
26. What kind of professional development opportunities does the university, particularly your supervisor provide you here? (C, O, P)
	12. What resources, methods, or techniques are available to provide these services to adjust to students' needs? (O)
	
	13. What services, resources, methods, techniques or tools does the academic advising system the university provide advisors? (O)
	
	14. What specific tools or technologies are used with first-year students here? (O)
	
	15. How do academic advisors you supervise learn about these tools and resources and how do they get access to them? (C, O)
	
	16. In what ways do you think the academic advising system, and particularly academic advisors here help students make a smooth transition to college? (O)
	
	17. Do you help academic advisors with advising issues in challenging situations? If yes, how? (O)
	
	18. Can you describe a typical meeting you conduct with academic advisors you supervise? (O, P)
	  a. How do you structure this meeting?
	  b. Is it individually, formally, or informally conducted?
	  c. What do you focus on? (academic advising issues, personal interests/matters, academic advisors' social activities, or future professional development, or career aspirations, etc.)
	
	19. How is academic advising evaluated at MSU, and particularly how are you evaluated? (O, P)
	
	20. Who is the authority to make changes in the academic advising system at the university, particularly here? (O)
	
	Community & Communication Among Advisors
	21. How do you communicate with academic advisors you supervise and with other administrators across the campus? Is there any online tool for conducting this communication? (C, O, P)
	
	22. How do you feel your role is valued at the university, particularly here? (C, O, P)
	
	23. Are you satisfied with contributions you have made to academic advising as an administrator who supervises academic advisors? What are these contributions? (C, P)
	
	24. How does the university assist you in updating your administrative and academic advising skills? (C, O, P)
	
	25. What kind of professional development opportunities does the university, particularly you provide academic advisors you supervise? (C, O, P)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Questions	Interview Questions	
	Academic advisors	Supervisors
1. How is academic advising organized in a four-year public institution?	P1, P2, O5, O6, O7, O8, O9, O10, O11, O12, O13, O14, O15, O16, O17, O18, O19, O20, O21, O22, O23, O24	P1, P2, O5, O6, O7, O8, O9, O10, O11, O12, O13, O14, O15, O16, O17, O18, O19, O20,O21
2. What structures, procedures, strategies, practices, resources and instruments, if any, do academic advisors utilize in supporting first-year students in making a smooth transition into higher education?	O8, O9, O10, O11, O12, O13, O14, O15, O16, O17,O18	O11, O12, O13, O14, O15, O16, O17, O18
3. What qualifications and skills do academic advisors and their supervisors perceive they have that allow them to help students succeed in higher education?	P3, P4, O18, O19, O20, O23 C21, C22, C23, C24	P3, P4, O18, O19, C21, C22, C23, C24, C25

APPENDIX F: CODE MAPPING: THREE ITERATIONS OF ANALYSIS

(to be read from the bottom up)

Code Mapping for the Structure and Practice of Academic
Advising in
a Public Research University

(Research Questions: 1, 2, and 3)

RQ#1: How is academic advising organized in a four-year public institution?	RQ#2: What structures, procedures, strategies, practices, resources and instruments, if any, do academic advisors utilize in supporting first-year students in making a smooth transition into higher education?	RQ#3: What qualifications and skills do academic advisors and their supervisors perceive they have that allow them to help students succeed in higher education?

(THIRD ITERATION: APLICATION TO DATA SET)

(SECOND ITERATION: PATTERN VARIABLES)

1A. organization structure 1B. organization culture 1C. advising culture	2A. advising model and delivery 2B. resources and tools 2C. communication, networking, and community	3A. professional identity and professional background 3B. qualifications, skills, and competencies 3C. professional development

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(FIRST ITERATION: INITIAL CODES/SURFACE CONTENT ANALYSIS)

1A. organization structure 1A. access 1A. confidentiality 1A. purpose 1A. context 1A. hierarchy 1A. leadership 1A. change/authority 1B. culture 1B. recognition 1B. reward 1B. evaluation	2A. advising model 2A. advisor types 2A. advising styles 2A. academic advising delivery 2A. AOP 2A. First-year seminars 2A. Summer programs 2A. onboarding 2A. meeting structure 2B. on line resources 2B. on campus resources 2C. support	3A. professional identity 3A. primary responsibility 3A. background/preparation 3B. qualifications 3B. professional skills 3B. transferrable skills 3B. intrapersonal skills 3C. professional development 3C. degree pursuing 3C. conferences

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	2C. services 2C. advising resources 2C. advising tools 2D. communication 2D. feeling 2D. contribution 2D. opportunities 2E. community 2E. network 2E. committees 2E. collaboration 2E. local and national associations

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