Describing Undergraduate Students’ Perceptions of Academic Advising Practices in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

DISSERTATION

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By

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Abstract

Academic advising is an integral part of the college experience. Outcomes of academic advising may be more critical than realized by either advisors or advisees. Studies have been compiled to suggest that meaningful and developmental contact with advisors promotes student success (Johnson & Wang, 2011; Kuh, 2008; Tuttle, 2000). However, a review of literature was used to reveal that students are dissatisfied with their academic advising, and that an extensive need exists to educate and train academic advisors on methods needed for establishing effective advising for college students. Therefore, the purpose of this descriptive-correlational study was to describe current undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising practices within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University.

The theoretical foundation for this study included two theories of student development. Perry’s (1970) Theory of College Student Intellectual Development was used to describe how college students progress through three major stages of thought in their cognitive development. Chickering’s (1969) Seven Vectors of Student Development Theory was used to identify seven vectors along which college students continually develop.
The researcher-designed questionnaire in this study contained 20 Likert-scale items that originated from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The researcher employed an online survey provider for data collection.

Analyses of the results indicated that academic advisors in CFAES were providing good quality advising to their undergraduate advisees. Academic advisors in CFAES were rated positively in regards to their relationships with undergraduate advisees. Students reported that advisors were available, and provided accurate and up-to-date information when it was needed. It was also found that the institution provided good quality academic advising to undergraduate students in CFAES, as well as provided support to help students succeed academically through academic advising.

Analyses of the results also identified areas of improvement for academic advising practices in CFAES. Academic advisors in CFAES are advising only half of their assigned undergraduate advisees, while half of the students indicated they were using sources other than their assigned advisor for advising needs. It was also reported that academic advisors in CFAES do not tend to discuss career plans with undergraduate advisees.

It was concluded that undergraduate students in CFAES were generally satisfied with the quality of academic advising they received at the college and the institution. Relationships indicated that the more frequent contact advisees have
with their advisors, the more likely they were to be satisfied with the advising practices and engaged in enriching educational experiences.

Recommendations included providing academic advisor training for new faculty members to inform them of the policies, procedures, and effective practices in academic advising. A second recommendation was for the college to conduct professional development opportunities for faculty members who serve as advisors to update them on the current research and advising practices. Further recommendations included to assess the effectiveness of advisors by using student feedback and to encourage advisors to maintain regular office hours and offer varied modes of contact with advisees.
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Fields of Study

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” -Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States of America

Institutions of higher education are in the business of preparing minds for the future. Providing students with the knowledge, resources, and critical thinking skills necessary to enter the professional world and make a positive contribution to society, are among a few of the overall objectives of post-secondary institutions. The African proverb, it takes a village to raise a child, expresses how extended family and friends support parents in the rearing of children; likewise, it takes a campus to develop a student.

The wisdom and encouragement from many teachers and mentors contribute to the preparation of students for their journeys through life. In the world of postsecondary education, the team of professionals who contribute to the growth and development of one student can be vast. Professors, human resource
representatives, teaching associates, residence hall supervisors, and financial aid
counselors can all have a lasting impact on the experiences of postsecondary
students who are developing the skills and abilities to succeed after college.
Among the most important campus influences in building young minds for the
future, however, is the students’ academic advisor. Few experiences in students’
post-secondary career have as much potential for influencing their development as
does academic advising (National Association of Academic Advising Statement
of Core Value of Academic Advising, 2008).

Academic advisors are important members of students’ postsecondary
education; they are among the first people new students encounter, and they are
the people with whom students often have frequent interaction throughout the first
year (Kuh, 2008). Playing a critical role in a student’s academic career makes
academic advisors “arguably the most important person in the student’s education
world” (Lowenstein, 2005, p. 72). Academic advisors may meet with students,
both new and experienced, to discuss a wide array of topics. Advising sessions,
for example, can be used to teach newcomers about campus culture--the
traditions, rituals, and practices that communicate how and why things are done in
a particular way at the school (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Advisors can also provide
information on coursework, degree programs, graduation requirements, and
general life advice to help develop students for the future. Regardless of why a
student seeks communication with an academic advisor, research has been used to
indicate that “the quality of academic advising is the single most powerful
predictor of satisfaction with the campus environment for students at four-year
schools” (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2005, p. 73). Institutions must
deliver quality academic advising for students to not only provide them with the
necessary information to successfully complete a degree program, but to also
afford them the opportunity to grow and develop personally and professionally.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) reported that in
2005, the vast majority of students (88%) took advantage of academic advising at
some point during their first year of college (Kuh, 2008). Students are seeking out
the advice and guidance of academic advisors to make successful transitions into
postsecondary education. However, Hagen and Jordan (2008) stated that colleges
generally do not require a specific degree in order to practice advising. In
addition, “national studies of student satisfaction indicate that advising is an
aspect of college with which students are the least satisfied” (Low, 2000, p. 68).
Perhaps the simplistic explanation to this phenomenon is that postsecondary
research institutions heavily weight “faculty member’s productivity in
grantsmanship and scholarship in adjudicated journals and books, with relatively
less emphasis given to teaching, institutional service, and advising undergraduate
students” (Kuhn, 2008, p. 8). The question, then, that higher education must ask
is, if undergraduate students are actively seeking advice and guidance from
academic advisors, why are they not satisfied with the services that their tuition entitles them to receive in order to build them for success in the future?

Need for the Study

Academic advisors in college and university environments play an important role in the positive development of advisees. “Advisors help students develop a perception of themselves and their relationship to the future…teaching them [advisees] to value the learning process, put the college experience into perspective, become more responsible, set priorities, evaluate sequences of events, and be honest with themselves.” (Upcraft, 1995, p. 174). As Upcraft discussed in his 1995 study of advising, academic advising is a relationship and does not equate to merely scheduling courses. Upcraft advocated that advisors would need to provide more interaction with advisees beyond registering them for classes if they wished to cultivate positive development of these students.

In addition to the growing responsibilities of developing students, the cost of higher education has tended to steadily increase. Thus, “students are being asked to pay more and more, and they justifiably will expect more” (Upcraft, 1995, p. 164). Abghari (2007) suggested that a new and innovative look at advising is needed at institutions of higher education in order to serve the diverse needs of students and to make these institutions more effective in developing students. A review of research revealed that students want and expect an advisor
who serves as a good resource person, who is available and well-prepared, who facilitates growth and transition, who listens to problems and anticipates student needs, and who is genuinely concerned with student welfare (Upcraft, 1995). As in any successful business, customers, in this case advisees, should receive the product in which they are paying, at the level of quality at which they are expecting.

Ultimately, the success or failure of higher education is not explained by student attributes or faculty teaching in isolation, but by the complex interactions between students and the learning environments they experience (Entwistle, 1990). Students are in need of comprehensive advising, counseling, and support services (Johnson and Wang, 2011). Mentoring and out-of-class contact with faculty members results in positive outcomes for students (McKinney, Vacca, Medvedeva, & Malak, 2004). The demands of academic advisors has changed and evolved from simplistic beginnings of scheduling classes to include a wide array of tasks and expectations set forth by both students and institutions to meet the growing needs of those being advised in today’s higher education environments. Institutions of higher education are challenged now more than ever to focus on the needs of clients, especially its students (Jones, 2003), and advisors are the personnel on the frontlines who are frequently challenged to meet these new and changing requirements. However, before advisors can be expected to provide effective and efficient services to their advisees, they must be able to describe
current student perceptions of the advising practices they are receiving, and then be able to modify advising approaches to best fit their situations.

Statement of Problem

Academic advising is an integral part of the college experience. Outcomes of academic advising may be more critical than realized by either the advisors or advisees. Quality academic advising assists students in life and in career goal clarification, as well as in the short-term goals of course selection and problem-solving (Kozloff, 1985). Studies have been compiled to suggest that meaningful and developmental contact with advisors promotes student success (Johnson & Wang, 2011; Kuh, 2008; Tuttle, 2000), and forms the most critical relationship on campus for students. For the faculty and staff in higher education, academic advising is often an institutional duty owed to their students. However, a review of literature was used to reveal: (a) that students nationally are dissatisfied with their academic advising, and (b) that an extensive need exists to educate and train academic advisors on methods needed for establishing effective advising for college and university students. Is this true for the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University? There is very little empirical data available in which to answer the question.

Before the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University can implement training for advisors, a student
perception study must be conducted to inform the development of a training plan that meets students’ needs. Institutions of higher education need to be made aware of the limitations and concerns of their current academic advising practices in order to modify current procedures to better meet the needs of the students they are serving.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive-correlational study was to describe current undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising practices within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University. The Ohio State University was undergoing a massive institutional transition from academic quarters to semesters. The university transition lends itself to an opportunity to make changes, modifications, and improvements to current university, college, and department-wide policies and procedures, including those related to academic advising. Describing the perceptions of undergraduate students in relation to academic advising practices is critical for providing the pertinent information for restructuring advising programs and agendas for the college.

This study aligned with the American Association of Agricultural Education’s (AAAE) 2011-2015 National Research Agenda, priority four: meaningful and engaged learning. The key outcome of priority four states that
research is needed to achieve the goal of having learners in all agricultural education learning environments actively and emotionally engaged in learning, resulting in high levels of achievement, life and career readiness, and professional success (2012). The design, development, and assessment of meaningful learning environments that produce positive learner outcomes are essential to properly educating the citizens of the 21st century (AAAE, 2012). Academic advising is an extension of the teaching role in higher education (Campbell, 2008; Eble, 1988; Hemwall & Trachte, 2003); and when designed, developed, and assessed well, advising plays a critical role in connecting students with learning opportunities that support engagement and the attainment of higher student achievement.

Theoretical Framework

The knowledge of many theories can and do enrich the practice of academic advising (Grites & Gordon, 2009) and can provide academic advisors with a better understanding of students’ widely different views of seemingly similar situations (Williams, 2007). The researcher in this study chose to utilize Perry’s Theory of College Student Intellectual Development (cognitive-structural development) and Chickering’s Seven Vectors of Student Development Theory (psychosocial development) to serve as the theoretical foundations of knowledge to describe the inquiry at hand.
Perry’s (1970) Theory of College Student Intellectual Development describes how college students progress through three major stages of thought in their cognitive development: (1) dualism, (2) multiplicity, and (3) relativism. Students who are at the dualism stage believe that there is a single right answer to all questions. Students in the multiplicity stage of development believe knowledge is just an opinion and students and faculty are both equally entitled to believe their own opinions. Students in the multiplicity stage may rebel at faculty criticisms of their work (Perry, 1970). The third major stage of the continuum is the relativism stage. Students at this stage of development recognize that opinions are based on values, experiences, reflection, and knowledge (Perry, 1970).

Chickering’s (1969) Seven Vectors of Student Development Theory identified seven vectors along which students continually develop: (1) developing competence, (2) managing emotions, (3) moving through autonomy toward interdependence, (4) developing mature interpersonal relationships, (5) establishing identity, (6) developing purpose, and (7) developing integrity. Vectors are not stages, but areas in which students evolve. Students may progress along multiple vectors at one time, as well as revisit vectors.

The use of two different developmental theories, cognitive-structural and psychosocial, were used to gain a wider understanding of student development in academic advising. Academic advising can and should integrate many theories
and frameworks into its practice to develop a deeper understanding of the students being served.

Conceptual Framework

To show the relationships of different constructs being investigated, the researcher identified a pathway to Increased Undergraduate Student Achievement Through Academic Advising (Figure 1.1). The conceptual framework model begins with a solid foundation of a description of students’ perceptions of the current academic advising practices. Before changes can be recommended or implemented, the current status of the present-day advising program, from the students’ perspective, must be known. From there a strong understanding of the knowledge and research in academic advising is needed to improve advising practices. The next step is the development of an academic advising vision that is shared, adopted, and practiced by faculty members, academic advisors, and administrative personnel who make decisions related to advising policies and procedures. The vision should be imbedded in the mission statement of both the college and institution. After the creation of an academic advising vision rises the development of a college-wide academic advising infrastructure which includes: (1) research-based practices employed by academic advisors within the college, (2) competent advisors who are able to meet the needs of undergraduate students in the college, (3) an assessment plan in which students can give timely feedback
on the academic advising services they receive, and (4) a support and recognition system from the institution, as well as the individual departments within the college, to encourage effective advising practices. The interrelationships among the three lower constructs lead to an improved academic advising system within the college, which in turn leads to increased student achievement among undergraduate students. All outcomes of the lower constructs give attention to best practices and focus upward to student achievement. The conceptual framework model illustrates the importance of establishing a solid academic advising foundation, supported by research and proven practices, in order to sustain an effective college-wide advising system that emphasizes student success.
Figure 1.1. Pathway to Increased Undergraduate Student Achievement through Academic Advising

Research Objectives

The research objectives guiding this study were to:

(1) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of college/departmental academic advising;

(2) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising relationships with faculty members;
(3) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ intentions to complete enriching educational experiences through academic advising;

(4) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of institutional support through academic advising;

(5) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ intentions to complete enriching educational experiences with faculty members in general;

(6) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ demographic characteristics;

(7) Describe relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices.

Definition of Terms

The definitions below provide an explanation of how each term was used as it appears in the study. The list was meant to provide the boundaries which the researcher maintained in order to retain consistency throughout the study.

Constitutive Definitions

Academic advisor: Academic advisor refers to an institutional representative who gives insight or direction to a college student about an academic, social, or personal matter (Kuhn, 2008). Can also be referenced as advisor or adviser.

Academic rank: Academic rank refers to a student’s grade level based on the number of credit hours they have successfully completed and recorded (The Ohio State University, 2012).
Advisee: An advisee is a student who has final responsibility for all decisions made related to their academics. The student is responsible for: (1) seeking advice and assistance from an academic advisor; (2) knowing university rules and regulations; (3) checking their university email accounts for university communications; and (4) maintaining accurate personal information (address, phone, etc.) on the university system (High Point University, 2012).

Advising: Advising involves helping students develop a realistic self-perception and helping them transition successfully to the postsecondary institution (National Academic Advising Association, 2011).

Counselor: Those who are trained in a graduate-level program to provide personal counseling and related services (Kuhn, Gordon, & Webber, 2006).

Faculty advisor: A faculty advisor is an educator who is considered an expert in their discipline and is knowledgeable about specific courses within their divisions. Faculty advisors are also knowledgeable about educational and career opportunities in their areas of concentration (University of Pittsburg, 2008).

Faculty member: A faculty member is an educator who works at a college or university (Merriam-Webster, 2012).

Professional academic advisor: Professional advisor refers to an individual who has been hired to focus primarily on academic advising activities that promote academic success. Professional advisors typically have received training to work in their professional position (Self, 2008).

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Operational Definitions

*Perceptions of academic advising:* will be measured by the frequency counts and means of the total responses on the questionnaire, based on a four-point response scale rating the level of quality of advising given a numerical value ranging from 1= poor to 4= excellent.

*Perceptions of advising relationships with faculty members:* will be measured by the frequency counts and means of the total responses on the questionnaire, based on a four-point response scale rating the frequency of communication given a numerical value ranging from 1= never to 4 = very often.

*Students’ intentions to complete enriching educational activities:* will be measured by the frequency counts and means of the total responses on the questionnaire based on a four-point response scale rating the level of intent given a numerical value ranging from 1= not decided to 4= done.

*Perceptions of institutional support:* will be measured by the frequency counts and means of the total responses on the questionnaire based on a four-point response scale rating the level of support given a numerical value ranging from 1= very little to 4= very much.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledged limitations in this study resulting from the methodologies and procedures employed. The first limitation recognized by the
researcher was that the subjects used in this study were a population of students in a college of food, agricultural, and environmental sciences at a large, Midwestern land grant institution. It should be conceded that this limitation affects how the conclusions can be generalized to other populations.

The researcher acknowledged that the collection of data was also a limitation. Data were collected during the spring quarter. Spring quarter, although it allows students to reflect on an entire year’s worth of academic advising, is typically a hectic quarter in the college environment. Students were actively involved in year-end banquets, community service events, and were submerged in the process of applications and interviews for scholarships, graduation, internships, and jobs, all of which are demanding of students’ time. It should be disclosed that this limitation may have affected the response rate of the survey.

Additionally, data were collected during the last quarter-based academic term in the university’s history. Students were asked their perceptions of academic advising at both the college and institutional levels, all while preparing to make this significant academic transition. Some students may have felt apprehensive about the change from quarter-based terms to semester-based terms and their anxiety may not have reflected an accurate perception of their overall advising experiences. It should be acknowledged that the context and conditions of the academic environment during the data collection were unique to this monumental university transition.
The survey instrument provided an additional limitation for this study. The items in the survey instrument were used verbatim from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE is a standardized instrument used nationally and globally to gather data on student engagement at institutions of higher education. The questions derived from NSSE are worded in general terms to accommodate the differences across a multitude of institutions. Thus, the wording in the survey instrument was not specific to The Ohio State University, nor the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

Lastly, data were collected using an online survey provider. Students received email notifications inviting them to participate in the survey, reminders to complete the survey, and other correspondences sent through the survey provider to their university-provided account. A limiting factor could have been that the spam filters on email accounts may have deterred messages from being delivered to the recipients’ inboxes and inadvertently delivered them to the junk-box instead. This limitation was more likely to occur if students had their university email linked to transfer messages to a different email account. It should be recognized that students may have been unintentionally and involuntarily opted-out of the data collection due to this limitation.
Delimitations

The delimitations of this study established the periphery between what was included in this research study and what was not included in this research study. The purpose of the study was to gain a description of the current undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising practices within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University. The study was designed to focus on a population of undergraduate students enrolled in the college. The study was not intended to describe graduate students’ perceptions within the college, nor any student enrolled in majors outside the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Additionally, this study was not conducted to describe the reasons why undergraduate students did or did not seek academic advising, but rather to describe their perceptions of the advising services they received for unidentified reasons.

Summary

Chapter One was designed to guide the reader through the introduction of a study that described the current undergraduate students’ perceptions of the academic advising practices within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University. Although the results of the
study were not intended to be generalized to a population outside of the research subjects, the results may further develop lines of inquiry into academic advising of undergraduate students in this and similar institutions of higher learning.

The results of this study can be beneficial to academic advisors, as well as institutions of higher education as a whole. Practicing academic advisors can use the findings to lead them to reflect upon their personal philosophies and methods of advising, and what consequences their discourse may have on student learning outcomes. Institutions of higher education can use the findings of this study to base their line of research on undergraduate academic advising, as well as to encourage academic advisors within the institution to be aware of the relationships between academic advising and overall student experiences, student achievement, and student satisfaction with the institution.

Additionally, the results of this study will be useful in the professional development of academic advisors. Persons responsible for providing training and education of advisors can use the findings to create awareness about the impact of academic advising on undergraduate students across colleges and institutions to positively impact current and future students in higher education.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Academic advising is a critical service for students in higher education. The 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) found that the more frequent contact students had with academic advisors, the greater their self-reported gains in personal and social development, practical competence, and general education. The models and styles of academic advising vary and are nearly as diverse as the students being served in higher education today. Despite the different approaches of academic advising, the duty of advising is the “stalwart soldier of American higher education” (Hunter & White, 2004, p. 25), providing the pathway for student success. Hunter and White advocated advising as a powerful strategy for managing in an era of shrinking resources and rising expectations that has actually been available in various guises for centuries. Academic advising will not cease in importance as higher education becomes more accessible and available for students; it will only continue to become more significant and vital for the success of students and institutions in the competitive world of higher education.
Theoretical Framework

Advancing the place of academic advising in higher education will require practice that integrates theory and research. A theory is an explanation of how something works. Theories allow someone to describe a process and to predict future events under a given circumstance” (Kuhn, 2008, p. 13). No single theory can accurately explain academic advising as a whole, just as not one theory can explain the entire field of medicine, law, or teaching. “Any one theory alone may have its limitations; but the use of an array of theories will lead to an understanding of this broadly complicated phenomenon known as academic advising” (Hagen & Jordan, 2008, p. 17). Among the multiple theories that provide a foundation for effective academic advising are those of student development, cognitive development, career development, multiculturalism, moral development, learning, personality, and adult development. Attempts to create one theory of academic advising have not been successful. Advisors should be grounded in multiple theories, but not reliant upon a single theoretical perspective (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). The knowledge of many theories can and do enrich the practice of academic advising (Grites & Gordon, 2009) and can provide academic advisors with a better understanding of students’ widely different views of seemingly similar situations (Williams, 2007). As an academic advisor comes to know more about a student, an individualized and complex mosaic evolves—a mosaic that may result in overlap, confusion, or even conflict
among multiple theoretical perspectives; it is one thing to advise an adult student, but as different functions are introduced into the advising relationship, complexity increases and advisor certainty decreases (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). Theories have multiplied and diversified to the extent that advisors face a theoretical conundrum. In order to focus the scope of this study, the researcher chose to utilize Perry’s Theory of College Student Intellectual Development (cognitive-structural development) and Chickering’s Seven Vectors of Student Development Theory (psychosocial development) to serve as the theoretical foundations of knowledge to describe the inquiry at hand.

**Perry’s Theory of College Student Intellectual Development**

Perry’s classic model of intellectual development theory among college students formed as a result of his research in the 1960s and 1970s. Perry grounded his research and theory on cognitive-structural works, including the work of Piaget. Cognitive-structural research focuses on how the mind’s structures are viewed one at a time, always in the same order, regardless of cultural conditions, age, and rate at which the person travels through each sequential stage (Perry, 1970). Perry’s theory puts meaning behind how college students come to understand knowledge and describes how students rely on authority of others to define knowledge, before they learn how to define it for themselves.

Perry’s Theory of College Student Intellectual Development describes how college students progress through three major stages of thought in their
cognitive development: (1) dualism, (2) multiplicity, and (3) relativism. Students who are at the dualism stage believe that there is a single right answer to all questions. This stage is often referred to as the black/white or either/or stage. Knowledge is delivered by advisors and teachers, while students take notes, memorize, and lack independent thinking (Perry, 1981). Students in the multiplicity stage of development believe knowledge is just an opinion and students and faculty are both equally entitled to believe their own opinions. Students in the multiplicity stage may rebel at faculty criticisms of their work (Perry, 1981). The third major stage of the continuum is the relativism stage. Students at this stage of development recognize that opinions are based on values, experiences, reflection, and knowledge (Perry, 1981). Within the three major stages, Perry described a continuum of nine total positions that students move from: position one consists of basic duality, while position nine is one of maturity where a person has developed a sense of self in both commitments and style (Wankat & Oreovicz, 1993). Students will pass through the stages in a predictable sequence of epistemological growth (Perry, 1970). Each stage will be met in hierarchal order and provide the cognitive foundation for growth on the next level. Academic advisors must recognize that students cannot understand or answer questions which are, in a developmental sense, too far above them (Wankat & Oreovicz, 1993).
Perry’s cognitive-structural theory describes how learners move from viewing truth in absolute terms of right versus wrong to recognizing multiple, conflicting versions of truth that exist. The Perry model holds much explanatory power in suggesting how students make sense out of the information, theories, experiences, and opinions that confront them in college (Troup, 2011), and sheds light on student perspectives that may be different from academic advisors and college teachers. Developmental theorists, such as Perry, describe cognitive development as a series of positions in which students progress during their journey through higher education. Perry’s Theory of College Student Intellectual Development is a long-standing, scientifically valid and reliable theory used to better grasp the concepts of academic advising in higher education.

**Chickering’s Seven Vectors of Student Development**

Chickering’s Theory of Student Development has been a prominent theory used in developmental advising over the decades. Chickering based his original framework from the belief that as students encounter differentiation, integration, and increased complexity of their ideas and values, they struggle to reconcile their new thoughts with their old beliefs (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Grounding his theory of student development in the psychosocial realm, Chickering (1969) examined the content of development, the important issues people face as their lives progress, such as how to define themselves, their relationships with others, and what to do with their lives. Chickering emphasized the importance of
developing interpersonal competence, the ability to work cooperatively and productively with others, and of recognizing and accepting interdependence as an essential reality of living (Troup, 2011). In 1993, Chickering updated his theory with the assistance of Reisser, but the process of students moving through seven vectors of development remained the same.

Chickering’s Theory of Student Development identified seven vectors along which students continually develop. Vectors are not stages, but areas in which students evolve. Students may progress along multiple vectors at one time, as well as revisit vectors. As a result of this pattern of development, Chickering (1970) argued that vectors may be better conceived by a spiral or steps rather than a straight line. The seven vectors represent seven significant areas of challenge, development, and growth throughout the college years. The first vector is achieving competence, which focuses on students increasing their cognitive, affective, and physical skills. Managing emotions is another vector, where students learn to “control impulses and to develop appropriate responses” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 21). Third is moving through autonomy toward interdependence. Students learn to be self-sufficient, responsible, and make decisions without assistance. Developing mature-interpersonal relationships is the fourth vector. Students create and maintain diverse relationships in respect to others. The fifth vector focuses on developing a sense of self, shared by historical events, social and cultural conditions, and issues from ethnic heritage (Pascarella
& Terenzini, 2005). Development along the sixth vector occurs as an individual answers not only the question *who am I?*, but also, *who am I going to be?*, and *where am I going to go?* (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The seventh vector focuses on values and beliefs with the emerging identity of the student. Chickering argued that as students progress through the seven vectors, they become less dependent on others and promote their own development.

Chickering’s seven vectors of student development is a complex, interdependent process that can continue beyond the scope of an undergraduate degree. However, understanding the development of undergraduate students allows advisors to be more proactive in anticipating student issues and to be more responsive to concerns that arise (Williams, 2007). The seven vectors represent significant areas of growth and development during the college years. The needs and perspectives of students change as they develop, specifically their relationships with others and their influence of others.

The theoretical foundations of both Perry and Chickering were used to establish a framework of student development in academic advising for this study. Developmental theories provide a framework for how students develop and grow throughout the college years. A common theme in developmental theories is the reduced dependence on others for information, values, beliefs, and a sense of self. Academic advisors recognize that academic advising is not limited to any one theoretical perspective and that practice is informed by a variety of theories from
the fields of social sciences, the humanities, and education (National Academic Advising Association, 2011).

History of Academic Advising

Students in higher education today are familiar with the term academic advising, even if they do not take advantage of its services. Institutions of higher education have offered academic advising opportunities for students as far back as the early 1800s, and advising has continued to evolve to meet the growing and transforming needs of students throughout the decades.

Ohio has been acknowledged with establishing the foundations of academic advising in America. In the late 1820s, Kenyon College introduced the first known formal system of advising. Each student was teamed with a faculty member who served as the student’s advisor (Cook, 1999). In 1876, the first faculty advising occurred at Johns Hopkins University and in 1888 freshmen advisors were appointed at Harvard (Martin, 2006). By the late 1930s, most colleges and universities developed an organized and formalized academic advising system, which focused solely on the academic aspects of student life (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011; Tuttle, 2000). After the passage of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (commonly known as the G.I. Bill), higher education became a possibility for students from a variety of backgrounds and age groups. As women, multicultural students, students with disabilities, and
transition students began to matriculate, institutions of higher education responded with changes in their approach to student support services, such as academic advising (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011).

By the 1950s, federal funding for education resulted in an emphasis on accommodating new student populations. Colleges and universities began implementing freshmen orientation programs, which included advising services for new students. However, according to national surveys dating back from this time period, academic advising has been one of the college experiences rated lowest in student satisfaction (Allen & Smith, 2008). The discontentment of students and an increase in student numbers made the decade of the 1960s a critical period of transition from the traditional prescriptive relationship between the advisor and students toward a developmental process that rapidly gained acceptance in higher education (Crookston, 1972). From this timeframe, numerous theories in educational and social sciences have provided fundamental changes in academic advising.

In the early 1970s, the idea to move away from a top-down model of dispersing academic advising information to a different approach took hold. This concept prompted Crookston and O’Banion to link advising to theories of student development and to use those ideas and concepts to explain advising as a form of teaching (Gordon & Habley, 2000). From the 1970s, scholars and faculty members have redefined the academic advisor’s responsibilities to include
guidance, as well as imparting information; developmental academic advising as we know today evolved from this process (Williams, 2007). The 1970s Carnegie Commission on Higher Education Report suggested a great focus on advising, an increase in advising centers and professional advisors, as well as university-wide centralized advising models (Martin, 2006). Since the 1970s, scholars and faculty members have redefined the academic advising role to include personal and academic guidance, in addition to the traditional role of disseminating information. Developmental academic advising was evolving and, thus, advising began to resemble an organized profession.

From the 1980s to present day, academic advising has changed with the times and the students. There was an increase in advising for undecided majors expanded through the concept of career counseling. Habley (1995) found that the only historical constant in academic advising was that members of the faculty have always played a prominent role in the delivering of services, of providing information on courses, transmitting information in course catalogues, and in student development (Harrison, 2009). The 1990s brought an increase in advising-related research, advising grounded in student development theory, and the recognition that advising is a powerful retention tool (Martin, 2006). In the twenty-first century, new populations have gained access to colleges and universities, demanding innovative responses from faculty and administrators, including automated advising systems, virtual advising, and assessment of
advising. There is no longer, if there ever was, a definition of a *typical* student (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008) and the demands of academic advising in higher education today reflect the needs and wants of students who are unique in the history of our education system.

Recognizing Current Academic Advising

The term *academic advising* can conjure a wide array of descriptions when researched throughout the literature. It seems as though the picture of what an *ideal* academic advisor is and does changes from resource to resource. The literature, as well as individuals who engage in advising, do not always agree on the definition, purpose, or roles and functions of academic advising (Raskin, 1979). In response to the vast differences and viewpoints, the roles and responsibilities behind academic advising seem to be growing.

The current advising process encompasses more than just academic issues; it also includes addressing students’ personal concerns and their adjustment and integration into campus life (Kadar, 2001). O’Banion (1972) asserted that the purpose of academic advising is to help students choose a program of study which would serve them in the development of their total potential. Academic advising can and should play a pivotal role in directing student behavior toward those activities that will nurture and support their success toward educational, career, and life goal achievement (Campbell & Nutt, 2008). Crookston believed that
higher education provided opportunities for students to develop a plan to achieve self and that teaching included any experience that contributed to the student growth, including academic advising (King, M. C., 2008). Academic advising is no longer an additional service to assist students in scheduling courses, it is now a process that informs, suggests, counsels, disciplines, coaches, mentors, and even teaches students how to develop themselves during the higher education experience (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008).

A strong advising program can provide the academic support needed to empower students and to contribute to their academic success. Academic advising involves negotiating advice about degree requirements, course selection, career paths, campus involvement, and perhaps even physical and mental well-being (Champlin-Scharff, 2010). The challenge for some institutions is to create an academic advising system that students, faculty, staff, and administration view as essential, not peripheral, to the educational experience. “While there is a general agreement concerning the importance of academic advising for the efficient functioning of the institution and the effective functioning of the student, there is little agreement regarding the nature of the academic advising and who should perform the function” (O’Banion, 1972, p. 10). The assorted models and styles of academic advising are both extensive and unique. From faulty academic advising models to collaborative peer advising models, each design has both pros and cons and should be examined thoroughly before being implemented.
Academic Advising Models

In colleges and universities across the country, countless models of academic advising take shape to reflect the beliefs and experiences of the faculty and administration that are in charge of implementing such services. To be clear in this research study, a *model* refers to the *whom* that is responsible for fulfilling the roles of an academic advisor. In a large complex research university, the advising unit might be within a single program, a major, a department, a college, a campus, or a university-wide center (Kuhn, 2008).

Among the advising models utilized in higher education today are: faculty-only models, supplementary models, split models, dual models, total intake models, satellite models, and self-contained models. Each model consists of its own unique set of underpinning policies, procedures, and theories. Researchers further classified the organization of all advising models into three categories: (1) decentralized, (2) centralized, and (3) shared (King, M. C., 2008).

Decentralized models provide academic advising services by faculty and staff in their academic departments (King, M. C., 2008). Overall coordination may be centralized, however, advisors are accountable to their own department. King (2008) described centralized models as those that provide academic advising in an administrative unit, such as an advising or counseling center with a director and staff. Generally, centralized advising models house all academic advising and related services in one location.
Shared models of academic advising provide services that are shared between a central administration unit and faculty or staff in academic departments. Each model of academic advising in higher education today possesses their own organizational and exceptional differences that make them a distinctive entity in the advising field.

Faculty-Only Model

Throughout the history of academic advising, faculty members have served the role of advising or supporting students. In the early years of colleges and universities, faculty members seemed to fill the role of a beloved mentor (Hemwall, 2008). Faculty advising models vary widely and include both informal and formal contact with students at all stages in their education (Hemwall, 2008), but rely solely on faculty members to satisfy all advising needs. As allotment of faculty time has changed over the decades and has become more structured, relationships with students are now more structured as well. “Students may perceive that faculty advising is only concerned with course advice and registration signatures. In addition, many faculty members may be uncomfortable when the conversation leaves the academic realm” (Rosenthal & Shinebarger, 2010, p. 24). Faculty advising can vary by the type of advising system—centralized, decentralized, and shared. Faculty advisors may work through their specialized department, be required to volunteer time at an advising center, or be in a partnership to advise students once they declare a major. The faculty-only
model predominates in higher education today, however the use of faculty-only models continues to decline, dropping from 33% in 1987 to 25% in 2003 (King, N. S., 2008). If faculty advisors are to be successfully utilized in an academic advising model, their experience and input must be recognized and integrated in the design and articulation of it (Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Faculty advisors are in a pivotal position to work with students both inside and outside the classroom. Their role in assisting and guiding students in higher education can be critical.

**Engagement Advising Model**

The engagement advising model is similar to the faculty-only model described previously, however, the difference lies in the method in which students are assigned to faculty members. In the faculty-only model, students are appointed to faculty members for academic advising; typically the dispersion of names among faculty is done in a random manner. In the engagement model for academic advising, the student-advisee is paired with an appropriate professor-advisor with the objective of providing mutually rewarding learning and training in a particular academic area of shared interest (Yarbrough, 2002). The engagement model allows for both, advisee and advisor, to develop a heightened personal investment in the success of the student’s academic program, the supporting academic program, and the overall university. The engagement model of academic advising proposes that the student is entering into the college or university academic relationship as a consumer. “The incoming student is paying
tuition to learn under a more experienced tutor/mentor/teacher” (Yarbrough, 2002, p. 67). The engagement model fosters the academic advisor to be the frontline mentor in assisting the advisee in identifying and clarifying personal and academic goals. Although the academic advising is performed by a faculty member, similar to the faculty-only model, the advisee has input on choosing an advisor who would be a good fit for them throughout their educational journey.

**Professional Academic Advisor Model**

With the growth of advising centers on college and university campuses, the role of *professional academic advisors* has been well established and is becoming a more common position in higher education. While faculty members continue to play a significant role in academic advising, many institutions have chosen to employ nonfaculty staff whose main focus is the academic success of students (Self, 2008). Many schools hire outside professional advisors to handle freshman orientation and other academic advising needs (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011). Professioal advisors have been hired to specifically promote academic advising and success of students at the institution; often they have received training and education to support them in their endeavors. Tuttle (2000) researched and contended that professional advisors are in the best position to meet students’ needs because they understand the needs of undecided students, are committed to the retention of students, are more accessible than faculty, and can easily link students with other campus services. Professional academic
advisors are able to spend their time meeting with students or participating in
advising-related activities. Faculty advisors are certainly capable of fulfilling the
advising needs of students, but may find it challenging to do so due to their
commitments to teaching and research. Professional advisors are trained to
understand the institution’s programs, goals, and objectives in order to become
exemplary at helping students transition to, and complete, the higher education
experience.

Peer Advisor Model

Sometimes the most influential people in a student’s life are their own peers. Taking advice and guidance from a peer can bring along a sense of
comfort and trust that cannot be found in those with authority. Lowe and Toney
(2001) recommended instituting a peer advising system, utilizing experienced
students to assist less experienced students. A peer advising model provides more
options for those seeking information, as there can be more peer advisors readily
available to meet with students than faculty or other types of advisors.

Literature indicated that more and more institutions are implementing peer
advising models and Self (2008) confounded those reports by finding the use of peer undergraduate students in various advising roles to support academic
advising efforts is increasing. Colleges and universities are starting to explore
creative options to assist students, and harvesting the energy and knowledge of
undergraduate peers may be a legitimate reaction. “Students like interacting with
other students, and if this interaction can work to benefit students by helping them succeed academically, it should be considered” (Self, 2008, p. 274). Tightening budgets across institutions may support the notion that peer advisors are a better fit for students than faculty or professional advisors. Peer advisors can prevent faculty from taking time away from increasing teaching loads, and from essential research responsibilities. One of the major pitfalls of implementing peer advising models, however, is that advisors are not long-term employees. Therefore, replacing peer advisors would be a cyclical process and the consistency in advising would only be as steady as the transition of peer advisors.

**Counselor Liaison Model**

The use of professional *counselors* in academic advising occurs in all types of institutions. However, counselor liaison advising models are more prominent in community college settings (Self, 2008). The conception of the counselor liaison model stemmed from the guidance office model common in public high schools. The objective of the counselor liaison model is to increase the retention and graduation rates of students through linking counseling intervention strategies with developmental academic advising by assigning professionals from the counseling center to work with academic departments to provide services to students (Kadar, 2001). More often than not, this model of advising occurs in an advising or counseling center on campus, and advisors typically work through a dean of student affairs. The training and preparation of
counselors, unlike that of faculty or peer advisors, are from a student development perspective. Their specific training, experiences, and skills make the model more appealing to deal with students who have numerous issues (Kadar, 2001). In addition, counselors at many institutions receive training to develop expertise on academic curriculum and programs, transfer articulation, and general campus referrals that are common to the skills of professional academic advisors (Self, 2008). Just as with all advising models, the counselor liaison model is not implemented without some adverse consequences. “Counselors typically have to balance students’ needs for personal counseling with the need for academic advising and registration with limited time access to the student” (Self, 2008, p. 272). Counselors who serve as academic advisors juggle several hats in terms of responsibilities. The time allotted to complete all the necessary tasks of an advisor and counselor puts restrictions on individual meetings with students, especially during peak advising times on the academic calendar. Many counselor-liaison models take proactive measures to ensure that the services to students are in no way hindered by the implementation of this type of advising system.

**Supplementary Advising Model**

Described thus far have been models of academic advising operated by a sole entity to perform the essential advising tasks at institutions. The faculty-only model relies merely on faculty to serve as academic advisors; the peer advising
model relies on peers to serve in an advising capacity for students. The supplementary advising model, however, is the third most common model used at institutions of higher education and relies on several groups of people to perform academic advising roles. Through a review of literature, several terms were used to describe this type of model, such as the *split model* or *total intake model*. For the purpose of this paper, the terms will be grouped together as the supplementary model of academic advising, as the differences between the terms were insignificant for the scope of this study.

The supplementary model assigns students to a faculty member for advising, but a general advising office provides assistance for students as well (Tuttle, 2000). Several modifications can exist in the organization of this model of advising. The most popular situation includes an advising center for a designated group of students, such as those with undeclared majors, with all other students assigned to academic departments (Tuttle, 2000). Another form of the supplementary model includes transferring students to a new advisor after a specified period of time. Freshman, for example, may be advised by staff at an academic advising center for a length of time before they are transferred to an academic department (Tuttle, 2000). The transferring of students from an advising center to a departmental faculty advisor ensures that institutional requirements, specifically for new students, are met before they are promoted into a major area. Supplementary advising can also provide students with specialized advising
services from advisors who focus on meeting student needs as a first-year student or a transfer student. A drawback to supplementary advising is that a student may establish a relationship with their initial academic advisor, but be reassigned as per policy, and lose that critical connection.

Although a number of organizational models exist for delivering academic advising, ranging from those where faculty do all advising to those that use professional advisors, “Habley found advising continues to be part of the role of most faculty, with faculty responsible for 75-90% of the advising in American colleges and universities” (Allen & Smith, 2008, p. 397). There is no best advising model; each model has its own unique contributions and disadvantages. Each institution must define its advising program while taking into account such factions as characteristics of students and faculty, size of the institution, and location (Raskin, 1979).

Academic Advising Styles

While the perfect model of academic advising may not exist, appropriately developed and applied models and theories guide and facilitate the process of academic advising. The how of academic advising is known as the style. How academic advisors approach their advisees during an advising session is their preferred style of advising. Some advisors utilize institutionally implemented styles of advising, such as strengths-based styles or developmental styles. Other
advisors may choose to use one style over another due to their own comfort level. Who advises and how advising services are delivered have been the major questions asked about academic advising in the last two decades (Tuttle, 2000), and it is easy to see why. In a review of literature, the number of academic advising styles used in the profession is vast and diverse. Below are a few of the more commonly utilized advising styles, but in no means does this represent a comprehensive list available for those practicing in the field.

**Prescriptive Advising Style**

Prescriptive advising is a style of advising that is characterized by a top-down approach, where a student serves as a recipient of information and ideas. The advisor serves as the *keeper of knowledge* and the student serves as the *receiver of facts*. Crookston (1972) made a well-cited comparison that the prescriptive advising relationship is similar to that of a doctor and patient. The student or *patient* has a problem and the advisor or *doctor* gives advice to fix it (Williams, 2007). Traditionally, prescriptive advisors supply answers to specific questions, but rarely address broad-based academic concerns.

Academic advising started as a means to assist students in choosing the correct courses to fulfill a desired major. Faculty advisors simply helped students choose courses in a prescriptive approach to advising (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011). “The prescriptive approach is associated with a knowledgeable advisor who knows the requirements, provides sound answers to a myriad of...
logistical questions, and steers students in the right direction when they are lost” (Smith, 2002, p. 40). The prescriptive advising process does not change the student very much, except that perhaps they eventually succeed in memorizing some of the rules and requirements (Lowenstein, 2005). Nonetheless, a majority of advisors, despite the advising model they follow, will perform at least some occasional prescriptive advising to answer student’s straightforward questions.

Prescriptive advising can possess a negative reputation simply due to its name. *Prescriptive advising* has a bad sound to it and certainly seems to refer to something with which no self-respecting advisor would want to be associated with (Lowenstein, 2005). However, the prescriptive style of advising is “not without its merits. Research indicated that students whose cultures stress hierarchical patterns of interactions prefer a more directive style” (Appleby, 2008, p. 85). In a descriptive study of 34 first-year students at the University of Albany, Smith (2002), found that students in the study generally preferred prescriptive advising and students described advising meetings as primarily logistic interactions about course selection, general education requirements, and course registration.

Advising many students can be a challenge for some academic advisors. Novice advisors often use a prescriptive advising style and since many students expect this type of advising, many advisors never transition to a more developmental style (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009). Some larger institutions
may assign hundreds of students per each academic advisor to accommodate all students within the university advising model. Given the number of students for whom some advisors are responsible, the goal of helping each individual student develop as a whole person shifts to firefighting and often prescriptive advising (Tuttle, 2000). In these cases, interactions are primarily question and answer sessions and are driven by the advisor’s interpretation of the student’s academic direction.

The prescriptive academic advising style allows for the professor to profess what he/she knows, but also makes for a tidy relationship with the student. Students receive straight-forward answers to their questions and advisors invest little time into the advising session. Perhaps in the profession’s enthusiasm for other advising styles, the value of certain traditional, prescriptive activities are overlooked (Fielstein, 1994). Prescriptive advising has been among one of the first styles of academic advising used in higher education and can still be vital in today’s learning environment. However, there have been other styles added to the academic advising toolbox which should not be overlooked when establishing an advising program at an institution.

**Developmental Advising Style**

Developmental advising focuses on students’ personal growth and development, while centered on students’ academic learning. Developmental academic advising is considered both a process and an orientation. Crookston and
O’Banion, the ‘fathers’ of developmental advising, targeted three goals or vectors for this style of advising: (1) developing competence, (2) developing autonomy, and (3) developing purpose in the undergraduate student (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011). Developmental advising is concerned with specific personal or vocational decisions, but also with facilitating the student’s rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness, and problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills (Crookston, 1972). The style of developmental academic advising avoids simply providing answers to students, but instead engages students to think and collaborate with the advisor to be an active part of the decision-making process.

Developmental academic advising recognizes the importance of interactions between the student and the campus environment. The focus becomes the person; developmental advising advocates for working with students at their own stage of development (King, 2009). “Developmental advising provides students with important academic information and also leaves academic decision-making in the hands of the students” (Smith, 2002, p. 40). Utilizing the developmental advising style not only provides advantages for the student, but for the institution as well. The school’s academic community benefits from an advising process that bridges institutional divisions between academics and student affairs (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011). In addition, Hale, Graham, and Johnson (2009) found in their study of undergraduates nearly all
students (95%) had indicated that their preferred academic advisor would be a
developmental advisor who established a personal relationship and with whom
they would seek out for more than simply course selection and scheduling; thus
allowing the establishment of a personal connection between students and their
institution.

Although developmental academic advising has been encouraged and
endorsed in the profession, some disagreement exists among practicing advisors
as to its true ability to be employed in the field. Lowenstein (2005) declared
developmental advising as the dominant paradigm in the profession today, but
asserted that it merely gained its acceptance from the less-attractive alternative,
prescriptive academic advising. Hemwall and Trachte (2003) feared that
developmental academic advising contributed to the strain among faculty and
professional advisors because most faculty members do not have the background
nor the interest in student development theory and practice (Grites & Gordon,
2009). Institutions are applying developmental advising methods using academic
advisors who are not trained in the appropriate foundations needed. Time is also
of the essence for developmental advisors who are already depleting available
space in their schedules just to maintain their other roles and responsibilities of
daily operations.

The developmental paradigm has helped define advising as a profession
for thirty years, but according to some, it has failed to advance with the
progressing times. As a result from a review of literature by Harrison (2009), it was stated that the thirty-year-old developmental approach does not represent recent changes in higher education and may not have utility for advising students in the twenty-first century. Hemwall and Trachte (1999) reported that the concept of developmental advising moves the focus of academic advising away from academic learning and does not support the centrality of the academic curriculum. Additionally, Fielstein (1994) reported that although many students appeared to endorse the developmental approach to advising, more thinking students do not value a collaborative relationship and seem to have more contentment with prescriptive styles of advising.

Using the developmental style of academic advising allows advisors to guide, not direct, students to personal goals and the means to achieve them. Compared to other advising styles, developmental advising is more interactive and permits students to become more involved in their own educational experiences. Academic advising that facilitates student engagement and success is developmental and, in that regard, acknowledges that one lens cannot be used to view the experience and skills of all students (Campbell & Nutt, 2008).

**Intrusive Advising Style**

Intrusive advising is a style of academic advising in which the advisors and students take the initiative to provide amplified support services to help students succeed. Academic advising services are often amplified, in both
quantity and quality. Intrusive advising grew out of the concern for freshman and sophomore students who were unsuccessful in college (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011) and has since grown to include any student who may be labeled at risk in terms of reaching graduation. Intrusive advising has shown improvement of enhanced academic skills and increased retention in students who require this style of direction. Students who participate in intrusive advising reported a greater sense of integration, a feeling of value and belonging, and increased motivation to keep up with their studies (Williams, 2007). Intrusive academic advising may not be necessary for all students in higher education, but those who need extra assistance to remain on track in meeting academic, personal, and professional goals, benefit from the greater amount of attention to their educational success.

**Strengths-Based Advising Style**

Strengths-based academic advising focuses advising services from the students’ areas of need to their areas of talent and engagement. Strengths-based advising is a holistic approach similar to developmental advising. However, it differs from developmental advising in that it is based on student motivation, rather than on needs assessment; it focuses on possibilities, rather than on problems; and it focuses on talents and skills and how those strengths lead to success (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). The objective of strengths-based advising is to allow students to be who they are and to develop the strengths they already
possess. Williams (2007) found in a review of literature that strengths-based advising enables students to build upon talents they bring with them into college and to teach them to apply their strengths to new learning tasks. Capitalizing on students’ strengths, instead of focusing on their weaknesses, can build their confidence while motivating them to acquire the knowledge base and skills necessary for college-level achievement. Research on strengths-based advising reveals that the approach is more beneficial in meeting the needs of today’s diverse students than traditional advising practices (Williams, 2007). Academic advisors work with students in a unique function compared to other faculty and staff on campus; utilizing strengths-based techniques during advising sessions can promote constructive ripple effects across the advisee’s pursuit of education and goal attainment (Hagen & Jordan, 2008).

Praxis Advising Style

Another style of academic advising used in the profession is praxis advising, which follows the *advisor as teacher* metaphor. Praxis advising reconnects academic advising to the main mission of institutions--student learning (Hemwall & Trachte, 1999). “In the praxis approach, advisors provide sound advice about courses and logistics, but they also stimulate student interest by discussing the advisor’s discipline and field of expertise” (Smith, 2002, p. 40). There is similarity between the praxis style of advising and the developmental style. Both place emphasis on individual students, however, the difference
between the concept of praxis and developmental advising is student learning (Grites & Gordon, 2009). Using praxis strategies, academic advisors involve their advisees in dialogue about the purpose and meaning of course requirements, and prompt advisees to engage in critical self-reflection or to see the connection between ideas and action (Hemwall & Trachte, 1999). To those who practice praxis advising, it preserves the important contributions of developmental academic advising, however, it does not lead back to what some see as a problematic idea of the advisor and advisee being equal, as seen in developmental advising.

Social Constructivist Advising Style

The styles of academic advising presented thus far have been focused on the individual student; an advisee and an advisor working together for the development and advancement of one student at a time. “Interestingly, however, group advising is being considered to be a viable option” (King, N. S., 2008, p. 279). Another approach to academic advising, which builds from prescriptive-developmental paradigms, is using social constructivism to deliver advising services. When advising students from high relational groups, such as many non-western cultures who value community and relationships more than individual achievement, social constructivist methods may be more effective than other methods (Williams, 2007). Social constructivist advising involves educational planning and student services with collaborative social interaction. A review of
literature also pointed out that group advising is more closely related to classroom teaching and less aligned with counseling than one-on-one advising (King, N. S., 2008). Faculty members may actually feel more comfortable advising in a group setting since it is similar to teaching in a classroom. Social constructivist advising styles may offer student retention value as well. Connecting students with both their peers and an advisor is an advantage in group advising (King, N. S., 2008). Social constructivist advising provides a network of support for students to use throughout their career in higher education and beyond.

Role of the Academic Advisor

The expectations around the functions of an academic advisor can be multifaceted and confusing (Crookston, 1972), and due to the layers of responsibilities, the advisor provides a unique service to students that is distinct from that of anyone else on campus. Academic advising in higher education has evolved from a rather routine exercise to a comprehensive operation. The academic advisor juggles the hats of many roles: a facilitator of communication, a coordinator of learning experiences, a referral agent, a teacher, a mentor, and sometimes even a stand-in parent (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). The role of an academic advisor shifts as student populations and administration change over time.
Establishing a trusted relationship with an advisee should be a primary priority of the advisor. The relationship between the student and advisor is crucial; when both parties become actively involved and share responsibility, there is an increase in the quality of the advising experience (Frost, 2000). Academic advisors may work with students throughout the entire length of their higher education career, so establishing a foundation of trust and rapport is essential to maximizing the benefits of advising. Academic advisors are among the first staff members to interact with first-year students and can serve as important resources for them (Gordon & Habley, 2000). Advisees who establish a working relationship with their advisor reap the advantages of increased student motivation and involvement (Martin, 2006), but also assistance in regards to future career contacts and letters of recommendation. In addition, advising offers multiple opportunities to develop a rapport with students that can often lead to the discussion of goals and personal issues that may be impeding success (Kadar, 2001). Advisors who take the time to establish a relationship and rapport with their advisees may even find it more comfortable to perform their advising roles.

Academic advisors are charged with guiding students through their academic careers and through their journeys in higher education. This role leads them to perform many tasks, “which include, but are not limited to providing accurate and timely information, communicating in useful and efficient ways, maintaining regular office hours, and offering varied contact modes” (National
Without accurate and timely information about course requirements, students lose faith in an advisor’s ability to advise, or could be delayed in the completion of a degree program. “Course selection is a difficult and time-consuming process requiring extensive knowledge on the part of the advisor regarding courses, as well as the individual being advised” (O’Banion, 1972, p. 11), and is an essential role to be fulfilled by advisors. Knox, Schlosser, Pruitt, and Hill (2006) found in their study that weak advising relationships were characterized by poor communication and that open communication was present in good advising relationships. Communicating through various modes, including during advisee visits to regularly scheduled office hours, strengthens the advisor-advisee relationship.

Advising is more than providing information; advising is also engaging students in their overall development. Academic advisors work to strengthen the importance, dignity, potential, and unique nature of each individual within the academic setting (National Association of Academic Advising, 2011). Crookston (1972) also described the role of the advisor as more holistic than logistic by advocating the advisor is a teacher and even encouraged advisors to foster growth in the whole student. Assisting students to grow beyond academics, but also as a person, may not be a responsibility that all people associate with academic advising, but is recognized by the profession as an important role of an advisor.
Developing students as self-authors is strongly related to the notion of *advising as teaching* (Pizzolato, 2008).

Although the role of an academic advisor is vast and ever-changing, the advisor must remember that they are not the only resource a student should access during college (Pizzolato, 2008). The role of the academic advisor has shifted with cultural and institutional changes; an excellent advisor will now play a role with respect to a student’s entire curriculum that is analogous to the role that the excellent teacher plays with respect to the content of a single course (Lowenstein, 2005). Overall, the primary role of an academic advisor is to offer support, encouragement, and information to improve a student’s academic life and to create a sense of responsibility and belongingness to the institution. Development of desirable educational outcomes is a natural centerpiece of academic advising (Pizzolato, 2008).

**Academic Advising as Teaching**

Despite the array of academic advising models and styles from which institutions can choose to implement, one thing is certain: interacting with advisees requires many of the same skills that are utilized in the classroom by teachers. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) “affirms the philosophical perspective that academic advising is a form of teaching and, as such, has a curriculum, pedagogy, and identifiable learning outcomes for
students” (Campbell, 2008, p. 231). To be clear on what is meant by teaching, Crookston’s (1972) definition of teaching was defined as any experience in the learning community where the teacher and student interact to contribute to individual, group, or community growth and development and can be evaluated. Recognizing that education and teaching can take place both inside and outside the classroom can help conceptualize the advising-as-teaching belief.

Academic advising is an innovative form of teaching that can help students become involved in their own education. Capitalizing on teachable moments and using them to improve student experiences in higher education is one way to enhance academic advising. Appleby (2008) recommended that academic advisors should think of advising as a course offered to advisees. The advisor is the instructor; the student is the learner; the office is the classroom; and facilitating growth along several dimensions is the curriculum. The complex cognitive skills that students can develop through the advising-as-teaching concept include: (1) seeing oneself as able to construct knowledge and have ideas from others, and (2) understanding that there are multiple ways to view any given situation or idea (Pizzolato, 2008). When done well, academic advising plays a critical role in connecting students with learning opportunities that support engagement, success, and the attainment of learning outcomes in higher education.
Advising is a form of teaching and stretches beyond instruction, beyond lectures and seminars. Advising may include career planning, crisis counseling, and surrogate parenting all rolled into one, but nonetheless, it is teaching (Berdahl, 1995). The similarities between the role of an academic advisor and the role of a teacher should not go unnoticed; both develop clear curricula that specify expectations for learning, set clear learning outcomes, and create a variety of learning experiences for students (Campbell & Nutt, 2008). Advising is an extension of the teaching process and given the similarities between teaching and advising, it should come as no surprise that advising provides teaching and learning opportunities similar to those found in the classroom (Foushee, 2008). Academic advising is intricately related to curriculum and instruction, and when instructors advise students, there is a greater opportunity to integrate the process of advising with the program of instruction (O’Banion, 1972). Advisors who think about advising as if they were teachers, have educational values and goals that they hope to develop in their advisee, and that meet the purposes of higher education.

People do not learn in one way, and it may well be that no one model or style of academic advising can be effective for all students. However, advisors who realize that teaching and learning are taking place during advising sessions can begin to tailor strategies to meet the different learning needs of their students. Eble (1988) stated that faculty should consider advising as an extension of the
teaching role in which they can demonstrate genuine concern for their students. In addition, Hemwall and Trachte (2003) also advocated that advising be viewed as teaching. They described academic advisors as first and foremost teachers who view their advising roles as part of the learning and teaching process. Academic advising is often described as the hub of an institutional wheel with connections to other areas of the institution; as such, advisors are in a key position to teach and collaborate with advisees, to engage them in their own learning, and to achieve their goals (King, M.C., 2008). Viewing academic advising as more than just an educational process to a paradigm of teaching and learning, emphasizes the focus on more learning outcomes for student success.

Characteristics of an Effective Academic Advisor

Being an effective academic advisor, motivating and directing students to achieve excellence, is an art. The behaviors, dispositions, and skills needed to work with undergraduate students on a daily basis in the role of an academic advisor should not be taken lightly. O’Banion (1972) advocated that, “there must be special concerns for the advisory skills of instructors, which means that only those who qualify should participate” (p. 15). Those who do qualify to serve as an academic advisor possess similar attributes that distinguish them within the profession.
One of the central characteristics that an advisor should possess is a genuine concern for students. Advisors should recognize that it is important to remember that students will likely respond more positively if they know that they will be treated as someone with outstanding potential instead of just another problem (Bloom, 2002). In addition, Ford and Ford (2009) indicated that anyone with advising responsibilities must never react to a student as though the student is an interruption of work. Effective advisors will welcome students into their office without hesitation or contempt. Bloom (2002) made reference that for advisors, one of the challenges faced is to treat the last appointment of the day with the same enthusiasm generated for the first person through the door. Academic advisors who are good at their role welcome the responsibilities of working with students, despite the time of day they enter their offices.

Another characteristic of effective advisors is to provide the truth to students. Students who seek academic advising are not only entitled to the truth, but expect it. The advisor’s responsibility, as hard as it may be, is to remain neutral and to provide the facts in any situation. The excellent advisor helps students understand and create logic in order to make their own decisions (Lowenstein, 2005). As stated several times, advising is more than providing information and doing things for the student; students should be active and engaged in their own education (Williams, 2007). Students are ultimately the ones responsible for making decisions throughout the advising process. An effective
advisor will provide accurate information needed and the freedom for students to 
make the best decisions (O’Banion, 1972). Although the final choice may not be 
the preferred choice, effective advisors put forth accurate and truthful information 
and then empower advisees to make their own conclusion.

A third characteristic of effective advisors is knowledge of the institution 
and program in which they work. O’Banion (1972) proposed that the faculty 
advisor who knows the programs and courses and has direct contact with students 
is in an ideal position to serve as an academic advisor (Wiseman & Messitt, 
2010). Effective advisors will seek the initial training and preparation to educate 
themselves on the fundamentals of the advising area if they are uncertain or have 
questions. “Advisors spend countless hours helping students understand 
requirements and policies, course selection, standards for academic performance, 
and counseling students through choices they have” (Andreatta, 2011). In order to 
perform these tasks successfully, effective advisors must first have their own 
working knowledge of the topics before they can assist students through the 
process.

Although this is by no means a comprehensive list, the three 
characteristics of effective advisors listed here are traits that are essential for 
advising students. There are two essential components for effective advising 
according to Williams. “The first component is a thorough knowledge of areas in 
which advisors are called on or are responsible for giving advice. The second, no
less important than the first, is the ability to counsel students effectively and to develop a good advisee-advisor relationship” (Williams, 2007, p. 16).

Academic Advising and Diversity

Academic advising plays an important role in the lives of all students in higher education. Advisors serve as a resource person to answer questions, disperse information, and provide guidance and support that can enhance the college experience, while ensuring necessary requirements are met. In meeting the needs of students in higher education today, academic advisors must tailor their approaches to the increasingly diverse undergraduate student population (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011). Students with specific advising needs include: academically underprepared students, first generation students, students with disabilities, student athletes, students in transition, international students, and minority populations on campus.

The academic advising system provides advantages that are particularly valuable for diverse student populations. Effective advising practices, such as demonstrating genuine care for students and providing accurate information on institutional policies and procedures, can strengthen the confidence diverse students have in the advising process (Kuh, 2008). Linking students to support resources on campus, intended for diverse populations, can be among the most critical information provided to these students. Kuh (2008) also found that
advising is thought to be most effective in terms of promoting student growth, learning, and success when it is integrated into support services and when it is sensitive to the developmental needs of diverse students.

In The Chronicle of Higher Education (2007), it was stated that by 2015 the estimated number of students enrolled in two and four-year colleges is projected to be over 16 million (Steele & McDonald, 2008) and many of these students will be classified as having a diverse background. Students who enroll in higher education are distinct in their race, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, age, disabilities, and the list continues to grow. Effective advisors are well informed about their students. They know their students’ demographics, preferred learning styles, individual talents, and when and where they need help (Kuh, 2008). Given the array of issues that students must manage during college, a cookie-cutter approach to advising students, including those from diverse backgrounds, will not be sufficient. “Enhancing the quality of academic advising is essential to meeting the challenges presented by the changing demographics and expectations of today’s students” (Steingass & Sykes, 2008, p. 18).

Progression of Student Advising Needs

Obtaining a degree in higher education takes multiple years to accomplish. At different stages in their academic progress, students will require different types of advising (Berdahl, 1995). Students who are new to higher education or who are
transitioning to a new institution have differing levels of experience than upperclassmen or students who have been on campus for a longer period of time. General groups of students who prefer or benefit from prescriptive advising styles include: (1) freshmen who expect and prefer prescriptive advising (Smith, 2002); (2) male students (Light, 2001); and (3) students who are classified as sensing and thinking personalities based on Myers-Briggs Type Indicators (Crockett & Crawford, 1989). In addition, the Academic Advising Inventory found that part-time students and lowerclassmen received more prescriptive advising overall than white students and upperclassmen (Smith, 2002). The student’s role in prescriptive advising is to absorb information (Lowenstein, 2005) and to learn how to begin to navigate the academic system, policies, and procedures. It is more commonly found that prescriptive advising techniques are more effective during early stages in students’ academic programs (Berdahl, 1995); when lowerclassmen and new students need adjustment time to begin understanding the institutional practices. A study by Broadbridge (1996) found that students wanted extra time with advisors at the start of their academic careers because they were nervous and unaware of the scope of changes with college attendance and felt a need to be directed (Smith, 2002).

As students begin to progress through an academic program, their advising needs, wants, and expectations begin to evolve toward developmental advising styles. Academic advising begins at the point of recruitment and continues
through graduation (Lowe & Toney, 2001), and as such, students at the start of
their academic journey need more guidance with course and program selection.
For upperclassmen, the issues are often different. Although freshmen and
sophomores tend to focus on attainment and demonstration of intellectual
competence, juniors and seniors often raise questions about employment, graduate
school, and life goals (Spicuzza, 1992). Students who are preparing to complete
their degree programs and to enter the next stage of their journey have different
types of questions and concerns than those students who are at the beginning
phases. Upperclassmen often require career counseling, and perhaps personal
counseling, as well as academic counseling (McLaren, 2004) in the preparation of
transitioning from an undergraduate student to beyond. General groups of
students who prefer or benefit from developmental advising techniques include:
(1) female students (Light, 2001); (2) upperclassmen (Smith, 2002); and (3)
students with Myers-Briggs Type Indicators of intuitive and feeling (Crockett &
Crawford, 1989).

Academic advising has the advantage of providing students with one-on-
one interactions across the span of multiple years. Most colleges consider the
process of academic advising as a continuous process, beginning before the
student attends class and continuing throughout their stay at the college
(O’Banion, 1972). During this timeframe, students begin to grow and develop
academically and personally, which reflects why they may be partial to different
styles of advising during different stages of their academic progress. In a Broadbridge study (1996), it is explained that students’ preferences of advising style was an evolving process rather than a stable preference that lasted throughout their academic careers (Smith, 2002).

Students who are new to the institution may feel more comfortable with prescriptive advising as they figure out their new environment. More experienced students, who are preparing to embark on new voyages, may feel more at ease making decisions that directly affect them beyond the degree program. Regardless of where students are in the advising scheme, each student comes into the advisor/advisee relationship with different needs. Students differ academically, developmentally, and personally; therefore, resulting in different approaches for both information and counseling functions of an advisor (Beaker & Young, 1994). Academic advisors awareness of the progression of students’ needs as they move through their academic programs is necessary in order to provide them with the most effective and efficient advising that will assist them in achieving their goals.

Academic Advising Meetings

Students may seek a meeting with their academic advisor for various reasons. Some students may schedule an appointment to meet with their advisor concerning a course conflict; others may stop into their advisor’s office
informally to receive a necessary signature. Regardless of why students meet with their advisors, academic advising sessions can be beneficial to students if the advisor and advisee are both satisfied with the outcomes. Bloom (2002) reported that people respond more favorably to those who are optimistic thinkers and who help us create positive images of our futures, rather than to people who are negative and disapproving of our plans. Thus, students are more likely to participate in academic advising meetings and be more satisfied if their advisor is optimistic and positive (Steingass & Sykes, 2008).

Meeting with students regularly is vital to establishing an advising relationship that can benefit students. Establishing a relationship with an academic advisor enriched the value of the advising process for students (Light, 2001). “Frequent contact with advisors helps students stay abreast of current academic information and promotes progress toward educational goals” (Berdahl, 1995, p. 8). The more frequently students meet with academic advisors, the more satisfied they are with the advising services that they receive, as well as are more satisfied with the institution. Lowe and Toney (2001) reported that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction and frequency of contact with advisors for all students. Advisors should work with students to develop a plan to meet regularly to monitor student progress toward meeting academic goals. Students who meet with their advisors at least twice per semester persist at much higher rates and are more likely to be in good academic standing at the end of the
first year in college compared to their peers who met fewer times with their advisor (Steingass & Sykes, 2008). Steingass and Sykes also reported that students are also more apt to succeed academically, establish clearer educational and lifelong objectives, and tailor their educational experience toward their goals and aspirations when they receive ongoing and meaningful academic advising. It is important that advisors take students’ situations into consideration when scheduling an advising meeting. Some students may need to meet more frequently than others due to special circumstances, such as being classified as at risk or underprepared. Advisors must realize that they cannot change a student’s entire life in a single advising session and that students may need time to allow possibilities to marinate before they move from reasoning with their advisor to actually acting on their reason (Pizzolato, 2008). Arranging regular meetings with students in advance may make the scheduling aspect of advising less hectic and last-minute for both the advisor and the advisee.

When students do come and visit an advisor Utah State University (2011) recommends three essential components for advising sessions: (1) planning and preparation, (2) thorough content, and (3) follow up. In addition, several accepted practices have been established in the profession to promote the most efficient and effective experience possible for the advisees. Fox (2008) suggested that when delivering one-on-one advising, five key skills should be applied: (1) competence, (2) confidence-building, (3) cordial, (4) credible, and (5) creative. Competence
indicates that the advisor should be knowledgeable of the academic discipline, institutional policies and procedures, degree plans, and course content. Confidence-building suggests that advisors need to assist advisees in developing the confidence needed to participate in skillful reflection and decision-making processes. Cordial refers to acting kind to students and establishing a mutual trust. In terms of being considered credible, “academic advisors must continually work to be well-informed, connected to key personnel on campus, and respected for their work as an advisor” (Fox, 2008, p. 350). Lastly, advisors must find ways to be creative in order to get students to explore solutions to their issues that they may not have considered previously. Other established practices that Fox recommended for academic advisors to follow during advising sessions include: take a genuine interest in students, focus on student needs, involve students in the process of advising and learning, guide students through the advising process rather than directing them, and being able to communicate clearly.

Advisement from the same advisor over time provides the opportunity to not only receive a timely, consistent response, but also a response that is more personalized for the student. Research indicates that students who make connections to at least one adult on campus have higher levels of satisfaction and higher retention rates than students who do not (Smith, 2002), and academic advisors are in a unique role to serve as that one strong connection. Establishing personal connections with advisors permits students to become more vested in the
institution and less likely to quit before the completion of a degree program. The exchanges between an advisee and advisor, no matter how brief, may have the greatest impact on campus and make students more likely to remain in school (Yarbrough, 2002).

Despite the link between retention and academic advising, students are often dissatisfied with the academic advising they receive. Habley (1995) found that students who perceive faculty and staff as unconcerned with their development, are more likely to leave the educational environment (Ford & Ford, 2009). If students feel that their advisors are uninterested in genuinely assisting them during advising sessions, they are less likely to return for continued guidance, which could deter them from achieving their educational goals. The underlying assumption for encouraging interactions between advisors and students is that such relationships and meetings will culminate in the successful completion of the academic program, leading to a commencement and the awarding of a degree (Yarbrough, 2002).

Academic Advising with Technology

Technology has had a profound effect on higher education in the past ten years. Academic advising at colleges and universities has been significantly affected by the recent advances in technology. In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, technological communication has signaled a major shift
in the advisor/student relationship (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011); some advisors have embraced this shift with candor, while others have struggled with the changes.

While technology itself is neither good nor bad, the ways in which it is used can be either appropriate or inappropriate. In the realm of academic advising, it should be considered appropriate when it enhances the advisor-advisee relationship, especially when it provides a level of advising beyond information-giving by expediting access to information (Leonard, 2008). Students can utilize technology from the palms of their hands to answer an advising question any time of the day or night. Students are technologically savvy and prefer electronic communication, use internet as a primary source of information, and are accustomed to getting answers 24-7 (Martin, 2006). The array of technologies that can support academic advisors include: advising web sites, student information systems (SIS), degree audit programs, transfer articulation systems, career guidance programs, webinars, instant messaging, social networking sites, email, course management systems, podcasts, blogs, and of course, the standard cell phone (Leonard, 2008). Advisors who may not have time for regularly scheduled hour-long sessions with each advisee can participate in short, ongoing conversations via phone calls, text messages, Facebook posts, or email. Leonard suggested that advisors meet the challenges of using technology to strengthen, not diminish their interactions with students.
Although many technologies have been appropriately adapted for academic advising purposes, not all academic advisors have embraced the digital age. Leonard (2008) has made the distinction of digital immigrants versus digital natives. Digital immigrants have not grown up with complete access to technology; they have had to learn and adopt technology as an adult. Digital natives, however, have known nothing other than the high-tech lifestyle. “If academic advisors want to reach their advisees, and their advisees are living in a digital world, then advisors need to become a part of that world as well” (Leonard, 2008, p. 304). Although this is easy to suggest, some advisors refuse to employ using technology for advising purposes, as they feel it disintegrates the personal connection. Smith (2002) purported that technology is making advising more impersonal. Some digital immigrants feel the role of the advisor is to establish a relationship with the advisee, which they feel becomes diluted with the use of a screen between two people.

Academic advisors should use caution when implementing technology into their methods for connecting and communicating with students. While technology can be convenient, it does lose some of the face-to-face value (Smith, 2002). However, if advisors want to associate with twenty-first century students, technology is nearly inevitable. Technology uses a format in which students are familiar (Leonard, 2008) and can navigate efficiently to receive information at the touch of a button. In the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2012), it was
found that 96% of college-aged adults between 18-29 use the internet; 97% of enrolled college students use the internet; 95% of students check email daily; and 46% of students indicated that email allows them to express ideas to professors that they otherwise would not. As the profession of academic advising matures, the use of technology will not be a question (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011); digital natives will soon begin to consume advising positions once held by digital immigrants, and the use of technology will be commonplace for academic advising for all students.

Academic Advising in Relation to the Institution

In today’s economic times, students expect and demand more from institutions in return for the increased costs of tuition. Building a sound academic advising system is an investment in students and their degree programs. Academic advising must first be recognized by the institution as an important activity in the life of students (O’Banion, 1972) before it can receive the recognition and resources needed to make it effective. Academic advisors are in a unique position in the higher education community to see the spectrum of advisees’ lives inside and outside the classroom (Foushee, 2008). Therefore, the advising situation naturally lends itself to creating a climate of communication which can compensate for much of what happens elsewhere on campus.
Colleges and universities are responsible for creating environments for learning and development that help students make a transition into higher education and the new accountability they will inherit. “Academic advising, well-developed and appropriately accessed, is perhaps the only structured campus endeavor that can guarantee students’ sustained interaction with a caring and concerned adult who can help them shape such an experience” (Hunter & White, 2004, p. 21).

Developing and implementing an advising system to meet the needs of students, requires leadership and planning. First and foremost, an advising program viewed as essential, has a leader with authority over resources and personnel necessary to achieve the mission of the advising program (Hunter & White). A leader to direct the overall advising program throughout the institution is critical to establishing guidance and consistency. Once leadership has been founded, institutions, under the direction of the advising leadership, need to determine an advising model to expedite the advising process. According to Moore (1976), institutions must decide if advising will be “a single-direction activity that begins and ends with schedule-making, a process of information-giving and receiving, or a process of individualized teaching” (Raskin, 1979, p. 101). Once the institution establishes a philosophy towards advising, it will lead to its successful implementation and overall effectiveness of student achievement.
Academic advising is perhaps one of the most heavily used student service on campus. Each student will likely have contact with an advisor on campus over the course of their academic career and will need the assistance and guidance to complete a degree program. Each institution has its own distinct advising system with unique missions and goals to suite the students and faculty. “Who does advising is probably not as important as the philosophy of the institution that supports the academic advising program” (O’Banion, 1972, p. 72). The most obvious, though often neglected, place to start, is an institutional academic advising mission statement. A mission statement is a vital foundation for the goals and objectives of an overall advising program (Hunter & White, 2004). Written reference materials for advisors in the form of an advising handbook, updated regularly, and that includes a clear mission and strategic plan for meeting the advising needs of students at the college or university are essential resources. Increasingly, campuses are adopting a syllabus format to communicate the intentions of and expectations for academic advising (Campbell & Nutt, 2008). A syllabus outline for advising services can make institutional missions, goals, objectives, contacts, expectations, and learning outcomes visible for both advisors and advisees.

Although there are many academic advising models and styles from which institutions can choose to implement, a majority of advising is fulfilled by faculty members. Faculty are generally hired with the assumption that they will teach in
the classroom, engage in research, publish in their field, and secure grants to support their work; some faculty members may not realize that when they accept a position, they will also be expected to advise students (Hunter & White, 2004). Advising has generally been viewed as an additional responsibility to faculty members whose schedules are already full. Berdahl (1995) and Harrison (2009) both reported that among the responsibilities associated with faculty positions in academe, student advising is likely to be given the short stick compared to teaching, research, publication, and service. In addition, Allen and Smith (2008) reported that the time faculty spend conducting research has increased since 1972, whereas the time they spend advising and counseling students has decreased.

Academic advisors across institutions are being overworked and are finding less extrinsic reward for their advising services. As a consequence, students may become dissatisfied with the institution. Institutions where students are dissatisfied with advising or where students are poorly advised, there is the risk that these factors may contribute to declining enrollments (Lowe & Toney, 2001). Researchers have indicated that approximately one-third of entering students leave postsecondary institutions without a credential (Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Literature has reiterated again and again that academic advisors play a positive role in the retention of students. Institutions that establish strong academic advising programs across the campus can help relieve the attrition rate of its students. In the current competitive world of academe, students may feel
overwhelmed and may opt to quit higher education or transfer to an institution that is more fitting of their needs. Lowe and Toney (2001) stated that it is not a question of how to fix the students to make them stay, it becomes an institutional question of how to fix our academic advising to help retain students through the completion of a degree.

Academic advising is intended to enhance students’ academic and social integration into a college or university. Good academic advising may very well be the key to success for many students (Allen & Smith, 2008) who need a personal connection to help them through the trying times of college life. The process of academic advising is important to institutions of higher education and the role of the academic advisor is critical to student retention and student satisfaction with the institution (Lowe & Toney, 2001). When students are pleased with their experiences at an institution and feel that their goals are obtainable, they are likely to complete an academic program.

Metzner (1989), found in a review of literature, that improvement in academic advising ranks among the most frequently recommended and implemented interventions for increasing retention. Because retention improves academic and financial foundations, many colleges make retention a key objective of the advising efforts. Given the important role of academic advising in student retention, serious efforts to improve retention should be grounded in an evaluation
of student perceptions, desires, and satisfaction with academic advising (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009).

There is little doubt that undergraduate student academic advising will remain a necessary component of higher education. Academic advising and the required knowledge of a wide range of complex academic programs is one of the technically most challenging positions in the area of academic or student services (Tuttle, 2000). Advisors are responsible for knowing and understanding institutional policies and procedures, as well as knowing each of their advisees. As such, academic advisors should have a sensible student load. “In the Carnegie Report, Raines suggested that there be no more than fifteen advisees without a reduced teaching assignment” (O’Banion, 1972, p. 15) in order to provide valuable support to assist all advisees in their journeys through postsecondary education.

Walter’s (1982) preliminary findings from a study at the University of Iowa, showed that satisfaction with advising, for both the advisor and the advisee, is inversely proportional to the advising workload. The findings reaffirm that a reasonable advising load is essential for delivering quality advising to students. Institutions should also recognize that not all faculty members can handle the same advising loads. “New and younger faculty, many of whom may be less knowledgeable of the information one must have in order to render advice effectively in a complex institution, are often those to whom fall the heaviest
advising loads” (Berdahl, 1995, p. 6). Giving less experienced faculty members advising responsibilities immediately may not be in the best interest of the students or institution, especially if promotion and tenure decisions are based on research productivity and publications (Hunter & White, 2004). Institutions should regulate policies and provide reasonable advising loads for faculty members who are charged with advising duties in addition to other institutional responsibilities (O’Banion, 1972; Harrison, 2009).

Rewards and recognition can serve as extrinsic motivational factors for academic advisors to be efficient and effective in their roles. Academic advising could very well benefit from institutional recognition and rewards for advisors who are outstanding in their services. “Advising needs to be recognized as a high priority by administration and an integral part of the mission of each university” (Beaker & Young, 1994, p. 36). If advisors are recognized and appreciated, the importance of advising may be perceived higher than it currently is in colleges and universities across the country. Recognition and appreciation of academic advisors has been a professional concern for decades and is influenced by the lack of rewards for faculty advisors (Tuttle, 2000). A review of literature repeatedly indicated that faculty perceived academic advising to be undervalued by administrators; 31% of all institutions acknowledged that they do not provide any form of recognition, reward, or compensation for faculty advising (Allen & Smith, 2008).
Institutions of higher education must realize that students need support from faculty and staff if they are to succeed. At large, decentralized institutions, there may be no single person in charge of all advising; in such cases, advising is frequently delivered unit by unit, in academic departments, or in combination with specialized centers (Hunter & White, 2004). The assumption that student advising is an unwanted and unprepared-for responsibility thrust upon the unsuspecting and inexperienced faculty member is not new (Yarbrough, 2002); however, institutions can work to provide assistance and resources to advisors to afford them the tools necessary to positively impact the student population.

Summary

Academic advising is a vital process to students in higher education. The benefits to students who receive quality advising can be seen throughout the literature; students are more likely to succeed in a degree program, are more satisfied with their advisor, and are more satisfied with the institution as a whole when there is quality academic advising. However, when students do not perceive advising as beneficial, they will go elsewhere to obtain the information they need. Beaker and Young (1994) found that 41% of students in a New Hampshire university study reported that when seeking advice on selecting courses for the next semester, they accepted the advice from their college peers more seriously than seeking out their advisor. Nearly half of all students in that same study found
peers to be more credible than their academic advisors. These numbers speak volumes about the perceptions students have of the advising systems in higher education. Students are not committed to seeking-out advisors when they can acquire the *same* advice from their friends. However, informal peer advice is no substitute for trained professionals in meeting the challenges of quality academic advising. Challenges for academic advising are significant; facilitating the development of coherent educational plans across a student’s educational career is no small task and requires those who are committed to the intellectual and social development of students, both in-and out-side the formal classroom (Campbell & Nutt, 2008).

In lieu of the traditional faculty advising model, numerous advising systems have emerged. Greater complexity now exists in many dimensions of advising, such as advising personnel and their functions, the content of advising sessions, the format and setting for advising, and the advisor-student relationship (Metzner, 1989). Although faculty members are capable of dealing with course-related problems and departmental requirements, the truth exists that they are seldom taught to assist students to integrate their coursework with their life goals (Beaker & Young, 1994). This critical piece of information makes it a critical responsibility of the institutions to choose the most appropriate advising model and style to fit the faculty and students.
As reward structures offers little to academic advisors in return for time spent advising students, it seems only natural that faculty attention in that area has waned (Berdahl, 1995). Teaching and research has taken the limelight away from the advising aspect of a faculty position. Faculty members who take their advising roles to heart, are often only rewarded with a heavier advising load. Although students appreciate faculty who take the time to develop advising expertise, there can be unintended consequences of providing quality advising. When students seek advisors who are good over their assigned advisors, the result is higher advising loads than are officially recognized (Allen & Smith, 2008). The quality of advising received is affected when advisors cannot fulfill their roles to each advisee who is in need of their guidance.

Good advising is an exhausting vocation and the burn-out rate is high (Walter, 1982). The better the advisor, the more likely the advisor will acquire too many students, eventually resulting in a decline of advising quality per student. Research studies have revealed extensive student dissatisfaction with advisement. These findings imply that there is considerable latitude for the improvement of advising services (Metzner, 1989). Effective academic advising programs identify what students should know and do as a result of academic advising and then be able to implement the necessary steps. In order to achieve these goals, academic advising must be examined for its effectiveness in the lives of students. The future of academic advising will lie in its ability to create and use theory, apply findings
in practice, and assess effectiveness through research (Kuh, 2008). Outstanding academic advising programs do not simply emerge, they are conceptually and theoretically grounded and guided by missions, goals, and objectives that reflect the values of the institution (Campbell, 2008). To begin the process of implementing an effective and outstanding advising program, institutions must first recognize student needs, and then design a program to achieve their academic goals.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive-correlational study was to describe current undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising practices within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University. The Ohio State University was undergoing a massive institutional transition from academic quarters to semesters. The university transition lends itself to an opportunity to make changes, modifications, and improvements to current university, college, and department-wide policies and procedures, including those related to academic advising practices. Describing the perceptions of undergraduate students in relation to academic advising practices is critical for providing the pertinent information for restructuring advising programs and agendas for the college.
Research Objectives

The research objectives guiding this study were to:

(1) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of college/departmental academic advising;

(2) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising relationships with faculty members;

(3) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ intentions to complete enriching educational experiences through academic advising;

(4) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of institutional support through academic advising;

(5) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ intentions to complete enriching educational experiences with faculty members in general;

(6) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ demographic characteristics;

(7) Describe relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices.

Research Design

This research was a descriptive-correlational census study of undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University during the 2012 spring
academic quarter. An electronic questionnaire was used to obtain the data needed to address the stated objectives.

Setting the Context

The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University is comprised of eight academic departments. In addition, the college also houses the School of Environmental and Natural Sciences. There are currently 21 majors and 30 minors offered in the college; two new minors are going through the approval processes at this time. Faculty members serve in most of the academic advising roles. The number of faculty advisors in CFAES is as follows: agriculture sciences, 69 faculty advisors; environmental sciences, 25 faculty advisors; and food, agricultural, and biological engineering (FABE), 4 faculty advisors. The number of professional (non-faculty) advisors in CFAES is as follows: agriculture, 2 professional advisors; environmental sciences, 2 professional advisors; and food, agricultural, and biological engineering, 1 professional advisor. The number of student support service providers (non-faculty advisors) are as follows: agricultural, 8; environmental sciences, 2; and food, agricultural, and biological engineering, 0. During the Spring, 2012 quarter, 2294 undergraduate students were enrolled in the college.
Subjects

The study was conducted as a census of the undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University. Potential subjects were included on a list provided by the college office. The frame was obtained on April 17, 2012, via email from the college’s Assistant Dean for Student Development. The frame contained names and email addresses for all students enrolled in CFAES on the fifteenth day of classes during the spring 2012 academic quarter. The fifteenth
day of the quarter marks the date when students are no longer eligible to drop enrollment without penalties and fees, therefore minimizing the potential student withdrawals during the research study, making the frame as accurate as possible. In addition, the researcher worked with the Assistant Dean to eliminate students identified as double-majors, and were listed in the frame twice. The original frame of 2,307 students was reduced to 2,294 students invited to participate in the research study. However, through communication with students during the data collection process, 60 students opted-out of participating in the survey due to enrollment inconsistencies. The researcher deemed those 60 students as an inaccessible population. Thus, the end result of the accessible frame used by the researcher was finalized at 2,234 undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University during spring quarter, 2012.

Response Rate

Regarding response rate, as can be seen in Table 3.1, at the end of the first data collection cycle, 229 responses had been received. At the end of the second collection cycle, an additional 91 responses had been received; another 87 responses were reported after the third collection cycle. At the end of the fourth collection cycle, 108 more students responded and another 63 students responded after the fifth collection cycle. The sixth collection cycle resulted in 29 responses,
while the last collection cycle accumulated an additional 7 responses from students. At the end of the data collection, a total of 685 responses were received for an overall response rate of 29.87%.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date Email Invitation Sent</th>
<th>Number of recipients</th>
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<tr>
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<td>87</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 21, 2012</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 23, 2012</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 28, 2012</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>2.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6, 2012</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Data</td>
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<td>67.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Total</td>
<td>2294</td>
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Table 3.1. CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Survey Response Rate

Instrument Design

The research questions for the survey instrument used in this study originated from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE is a nationally and globally recognized assessment tool used by both public and private four-year colleges and universities to assess student engagement during
their undergraduate experiences. The researcher deemed NSSE an established, well-known, valid, and reliable instrument to employ in this research study for several reasons. First and foremost, NSSE was designed for undergraduate students to provide direct input on their educational experiences in three broad categories: (1) institutional actions and requirements, (2) student behaviors, and (3) student reactions to college, including their perceptions about the quality of their experiences (NSSE, 2012). The construct of academic advising, the main focus of this study, encompassed into all three NSSE categories, meaning questions in the NSSE instrument were relevant to this study. NSSE is an alternative tool for gathering student data and can be used in a wide-range of situations, thus making the results useful for institutions to improve undergraduate education. The United States Department of Education (2006) suggested that the National Survey of Student Engagement was a viable instrument for all types of institutions to measure and to demonstrate learning outcomes for all types of students. The researcher wanted to be able to utilize a survey instrument that was relevant for all students participating in the study. They also sought to produce useful data for improving the academic advising practices within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Lastly, NSSE is an established survey instrument that has been accepted by researchers and institutions of higher education nationally and globally to assess the quality of undergraduate experiences. Cuseo (2008) reported that a student-rating survey or questionnaire,
when well-constructed and properly administered, can serve as an effective centerpiece for a comprehensive advising assessment tool. NSSE was meticulously constructed by a design team that consisted of outstanding experts in the field of education, including: Alexander Astin, Arthur Chickering, John Gardner, George Kuh, and several others. Many of the NSSE items were derived from existing student questionnaires such as: the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ), and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), as well as freshman and follow-up surveys administered by the University of North Carolina system. NSSE has been utilized for over a decade, and has gathered data on over two million undergraduate students. Institutions have used NSSE data to identify aspects of the classroom that can be improved through changes in policies and procedures based upon research-supported practices in undergraduate education (NSSE, 2007). Upon examining the foundations, research, and value in the National Survey of Student Engagement, the researcher found it both appropriate and beneficial to use in this study.

The researcher-designed questionnaire contained 26 quantitative items appropriate for gaining a better understanding of the perceptions of undergraduate students in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences toward their experiences with academic advising (see Appendix A). Twenty of the questionnaire items were derived verbatim from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) instrument; six demographic items were researcher-
designed. In order to obtain the necessary approval to use the twenty items in the research study from NSSE administration, as well as the university, the researcher completed an item usage proposal identifying the proposed objectives of the study, and identifying the NSSE items that would be used (see Appendix B). Once the item usage proposal was approved, an item usage agreement form then served as a legal document to establish privileges and conditions under which the twenty identified items and collected data were to be used during and after the study (see Appendix C). Lastly, the 26 survey items were divided into constructs and placed in five sections throughout the questionnaire.

Section one of the instrument was designed to gain an understanding of undergraduate students’ relationships with faculty members in CFAES. Students answered four questions to indicate their perceptions of items in this construct. Example questions included: how often do you talk about career plans with a faculty member or advisor, and how often do you work with faculty members on activities other than coursework?

Section two contained three items designed to recognize CFAES undergraduate students’ academic intentions for completing enriching educational experiences through academic advising. Example questions included: what are your current plans in regard to completing a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment, and what are your current plans in regard to completing an independent study or self-designed major?
The third section consisted of questions to identify CFAES students’ perceptions of institutional support through academic advising. Section three contained eight statements for students to indicate their level of agreement in regards to their views of institutional support. Example questions included: does the institution provide the support you need to help you succeed academically, does the institution assist you in developing a personal code of values and ethics, and how would you rate this university’s responsiveness to student academic problems?

Section four focused on gathering information on the students’ perceptions of academic advising in the college. Students responded to five questions and statements in this construct. Example questions included: how would you rate the quality of academic advising you have received from your college or department at this university, and has the information you have received from academic advisors been accurate and up-to-date?

Section five, demographics of the undergraduate students enrolled in the college, consisted of six items. Example items included: academic rank, transfer/transition status, and number of times per quarter students contacted academic advisors.
Outcome Measures

The data were collected using an electronic questionnaire to describe the perceptions undergraduate students in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at Ohio State University had towards their academic advising experiences. Frequencies and means were used to describe undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising practices. The Davis Convention (1971) was used to describe the strength of the relationships between undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices (Table 3.2). Demographic data were also collected from subjects who participated in the survey and analyzed using frequencies and means. All data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>.70 and higher</td>
<td>Very strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.50-.69</td>
<td>Substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.30-.49</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.10-.29</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.01-.09</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: The Davis Convention for Describing Relationships.
Validity, Reliability, and Credibility of Self-Reported Data

As with many surveys, the questionnaire used in this research study relied on self-reported data. The validity and credibility of self-reported data have been examined extensively by researchers (Baird, 1976; Berdie, 1971; Pohlman & Beggs, 1974; Turner & Martin, 1984). The accuracy of self-reported data is generally affected by two issues: (1) the inability of respondents to provide accurate information, and (2) the unwillingness of respondents to provide accurate information. The first issue may be a result of students not having adequate experiences to render a judgment on questions or statements, or students may simply not understand the question. The latter of the two issues represents the possibility that students intentionally report inaccurate information. Research has been used to show that generally, people tend to report accurately, with the exception of items that may be sensitive, or that put them in an awkward or embarrassing position (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988).

Self-reported data are also subject to the *halo effect*. The halo effect is the possibility that students may slightly inflate certain aspects of their behavior or performance, such as grades, the amount of contact with their academic advisors, or the number of activities or internships on which they plan to work with their advisor. To the extent that the halo effect exists, it appears to be relatively constant across all types of students (Pike, 1999). Therefore, while students may report inaccurate information, the effect is consistent across all students, so the
halo effect does not appear to advantage/disadvantage one group of students or another.

Self-reported data are likely to be valid under five general conditions: (1) respondents know the information being requested, (2) questions are phrased clearly, (3) questions refer to recent activities, (4) respondents feel the questions are important enough to provide a serious and thoughtful response, and (5) questions do not pose a threat, embarrassment, or violation of personal privacy (Bradburn & Sudman, 1988).

The researcher in this study collected data during the spring quarter, allowing students to complete nearly an entire academic year, and, therefore, permitting adequate time for students to experience academic advising within the college. The questions in the survey were written to ask about common experiences within the students’ recent past, which eliminated a frame of time to recall information. The formatting for most items was a simple rating scale, which helped students accurately interpret questions and record their response. The items used in this survey have been used in other existing college student research studies and have been shown to be consistent in gathering valid and reliable data from students (Kuh, 2004). Overall, there is evidence that self-reported data are accurate and reliable and that students typically respond with personal interest to such questionnaires.
Survey Instrument

Twenty of the twenty-six questionnaire items for this study were acquired from The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) instrument; the remaining six questions were researcher-designed demographic items. The 20 NSSE items were those that specifically targeted academic advising. NSSE was launched in 2000 and has been updated several times since its debut in colleges and universities around the country. Most recently, it has been updated for data collection in 2013. The survey instrument was designed to assess the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development. The questionnaire is designed to collect information in five categories: (1) participation in educationally purposeful activities; (2) institutional requirements and the challenging nature of coursework; (3) perceptions of the college environment; (4) estimates of educational and personal growth since starting college; and (5) background and demographic information (NSSE, 2012). Through its student self-reported survey, NSSE administrators collect information from hundreds of four-year colleges and universities annually to provide information about student engagement in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and development. The results provide an assessment of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college (NSSE, 2012).
Survey items represent research-established good practices in undergraduate education. Items reflect behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of higher education. NSSE does not assess student learning directly, but survey results point to areas where colleges and universities are performing well, and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved (NSSE, 2012).

The NSSE instrument was field-tested by Peter Ewell of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and George Kuh of the Center for Postsecondary Research and School of Education at Indiana University (NSSE, 2007). The NSSE instrument was pilot-tested in the spring of 1999 to a small number of institutions. Changes were made accordingly by the design team and the instrument was then pilot tested a second time to a larger number of institutions in the autumn of 1999. The objective of the pilot project was to test the instrument and administration procedures from a technical standpoint (NSSE, 2007).

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Items 1-20 in the questionnaire were acquired from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the researcher was granted permission to use them for this study. Validity and reliability of the items were established by a team of NSSE designers that constructed the instrument. Standardized instruments
come with the advantages of having already-established reliability and validity (Cuseo, 2008). The NSSE established reliability and validity measures are reported below.

Validity refers to the degree to which a survey measures what it purports to measure. There is no statistical test to measure face validity, but rather it is determined by a panel of experts who provide feedback to the researchers. The NSSE survey-design team who constructed the original NSSE survey instrument in 1998 and 1999 ensured the items were clearly worded, well-defined, and possessed high face and content validity (NSSE, 2012). Like face validity, content validity is also established by a panel of experts.

Factor analysis was used to establish construct validity. The NSSE instrument-design team conducted psychometric analyses on data collected, beginning with the field tests administered in 1999 and conducting follow-up analyses since the initial administration of the survey. The NSSE instrument-design team utilized exploratory factor analysis to establish factor structures that emerged from the data. An oblique rotation was then used because factors of engagement are assumed to correlate with one another (NSSE, 2012). Confirmatory factor analysis was then performed based on the results from the exploratory factor analysis. All of the reliability scores were found to be .70 or higher, which is deemed acceptable by social science standards. Overall, the NSSE instrument design-team and administrators assert that the face, content, and
construct validity of the survey are strong and most items have been used for years in established college assessment programs (NSSE, 2012).

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement of an instrument. “The reliability evidence presented here assesses the extent to which items within a scale are internally consistent or homogenous and the extent to which results are similar across periods of time or different forms of the NSSE survey. Use of a reliable instrument or scale implies that data and results are reproducible” (NSSE, 2012). Internal reliability was determined by a Cronbach’s alpha score to determine if items within a construct were consistent and complementary to one another. On a scale of zero to one, scores closer to one indicate a higher internal consistency, whereas scores closer to zero indicate a lower internal consistency.

Using the NSSE 2011 Cronbach alpha levels, the first construct, relationships with faculty members, was determined to have an alpha level of .71 for first year students and .74 for senior students. Construct two, student intentions of participating in enriching educational experiences through academic advising, was found to have an alpha level of .54 for first year students and .64 for senior students. Perceptions of institutional support through academic advising, construct three, was found to have alpha levels of .79 for first year students and .80 for senior students. The fourth construct, students’ perceptions of academic advising the college, was found to have an alpha level of .76 for first year students and .81 for senior students.
To determine the reliability of the NSSE instrument when it is administered to different cohorts of students at the same institutions across consecutive years, an analysis of the temporal stability was determined by the instrument design team. An institution-level correlational analysis was conducted in 2011 using benchmark scores from 231 institutions that participated in both the 2010 and 2011 NSSE survey administration. Relationships were reported using Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Pearson’s values range between negative and positive one. The closer a score is to one, the stronger the relationship between an institution’s 2010 and 2011 scores; values closer to zero indicate a weak relationship between the two scores. Overall, Pearson’s values on the five benchmarks within the survey ranged from .749 and .924. Research suggests that values of .70 or higher indicate strong correlations, meaning NSSE scores are strongly stable from year to year.

Conditions of Testing

SurveyMonkey™ online survey provider was used to administer the questionnaire. The online survey system was selected based on its ease of use, accommodation for varying question types, and prompt ability to distribute and collect data from a large population of undergraduate students. The researcher modified the original NSSE survey design to format the questionnaire based on the options provided through the online survey provider. The subjects were
administered the survey via their university provided email accounts. The survey was distributed during the last spring academic quarter at the university before the conversion to semesters. Spring quarter is a busy time of year on campus for students, particularly for those who are involved in extra-curricular clubs and organizations, as well as those students who are preparing to graduate. Individual testing conditions varied depending on time and location that each subject completed the survey.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using Dillman’s (2000) tailored design method, which was modified to fit the situation. For example, the study used three of the five parts of the tailored design method: (1) respondent-friendly questionnaire; (2) up to five contacts with the recipient; and (3) personalized correspondence. A token incentive was not sent to subjects and the inclusion of self-addressed stamped envelopes was not used in the study, as the study was distributed and collected using an online service provider.

IRB Approval

The Ohio State University Office of Responsible Research Practice (ORRP) requires all research involving human subjects to be reviewed prior to the start of the study. On February 4, 2011, the researcher completed the mandatory
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) web-based course, which is required by researchers every three years for the safety and protection of human subjects. The researcher then applied for IRB approval on March 28, 2012; however, approval was not granted until several modifications were made to the proposal. Modifications included: (1) completion of a blank response, (2) submission of a recruitment email, and (3) clarification of the consent process. All modifications were re-submitted to the satisfaction of the IRB review committee and approval was granted April 12, 2012 under the assigned protocol number 2012B0102.

Procedures

On April 17, 2012, a compiled list of undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University on the fifteenth day of the spring academic quarter was provided by the Assistant Dean for Student Development within the college. The list provided all pertinent subject contact information that the researcher needed to successfully complete the study. The researcher, along with the Assistant Dean, purged the list of students enrolled as double majors and listed twice in the frame.

On April 25, 2012, a pre-notice correspondence email was sent to all undergraduate students enrolled in the college (see Appendix D). The Associate Dean and Director of Academic Affairs for the college sent the email informing
students that an electronic survey would be arriving in their university-provided email accounts on April 27, 2012 and encouraged them to participate in the study. On April 27, 2012, the first of eight email correspondences was dispersed to the target population by Surveymonkey™ titled, “Please assist your fellow CFAES students” with a link to the questionnaire (Appendix E). All email communications from the researcher to the subjects were personally addressed using first names of students as documented by the college enrollment list.

The researcher sent a second email correspondence containing a link to the questionnaire to nonrespondents on May 4, 2012. The subject of the message was titled “CFAES needs your input” (Appendix F). The researcher received a reply correspondence from a student who suggested that he was not enrolled in CFAES, but rather he was enrolled in the Department of Food, Agricultural, and Biological Engineering. The researcher attempted to clarify this confusion by informing the student that the Department of Food, Agricultural, and Biological Engineering is a department housed within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences; however, the student provided no further correspondence.

The researcher sent four additional email messages requesting students to participate in the study (Appendices G, H, I, & J) before the Associate Dean resent the original email to all undergraduate students prompting and encouraging them to complete the survey. On June 1, 2012, the researcher sent an email correspondence to nonrespondents reminding them that their window of
opportunity to participate in the study was coming to an end (Appendix K). On
June 6, 2012, a final email correspondence was sent by the researcher to
nonrespondents urging them one last time to complete the survey (Appendix L).
The survey remained open until the researcher closed its access on June 8, 2012.
A thank you email was sent to all respondents on June 8, 2012, letting participants
know that their input was much appreciated and valued (Appendix M).

All data were collected and analyzed using SPSS version 20 beginning on
July 20, 2012. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data because the
study was a census. Frequencies, population means, and standard deviations were
rounded to the nearest one-hundredth decimal place. Depending on the level of
measurement of the variable, appropriate descriptive statistics—frequencies,
percentages, means, and standard deviations—were used to describe the
perceptions of the accessible population of undergraduate students enrolled in
CFAES.

Controlling Nonresponse Error

This study was a census of undergraduate students enrolled in the College
of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences during spring quarter, 2012.
The researcher was not attempting to generalize beyond the target population;
however, the researcher wanted to ensure with confidence that the sample of
students who responded to the survey were representative of all students in the
college. To minimize nonresponse error, initially, the researcher utilized a modification of Dillman’s (2000) Tailored Design Method to increase survey responses. Dillman’s design is based on motivational psychology and employs three conditions to maximize survey response: (1) reduce costs to the respondents by making the task appear brief, reduce effort required to complete the questionnaire, eliminating monetary costs, and eliminating chances for embarrassment; (2) reward the respondents by showing positive regard and making the questionnaire interesting; and (3) establish trust by identifying with a known, legitimate organization. Although Dillman’s design was implemented throughout the study, the researcher wanted to minimize the concern of nonresponse error, the concept that those who did not complete the survey may be different in some dimension than those who did respond.

In an article by Miller and Smith (1983), they suggested specific techniques for handling nonresponse issues. Among those techniques to handle nonresponse error is the comparison of early to late respondents. “Research has shown that late respondents are often similar to nonrespondents. Thus, one way to estimate the nature of the replies of nonrespondents is through late respondents” (Miller & Smith, 1983, p. 48). To begin, the researcher chose five demographic characteristics from the questionnaire to use as a comparison of early and late respondents. The demographic characteristics consisted of: (1) gender, (2) transfer/transition status, (3) grade point average, (4) academic rank, and (5)
frequency of contact with advisors per quarter. The researcher then determined the parameters of what determined the difference between an early response and a late response. It was concluded that responses received during the first four weeks of the data collection, from April 27-May 27, were early respondents. Data collected between May 28-June 8 were determined to be late respondents. The researcher randomly selected ten early respondents and ten late respondents who were compared statistically to determine differences, with late respondents assumed to be representative of nonrespondents. The researcher a priori set a 90% confidence band around response means to conclude if the characteristics were comparable between the two groups. No differences were found between characteristics of early and late respondents, thus the data were assumed to be generalizable to the target population of undergraduate students in CFAES.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive-correlational study was to describe undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising practices within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University. The Ohio State University was undergoing a massive institutional transition from academic quarters to semesters. The university transition lends itself to an opportunity to make changes, modifications, and improvements to current university, college, and department-wide policies and procedures, including those related to academic advising. Describing the perceptions of undergraduate students in relation to academic advising practices is critical for providing the pertinent information for restructuring advising programs and agendas for the college.
Research Objectives

The research objectives guiding this study were to:

(1) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of college/departmental academic advising;

(2) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising relationships with faculty members;

(3) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ intentions to complete enriching educational experiences through academic advising;

(4) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of institutional support through academic advising;

(5) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ intentions to complete enriching educational experiences with faculty members in general;

(6) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ demographic characteristics;

(7) Describe relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices.
Results

Results for Objective 1: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Perceptions of College/Departmental Academic Advising

Undergraduate students in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University perceived the quality of academic advising received from the college or department as good (38.6%) or excellent (29.5%). Approximately 20% of students perceived the quality of academic advising received from the college or department as fair (20.2%), while 11.8% perceived the quality as poor (see Table 4.1). The mean score for academic advising (n=645) was 2.86 (sd=.97) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=poor, 4=excellent), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Scale</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.86 (sd=.97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Perceptions of Quality of Academic Advising Received from the College or Department

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent).
Throughout the 2011-2012 academic year, undergraduate students enrolled in CFAES received most of their academic advising from advisors within the college or department (55.5%). As seen in Table 4.2, other sources from which students received academic advising during the past year included: online registration and degree tracking system (18.3%); instructors or staff members not formally assigned as an advisor (15.4%); friends or family (6.0%); and undergraduate catalog or other publications (4.8%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Advising</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisors in college or department</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online registration and degree tracking system</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors or staff not formally assigned as an advisor</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends or family</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate catalog or other publications</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n= 649

Table 4.2. Sources Where Students Received Academic Advising During 2011-2012
Undergraduate students in CFAES agreed that advisors in the college or department were available when students needed to see them (51.7%). Nearly 30% of students strongly agreed that advisors within the college or department were available when students needed to see them (29.2%). However, 13.3% of students disagreed and 5.9% of students strongly disagreed that advisors were available in the college or department when students needed to see them (see Table 4.3). The mean score for advisor availability (n=648) was 3.04 (sd=.81) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>648</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.04 (sd=.81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Advisor Availability When Students Needed Them

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).
Over 80% of the undergraduate students in CFAES agreed or strongly agreed that the information received from their academic advisors has been accurate and up-to-date (83.9%). However, 11.5% of students disagreed and 4.7% strongly disagreed that the information received from their academic advisors has been accurate and up-to-date (see Table 4.4). The mean score for quality of advising (n=645) was 3.09 (sd=.77) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.09 (sd=.77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of the Accuracy of Information Received from Academic Advisors

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

Undergraduate students enrolled in CFAES identified the following as their greatest obstacles to academic progress: money, work obligations, and finances (33.8%); difficulty getting the courses needed (18.3%); lack of good
academic advising (10.3%); lack of personal motivation (9.4%); poor academic performance (5.5%); and family obligations (3.4%). Conversely, 19.2% of students reported that they have no real obstacles to academic progress (see Table 4.5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Obstacle</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money, work, finances</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No real obstacles</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties getting courses</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of good advising</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of personal motivation</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor academic performance</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family obligations</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n= 650

| Table 4.5. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Reported Obstacles to Academic Progress |
Results for Objective 2: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Perceptions of Academic Advising Relationships with Faculty Members

Undergraduate students in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences reported they sometimes discuss career plans with a faculty member or advisor (60.1%). Twenty percent (20.6%) of students reported they often discuss career plans with faculty or advisors, while 15.0% reported they never discuss career plans with faculty or advisors (see Table 4.6). Another 4.2% of students reported they discuss career plans very often with faculty or advisors. The mean score for occurrence level discussing career plans (n=685) was 2.14 (sd=.71) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=never, 4=very often), the mode was 2.00, and the median was also 2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>685</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.14 (sd=.71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6. CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Occurrence Level Discussing Career Plans with Faculty Members or Advisors

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (very often).
When students rated their relationships with faculty members in CFAES on a scale of 1-7 (one indicated that faculty members were unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic, while seven indicated that faculty members were available, helpful, and sympathetic), 27.5% rated their relationships a *six* (see Table 4.7). Twenty-two percent (22.8%) of students rated their relationships with CFAES faculty members a *five* and 17% of students rated their relationships a *seven*. The remainder of the ratings included: 14.7% rated their relationships a *four*; 8.7% of students rated their relationships a *three*; 6.6% of students rated their relationships a *two*; and 2.8% of students rated their relationships with faculty members in CFAES a *one*. The mean rating (n=681) was 4.99 (sd=1.58), indicating that students, overall, perceived positive relationships, while the mode was 6.00, and the median was 5.00.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>681</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.99 (sd=1.58)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7. Undergraduate Students' Rating of Relationships They Have with Faculty Members in CFAES

Note: Scores ranged from 1=unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic to 7=available, helpful, sympathetic

Results for Objective 3: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Intentions to Complete Enriching Educational Experiences Through Academic Advising

Undergraduate students (56.1%) enrolled in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences reported that they plan to complete a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment (see Table 4.8). One-third (33.5%) of the students reported that they have already completed a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment. However, 7.6% of students reported that they have not decided if they will complete a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment, while 2.8% reported they do not plan to complete one. The
mean score for intent to complete an internship (n=675) was 3.16 (sd=.80) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=not decided, 4=done), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Intent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not decided</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not plan to do</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan to do</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>675</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.16 (sd=.80)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Intent to Complete a Practicum, Internship, Field Experience, Co-op Experience, or Clinical Assignment

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (not decided) to 4 (done).

Over half of the undergraduate students in CFAES reported that they did not plan to complete an independent study or self-designed major (63.5%); however, 7.5% of students reported that they did plan to complete an independent study or self-designed major (see Table 4.9). Twenty-two percent of students reported that they had not decided if they will complete an independent or self-designed major. In addition, 6.9% of students reported that they have already completed an independent study or self-designed major. The mean score for intent
to complete an independent or self-designed major (n=677) was 1.99 (sd=.76) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=not decided, 4=done), the mode was 2.00, and the median was also 2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Intent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not decided</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not plan to do</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan to do</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>677</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.99 (sd=.76)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 9. CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Plans to Complete an Independent Study or Self-designed Major

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (not decided) to 4 (done).

Results for Objective 4: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Perceptions of Institutional Support Through Academic Advising

Undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences reported that the institution provided quite a bit of support needed to help students succeed academically (41.6%). Twenty-eight percent (28.4%) of students reported that the institution very much provided the support needed to help students succeed academically (see Table 4.10). However,
25.3% of students perceived that the institution provided only some of the support needed to help students succeed academically, while an additional 4.7% perceived the institution to provide very little of the support students needed to succeed academically. The mean score for institutional support to help students succeed academically (n=663) was 2.94 (sd=.85) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=very little, 4=very much), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Support</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td>663</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>2.94 (sd=.85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Institutional Support Provided to Help Students Succeed Academically

Note: Scores ranged from 1(very little) to 4 (very much).

When asked if the institution helped students cope with non-academic responsibilities, including work and family, 37.9% of CFAES undergraduate students reported that the institution did very little, while 36.7% of students reported that the institution did some to help students (see Table 4.11).
Furthermore, 17.8% of students reported that the institution did quite a bit to help students cope with non-academic responsibilities, and 7.6% of students reported the institution did very much to help students cope with non-academic responsibilities. The mean score for perceptions of institutional help with non-academic responsibilities (n=662) was 1.95 (sd=.93) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=very little, 4=very much), the mode was 1.00, while the median was 2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Help</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td><strong>662</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.95 (sd=.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Level of Help Provided by the Institution to Cope with Non-academic Responsibilities

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (very little) to 4 (very much).

CFAES undergraduate students acknowledged that the institution provided some support needed for students to thrive socially (37.9%), while 28.7% of students perceived that the institution provided quite a bit of support for students to thrive socially (28.7%). Additionally, 19.3% of students reported that the
institution provided very much support for students to thrive socially (see Table 4.12). Fourteen percent of students communicated that the institution provided very little support for students to thrive socially. The mean score for institutional support to thrive socially (n=662) was 2.53 (sd=.96) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=very little, 4=very much), the mode was 2.00, and the median was also 2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Support</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>662</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.53 (sd=.96)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of the Level of Support the Institution Provides Students to Thrive Socially

Notes: Scores ranged from 1 (very little) to 4 (very much).

Undergraduates enrolled in CFAES indicated that the institution assisted students quite a bit in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills (38.9%). Furthermore, 26.5% of students reported that the institution assisted them some in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills, while 24.4% of students reported that the institution assisted students very much (see Table 4.13). In
addition, 10.3% of students perceived the institution assisted very little to acquire job or work-related knowledge and skills. The mean score for assistance to provide job or work-related knowledge and skills (n=661) was 2.77 (sd=.93) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=very little, 4=very much), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Assistance</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>661</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.77 (sd=.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of the Level of Assistance the Institution Provides to Acquire Job or Work-related Knowledge and Skills

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (very little) to 4 (very much).

When asked if the institution provided assistance to students to develop a personal code of values and ethics, 38% of students recounted that they received some assistance, while 29.5% of students received quite a bit of assistance (see Table 4.14). Nearly nineteen percent of students (18.8%) reported they received
very little assistance from the institution to develop a personal code of values and ethics, and an additional 13.7% communicated that they received very much assistance to develop a personal code of values and ethics. The mean score for assistance to develop a code of values and ethics (n=664) was 2.38 (sd=.94) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=very little, 4=very much), the mode was 2.00, and the median was also 2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Assistance</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td>664</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>2.38 (sd=.94)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of the Level of Assistance the Institution Provides to Develop a Personal Code of Values and Ethics

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (very little) to 4 (very much).

Overall, over two-thirds of undergraduate students in CFAES rated the quality of academic advising they received at the institution as excellent or good (68.1%). In addition, 19.6% of students perceived the quality of academic
advising received at the institution as fair, and 12.4% of students reported experiencing poor quality academic advising (see Table 4.15). The mean score for quality of academic advising received at the institution (n=663) was 2.86 (sd=.98) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=poor, 4=excellent), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Quality</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>663</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.86 (sd=.98)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Rating of the Quality of Academic Advising Received at the Institution

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent).

The university’s responsiveness to student academic problems was perceived as good (45.4%) by undergraduate students in CFAES (see Table 4.16). An additional 30.8% of students communicated that the university’s responsiveness to student academic problems was fair, while 14.3% of students
considered the university’s responsiveness to student academic problems as poor.

The mean score for university responsiveness (n=659) was 2.64 (sd=.84) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=poor, 4=excellent), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.0.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Responsiveness</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>659</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.64 (sd=.84)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.16. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Rating of the University's Responsiveness to Student Academic Problems

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent).

Nearly half (47.6%) of undergraduate students in CFAES agreed that at this university, students have to run around from one place to another to get the information or approvals they need; conversely, 26% of students disagreed (see Table 4.17). However, 23.9% of students strongly agreed that at this university students have to run around from one place to another to get the information or approvals they need; additionally, 2.6% of students reported that they strongly
disagreed that students have to run around from one place to another to get the information or approvals they need at this university. The mean score for students’ agreement level of having to run around from place to place to get approvals (n=662) was 2.93 (sd=.77) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree), the mode was 3.00, and the median was also 3.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean 2.93 (sd=.77)  
Mode 3.00  
Median 3.00

Table 4.17. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Agreement Level that at this University, Students Have to Run Around From One Place to Another to Get the Information or Approvals They Need

*Scores ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).
Results for Objective 5: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Intent to Complete Enriching Educational Experiences with Faculty Members in General

Students enrolled in CFAES reported that they sometimes (48.6%) or never (42.8%) discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class (see Table 4.18). Additionally, 7.4% of undergraduate students often discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class, while 1.2% of students did so very often. The mean score for occurrence level of discussing ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class (n=685) was 1.67 (sd=.66) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=never, 4=very often), the mode was 2.00, and the median was also 2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>685</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.67 (sd=.66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.18. CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Occurrence-Level of Discussing Ideas from Readings or Classes with Faculty Members Outside of Class

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (very often).
Concerning the occurrence level of students working with faculty members on activities other than coursework (i.e. committees, orientations, student life activities), 44% of students reported they never work with faculty members in this capacity (see Table 4.19). Thirty-six percent (36.8%) of students reported that they sometimes work with faculty members on activities other than coursework, while 12.6% reported they often work with faculty members on activities other than coursework. In addition, 6.6% of students reported that they very often work with faculty members on activities other than coursework. The mean score for how often students worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (n=682) was 1.82 (sd=.89) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=never, 4=very often), the mode was 1.00, while the median was 2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>682</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.82 (sd=.89)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.19. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Occurrence-Level with Working with Faculty Members on Activities Other Than Coursework

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (very often).
Students enrolled in CFAES reported they do not intend to work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements (41%); in contrast, 24% of students reported that they do intend to work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements (see Table 4.20). Eight percent of undergraduate students (8.1%) reported that they have already completed a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements, while 26.9% of students have not yet decided if they will complete one. The mean score for level of intent to work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements (n=676) was 2.13 (sd=.90) on a 4-point Likert scale (1=not decided, 4=done), the mode was 2.00, and the median was also 2.00.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Intent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not decided</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not plan to do</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan to do</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n</strong></td>
<td><strong>676</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.13 (sd=.90)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.20. CFAES Undergraduate Students' Intent to Work on a Research Project with a Faculty Member Outside of Course or Program Requirements

Note: Scores ranged from 1 (do not plan to do) to 4 (done).
Results for Objective 6: Describe the Demographic Characteristics of Undergraduate Students in a College of Agricultural and Related Sciences

As seen in Table 4.21, 30.5% of CFAES undergraduate students who participated in the study reported their academic rank as fourth year students, while twenty-eight percent (28.5%) of students reported they were ranked as third year students. Nearly twenty percent (19.8%) of students reported they were ranked as second year students, and 13.9% of students reported they were a first year undergraduate. In addition, 7.3% of students reported they were in their fifth or more year as an undergraduate student. Thirty-nine students did not report their academic rank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Rank</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+ years</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n= 646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.21. Academic Rank of CFAES Undergraduate Students Participating in the Study
Of the undergraduate students enrolled in CFAES who participated in the study, nearly two-thirds (65.8%) of them were female (see Table 4.22). The remaining 34.2% of students were male. Forty-two students did not report their gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n= 643</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.22. Gender of CFAES Undergraduate Students Participating in the Study

Over two-thirds of the undergraduates in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, who responded to the survey, described their grade point average during the spring academic quarter of 2012 as ranging between 3.0-3.9 GPA (67.3%). Nearly thirty percent (29.7%) described their grade point average between 2.0-2.9 (see Table 4.23). In addition, 1.7% of students reported they had a grade point average of 4.0 or greater, while 1.1% of students reported they had a grade point average between 1.0-1.9. Furthermore, .2% of students reported they had a grade point average of 0.9 or less. Thirty-nine students did not report their grade point average.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Point Average</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0 or greater</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9-3.0</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9-2.0</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9-1.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.9 or less</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n= 646</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No response</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.23. Grade Point Average of CFAES Undergraduate Students Participating in the Study

CFAES undergraduate students who participated in the survey acknowledged they did not transition to the Columbus campus from either a branch campus of The Ohio State University nor did they transfer from another institution (61.6%). In addition, 38.4% of undergraduate students responding did transition to the Columbus campus from a branch campus of The Ohio State University or transferred from another institution (see Table 4.24). Thirty-nine students did not report whether or not they transitioned or transferred to the Columbus campus.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfer Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No transition/Transfer</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition/Transfer</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n= 646</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.24. Transition/Transfer Status of CFAES Undergraduate Students from Either a Branch Campus or Another Institution.

Over half of undergraduate students in CFAES (57.2%) contacted their academic advisor between one and two times per quarter (see Table 4.25). Twenty percent (20.7%) of students contacted their academic advisor between three and four times per quarter. In addition, 10.8% of students reported they contacted their academic advisor zero times per quarter. Moreover, 6% of students contacted their academic advisor seven or more times per quarter, while 5.3% of students contacted their academic advisor between five and six times per quarter. Thirty-eight students did not report how often they contacted their academic advisors per quarter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of contacts per quarter</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n= 647</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.25. Numbers of Times CFAES Undergraduate Students are in Contact with Academic Advisors per Quarter

As seen in Table 4.26, undergraduate students enrolled in CFAES indicated that of the eight methods of communication listed on the questionnaire, email was the most frequently used method of communication students used to contact their academic advisor (91.8%). Over three-fourths (79.6%) of respondents reported they scheduled an appointment to communicate with their academic advisor. Nearly thirty-eight percent (38.1%) of students communicated with their academic advisor during unscheduled appointments in the advisor’s office and 30.5% of students communicated with their academic advisor during unscheduled, informal visits outside the advisor’s office. Students also reported using phone calls (18.5%), texts (5.8%), and social media (2.8%) to communicate with their academic advisors. Of the methods of communication listed, hand-
written correspondence was the least used by undergraduate students in CFAES (1.2%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Communication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled appointment</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unscheduled appointment in advisor’s office</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unscheduled, informal communication outside advisor’s office</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone call</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwritten correspondence</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.26. Methods of Communication Used by CFAES Undergraduate Students and Academic Advisors
Results for Objective 7: Describe the Relationships Between CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Characteristics and Perceptions of Academic Advising Practices

Academic Rank

When describing the relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices (Table 4.27), negligible relationships were found between academic rank and the perception of running around from one place to another to get information or approvals, as well as academic rank and the frequency of discussing readings or classes with faculty members outside of class. Negative negligible relationships were found between academic rank and advisor availability, perceived accuracy of information received, discussion of career plans with faculty members, relationships with CFAES faculty members, institutional support acquiring work-related skills, institutional support developing a code of values and ethics, and frequency of working with faculty members on activities other than coursework. Negative low relationships were found between academic rank and quality of advising received from the college, institutional support to succeed academically, institutional support to cope with non-academic responsibilities, institutional support to thrive socially, overall advising received from the institution, and institutional responsiveness to student academic problems. Negative relationships, both negligible and low, indicated that the higher the academic rank, the less
positively students responded to the perceived quality of academic advising practices.

*Gender*

When describing the relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices, negligible relationships were found between gender and discussion of career plans with faculty members, frequency of working with faculty members on activities other than coursework, relationships with CFAES faculty members, institutional support in developing a code of values and ethics, overall advising received from the institution, institutional responsiveness to student academic problems, overall quality of advising received from the college, advisor availability, and perceived accuracy of information received from advisors. Negative negligible relationships were found between gender and institutional support to succeed academically, institutional support to cope with non-academic responsibilities, institutional support to thrive socially, institutional support to acquire work-related skills, perceptions of running around from one place to another to get information or approvals. A negative low relationship was found between gender and the discussion of readings and classes with faculty members outside of class. Negative relationships, both negligible and low, indicated that males, ‘agreed’ more than females to the perceived quality of academic advising practices.
When describing the relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices, negligible relationships were found between grade point average and discussion of career plans with faculty members, relationships with faculty members in CFAES, institutional support to cope with non-academic responsibilities, institutional support to develop work-related skills, institutional support in developing a code of values and ethics, overall advising received from the institution, overall quality of advising received from the college, advisor availability, and perceived accuracy of information received from advisors. A negative negligible relationship was found between grade point average and students’ perceptions of running around from one place to another to get information or approvals they need. Interpreted, this negative relationship indicated that the higher the grade point average, the more students strongly disagreed that they had to run around to seek information or gain approvals; the lower the grade point average, the more students agreed that they had to run around to get information or approvals. Low relationships were found between grade point average and the discussion of readings and classes with faculty members outside of class, frequency of working with faculty members on activities other than coursework, institutional support to succeed academically, institutional support to thrive socially, institutional responsiveness to students’
academic problems, overall quality of advising received from the college, advisor availability, and perceived accuracy of information received from advisors.

*Transfer/Transition Status*

When describing the relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices, negligible relationships were found between transfer/transition status and discussion of career plans with faculty members, discussion of readings and classes with faculty members outside of class, and institutional support in developing a code of values and ethics. Low relationships were found between transfer/transition status and frequency of working with faculty members on activities other than coursework, relationships with faculty members in CFAES, institutional support to succeed academically, institutional support with non-academic responsibilities, institutional support to thrive socially, institutional support to acquire work-related skills, overall advising received from the institution, institutional responsiveness to student academic problems, overall quality of advising received from the college, advisor availability, and perceived accuracy of information received from advisors. A negative low relationship was found between transfer/transition status and students’ perceptions of running around from one place to another to get information or approvals they need. Interpreted, this negative relationship indicated that students who identified themselves as a transfer/transition student more strongly agreed that they had to
run around to seek information or gain approvals; students who did not identify themselves as transfer/transition students more strongly disagreed that they had to run around to get information or approvals.

**Frequency of Contact per Quarter**

When describing the relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices, negligible relationships were found between frequency of contact per quarter and academic rank, grade point average, and transfer/transition status. A negative negligible relationship was found between frequency of contact per quarter and gender. Interpreted, this negative relationship indicated that male students had more frequent contact with their academic advisor than female students. A negative negligible relationship was also found between frequency of contact per quarter and students’ perceptions of running around from one place to another to get information or approvals they need. Interpreted, this negative relationship indicated that students who had more frequent contact with their advisors per quarter were more likely to disagree that they had to run around from place to place to get information or approvals they need. A low relationship was found between frequency of contact and discussion of readings and classes with faculty members outside of class, frequency of working with faculty members on activities other than coursework, institutional support to succeed academically, institutional support with non-academic responsibilities, institutional support to
thrive socially, institutional support in acquiring work-related skills, institutional support in developing a code of values and ethics, institutional responsiveness to student academic problems, advisor availability, and perceived accuracy of information received from advisors. Moderate relationships were found between frequency of contacts per quarter and discussion of career plans with faculty members, relationships with faculty members in CFAES, overall advising received from the institution, and overall quality of advising received from the college.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academic Rank</th>
<th>Gender 1=male 2=female</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Transfer/Transition status 1=transfer/transition 2=did not transfer</th>
<th>Frequency of contact per quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of advising in college</td>
<td>-.128**</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.130**</td>
<td>.341**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor availability</td>
<td>-.068</td>
<td>.091*</td>
<td>.090*</td>
<td>.111**</td>
<td>.256**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate information</td>
<td>-.073</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.118**</td>
<td>.203**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss career plans</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.087*</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.447**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with CFAES faculty</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.092*</td>
<td>.143**</td>
<td>.313**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support academically</td>
<td>-.111**</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.166**</td>
<td>.153**</td>
<td>.197**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support with non-academic responsibilities</td>
<td>-.109**</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.139**</td>
<td>.220**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support socially</td>
<td>-.144**</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.136**</td>
<td>.163**</td>
<td>.206**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support to acquire work-related skills</td>
<td>-.097*</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.095*</td>
<td>.106**</td>
<td>.155**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support to develop code of values and ethics</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.149**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall quality of advising at institution</td>
<td>-.131**</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.141**</td>
<td>.350**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional responsiveness to academic problems</td>
<td>-.164**</td>
<td>.078*</td>
<td>.113**</td>
<td>.143**</td>
<td>.186**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run around from place to place to get info/approvals</td>
<td>.089*</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.086*</td>
<td>-.125**</td>
<td>-.089*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss ideas from readings/class outside class</td>
<td>.079*</td>
<td>-.100*</td>
<td>.132**</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.209**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with faculty members on activities other than coursework</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.179**</td>
<td>.176**</td>
<td>.273**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic rank</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer/transition status</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.27. Relationships Between CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Characteristics and Perceptions of Academic Advising Practices

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level  **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Review of the Study

Academic advising has been a part of higher education for the past several decades. “In the past 30 years, academic advising has become recognized as a viable and necessary component of higher education that results in the success of college students” (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008, p. 462). The profession of academic advising is diverse; great complexity exists in the many dimensions of advising, such as the types of advising models, kinds of advising styles, the function of advising, the content of advising sessions, and the advisor-advisee relationship. To confound the profession of advising further, many surveys have revealed extensive student dissatisfaction with advisement. Findings imply that there is considerable latitude for improvement in advising services (Metzner, 1989). Academic advising is an integral part of the educational process, and affects students in numerous ways (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008); thus academic advising must be examined for its effectiveness in the lives of students (Kuhn, 2008) to meet the vision of the institution and needs of the students.
Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising practices within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University. The Ohio State University was undergoing a massive institutional transition from academic quarters to semesters. Cuseo (2008) recommended that a favorable time to administer an evaluation of academic advising is at a critical point in a students’ academic career (Cuseo, 2008), such as a transition from quarters to semesters. The university transition lends itself to an opportunity to make changes, modifications, and improvements to current university, college, and department-wide policies and procedures, including those related to academic advising. Describing the perceptions of undergraduate students in relation to academic advising practices is critical for providing the pertinent information for restructuring advising programs and agendas for the college.

The research objectives guiding the study were to:

(1) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of college/departmental academic advising;

(2) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic advising relationships with faculty members;

(3) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ intentions to complete enriching educational experiences through academic advising;
(4) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ perceptions of institutional support through academic advising;

(5) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ intentions to complete enriching educational experiences with faculty members in general;

(6) Describe CFAES undergraduate students’ demographic characteristics;

(7) Describe relationships between CFAES undergraduate students’ characteristics and perceptions of academic advising practices.

As long as retention and graduation rates remain a primary measure of institutional success that often results in funding at state institutions, academic advising will need to demonstrate its direct effect on these measures (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). When research studies indicate numbers, in some cases as large as 41%, of students who reported they take advice from college peers more seriously than advice from their advisors (Beaker & Young, 1994), academic advisors must work to become well informed, connected to students and key personnel on campus, and respected for their work (Fox, 2008).

The first step to change is to recognize the present. The present-day status of the college’s academic advising practices was described through the data obtained from undergraduate students in CFAES, who voiced their perspectives in this descriptive-correlational, census study. The study was designed to obtain information needed to achieve the stated objectives of describing the current
status of academic advising practices in the College of Food, Agricultural, and
Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University.

Conclusion

Objective 1: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Perceptions
of College/Departmental Academic Advising

Quality of College/Departmental Academic Advising

Conclusion

Academic advisors in CFAES are providing quality advising to their
undergraduate advisees.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussions

Although nearly 70% of the undergraduate students in CFAES perceived
the quality of advising in the college as either good or excellent, the remaining
students are less than satisfied with the quality of advising they have received.
Astin (1984) found that student learning is directly proportional to the quality and
quantity of their involvement. Student satisfaction with advising is directly
proportional to the extent of advisor contact. Students who visited their advisors
are satisfied with their advising. Relationships found in this study supported
research trends that students who visited their advisor more frequently were more
satisfied with the quality of advising received. If students who lack contact and
involvement with their academic advisors are also less satisfied with the quality of
advising, then the college should explore ways to encourage these students to get more engaged in the advising services offered.

Additionally, little recognition is given to those advisors who are succeeding in their advising roles and who are recognized as good quality advisors by students. Good academic advising must be recognized by the college as an important activity in the life of the institution (O’Banion, 1972), and advisors should be rewarded for the time spent advising students to keep faculty attention from waning in that area (Berdahl, 1995). If the college wants to continue to receive good ratings from students, then the work of advisors should be supported and acknowledged.

Sources Where Students Received Academic Advising

Conclusion

Academic advisors in CFAES are advising half of their assigned undergraduate advisees in the college.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussions

Over half of the undergraduate students received most of their advising from their academic advisors, while the other half utilized someone/something else other than their assigned advisor as their primary source of information. The college should investigate why nearly half of the students are using advising sources other than their assigned academic advisors. Faculty members may have
too many advisees. If so, they can spend little time with individual students, which limits opportunities for communication (Foushee, 2008), and thus prompts students to go elsewhere to fulfill advising needs. In addition, students may not feel that their advisor is someone in whom they can rely, or in whom they feel comfortable to talk. As a starting point, some mechanism must first be employed by the college to determine whether or not a person should be an advisor, and whether or not an advisor is retaining their effectiveness (Walter, 1982). If the college can determine why students choose not to use their assigned academic advisors, then they can work towards decreasing the percentage of students who substitute their advisor for another source of advisement.

Advisor Availability

Conclusion

Academic advisors in CFAES were available when undergraduate advisees needed them.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

Although it is a positive aspect that most students feel their advisors are available to see them when there is a need, it is critical that all students feel that their advisors are available when they are needed. Regular student contact helps advisors gain meaningful insights into students’ academic, social, and personal experiences and needs (NACADA, 2008). Relationships are built on
communication and interaction. Students who meet with advisors more frequently are more satisfied with advising and are also generally more satisfied with the institution (Kuhn, 2008). In order for students to feel completely entrusted in their advisor, advisors must be readily available to assist students as the need arises. Students expect timely information, and it is the advisor’s responsibility to provide accurate and timely information when students need it (NACADA, 2008). It is interesting to note that the researcher in this study found a significant relationship between advisor availability and frequency of contact with advisor per quarter, indicating that the more the advisor was available, the more the students contacted them. If the college promotes and supports the use of regular office hours for academic advisors, then students may feel that their advisors are more available to offer their guidance. Advisors can also utilize technology, such as email and cell phones, to stay in contact with students.

**Accurate and Up-to-date Information**

**Conclusion**

Academic advisors in CFAES provided accurate and up-to-date information for their undergraduate advisees.

**Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion**

Undergraduate students reported that the information they received from their academic advisors in the college has been accurate and up-to-date. It is
important that students continue to receive accurate and up-to-date information in future advising sessions. Fielstein (1994) indicated that without accurate information about course requirements and changes, a student might lose faith in an advisor’s ability to advise. If students are expected to utilize their academic advisors throughout their academic careers, there needs to be trust and assurance that the advisor is going to promote the student’s successful progress toward the completion of a degree program. It is interesting to note that the researcher in this study found a significant relationship between the perceptions of accurate and up-to-date information and frequency of contact per quarter; meaning, students who visited their advisors more often, reported receiving more accurate and up-to-date information.

Advisors should keep in mind that they are not the only resources that students could access during college (Pizzalotto, 2008). Referring students to others when the advisor does not have accurate answers can be more beneficial than attempting to make decisions with a lack of information. If the college can assist advisors by providing a reference guide with the contact information for support personnel in the college and university, then students would recognize that even if their advisors do not have the answers, their advisor can guide them to the right resources for assistance.
Reported Obstacles to Academic Progress

Conclusion

Money, work, and finances were the biggest obstacles to academic progress for undergraduate students in CFAES.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

Given that students indicated money was the biggest obstacle to their academic progress, academic advisors need to be sure they understand the facts and motivations of their students in order to preserve the overall academic advising mission (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). If students reported that money, work, or finances were an issue in completing their academic degree program, advisors need to be aware of those obstacles in order to provide the appropriate guidance, support, and resources to the student. The college should promote scholarships, financial aid packages, and student loan information to both advisors and students. Advisors should also be able to inform students of payment plans offered by the university, such as the Tuition Option Payment Plan (TOPP). Advisors should be made aware of the staff in the college office who could be contacted if a student has financial questions or concerns. If academic advisors in the college are knowledgeable about the resources available to assist students in financial need, they are then able to pass along that information to those students who need it.
Conclusion Objective 2: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Perceptions of Academic Advising Relationships with Faculty Members

Discussion of Career Plans

Conclusion

Academic advisors in CFAES do not tend to discuss career plans with undergraduate advisees.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

One of the many roles of an academic advisor is to assist in synthesizing and contextualizing students’ educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities, and lives to extend beyond the campus boundaries and timeframes (Gordon & Habley, 2000); including discussing and preparing for future career plans with students. Chickering’s Theory of Student Development (1969) stressed the importance of undergraduate students developing a sense of self beyond life at the institution by asking not only who I am?, but also who do I want to be?, and where am I going? Although advisors may be capable of dealing with course-related problems and departmental requirements, they seldom are taught to assist students to integrate their coursework with their life goals (Beaker & Young, 1994). Advising is more than providing information and should actively engage students in the outcomes of their academic career (Williams, 2007). If students are not tending to discuss their career plans with their advisors, then advisors need to be the ones to start the conversations with students during
their advising sessions. If advisors feel they are not capable or confident enough to discuss career plans with students, then the college needs to provide training for advisors so that more career planning conversations can take place.

Rating of Relationships with Faculty Members in CFAES

Conclusion

Academic advisors in CFAES have positive relationships with undergraduate advisees.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

The relationship between the student and the advisor is crucial, with both parties being actively involved in, and sharing the responsibility for the quality of the experience (Frost, 2000). A significant relationship was found by the researcher in this study that indicated students who had more contact with their advisors also rated their relationships with faculty members higher. In certain situations, the establishment of a relationship is the easy part; it is the continuation of the relationship that becomes difficult. Advisors can become frustrated or disappointed with the decisions students make. Ultimately, however, it is the student’s right to make the decisions about their education, and the advisor’s responsibility to provide accurate information from which the students base their decisions. Thus, despite what students say or do, advisors should remember that students will likely respond more positively to advising if they know that they
will be treated as someone with potential, instead of a problem (Bloom, 2002). If advisors can recognize the stage of Perry’s (1970) cognitive development at which students are during advising sessions, then advisors can more appropriately react to and accommodate the specific needs of students.

Given that a majority of CFAES students rated their relationships high on the rating scale, the challenge becomes two-fold: (1) to improve relationships with those students who indicated low ratings, and (2) to maintain the relationships with students who indicated high ratings. The college could provide professional development in the components that are fundamental to producing effective advisors who create environments that promote the development of students (NACADA, 2008).

Conclusion Objective 3: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Intentions to Complete Enriching Educational Experiences through Academic Advising

Intent to Complete a Practicum, Internship, Field Experience, Co-op, or Clinical Assignment

Conclusion

Undergraduate students in CFAES plan to complete a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

Although over half of the undergraduates planned to complete an internship, and an additional one-third indicated that they have already completed
an internship, nearly 10% of undergraduate students in CFAES reported that they
do not plan to or have not decided to complete an internship. However, the
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences requires students to
complete a minimum of one internship before graduation. The CFAES Academic
Degree Plan (2012) even suggested in the degree plan outline that undergraduate
students “complete [your] internship by the end of the summer after your third
year.” If students in the college do not plan to complete an internship or have not
decided to complete an internship, there is an obvious lack of information and
communication between advisor and advisee on this critical graduation
requirement.

Grites, Gordon, and Habley (2008) recommended that academic advisors
play several roles, including: advocator, intervener, dissonance mediator, guide,
and anticipator of possible pitfalls. If undergraduates in CFAES are not properly
informed that the completion of a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op,
or clinical assignment is needed to fulfill graduation requirements, then advisors
need to fulfill those roles as recommended by Grites, Gordon, and Habley. The
advisor needs to be the intervener when students make the decision not to
complete an internship; the dissonance mediator who describes and informs
students of missing graduation requirements for the college; a guide to direct
students on how to find and complete an internship; and an informer of the pitfalls
students may encounter in the wake of planning and completing an internship.
Intent to Complete an Independent Study or Self-Designed Major

Conclusion

Undergraduate students in CFAES do not plan to complete an independent study or self-designed major.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

A majority of undergraduate students in CFAES will not complete an independent study or self-designed major, however, there was a small percentage of students who were interested in completing those experiences. Academic advisors should be aware of the policies and procedures involved in assisting interested students with achieving those specific goals. Effective advising consists of being competent with thorough knowledge in areas in which advisors may be called upon or responsible for giving advice (Williams, 2007). Although most students will not complete these types of enriching educational experiences, advisors should still be up-to-date and informed on how to direct students who intend to go outside the norm. If students have an interest in an area, then advisors need to make themselves knowledgeable to help students reach their full potential (Bloom, 2002).
Conclusion Objective 4: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Perceptions of Institutional Support through Academic Advising

Institutional Support Provided to Help Students Succeed Academically

Conclusion

The institution provided support to help undergraduate students in CFAES succeed academically.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

When students report that the institution supports them in succeeding academically, they will more likely be satisfied with the institution (O’Banion, 1972). In schools where students are dissatisfied with the institution or are poorly advised, there is an increased risk that these factors may contribute to declining enrollments (Lowe & Toney, 2001). Good academic advising may very well be the key to academic success for many students (Allen & Smith, 2008). Academic advising must result in improved student learning outcomes that enhance the institutional performances that are reviewed for accreditation purposes and that are demonstrated across the student body on campus (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). If students reveal that the institution lacks the support for them to succeed academically, then the institution could risk losing its clientele. Academic advising serves as the link between student and institution, especially in large institutions such as Ohio State, to provide the perceived academic support.
students need. An institution’s philosophy towards academic advising will affect its effectiveness in encouraging students to succeed (Raskin, 1979).

Given that CFAES undergraduate students perceived the institution as supportive in their journey to succeed academically, advisors should receive regular feedback from advisees. Providing the opportunity for student feedback to monitor this component of advising allows for immediate intervention if students indicate that academic support is decreasing.

Institutional Support to Help Students Cope with Non-academic Responsibilities

Conclusion

The institution provided little help to undergraduate students in CFAES to cope with non-academic responsibilities.

Recommendations and Implications

The nature of academic advising and the knowledge necessary to address a wide-range of complex advising areas, is challenging in the field of academic or student services; training advisors to handle all situations is a significant concern (Tuttle, 2000). Academic advisors may be uninformed, untrained, or uncomfortable discussing topics with advisees outside the realm of academics. However, rather than suggesting that faculty simply need to do more and better advising, institutions might ask whether it is even reasonable to expect that any
one individual can provide the full complement of functions that is suggested of quality academic advising (Allen & Smith, 2008).

If students indicated that the institution provided little support with non-academic responsibilities, then the institution should provide and promote services that are offered on-campus, as well as off-campus, to students through academic advisors. It is interesting to note that a significant relationship was found in this study to indicate that the more contact students had with advisors, the more support they perceived the institution gave them with non-academic responsibilities. It has been argued that faculty members are not trained in personal development of students, and would be well advised to provide solely academic and professional advice (Smith, 2002); advisors cannot be expected to solve every problem students bring to them. However, this argument does not support the development of a whole student in higher education, nor the student development theories of Perry (1970) and Chickering (1969). If advisors have the knowledge of institutional resources to pass along to students, then students can take the initiative to follow-up with the necessary services.

Institutional Support Provided to Thrive Socially

Conclusion

The institution was lacking in providing support for undergraduate students in CFAES to thrive socially.
Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

Chickering (1970) and Perry (1970) both purported that academic goals, decisions, and learning cannot be isolated from students’ career goals, nor their social characteristics and environments. Chickering’s Theory of Student Development amplified the importance of social skills in the growth of college students by including the vector, *developing mature interpersonal relationships*, as a critical area of development. Students learn both in- and out-side of their classroom environments. The opportunity to interact with peers professionally and socially can play an important role in developing a well-rounded student. Academic advising is intended to enhance students’ academic and social integration into the institution (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009). A challenge for academic advising is to facilitate the development of educational plans across a student’s academic career, which requires a commitment to the intellectual and social development of the students in- and out-side of the formal classroom (Campbell & Nutt, 2008).

With over 1000 student organizations on campus at Ohio State, students have more than sufficient opportunities to get involved socially with other students with similar interests. If students reported that the institution is lacking in its support to help them thrive socially, perhaps students lack awareness of the many opportunities to become socially involved around campus; students may also need to be encouraged to become actively involved in social activities and
organizations. Advisors should ask guiding questions to determine students’ strengths and interests (Bigger, 2005), and then urge students to join clubs and organizations that embrace their interest areas. Advisors should also recognize that supporting students to thrive socially can be accomplished by merely holding conversations with students and encouraging them to get involved in social organizations and networking opportunities.

**Institutional Assistance to Acquire Work-related Knowledge and Skills**

**Conclusion**

The institution provided assistance to undergraduate students in CFAES to acquire work-related knowledge and skills.

**Recommendations and Implications**

Advisors sometimes assume that students have made choices in life goals and vocational goals before they enter college; this assumption can cause academic advising programs to fail when advisors begin advising while avoiding this area (O’Banion, 1972). Academic advisors need to provide students with the support and resources needed to acquire work-related knowledge and skills that students can use outside of the institution. Learning involves the development of practical application (Yarbrough, 2002), and academic advisors are in a unique position to assist students in finding ways to apply the skills learned at the institution into real-life working knowledge. Although students in CFAES
reported that the institution provided assistance to acquire work-related knowledge and skills, indicated that there is room for improvement because students did not indicate an excellent amount of support. Advisors can assist students in locating opportunities that would allow them to acquire work-related skills, such as internships, field experiences, and student organizations pertaining to the students’ career interests. The effective advisor helps students to understand, to create logic, and to make application of the student’s curriculum (Lowenstein, 2005), including how to acquire work-related knowledge and skills.

Institutional Assistance to Develop a Personal Code of Values and Ethics

Conclusion

The institution lacked assistance to undergraduate students in CFAES in developing a personal code of values and ethics

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

Institutional academic advising programs must have an articulated vision for advising, setting goals and objectives, promoting student learning and development, and prescribing and practicing ethical behavior (King, M. C., 2008). When advisors assist students in developing their own code of values and ethics, it aligns academic advising to concepts of student engagement and integrates it into the educational fabric of an institution—not merely layering it on as a student service (Campbell, 2008). Development in higher education usually implies
growth, or potential for growth, toward maturity or greater complexity (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). If students indicated that the institution needed improvement in assisting with developing a more complex sense of self through a personal code of values and ethics, then the institution reflects room for growth.

Chickering’s Theory of Student Development (1969) indicated that the final vector of student development was the area of creating one’s own values, beliefs, and integrity. College students tend to experience changes in their own value system and create their own beliefs as they mature through a degree in higher education. This area of student development is critical, especially for upperclassmen who are more likely to be at this final vector of development before transitioning into the real-world. The institution has the responsibility to contribute the means for students to mature to this level of complexity.

Academic advisors should also recognize the changing student demographics, characteristics, and experiences. The demographic profile of today’s college student is different from that of thirty years ago (Kennedy & Ishler, 2008); more adult and nontraditional students are enrolled in higher education and may hold higher expectations of moral and ethical developmental support from the institution. Older, more mature students may also arrive in higher education on different ends of Perry’s (1970) cognitive development spectrum. Instead of leaning towards the dualism stage of cognitive development, nontraditional students may lean towards the relativism stage. If students have a
want or a need to develop a code of values and ethics, then the advisors should hold discussions with advisees to promote this area of development. Advisors should also practice using a code of values and ethics while interacting with students to provide an example of such behavior. The institution should consider providing professional development for advisors that addresses this area of development so that advisors can provide resources and opportunities to promote this aspect of the whole student.

Quality of Academic Advising Received at the Institution

Conclusion

The institution provided quality academic advising to undergraduate students in CFAES.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

The process of academic advising is important to institutions of higher education. The role of the academic advisor is critical to student retention and student satisfaction with the institution (Lowe & Toney, 2001). Thus, is it essential that students are pleased with the quality of advising they receive from the institution. Outstanding academic advising programs do not simply emerge, they are conceptually grounded--both theoretically and institutionally--and are guided by statements of vision, mission, goals, and program objectives that support the purposes of academic advising (Campbell, 2008). The researcher
found significant relationships that support the research literature that indicated that the more frequent contact students have with advisors, the more satisfied students are with the quality of advising at the institution. Given that a majority of students reported the quality of academic advising at the institution was good, then academic advisors, the college, and the institution need to challenge themselves to seek the next level in academic advising excellence. The institution should consider providing space and time, perhaps during professional development activities, for advisors to talk with one another throughout the academic year. Interaction helps advisors to learn from each other and to collectively identify issues that the institution as a whole could address to better support student development and learning (Pizzolato, 2008). Striving to improve the quality of advising for students would benefit not only the students, but the institution as a whole.

Institutional Responsiveness to Student Academic Problems

Conclusion

The institution lacks responsive behaviors to academic problems faced by undergraduate students in CFAES.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

Academic and advising practices must be recognized as a high priority by administrators and as an integral part of the mission of each university (Beaker &
Young, 1994). Students should not perceive their institution as lacking in responsiveness to student academic problems. Academic advising is perhaps the only structured campus endeavor that can guarantee students sustained interaction with a caring and concerned adult who can help them (Hunter & White, 2004). Given that students perceive that there is room for enhancing the institutional responsiveness to student academic problems, the institution should inquire into the level at which academic advising process issues occur, which, therefore, cause students to report that the university could improve their actions.

It is suggested that the institution follow suit of many other universities and adopt a syllabus format to communicate expectations and procedures for academic advising (Campbell, 2008). In addition, written reference materials for advisors could be developed, perhaps in the form of a quick-reference handbook or interactive electronic format, which could be updated regularly (Leonhardy & Jimmerson, 1992). Minimizing student academic problems and maximizing the institutional response time can result in improved academic advising experiences and consequently higher student achievement.
Agreement Level that Students Have to Run Around from One Place to another to get the Information or Approvals Needed

Conclusion

To obtain information or approvals needed, undergraduate students in CFAES have to run around from place to place.

Recommendations and Implications

The National Association of Academic Advising (NACADA, 2008) stated that, “the cooperative efforts of all who advise include, but are not limited to, providing accurate and timely information, communicating in useful and efficient ways, maintaining regular office hours, and offering varied contact modes.” Since students reported that they have to run around from one place to another to obtain the information or approvals they need, then the institution is failing to meet the standards of NACADA. Course selection and registration is a difficult and time-consuming process, requiring extensive knowledge (O’Banion, 1972); both students and advisors can become overwhelmed by the procedures if there is no direction, guidance, or support coming from the administration in charge of the advising services. An initial training and preparation program, as well as a continuing education component, is fundamental to producing effective advisors who can answer students’ questions and can point them directly to the appropriate personnel for further advisement (Hunter & White, 2004). The institution needs to
assist in minimizing the run-around for students, so that advising sessions are more effective and efficient.

It should be noted that the researcher found a significant relationship that indicated that transfer/transition students perceived there is more run-around than non-transfer/transition students reported. Are these students falling through the cracks in the advising system of the college? Special attention should be directed towards these students to prevent run-around situations and to provide them with the resources needed to assist them in the transfer/transition process. Transfer and transition students could become more acquainted with the college and university policies and procedures through their college orientation seminar.

Conclusion Objective 5: Describe CFAES Undergraduate Students’ Intent to Complete Enriching Educational Experiences with Faculty Members in General Discussion of Ideas from Readings or Classes with Faculty Members Outside of Class

Conclusion

Faculty members do not discuss ideas from readings or classes with undergraduate students in CFAES outside of class.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

College personnel must realize that students need support from peers, faculty, staff, and family if they are to succeed (Bigger, 2005). Support for students should occur both inside and outside of the classroom. Support can come
in many forms, including discussing readings or classes outside of class. Faculty members in general have a responsibility to assist in the advising process of all students. Faculty members may not realize that when they accept a position, they will be expected to advise students, formally or nonformally (Hunter & White, 2004). Under the notion that advising is teaching (Crookston, 1972), advisors advocate for student educational achievement to the highest attainable standard; they support student goals, and uphold the educational mission of the institution (NACADA, 2008). Holding conversations with students about their readings or classes, outside of the classroom, can support students’ highest level of educational attainment.

The researcher found a significant relationship in that students who more frequently contacted their advisors also discussed ideas from readings or class outside of class time more frequently. If students are not having these discussions with faculty members or advisors, then the advising system must evaluate opportunities that could be implemented for increasing the frequency of these discussions. Often, teachable moments during advising can arise when faculty members or advisors listen to students talk about their favorite classes or interests (Foushee, 2008). Encouraging faculty members to have conversations about classes and readings with students beyond the classroom walls can also facilitate student development in nonformal environments. Faculty members and advisors
alike, can use these opportunities to not only expand teaching, but to build positive rapport with students.

Working with Faculty Members on Activities other than Coursework

Conclusion

Faculty members do not tend to work with undergraduate students in CFAES on activities other than coursework.

Recommendations and Implications

Students in CFAES are generally not working with faculty members outside of the academic realm; however, the lack of student-faculty member interaction outside the classroom, may affect what is going on inside the classroom. O’Banion (1972) found that when instructors volunteered for out-of-class activities with students, they were likely to be better advisors and better instructors. It should be noted that this research supported this concept by finding a significant relationship between students who more frequently contacted their advisors and students who tended to work with faculty members on activities other than coursework. Developing valuable relationships between teachers and students becomes an important form of teaching and advising (Gale Encyclopedia of Education, 2011). Working with students on activities other than coursework, provides opportunities to foster working relationships with faculty members.
Eble (1988) stated that faculty should consider advising as an extension of their teaching role in which they can demonstrate genuine concern for students’ welfare by being available and approachable outside the classroom. If students in CFAES are not working with faculty members on activities outside the classroom, then advisors need to make themselves more approachable and available for students. Faculty members could volunteer to advise student organizations, attend college-wide activities, or offer opportunities to work with students on undergraduate research, or projects for conferences. Regardless of how faculty go about interacting with students outside the classroom, it should be recognized that education takes place both in- and out-side the walls of a classroom, and that universities are places in which, ideally, a holistic learning environment exists (Berdahl, 1995).

**Intent to work on Research Projects with Faculty Members outside of Course Requirements**

**Conclusion**

Undergraduate students in CFAES do not intend to work on research projects with faculty members outside of course or program requirements.

**Recommendations, Implications, and Discussions**

Advisors can do their students and institutions a great service by encouraging their advisees to engage in educationally purposeful activities, such
as student-faculty research (Kuh, 2008). Expanding the opportunities for students to participate in educationally enriching experiences, such as working with faculty members on research projects can mutually benefit both students and faculty members. When viewed as an educational process and done well, academic advising plays a critical role in connecting students with learning opportunities to foster and support their engagement, success, and the attainment of key learning outcomes (Campbell, 2008). If students do not plan to complete research projects with faculty members, then advisors need to encourage the students to get involved in these activities. Students are able to develop cognitive skills, acquire work-related skills, and build professional connections by completing research projects with faculty members. Advisors should urge students to participate in these opportunities, and should provide students with names of colleagues who are in search of undergraduate assistants. It should be recognized that the CFAES (2012) website promoted student research by stating, “student researchers are a valuable part of our college and Ohio State.”

Conclusion Objective 6: Describe the Demographic Characteristics of Undergraduate Students in CFAES

Conclusion

The typical student who participated in the study was a female in her fourth year of undergraduate education. She maintained a grade point average
between 3.0 and 3.9 and did not transfer or transition into the college from an Ohio State branch campus or another institution. It is likely that she is in contact with her academic advisor either one or two times per quarter. It is most likely that her contact with advisors is done through email communication. Her biggest obstacle to completing her degree in four years is money, work, or finances.

**Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion**

Although most students in the study reported they were in their third or fourth year as undergraduate students, a small percentage reported they were in their fifth or more year. The college should investigate why students are not completing program plans in the four years proposed in the college degree program plans. The college should identify these students and ensure they are receiving accurate and timely academic advising to assist them in fulfilling their educational goals. If these students are less satisfied with the advising system, then the college needs to recognize the insufficiencies to prevent future students from not completing their degrees in the recommended time frame.

Students who are taking more time to complete their degrees may also be the students who reported the biggest obstacle to their academic success is work and money. These students may be working full-time to earn money while taking classes simultaneously. Since this is true, then advisors need to acknowledge the challenges students working full-time have in meeting their educational requirements. In addition, it should be recognized that the correlation between
frequency of advisor contact and gender indicated males have more frequent
contact than females per quarter with their advisors. Research literature suggests
the opposite, so why are females in CFAES not contacting their advisors as often?

Conclusion Objective 7: Describe the relationships between CFAES
Undergraduate Students’ Characteristics and Perceptions of Academic Advising
Practices

Conclusion

Students who contacted their advisor more frequently had discussions of
career plans with their advisor.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

There was a strong, moderate relationship between the number of times
students were in contact with their academic advisors per quarter and the
frequency of discussions of career plans. Lowenstein (2005) stated that the more
profound goal of academic advising is to enhance the student’s development, and
that advising should always have a goal that goes beyond just providing
information. Students who visited their academic advisors more frequently, had
conversations beyond courses and scheduling; they discussed plans for future
careers. It is a goal for many students to obtain a career after the completion of a
degree program. Despite how frequently students visit advisors, advisors should
keep the dialogue open with all students on future career plans and aspirations.
The researcher found that relationships also indicated students with more frequent contact with their advisors were more likely to participate in enriching educational experiences, and were overall more satisfied with the quality of advising they received at the college and institution. These findings are consistent with the research literature (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009; Kuh, 2008; O’Banion, 1972). If the college wants students to be more satisfied with advising services and to reap the benefits of establishing an advisor-advisee relationship, then students need to be encouraged to visit their advisors more frequently.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Through this research study, descriptive data regarding student perceptions of quality academic advising in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences was analyzed. Further research is warranted to extend the contribution of the body of knowledge to the advising field, as well as to the college.

The first recommendation for future research is to modify the research instrument. The researcher used research items, verbatim, from the NSSE instrument. However, the wording of some items was not specific to Ohio State’s situation, or the items contained *double-barreled* questions. For example, question one asked students how often they talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor. This *double-barreled* question may confuse participants who...
could respond one way when thinking about a faculty member, or another way when thinking about his/her academic advisor. The researcher did not modify NSSE questions because the intention was to conduct trend comparisons using responses from several previous years’ data. However, the opportunity did not exist to allow for those comparisons to be made. Thus, the researchers recommend that future research be conducted with a modified research instrument that more closely aligns with the college’s needs.

It is also recommended that future research be conducted to analyze differences in students’ perceptions of advising received from faculty advisors within the college and professional advisors, as well as student support services advisors. Analyzing the various advising models within the college could provide data that supports the notion that one model is more effective for CFAES than another.

In addition, it is recommended that advising practices between academic departments be assessed. Comparing departments across the college may show practices within one department that are more efficient and effective for students than in another department. Examining individual departments and their advising practices also lends itself to providing resources and training that are specific for each department. Providing specific resources and training to individual departments can increase the number of and effectiveness of advising practices within departments, and across the college. The comparison of advising practices
across departments could also reveal advisors who are excelling at their role, as well as those who may need continued professional development in the area of academic advising of undergraduate students.

Further research should be conducted to compare advising in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences to other colleges in the university. CFAES prides itself on academic advising within the college and advisors’ commitment to student learning and achievement. However, comparing advising perceptions from undergraduates in CFAES to undergraduates in other colleges, may expose new opportunities for the college to improve advising services offered to students. In order to be advantageous in the support of student development, the college should continually strive to evaluate their performance and provide innovative strategies to remain at the forefront of student academic advising.

Lastly, it is recommended that focus groups be used to determine factors related to the low response rate of this study (30%). The response rate was lower than anticipated by the researcher. Even though Dillman’s (2000) tailored design method was implemented to maximize response rates from participants, the results were low. Focus groups could be used to assess the views of respondents and of nonrespondents. The data collected from the focus groups could then be used to modify the methods of data collection for future online surveys for the college.
Discussion

The theoretical foundations of Perry (1970) and Chickering (1969) recognized that college students develop in foreseeable stages and areas; however, each student is unique to the pace and progression needed to proceed from one stage or area to the next. When students encounter new experiences and increased complexity as they integrate into higher education, they can struggle to assimilate old experiences with new ones. Academic advisors need to be cognizant of this reality, and recognize how each student’s developmental progress will affect outcomes of advising sessions, and ultimately the successful completion of a degree program.

Educational environments play an enormous role in the student’s ability to progress from one area of development to the next, and academic advisors who have meaningful and engaged interactions with students, contribute to their advancement. The thought processes students acquire to understand knowledge and interact with others, will broaden over the course of an undergraduate degree program. By acknowledging, appreciating, and working with the unique phases of cognitive and psychosocial development that students bring to the advisor-advisee relationships, advisors can enhance advising practices across the institution and can promote higher achievement among all students.

The conceptual framework model (Figure 1.1) presented by the researcher in this study will provide the core for the remainder of this discussion. The
conceptual framework was designed to identify the pathway for increasing undergraduate student achievement through academic advising; it begins with a description of the current perceptions students have of the advising practices of academic advisors. When engaging students to provide feedback, it is important to remember that many of them view education as a service they purchased (Hunter & White, 2004); thus they have expectations as a consumer of the institutional product. Inviting students to assess the effectiveness of academic advising practices delivers a strong and explicit message to all members of the college community that advising is an important, professional responsibility (Cuseo, 2008).

There are countless advising assessment instruments available that provide opportunities to survey students; unfortunately, few are being used. Many institutions reported using no formal evaluation of advising programs or formal evaluation of individual advisors (Spicuzza, 1992). The researcher in this study found it critical to use students’ perceptions of current academic advising practices as a foundation for ensuring a successful and effective advising program.

The second tier on the conceptual framework is a strong understanding of the knowledge and research in academic advising. The styles of advising being practiced in the field to meet that purpose are vast. A continuum of advisor involvement can be traced from the prescriptive style of advising, which
demonstrates the traditional sense of the advisor giving advice and the advisee applying the advice, to the opposite end of the spectrum with developmental advising, which fully engages the student in the advising dialogue and decision making process. Knowledge of different advising styles should be readily available for advisors to employ, along with the tools and resources they need to allow them to satisfy the needs of the students who walk into their offices. Academic advisors are better prepared to work effectively with their students if they are familiar with theories, models, career advising, planning, and recent advances in career and academic advising (Metzner, 1989). Providing annual professional development opportunities for advisors to become more knowledgeable with current research practices and findings is an opportunity to keep advisors up-to-date.

The third tier on the conceptual framework is the development of an academic advising vision. A college-wide academic advising vision should describe what advising would be at its best and should be communicated to all faculty, staff, and students in the college. The establishment of a vision would assist in providing guidelines that clearly state the roles and responsibilities of advisors, and could help in identifying the outcomes of an excellent advising program. The use of too many visions in an institution can create confusion and lack of clarity among the faculty and staff who are required to meet them. Therefore, it is suggested that the vision of advising for the college be embedded
in the overall college mission. Currently, no academic advising vision could be found for either the college or the university. The researcher located pledges that promise to protect students’ academic progress, but the researcher could not access a vision.

The next tier on the conceptual framework is the development and organization of a college-wide academic advising infrastructure. It should be recognized that the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences does currently have an advising program in place. The academic advisors in CFAES should utilize research-based practices when advising students. Hemwall (2008) reported that good advising may be the most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience; advisors who are utilizing empirically-proven practices are more likely to provide a good experience for advisees.

Academic advisors should be knowledgeable of current college and university policies and procedures, particularly on the transition from quarters to semesters. An academic advising handbook is available for students and advisors on the college and university websites to assist in making everyone involved more informed of the changes.

Student feedback should be collected regularly to assess academic advising practices and effectiveness. Given the important role of academic advising in student retention, serious efforts to improve student perceptions,
desires, and satisfaction with academic advising should be grounded in evaluations (Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009).

The college should ensure that academic advisors are receiving the support and resources needed to fulfill their roles as advisors from both individual departments and the institution. In order to contribute to their students’ needs, advisors must possess a clear understanding of the students they serve in the college. Incorporating student development theory into the annual academic advisors’ and freshmen advisors’ orientation workshops, would allow advisors to gain an understanding of developmental phases of students and how their advising needs change. In addition, cultural competency training could be incorporated into professional development opportunities for faculty members and advisors to learn teaching strategies that are most appropriate for inclusive behaviors of diverse groups of students.

The next tier on the conceptual framework is the theoretical notion that if the lower tiers are effectively implemented, an improvement in the academic advising practices within the college will be evidenced. Academic advising can be described as the hub of the wheel with connections to all other areas of the institution. As such, advising services are in a key position to take the lead in making sure that all services are interconnected, so that students are engaged in their learning (King, M. C., 2008). Improved academic advising requires a three-way commitment between students, advisors, and administrators (Leonhardy &
Jimmerson, 1992). Students need to be encouraged to take responsibility for their decisions, actions, and education. Advisors, in order to implement advising skills, need access to accurate information, and need to be motivated to carry-out effective advising to all advisees. Administrators must provide appropriate advising policies, resources, support, rewards, and recognition to advisors for good advising. When all three stakeholders execute their roles in the advising process, academic advising will be improved.

The top tier of the conceptual framework naturally lends itself to increased student achievement through academic advising, with the assumption that the lower tiers have been successfully achieved. Academic advisors are an integral part of the learning community, and as such, need to coordinate the advising system on campus to be in tune with student needs.

Institution personnel want students to be successful and want students to complete their degree program. For most institutions, retention is a key objective of the advising effort. Retention improves academic foundations of the institution (Tuttle, 2000). Students who have high achievement in the college and institution will be more satisfied with their learning experiences and will be more likely to complete their degree. The core purpose of academic advising is to enhance learning and to assist students in achieving their goals for higher education. This can be accomplished with the support of high-quality academic advising.
Suggested Applications

While advisors across the country are increasingly employing research-based advising practices, gains in the profession continue to be diluted by inordinately large advising loads, program structures that prevent students from meeting with the same advisor at each visit, and faculty priorities that limit attention to advising (Pizzolato, 2008). Changes in advising practices do not happen immediately and require departmental and institutional support. “Improving academic advising is a pressing concern and an ongoing, never-ending endeavor on many college campuses” (Steingass & Sykes, 2008, p. 18). Faculty are often hired with the assumption that they will teach in the classroom, engage in research, publish in their field, and secure grants to support their work (Hunter & White, 2004); they are often caught by surprise when their first advisee shows up at their office door. Giving new faculty members advising responsibilities immediately may not be in the best interest of students if faculty member’s promotion and tenure decisions are based solely on research and publications. An introduction to the expectations of the importance of the role of advising should become part of graduate preparation programs for future faculty members (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). Priming future academic advisors for the reality of advising, would help in expediting the trial and error process experienced by many new advisors.
The researcher in this study suggested that in an ideal academic advising program, students would benefit most from an advising program that merged three advising models. The merging of professional advisors, faculty advisors, and peer advisors into a comprehensive advising program would enhance student development from Perry’s and Chickering’s theoretical frameworks. Utilizing professional advisors to assist students with logistical and procedural issues can cater to the students who are early in their student development phases. Professional advisors who can provide basic information along the dualism continuum can meet the needs of new and beginning students, while giving those students attention to areas of academics they need most. Utilizing professional advisors for logistical needs can also relieve duties from faculty advisors who have additional responsibilities.

Immersing faculty advisors into an advising program is essential to providing an avenue that connects students and faculty outside of the classroom. Faculty members contribute a career development aspect that is critical for developing students in specific career fields. Faculty advisors are linked to industry professionals and are attuned to the cultures in their fields; they can provide advice for students preparing to enter those fields. Students who are nearing the end of their program and are generally further along in their cognitive and psychosocial development, have different needs that can be addressed more effectively through faculty advisors.
The use of peer advisors can be an added benefit for students, as well as the faculty and professional advisors. Peer advisors can greatly influence the decisions of the students with whom they work. Implementing the use of peer advisors during peak advising times, such as course scheduling, can provide an alternative resource for students. Students can obtain recommended courses and instructors, as well as be encouraged to participate in student organizations, through the use of peer advisors. A sense of credibility is added to advising when students get suggestions and information from their peers. Peer advisors can assist in the development of students’ social aspects, moral and ethical aspects, and the multiplicity phase of cognitive aspect.

Designing an academic advising program that integrates three advising models, professional advising, faculty advising, and peer advising, can benefit students at all stages of development (Chickering, 1970; Perry, 1969). Students would have multiple resources to utilize, and would be able to gain access to advisors more frequently. However, a computer-based advising software should be used to keep accurate records on students and the advising services they received. This software could be used similarly to files in a doctor’s office where records of the students’ advising could be maintained and accessed by other advisors. The advising load for faculty members could be reduced by implementing the three advising-model program, which would leave more time for other responsibilities, such as teaching and research.
A potential application for the college might be to monitor advising loads to ensure that advisors and advisees are respecting the limitations of one another’s time. Findings from a study at the University of Iowa, showed that satisfaction with advising for both the advisor and advisee was inversely proportional to the advising workload (Walter, 1982). Advisors should have a sensible student load. It has been suggested through research that no more than 15 advisees should be permitted without a reduced teaching load (O’Banion, 1972). Often, advisors who are recognized as good advisors by students are rewarded only by receiving additional advisees. What are the checks and balances to ensure that advisors are not becoming overwhelmed with too many advisees, officially or unofficially assigned by the unit?

Another suggested application for the college might be to provide a prominent training and reward system for honoring and recognizing the work and dedication of good advisors. Cuseo (2008) found that three components should be taken seriously by institutions to motivate advisors to perform: (1) clarify the purpose and meaning of advising, (2) provide effective advisor orientation and training, and (3) provide recognition and rewards for advisors’ performance. If advisors are not trained or informed regarding academic advising practices, they cannot be expected to function as effective advisors. It is recommended that the introduction of theories used in academic advising be inserted in advisor orientation workshops and seminars. Informing advisors on theories that support
student development through advising can provide the foundation needed by advisors to recognize and understand the developmental phases of students and their changing needs. If little reward structure is offered in return for time spent advising students, it is natural that faculty attention in that area would wane (Berdahl, 1995). CFAES provides updates to advisors and faculty on technical changes in information, policies, and procedures. However, a required in-depth training on advising for new faculty does not exist and is difficult to enforce. Some recognition for advising is rewarded at the annual college recognition banquet, however, beyond that, little recognition is given to advisors who excel on a regular basis at their advising roles.

The future agenda for academic advising will continue to be linked to the rapid changes that characterize the state of higher education (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). The challenge to the profession of advising is to prepare and to foster the growth of all models of advising. In order to provide optimal student success in achieving educational outcomes, advising must remain a critical part of higher education. Utilizing resources such as the Nation Academic Advising Association (NACADA) to establish and maintain advising programs, will help ensure current, research-based practices are implemented into advising practices.

Grounding advising programs in diverse theories of development, establishing advising visions and objectives, and preparing advisors for the unique task of interacting with students on varying levels, will all assist in improving
advising across higher education. It has been stated that academic advisors are in a more unique position than anyone else on campus to work with students on a regular basis. Advisors become the familiar face on which to rely over the course of a degree program. The relationships built between advisors and advisees are significant in determining whether a student’s experience in higher education is a positive one.

Franklin D. Roosevelt famously stated, “*We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.*” Academic advising is an extension of teaching students in higher education the skills and competencies needed to grow, prosper, and function as contributing members of society once they leave the confines of the institution. Among one of the most important influences in building young minds for the future, is that of a student’s academic advisor. Under the notion that advising is teaching (Crookston, 1972), advisors advocate for student educational achievement to the highest attainable standard; they support student goals, and uphold the educational mission of the institution (NACADA, 2008). When viewed as an educational process and done well, academic advising plays a critical role in connecting students with learning opportunities to foster and support their engagement, success, and attainment of key learning outcomes (Campbell, 2008). The effective design, development, and assessment of academic advising programs in colleges of agriculture, will assist in
the production of positive learner outcomes that are essential to properly educating the citizens of the 21st century.
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Appendix A: Questionnaire to Measure Perceptions of Undergraduate Students in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences toward Academic Advising Practices
Section 1: Welcome

WELCOME!

Thank you for participating in this survey!

The Ohio State University

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Science

Section 2: Relationships with Faculty Members

Please indicate your responses to the following statements regarding your relationships with faculty members in the college, both inside and outside of the classroom.

1. How often do you talk about career plans with a faculty member or advisor?
   a. Never
   b. Sometimes
   c. Often
   d. Very often

2. How often do you discuss ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class?
   a. Never
   b. Sometimes
   c. Often
   d. Very often

3. How often do you work with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)?
   a. Never
   b. Sometimes
   c. Often
   d. Very often
4. On a scale of 1-7, how would you rate the relationships you have with faculty members in CFAES? (1=unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic; 7=available, helpful, sympathetic)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Section 3: Student Intentions to Complete Enriching Educational Experiences

Please indicate your plans for the following statements.

5. What are your plans to complete a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment?
   a. Not decided
   b. Do not plan to do
   c. Plan to do
   d. Done

6. What are your plans to work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements?
   a. Not decided
   b. Do not plan to do
   c. Plan to do
   d. Done

7. What are your plans to complete an independent study or self-designed major?
   a. Not decided
   b. Do not plan to do
   c. Plan to do
   d. Done
Section 4: Perceptions of the Institution

Please indicate your responses to the statements provided in regards to the support provided by the institution through academic advising.

8. Does the institution provide the support you need to help you succeed academically?
   a. Very little
   b. Some
   c. Quite a bit
   d. Very much

9. Does the institution help you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)?
   a. Very little
   b. Some
   c. Quite a bit
   d. Very much

10. Does the institution provide the support you need to thrive socially?
    a. Very little
    b. Some
    c. Quite a bit
    d. Very much

11. Does the institution assist you in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills?
    a. Very little
    b. Some
    c. Quite a bit
    d. Very much

12. Does the institution assist you in developing a personal code of values and ethics?
    a. Very little
    b. Some
    c. Quite a bit
    d. Very much
13. Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institutions?
   a. Poor
   b. Fair
   c. Good
   d. Excellent

14. How would you rate this university’s responsiveness to student academic problems?
   a. Poor
   b. Fair
   c. Good
   d. Excellent

15. At this university, students have to run around from one place to another to get the information or approvals they need.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly agree

**Section 5: Perceptions of the College/Department**

*Please indicate your responses to the statements about academic advising within the college and/or department.*

16. How would you rate the quality of academic advising you have received from your college or department at this university?
   a. Poor
   b. Fair
   c. Good
   d. Excellent

17. During the past year, from what source did you receive MOST of your academic advising?
   a. Advisors in your college or department
   b. Instructors or staff members not formally assigned as an advisor
   c. Online registration and degree tracking system
   d. Undergraduate catalog or other publications
   e. Friends or family
18. The advisor(s) in your college or department is (are) available when you need to see her/him (them).
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly agree

19. The information you’ve received from academic advisors has been accurate and up to date.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly agree

20. From the list below, choose ONE item that best describes the BIGGEST OBSTACLE to your academic progress.
   a. Money, work obligations, finances
   b. Family obligations
   c. Difficulties getting the courses you need
   d. Lack of good academic advising
   e. Lack of personal motivation
   f. Poor academic performance
   g. I have no real obstacles

Section 6: Demographics

Please complete the following demographic data.

21. Academic Rank
   a. 1st year
   b. 2nd year
   c. 3rd year
   d. 4th year
   e. 5+ years

22. Gender
   a. Male
   b. Female
23. Current Grade Point Average (GPA)
   a. 4.0+
   b. 3.9-3.0
   c. 2.9-2.0
   d. 1.9-1.0
   e. .9 or lower

24. Did you transfer/transition to the Columbus campus from either an OSU branch campus or another institution?
   a. Yes
   b. No

25. How many times per quarter are you in contact with your academic advisor?
   a. 0
   b. 1-2
   c. 3-4
   d. 5-6
   e. 7+

26. Please indicate the method(s) of communication you use with your academic advisor: mark all that apply.
   a. Email
   b. Phone call
   c. Text
   d. Social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter)
   e. Hand written correspondence
   f. Scheduled appointment
   g. Unscheduled appoint in advisor’s office
   h. Unscheduled, informal communication outside advisor’s office (i.e. passing in hallway, at a college/department event, student organization meeting)
7. Thank you! We appreciate your input! GO BUCKS!
Appendix B: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Item Usage Proposal Form
REQUESTS TO USE NSSE SURVEY ITEMS

The National Survey of Student Engagement’s (NSSE) survey instrument, The College Student Report, is copyrighted and the copyright is owned by The Trustees of Indiana University. Any use of survey items contained within The College Student Report is prohibited without prior written permission from Indiana University.

In addition, as a non-subsidized, cost-recovery project, the NSSE program may ask researchers who wish to borrow from, adapt, or translate the NSSE instrument to pay a fair price for the time and effort the NSSE staff put into forming such Agreements, and as reasonable estimate of the value of NSSE’s intellectual property.

In addition, such Agreements typically entail the following terms briefly described below, but to appear in formal legal detail in the actual Agreement:

1. That all details of the license be negotiated in advance and in writing, which is incorporated by reference into the Agreement;

2. The Agreement does not include any right to sublicense others. Any different or repeated use of the item(s) require an additional license;
3. The researcher agrees:

   a. To provide to NSSE frequency distributions and means on the licensed item(s);

   b. On the survey form itself, and in all publications or presentations of data obtained through the licensed item(s), to note that the items were used with permission from Indiana University;

   c. To provide to NSSE a copy of all surveys that include NSSE items or modified items; and

   d. To provide to NSSE a copy of all reports, presentations, analyses, or other materials in which the borrowed item(s) are presented, discussed, or analyzed.

4. The Agreement will include an expiration date.

5. Other terms as deemed necessary to govern the Agreement as determined by either party.
Proposal to Use Items from *The College Student Report*

*Contact information:*

February 11, 2012

Whittington M. Susie

Last Name First Name

Professor

Title

The Ohio State University

Institution

203 Agricultural Administration Building

Office

2120 Fyffe Road

Address

Columbus OH 43210 USA

City State/Province Zip or Postal Code Country
Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible. Feel free to attach additional documents in support of the proposal.

1. State the objective of your survey:
   
   a. Describe characteristics of faculty academic advisers as perceived by undergraduate students
   b. Describe undergraduate students’ perceptions of needs relative to academic advising.
   c. Describe communication patterns of undergraduate students with their academic adviser
   d. Evaluate the relationship between undergraduate students with their academic advisors as perceived by the students.
   e. Describe demographic characteristics of undergraduate students in a college of agricultural and related sciences.

2. Identify the specific item(s) to be used:

   Please see Page 6 of this document for a list of specific items to be used
3. To whom will the survey be administered?

The survey will be administered to undergraduate students in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University Columbus Campus.

4. How will the survey be administered—through oral interviews, on paper, electronically, a combination of methods, other?

The survey questions identified from the NSSE survey will be administered through an electronic survey provider.

5. Describe your sampling methodology.

First, an electronic letter will be sent to the undergraduate student population in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University Columbus campus, inviting students to participate in the survey, explaining the importance of their contribution to the college, and providing them with a date that the survey can be expected to arrive in their email.

Second, an email containing a link to the survey through the electronic survey provider will be sent to the student population in CFAES. The email will once again explain the objectives of the research, the importance of student participation, as well as request student participation in the survey.

A week after the first survey link was emailed to the students, an electronic reminder letter, as well as the link to the survey, will be sent to non-respondents. A thank you letter will be sent to those students who have responded to the survey.

A week after the reminder letter is sent to non-respondents, a third and final attempt will be made to request student participation in the survey. An electronic letter requesting student participation, as well as a link to the electronic survey will be mailed to all non-respondents.

A thank you letter will be emailed to all students who responded to the survey after the second and third requests thanking them for their participation in the research.
6. State your maximum number of survey recipients.

*There will be no more than 2,300 students participating in the survey.*

7. List your expected start and end dates for survey administration. Please indicate if you intend to use these items on a continuing basis (e.g., each semester or year).

*We anticipate beginning the research on Monday, April 2, 2012 by sending out the initial letter to students requesting their participation when the survey arrives to their email accounts. The first survey link will arrive to students in their email on Wednesday, April 4, 2012. A reminder email will be sent out on Wednesday, April 11, 2012 to non-respondents. A second and final email reminder will be sent out to non-respondents on Wednesday, April 18, 2012. The last day for data collection will be approximately Friday, April 20, 2012.*

8. Append a copy of the proposed survey instrument to be used, noting where the NSSE items are located.

*Please see attached proposed questions. Please note that the format will be changed as it is entered into the electronic survey provider.*

9. Please list all sponsoring organizations and funding sources for this study.

*College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.*

10. If your institution is NSSE eligible, will a NSSE administration be under way at the same time as your proposed research?

*No, there will not be a NSSE administration under way at the same time as the proposed research.*

11. Provide the name, title, and organization of your principal investigator, if different from the contact person described above.
12. If you are a student working on your dissertation or other research, please list your advisor.

*Academic and Dissertation Advisor: Dr. M. Susie Whittington*
NSSE Items Requested to be Used:

27. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor.
   a. Never
   b. Sometimes
   c. Often
   d. Very often

28. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class.
   a. Never
   b. Sometimes
   c. Often
   d. Very often

29. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.).
   a. Never
   b. Sometimes
   c. Often
   d. Very often

30. Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment.
   a. Not decided
   b. Do not plan to do
   c. Plan to do
   d. Done

31. Work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements.
   a. Not decided
   b. Do not plan to do
   c. Plan to do
   d. Done
32. Independent study or self-designed major.
   a. Not decided
   b. Do not plan to do
   c. Plan to do
   d. Done

33. Please rate your relationships with faculty members on a scale of 1-7
   (1=unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic, 7=available, helpful, sympathetic)
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

34. Does the institution provide the support you need to help you succeed academically?
   a. Very little
   b. Some
   c. Quite a bit
   d. Very much

35. Does the institution help you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.).
   a. Very little
   b. Some
   c. Quite a bit
   d. Very much

36. Does the institution provide the support you need to thrive socially?
   a. Very little
   b. Some
   c. Quite a bit
   d. Very much

37. Does the institution assist you in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills?
   a. Very little
   b. Some
   c. Quite a bit
   d. Very much
38. Does the institution assist you in developing a personal code of values and ethics?
   a. Very little
   b. Some
   c. Quite a bit
   d. Very much

39. Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institutions?
   a. Poor
   b. Fair
   c. Good
   d. Excellent

40. How would you rate the quality of academic advising you have received from your college or department at this university?
   a. Poor
   b. Fair
   c. Good
   d. Excellent

41. How would you rate this university’s responsiveness to student academic problems?
   a. Poor
   b. Fair
   c. Good
   d. Excellent

42. During the past year, from what source did you receive MOST of your academic advising?
   a. Advisors in your college or department
   b. Instructors or staff members not formally assigned as an advisor
   c. Online registration and degree tracking system
   d. Undergraduate catalog or other publications
   e. Friends or family
43. Agree/Disagree: The advisor(s) in your college or department is (are) available when you need to see her/him (them).
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly agree

44. Agree/Disagree: The information you’ve received from academic advisors has been accurate and up to date.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly agree

45. Agree/Disagree: At this university, students have to run around from one place to another to get the information or approvals they need.
   a. Strongly disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Agree
   d. Strongly agree

46. From the list below, choose ONE item that best describes the BIGGEST OBSTACLE to your academic progress.
   a. Money, work obligations, finances
   b. Family obligations
   c. Difficulties getting the courses you need
   d. Lack of good academic advising
   e. Lack of personal motivation
   f. Poor academic performance
   g. I have no real obstacles
Appendix C: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Item Usage Legal Agreement Document
The National Survey of Student Engagement's (NSSE) survey instrument, *The College Student Report*, is copyrighted and the copyright is owned by The Trustees of Indiana University. Any use of survey items contained within *The College Student Report* is prohibited without prior written permission from Indiana University. When fully executed, this Agreement constitutes written permission from the University, on behalf of NSSE, for the party named below to use an item or items from *The College Student Report* in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

In consideration of the mutual promises below, the parties hereby agree as follows:

1) The University hereby grants The Ohio State University — Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership ("Licensee") a nonexclusive, worldwide, irrevocable license to use, reproduce, distribute, publicly display and perform, and create derivatives from, in all media now known or hereafter developed, the item(s) listed in the proposal attached as Exhibit A, solely for the purpose of including such item(s) in the survey activity described in Exhibit A, which is incorporated by reference into this Agreement. This license does not include any right to sublicense others. This license only covers the survey instrument, time frame, population, and other terms described in Exhibit A. Any different or repeated use of the item(s) shall require an additional license.

2) In exchange for the license granted in section 1, Licensee agrees:

   a) to pay to Indiana University the sum of $350.00, by check upon execution of this Agreement;

   b) to provide to NSSE frequency distributions and means on the licensed item(s);

   c) on the survey form itself, and in all publications or presentations of data obtained through the licensed item(s), to include the following citation: "Items xx and xx used with permission from *The College Student Report*, National Survey of Student Engagement, Copyright 2001-12 The Trustees of Indiana University";

   d) to provide to NSSE a copy of any derivatives of, or alterations to, the item(s) that Licensee
makes for the purpose of Licensee's survey ("modified items"), for NS SE’s own nonprofit, educational purposes, which shall include the use of the modified items in The College Student Report or any other survey instruments, reports, or other educational or professional materials that NSSE may develop or use in the future. Licensee hereby grants the University a nonexclusive, worldwide, irrevocable, royalty-free license to use, reproduce, distribute, create derivatives from, and publicly display and perform the modified items, in any media now known or hereafter developed; and
e) to provide to NSSE, for its own nonprofit, educational purposes, a copy of all reports, presentations, analyses, or other materials in which the item(s) licensed under this Agreement, or modified items, and any responses to licensed or modified items, are presented, discussed, or analyzed. NSSE shall not make public any data it obtains under this subsection in a manner that identifies specific institutions or individuals, except with the consent of the Licensee.

3) This Agreement expires on August 31, 2012.

The undersigned hereby consent to the terms of this Agreement and confirm that they have all necessary authority to enter into this Agreement.

For The Trustees of Indiana University: Alexander C. McCormick

For Licensee:

Dr. M. Sue Whittington
Professor of Agricultural Education
The Ohio State University
Dear CFAES Students:

The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences is committed to ensuring all students have an opportunity for outstanding educational experience. As we strive to achieve eminence it is important to receive input from you regarding your experiences and perspective as a student in our College. You have the unique opportunity to provide valuable input for improving student success by participating in a research study entitled “Academic Advisor’s Performance as Perceived by Undergraduate Advisees in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Related Sciences”.

The purpose of this study is to gain better insight regarding academic advising services currently offered to students in our college so that we can better meet your needs in the future. **Your participation in this study is important.** On Friday, April 27th you will receive an e-mail containing a link to the survey and a statement of purpose. Please commit a few minutes of your day to promptly complete the survey when it arrives.

Thank you in advance, your cooperation and support will make a difference in the lives of many students.

Linda C. Martin
Appendix E: Initial Correspondence Email Sent to Undergraduate Students via Surveymonkey™

From: "filson.5@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>

Subject: Please assist your fellow CFAES students

Body: Dear [FirstName]:

As a student in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study, "Academic Advisor’s Performance as Perceived by Undergraduate Advisees in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Related Sciences". The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the academic advising services currently offered in our college so that we can better meet your needs. To participate in this study you should currently be an undergraduate student enrolled in CFAES.

To start this short survey, please click on the link provided. Below, you will find your rights as a study participant and more details about the research study.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you are willing to participate in this voluntary study, you will be asked to complete an online survey, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey will be available for you to complete from April 27, 2012-June 8, 2012. This research will be anonymous and the survey results will be reported in a summarized manner. Since participation in this study is voluntary, you may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Your responses will help provide a detailed profile describing the academic advising strategies currently used within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The potential benefits to you and others in our college will come from the summarized information that will be used to improve academic advising services for all CFAES students. There are no foreseeable risks to students who participate in this study. Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of Internet security or email can be given as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, please contact Dr. Susie Whittington by e-mail at Whittington.1@osu.edu. If you would like to contact someone outside of this research study to discuss your rights as a participant, or other study-related concerns or complaints, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

I appreciate your time and would like to thank you in advance for your consideration in participating in this study. Your contributions to the college are greatly appreciated. By clicking the link below to go directly to the survey, you are hereby granting your informed consent to take part in this research study.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you wish to opt out of the survey, please click the link below: https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

Go Bucks!
Sincerely,

Dr. Susie Whittington
Professor
The Ohio State University
From: "filson.5@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: CFAES Needs Your Input
Body: Dear [FirstName]:
As a student in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, I would like to again invite you to participate in a research study, "Academic Advisor’s Performance as Perceived by Undergraduate Advisees in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Related Sciences". The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the academic advising services currently offered in our college so that we can better meet your needs. To participate in this study you should currently be an undergraduate student enrolled in CFAES.

To start this short survey, please click on the link provided. Below, you will find your rights as a study participant and more details about the research study. [Link to survey]

If you are willing to participate in this voluntary study, you will be asked to complete an online survey, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey will be available for you to complete from April 27, 2012-June 8, 2012. This research will be anonymous and the survey results will be reported in a summarized manner. Since participation in this study is voluntary, you may choose not to participate or to withdrawal at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Your responses will help provide a detailed profile describing the academic advising strategies currently used within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The potential benefits to you and others in our college will come from the summarized information that will be used to improve academic advising services for all CFAES students. There are no foreseeable risks to students who participate in this study. Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of Internet security or email can be given as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, please contact Dr. Susie Whittington by e-mail at Whittington.1@osu.edu. If you would like to contact someone outside of this research study to discuss your rights as a participant, or other study-related concerns or complaints, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

I appreciate your time and would like to thank you in advance for your consideration in participating in this study. Your contributions to the college are greatly appreciated. By clicking the link below to go directly to the survey, you are hereby granting your informed consent to take part in this research study.
[Additional link]

If you wish to opt out of the survey, please click the link below: [Opt-out link]

Go Bucks!

Sincerely,

Dr. Susie Whittington
Professor
The Ohio State University
Appendix G: Third Email Correspondence Sent to Undergraduate Students via SurveyMonkey™

From: "filson.5@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: CFAES Requests Your Input
Body:
Dear [FirstName]:

As a student in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, I would like to again invite you to participate in a research study, "Academic Advisor’s Performance as Perceived by Undergraduate Advisees in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Related Sciences". The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the academic advising services currently offered in our college so that we can better meet your needs. To participate in this study you should currently be an undergraduate student enrolled in CFAES.

To start this short survey, please click on the link provided. Below, you will find your rights as a study participant and more details about the research study. https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you are willing to participate in this voluntary study, you will be asked to complete an online survey, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey will be available for you to complete from April 27, 2012-June 8, 2012. This research will be anonymous and the survey results will be reported in a summarized manner. Since participation in this study is voluntary, you may choose not to participate or to withdrawal at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Your responses will help provide a detailed profile describing the academic advising strategies currently used within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The potential benefits to you and others in our college will come from the summarized information that will be used to improve academic advising services for all CFAES students. There are no foreseeable risks to students who participate in this study. Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of Internet security or email can be given as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, please contact Dr. Susie Whittington by e-mail at Whittington.1@osu.edu. If you would like to contact someone outside of this research study to discuss your rights as a participant, or other study-related concerns or complaints, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

I appreciate your time and would like to thank you in advance for your consideration in participating in this study. Your contributions to the college are greatly appreciated. By clicking the link below to go directly to the survey, you are hereby granting your informed consent to take part in this research study. https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you wish to opt out of the survey, please click the link below:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

Go Bucks!

Sincerely,
Dr. Susie Whittington
Professor
The Ohio State University
Appendix H: Fourth Email Correspondence Sent to Undergraduate Students via Surveymonkey™

From: "filson.5@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>

Subject: College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences needs your input

Body: Dear [FirstName]:

As a student in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, I would like to again invite you to participate in a research study, “Academic Advisor’s Performance as Perceived by Undergraduate Advisees in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Related Sciences”. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the academic advising services currently offered in our college so that we can better meet your needs. To participate in this study you should currently be an undergraduate student enrolled in CFAES.

To start this short survey, please click on the link provided. Below, you will find your rights as a study participant and more details about the research study. https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you are willing to participate in this voluntary study, you will be asked to complete an online survey, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey will be available for you to complete from April 27, 2012-June 8, 2012. This research will be anonymous and the survey results will be reported in a summarized manner. Since participation in this study is voluntary, you may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Your responses will help provide a detailed profile describing the academic advising strategies currently used within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The potential benefits to you and others in our college will come from the summarized information that will be used to improve academic advising services for all CFAES students. There are no foreseeable risks to students who participate in this study. Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of Internet security or email can be given as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, please contact Dr. Susie Whittington by e-mail at Whittington.1@osu.edu. If you would like to contact someone outside of this research study to discuss your rights as a participant, or other study-related concerns or complaints, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

I appreciate your time and would like to thank you in advance for your consideration in participating in this study. Your contributions to the college are greatly appreciated. By clicking the link below to go directly to the survey, you are hereby granting your informed consent to take part in this research study. https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you wish to opt out of the survey, please click the link below: https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

Go Bucks!

Sincerely,

Dr. Susie Whittington
Professor
The Ohio State University
Appendix I: Fifth Email Correspondence Sent to Undergraduate Students via Surveymonkey™

From: "whittington.1@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com"
<member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences requests your input
Body: Dear [FirstName],
We are conducting a survey for the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University, and your response would be greatly appreciated. We are studying the academic advising system in our college and your experiences will allow us to make necessary changes to improve the advising experience.

Here is a link to the short survey: 
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message. All data is kept confidential and cannot be identified on an individual basis.

If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact the primary investigator, Susie Whittington, at whittington.1@osu.edu.

Thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,

Dr. Susie Whittington
Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education

Please note: If you wish to opt out of this survey please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
Appendix J: Sixth Email Correspondence Sent to Undergraduate Students via SurveyMonkey™

From: "filson.5@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences requests your input
Body: Dear [FirstName]:
As a student in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, I would like to again invite you to participate in a research study, “Academic Advisor’s Performance as Perceived by Undergraduate Advisees in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Related Sciences”. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the academic advising services currently offered in our college so that we can better meet your needs. To participate in this study you should currently be an undergraduate student enrolled in CFAES.

To start this short survey, please click on the link provided. Below, you will find your rights as a study participant and more details about the research study.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you are willing to participate in this voluntary study, you will be asked to complete an online survey, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey will be available for you to complete from April 27, 2012-June 8, 2012. This research will be anonymous and the survey results will be reported in a summarized manner. Since participation in this study is voluntary, you may choose not to participate or to withdrawal at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Your responses will help provide a detailed profile describing the academic advising strategies currently used within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The potential benefits to you and others in our college will come from the summarized information that will be used to improve academic advising services for all CFAES students. There are no foreseeable risks to students who participate in this study. Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of Internet security or email can be given as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, please contact Dr. Susie Whittington by e-mail at Whittington.1@osu.edu. If you would like to contact someone outside of this research study to discuss your rights as a participant, or other study-related concerns or complaints, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

I appreciate your time and would like to thank you in advance for your consideration in participating in this study. Your contributions to the college are greatly appreciated. By clicking the link below to go directly to the survey, you are hereby granting your informed consent to take part in this research study.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you wish to opt out of the survey, please click the link below:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

Go Bucks!

Sincerely,

Dr. Susie Whittington
Professor of Agricultural Education
The Ohio State University
Appendix K: Seventh Email Correspondence Sent to Undergraduate Students via Surveymonkey™

From: "filson.5@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>

Subject: Last Chance to Help CFAES Improve Academic Advising!

Dear [FirstName]:

Please assist us in the switch from quarters to semesters by telling us about your advising experiences in the College! As a student in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, you are again invited for the final opportunity to participate in a research study, “Academic Advisor’s Performance as Perceived by Undergraduate Advisees in a College of Food, Agricultural, and Related Sciences”. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the academic advising services currently offered in our college so that we can better meet your needs. To participate in this study you should currently be an undergraduate student enrolled in CFAES.

To start this short survey, please click on the link provided. Below, you will find your rights as a study participant and more details about the research study.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you are willing to participate in this voluntary study, you will be asked to complete an online survey, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey will be available for you to complete until June 8, 2012. This research will be anonymous and the survey results will be reported in a summarized manner. Since participation in this study is voluntary, you may choose not to participate or to withdrawal at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Your responses will help provide a detailed profile describing the academic advising strategies currently used within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The potential benefits to you and others in our college will come from the summarized information that will be used to improve academic advising services for all CFAES students. There are no foreseeable risks to students who participate in this study. Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of Internet security or email can be given as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, please contact Dr. Susie Whittington by e-mail at Whittington.1@osu.edu. If you would like to contact someone outside of this research study to discuss your rights as a participant, or other study-related concerns or complaints, please contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

I appreciate your time and would like to thank you in advance for your consideration in participating in this study. Your contributions to the college are greatly appreciated. By clicking the link below to go directly to the survey, you are hereby granting your informed consent to take part in this research study.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

If you wish to opt out of the survey, please click the link below:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

Go Bucks!

Sincerely,

Dr. Susie Whittington
Professor of Agricultural Education
The Ohio State University
Appendix L: Eighth Email Correspondence Sent to Undergraduates via Surveymonkey™

From: "filson.5@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: Survey Responses Needed for the College
Body: Dear [FirstName]  
As you wrap up the LAST spring quarter at Ohio State, please take 10 minutes to complete a short survey about advising in the College of Food, Ag., and Environmental Sciences. Your perceptions are needed in order to make positive changes for the upcoming switch to semesters!

Please Click here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

Thanks!  
Have a *great* summer!

Dr. Susie Whittington and  
Caryn Filson

If you would like to remove yourself from the survey click here:  
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
Appendix M: Thank you Email to Respondents

From: "filson.5@osu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: Thank you!
Body: Dear [FirstName],

Thank you for taking the time to complete our college survey on academic advising! We truly appreciate your time and input!

We hope you have a great summer!

Thank you again for participating in the survey!

Sincerely,

Dr. Susie Whittington
Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education

Caryn Filson
Graduate Research Associate

Please disregard the following links.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx