The Changing Advising Needs of Undergraduate Students

Chapter One

Introduction

During the 1950s and 1960s, higher education experienced an enrollment explosion (Grites, 1979). Since this time, enrollment in higher education has continued to rise and become more diverse. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (1998) reported that the overall enrollment in higher education increased by 16% between 1985 and 1995. During this same time, the percentage of racial minorities increased from 16% to 25%.

However, statistics show that less than one-half of students will persist to graduation in the institution in which they began their studies and approximately one-fourth will never graduate (Tinto, 1987). There is a wide range of reasons why students leave college (Anderson, 1985; Tinto, 1987). Most withdrawals from college are voluntary on the part of the student. They may be experiencing financial difficulties, family problems, loneliness, or personal crises. Students may also drop out of college because of academic reasons. They may be frustrated because they do not have clear academic or career goals. Other reasons include poor academic performance, the fear of failure in the college setting, and poor management of studies and time.

Academic advisors can help retain students through their guidance and positive influence on students (Crockett, 1985; Tinto, 1987). Kulik, Kulik, and Shwalb (1983) studied the effects of four types of programs on the retention of college students. The four programs included (a) study and academic skills instruction, (b) academic advising and counseling, (c) academic support programs, and (d) enrollment in developmental and remedial courses. They found that students who participated in the programs had a retention rate that was eight percent higher than those who did not participate in the programs.

Ramirez and Evans (1988) identified several factors that contribute to retention in minority students. These factors include inappropriate course selection, poor scheduling, low use of support services, and the lack of comprehensive advising. Astin (1972) reported that one of the keys to persistence for racial minority students is relationships with faculty members. In a study by Burrell and Trombley (1983) they found that freshmen and sophomore minority students perceived academic

advisors as the most important source of support they had on campus. These studies imply that it is important that institutions provide a comprehensive advising program for all students.

Academic Advising

Academic advising has been a part of higher education for many years. Initially in the higher education system, students followed a very structured schedule that was typically set up by their faculty advisor (Frost, 1991). In the late 1800s, with the onset of the elective system, students were given more freedom to choose their classes. Academic advisors, usually faculty members, assisted students in selecting what courses they should take. In general, advisors focus on curricular issues, including academic information and graduation requirements (Kramer, Taylor, Cynoweth, & Jensen, 1987). In addition to helping students with their class schedules, academic advisors help students clarify their academic and career goals, assist students with institutional policies and procedures, help acclimate students to college life, and provide resources (Crockett, 1978; Kramer et al., 1987). They serve as teachers, mentors, and guides to help students reach their maximum education potential (Byrd, 1995; Crockett, 1978).

Two Models of Advising

Throughout the years, two predominant models of academic advising have emerged: prescriptive and developmental. Prescriptive advising is based on an authoritative relationship (Crookston, 1979). Crookston likened prescriptive advising to the doctor-patient relationship. The student comes in to the advisor and describes some "ailment." In turn, the advisor prescribes a "remedy." It is then the student's responsibility to follow the advisor's advice. The advisor is an authority figure who teaches and the student learns. The advisor remains virtually uninvolved with the student. Once the advisor has answered the student's question, the responsibility is then on the student to follow through.

Advisors who utilize a prescriptive advising style tend to focus on students' limitations instead of their potential (Crookston, 1979). According to Crookston, they often base decisions on students' college entry scores. In the prescriptive advising style, advisors sometimes perceive students as immature and may believe they are incapable of making good decisions. As a result, they tend to make decisions for students. In a prescriptive advising relationship, advisors are seen as superior in their academic knowledge and status.

The Academic Advising Inventory (AAI) (Winston & Sandor, 1984) provides descriptors of the prescriptive advising style. Some of the descriptors that relate to prescriptive advising include a formal and distant advising relationship, an advising relationship that is restricted to academic matters, and a relationship in which the advisor is the expert. When describing the academic decision-making found in the prescriptive advising style, the AAI describes the advisor as one who informs the student of the proper course of action, ensures that the student follows through, and makes many of the decisions for the student. In the area of course selection, advisors are described as the main decision-makers, where decisions are based upon the students' grades and test scores.

In contrast to this prescriptive advising, developmental advising is grounded in developmental theory (Frost, 1991). Developmental advising focuses on Chickering's vectors of developing competence, developing autonomy, and developing purpose. Developmental advising sessions are student centered and students and advisors share decision-making responsibilities. The focus is on learning, both for the students and the advisors (Crookston, 1979; Frost, 1991).

Advisors who look for potential in students and help them plan and reach new life goals are characteristic of the developmental advising style (Crookston, 1979). They help students realize the satisfaction that can be found when personal growth and self-fulfillment is accomplished. Advisors see students as maturing, developing, and capable of handling responsibility. The goal of the developmental advising relationship is "openness, acceptance, trust, sharing of data, and collaborative problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation" (p. 251).

Ender, Winston, and Miller (1982) describe developmental advising as a continuous process. It is developed over time and is centered on the growth and development of the whole student. Goal setting is also central to developmental advising. Advisors assist students in setting not only academic goals, but career and life goals also. They play a large role in the development of students, but they can not do it all. They collaborate with student affairs professionals when possible to provide programs for students. They also are familiar with other resources on campus so that they can refer students to other offices when necessary.

Developmental academic advising is also characterized by ways in which the advisors relate to the students (Creamer & Creamer, 1994). Advisors who utilize a developmental advising style approach their students with a caring and sympathetic nature. They consider the developmental status of

the students and strive to foster growth each time they meet with students. The effectiveness of developmental advising is determined by the development of the students.

In many ways, developmental academic advising is similar to counseling, but one should be cautious not to equate the two. Both academic advisors and counselors seek to help the students through their academic career. Both are concerned with the development of students and both want to see students succeed and become the best individuals they can become (Butler, 1995). However, there are also many differences between the two.

One important difference is the training required. Counselors typically complete graduate degrees in counseling or psychology and are licensed by a professional organization. Academic advisors, on the other hand, are usually departmental faculty, and many times receive very little training in advising (Ryan, 1995). Academic advisors are mostly concerned with academic issues, helping students to develop intellectually, set career goals, and graduate from college. Counselors help students deal with personal, life issues and learn more about themselves as individuals (Butler, 1995). Academic advisors and counselors, working together, can provide students with the academic and personal support they need to succeed in college.

It is often postulated that prescriptive and developmental advising are dichotomous in nature. They are seen as distinct opposite ends of the advising spectrum. However, Daller, Creamer, and Creamer (1997) found that prescriptive and developmental advising styles are actually overlapping in nature. In their study, which examined distinct advising styles used by professional advisors, they found that all of the advisors observed used behaviors that are characteristic of both prescriptive and developmental advising.

Delivery of Academic Advising

There are many different delivery systems for academic advising. In ACT's Fifth National Survey on Academic Advising, colleges and universities were asked which of seven advising models were used most often at their institution (Habley & Morales, 1998). The seven models included: (a) faculty only, (b) supplementary, (c) split, (d) dual, (e) total intake, (f) satellite, and (g) self-contained. In the faculty only model, students are assigned to an instructional faculty advisor who remains their advisor for the extent of their academic career. Supplementary advising occurs when students are assigned a faculty advisor who handles approval of all transactions. This model also provides access to an advising

office to respond to general questions. Institutions that provide advising centers for special populations of students (academically underprepared, undecided majors, non traditional) and faculty advisors for all other students are described as utilizing the split model.

In the dual model, students are assigned two advisors. One advisor is a faculty member in the student's academic department who assists the students with major requirements. The other advisor is from an advising office and assists the student with general requirements and institutional policies and procedures. The fifth type of advising model is total intake. In this model, staff members in an administrative unit are responsible for advising students until the students meet certain requirements are met. After those requirements are met, students are assigned to faculty advisors. The satellite model is used when there is an established office or unit that is responsible for all advising. The final model is self-contained. In this model, all advising is done by staff in a centralized advising office. Results from the ACT survey showed that the three most prevalent models used in both two-year and four-year institutions are faculty, split, and supplementary.

According to the ACT survey, faculty advisors remain the primary source of academic advising on college campuses today (Habley & Morales, 1998). These faculty advise an average of 26 students in their respective disciplines. With changing curriculums and more complex academic requirements, advising has continued to become more complex for faculty advisors (Ryan, 1995). However, only one-fourth of academic departments offer any training for faculty advisors (Habley & Morales, 1998; Ryan, 1995). Even though the majority of faculty are required to advise students (Habley & Morales, 1998), very few are evaluated on the basis of their advising abilities (Frost, 1991). Also, very few institutions provide any recognition to faculty for their efforts in academic advising and the number that do provide recognition is decreasing (Habley & Morales, 1998).

Academic advising centers evolved because of increased enrollments and decreased faculty interest in advising students (Grites, 1979). This concept was first used in community colleges. Academic advising centers, although located in some academic departments, usually serve students who have not declared a major and those who are underprepared or at risk academically (Habley & Morales, 1998). Advising centers often serve as liaisons for academic offices and maintain academic records. Many advising centers are also responsible for the development of advising support materials and for advisor training.

Typically, the director of the advising center was a professional staff advisor (Grites, 1979). Many academic advising centers utilize the services of professional advisors (King, 1993). According to ACT's Fifth National Survey on Academic Advising, the number of professional advisors in institutions has increased since 1987 (Habley & Morales, 1998). Although professional advisors may not possess great knowledge in a certain academic area, they are usually trained in student development theory (King, 1993). Professional advisors may also have training in career development and different counseling techniques.

Another delivery system that is being used more often is clerical staff (Habley & Morales, 1998). According to ACT's Fifth National Survey on Academic Advising, 14% of the institutions surveyed used clerical staff in at least one academic department. Although this is the recorded number, the actual number is probably quite higher. This number will probably increase as enrollments continue to increase.

The Need for Research

Academic advising is an important part of a student's education. It impacts not only the lives of the students, but the institution as well. Advising is concerned with the development of the whole student throughout the academic career.

Kramer et al. (1987) proposed a taxonomy of services that advisors offer to students throughout their four years of college. This taxonomy is based on student development theory and on the general understanding of what students need as they progress through college, rather than on research utilizing students. Research is needed to determine the changing needs of students based on the actual topics students present to advisors.

The developmental style of advising suggests that all students are individuals and that each advising session should be individualized according to the advising topics raised by the student (Crookston, 1979). However, Daller (1997) found that the advisors she observed approached each advising session in the same manner, regardless of the student or the topics presented. This research adds to that research by exploring how student's presenting concerns compare to issues advisor's raise with them.

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate if the advising topics that traditional-age students present to advisors vary by grade level. Further, the study will look at whether these topics differ by gender or race. It will also look at whether topics discussed by advisors vary by grade level. Topics discussed by advisors are defined as those topics that advisors raised in addition to the topics presented by the students. The study was conducted at a large land-grant Mid-Atlantic university. Data were collected through interviews with students just before they met with an academic advisor. After the advising session, advisors completed a follow-up survey to determine what topics they raised during the meeting.

Research Questions

The present study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the topics that traditional-age students present to an advisor vary by grade level?

2. How do the topics presented to advisors by traditional-age students vary by race or gender?

3. Do the topics raised by advisors vary by grade level of advisees?

4. Do the topics raised by advisors vary by race or gender of the advisee?

Significance of the Study

The present study has significance for current advisors, future advisors, university administrators, and those who conduct advisor training. Advisors, both faculty and professional, may benefit from this study. The results will provide them with information regarding the advising topics raised by traditional-age undergraduate students and how they may differ by grade level, gender, and race. They may also receive information about topics that should be raised during advising sessions. Individuals who train advisors may use the results of this study to assist advisors in understanding the framework for developmental advising. It may provide information regarding developmental needs of students and how those needs may be different according to academic level, gender, and race of the student.

Organization of the Study

  This study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the topic under study, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance to research. Chapter two reviews the relevant literature concerning the research questions. The third chapter describes the methodology used in the study, including sampling techniques and procedures used to collect and analyze the data. The findings of the study are presented in chapter four. Chapter five discusses the results and their implications for future research and practice.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

According to student development theory, students change throughout their college experience. Most theories agree that to begin with students are less confident in their own ability to make decisions. However, as they progress through college, they gain confidence in their own opinions, yet still value other opinions. They also begin to make decisions based more on their own values and ethical standards than on the opinions and standards of others. The ways in which students utilize the help of an academic advisor may also change as they progress through these stages.

Freshman students are more likely to rely on advisors for definite answers to academic issues and registration processes. They will see their advisor as an authority figure that has all of the right answers. They typically will not take any responsibility for their own decisions. One of the main objectives of freshman students is to feel that they are a part of the overall college culture. They may ask advisors what organizations or events they should get involved with to better find their niche on campus.

As students progress developmentally and academically, they will rely less on their advisor. They will begin to rely more on their own decision-making abilities and on the advice of other sources. These sources may include friends, family, and information from webpages and brochures. They will probably still rely on their advisor during preregistration times to make sure they are taking the right courses to fulfill their degree requirements.

As students progress into their junior and senior years, they may once again rely on their advisor for information concerning career choices, graduate school information, life goals, and graduation requirements. However, they will see their advisor more as a mentor or friend and seek opinions rather than definite right or wrong answers. They may also seek advice on finding volunteer and internship opportunities that most closely match their values. They may also see an advisor just to discuss the implications of a decision they have made rather than to ask specific questions.

The topics students present may also vary by race and gender. Women may be more likely to discuss personal issues with their advisor and to want to maintain a more personal relationship. Students who are not in the majority race group may be less likely to open up to advisors who are from the majority race group. These students may be more likely to rely on their families, communities, or faculty

who share their ethnic background for advice and information about academic, career, and personal topics.

In order to study this phenomenon, it is first necessary to explore the literature on student development theory. Both psychosocial and cognitive student development theories are examined. Because academic advisors assist students in making career decisions, it was also important to examine career development theories. The literature on changing advising needs and advising preferences of students is also reviewed. Finally, the literature on the different advising styles used by advisors is reviewed.

<div align="center">Student Development Theory</div>

Student development theorists postulate that students go through developmental changes throughout their college careers. These theories are useful in helping college personnel understand some of the differences in students and how these differences may affect the way students learn (Rodgers, 1980). Student development theories are generally categorized into two areas: psychosocial and cognitive. For the purpose of the present study, a review of psychosocial, cognitive, and career development theories was conducted.

<u>Psychosocial Development</u>

Many psychosocial theories are based on the work of Erikson and focus on the identity stage of his lifespan development theory (Rodgers, 1980). Psychosocial theories focus on the content of development – what we think, not how we think (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Miller & Winston, 1990; Rodgers, 1980). Psychosocial theorists study individuals' thinking, feeling, and experiences as these entities relate to their lives. They postulate that development occurs over the lifespan as individuals satisfactorily resolve developmental crises or life tasks. These life tasks can be biological, sociological, or psychological in nature.

Psychosocial theories possess some common characteristics. One is that most of the theories are based on life stages (Evans, et al., 1998; Miller & Winston, 1990; Rodgers, 1980). Each stage involves different issues and is "qualitatively different" (Rodgers, p. 39). Individuals progress through these stages throughout their lifespan. Psychosocial theories typically focus on stages that occur in individuals 18 to 25 years of age.

Individuals move through these stages in a sequential manner (Evans, et al., 1998; Miller & Winston, 1990; Rodgers, 1980). As individuals move through the stages, they are faced with crises or life tasks. Anxiety over these crises incites the need for individuals to resolve the conflict within themselves. As they learn to resolve these crises, they move into a new stage (Evans, et al.). However, individuals may regress to earlier stages when they have to readdress life tasks.

Another common characteristic of psychosocial theories is that they are cumulative (Evans, et al., 1998; Miller & Winston, 1990; Rodgers, 1980). Each new stage is a building block of the previous stage and is representative of a higher level of psychosocial development, with the earlier stages requiring simple behaviors and the later stages more complex behaviors (Miller & Winston). As individuals move through these stages, they further develop their own unique identity.

Psychosocial theories are not universal (Evans, et al., 1998; Rodgers, 1980). Not all individuals move through the stages at the same pace or at the same age. Some individuals may stay in one stage much longer than other individuals in the same age group. Many factors may influence how an individual moves through the stages. Individuals may make decisions based on their cultural background, gender, or environment.

Many psychosocial theories have emerged throughout the years. This literature review will focus on three of these theories. Chickering's theory of identity development was one of the first theories of student development (Evans, et al., 1998). The theory that he developed was based on research conducted at small colleges by himself and other researchers. Other theories have emerged that focus on women and ethnic minorities. Two of these theories are Josselson's theory of identity in women and Cross's model of racial identity development.

Chickering's theory. Chickering believes that the most important developmental problem that students face during college is establishing identity and the theory centers around seven vectors of identity development (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). His theory of student development focuses on individuals age 18-25 years and the developmental changes that occur during their college years (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering chose to base his theory around vectors rather than stages. In the context of his theory, Chickering proposed that vectors could be better envisioned as a spiral staircase or major highways (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). These vectors build upon and converge with one another as individuals develop their own identity. There is no

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set time in which these vectors are accomplished in a student's development and a student might sometimes revisit a vector. This is often the result of some life event. The vectors begin with the less complex, developing competency, and move through to the more complex stage of developing integrity.

Developing competency incorporates intellectual, physical, and interpersonal competency (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Intellectual competency occurs when students feel confident in their knowledge and skills in a specific area. Students' experience increased proficiency in critical thinking and their ability to reason. As students develop competency, they also pay more attention to their physical well-being. Interpersonal competency will emerge as the students hone their communication skills and begin to work more effectively with others. Students are more likely to rely on advisors for academic resources only as they develop in this area. They will probably seek information on what classes to take and how to register.

The second vector is managing emotions. As students experience these changes, they learn to identify their emotions, and develop the ability to control and express their emotions appropriately (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). As students progress in this vector, they feel more independent and begin to move through autonomy toward interdependence, the third vector. At this time, students may rely less on an advisor for information. They will rely more on themselves for the information they need.

While moving through autonomy toward interdependence, students will experience a sense of emotional and instrumental independence (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). When students reach emotional independence, they no longer need constant reassurance and approval from others. They learn to make their own decisions.

Instrumental independence pertains to a student's ability to find the answers for themselves. As students gain this independence, they become aware of the importance of interdependence. They begin to feel more interconnected with others. Student who are experiencing development in this area may rely less on an advisor for general information because they feel confident in their own ability to gather this type of information. They rely less on advisors to tell them they are taking the right classes. Instead of relying on their advisor for the right answer, they may ask the opinion of their advisor and then make the decisions on their own.

This leads to the fourth vector, developing mature interpersonal relationships. As students begin to develop mature interpersonal relationships, they begin to develop an acceptance and appreciation for people of different cultures (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). They accept others for who they are and are therefore more capable of maintaining healthy intimate relationships. Students may see their advisor as more of a mentor or confidant than someone who only provides information They may bring more serious issues to their advisor such as problems in classes.

Establishing identity is the fifth vector in Chickering's theory. With the achievement of establishing identity, students gain a secure sense of self (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). They will become more comfortable with their identity and accept themselves for who they are. While developing mature interpersonal relationships, students learned to appreciate the differences in others. Establishing identity helps students learn to appreciate differences within themselves. As students establish identity, their advisor may continue to be more of a mentor and the student may discuss more personal issues with the advisor. The students feel more comfortable with their own identity, so they feel more comfortable discussing personal issues with their advisor. At this point, the students make most of the simple academic decisions on their own, but may seek advice from their advisor on the more complex decisions.

The sixth vector is developing purpose. Students begin to set definite goals for their future (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). They are capable of making commitments. They make decisions and stick with those decisions even when opposition occurs. As students learn to remain true to their conviction even in opposition, they express characteristics common to the seventh vector, developing integrity. As students develop integrity, they are more likely to talk to their advisor about career and life goals. They may seek advice on how to gain experience and how to get the education they need. Subjects for discussion may include career plans, applying to graduate schools, and internship opportunities.

The developing integrity vector has three stages (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Students first begin to develop a humanized value system in which their own interests are balanced with the interests of others. Next, students develop a personalized value system. Their set of core values are the most important, but they still recognize and respect the values of others. The final stage of this vector is developing congruence. In this stage, actions become congruent with values and are balanced with

social responsibility. Students who reach this vector while still in college may discuss issues with their advisors that focus on their personal values. They may seek advice on ways to ensure that their values become a part of their life goals.

Chickering believed that an individual's environment could be a powerful influence on their development (Chickering, 1976; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). He postulated that seven educational environment factors influence development. These include: (a) institutional objectives, (b) institutional size, (c) student-faculty relationships, (d) curriculum, (e) teaching, (f) friendships and student communities, and (g) student development programs and services.

As students develop and establish their identity, it is possible that their need for an academic advisor changes. In the beginning, they may seek an advisor who will be an authority figure and guide them step by step through academic processes. As they become more independent and begin to make more lifelong goals, they may expect their advisor to be more characteristic of a mentor or friend. They may rely more heavily on their advisor as a sounding board and someone to share ideas with.

Josselson's theory. The basis for Josselson's study was the earlier work of Marcia (Evans, et al., 1998). Marcia postulated that there are four states of identity: (a) diffusion, (b) foreclosure, (c) moratorium, and (d) achievement (Marcia, 1980). Whether or not a crisis occurs and whether or not commitment or personal investment was made to overcome that crisis serve as bases to define the states. Josselson's study focused on women 20-22 years of age (Evans, et al., 1998).

Josselson postulated that women in the identity diffusion state have not faced crisis or made commitments (Evans, et al., 1998). She found that one common characteristic of women described in this state is that they often withdraw from difficult situations. Women in this state may rely on advisors to make decisions for them so they can avoid those situations. Women who are considered in the diffusion state may rely on their advisor for answers to all questions. These may include academic, career, and personal. They may expect their advisors to have all of the answers and will rarely make decisions on their own. They likely will follow their advisors recommendations and expect those recommendations to always present positive results.

The moratorium state occurs when crisis is present, but no commitment is made. These students are likely to rely on their advisors and other authority figures to solve all of their problems. If the results

are not positive, they will likely blame the advisor for providing them with bad advice. They will not take any responsibility for their own actions.

Individuals defined in the foreclosure state are those who have committed to their identity, but who have not faced a crisis. Typically these students have made decisions, but those decisions are mainly based on the values of their parents that they have accepted as their own with no challenge. Women identified in the foreclosure state are more likely to rely on family members for advice. However, when they do seek the help of an advisor, it will be for strictly academic reasons. They are also likely to take the advice from the advisor and ask family members to help them with the final decisions.

Identity achievement women are those who have faced crisis and have committed. These women have achieved distinct identities. Students who have achieved identity are more likely to consider their advisor as a friend or mentor. They are more likely to discuss life and career goals in addition to academic and administrative information. They are not likely to take their advisors advice as authority, but as one opinion to weigh along with others in the decision making process.

Cross's model. Cross's model focuses on racial identity development (Evans, et al., 1998). His study was based on Black individuals, but could be adapted to other racial groups. He postulated that individuals move through five stages to reach identity commitment. These stages are: (a) preencounter, (b) encounter, (c) immersion-emersion, (d) internalization, and (e) internalization-commitment. Individuals move through these stages in order and each builds upon the previous.

In the preencounter stage, individuals do not recognize the importance of their racial identity (Evans, et al., 1998). They would rather be accepted as a person than be singled out because of their race. Their values and attitudes are more congruent with those of the White culture. Some individuals in this stage go so far as to rebel against their own racial group. Students in this stage are looking for acceptance. They may seek information about what the popular classes are, ways to get involved on campus, and information about how to fit in to the overall college culture.

During the encounter stage, individuals face an encounter, racial in nature, which incites a change in their attitude. This encounter can be positive or negative, but the individuals begin to appreciate their own racial group and tries to better understand their cultural heritage. During this stage, students may ask advisors about student organizations or classes that focus on their cultural heritage.

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Immersion-emersion occurs in two steps (Evans, et al., 1998). First, individuals become totally immersed in their culture and withdraw from other racial groups, especially Whites. This stage can be highly emotional and can be characterized by anger, guilt, and pride. During this stage, students may have a greater desire to seek out an advisor who shares their racial background. The second step of immersion-emersion occurs when individuals begin to curtail their emotions and internalize their new identity. They begin to look at their new identity from a more critical aspect. Students in this stage may be more likely to discuss racial issues with their advisors.

During the internalization stage, individuals become more secure in their identity (Evans, et al., 1998). They still focus on their racial group, but begin to appreciate others and move toward a sense of multiculturalism. The final stage, internalization-commitment is reached when individuals see the importance of using their own identity to help others who share the same problems they have faced. During the final two stages, students are more likely to share more personal information with their advisors. They may see their advisor as a mentor, even if they are not of the same race.

These theories all focus on the psychosocial development of students. Another category of student development theories focuses on the cognitive development of students.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development theories focus on how people think (Evans, et al., 1998; King, 1990; Rodgers, 1980). This classification of theories is based on the postulation that cognition is based on structures. These structures assist individuals in adapting to their environment by serving as lenses through which individuals perceive and evaluate their experiences. As individuals develop, they move from simple to more complex structures.

Cognitive development occurs in stages (Evans, et al., 1998; King, 1990; Rodgers, 1980). These stages are unique in nature and individuals go through them one at a time. The stages are also invariant and sequential as individuals move through them in a specific order. All individuals move through all stages in cognitive development theories. However, the age of individuals and the rate at which individuals move through these stages may vary. Each stage is qualitatively different from the others. The stages are also hierarchical in nature and evolve from the previous stage and also preview the next stage.

Cognitive theorists postulate that development occurs as a result of some type of cognitive conflict (Evans, et al., 1998; King, 1990; Rodgers, 1980). There are three basic assumptions that explain how these conflicts are handled. These include accommodation, assimilation, and equilibrium. Accommodation occurs when individuals, faced with conflicts, use their existing ideas and thought patterns to solve the problem. When individuals challenge and change their way of thinking to solve these cognitive conflicts, they are assimilating. Equilibrium occurs when individuals utilize both assimilation and accommodation to work through cognitive conflicts. In other words, they not only draw from their own thought patterns and ideas to solve the conflict, but also challenge their own way of thinking by seeking out other ideas and opinions and using all of the information to solve the conflict.

There are many theorists who have tried to explain how people make meaning in their lives. Perry is one such theorist. Perry (1970) used the results from a longitudinal study to form the basis for his study. All of his subjects were men. Baxter Magolda (1992), another theorist, interviewed both men and women in her longitudinal study in development of her theory of cognitive development.

Perry's theory. Perry's (1970) theory describes intellectual and ethical development throughout the lives of individuals. It centers on three different ways of knowing that include dualism, multiplicity, and relativism. Once individuals move through these three ways of knowing, they move to commitment. Perry's theory is made up of nine positions centered on the three ways of knowing and commitment. Perry states that development occurs during the transition period from one position to the next.

Positions one and two center on the dualistic way of knowing (Perry, 1970). During these positions, basic duality and multiplicity prelegitimate, individuals perceive that all knowledge is available and comes from an authority figure. All questions can be answered and there is a right or wrong answer to everything. Students may see their advisor as an authority figure who has all the right answers and probably will not question the advice they receive. They will likely seek information on classes, registrations, administrative policies, and surviving on campus. As individuals are challenged and they discover that some answers are not known, they will begin to move into the next positions and on to the multiplistic way of knowing.

Positions three and four represent a multiplistic way of thinking (Perry, 1970). In position three, multiplicity legitimate but subordinate, individuals begin to accept that other opinions exist, but still rely on authority figures for the right answers. Position four is subdivided into two parts, multiplicity

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coordinate and relativism subordinate. During this position, individuals begin to rely on their own opinions and ideas. They view authority figures as having opinions, but not necessarily better than their own. During this time, students may begin to see the importance of taking responsibility for their own academic decisions and rely on advisors only as one of many reliable sources of information.

As individuals strive to find support for their own opinions, they move from a multiplistic to a relativistic way of knowing (Perry, 1970). Positions five and six, relativism and commitment foreseen, are representative of the relativistic way of knowing. Knowledge is based on gathered evidence from different sources. Individuals see their own opinions as important, but also value the opinions of peers and authority figures. As students progress to the relativistic way of knowing, they are more likely to see their advisor as a mentor or friend. They seek information from their advisor and from others and make their own decisions based on those opinions.

As individuals transition from position six to position seven, initial commitment, they begin to not only have their own opinions, but base commitments on those opinions (Perry, 1970). Perry views this commitment as the beginning of the ethical development for individuals. Positions eight and nine, evolving commitment and commitment in relativism, build upon this initial commitment. Decisions are based on individuals' ethical standards. At this stage, students are probably less likely to seek out the assistance of an advisor because they begin to rely more on their own ability to make decisions. However, when they do see an advisor, they are likely to discuss life and career goals. Even if they may not agree with the advice the advisor provides, they will respect it.

Baxter Magolda's model. Baxter-Magolda's (1992) model is made up of four stages. These include absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing, and contextual knowing. In each stage, patterns emerge that are gender specific.

In stage one of her model, knowledge is assumed to be absolute (Baxter Magolda, 1992). It is assumed that the information given by the teacher is correct and right. Teachers and leaders are seen as the authority. The two patterns of learning that emerged from this stage were receiving and mastering knowledge. Receiving knowledge is a private approach in which individuals do not readily express what they have learned or publicly question those in authority. More women seem to follow this pattern. Men follow more closely the mastering knowledge pattern. In this pattern, there is more verbal, public display of knowledge. Individuals may verbally question authority and expect interactions with those around

them. This stage is very similar to Perry's dualistic way of knowing and advisors are probably viewed as authority figures. During this stage, students will seek answers from advisors on academic issues only and the information given to them will be seen as right.

In the transitional learning stage, individuals begin to accept that not all knowledge is absolute and that there are some uncertainties (Baxter Magolda, 1992). The two patterns of learning found in this stage are interpersonal and impersonal knowing. Baxter Magolda found that women tend to be interpersonal and amass knowledge by sharing ideas with others, both peers and instructors. Relationships are the guiding factors in interpersonal knowing. In the impersonal knowing, individuals value challenge. This pattern of learning is characterized by the use of logic and research. Knowledge is gathered more through debate and forced thinking than through the mutual sharing of ideas. Men tend to follow the impersonal pattern. In this stage, women may be more likely to perceive their advisors as mentor and to share ideas with and receive advice from. Men in this stage may not seek the advice of an advisor and are more likely to find the information they need through other resources (friends, computer, family).

The third stage, independent knowing, occurs when individuals begin to understand that most knowledge is uncertain and that ideas should be explored (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Interindividual knowing, the pattern that most women follow, involves the concept of looking at ideas from a dual perspective. Individuals not only cherish and value their own ideas, but they also mutually respect and draw knowledge from the ideas of others. Men more frequently utilize an individual knowing pattern. In this pattern, individuals also respect the ideas and values of others, but most emphasis is placed on their own knowledge and ideas. Students in this stage are likely to seek information from their advisor that is not a right or wrong answer. They are more likely to ask their advisor's opinion on a subject and then weigh all of the information and make their decision on their own.

The final stage of Baxter Magolda's (1992) theory is contextual knowledge. Contextual knowledge involves learning through questioning and gathering support for the information that is being presented. Individuals still maintain their own points of view, but they support these views through various forms of evidence. Very few of the individuals in Baxter Magolda's study fell into this stage. Therefore, she did not feel that she had enough data to postulate on gender differences at this stage. Very few college students reach this stage. However, students who do reach this stage are likely to

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discuss many different topics with their advisors including graduation requirements, career goals, life goals, and academic issues. They see their advisor as a mentor and use the information they receive from their advisor as a building block so that they can gather additional information before making decisions.

As students develop cognitively, their view of advisors may change. At first, advisors may be viewed as absolute authorities on academic issues. As they progress, women may see advisors more as a friend or resource that they can share ideas with and receive advice from. Men may also view advisors as a resource, but as they progress, they will rely more heavily on their own views and less on advisors.

Student development theories help us to begin to understand the changes that students are going through during their college career. These theories are important for academic advisors as they work closely with students and help them to smoothly transition through the stages. Career development is another genera of theories that have emerged that assist academic advisors in their interactions with students.

Career Development

One topic that academic advisors often discuss with students is career goals. Therefore, it is important to examine the literature on career development. The idea of career identity as a developmental process began to emerge around the 1950s and 1960s (Seligman, 1994). Career development begins early in one's life as children begin to gain skills and interests in different career fields (Isaacson & Brown, 1997; Seligman, 1994; Vondracek, Lerner, & Schulenberg, 1986). Development continues throughout adolescence and adulthood and at times into old age as older individuals seek new career experiences after retirement. Vondracek, et al. stress that individuals are always changing and developing and are not easily placed into structured categories. Therefore, career development theories and methods tend to be multifaceted.

Super's theory. One of the most widely utilized career development theories is Super's life-span, life-space theory (Isaacson & Brown, 1997; Seligman, 1994). Super first introduced his theory in 1953 with 10 postulates. Throughout the years, he has expanded on his original theory and now proposes 14 concepts that are important in an individual's career development (Isaacson & Brown,

1997). However, Super does not address the effects that race or gender may have on career development.

Super's theory does not follow a stringent pattern or exactness (Isaacson & Brown, 1997). Through these 14 concepts, he recognizes that individuals can and do change their career choices and preferences. He also recognizes that a variety of people can be suited to a particular job and that one person can do a variety of jobs. He does not seem to buy into the idea that if you are a particular "type" then you must fit into a specific job category.

Super also emphasizes the importance of outside influences in addition to internal self-concepts in career decisions (Isaacson & Brown, 1997). Many factors in career decision making – our values, interests, and abilities – are very personal, internal, and individual. However, Super points out that there are also many external influences including cultural background, family influences, and environment. He also recognizes that even after career decisions have been made, these factors continue to play an influential role in career development.

Super places emphasis on the many life roles each individual holds (Isaacson & Brown, 1997). This is especially important in our society today, as more and more individuals are juggling school, career, family, community involvement, and other roles. Super's Life-Career Rainbow shows how the importance levels of these roles change as we progress through life. These life roles can shift as students progress through their academic career.

Career development plays a major role in the life of college students. During this time, students become more goal-oriented and try to find the academic major that fits with their career ideas (Seligman, 1994). Most students enter college to prepare for a career. They choose a major that most closely relates to their interests and career aspirations. It is important for advisors to assist students as they face difficult career questions (Isaacson & Brown, 1997). Seligman suggests that one of the most crucial times for students is their senior year as they begin to seek employment after college. Advisors can be a good source of information as well as internship opportunities (Isaacson & Brown, 1997).

Advisors can serve as a great resource for students as they progress through their career development. At first, advisors can provide information on courses and majors that are appropriate for the career goals of the students. They also can help the students to better understand their abilities, values, and interests and how they can use these factors to help them decide on a career. Advisors also

assist students by providing them with resources on how they can investigate careers and begin to build a resume through volunteer and internship opportunities. Advisors also provide information on graduate schools and the types of degrees required for certain careers.

There is no question that students go through changes during college. Therefore, it is important to understand the changing advising needs of students. It is also important to know what the students prefer as far as advising is concerned. Gender and race may have an effect on the academic needs and preferences of students.

<div align="center">Advising Preferences and Changing Needs of Students</div>

Advising Preferences

Studies have shown conflicting results when students have been asked to rate their preference for advising models. Herndon, Kaiser, and Creamer (1996) conducted a study to determine if specific groups of students had a greater preference for prescriptive or developmental advising and which type of advising they most often received. The students who participated in the study were white and black traditional-age students at a 2-year commuter college. The students were categorized according to gender, race, and enrollment status (full-time vs. part-time). Students in all groups showed a preference for developmental advising. No significant differences were found in preference between race and enrollment status. Female students preferred developmental to a greater degree than males.

Results were also given concerning the type of advising most often received as perceived by the students according to their responses on the survey (Herndon et al., 1996). White male and female students and full-time black female students reported that they received advising that was more characteristic of developmental advising. Part-time students, in general, reported that they received advising that was more characteristic of prescriptive advising. Herndon et al. suggest that this may be true because these students are on campus for small amounts of time and may seek out advisors who can help them quickly and efficiently. White female students reported receiving more prescriptive advising than any other groups. Herndon et al. state that advisors who practice prescriptive advising are not likely to initiate advising sessions with students. They postulate that white female students may be more likely to seek out advising help and this may be the reason that they report receiving more prescriptive advising.

Fielstein, Scoles, and Webb (1992) surveyed traditionally aged students and adult learners concerning their preferences for advising styles. Students were asked to rate items on the survey according to both their preference and their overall satisfaction. Each item was an activity related to either developmental advising or prescriptive advising. They found that activities common to prescriptive advising were preferred over developmental advising by both groups. No analyses were performed to determine difference on the basis of gender or race. Overall, both groups of students were dissatisfied with the advising they received. The authors suggest that this may be the case because there were significant discrepancies between the students' advising preferences and the perceptions of the advising they received. However, all students tended to be less satisfied with the developmental aspect than the prescriptive aspect.

Larsen and Brown (1982) conducted a study to determine the expectations of both faculty (including faculty, professional advisors, and department chairs) and students in regards to academic advising. They found that both faculty and students reported the expectation that advisors assist students in career planning. Both groups also agreed that advisors offer information about extracurricular activities. However, student responses suggested that faculty did not provide information on a large enough spectrum of activities. Faculty saw their main function in referring students to extracurricular activities as being limited to those activities that related to their academic area. In the area of personal problems, three-fourths of the faculty and over half of the students surveyed believed that advisors are responsible for assistance with personal problems and making referrals when necessary.

When considering advising mechanics, both faculty and students agreed on some basic responsibilities of both advisor and advisee (Larsen & Brown, 1982). Both groups believed that advisors are responsible for knowing major requirements and also for being able to recommend courses outside of the major. Being knowledgeable of university resources, keeping regular office hours, and serving as a reference for either graduate school or future employment were also considered as important functions of academic advising. Advisees' responsibilities included selecting courses from recommendations of advisor, researching classes that sound interesting to them, filling out forms properly, making appointments with advisor, initiating advisor contact, and the having the ability to change advisors.

Most researchers see advising as a progressive process. This process begins with more basic, prescriptive advising including helping students learn to register for classes, familiarizing students with university policies and procedures, and providing graduation requirements (Wright, 1982). The second level of this process includes helping students understand and interpret the new roles in their lives as they mature and develop. At this level, there is more communication between students and advisors that focuses on personal development, career development, and helping the students learn to overcome crises.

Kramer, Taylor, Chynoweth, and Jensen (1987) provide a guide for advisors using developmental advising. They developed this guide based on a review of the literature on academic advising. This guide provides advisors with information about student needs and advisor services that are evident in each year of a student's academic career. They postulate that during the freshman year, one of the main needs of students is to become familiar with the university, including the resources available, administration, and policies and procedures. Students will need to gain understanding in how to register for classes and how to drop and add classes. Advisors provide information on university and major requirements. Through providing this information, advisors assist students in beginning to assume responsibility for their own education. This is also the time when students need to learn good time management and study skills. The advisor plays a large role by helping the students with these areas and by referring them to time management and study skills workshops on campus. Advisors also help the students begin to relate their academic major to the career area in which they are interested.

The sophomore year can be very difficult for some students (Kramer, et al., 1987). Advisors can provide support for sophomores through this sometimes difficult period. During the sophomore year, students begin to refine their academic plans. Some of their specific needs include refining their academic goals, forming accurate expectations for their major, looking further into career options, and developing a clear and accurate academic plan. Advisors assist these students by establishing contact with them and providing information on classes available and major options. They also encourage them to attend special meetings or seminars being offered in their area of interest. Advisors may consider referring students to career offices for more focused career counseling during their sophomore year.

By the junior year, students tend to be more acquainted with a few faculty members in their area of study (Kramer, et al., 1987). They begin to establish some clear goals for their career path. They also begin to feel confident in their abilities in their academic area. If they are considering graduate school, the junior year is the time to gather information for schools. It is also the time to begin the process of determining academic progress and the requirements still needed for graduation. Advisors encourage students to seek out internship opportunities, fieldwork, or research opportunities to hone their skills in their chosen academic field. They also provide information about graduate schools and help students as they begin the application process.

By the time students get to their senior year, they are ready to prepare for the world of work or for entrance into a graduate program (Kramer, et al. 1987). Advisors become a great resource for students, helping them with resume development, networking, and interviewing skills. They also provide resources about graduate schools and entrance exams. Although the senior year can be an exciting time of change and preparation for different experiences, one of the greatest needs for seniors is to be sure that all graduation requirements have been met and that they are ready for commencement.

Advising Needs Based on Race and Gender

Each student brings different issues to the advising table. Some students may have special needs because of their racial background. Another group of students that may have special advising needs are women. Some research examines how the advising needs of special student populations vary.

Needs of minority students. Throughout the literature, one important theme emerges concerning the needs of minority students. This central theme of minority student development is the need for good mentors and role models on college campuses (Chew & Ogi, 1987; Frost, 1991; LaCounte, 1987; Pounds, 1987; Quevedo-Garcia, 1987; Tan, 1995). Academic advisors can help to fill this role even if they do not share the ethnicity of the advisees. However, to accomplish this, it is important that advisors are aware of the values, traditions, and expectations that some minority students have and some of the barriers they may face as they attend predominantly white institutions.

Pounds (1987) discusses ways that blacks may differ from whites on college campuses today. One is that they come from different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. Pounds also suggests that blacks may be less involved in campus life and therefore are less satisfied with their college

experience than white students. Black students often experience feelings of isolation on predominantly white campuses. They do not feel as though they fit in and may have a difficult time finding their niche.

There are several values that tend to be common to most Asian Americans. Asian American students tend to be very devoted to their families (Chew & Ogi, 1987). They also possess a high regard for obligation. Because humility is a valued quality in Asian cultures, Asian American students may have a tendency toward shyness. Asian Americans also refrain from freely showing their emotions (Chew & Ogi, 1987). Because of this, Asian American students tend to be more apprehensive and introverted than most white students (Onoda, 1977).

In predominantly White universities, Hispanics may struggle with how to integrate their own cultural background into the college culture (Quevedo-Garcia, 1987). Hispanic students also feel very strong family and community ties. Major decisions are typically made with the help and support of family members. Hispanic students are likely to choose a college that is low in cost and close to their family and community.

American Indians is another minority group that possesses some special needs. For many American Indians, college is their first educational experience outside of the reservation (LaCounte, 1987; McIntosh, 1987). Family is very important to American Indian students. In a study by Cibik and Chambers (1991), American Indians were more likely than other minority groups or Whites to miss classes because of family or religious obligations.

Cibik and Chambers (1991) found several barriers to persistence that are common among American Indian, Hispanic, and Black students. They found, along with many others (Chew & Ogi, 1987; LaCounte, 1987; McIntosh, 1987; Pounds, 1987; Quevedo-Garcia, 1987) that the cost of college is one of the largest barriers for minority students. Three fourths of the minority students Cibik and Chambers surveyed were receiving or had received financial aid and most reported no financial assistance from their families. They also found that minority students had a more difficult time meeting people and forming a social support system. Most minority students felt that they were academically prepared for college. However, other researchers (McIntosh, 1987; Pound, 1987) have listed academic underpreparedness among the list of barriers for Black and American Indian students.

One of the resounding suggestions in the literature for advising minority students is to avoid stereotyping students (Chew & Ogi, 1987; Cibik & Chambers, 1991; Frost, 1991; LaCounte, 1987;

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McIntosh, 1987; Pounds, 1987; Quevedo-Garcia, 1987). Although each minority culture has some common values, each student is unique. Frost offers suggestions of techniques to use when advising minority students. One suggestion is to help students find their niche within the college. Advisors can help them see how they fit in and encourage them to get involved. Referring students to other resources on campus is one way advisors help students who have problems the advisor is not capable of handling. Advisors also bolster a positive self-image in minority students by supporting and encouraging them to develop their own unique identity. As students are adjusting to college, advisors help them find academic experiences that will be enriching and successful. Although advisors may not share the same ethnicity as their students, they can still serve as role models and mentors for these students. However, if students prefer to have a mentor who shares their ethnic background, advisors can encourage and help these students in their effort to find a mentor.

Needs of women. Because women are not often viewed as a minority group, there is very little literature on the subject of how advisors can help women in their adjustment to college. Developmental theory suggests that women may experience different needs than men throughout their developmental process. Because of this, women may have different expectations of advisors.

Women may experience some of the same barriers as other minority groups. Many women find themselves in a "chilly climate" in college (Allen & Niss, 1989). A chilly climate is one in which a person does not feel accepted, supported, or treated the same as others. This is especially true in majors that are typically underrepresented by women. This feeling of isolation may encourage women to alienate themselves from faculty and students rather than getting involved.

<div align="center">Advising Styles and Practices</div>

Academic advising has often been presented as either being either prescriptive or developmental. However, recent studies have shown that advisors actually use more of a combination of these two types of advising. In a study about advising styles, Daller (1997) found that each of four styles identified utilized aspects of both prescriptive and developmental advising. Frost's (1993) study on advisors who utilized developmental advising practices focused on three objectives of developmental advising.

<u>Daller's Study</u>

In 1997, Daller conducted a study wherein she observed advising sessions with first and second year students. From her results, she posited that advisors utilize one of three advising styles: (a) counselor, (b) scheduler, and (c) teacher. The styles were identified based on the stated philosophies of the observed advisors and the observations made during the advising sessions. The styles were defined based on six characteristics. These include content, personalization, decision-making, advisors comments, advisor behaviors, and stated philosophy of advisor. Each of these styles includes a mixture of both prescriptive and developmental advising. In other words, each style had characteristics that are considered prescriptive and characteristics that are considered developmental. Individual advisors also tended to approach each advising session the same, not altering their individual styles based on the students they were seeing.

According to Daller (1997), counselors feel that they should encourage and support advisees and make them feel comfortable in the advising setting. They are concerned with the development of the whole student. They are typically acquainted with the students' personal background as well as their academic background. Counselors are genuinely interested in students and want the students to feel comfortable. They encourage students and help them by making suggestions. They empower them to make decisions, and give them encouragement and support to follow through on those decisions. However, they emphasize that success lies with the students.

Daller (1997) found two sub-styles within the counselor style. Nurturers are highly concerned with the students' well-being. They frequently schedule follow-up appointments to make sure the students are doing well. Coaches also are very motivational in nature, providing students with positive reinforcement.

Daller (1997) found that schedulers feel that their main objective is to be knowledgeable about institutional policies and procedures. Even though they are interested in the student's personal life, academics is their main focus. They emphasize academic issues and advising sessions are generally focused on class scheduling, grade inquiries, and other academic concerns. Schedulers serve as a substantial resource for students. A sub-style of the scheduler, the colleague, is still concerned about academics, but shows more of a personal interest in the students. Colleagues also are more concerned

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with the advisor-student relationship. They tend to know the students better and base their relationship on friendship.

Advisors labeled as teachers are concerned with both academic and personal issues (Daller, 1997). Teachers want to help students by enabling them with the skills necessary to become self-sufficient. They typically know about the advisee's personal background and show personal concern in advising sessions. Teachers see each student as different and approach advising sessions as such. They involve students in the decisions and often ask the students' opinions. Students are active members of the advising sessions. Teachers tend to show students how to go about completing a task and leave them with the responsibility of carrying it out. The most important concern of the teacher is the education of students.

Frost's Study

Frost (1993) studied the practices of advisors in two liberal arts women's colleges. In an earlier study, the academic advising programs at both colleges received ratings from students that indicated a developmental approach to advising was being used. Frost then examined freshmen advisors who were described by the students in the earlier study as being developmental advisors. These advisors were asked to complete a survey about their advising practices. Frost found that these advisors had a desire to get to know their students on a personal level. She also found that these advisors were genuinely interested in the whole educational experience of the students, not just the academic development. From the results of the study, three main objectives of advising sessions emerged.

The first objective is to help students become more involved in all aspects of college life (Frost, 1993). To accomplish this, advisors helped students become familiar with the programs available to them. Early in the advising relationship, advisors encouraged students to begin to look at their long-range academic and career goals and begin planning ways to reach those goals.

The second objective that emerged is that developmental advisors help students explore factors that promote student success (Frost, 1993). Advisors accomplished this by helping students learn to make academic, career, and personal decisions. They provided guidance and support, but did not make decisions for the students. They also helped students learn more about time management, study skills, and planning their schedules.

Displaying interest in students' progress, both academically and personal, was the third objective that emerged from this study (Frost, 1993). Advisors accomplished this by asking questions about what the student was interested in and by having conversations centered on the student's activities outside of the academic realm. Academically, advisors kept students up to date on their academic progress. They can do this by talking about the requirements and how well the student was progressing toward their academic goals.

Conclusion

Students go through many changes during college. Psychosocially, they are becoming more independent and setting goals for their future. Cognitively, they are beginning to think critically and form their own ideas and opinions. They are also experiencing changes in their career development, trying to relate their academic goals to their long-term career goals. Challenging students to get the most out of their college experience is one way advisors can help students through the developmental changes (Kuh, 1997).

As students go through these developmental changes, the advising topics that they present to advisors may also change. In the beginning, students are more likely to seek advice from their advisors on basic campus survival. For example, they may want information on degree requirements, university policies and procedures, and registration procedures. As they progress, they are more likely to discuss topics such as career, life goals, graduation school, and specific graduation requirements.

Students may also change the way they view advisors. In the early stages, they are more likely to view their advisor as an authority figure. Their advisor is someone who has all of the right answers about classes, policies, and requirements. As they progress through their academic career, they may view their advisor as more of a mentor or a friend. They may seek opinions and advice from their advisor. However, they will weigh the advice and opinions of their advisor along with others and make final decisions based on their own values and opinions.

Advising can be and is delivered in many different ways on college campuses today. Some institutions utilize faculty advisors exclusively. Others may utilize a number of different advisor delivery methods including advising centers, professional advisors, staff advisors, or a combination of these methods.

Students may experience different advising needs or expectations of an advisor based on their academic level, race or gender. Different student groups may have different expectations of advisors and advisors may treat groups differently. There is contradiction in the literature on the types of advising students need, prefer, and receive. Much of the literature focuses on freshman and sophomore students. There is still a need to determine what types of topics students are presenting to advisors, what types of issues faculty are raising with students, and if these issues differ according to academic level, race, or gender of the students. This study will attempt to answer those questions.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This exploratory study was designed to investigate how the advising needs that traditional-age students present to an advisor vary by grade level, race, or gender. Topics discussed by advisors were also examined to determine if these topics varied by grade level, race, or gender of the advisee. The study was conducted at a large, public, research university.

Specifically, the study was designed to explore the following research questions:

1. How do the topics that traditional-age students present to an advisor vary by grade level?

2. How do the topics presented to advisors by traditional-age students vary by race or gender?

3. Do the topics discussed by advisors vary by grade level of advisees?

4. Do the topics discussed by advisors vary by race or gender of the advisee?

There are two conventional types of research. These include quantitative research and qualitative research. Quantitative research is grounded in the assumption that the social environment is relatively constant across time and different settings (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Quantitative researchers typically attempt to learn about a larger population by studying a smaller sample and generalizing the results. Data are typically gathered through surveys and questionnaires. Quantitative researchers use statistical analysis to show significant differences between groups and results are based on numbers.

Qualitative research uses many different methods (interviews, case studies, ethnographies) to study a particular phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative researchers believe that there are no constants and results are typically not generalizable. Qualitative researchers attempt to study particular phenomena in a natural setting. Results are typically analyzed using interpretive methods rather than statistical methods. Researchers attempt to make sense of the data by categorizing and interpreting themes.

The present study used both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. One qualitative aspect of the study was the interviews that students participated in. Students answered an open ended interview question. The researcher used these data to determine emerging themes and categories used during the data analysis portion of the study.

Surveys, which tend to be quantitative, were used with the advisors. After the data were categorized using qualitative methods, the data were analyzed using statistical methods. Chi-square tests

were used to determine any statistically significant differences among the types of topics raised by students and advisors according to academic level, gender, and race of the students.

The study was also considered exploratory because there is a lack of previous research on the particular phenomenon being investigated. In particular, very little research has been conducted that examines the types of topics students and advisors raise during advising sessions. Because of this, this study was not conducted to prove or disprove a hypothesis.

Sample Selection

For this study, it was necessary to identify three samples. First, it was necessary to select colleges and departments participating in the study. Next, advisors from the colleges and departments were selected to participate. Finally, students from these departments were selected to participate in the study.

Selection of Colleges and Departments

The colleges and departments asked to participate in the study were the College of Business, the College of Engineering, the College of Natural Resources, and the departments of psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. The departments and colleges were purposefully selected because they provide advising services for undergraduate students at all grade levels. They also provided access to a large number of undergraduate students and were more likely to have a steady flow of students coming to advising sessions. These colleges and departments also utilize a variety of advising delivery methods including advising centers, professional advisors, and staff advisors.

Selection of Advisors

Professional advisors from the five colleges and departments were asked to participate in the study. For the purpose of this study, professional advisors were defined as individuals whose main job responsibility is advising. This included staff advisors, administrative faculty whose main job is advising, and graduate students working as advisors in advising centers.

Selection of Students

The sample was comprised of traditional-aged college students and was purposefully selected. Twenty students from each grade level were surveyed for a total of 80 students. The researcher was purposeful in selecting students to participate so race and gender were equally represented at each

grade level. For the purpose of this study, race was categorized as majority and non-majority because the sample of students within minority groups was not large enough to make meaningful comparisons. Students were asked to participate when they came for either a walk-in or scheduled appointment with one of the participating advisors. To reach students who may present a broad range of topics, the researcher utilized a variety of advising centers and professional advisors, as well as interviewing students during several weeks of the semester.

<div align="center">Data Collection Procedures</div>

Data were collected in several steps. First, the administrators and professional advisors were sent an e-mail (see Appendix A) providing them with information about the study and asking if it would be acceptable for the researcher to interview students in their college or department prior to meeting with an advisor. Deans and department heads were also asked to identify advisors who may be willing to participate in the study. Appointments were set up with the administrators and advisors to offer further explanation of the study. If possible at that time, the researcher also set up possible times for interviewing students before advising sessions and for collecting surveys that were convenient for the advisors. Next, the researcher received authorization from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct research involving human subjects.

In the next step, data were collected at advising sessions. The data collection took place during several weeks of the spring semester. The researcher attempted to choose times that would not be skewed because of typical academic problems during those times. Those times included the end of a semester in which discussions would mostly focus on graduation, exams, and possible failed classes. The first three days of the semester were also avoided because during this time most topics discussed would center on changing class schedules. The researcher sat outside of the advisors' offices and the advising centers and asked students as they came in to see an advisor if they would be willing to participate in the survey. The researcher visited each advising site weekly until the desired sample of students was achieved.

The study was explained to each student and informed consent forms were signed by the student (see Appendix B). After informed consent was obtained, students were asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C). Following the completion of the questionnaire, the researcher asked what the student planned to talk to his or her advisor about that day (see Appendix

D). If answers were unclear, the researcher asked the student to clarify his or her answer. The students' answers were written by the researcher on the back of the demographic questionnaire. Students were asked to fill out a short form providing their name and e-mail address for two drawings for $50.00 gift certificates to the university's campus bookstore.

The next step was to collect the data from the advisors. Informed consent was received from all advisors participating in the study prior to the onset of the data collection. After the advising sessions, advisors were asked to complete a survey (see Appendix E) to determine the topics they raised during the advising sessions. They were also asked to identify topics raised by the students. Many different advisors were used so that they did not have to fill out an excessive number of forms. This helped to decrease the chance that the advisors may not fill out the questionnaire honestly because they anticipated what information the researcher was looking for.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

Two instruments were used in this study. The first was the student demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C). Students were asked to provide information on their academic level, age, race, gender, and academic major. This information was used to ensure representation from all groups and so the data collected could be sorted according to demographic variables. The interview question was included on the back of the questionnaire where the researcher recorded the students' answers (see Appendix D).

The second instrument used was the advisor survey (see Appendix E). Advisors were asked to complete the survey after meeting with students who were participating in the study. The survey consisted of two questions. Each question contained an identical list of possible advising topics. The list was developed after reviewing advising surveys and lists of advising topics found in the advising literature (Daller, 1997; Habley & Morales, 1998; Kramer, Taylor, Chynoweth, & Jensen, 1987). The first question asked advisors to identify topics that the students raised during the advising session. The second question asked the advisor to identify topics that they had raised during the advising session. Each question also provided space for the advisor to add topics that were not found in the given list.

Both the students and the advisors were asked to provide the date and time of the appointment on the forms so that the information could be matched after the data was collected. Once student

questionnaires and advisor surveys were matched, the date and time of the appointment were removed from the questionnaires and surveys.

Data Analysis Procedures

Once all of the interviews and surveys were completed, the researcher analyzed the data. The data were analyzed in several steps. In the first step, each separate advising topic mentioned by the student during the interview was recorded on an index card along with the student's grade level, age, race, gender, and academic major. Advising themes were identified as they emerged from the answers given by the students.

In the next step, the cards were sorted according to grade level. Next, they were divided according to the advising themes that emerged. Then, the researcher counted and recorded to number of times each theme occurred in each grade level. After these counts were completed, the same procedure was completed for race and gender. Academic major was only looked at as a variable if there were major difference that emerged based on major. After the counts were made, chi-square tests were completed to determine any significant differences in topics discussed by academic level, race, or gender. Because the sample size of the study was relatively small and the data were represented by frequency counts rather than means, it was appropriate to use chi-square tests to determine statistical significance. Chi-square tests determine if statistically significant differences exist between observed and expected frequencies of different groups (Gall, Borge, & Gall, 1996; Pryczak, 1995).

The next step was to analyze the data from the advising surveys. Each topic raised by the advisors was written on an index card along with the advisee's grade level, age, race, gender, and academic major. The data were analyzed using the same procedures used to analyze the data from the student interviews. The same procedure was repeated to analyze the data in which the advisors were asked to identify topics raised by the advisees.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

A study is deemed trustworthy if it is found to have credibility, is found dependable, and is confirmable (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher took several steps to enhance trustworthiness of the study. One way trustworthiness was enhanced was through the interview process. The researcher was able to have the student clarify any information she did not understand. A pilot study was also

conducted on a small number of students and advisors to ensure that the instruments were usable and that they would elicit the kind of data that would be useful.

Authenticity is the degree to which the study is found to be fair or accurate and reliable (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The authenticity of this study was enhanced by a review of the survey and methodology by a panel of experts in the field of academic advising. These experts included a director of an advising center, an administrator in academic support programs, and an researcher and author in the areas of academic advising and student affairs. The panel provided the researcher with recommendations for revision of the protocols.

Limitations

As with all research, there were several limitations to this study. These included sampling limitations and generalizability limitations. In terms of sampling, all of the respondents in the study were traditional-age students from one institution. It is likely that students at other types of institutions would present a different, possibly broader, range of topics with an advisor. Another is that the sample was purposeful, not random, in nature. Because of the low percentage of minority students at the institution, the researcher selected students to participate that would provide the representative sample needed. The results may have been different if students were selected on a random basis. The sample was also limited to students who voluntarily came to see an advisor. This sample of students may not be representative of all students at this institution or others. These sampling limitations also limit generalizability. There were also other generalizability limitations. One was that the data were collected at one large, public, research institution. Therefore, the results are not generalizable to other large, public, research institutions or to other types of institutions.

There were also limitations in regards to the sample of advisors chosen. Only professional advisors were used in the study. These advisors may have more training than other advisors and therefore may raise topics other advisors would not. Also, the use of professional advisors is not the most common form of advising utilized on college campuses. Therefore, they may not be representative of the majority of advisors.

Summary

Data for this study were collected from student interviews before meeting with an academic advisor and from advisor surveys after the advising meetings. The data provided information on what

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topics students plan to discuss with advisors and what topics advisors raise during advising sessions. The data collected were analyzed to determine if advising topics that students raise with advisors vary according to grade level, race, or gender. The data were also analyzed to determine if advisors raise different topics with students depending on the grade level, race, or gender of advisees.

Chapter Four

Results

Sample of Participants

Two sets of participants were used in the study. The first set of participants consisted of advisors. A total of 11 advisors participated in the study. Six of the advisors are full-time professional advisors, each having at least two years experience in advising. The remaining five advisors are graduate students with advising as part or all of their graduate assistantship responsibilities. Advisors held positions in the College of Business, College of Natural Resources, Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering in the College of Engineering, and Interdisciplinary Studies and psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences. Of the advisors, eight (73%) are female and nine (82%) are White.

The second set of participants consisted of 80 students who met with one of the participating advisors in an advising session between January and March of 2000. The researcher sought out students at different advising offices on a university campus until data were collected from a sample of students that was relatively evenly distributed by academic level, gender, and race. Of the 80 participants, 16 (20%) are freshmen, 23 (28.75%) are sophomores, 15 (18.75%) are juniors, and 26 (32.5%) are seniors (see Table 1). A total of 42 (52.5%) of the participants are female and 38 (47.5%) are male. This is an over sampling of female students at the university where in 1998, females made up only 40.7% of the total student population (University Fact Book, 1999).

Race of the students was categorized as either White or Non-White. Sixty-seven (83.7%) of the students self-identified as White. The percentage of Non-White students (16.3%) represents an over sampling of Non-White students at the university. The percentage of students at the university who are Non-White is 14% (University Fact Book, 1999).

The sample of students who participated in the study is very homogeneous by age. The average age of the students is 20.5 years. All of the students ranged in age from 17 to 23 with the exception of one student who is 43. The student participants represent more than 20 different academic majors. The greatest numbers of students are from Interdisciplinary Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences (n=25, 31%), Business (n=21, 26%), and Engineering (n=20, 25%).

Table 1

Number of Student Participants (N=80)

	Male		Female		
	White	Non-White	White	Non-White	Total (% n)
Freshman	4	1	8	3	16 (20.00)
Sophomore	9	0	12	2	23 (28.75)
Junior	9	2	3	1	15 (18.75)
Senior	10	3	12	1	26 (32.50)
Total (% n)	32 (40.0)	6 (7.5)	35 (43.7)	7 (8.8)	80 (100)

Note. Total male participants = 38 (47.5%); total female participants = 42 (52.5%); total White participants = 67 (83.7%); total Non-White participants = 13 (16.3%).

Students were asked the approximate number of times they meet with an advisor per semester. On average, students reported that they meet with an advisor 2.44 times per semester based on data from 75 students (see Table 2). Students reported answers ranging from zero times to 25 times with one student answering "almost every day." The majority of the students reported that they meet with an advisor one to four times per semester. Five students, four seniors and one sophomore, reported seeing an advisor 10 times or more per semester and one student reported seeing an advisor "almost every day." Because the data from these six students were outliers when compared to the other data, they were removed from the average calculation so that the averages would not be skewed.

The data analyses are reported in the next section. First, the topics raised by students will be discussed by academic level, gender, and race. Second, the topics raised by advisors will be discussed by academic level, gender, and race. A comparison of the topics raised by students and by advisors will be presented in the third section. In the final section, a summary of the findings will be presented.

<p align="center">Topics</p>

Topics Raised by Students

Prior to each advising session, the researcher talked with each student and asked him or her to complete a short demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C). Following the completion of the questionnaire, the researcher asked each student what he or she planned to discuss with his or her advisor during the advising session (see Appendix D). If answers were unclear, the researcher asked the student for additional information.

After the data were collected, the researcher recorded each different topic raised by the students on an index card, each card containing one topic. A complete listing of the subtopics appears in Appendix F. The researcher grouped the cards according to similarity of the topics raised. The main topics were determined using surveys and lists of advising topics found in the advising literature (Daller, 1997; Habley & Morales, 1998; Kramer, Taylor, Chynoweth, & Jensen, 1987; Winston & Sandor, 1985). The main topics were information pertaining to major, course information, career/professional, and other.

Table 2

Average Times Students Reported Meeting with an Advisor Per Semester

Academic Level	Male		Female		
	White (n=30)	Non-White (n=5)	White (n=33)	Non-White (n=6)	Total (n=74[a])
Freshman (n)	3.63 (4)	1.00 (1)	2.00 (8)	3.25 (2)	2.50 (16)
Sophomore (n)	2.06 (9)	0.00 (0)	2.32 (11)	0.75 (2)	2.07 (22)
Junior (n)	3.22 (9)	3.00 (2)	2.33 (3)	1.00 (1)	2.87 (15)
Senior (n)	2.56 (8)	2.00 (2)	2.25 (10)	5.00 (1)	2.48 (21)
Total (n)	2.75 (30)	2.20 (5)	2.21 (33)	2.33 (6)	2.44 (74)

Note. Total male participants = 2.67 (n=35); total female participants = 2.23 (n=39); total White participants = 2.47 (n=63); total Non-White participants = 2.27 (n=11).

[a]Six students, five seniors and one sophomore, reported seeing an advisors 10 times or more per semester. To prevent the averages from being skewed, the data from these six students were eliminated from the average calculations, reducing the total number used from 80 to 74.

The 80 students raised a total of 319 different topics. The researcher categorized the topics into four different main topics containing a total of 52 subtopics. A student could raise more than one issue in the same category. Most of the topics identified by students immediately prior to meeting with an advisor dealt with academic issues or policies. Information pertaining to major was the largest main topic (n=151, 47.33%). Included in information pertaining to major are such topics as degree progress, academic difficulty, and specific major requirements. Course information was the second largest topic (n=99, 31.03%). It includes information on specific courses and course selection. The sub-topic Information on alternative courses included information on classes that are not specifically listed as degree requirements. These included transfer credits, study abroad, course substitutions, and independent study and undergraduate research. When these two categories of topics are added together (n=250, 78.37%) over three-fourths of the topics raised by students dealt with academic issues.

Only a small number of topics raised by students with an advisor dealt with matters other than academic. Topics related to career or professional issues represented an unexpectedly small category. Only 10.34% of the topics raised by students dealt with career issues. The other main topic represented 11.30% of the total topics raised by students. This main topic was used to house any topics that were not found to be appropriate in the other three main topics and were small in number. Because of the small number of personal topics raised, this sub-topic was included in the other main topic.

Academic level. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the difference between the topics raised by students by academic level. No statistically significant differences were found in the types of topics raised by students according to their academic level [χ^2 (6, $\underline{N}$=283) = 9.026, n.s.] (see Table 4). Although one cell violates the chi-square rule that each cell contain a count of at least five, the researcher felt it was important to perform the test using all four academic levels because most literature on academic advising focuses on needs of students at each level. Two additional chi-square tests were run to validate the non-significance of the original chi-square test. The first additional chi-square test was run after collapsing the columns of junior and senior to ensure at least a count of five in each cell. This chi-square test yielded a non-significant result [χ^2 (4, $\underline{N}$=283) = 8.8963, n.s.]. The second additional chi-square test was run after eliminating the

Table 3

Number of Topics Raised by Students with the Advisors by Academic Level

Topics	Academic Level				Total (% of N)
	FR (n=16)	SO (n=23)	JR (n=15)	SR (n=26)	(n=80)
Information Pertaining to Major	41	51	21	38	151 (47.33)
Major selection	14	18	6	4	
Degree progress	11	18	3	8	
Graduation	3	8	7	18	
University academic policies	5	5	2	5	
Academic difficulty	8	2	3	3	
Course Information	22	24	24	29	99 (31.03)
General course selection/schedule	15	16	11	16	
Information on alternative courses	5	8	7	8	
Specific course content	2	0	6	5	
Career/Professional	7	15	4	7	33 (10.34)
Career/employment information	6	11	4	7	
Graduate/professional school information	1	4	0	0	
Other	11	4	8	13	36 (11.30)
Total (% of N)	81 (25.4)	94 (29.5)	57 (17.9)	87 (27.2)	319 (100)
Average number topics raised per student	5.06	4.09	3.8	3.35	3.99

Table 4

Chi-Square Calculation for Number of Topics Raised by Students with Advisors by Academic Level

Topics	Academic Level				Total
	FR	SO	JR	SR	
	(n=16)	(n=23)	(n=15)	(n=26)	(n=80)
Information Pertaining to Major	41	51	21	38	151
Course Information	22	24	24	29	99
Career/Professional	7	15	4[a]	7	33
Total	70	90	49	74	283
χ^2=9.026, df=6, n.s.					

Note: The main category Other was omitted from the chi-square calculations because of the diversity of topics found (see Appendix G).

[a]To remain consistent and because the inclusion of the category Career/Professional is important to the statistical findings, this category was used in the chi-square calculation even though one cell violates the chi-square rules. The results of the chi-square did not change with the use of this data.

career/professional category from the calculation because this was the category that contained the cell with the frequency less than five. The results were not significant [χ^2 (3, $\underline{N}$=250) = 5.7476, n.s.].

The average number of topics raised by each student is 3.99. The average number of topics raised per student consistently declines across the academic levels. Freshmen, on average, raised 5.06 topics, sophomores raised 4.09 topics, juniors raised 3.8 topics, and seniors raised 3.35 topics.

By comparing the average number of times students meet with an advisor per semester (see Table 2) and the average number of topics raised, some interesting observations emerge. Sophomores reported meeting with an advisor an average of 2.07 times per semester, less than students from any of the other three academic levels did. Sophomores, on average, however raised more topics than did juniors or seniors. There may be a link between the number of topics raised by students per session and the number of times he or she meets with an advisor each semester. It is possible that because sophomores on average meet with an advisor only 2.07 times per semester they raise more topics in each meeting. On average, juniors reported meeting with an advisor more often than students from any other academic level. This is interesting when one considers that juniors make up the smallest percentage of participants.

Juniors were more likely than students at other academic levels to raise topics pertaining to course information. Juniors were less likely than students at other academic levels to raise topics pertaining to career or degree progress. This does not follow with the typical progression presented by Kramer, Taylor, Chynoweth, and Jensen (1987) in their guide on developmental advising. They predict that career goals are one of the areas that juniors will focus on with their advisors. The lack of career topics raised by juniors may be due to the fact that most of the data gathered on juniors were acquired during the week prior to pre-registration for the following semester. Before this time, few juniors came to see an advisor during the researcher's data collection times.

Few students raised topics concerning co-curricular activities available at the university. This topic was raised only twice, once by a freshman and once by a sophomore. This number seems low as one might expect freshmen to inquire about co-curricular activities as they try to find their niche and become a part of the university community. It is possible, however, that students receive this information from sources other than advisors, such as residential hall advisors or coordinators.

Students rarely indicated that they planned to raise personal topics, including topics about family, friends, or personal problems with the advisor. Based on developmental advising and developmental theory, one might expect more mention of personal topics. Particularly, one might expect juniors and seniors to be more likely to discuss life goals and personal issues as they form a closer bond with their advisor. However, juniors and seniors, on average, raised fewer topics than did freshmen and sophomores and the majority of topics raised pertained to academics. The raising of personal topics may be influenced by the relationship between the student and his or her advisor. Given the average number of times students meet with an advisor one might expect the number of personal topics discussed to be higher. Another possible explanation for the low number of times personal topics that were raised could be that both students and advisors did not report this information to the researcher. They may have talked about personal topics in casual conversation but did not report it because they did not see its relevance to the study.

Gender. The differences between the topics raised by students according to gender are presented in Table 5. There were no statistically significant differences in the type of topics raised by gender [χ^2(2, $\underline{N}$=283) = 1.2615, n.s.] (see Table 6). Female students raised an average of 4.28 topics with advisors while male students raised an average of 3.66 topics each with advisors. Although female students raised more topics than male students, they reported on average meeting with an advisor fewer times per semester than did male students (see Table 2). The majority of the topics discussed by both male and female students pertained to academic issues, including questions related to courses.

Female students raised more topics than males did in every category except university academic policies and specific course information. Baxter Magolda (1992) postulated that females tend to be more interpersonal than males and that they amass knowledge by seeking advise from others. This may explain why the female students in the study raised more topics with advisors than the male students did.

Table 5

Number of Topics Raised by Students with Advisors by Gender

Topics	Gender		Total (% of N)
	Male (n=38)	Female (n=42)	(n=80)
Information Pertaining to Major	63	88	151 (47.33)
Major selection	16	26	
Degree progress	14	26	
Graduation	17	19	
University academic policies	9	8	
Academic difficulty	7	9	
Course Information	47	52	99 (31.03)
General course selection/schedule	28	30	
Information on alternative courses	11	17	
Specific course information	8	5	
Career/Professional	12	21	33 (10.34)
Career/employment information	10	18	
Graduate/professional school information	2	3	
Other	17	19	36 (11.30)
Total (% of N)	139 (43.6)	180 (56.4)	319 (100)
Average number of topics raised per student	3.66	4.28	3.99

Table 6

Chi-Square Calculation for Number of Topics Raised by Students with Advisors by Gender

Topics	Gender		Total (n=80)
	Male (n=38)	Female (n=42)	
Information Pertaining to Major	63	88	151
Course Information	47	52	99
Career/Professional	12	21	33
Total	122	161	283
χ^2=1.2615, df=2, n.s.			

Note: The main category Other was omitted from the chi-square calculations because of the diversity of topics found (see Appendix G).

Race. The differences in topics raised with advisors by White and Non-White students are summarized in Table 7. Because of the disproportionate number of White participants, it is not appropriate to perform a chi-square test. On average, Non-White students raised more topics with an advisor than did White students. Non-white students raised an average of 4.9 topics per student while White students raised an average of 3.8 topics per student. Non-White students also reported meeting with an advisor more often per semester than White students. Although Non-White students raised an average of 1.1 topics more per student than White students, substantially fewer Non-White students raised topics pertaining to career and professional information than did White students. In particular, topics pertaining to graduate and professional school information were never raised by Non-White students. White students raised this topic five times.

Some of the literature on advising Non-White students emphasizes the importance of the role of the family in many Non-White cultures (Chew & Ogi, 1987; Cibik & Chambers, 1991; Quevedo-Garcia, 1987). Family often takes priority over all other issues, including academic. Cibik and Chambers (1991) cite getting involved on campus and meeting others as an important issue for most Non-White students. With this in mind, it is somewhat surprising that so few Non-White students raised topics pertaining to personal or family issues. Also, no Non-White students raised topics regarding to co-curricular activities. As with all of the students who participated in the study, the topics raised by Non-White students focused mainly on academic issues. One explanation for this is that students may have certain predetermined expectations of an advisor's role in a large research university. They may believe that the advisor's role is to provide academic information only. In a different type of institution, students may have different expectations of advisors and may raise a more diverse rage of topics.

Topics Raised by Advisors

Advisors completed a brief survey (see Appendix E) immediately following each advising session with a student participating in the study. On average, the advising sessions lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. On the survey, advisors were provided with two identical lists of advising topics. On one list, the advisor was asked to identify topics raised by the student during the advising session. On

Table 7

Number of Topics Raised by Students with Advisors by Race

Topics	Race		Total (% of N) (n=80)
	White (n=67)	Non-White (n=13)	
Information Pertaining to Major	120	31	151 (47.33)
Major selection	34	8	
Degree progress	33	7	
Graduation	30	6	
University academic policies	13	4	
Academic difficulty	10	6	
Course Information	79	20	99 (31.03)
General course selection/schedule	48	10	
Information on alternative courses	21	7	
Specific course information	11	3	
Career/Professional	30	3	33 (10.34)
Career/employment information	25	3	
Graduate/professional school information	5	0	
Other	26	10	36 (11.30)
Total (% of N)	255 (80)	64 (20)	319 (100)
Average number of topics raised per student	3.8	4.9	3.99

the other list, the advisor was asked to identify topics he or she raised during the advising session. The list was developed after reviewing advising surveys and lists of advising topics found in the advising literature (Daller, 1997; Habley & Morales, 1998; Kramer, Taylor, Chynoweth, & Jensen, 1987; Winston & Sandor, 1984). Advisors were also given space to write in any topics that were not listed. Observing the difference between the number and range of topics raised by students and raised by advisors provides a way to assess if advisors were using a more developmental or more prescriptive model of advising.

Before recording and counting the topics raised by advisors, the completed advisor's surveys were compared with the student interviews to ensure that there was no overlap in the topics raised. When duplications of topics raised occurred, the researcher made the assumption that the topics were raised by the student and did not include them in the topics raised by advisors. This prevented the same topic from being recorded as raised by both a student and their advisor. After comparing the two questionnaires and the data from the interviews, each topic raised by the advisors was recorded on index cards, following the same procedure as with the topics raised by students.

The advisors raised a total of 113 topics in addition to those raised by students (see Appendix G). The same main topics were used to categorize the topics raised by the advisors as were used for topics raised by students. Information pertaining to major was the largest main topic (n=37, 33%) followed by career/professional (n=34, 30%), course information (n=31, 27%), and other (n=11, 10%). About two-thirds of the topics (n=68, 63%) raised by advisors dealt directly with academic issues. Topics concerning personal issues were included in the other main topic, with advisors raising topics dealing with personal issues with only two students. On average, advisors raised 1.4 topics in addition to those raised by students. This suggests that the advising sessions were centered mainly on the topics raised by the students. A comparison of the topics raised by students and the topics raised by advisors appears in a later section of the chapter.

The topic of degree progress was not raised by any advisors and therefore was omitted from the tables pertaining to topics raised by advisors. Differences by academic level, gender, and race are discussed in the following sections.

Academic level. The number of topics raised by advisors according to academic level are reported in Table 8. No statistically significant differences were found in the types of topics advisors

raise according to academic level [χ^2(6, $\underline{N}$=102) = 8.2469, n.s.] (see Table 9). As with the topics raised by students, the majority of topics raised by advisors fall into two categories: information pertaining to major and course information.

When comparing the average number of topics raised by advisors by academic level, a similar pattern emerges as with topics raised by students. On average, advisors raised nearly twice as many issues with first-year students as with seniors. Advisors raised 2.19 topics per freshman, 1.04 topics per sophomore, 1.87 topics per junior, and 1.0 topic per senior. One would expect that freshmen may require more guidance on academic issues. Since the majority of topics raised by advisors pertain to academic issues, this may offer some explanation as to why the average number of topics raised for freshmen is larger than for students at other grade levels.

Student development theory and the developmental advising model postulate that as students progress through their four years of college, they require less information pertaining to their major and more information pertaining to career and life goals. As would be expected, advisors did raise more career and professional topics with juniors and seniors. However, within the main topic of career/professional, advisors raised the topic of career and employment information more with juniors and the subject of graduate or professional school more with seniors. One might expect that advisors would discuss graduate school more with juniors since most graduate applications are due early in the senior year.

Gender. A breakdown of the topics raised by advisors according to gender is provided in Table 10. No statistically significant differences were found when comparing the topics advisors raised with males and with females [χ^2(2, $\underline{N}$=102) = 5.0102, n.s.] (see Table 11). There is very little difference in the number of topics raised by advisors with males and females. On average, advisors raised 1.5 different topics with male students and 1.33 topics with female students.

In the area of graduate and professional school information, advisors raised this topic with females (n=7) more often than males (n=2). It is possible that advisors may raise the issue of

Table 8

Topics Raised by Advisors by with Students Academic Level

Topics	Academic Level				Total (% of N) (n=80)
	FR (n=16)	SO (n=23)	JR (n=15)	SR (n=26)	
Information Pertaining to Major	12	11	9	5	37 (33)
Major selection	5	1	1	0	
Graduation requirements/status	1	3	4	2	
University academic policies	1	1	0	1	
Academic difficulty	5	6	4	2	
Course Information	11	5	6	9	31 (27)
General course selection/schedule	4	1	2	3	
Information on alternative courses	4	1	0	2	
Specific course information	3	3	4	4	
Career/Professional	6	6	11	11	34 (30)
Career/employment information	6	4	10	5	
Graduate/professional school information	0	2	1	6	
Other	6	2	2	1	11 (10)
Total (% of N)	35 (31)	24 (21)	28 (25)	26 (23)	113 (100)
Average number of topics raised per student	2.19	1.04	1.87	1.0	1.41

Table 9

Chi-Square Calculation for Number of Topics Raised by Advisors with Students by Academic Level

| Topics | Academic Level | | | | Total |
	FR (n=16)	SO (n=23)	JR (n=15)	SR (n=26)	Total (n=80)
Information Pertaining to Major	12	11	9	5	37
Course Information	11	5	6	9	31
Career/Professional	6	6	11	11	34
Total	29	22	26	25	102
$\chi^2=8.2469$, df=6, n.s.					

Note: The main category Other was omitted from the chi-square calculations because of the diversity of topics found (see Appendix G).

Table 10

Number of Topics Raised by Advisors with Students by Gender

Topics	Gender		Total (% of N)
	Male (n=38)	Female (n=42)	(n=80)
Information Pertaining to Major	23	14	37 (33)
Major selection	3	4	
Graduation requirements/status	7	3	
University academic policies	2	1	
Academic difficulty	11	6	
Course Information	11	20	31 (27)
General course selection/schedule	3	7	
Information on alternative courses	2	5	
Specific course information	6	8	
Career/Professional	17	17	34 (30)
Career/employment information	15	10	
Graduate/professional school information	2	7	
Other	6	5	11 (10)
Total	57 (50.44)	56 (49.56)	113 (100)
Average number of topics raised per student	1.5	1.33	1.41

Table 11

Chi-Square Calculation for Number of Topics Raised by Advisors with Students by Gender

| | Gender | | |
Topics	Male (n=38)	Female (n=42)	Total (n=80)
Information Pertaining to Major	23	14	37
Course Information	11	20	31
Career/Professional	17	17	34
Total	51	51	102

χ^2=5.0102, df=2, n.s.

Note: The main category Other was omitted from the chi-square calculations because of the diversity of topics found (see Appendix G).

graduate or professional school more frequently with female students than with male students because they assume women may be less likely to consider graduate school.

Race. The differences in topics raised by advisors by White and Non-White students are summarized in Table 12. Because of the disproportionate number of White participants, it is not appropriate to perform a chi-square test. There is little difference in the average number of topics raised by advisors with White (1.40) and Non-White students (1.46). As stated earlier, Non-White students raised on average 1.1 more topics with advisors than did White students (see Table 7). This is consistent with the pattern that has emerged that advisors seem to adjust the number of topics they raise with students by the number of questions the students present. This is probably a reflection of the typical length of an advising session.

Although the difference was not significant, advisors seemed to raise a more diverse set of topics with White students than with Non-White students. The main topics advisors raised with Non-White students pertained to major and to career and professional information. Advisors rarely raised the topic of graduate or professional school with Non-White students. Non-White students did not raise this topic with advisors (see Table 7) and so one might have expected advisors to raise this topic more often. Advisors raised topics related to courses more often with White students than with Non-White students, with all of the topics raised on course selection being with White students. Although advisors rarely raised personal topics, advisors raised no personal topics with Non-White students. One reason for this could possibly be the race of the advisor. If the advisor was not familiar with the cultural background of the student, he or she may have felt uncomfortable raising personal topics.

Comparison of Student-Raised and Advisor-Raised Topics

Many of the topics raised by students and advisors were similarly distributed across academic level, gender, and race. However, a comparison of the differences in the distribution is warranted. Tables 3 and 8 provide the results according to academic level of topics raised by students and advisors, respectively. There was a steady decline in the average number of topics raised by students across academic levels. However, the pattern was not as consistent in the average number of topics raised by advisors across academic levels. In the developmental advising model, one might expect more consistency in the number of topics raised by students and advisors across academic levels, but a difference in the types of topics raised across academic levels. The results of this study do not support

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Table 12

Number of Topics Raised by Advisors with Students by Race

Topics	Race		Total (% of N)
	White (n=67)	Non-White (n=13)	(n=80)
Information Pertaining to Major	30	7	37 (33)
Major selection	5	2	
Graduation requirements/status	9	1	
University academic policies	2	1	
Academic difficulty	14	3	
Course Information	29	2	31 (27)
General course selection/schedule	10	0	
Information on alternative courses	6	1	
Specific course information	13	1	
Career/Professional	26	8	34 (30)
Career/employment information	18	7	
Graduate/professional school information	8	1	
Other	9	2	11 (10)
Total (% of N)	94 (83.2)	19 (16.8)	113 (100)
Average number of topics raised per student	1.40	1.46	1.41

this model as there was very little diversity in the types of topics raised by students or advisors across academic levels. A vast majority of the topics raised pertained to academic issues.

The average number of topics raised by female students was higher than the average number of topics raised by male students (see Table 5). Females consistently raised more topics than males across all of the topic categories. On average, advisors raised slightly fewer topics with female students than with male students (see Table 10). With the exception of course information and graduate and professional school information, advisors consistently raised more topics with males across the categories. An explanation for this could be the factor of time. Females raised more topics with advisors and if there was a time limit on the advising session, advisors may not have had sufficient time to raise further topics.

When discussing the topics raised according to race (see Table 7 and Table 12), it is important to note that on average, Non-White students raised 4.9 topics per student compared to 3.8 topics per student for White students. However, there is very little difference in the average number of topics raised by advisors according to race. Advisors raised an average of 1.40 topics with White students and 1.46 topics with Non-White students.

Even though the number of topics raised by advisors is fairly consistent by race, there appears to be more diversity in the categories of topics that advisors raised with White students. Non-White students report on average meeting with an advisor more often per semester than White students (3.33 times and 2.47 times, respectively). Non-White males report meeting with an advisor 4.33 times per semester. With the number of times Non-White students report seeing an advisor, it is expected that a more diverse set of topics raised by both Non-White students and advisors would have emerged. Although Non-White students raised a substantial number of topics with advisors, few of those topics pertained to career and professional information. Advisors did raise this topic with Non-White students, but only in the career information category. Only one advisor raised the topic of graduate or professional school with a Non-White student. As stated earlier, this may reflect that advisors share the stereotype that Non-White students are less academically prepared than White students are and, therefore, are less likely to go to graduate school. This is an important observation when one considers the low number of minority students who pursue graduate school.

There is a consistent lack of personal topics being raised by both students and advisors. Advisors rarely raised personal topics and no advisors raised personal topics with Non-White students. Students also rarely raised personal topics, with the majority of these topics being raised by White students. One reasonable explanation for this is the lack of availability of Non-White advisors in some advising areas. Some students may feel uncomfortable discussing personal topics with an advisor with whom they do not share a cultural background. In turn, some advisors may not feel comfortable discussing personal topics unless the topic is raised by the student. Another explanation for this could be that the frequency of personal topics being raised was underrepresented. If the personal topic was raised in a more casual conversation, advisors and students may not have felt it was relevant to the study and did not report it as a topic being raised.

Summary

Little diversity was found in the categories of topics raised by either students or advisors. Most topics raised pertained to academic issues. The number of times career related topics were raised was relatively low and discussion of personal topics by either students or advisors was rare. Given that on average students reported meeting with an advisor between two and three times a semester, a greater range of topics would be expected. The lack of diversity of topics raised may be partly explained by both the students' and the advisors' expectations of the advising role in a large research university where student services are decentralized. Students are assigned an academic advisor, but they have access to career counselors, individual counselors, residence hall advisors, faculty advisors, mentors, and others. The students may hear the title academic advisor and conclude that he or she is the person who will provide them with information pertaining to academics.

There were no statistically significant differences found when comparing types of topics raised by students and advisors by academic level, gender, or race of the student. However, there are some observations about the average number of topics raised by students and advisors and how they varied by academic level, gender, and race that are worthy of discussion. There was a consistent decline in the number of topics raised by students by academic level, with freshmen raising the most topics and seniors the fewest. Advisors also raised more topics with freshmen than with sophomores, juniors, and seniors and fewer topics with seniors than with students from any other academic level. This could suggest that students become more autonomous over time. It also could suggest that advisors assume that students

become more autonomous over time. A developmental advising model suggests that as the advisor/advisee relationship develops, it will take on a more personal nature. It is possible that the seniors and advisors did have conversations of a more personal nature, but because of the casualness of the conversation, they did not see it as relevant to the study and therefore did not report it as raising topics on personal issues.

There seemed to be some contradiction in the data reported by juniors. Juniors reported meeting with advisors more times per semester than students from any other academic level, yet they represent the smallest percentage of students in the sample. Most of the data collected on juniors were collected the week before preregistration and the topics raised by juniors centered on course selection. Assuming that their self-reports of the number of times they meet with an advisor each semester are accurate, this may suggest that juniors generally meet with their advisors only during critical times of the semester – the beginning, course preregistration, and the end.

Seniors reported meeting with an advisor an average of 2.44 times, only slightly less than juniors. This average does not include data from five seniors who reported seeing their advisor more than 10 times per semester. Four of these seniors share the same major and advisor. On the days each of these students spoke with the researcher, each raised only one topic with his or her advisor. However, all of these students shared with the researcher other topics he or she discussed with the advisor at other meetings. These topics ranged from academics to talking about a bad week. Because these topics were not raised with the advisor at that particular advising session, they were not used in the data presented. The frequency of visits by these students to this advisor and the range of topics the students shared with the researcher were not observed in other settings in the study. This suggests that something different is happening in this setting than what seems typical in the other settings studied. It is possible that this particular advisor practices a developmental approach to advising and/or that he or she has developed a personal relationship with these students that was not characteristic of other advisors and students in the study.

On average, advisors only raised about one issue per session in addition to an average of nearly four raised by students. Given that the average advising session was 15 to 20 minutes long and that on average at least five topics were discussed, this suggests that the advising sessions consisted of a fairly cursory discussion of questions. It could also suggest that the advising sessions might be characterized

as largely following the model of information giving. Many times during data collection, the researcher observed that students came to see an advisor on their way to class or some other appointment. This did not allow much time for the advisor to do more than answer the students' questions. At other times, advisors had set appointments every 20-30 minutes. Again, if students are raising three to four topics per meeting, this does not allow much time to discuss topics other than those at hand.

Female students on average raised more topics per session than did male students, but reported meeting with an advisor fewer times than male participants. Advisors raised fewer topics with female students than with male students. Once again, this could have been because of time constraints in the advising sessions. The reasons for these findings are unclear, but it is possible that because females meet with an advisor less often, they raise more topics per advising session.

One of the most interesting findings from the study regards race differences in the average number of topics raised by students. Non-White students on average raised a substantially higher number of topics than did White students. On average, Non-White students raised 1.1 more topics than White students did. There was very little difference in the average number of topics raised by advisors with White and Non-White students with advisors raising slightly more topics with White students. Advisors raised no personal topics with Non-White students and only a very few with White students. Other researchers (Chew & Ogi, 1987; Cibik & Chambers, 1990; LaCounte, 1987; McIntosh, 1987; Pounds, 1987; Quevedo-Garcia, 1987) suggest that Non-White students may experience feelings of isolation at a predominantly White institution. Therefore, Non-White students are more likely to seek advice on finding their niche on the campus and on learning the university system. The findings in this study are consistent with the literature on Non-White students. Because the percentage of Non-White advisors in the study was so low, it is fair to assume that some of these Non-White students are meeting with White advisors. This indicates that Non-White students do not necessarily limit their interactions to advisors of the same race.

In a developmental advising model, one might expect the number of topics raised by students and advisors to be more consistent and possibly increase rather than decrease across the student's academic career. A more diverse set of topics would also be expected in a developmental advising model. With the exception of one advisor, there was little indication of the development of a personal relationship between students and the advisors, despite on-going interactions. These findings are one

indication that a relatively traditional, prescriptive, information giving model of advising is the predominant model in the context studied.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The first section of this chapter provides a brief synopsis of the study. The second section includes a discussion of the major conclusions from the data analysis. In the third section, relation to previous research will be discussed. In the fourth section, limitations of the study will be discussed. The fifth section includes suggestions for future research. Implications for advisors are discussed in the last section.

Synopsis

The purpose of this study was to determine if the advising topics that traditional-age undergraduate students present to advisors vary by academic level. Further, the study examined whether these topics differ by gender or race. Topics raised by advisors were also examined to determine if the topics raised by advisors varied by academic level, gender, or race of the student.

Two samples were used for this study. One consisted of 11 professional advisors who agreed to participate. The other group was comprised of 80 undergraduate students at a large research university. The sample of students was fairly evenly distributed among the four academic levels. The number of female and Non-White students represented a slight over sampling based on the number of female and Non-White students enrolled at the university.

Data were collected over a two-month period during the spring semester. The researcher sat outside of the advisors' offices and the advising centers and asked students as they came in to see an advisor if they would be willing to participate in the study. The researcher visited each advising site weekly until a sample of students was achieved that was relatively equally distributed by academic level, gender, and race. Students were asked to complete a short demographic survey and to answer an interview question to determine what topics the student planned to raise at the advising session. At the conclusion of the advising session, advisors completed a short survey indicating topics raised during the advising by the student and by the advisor.

The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the topics that traditional-age students present to an advisor vary by academic level?

2. How do the topics presented to advisors by traditional-age students vary by race or gender?

3. Do the topics raised by advisors vary by grade level of advisees?

4. Do the topics raised by advisors vary by race or gender of the advisee?

The main categories of topics were determined using surveys and lists of advising topics found in the advising literature. The data were analyzed using chi-square tests and observations. Chi-square tests were used to compare differences in topics raised by students by academic level and gender. No statistically significant differences were found using the major categories identified by the researcher. Differences in topics raised by advisors by academic level and gender were also compared using chi-square tests, yielding no statistically significant results.

Although no statistically significant results were found, several observations are worth noting. The 80 students raised a total of 319 topics for an average of 3.99 per student per advising session. In addition to the topics raised by students, advisors raised 113 topics or an average of an additional 1.41 topics per session. The average number of topics raised by students steadily decreased from freshmen to seniors.

There was a definite lack of diversity in the topics raised by both students and advisors by academic level, gender, or race. The vast majority of the topics raised pertained to academics, including degree progress, course selection, and university policies. Both students and advisors raised career and professional topics and personal topics less often than was expected by the researcher. Career and professional topics were raised more often by advisors than by students, but overall career and professional topics were raised less frequently than academic topics. Personal topics were rarely raised by either students or advisors. This was especially surprising with juniors and seniors as one would expect that juniors and seniors might have had more time to form a personal relationship with their advisors than do freshmen or sophomores.

One of the most interesting findings of the study was in the different number of topics raised by White and Non-White students. Non-White students, on average, raised 1.16 topics more than White students did. Advisors also raised more topics with Non-White students than with White students. When one considers the number of topics raised by Non-White students and the number of topics raised by advisors with Non-White students, it is interesting to note that on average, 6.36 topics are raised with Non-White students during a 15 to 20 minute advising session, compared to 5.2 topics with White students.

Although an average of 6.36 topics were raised with Non-White students, the topic of graduate school was rarely raised by advisors with Non-White students and was never raised by Non-White students themselves. Some researchers postulate that Non-White students are academically underprepared for college and therefore are less likely to attend graduate school. It is possible that the advisors in this study stereotyped Non-White students and do not believe that they are capable of success in graduate studies. It is also possible that the Non-White students themselves have fallen victim to this stereotype and do not even pursue the possibility of graduate school. A worst case scenario is that this lack of the discussion of graduate school with Non-White students is evidence of underlying institutional racism.

Although there was little difference in the topics raised at the advising sessions, there was one group of students that seemed to be reporting an experience that was not a typical one. Four of the six students who reported meeting with an advisor more than 10 times per semester were all in the same major and had the same advisor. During the interview portion of the data collection, these students not only discussed what they planned to talk to their advisor about that day, but also topics they discussed with their advisor at other times. These topics ranged from discussing course information to talking about a bad day. One student mentioned that she could talk to her advisor about anything, from academics to issues with friends to co-curricular activities. One possible explanation for these students' experiences is that the advisor has been trained in student development and may practice a more developmental than prescriptive approach to advising.

Major Conclusions

When all of the different variables of the study are considered, there are a number of major conclusions that emerge. One major conclusion is about time constraints advisors face. On average, a total of 5.50 topics are raised per advising session. For Non-White students, this number increases to 6.36 topics per advising session. Advising sessions typically lasted 15 to 20 minutes which breaks down to approximately one topic being discussed every three to four minutes. The large number of topics students raise combined with the limited time in advising sessions could explain the low number of topics raised by advisors. Advisors simply do not have enough time to raise more issues with advisees.

The length of time spent in most advising sessions answering strictly academic questions seems to indicate that a prescriptive, information giving model of advising is being employed by most of the

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advisors in the study. In a more developmental model of advising, one would expect more discussions focusing on career and life goals in addition to the academic issues. However, if the time in advising sessions primarily is being used to answer largely procedural academic questions, many the same questions repeated over and over, then it is very difficult for advisors to practice a developmental model of advising.

Another suggestion for why there is such a lack of diversity in topics is the expectations that both students and advisors have of the role of an academic advisor in a large research university. The main focus in most research universities is on research and teaching. In the institution in which this study took place, most departments utilize faculty advisors. Traditionally, the advising model used has been a largely prescriptive, information giving model. Faculty advisors rarely receive training about advising. Students become accustomed to this type of advising and do not have the expectation of discussing issues other than academics with advisors, even with professional advisors with training in developmental advising. Students may have these expectations for many different reasons. One reason is that their parents or older siblings may have experienced a more prescriptive model of advising. In turn, they may recount their experiences with their advisors to the student thereby giving the student an image of an advisor who only answers academic questions. Also, at this institution, during freshman orientation, students are introduced to their advisors on the second day of orientation. During their short time with their advisor, their schedule and academic questions are the most important aspects of the meeting. Because of this type of introduction to advising, students may then expect that their advisors only provide academic information.

At the institution where the study took place, student services are fairly decentralized. Upon entrance to the university, students are assigned an academic advisor who is either a faculty member or a professional advisor. Students are also placed in a residence hall staffed with a resident advisor and a residence hall director. They are also provided information on individual counselors, career counselors, student organization advisors, and so on. With all of these different advisors and counselors available as resources, it is understandable why students may consider their academic advisor as a specialist who only deals with academic issues. Students develop these expectations through different sources. Some advisors utilize a largely prescriptive, information giving model of advising. These advisors may reinforce to student the expectations that advisors provide information about academic issues. Other students may

also reinforce these expectations by sharing with younger students their experiences with advisors who may practice an information giving model of advising.

Although a prescriptive approach to advising seems to characterize the exchanges captured in this study, these expectations may be changing. New initiatives are being taken at the university to foster a more proactive attitude about advising and to adopt of more developmental model of advising than has been practiced in the past. Some of these initiatives include recognition for faculty and professional advisors for exemplary advising through advising awards. Professional development seminars and workshops are also available for faculty and professional advisors to hone their skills and share ideas with other advisors on campus. An advising web page has also been set up to help students and advisors better understand the initiatives and to emphasize the importance of advising on the campus. There is also a list of student and advisor responsibilities that are being made available to both students and advisors through many different venues. If this study were repeated in a few years, after the new initiatives are put in place and advising is raised to a higher standard on campus, different results may emerge.

<center>Relation to Previous Research</center>

The results found in this study do not support the implications in previous research that students' needs of advisors will change over the course of their academic career. The results also do not support the notion that advisors will develop a more personal relationship with students and therefore raise different topics as students develop and progress academically.

Student development theory suggest that as students progress through their academic career, they develop both psychosocially and cognitively. This would suggest that students may have different advising needs as they develop their own identity and learn to rely on their own ideas and experiences and therefore may raise different topics with advisors. The results of this study indicate that there is actually very little change in the types of topics and issues that students raise with advisors across the four academic levels as reflected by topics identified for discussion by the advisors and students who participated in this study. Further, student development theories and career development theories suggest that as students progress, they will focus their discussions on topics related to personal values, life goals, and career goals. Although slightly more students in the junior and senior groups raised topics

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related to career with their advisors, there was not a significant difference found in the number of times career topics were raised across academic levels.

Kramer, Taylor, Chynoweth, and Jenson (1987) developed a guide for advisors practicing development advising that provided advisors with a roadmap of the types of needs students may have according to their academic level. These needs are based on a progression from needing mostly academic and university information from an advisor in the freshman year to relying on their advisor as more of a resource and mentor in their senior year. Again, the results of this study indicate that the topics raised by freshmen vary little from the topics raised by seniors.

Previous literature shows that minority students may have special needs because of their racial background and therefore may have different advising needs than the majority population (Chew & Ogi, 1987; Cibik & Chambers, 1991; Quevedo-Garcia, 1987). Researchers (Cibik & Chambers, 1991; Frost, 1991) cite getting involved on campus as one important aspect of the success and persistence of minority students. Therefore, one might expect that both students and advisors would be more likely to discuss extra curricular activities and student organizations. However, data from this study show that there was very little mention of these topics by advisors or Non-White students. Non-White students may be acquiring this information from other sources on campus. The expectation that advisors provide only academic information may also be a factor in the lack of these discussions between advisors and Non-White students.

There was also little difference found in the types of topics that advisors raised with students. The literature on developmental advising postulates that advisors who practice developmental advising will adjust their advising style to meet the needs of particular students. One would also expect that as these advisors develop a personal relationship with students, they are more likely to raise personal topics and discuss topics relating to the values, life goals, and career goals of the student. The advisors who participated in this study raised many of the same topics with students, regardless of the student's academic level, gender, or race. This does not suggest that a developmental model of advising is being practiced by these advisors.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

There are several limitations to the study. One of the most prominent limitations deals with the amount of time required to collect the data from students. Originally, the researcher had planned to

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collect data over a four-week time period, spending two hours at each advising site each week. This would equate to gathering data from approximately 20 students per week. Following the first week of data collection, the researcher had spoken with only five students. Several times the researcher sat outside an advisor's office for two hours and never saw a single student. It was difficult to find students who were meeting with advisors. Because of this, the data collection took approximately eight weeks as opposed to the four weeks planned. The extension of time also required the researcher to collect data the week before preregistration, a time she had hoped to avoid because most topics during that time would likely center on course selection.

Data collection was less difficult in those offices where advisors made appointments with students. In these situations, the researcher planned her schedule around the set appointment times and was able to gather data consistently throughout the two to three hour time slot. However, several of the advisors met with students on a walk-in basis during office hours. Even when the researcher worked with the advisor to predict heavy traffic times, there was still no guarantee of seeing a student during that two to three hour period.

As the data collection progressed, it was important for the researcher to be strategic about the selection of students to interview to ensure a fairly even distribution of students by academic level, gender, and race. It was particularly difficult to find juniors to participate in the study. Up until preregistration week, only four juniors had met with the advisors participating in the study during the times the researcher was collecting data. Therefore, it was especially important that the researcher gather data from juniors in the last week of data collection.

Because it was so difficult to gather data from 80 students during an eight-week time span, there is some doubt about the number of times some students reported meeting with an advisor each semester. This is especially questionable with juniors, who on average reported meeting with an advisor more than any other group, yet were the most difficult group to gather data from. It is possible that some students exaggerated their estimate of the number of times they meet with an advisor each semester because they knew the study was about advising.

Another limitation of the study involves the time needed for the advisors to complete the advisor surveys. When advisors had back-to-back appointments, it was sometimes difficult for them to complete the advisor surveys in a timely manner. In this situation, advisors did not always have time to

fill out the forms immediately following the appointment or they filled out the form hastily. If they waited to complete the form after several appointments, the information from the first appointment was no longer fresh in their minds. In such cases, advisors may have filled out the survey indicating topics they generally cover in an advising session, rather than indicating the topics that were actually addressed in a particular advising session.

There are also some sampling and generalizability limitations to the study. Some of these limitations were because of the type of institution utilized for the study. The study was conducted at a large, research institution. Traditionally, faculty advisors in the student's major department provide advising at this institution. This study utilized only professional advisors. Therefore, many majors on campus were not represented because they do not employ professional advisors.

The student body at the institution is homogeneous in terms of age, race, and socio-economic status. Most students are traditional age, White, and come from families in the middle to upper middle class. Because of the rural location of the institution and that it is selective in the admission of students, the students also tend to be fairly homogeneous in term of academic background.

The sampling of students used in the study was not random. Rather, it was an opportunistic and purposeful sample. It was opportunistic in that it only included students who chose to meet with an advisor and who happened to meet with an advisor while the researcher was conducting data collection at that site. The sample was purposeful, especially during the last couple of week of data collection, as the researcher was strategic in the choice of participants so that the sample would be fairly evenly distributed across academic level, race, and gender.

Another limitation of the study is that it only examined one delivery method of advising and that is the one-on-one advising session. During the study, several advisors pointed out the number of advising questions they answered over email and through phone calls. One advisor commented one day that she had answered several questions by email while the researcher sat outside her office for two hours without seeing any students. It is possible that only assessing one delivery method may underestimate the number of contacts students have with advisors and the types of issues raised.

Future Research

There are several research studies that could expand on the results found in this study. One interesting study would be to conduct the same type of research, but to do so in different types of

institutions. Other institutions may provide samples of students and advisors who have different expectations of advisors than those found at a large research university. Also, at institutions where there is less focus on research, there may be more focus on student learning and co-curricular activities that enhance the learning in the classroom. Different types of institutions may also have a more heterogeneous student body, thus providing a different array of students in the sample. At different types of institutions, one may find that students raise different categories of topics with advisors.

This research may also yield different results if the researcher were present in the advising sessions. This would give the researcher the opportunity to observe the advising sessions and have a clearer picture of the topics raised by both students and advisors. However, this type of research would be very time consuming, especially to collect data from at least 80 students. It also has the potential to be very monotonous. If, as this study indicates, that many of the same questions are being asked and answered in advising sessions, the researcher would observe much of the same type of topics being raised in most of the advising sessions.

A quantitative study of the topics raised by students with advisors would be less time consuming and would possibly reach more students. A survey, similar to the advisor survey used in this study, could be placed at various advising centers and advisors' offices on campus. The survey would ask students what topics they plan to raise with the advisor and provide them with a list of topics. Students would complete the survey before meeting with an advisor and place it in a designated place where the researcher would collect them at a later time. This would not narrow the field of student participants to only those who met with an advisor during the times the researcher was at the advisor's office.

Another study would be to conduct research using other types of advising delivery methods. For example, data could be gathered on the types of questions advisors receive and answer over email, through phone calls, and from advising web pages. This type of study would rely heavily on information from advisors and not from students. Advisors would be expected to keep a log of questions and answers of emails and phone calls from students. This could be a rather time consuming activity on the part of the advisors. However, it would be a way to discover the types of topics students raise with advisors using different delivery methods and whether those topics differ from the types of topics they present in a person to person meeting.

A longitudinal study would provide clearer information on the changing needs of students as they progress through college. This type of study would be very time consuming and would have to be an on-going research project. The study could be conducted across a semester, a year, or throughout the student's entire academic career. Students could be asked to keep an advising journal in which they would keep notes from each advising session they attend. This type of study would show the differences in the types of topics the student raises with his or her advisor and how the relationship with his or her advisor may change as the student develops and matures. Accurate information would also be gathered on the number of times the student met with an advisor each semester.

Implications for Advisors

In a large research university, it is easy for students to get lost in the crowd. Advisors can play a part in helping these students find their niche and have a successful academic career. However, the results of this study suggest that advisors have little time in advising sessions to do anything other than provide information on a limited range of topics. It is also clear that the topics raised by both students and advisors focus on academics. There also may be certain underlying expectations of advisors that draw this limited range of topics. So, how can advisors utilize their training and practice developmental advising in this type of setting?

It would appear that many of the same questions are being asked during each advising session. If students could find this information from other sources, there will be more time during advising sessions to discuss topics other than academics and to form a more developmental relationship with students. Below are a few suggestions on ways that advisors can provide basic advising information to students outside of the advising sessions.

Today, most campuses are wired. Students spend a lot of time on the computer, surfing the web. Providing advising homepages is one way that advisors can get information to students. Advising web pages should include information on semester deadlines, university policy and procedures, and frequently asked questions. Also included should be information on departmental policies, course requirements, and links to other resources. All advising web pages should also include a link to email questions to an advisor. This enables students to ask the questions on the spot, while they are fresh in their minds. However, advisors need to be cognizant of the importance of answering these questions in a

timely fashion. This type of information could also be provided on an advising bulletin board inside the advising center or near the advisor's office.

Other suggestions include maintaining an advising listserv and providing an advising newsletter. A listserv provides advisors with the opportunity to send out new information to students quickly. Routine information could be sent to students once a week with crucial information being sent out immediately to students. An advising newsletter would also help students to gather general information. This is also one way to emphasize the importance of advising to the students.

Peer advisors could also be utilized to answer many of the routine questions being asked during advising sessions. Many times, peer advisors have gone through some of the same classes that the other students are preparing to take. Peer advisors may be able to share more information with these students about class content and expectations of professors. Group advising is another way to alleviate some of the same questions being asked during advising sessions. One time during the semester when group advising is utilized the most is during preregistration. Students in the same major are usually required to take many of the same courses. There are some exceptions to this. However, for those majors that require students to take the same courses, group advising is a way to answer general questions about course selection once that they may have to answer several times in individual advising sessions.

These are just a few suggestions as to how to alleviate some of the monotony of the information exchange, prescriptive model of advising. However, if students can receive this information through different venues, they may not see the importance of going to see an advisor. This is why it is so important that advisors and university administration stress the importance of advising with entering freshmen. Advisors need to establish a relationship with students as soon as they enter the university, and continue to build that relationship throughout the academic career. As this relationship is established and developed, there will be a natural progression from information exchange to a more developmental model of advising.

Another important implication for advisors is the fact that the topic of graduate school was rarely raised with Non-White students. There are a number of reasons as to why there was a lack of discussion concerning graduate school with Non-White students. Maybe there just was not enough time during the advising sessions. Another possibility is that both the advisors and the students believed that Non-White students cannot succeed in graduate school. Non-White students are underrepresented in

graduate schools. Because there are fewer Non-White students in graduate school, there are fewer Non-White faculty and administrators in higher education institutions, especially in predominantly White institutions. As a result, there is a lack of Non-White role models and mentors in the higher education system.

It is important that advisors are provided with training that focuses on some of the issues faced by Non-White students. This type of training may help advisors better understand their own prejudices and to begin to understand some of the barriers that Non-White students may face. As a result, advisors will have a better understanding of the Non-White students they advise. In conjunction with diversity training, it is important to inform advisors of programs and services available to Non-White students who want to pursue graduate studies. For example, the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureat Achievement Program was established to encourage both low income and underrepresented groups to pursue graduate studies. Non-White students may not consider graduate studies because of the stereotypes they have lived with their whole lives that they cannot succeed academically. Therefore, they may not even feel that it is an issue that they should raise with their advisor. Advisors need to be cognizant of this stereotype and take the pressure off of the student by raising the topic of graduate school and encouraging both promising White and Non-White students to pursue postbaccalaureate degrees.

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Appendix A

E-mail to College Deans and Department Heads

Dear _____,

My name is Mary Taylor and I am a Master's student in Higher Education and Student Affairs. I am currently preparing my thesis proposal in which my main research focus is how students' advising needs vary according to their grade level, race, or gender. To try to answer this question, I plan to interview students before advising sessions and ask advisors to complete a short survey after advising sessions. With your approval, I would like to survey students and advisors in your (College/Department). The student questionnaires will contain questions about demographic information. The student interview will consist of one question asking students what they plan to discuss with their advisors during the session. After the advising session, advisors will be asked what topics they raised during the session and what topics students raised during the session. Students will not be asked any questions regarding quality of advising or satisfaction with advising. Students and advisors will also be given the option of not disclosing any confidential issues or topics they may discuss.

I plan to collect data during the early weeks of the Spring semester. If you have any questions concerning my study, please feel free to contact me (231-6630 (w); 382-7385 (h); taylorm@vt.edu). Thank you in advance for considering my request to survey your students and advisors. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Mary Taylor

Appendix B

Sample of Informed Consent Form

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: The Changing Advising Needs of Undergraduate Students

Investigator: Mary E. Taylor

I.   Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to investigate how the advising needs that traditional-age students present to an advisor vary by grade level, race, or gender. Topics discussed by advisors were also examined to determine if these topics varied by grade level, race, or gender of the advisee. The study was conducted at a large, public, research university.

II.   Procedures

Data were collected in several steps. First, the deans, department heads, and professional advisors were sent an e-mail providing them with information about the study and asking if it would be acceptable for the researcher to interview students in their college or department prior to meeting with an advisor. The investigator answered any questions from the advisors during a meeting. Next, the researcher received authorization from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct research involving human subjects. After the researcher received IRB approval and approval from the deans, department heads, or advisors, the researcher scheduled times with the advisors to collect data.

Next, data will be collected at advising sessions. The data collection will take place during several weeks of the spring semester. The researcher will sit outside of the advisors' offices and the advising centers and ask students as they come in to see an advisor if they are willing to participate in the study.

The study will be explained to the students and informed consent forms will be signed by the students. After informed consent is obtained, students will complete a short demographic questionnaire. Following the completion of the questionnaire, the researcher will ask what the student plans to talk to his or her advisor about that day. If answers are unclear, the researcher will ask the student to clarify their answer. The students' answers will be written by the researcher on the back of the demographic

questionnaire. Students will fill out a short form providing their name and e-mail address to be eligible for two drawings for $50.00 gift certificates to the university's campus bookstore.

The next step is to collect data from the advisors. After the advising sessions, advisors will complete a survey to determine the topics they raised during the advising sessions. They will also be asked to identify topics raised by the students.

All information will remain confidential and anonymous. No names will be used and all personalized identification will be removed before the data analysis occurs.

III. Risks

There are no major risks associated with this study. Advisors and students were advised that they did not have to disclose any confidential information they did not feel comfortable disclosing to the researcher.

IV. Benefits of this Study

The present study has significance for both practice and research. Advisors, both faculty and professional, may benefit from this study. The results will provide them with information regarding the needs of traditional-age undergraduate students and how they may differ by grade level, gender, or race. They may also receive information about issues that should be raised during advising sessions. Individuals who train advisors may use the results of this study to assist advisors in recognizing the importance of understanding the changing needs of students and the factors that may influence those needs.

This study is significant for research because it fills a gap in the existing advising literature. Although there is literature that focuses on the changing advising needs of students, no research has been conducted to determine the changing needs of students based on the actual topics students present to advisors. This research also fills a gap in the literature by exploring how student's presenting concerns compare to issues advisor's raise with them.

Subjects may contact the researcher in May of 2000 to request a summary of the research results.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Students and advisors will be asked to record the time and date of the advising session on the questionnaire and survey for matching purposes only. Once the questionnaires and surveys have been matched, this information will be removed.

VI. Compensation

Each student participant will be eligible for one of two drawings for $50.00 gift certificates to the campus bookstore.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Participants are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

VIII. Approval of Research

This research project is approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

IX. Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

I will complete the survey and answer the interview question, providing accurate information to the best of my knowledge.

X. Subject's Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

_____   _____

                  Signature   Date

_____

My name is Mary Taylor and I am a second-year Master's student in Higher Education and Student Affairs. I am currently collecting data for my thesis. By agreeing to complete the survey and answer the interview question, you are agreeing to participate in my data collection process. This study

was designed to identify how advising needs of students may vary according to academic level, race, or gender.

Should you have any questions about this research or its conduct, you may contact:

Mary Taylor, Investigator   382-7385 (taylorm@vt.edu)

Elizabeth Creamer, Faculty Advisor   231-8441

Tom Hurd, Chair, IRB, Research Division   231-5281

Appendix C

Date and Time of Appointment _____

Student Demographic Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather demographic data to be used in the study. Please answer all of the demographic questions listed below. All information on this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.

<u>Demographic Information</u>

Academic level (circle one):

First-year   Second Year   Third Year   Fourth Year   Fifth year or more

Age: _____

Major: _____

Race (circle one):

African American   Asian   Hispanic   Native American Caucasian   Other

Gender (circle one)

Female   Male

Approximate number of times you have met with this advisor: _____

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Appendix D

Date and Time of Appointment _____

Interview Protocol

What topics do you plan to discuss with your advisor at today's session? If there are confidential topics that you plan to discuss, you do not have to disclose that information to me if you do not feel comfortable doing so.

Appendix E

Date and Time of Appointment _____

Advisor Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather information on what advising topics advisors and students raise during advising sessions. All information on this survey will be kept strictly confidential.

1. Please place a check beside each advising topic that the student raised during the advising session today.

_____ Academic progress	_____ Financial aid
_____ Course selection	_____ Topics on health
_____ Dropping/adding courses	_____ Current employment opportunities
_____ Major selection/changes	_____ Campus offices/services
_____ Graduation requirements	_____ Disability issues
_____ Study skills/time management	_____ Career goals
_____ Academic difficulties	_____ Graduate school
_____ Withdrawing/transferring	_____ Professional school
_____ Academic Probation/suspension	_____ Job placement after graduation
_____ Course content	_____ Personal concerns or problems
_____ Transfer credits	_____ Family matters
_____ Experiences in classes	_____ Friends
_____ Co-curricular activities	_____ Social or political issues

Please list any other topics that were raised that are not listed above.

(Over)

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2. Please place a check beside each advising topic that you raised during the advising session today.

_____ Academic progress	_____ Financial aid
_____ Course selection	_____ Topics on health
_____ Dropping/adding courses	_____ Current employment opportunities
_____ Major selection/changes	_____ Campus offices/services
_____ Graduation requirements	_____ Disability issues
_____ Study skills/time management	_____ Career goals
_____ Academic difficulties	_____ Graduate school
_____ Withdrawing/transferring	_____ Professional school
_____ Academic Probation/suspension	_____ Job placement after graduation
_____ Course content	_____ Personal concerns or problems
_____ Transfer credits	_____ Family matters
_____ Experiences in classes	_____ Friends
_____ Co-curricular activities	_____ Social or political issues

Please list any other topics that were raised that are not listed above.

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Appendix F

Topics and Subtopics Raised by Student

Information Pertaining to Major (151)
<u>Major Selection</u> (42)
  Major changes/selection (18)
  Inquiring about major (11)
  Minor/concentration changes/selection (7)
  Double major (5)
  Major policies (1)
<u>Academic Difficulty</u> (16)
  Academic difficulty (9)
  Course of action following probation/suspension (3)
  Academic probation/suspension (2)
  Study skills/time management (2)
<u>Graduation</u> (36)
  Graduation requirements/status (32)
  Degree analysis questions (4)
<u>University Academic Policies</u> (17)
  Dropping/adding classes (10)
  Freshman rule policy (2)
  Policy clarification (1)
  Summer credit limit (1)
  Semester deadlines (1)
  Late dropping classes (1)
<u>Degree Progress</u> (40)
  Academic progress (28)
  Setting up degree plan (8)
  Meeting requirements with double or change of major (4)

Course Information (99)
<u>General Course Selection/Schedule</u> (58)
  Course selection (52)
  Changing option (P/F) (4)
  Problems with schedule (1)
  Retaking classes (1)
<u>Information on Alternative Courses</u> (28)
  Transfer credits (20)
  Independent study/undergraduate research (4)
  Study abroad (3)
  Course substitutions (1)
<u>Specific Course Content</u> (13)

Experience in courses (7)
Course content (6)
Career/Professional (33)
Career/Employment Information (28)
Career information (15)
Co-op/internship opportunities (8)
Employment opportunities (5)
Graduate/Professional School Information (5)
Graduate/professional school information (5)

Other (36)
Questions concerning graduation ceremony (5)
Personal problems (5)
Withdrawing/transferring to another university (4)
Family matters (4)
Financial aid (3)
Choose senior pictures (2)
Questions concerning Dean's list (2)
Making up missed work (1)
Problems with faculty (1)
Pledging fraternity (1)
Co-curricular activities (1)
Health services information (1)
Friends (1)
How to contact upper level advisor (1)
Where to hang fliers on department bulletin board (1)
Request to be added to departmental listserv (1)
Discuss current advisor (1)
Referred by athletic advisor (1)

Appendix G

Topics and Subtopics Raised by Advisors

Information Pertaining to Major (37)

    <u>Major Selection</u> (7)

        Major changes/selection (5)

        Minor/concentration changes/selection (2)

    <u>Graduation</u> (10)

        Graduation requirements/status (10)

    <u>University Academic Policies</u> (3)

        Dropping/adding classes (2)

        Late dropping classes (1)

    <u>Academic Difficulty</u> (17)

        Academic progress (12)

        Academic probation/suspension (2)

        Study skills/time management (2)

        Academic difficulty (1)

Course Information (31)

    <u>General Course Selection/Schedule</u> (25)

        Course selection (8)

        Changing option (P/F) (1)

        Retaking classes (1)

    <u>Information on Alternative Courses</u> (7)

        Transfer credits (5)

        Course substitutions (2)

    <u>Specific Course Content</u> (14)

        Course content (8)

        Experience in courses (5)

        Prerequisites (1)

Career/Professional (34)

    <u>Career/Employment Information</u> (25)

        Career information/goals (9)

        Job placement after graduation (9)

        Summer job/current employment opportunities (3)

        Co-op/internship opportunities (3)

        Resume/cover letters (1)

    <u>Graduate/Professional School Information</u> (9)

        Graduate/professional school information (9)

Other (11)

General information about campus services (3)
Co-curricular activities (2)
Health services information (1)
Financial aid (1)
Withdrawing/transferring to another university (1)
Disability issues (1)
Friends (1)
Parents (1)