Among advisors: an interview study of faculty and staff undergraduate advising experience at a public land grant university.

Donna J. S. Lynch

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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AMONG ADVISORS: AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF FACULTY AND STAFF
UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING EXPERIENCE
AT A PUBLIC LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation Presented
by
DONNA J.S. LYNCH

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
February 1998
School of Education
DEDICATION

In celebration of the lives of

My Father,
Roger H. Phelps

and

My Great Friend,
Spike Stephenson Lynch

Reflections on the stream of life.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This dissertation was developed and helped along through the encouragement and contributions of many people. This long list includes teachers, especially those in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, my advisees over the past fourteen years, and other researchers and writers in the fields of education and academic advising.

It could not have happened at all without the wholehearted participation of the twenty-eight faculty and staff academic advisors who gave much of their time, and shared their life stories which form the heart—as well as much of the content—of this dissertation. Each took my study and their participation seriously. In addition, I am grateful to the two professional staff advisors who participated in the pilot project. Their reflections on their experience signaled the direction for this fuller study. Although the advisors must go unnamed here in order to provide anonymity, they have my unending appreciation for their gifts of time, experience and understandings. It has been a privilege to come to know them and to make their stories available to others.

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Four colleagues and friends provided specific assistance. George Barham, whose graphic artistry is on full view in Figure 1, used more than one-hundred type faces to make my rough sketch of the "World of Topics," a reality in order to convey the dynamic interplay of topics and the mountain-sized scale of the raw data. Bettyjean Bouffard shared her expertise in the nuances of computers which helped to get the concepts presented in Figure 2 onto the printed page. I am deeply indebted to Mary Garrison whose word processing expertise helped me format the manuscript according to "the three C's," the principle requirements of the Graduate School for "clarity, consistency and common sense." I thank Pam Korza for her care and attention in reading the nearly final draft for grammatical errors and clarity, and for her enthusiasm for my efforts.

In the learning process, as with all other dynamic life experiences, the heart must be nourished along with the head. I am fortunate to have so many willing to provide this in full measure. The constancy of the support and love of my immediate family sustained me throughout the process. They helped me to find the toe-holds to persist, and provided much wise counsel. Among these advisors, I am especially grateful to my husband, Robert L. Lynch. He listened to many of my ideas, and graciously took time from his work to read and respond to the drafts of my comprehensive paper and the dissertation. He generously gave constructive editorial expertise, raised many helpful questions and made beneficial suggestions. More important, he never wavered in his belief in my ability to do this work, and that it would be meaningful.

My older son, Scott Cameron Stephenson, listened to my frustrations, empathized with me, and then gave me a dose of "you can do it!" My younger son, Christopher Jon Stephenson, not only shared his reasoning process in problem solving, but demonstrated what persistence is all about in his academic achievements and life goals. My sisters, Margery Ann Wallner and Robin Elizabeth Phelps, were a two-person cheering section. They were ever available to offer encouragement, and throughout the process, they maintained enthusiasm for this endeavor.
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ABSTRACT

AMONG ADVISORS: AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF FACULTY AND STAFF UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING EXPERIENCE AT A PUBLIC LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 1998

DONNA J.S. LYNCH, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST M.ED., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST ED.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Irv Seidman

This study uses in-depth interviewing along with participant observation and document analysis to develop an understanding of academic advising at one land grant university (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988a; Seidman, 1991; Spradley, 1980). Through in-depth phenomenological interviews, this study asks how academic advisors understand the work of advising, the changes proposed and occurring in this setting, and how they manage the deep-seated dilemmas and perplexing choices inherent in the advising role. In addition, it inquires how these choices and decisions connect to issues raised by national reform initiatives of professionalization and standardization for the field.

A group of twenty-eight faculty, professional and classified staff academic advisors from twenty different academic departments, counseling centers, and programs within the advising support system were interviewed. This included nineteen women and nine men who provided academic advising as a significant part of their work role.

A sequence of three separate, ninety-minute audio-taped interviews were done with each participant (Seidman, 1991). When transcribed, verbatim material was analyzed for patterns and commonalities that were shared among advisors as well as uniqueness of practice (Patton, 1980).
In interviews, as academic advisors reconstructed their experience and understanding of their work and work life, they repeatedly cited a common set of organizational issues. This interview material was developed into seven thematic chapters that describe and examine the context and historical development of academic advising; the changing student profile; the missing spirit of connectedness and inadequate preparation; divided roles and fragmented delivery system; self-constructed advising definitions and orientations; individually developed advising techniques and use of advising tools; and the issue of status.
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CHAPTER I

THE ISSUE

Now what I am trying to do tonight is to tell the story of the thing so far as I can recollect it as it has developed as an idea in my own mind. . . . I think that when I got through college I felt reasonably satisfied with the work, not wholly so, but reasonably so, but I recall that one thing that impressed me tremendously, and I have never recovered from it. It was the lack of unity in the college course. During the four years of work I had one course after another. It was called a course of study, but I cannot recall a thing that joined the subjects together as a course. I was conscious as I went through college of taking the series of steps, which, so far as I could make out, were solely unrelated. They seemed to be bins, one containing one thing, another containing something else; there was absolutely no integrity. Now I am simply reflecting an impression that was made more than thirty years ago.

[Kenyon L. Butterfield, President
Massachusetts College of Agriculture
Amherst, Massachusetts
March 25, 1924]

Overview

Academic advising has been institutionalized in American colleges and universities for more than one-hundred years. However, limited research has focused on the work of academic advisors in higher education. The majority of the studies have been done in the past two decades. A survey or questionnaire format has dominated these research endeavors, and these generally have focused on student opinions or faculty perceptions of advising (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). Research devoted to understanding the
experience of either faculty or staff academic advisors in the same educational context is minimal.

The research for this dissertation is centered on what it means to be an academic advisor in a particular public land grant university during a turbulent period of restructuring and reform. The literature base provides a historical context for this study.

In an effort to illuminate the complexities of academic advising at one university, I engaged in "a naturalistic investigation" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 197). This study has explored academic advising as understood by advisors themselves. It reflects the language used by participants, and it seeks the embedded and largely unexplicated assumptions on which advising decisions and actions rest (Bogdan, 1972; Patton, 1980).

Based on the primary method of in-depth phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 1991), I asked academic advisors to reconstitute their advising experience in the context of their life histories. The main significance of this method was to reconstruct the experience of participants as the basis from which all else flows (Schutz, 1967). Through this process, I anticipated the discovery of a broad range of advising experience, understandings and approaches.

Document analysis and participant observation were secondary sources of data useful in establishing the context in which academic advising happens at a particular land grant university (Patton, 1980; Sommer and Sommer, 1980; Spradley, 1980; Wolcott, 1994). The limited use of some public documents represented a stable and historical source to help ground this inquiry (Davis, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Some participant observation, restricted to the place and time of each in-depth interview, assisted in framing interview questions and added descriptive details (Bogdan, 1972; Ellen, 1984a; Lofland, 1971; Merriam, 1988a). These approaches served as a check and a structure for information gained through in-depth interviews. They were limited to clarification of themes raised by academic advisors, and add to the understanding of the work of academic advising as participants make sense of it.
Definition of the Issue

Just before his retirement from the college presidency of a small rural, land grant college in 1924, Kenyon L. Butterfield spoke to the faculty about an issue which had perplexed him throughout his life as an educator. He detailed the meaning his undergraduate experience held for him and what he understood of the experience of other undergraduates. He urged the faculty to deal with the issue of creating a more fully integrated educational experience at the college. His words continue to have relevance for academic advising in higher education:

I keep thinking . . . as the years go by, in terms of unity . . . Not a multitude of experiences or approaches . . . [but] a method by which a student would feel as he graduated, not as I felt—that I had a group of courses not tied together—on the contrary, something that . . . brought him some philosophy in life as a unit . . . because it is just as important to give this student something of an approach to his college course that reveals to him that there is a unity to it. I think the average student suffers all the way through because he comes into college and is given this subject and that subject and doesn't really know what it's all about. Nine-tenths don't know.

More than a hundred years after Butterfield earned his baccalaureate, the context of higher education has changed dramatically (Astin, 1993; Boyer, 1987; Grites, 1979; Raskin, 1979). Shifts in academic programs, technological, demographic, social and political changes, and the national academic advising movement have influenced the development of advising in colleges and universities. The literature base revealed a number of paradoxical situations.

Although the most commonly utilized teaching approach continues to be the large lecture sometimes augmented by discussion or laboratory (Westmeyer, 1985), educational reform extending from the late sixties to the present has expanded the concept of campus to include locations from correctional institutions to industrial and other work sites, as well as
community locations. Interdisciplinary, independent and self-designed academic concentrations and credit-for-life-experience broaden academic choice. External degree programs and telecommunications programs transcend the problems presented by distance or other physical limitations and extend opportunities for enrolling in higher education coursework or earning a college degree. Internships and practica provide ways of earning credits through experience. National exchange and study abroad programs allow students to complete academic requirements in absentia, and cooperative education programs extend the potential for "learning while earning." Many of these options offer additional means of exploring career goals and building job credentials before completing an undergraduate degree (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Douglas, 1992). Yet such a profusion of choices can lead to confusion about what to select and how to advise.

Innovations in computer technology have dramatically altered advising record keeping and registration processes which are less and less dependent upon "paper trails." The introduction of computer degree audits, increasingly available to students during the past decade and a half, provide a "picture" of their academic progress (Kramer and Megerian, 1985; Spencer, Peterson, and Kramer, 1983). In a large number of colleges and universities, computer systems allow students to register "on-line" by telephone. These innovations may eliminate the confusion and chaos of past registration processes condemned by O'Banion and Thurston in 1971. However, they also may mean that students often by-pass advising services. Technology has improved efficiency, but it has eliminated some of the old ways of making advising connections with students.

Current demographics disclose a serious decline in the numbers of college-seeking students (Boyer, 1987). However, declining numbers are met with increasing diversity of characteristics in the student profile. A decreasing, yet complex, student population, perplexing social issues and a gloomy economic picture affect the environment and climate
of contemporary American higher education (Westmeyer, 1985). Yet little information exists about the influences of these factors on the work and work life of academic advisors.

Faculty advising, formalized at Johns Hopkins in 1876, is the oldest institutionalized advising model in American higher education (Cowley, 1949). Compared with the other aspects of faculty life, advising always has been a low priority for many faculty (Boyer, 1987; Trombley and Holmes, 1981). In his review of three national studies, Crockett (1988) disclosed that faculty are generally rewarded, evaluated and recognized for their non-advising related activities of research and publication, and generally, advising has not been a factor taken into consideration for tenure or promotion decisions. Yet any endeavors to remove academic advising as a faculty responsibility have been opposed by faculty (Raskin, 1979).

In 1978, Brady utilized a questionnaire format to study faculty and student goals for academic advising at a public university. One finding was a "seventy-five percent incongruency" between faculty advisor goals and undergraduate advisee's need for academic advising (p. 135). Distance between student life and faculty role has remained a common concern since the formal inception of faculty advising (Astin, 1993; Taylor, 1969).

Student personnel services, also known as student affairs, emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century to fill this void. This encompassing term includes diverse student services from admissions to graduation as well as staff academic advising (Dinniman, 1977; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). Student personnel leaders claim an important attribute of their advising, as differentiated from that provided in academic affairs, is the potential for individualized attention to student needs beyond academic requirements (Winston, Ender, Miller, Grites and Associates, 1984). An important issue is the
possibility for tension between the two systems that may emphasize or focus on different aspects of the student experience: academic and personal.

During the past four decades, increases in student enrollment and diversity, multiple educational options and programs, complex social, economic and political concerns, and federal legislation have added complexity to advising. In an attempt to deal with these concerns and issues, especially in public institutions, a wide variety of generalists and specialists provide advising (Crockett and Levitz, 1984). Habley and Crockett (1988) discovered that approximately seven percent of colleges and universities reported use of staff advisors in all departments. They concluded that, "non-instructional personnel" handle a "small but significant portion of the advising" wherever they are employed (pp. 24-25). Yet King (1988) learned that faculty are seen by other faculty and staff as the major and credible providers of advising. Left unclear in these findings is what aspect of advising staff advisors provide or should provide, what advising is like for them, and where the boundaries lie between staff and faculty academic advising duties. Complex delivery systems increase the possibilities for confusion, conflicts and perplexing ambiguities.

Within the last one-hundred years, academic advising has been reinterpreted into seven distinct models. However, in general, the effectiveness of advising models and programs has not been determined (Habley, 1988b).

More than a decade of advising reform literature has stressed the importance of academic advising to campus vitality and student development, thereby reducing attrition and increasing retention (Habley, 1981; Gordon, 1981; Winston and Sandor, 1984; Walsh, 1979). Yet Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) found no conclusive evidence directly connecting advising to student persistence.
In a wide-scale study on the perceptions of advisors about the nature of their work, the majority responded that they consider advising a profession and themselves professionals (Gordon, Swenson, Spencer, Kline, Bogenschuts, & Seeger, 1988). However, at this time, academic advising does not fulfill the criteria of a profession (Bledstein, 1978; Gordon et al, 1988). The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) serves as a self-governing professional organization; however, the field does not have unified standards of admission. The Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs (CAS) and NACADA have developed advising standards, yet these are not held widely. Likewise, there is no agreement on educational requirements or standards of admission, a specialized body of knowledge and skills, in-service training requirements, or self-evaluation and monitoring. Advising does not have an individual legal status. This produces an air of equivocation.

Much of the contemporary advising literature focuses on reform and improvement initiatives. According to some writers, the adoption of the developmental advising approach, a common definition of advising, and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) Standards and Guidelines for Student Services/Developmental Programs will complete the professionalization process for academic advising and should lead to an improved practice as well as increased status (Gordon, 1988, Winston et al, 1984; Badiali, Higginson and Wyckoff, 1990; Frank, 1991). Currently, these improvement initiatives remain unrealized in institutions of American higher education (Habley and Crockett, 1988; Frank, 1991; White and Higginson, 1992). Such recommendations may largely reflect personal opinion, and they may be premature. Measures which call for changes in academic advising may go unheeded or realize incomplete implementation without a clear profile of the current situation from the experience and understanding of advisors.

At the local level, where I did my research, two changes were just underway. Restructuring had moved to a priority position and advising reform recommendations presented in September, 1992 were taking affect. Retention and attrition were closely linked
to advising. It was essential to gain an understanding of the experience of advisors to learn what meaning these recommendations and restructuring have for them. I wondered what would happen once academic advising was perceived as being vital to retention on this campus, and what this meant to academic advisors working in this changing environment.

In these conditions and circumstances, I asked academic advisors representing the breadth of the advising spectrum at one public land grant university to reconstruct their undergraduate advising experience through in-depth interviews (Seidman, 1991). This set the cornerstone for exploring their understanding of their work. Limited participant observation during interview sessions in locations where the participants in this study work, and some analysis of documents related to the development and implementation of academic advising at this University provided supplementary background for this study.

Purpose of the Study

This research explored key issues and tensions experienced by academic advisors in their day-to-day work life, and the meaning this had for them. It asked how they understood the restructuring and reform changes occurring in this setting, how they managed the deep-seated dilemmas and perplexing choices inherent in advising, and what this meant for relationships with colleagues and coworkers. It also inquired how these choices and decisions connected to issues raised by national professionalization initiatives. Specifically the study addressed the following:

1. What are the historical underpinnings for academic advising and its development at this University?
2. How do the social issues embedded in the University get played out in the advising process?
3. How is the current emphasis on reform, retention and restructuring understood by academic advisors?
4. How is the day-to-day work of academic advisors experienced and what meaning do advisors make of this experience?
5. What are the demands and limitations placed on academic advisors by their departments and the institution?

6. What conflicts, paradoxes, ambiguities and dilemmas are faced by academic advisors?

In-depth interviewing was the principle means of developing an understanding of the work as academic advisors experience and make meaning of it (Seidman, 1991). In order to add background information, I did some limited observation during interview periods at the locations where the participants in this study provide advising, (Ellen, 1984a; Lofland, 1971; Patton, 1980; Spradley, 1980), and through limited analysis of some documents, further developed an understanding of the context in which academic advising occurred (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988a). The vital issue is what can be learned from the reconstructed experience of advisors across the advising spectrum in one public land grant university in the last decade of the twentieth century.

Significance of the Study

This study adheres to "one of the cardinal principles of qualitative methods" by seeking a clearer and deeper understanding of the relationship of "background and context to the process of understanding and interpreting data" (Patton, 1980, p. 9). It is predicated on the fundamental precept that descriptive research data is needed in order to develop comprehension of academic advising through the reconstructed experiences of advising providers.

While survey techniques have been utilized to obtain data on advising, at this time no in-depth study of the experience of academic advisors, either faculty advisors or staff advisors, has been undertaken. The lack of attention to the daily realities and concerns of academic advisors indicated a need to explore the work through reconstructing the experience of those providing academic advising and how they made sense of their
experience. This inquiry increases the understanding of faculty advising and adds to the limited research on staff advising.

The significance of this choice of approach is that the information is based on in-depth interviews. This offered participants an opportunity to relate their experience, make connections and convey the meaning of their advising as they understood it, rather than to answer questions planned in advance. Some limited support from document analysis and participant observation furthered understanding of the context of this study.

The interactive processes of in-depth interviewing allowed for reciprocity which enabled clarification and spontaneity (Seidman, 1991). This mutuality has deepened comprehension of the complexities of academic advising from the reconstructed experience of participants. The current role of academic advising at this University has been illuminated through the words, expressions and understandings of the participants who previously have not been asked to give voice to their work-life experience and the meaning they make of that experience. The critical consequence was developing an understanding of what learnings can come from listening to the individual voices and experiences of academic advisers (Seidman, 1991).

This inquiry recognizes that academic advisors work in a field which is affected by a sense of being an emergent profession (Gordon et al, 1988; Meskill and Sheffield, 1970). Advising harbors conflicts between traditional academic beliefs and more recent ideas based on theories of development derived from humanistic and human development psychology (Winston et al, 1984). This study acknowledges that academic advisors enter the "profession" with their own history and understandings. It recognizes that variation in the experiences of those providing academic advising significantly affects the way advising is understood and how it happens (Patton, 1980).

It is imaginable that there are considerable differences as well as similarities in the advising experience. This study was undertaken in order to develop an understanding of the variations and variability of the work of academic advising in one university. This inquiry
illustrates distinctions of individual advising practice and experience, and demonstrates areas of commonality. It strives to present the political, social and economic environment in which academic advisors work. It casts light upon the nature, status, and role of academic advising, and it attempts to convey the psychological, philosophical and moral issues and points-of-view of academic advisors.

The process of conducting this inquiry, as well as the results, has been carefully documented. This may allow others to replicate this study. Such replication could generate information helpful in guiding reforms and building reasoned theory for academic advising.

My aim is to discover interrelationships, universality of advising concepts and uniqueness of individual advising practice at one university at a moment when advising improvement and reform initiatives have become a priority. This study is meant to disclose what has been little known to this time and informally understood.

Beliefs and Assumptions

I have been a professional staff academic advisor for more than a decade and involved in higher education for much of my adult life. Higher education has exerted a significant influence on my choices and my development. It is hard to imagine another context in which I might be so fully challenged and, creatively and happily, engage my talents, abilities and preference for learning as well as working with students. Like good teaching, good advising can make all the difference in a student's view of herself and others, and what she can visualize herself becoming and accomplishing. Given this perspective, it is clear that academic advising is a vital service to the developing student. Yet it has been my experience that academic advising is not fully understood by most academic advisors.

I feel strongly about advising, and for seven years fostered and participated in an information and advocacy organization for advisors at the university where I work. It is
with this sense of importance of academic advising, that I undertook this research. It was impelled by my affiliation with many who had expressed similar feelings over the years. These informal understandings were confirmed through a pilot study utilizing in-depth interviewing with academic advisors in the spring of 1992. The need of academic advisors for understanding, and an opportunity for their experiences and voices to be heard, was vital. This study was initiated in the belief that the findings would have meaning and be of use to some educators for the potential advantage of students and advising staff, and that the participants, as well as future readers, would benefit from the understandings gained through a naturalistic approach (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1980). Throughout this process, the dignity of each participant and respect for their experience and the meaning they make of their experience has been paramount.

The third assumption is the preference for a naturalistic style of research. Ferguson (1964) noted, "the very origin of the word style emphasizes choice," and choice implies belief (p. 77). According to Stewart and Mikunas (1990), three assumptions serve as the starting point for "every rational activity." These include the "nature of its activity, the object being investigated and the method appropriate to this kind of activity" (p. 6). I believe a naturalistic approach will acknowledge the past, highlight the present, uncover threads connecting advising to the future, and respect the individual contributing to this research.

Throughout this research, I assume that there is no such thing as one, or an objective reality. And I cannot know any participant's reality as she experiences it. As Schutz (1967) pointed out, if this were the case, the participant and I "would be the same person" (p. 106).

A fifth assumption is that little is known of the day-to-day work experience of academic advisors. I believe that carefully selected excerpts of verbatim material will provide a sense of the extent of the role of the participants in this study. The themes emerging from the material will illuminate some of their current issues and concerns
Adler (1964) cautioned, "Words are performing their highest function when they express ideas, but they do not constitute the ideas they express" (p. 3). The same word may not have the same meaning for each person, and words may not be taken out of context.

Both faculty and staff academic advisors have something important and valuable to offer in terms of improvement initiatives. This sixth assumption is based on literature written by academic advisors about their particular advising approaches and practices as well as previous research findings. Since limited attention has been accorded to understanding the lived experiences of academic advisors in previous studies, research from their perspective can provide information for the design and implementation of more effective advising systems.

A seventh assumption is practitioners who have the most contact with students represent an important knowledge base. Faculty have contact through their teaching and other informal connections as well as individual advising sessions. Staff academic advisors often do not have the relationship with students that classroom teaching permits. Conversely, they do not have the time commitment and responsibilities of research and publication. Although staff advisors generally are required to provide a variety of programmatic services in addition to formal advising, such services generally involve—as well as serve—students. It is assumed that this allows staff advisors ongoing, informal opportunities to exchange ideas, messages, or problem solve with students. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, staff advisors, as well as faculty, are an important source of information. Together, faculty advisors and staff advisors represent the best source of staff development information for academic advising.

That educational institutions adjust to changes in social, political and economic influences is an eighth assumption. Likewise, academic advising responds to alterations in educational institutions over time. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that academic advising reflects the environment in which it is practiced. It is assumed that effective
academic advising depends significantly on the context and the conditions of any situation. National reform recommendations may have less influence than the local environment and climate.

Research reports a need for advising improvements. I believe greater benefits accrue when academic advisors are involved in decision-making leading to such initiatives. This study is predicated on the assumption that through understanding the role, the responsibilities and needs of academic advisors, reasonable and viable staff development reforms can be developed, supported and implemented.

I believe it is necessary to have an understanding of the complexities of the role of academic advising, an overview of advising history, and the current environment in which academic advising occurs. Otherwise, academic advisors are like chefs hired to create an event with many unknowns. The metaphor that comes to mind as I think about academic advising in a university environment is a visualization of a thousand or more chefs who all do not know each other, yet are engaged in the act of creating a dinner for an estimated—though not accurate—number of guests whose appetites and diet restrictions or preferences are undetermined. The chefs plan and cook without comparing menus, need for ingredients or resources, and are unsure of the location of the dinner or the exact time or date.

Limitations and Boundaries of the Study

This study relied on in-depth interviewing with supplemental support from participant observation and document analysis. It was limited to the work experience of academic advisors in one land grant public university. It is unlikely that findings may be generalized to represent the nature of academic advising or explain the experience of academic advisors in American higher education.

Another limitation was the choice of one research site and its location. I used a specific land grant university for this study. The University undergraduate population was approximately 17,000 students. The undergraduate advising structure was decentralized
and included advising centers and offices managed by staff and faculty advisors. Current restructuring and reform proposals for the institution were being implemented. Among the measures were some which would affect and alter advising.

Although a study which focuses on one university lacks the breadth that an investigation into several or many might generate, it maximizes the advantages of a more complete understanding of one institutional setting. It is possible to come to deeply understand the work of academic advising at one university through inquiry into what typically occurs in a range of advising locations and by asking advisors to reconstruct their experience (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Seidman, 1991). This explicit portrayal documents "the unique variations which have emerged" in academic advising as it has adapted to various conditions over a lengthy time period (Patton, 1980, p. 200). Basically, it answers the question, "What is advising like here?"

While land grant institutions share a common founding philosophy, there is variation in how academic advising developed and how it is expressed from university to university. The academic and social environment, advising model in use, and other elements contributing to the experience of these participants may not typify the environment, structure and system operating at other higher education institutions. There is no attempt to predict future actions here or elsewhere or make any kind of academic advising forecast.

Limitations arise from the choice of research methodology. According to Sommer and Sommer (1980) each method has strengths and weaknesses. The sample size and variations that can occur in the selection of participants, the interview process itself, and the crafting of themes can reflect "interviewer bias." Karpati (1981) cautioned, "retrospective data may be biased by purposeful distortion or inaccurate recollection" or be transformed in some way in each individual's memory just through the process of living and developing (p. 136). I interviewed only a sampling of the academic advisors in one university. Therefore, I cannot claim to have first-hand understanding of all of the advising activities.
carried out and the advising process and procedures at every advising location, nor will my findings represent the experience of every advisor on campus. There was some variation of in-depth interviews and the content of individual interviews. In order to counterbalance the effect of dependence on observation used alone which may produce "unreliable" results, or depending only on documents which may present misleading data—whether intentional or unintentional—these methods were used only in a supplementary role to add contextual depth (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988a).

My gender, age, ethnic origins or middle-class status may have limited my frame of reference. These aspects may or may not have unduly influenced the way I am perceived, my ability to ask appropriate and timely clarifying questions or my understanding of the meanings being conveyed.

An additional limitation was my current position as a professional staff academic advisor. I was limited by my view of what academic advising is, the importance I placed on the advising activity, my intellectual beliefs and ideas around the relationship of advising and learning, my education, background and life experiences. I might be overly enthusiastic, or I might find it hard to resist a critical tone. This could hinder the process or the findings of this research. However, the understanding generated by my academic advising role may bring greater sensitivity to the process and working with the material.

Each of these beliefs, assumptions and limitations were identities which serve as lenses through which I viewed my research process and findings. Throughout this process, I kept in mind that the privilege of gaining access to another person's experience leads to a corresponding responsibility for protecting and caring for what they reveal about themselves or others (Lofland, 1971).

The Prospectus of the Dissertation

A three-part approach frames this study in order to understand the relationship of academic advising at the local level and connect it to the major reform measures and
research findings at the national level. Part One is a survey of the literature. It examines historical and contemporary issues presented in the body of written work produced by scholars and researchers in American higher education and academic advising in order to describe the context in which faculty and staff do their work. It also briefly highlights the local context. Part Two presents a thematic analysis of data gained through in-depth interviews with twenty-eight participants. These seven chapters provide description and discussion of the concerns and issues with extensive excerpts using participants' own words. Part Three is a reflection on the reconstructed stories of participants focused on their work and work life. It presents some recommendations for academic advising at one public land grant university.

Chapter I introduces the issue of concern for this study. Included are overview, definition of the issue, purpose of the study, significance of the study, beliefs and assumptions, limitations and boundaries of the study and the prospectus of the dissertation.

Chapter II is divided into two parts. The first section of the literature base stems from historical literature and studies on American higher education and current writings on academic advising. It broadly places academic advising in a historical context on a national level, and highlights the main contemporary advising themes and issues dominating reform literature from a national perspective. The second segment briefly explores the historical backdrop of the university setting where this study was done and provides an orientation to academic advising here.

Chapter III explains the methodological approach for this research. It is based on in-depth interviewing as the primary method of data collection with limited supplementary assistance from participant observation and document analysis. This increases the possibility for dependability or consistency in research, and allows for greater sensemaking of the data obtained in order to discover what academic advising is like at one public land grant university (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Sommer and Sommer, 1980).
In Chapters IV through X, themes and patterns stemming from the reconstructed experience of academic advisors in one public land grant institution are interlaced with analytic narrative. The use of direct accounts more fully informs this study and helps to illuminate the understanding of the complexities of academic advising in the context of one public land grant university. Verbatim excerpts from participants' interviews describe their "view of the world," how they define their work and the patterns of their work lives, clarify their interpretation of situations and resolution of dilemmas, and give voice to their concerns and perplexities (Bogdan, 1972, p. 69). It presents their visions for the future and the meaning that changes at the local level have for them. It examines how their choices and decisions connect to issues raised by national reform initiatives of professionalization and standardization for advising.

Chapter XI, the final chapter, presents a summary of this study. It includes reflections and interpretations based on data analyzed in this study. It comprises conclusions about what learnings have come from this work and recommendations for future studies on academic advising.
CHAPTER II
A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

I discuss the history of student personnel work, first because accredited historians do not and second, because early in my career I discovered that almost everyone employs history as a weapon to defend and to promote his point of view and his practices—that, indeed, history is an arsenal bursting with armature and ammunition.

[W. H. Cowley, 1949]

Introduction

Changes in social values and concerns, over time, have influenced the philosophical underpinnings and practices of American higher education. Crane (1963) pointed out this connection: "From the National University Project considered at the Constitutional Convention (1787) to the Morrill Act, signed by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, developments in American higher education had been closely related to the major events and forces in the nation's political and social history" (p. 27). The transition from the handful of colonial colleges—dominated by philosophies reflecting the convictions and aspirations of a variety of religious groups—to complex institutions with secular interests and more democratic behaviors mirrors the early concerns with survival, security and acquisition, and the later emphasis on equality, individualism and choice (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Hofstadter, 1963; Rudolf, 1962; Sharpless, 1915). These developments, in turn, have transformed academic advising.

Historically, academic advising emerged as a faculty responsibility. However, as the landscape of higher education became more complex, the organization and practice of advising likewise became more intricate. Now organizational formations include specialized advising centers, offices and programs, and a variety of delivery systems (Habley, 1988b; Hines, 1984; King, 1988). As Grites (1979) stated, "Academic advising
in American higher education has evolved from a routine, isolated, single-purpose, faculty activity to a comprehensive process of academic, career, and personal development performed by personnel from most elements of the campus community" (p. 5).

Regardless of innovations and improvement attempts, academic advising is often criticized (Polson and Gordon, 1988). Recent studies indicate directions for change. However, an understanding of academic advising from the experience of both faculty and staff advisors has not been undertaken.

The context of academic advising at one public land grant university can be more fully understood by broadly considering past practices and current realities in American higher education. The literature base inquires into the origins and primary forces that have shaped academic advising. It explores major points of view, advising trends and research findings relevant to academic advisors within contemporary institutions in order to connect practitioners to proposed reforms.

This chapter is organized into two parts. The first section presents a brief history of academic advising in American higher education. Material is arranged in five periods: the Colonial Period—1636 to 1786; the Revolutionary War to the Civil War—1787 to 1861; the Civil War to the Twentieth Century—1862 to 1900; The Twentieth Century to the Advising Movement 1901 to 1976; and the Advising Movement—1977 to the present (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Frank, 1991; Gordon, 1988; Habley, 1988a; Rudolf, 1962; Sharpless, 1915; Westmeyer, 1985; Winston, et al, 1984). The second part presents a brief history of advising at one public land grant university. It introduces the setting through "useful sources of information" in order to provide a context for the thematic chapters which follow (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 276).

The Colonial Period (1636-1786)

Harvard College offers an excellent example of the transformation of a colonial college into an international university and the ensuing significance for academic advising.
For more than 200 years—from its founding in 1636 with public money and a private bequest from John Harvard, until President Eliot introduced the elective system—collegiate study "was rooted in the Middle Ages" (Crane, 1963, p. 7; Rudolf, 1962). The course of study generally was fixed and limited to a single curriculum based on the earlier Greek system of the trivium and the quadrivium and had a utilitarian perspective (Westmeyer, 1985). Sharpless (1915) noted Harvard's "spirit of Puritan belief" aimed to mold youth into appropriate and dependable leaders of church and state. This served as the generic paradigm of higher education which was replicated by most other colleges until the Civil War (Boyer, 1987; Burr, 1949).

The models underlying the nine institutions established during the Colonial period were the English colleges operating at Oxford and Cambridge and the Dutch University of Leyden in Holland (Westmeyer, 1985). Yet as a result of great distance and limited communication, each Colonial college developed independently from the others. Despite differences in admission and graduation criteria, the charters of Colonial colleges generally held that instruction would be concerned with theological and cultural matters (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Burr, 1949; Handlin and Handlin, 1970; Rudolf, 1962).

Colonial colleges were limited in size, material comforts and libraries, and enrollments usually consisted of a few students. Admission was based on academic preparation to read and write in Greek and Latin and translate those languages into English (Handlin and Handlin, 1970; Westmeyer, 1985). By today's standards, the typical college student was young. Boys from prosperous families, generally between the ages of eleven and sixteen, attended these mostly residential institutions (Sharpless, 1915). Often these colleges were staffed only by the president and a few tutors. Rudolf (1962) reported that the tutor's role was "to maintain discipline without being harsh, to be friendly without sacrificing dignity, to distinguish between harmless pranks and real defiance of authority" (p. 161). More peers than professors, this was a large expectation of tutors who usually were recent graduates barely older than the boys whom they assisted and supervised.
(Handlin and Handlin, 1970). As prototype advisors, the college president and tutors were responsible for the moral, religious and spiritual growth as well as the academic progress of their young charges (Burr, 1949; Butts, 1939).

Early educators generally located colleges in remote areas to free students and scholars from distractions in order that they might develop moral discipline and benefit fully from the collegial environment. This established the tradition of residential colleges (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Williamson, 1961). Research indicates that a residential experience has been one variable that has had a positive impact on the retention of college students (Astin, 1993).

Colonial colleges allowed no curricular choice and students had no influence on what was offered. Self-formation or student development was not a goal. Some viewed college as a place to send unruly boys for "discipline" and "constant guidance" (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976). In some cases, "college discipline seemed to be the main business of college" (Handlin and Handlin, 1970, p. 12). Young boys going off to college soon discovered that "Guidance and counseling during this era was a matter of making adjustments through daily contact, and in most cases the adjustments had to be made by the students" (Burr, 1949, p. 91). Acceptable behaviors were spelled out in rigidly enforced moral codes and lists of rules pertaining to religious observances and manners. Deviation of any kind often was dealt with severely (Hawkins, 1972; Rogers, 1963; Sharpless, 1915). The concept of in loco parentis, or the college as surrogate parent, was the rule of the day (Hardee, 1959).

In summarizing the advising ethos of this period, MacIntosh (1948) wrote that while educators might have been interested in providing academic direction, unless a student recognized his need for assistance, or was noticed by a teacher, "he might in reality go on his way aimlessly even though he had a surface appearance of knowing what he was doing" (p. 74). Early extracurricular activities might well have been chopping the daily firewood or hauling water from a spring.
The Revolutionary War to the Civil War (1787-1861)

After the Revolutionary War, American educators and others began to question the idea, role and practices of higher education. "From the Enlightenment onward, in America as in Europe, there was steady shift away from traditional to scientific knowledge, from faith in authority to a reliance upon rationality" (Handlin and Handlin, 1970, p. 31). The Enlightenment introduced new ideas about the world and one's place in it.

Westward expansion is a second dynamic characteristic of this period. The needs of the frontier for educated people, especially teachers, coupled with the influence of the Enlightenment, led to higher education as an option for women.

Beginning with the founding of Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts in 1837, a few seminaries, and then colleges for women were established. Also in 1837, Oberlin College in Ohio launched the first co-educational college (Bragdon, 1929; Wrenn, 1951). The admission of women to college introduced the position of female principals. Although they may have provided some form of guidance, their main concern was supervision of their charges (Pierson, 1972).

The concept of college was reinvented repeatedly until the academic landscape included a variety of type and philosophical orientation: public, private, denominational and non-denominational, residential and non-residential (Butts, 1939; Crane, 1963; Rogers, 1963; Westmeyer, 1985). However, Crane (1963) explained, "Academic standards were low, teaching poor, libraries inadequate, student discipline stern, and severe strictures on the freedom of scholars prevented the development of advanced university studies" (p. 1). Curricular choice continued to be narrowly prescribed (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Ross, 1942; Westmeyer, 1985).

There were some glimmers of future directions. President Nott of Union College in New York was the first college administrator to actively assist students with their transfer concerns (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976). In 1825, the University of Virginia, guided by the
educational philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, instituted a system of elective studies and flexibility in length of time to complete a degree. The introduction of the parallel course offered some choice (Westmeyer, 1985). While it was choice with little advising assistance, this approach did allow students an option of a concentration in modern studies or the old classical curriculum. College administrations began the expansion into fledgling bureaucracies (Crane, 1963; Rudolf, 1962). George Ticknor of Harvard College, influenced by his friendship with Jefferson and his travels in Europe, joined other educators advocating for curricular and teaching reforms, an increased faculty role in research and more academic choices for students (Boyer, 1987; Hawkins, 1972; Rudolph, 1962; Westmeyer, 1985).

Enrollments grew and the general entrance age changed from pre-teen to seventeen or eighteen. Student-managed councils and clubs emerged. Union College established the first fraternity in 1825. Through these kinds of college-sanctioned extracurricular activities, students began to develop some sense of individuality, collegiality, power and control. By the end of this period, the restrictive behavioral codes were diminishing in their effectiveness (Bubacher and Rudy, 1976; Rudolf, 1962; Sharpless, 1915).

In this increasingly complex society, there was a "growing American belief that unless an institution served all men equally, it served America poorly" (Rudolf, 1962, p. 203). New and disturbing scientific discoveries, technological inventions and the first Federal interventions in higher education were on the horizon. These would alter the landscape of American knowledge and how Americans thought about themselves (Gilley, 1991). Previously unchallenged beliefs would fail and fade when held against scientifically proven facts (Handlin and Handlin, 1970). The volatile combination of social perspective and emerging scientific theories would lead to revision of the American experience and higher education (Rudolf, 1962). These also helped to set the stage for organized advising.
Harvard College again provides a useful example of permutations in higher education and the effect on the development of academic advising. In 1869, when Charles Eliot became president of Harvard College, he championed some innovations which held broad appeal and had widespread influence in American higher education such as the acceptance of new academic disciplines, higher academic standards and new teaching methods. He supported faculty specialization and scientific research as well as flexibility in curriculum requirements, course availability and student choice. In his view, individual differences required opportunities for individual growth (Boyer, 1987; Hawkins, 1972; Westmeyer, 1985). President Eliot also dismissed the traditional concept of *in loco parentis* as a block to individual liberty. United States presidents Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln had expressed similar beliefs. In dismantling many of the policies and practices that provided parental oversight to students, Harvard College eliminated much that had passed for advising for previous generations of students. In time, many other colleges followed suit.

Free will and freedom of choice for students in higher education were wholeheartedly represented in the elective system first instituted at Harvard College. "The elective principle moved the individual to the center of the educational universe and boldly asserted that all educated men need not know the same things" (Rudolf, 1962, p. 305). At its "apex," the elective system made advising extremely difficult (Westmeyer, 1985).

The prevailing social vision of the successful person at this time was the ordinary person, a hard-working individual capable of engaging in risky business ventures that offered the chance of large profits (Butts, 1939). Popular themes were "equality for all" and the "greatest good for the greatest number" (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976). Practical skills were valued and religious emphasis was waning (Crane, 1963; Rudolf, 1962). As Butts pointed out, "Collegiate education paralleled society" (1939, p. 12). The primary concern with pragmatic aspects of life was reflected in beliefs that education should prepare
students for emerging vocations. The social influence was mirrored in the college curriculum (Hofstadter, 1963; Westmeyer, 1985).

The passage of the Morrill Federal Land Grant Act of 1862, signed into law by President Lincoln after Secession, meshed with the American identity, and transformed the educational environment more than any event since the founding of the Colonial colleges (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Butts, 1939; Hofstadter, 1963; Ross, 1942). The Act called for the establishment of a minimum of one land grant college in each state (Ross, 1942). This measure permanently installed the federal and state governments into the environment and the business of higher education (Rogers, 1963; Ross, 1942; Rudolf, 1962). Parallel collegiate systems emerged: a federal and state supported system of public institutions and another consisting of privately endowed colleges (Ross, 1942; Rudolf, 1962; Sharpless, 1915).

In its rhetoric, the Morrill Act drew upon the "Jeffersonian myth of an agrarian America" even as the nation inched toward urbanization (Rudolf, 1962, p. 251). The elitist nature of higher education was modified through this initiative. Higher education became accessible to a wide population not just the wealthy class (Arbuckle, 1953; Burr, 1949; Mueller, 1961). In addition to the egalitarian ideal about the rights and importance of the individual, by the inclusion of academic courses of study dedicated to farming and mechanical arts, the Act reinforced the old American utilitarian viewpoint that education should be useful (Mueller, 1961). However, the focus had changed from the religious and service to community ideal of the Colonial Colleges. Increasingly, students interpreted the collegiate experience to mean satisfying credentialling requirements for emergent professions. A growing emphasis on material, rather than spiritual benefits, began to supplant the liberal arts principle of higher education dedicated to enriching the life of the mind (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Butts, 1939).

At this time, the notion of a person's life divided into "fixed time spans" began to emerge. These time spans "correlated with the stages of education" (Handlin and Handlin,
1970, p. 48). Seventy years later, this idea found theoretical grounding in the work of stage and phase researchers which provided the foundation for developmental academic advising (Winston et al., 1984).

The passage of the second Morrill Act of 1890 solidified the federal government's role in annual funding for land grant colleges. However, it added a stipulation that financial support was contingent upon the admission of qualified applicants without concern for race unless the states established "separate but equal facilities" (Rudolf, 1962, p. 253). This established educational separation. However, the Act of 1890 essentially paved the way for qualified students regardless of gender, race, economic status or age to attend publicly supported colleges and earn degrees.

For the first time, demographics became an important consideration for higher education as enrollment figures and diversity of students steadily increased. Personnel were added to assist the president in managing the increasing complexity of college affairs. The president became further removed from faculty and from teaching and advising students, as administrative responsibilities claimed his attention (Rudolf, 1962).

In 1890 at Harvard College, President Eliot revised the role of Dean of the College he had established in 1871. He appointed a faculty member, LeBarron Briggs, to this position (Mueller, 1961). He is considered to be the first dean of students in American higher education (Fley, 1979; Williamson, 1961). Mainly, Dean Briggs attended to the supervision and custodial needs of students. Other colleges followed suit. Within a short time, student discipline and control became nearly the entire job of such deans.

A successful collegiate experience depended upon a maturity and depth of information which many students did not possess (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976). Students, as young as thirteen or fourteen, accepted into land grant institutions often were ill-prepared for the demands of college life. Many were coping with the problem of being first-generation college students (Ross, 1942). Although federal action in 1785 led to the establishment of elementary schooling, legal decisions leading to the organization and
funding of high schools did not occur until 1872. Nationally, academic preparation and teaching was uneven (Westmeyer, 1985). These characteristics, combined with increased size and diversity of student enrollments, electives and course of study choices, and the appeal of the extracurricular added up to a complex situation and generated requests for guidance (Cowley, 1949; Rudolf, 1962).

One writer places the origins of academic advising in the "American Colonial college" (Hines, 1984, p. 255). Polson and Gordon (1988) specified that it "evolved from a faculty advising system for freshmen in Colonial times" (p. 49). Others draw a mythological connection: "Professional advising functions are compatible with faculty culture, in a tradition as old as Aeneas and Mentor" (Holmes, Clark, and Irvine, 1983, p. 23). However, the documented initial attempt to formalize academic advising occurred at Johns Hopkins University. There, President Gilman instituted the first academic advising model in American higher education in 1876 (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Cowley, 1949; Rudolf, 1962). It was conceived as a faculty responsibility to give instruction about academic requirements and assist students with their curricular selections.

President Gilman remained convinced of the importance of the advising role, and within a decade, was proposing that every college or university should employ "counselors or advisors of students" (Mueller, 1961, p. 52). Over the next few decades other college and university administrators acknowledged the need for student guidance and advising help. Within fifty years of President Gilman's initiative, some type of advising delivery system and model was in place in the majority of higher education institutions. Habley (1988b) discovered that the original faculty-only pattern has metamorphosed into seven generic advising models.

Cowley and Waller (1979) pointed out that historically the faculty-student relationship, at best, was an uneasy alliance, and students often viewed faculty as foes. However, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, a new European import, German intellectualism, began influencing American higher education. Faculty narrowed their focus
into new specialties and academic disciplines. Research began to replace teaching as the heart of faculty activity. The emphasis on research tended to remove faculty from students (Rudolf, 1962). At the same time, the draw of the extracurricular, rather than the curricular, often was the focal point of student collegiate experience. At a fever pitch toward the end of the nineteenth century, the entertainment value of the extracurricular, in particular that offered by a few highly competitive sports such as crew and football, offered possibilities of athletic victory over other colleges. For many students, this replaced the benefits and appeal of the academic curriculum. It yielded high visibility for individual players, teams and institutions. In order to promote advocacy and encourage state legislators to continue and increase support for publicly funded colleges and universities, public relations were built on highly competitive sports (Rudolf, 1962; Taylor, 1969; Sheldon, 1968).

The Twentieth Century to the Advising Movement (1901-1976)

By the opening decade of the twentieth century, complaints about faculty advising had become a chronic concern. At Harvard University, following the creation of the Board of Freshmen Advisors in 1889, each first year student had a faculty advisor (Rudolf, 1962). However, Hawkins (1972) reported, advising proved to be a brief, impersonal and "highly perfunctory" function (p. 108). Within his first year as President of Harvard University, Lowell noted the failure of the faculty advising system. He called for "more" faculty advisors, but with no apparent improvement in advising (Hawkins, 1972). Veysey (1965) stated that by 1906, faculty advising had failed even to live up to the basic aim of "supervising" a student's choice of coursework (p. 297). According to Taylor (1969) faculty indifference toward advising was complemented by a general lack of intellectual motivation among the student body.

Despite this, administrators increasingly viewed academic advising as a vital means of knitting the extracurricular together with the curricular and building unity into the academic experience (Dinniman, 1977; Mueller, 1961). As the new century began to
unfold, Rogers (1963) wrote there was "a growing tendency to employ professional, trained advisors or counselors" who could assist students with a broadening variety of issues related to their collegiate experience (p. 10). Bragdon (1929) noted that "exploration and guidance" and attention to the "growth of the individual" were goals which began appearing between 1909 and 1921 in statements of college aims. Schneider (1977) placed the "trend toward supplementing and replacing faculty advisors with professionally trained counselors" in the decade following World War I (p. 340).

A study by Hannum (1938) provided an example of the widespread dissatisfaction with faculty advising at this time. In his survey of student opinion about the faculty-only advising program at one public, land grant college, he discovered students believed that faculty advisors lacked adequate "information," "interest in student welfare," "time to devote to students needing advising," and "ability to advise," (pp. 35-42). He also reported no definition of advising and no training or additional compensation for faculty who provided advising at the college.

By the third decade of the century, the student personnel movement had evolved in an attempt to fill such gaps in American colleges and universities (Burr, 1949; Murray, 1972, Schneider, 1977). This movement represented "a major effort to restore a unified life to the American college" (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976, p. 332). Student personnel provided educational and vocational guidance and mental hygiene. Services stretched from recruitment, admission and orientation to graduation. In contrast to the academic freedom implied in electives, the effort of student personnel to help students manage their lives and adapt to the collegiate life often incorporated not so subtle vestiges of *in loco parentis*. Student needs often were referred to as "problems of adjustment" (Berdie, 1966). Lloyd-Jones (1929) compared students to "factory products" as if they were passive material in the process of being manufactured (p. 214). The insertion of student personnel into the academic advising arena established a more complex delivery system and conflict between those in academic affairs and student personnel. The activities and programs of student
personnel were not considered integral to the primary mission of higher education by many in academic affairs (Dinniman, 1977).

As the twentieth century progressed, the delivery system mirrored the increasingly complex student population. New advising specialists included staff in areas such as athletics, learning or physical disabilities, minority and adult advising. Although faculty-only advising had received abundant criticism, the rise of the staff counselor did not resolve these problems either. In many cases, the performance of staff counselors was called into question as much as that of the faculty advisors (Sheffield and Meskill, 1972).

Boundaries between the roles of faculty advisors and staff advisors were blurred. Confusion over areas which once had been the sole domain of faculty led to ambiguities. Understandably, students were bewildered about this situation. Their recourse generally was to seek assistance from those "in whom they have personal confidence" (MacIntosh, 1948, p. 84). In many instances, this meant other students. Such appears to be the case today. In a telephone survey on student use and opinion about the advising services at the University of Massachusetts, Shivley (1990) discovered that students are most likely to consult another student when needing assistance with coursework. Fewer than a quarter of those polled responded that they would go to a faculty advisor for information on the requirements for a degree, and staff advisors were not mentioned at all.

The ending of the World War II signaled another major change for American higher education, and it provided the impetus for academic advising to develop further toward an individually distinct practice. The passage of the "G.I. Bill of Rights" (Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944) brought the federal government into closer contact with colleges and universities (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976). Following a brief drought during World War II when admissions offices scrambled for students, by 1945, colleges and universities were inundated with applications from veterans eligible for the federal G.I. funds.
These students did not typify the previous enrollment profile. They often had families and expected advisors to help them prepare for a rapidly changing work world and job outlook. Such students often faced advisors and an academic environment unprepared for the depth and range of their needs. Many veterans either had rusty or limited academic skills. Skill building or remedial assistance was not commonly available. Instead, many veterans were advised to drop out. Plenty of others were waiting for their spot (Wall, 1987).

At this time, reform articles called for advising based on the needs of the individual (Henry, 1975). Some writers appealed for a reconceptualization of advising. They asserted that the purpose of advising was not to prescribe and impose an academic solution on students, but to enable them to find their path (Hawkes and Hawkes, 1945).

While the term "advising center" seems commonplace today, it generally began to appear at the midpoint of the twentieth century (Hines, 1984). For the most part, large universities, rather than colleges, created advising centers to assist students with a broad variety of needs. Yet "university-wide advising tended to be fragmented, inequitable and inconsistent" and "any academic uncertainty in the fifties was viewed in many ways as a personal weakness" (Wall, 1987, p. 62).

Although the post World War II decade presented many problems, in hindsight, it appears a relatively calm time. The majority of students accepted, rather than challenged, authority (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976). The transition from this period began with the landmark case of Brown versus the Board of Education (1954). When Thurgood Marshall successfully argued the case against the concept of "equal but separate" established by the second Morrill Act (1890), he helped to set the stage for the next major revision of American education: a collision of political, social and cultural confluences.

The federal government increased its role in higher education. The National Defense Education Act (1958) represented a new infusion of money for higher education. The Higher Education Act (1965) expanded and extended this earlier funding.
This type of financial assistance made higher education possible for millions and helped many institutions of higher education to grow rapidly. College enrollments reflected a broadening range of cultural backgrounds, understandings, academic preparation and inclination. Large numbers of "new" students, often referred to as "non-traditional," were people of color, female, or first-generation college students. The age range widened. The notion of lifelong learning was popular and many middle-aged to elderly students enthusiastically registered for coursework and applied for degrees (Grites, 1979; Weathersby and Tarule, 1980).

The understandings and life experience of the students in these new groups often were widely dissimilar to the traditional student. The non-traditional students joined the multitudes of traditional-age students, termed the "baby-boom generation," swelling the ranks at colleges and universities (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Cross and McCartan, 1984). Especially in rapidly expanding universities, one growing concern was satisfactory progress toward a degree and retention. Astin's (1993) studies revealed that "the largest effect of any institutional characteristic is associated with size, which reduces the student's chances of completing a degree" (p. 195).

Increasingly, students—with support from many faculty and staff in American colleges and universities—pressed for "relevance" in the collegiate experience and a greater opportunity for the expression of their individuality (Douglas, 1992; Westmeyer, 1985). Some academic reforms with "relevant" appeal at this time included pass/fail or ungraded courses; a greater number of courses available for self-selection; practica; independent studies; internships; cooperative education programs and cooperative learning approaches; experiments in living-and-learning; interdisciplinary and self-designed majors; and academic concentrations which allowed "credit-for-life experience:" extension of educational programs into community, industrial and other work settings; and external degree programs (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976).
While a number of these educational ideas were viewed as radical and new by some, they did not originate in this turbulent period. Many had been implemented in small colleges such as Antioch, Goddard, Bard, Sarah Lawrence and Bennington. Most were based on Dewey's pragmatic and progressive beliefs which encouraged the development of "individual programs to fit each student's needs, abilities and interests; an insistence that each student, with the help of a competent advisor, take charge of his own education" (Hofstadter, 1963; Rudolf, 1962, p. 476).

However, according to Walsh (1979), one common result of attempts to rapidly introduce these notions wholesale, disintegrated into a supermarket approach to education. The increasing numbers of academic possibilities, the wide variation of characteristics in the student profile, and the size of some undergraduate populations dramatically escalated the difficulty of providing advising.

The notion of higher education as a platform for social and political change gained strength. Students organized. Demonstrators called for the student right to be involved in setting regulations, policy and financial decision-making for their institutions. Others brought their attempt to influence national policy, especially around the issues of civil rights, the military draft and the Vietnam conflict, onto college and university campuses. Some faculty allied with students in social justice causes (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976). Yet many other administrators, educators, students, politicians and large segments of the general public viewed student activism as a negative force. Their volatile rhetoric and radical actions were seen as a threat to the traditions and concept of the academy (Sykes, 1988). The national and local news media provided extensive coverage of this situation, and the academy was exposed to the glare of floodlights and public scrutiny in a way not experienced before.

Toward the end of the decade, a general atmosphere of "anti-establishment" sentiment prevailed on many college and university campuses. Students and administrators often were adversaries. Many students sensed that much of the student personnel program
was "establishment," a device to serve the bureaucracy, and not them, a thinly veiled reincarnation of in loco parentis, and a potential threat to their power (Spolyar, 1968). In many instances, what was revealed in confidence to an advisor or counselor found its way to those who took disciplinary action. Students staged "sit-ins" in campus buildings clearly evincing disregard for any efforts by student personnel to mediate. Eventually, disruption and violence forced shut downs of many colleges and universities in 1968, 1969 and 1970 (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976).

The intensity of such concerns and behavior faded as the political, economic and demographic picture changed in the seventies. Enrollments declined. Collegiate costs rose and less money was available for higher education. Some reasons for student unrest such as antipathy to the military draft and the Vietnam War no longer existed. A number of acts and reform measures were passed by Congress. These generally dealt with civil rights and equitable treatment regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, or handicaps. Perhaps the best known, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA, also called the Buckley Amendment) protected the confidentiality of student academic records and was—and continues to be—germane to any discussion of advising (Nowicki, 1987).

Despite such changes, criticism of faculty advising remained constant. In 1954, Grier reported, "advisors are either unskilled in personnel techniques or have no interest in the student except as an intellect." Therefore, he asserted, advising remained "a mere clerical routine of program planning" (p. 51). Twenty-five years later, Raskin (1979) claimed that the majority of faculty did not regard advising as an important or easily integrated aspect of their role, and often focused on the traditional aspects of prescribing a course of action or providing scheduling and routine information which administrative staff often could handle. In 1970, Meskill and Sheffield pointed to the inappropriateness of relying on faculty to provide all advising, especially in institutions with large student populations and multiple characteristics. O'Banion and Thurston (1971) railed against
common advising and registration practices during this period. They called these "at best a farce and at worst a tragedy" (p. 6). These understandings continue to be voiced (Habley, 1988a).

At the same time, research by Cook (1980) underscored the fact that faculty advising continued to be the most utilized approach. Two assumptions supported this practice. The first is an historic perception which considers advising easily assimilated into the faculty role. The second, which hinges on the first, regards faculty advising as cost effective (King, 1988). However, no economic studies have been conducted to lend credence to the second assumption.

Goal incongruence discovered by Brady (1978) provided another viewpoint. Brady researched advisor goals and advisee needs at a public land grant university in order to generate descriptive information and discover the extent of congruence between faculty goals and student needs. Results demonstrated incongruency at "statistically significant levels" in three-quarters of the categories (p. 142). Students prioritized their primary needs as clarification of their problems or concerns, information about academic requirements or majors and assistance in locating other kinds of help. For faculty, referral and option building were most important while faculty goal eleven was the provision of information.

In 1969, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education had completed a large-scale survey of undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty. One recommendation was for increased emphasis on academic advising with the intent of "maximizing the student's development" and humanizing the landscape and environment of American higher education (Shane, 1981, p. 12).

Within a short period following this report, advising reform articles promoted a new form of advising based on the understandings of humanistic and developmental psychologists. In 1972, O'Banion originated the developmental advising model which segmented the advising process into five sequential activities from abstract to concrete: visualization of a whole life perspective and the creation of major life goals, setting career
goals, selecting a major and appropriate courses and finally, scheduling. Also in 1972, Crookston proposed that the advising relationship was either "prescriptive" (negative) or "developmental" (positive). The table below highlights the five dichotomies identified by Crookston.

Table 1.
Contrasts Between Traditional Advising and Developmental Advising Viewed on Five Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advising Dimension</th>
<th>Prescriptive</th>
<th>Developmental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• View of the Student</td>
<td>• Needy</td>
<td>• Capable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising Approach</td>
<td>• Telling</td>
<td>• Guiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concern for Student</td>
<td>• The Academic Self</td>
<td>• The Whole Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nature and Focus of</td>
<td>• Narrow and Restrictive</td>
<td>• Broad and Facilitating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student View of Advisor</td>
<td>• Powerful Expert</td>
<td>• Confidant and Mentor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reform articles called for human development theory to become the basis of all advising (Walsh, 1979). Yet national research over a ten-year period revealed no discernible increase in the acceptance and implementation of this advising approach (Crockett and Levitz, 1984; Habley and Crockett, 1988). And results of a wide-scale study by Polson and Cashen (1981) of the membership of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) presented evidence of confusion among advisors between the concept of developmental advising and counseling.

Kramer (1986), an advocate for developmental advising, associated traditional prescriptive advising and developmental advising to Gilligan's (1982) findings on masculine and feminine identities. Using Gilligan's interpretation to support his opinion, he asserted that masculine identity is motivated by individual achievement, attention to products of mental conception or other distinguishing activity. Female motivation is characterized by relationships and caring for others. Since women constitute only slightly more than a quarter of all college and university faculty, Kramer concluded that this
explained why developmental advising had not replaced traditional prescriptive advising to any significant degree.

In her research utilizing semi-structured interviews with women doctoral students to examine gender issues in the development of mentoring in advising relationships, Heinrich (1988) found no evidence which would support Kramer's contention. She discovered that mentoring in advising is rare, and aspects of advising that Kramer suggested as female were not significant either with female or male faculty in her study. Gender may or may not play a part in furthering acceptance of developmental advising.

In 1970, Meskill and Sheffield noted that academic advising was emerging as a "new specialty" with the potential to become a profession. As higher education edged away from the emotional events of the previous decade, academic advising slid from its unclear identity within fragmented student personnel (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976; Schneider, 1977). As the dust of the previous era settled, demographic and economic projections forecasted sparseness where abundance had prevailed (Raskin, 1979).

The Advising Movement (1977-Present)

The advising movement was initiated in 1977 with the first national conference devoted to the issues and concerns of academic advisors. Participants identified a need for a national organization. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), incorporated in 1979, is the first inclusive membership organization representing general—as well as specific—advising interests of the broad variety of institutions of higher education and academic advisors. A major position of NACADA is the improvement of the practice and status of advising.

The movement ignited an interest in understanding academic advising (McLaughlin and Starr, 1982). Barnett (1984) noted that the number of publications on advising produced in 1983 was double the number in 1978. Hines (1984) reported that between 1981 and 1984, more was published on the practice and theory of academic advising "than
in all previous years combined" (p. 327). In 1981, "Academic Advising" was entered as a separate descriptor in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) for the first time.

The first national survey of academic advising in American colleges and universities was done in 1979 as a collaborative effort between NACADA and the American College Testing Program (ACT). According to researchers, Carstensen and Silberhorn (1979), several dominant themes appeared in the data: advising had low status among other aspects of college work; advising often was conceived as a narrow activity; providers were viewed only as information givers; there were no rewards or recognition; and evaluation was ineffective.

Later research revealed stability of most concerns identified by the initial study. Despite a decade of increased interest and publication, research illuminated the inconsistency between concepts proposed at the national level and the prevailing realities of day-to-day advising practice conducted at an institutional level (Habley and Crockett, 1988). For example, in 1983 Habley wrote that an institution's mission and policy statements, programmatic philosophy, and procedures create the context in which academic advising exists. However, in the Third ACT National Survey of Academic Advising, Habley and Crockett (1988) discovered only fifty percent of American colleges and universities had developed mission or policy statements which identified advising as part of their purpose.

The majority of publications during the past two decades has focused on advising improvement. Three main themes pervade this reform literature. Proposals challenge the field to: 1) clarify the nature of advising—its essence and characteristics; 2) delineate the role of advising—its purpose and function in higher education; and, 3) improve the status of advising—through professionalization and standardization. Writing a definition of advising was among the initial "critical issues" identified by the membership of NACADA. However, the field has come to no consensus of opinion (Badiali, Higginson,
Levin, and Wyckoff, 1990). Generally, one or a combination of the following two emphases has been reflected in attempts to define the work: the counseling dimension (Gordon, 1988; Winston, et al, 1984), or the teaching dimension (Laff, Schein and Allen, 1987; Wall, 1988a and 1988b).

The literature has described a complex role. Concern for the aspirations of learners, the resources and options available and career possibilities in the context of the student's academic development (DiSilvestro, 1981) vie with administrative considerations such as "retention," "improvement of the quality of life on campus," and "enhancing support structures" (Kramer, 1984, p. 42). In general, advisors do not engage in the full range of this group of functions. This has made defining the work more difficult.

American higher education always has considered student academic persistence a responsibility (Mueller, 1961). However, as the numbers of potential college students substantially decline, contemporary academic institutions face the economic realities of attrition (Glennon and Baxley, 1985). Raskin (1979) anticipated the rise of retention as one of the primary concerns for advisors. This has been supported by research (Habley, 1986). Like the Dutch boy's finger in the dike, many have come to believe that the role of advising is to hold back the tides of attrition.

Further complexity grows out of the more recent connection of academic advising to student affairs in addition to the traditional affiliation with academic affairs. Dinniman (1977) noted that student personnel (student affairs) has not been perceived as integral to the educational mission of higher education. Mable (1993) wrote that student affairs has been seen as "peripheral to the educational mission" even a "frill" although "the out of class experiences of students has an enormous influence on their attempts to establish lives filled with direction and innovation" (p. 8). With one of its major roots in the student personnel movement, the role of academic advising likewise may be viewed as marginal. This ancillary position lends an air of illegitimacy to the advising role (Badiali et al, 1990; Gordon et al, 1988).
Professionalization of advising is an overriding concern expressed in advising reform literature. According to a number of writers, professional activities require working knowledge of inherent ethical and legal responsibilities, and self-evaluation is a perquisite of a professional (Brockett, 1988; Baca & Stein, 1983; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Gehring, 1987; Stein, 1990; Strike & Soltis, 1985; Young, 1984). Like medical doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, public defenders and other members of the helping professions, advisors have a position of trust and must exercise discretion and judgment. On one hand, they must be true to the mission, policies, rules and regulations of their department, school, college or university. On the other, they must guide students through the complexities of an academic system with many possibilities and many interpretations (Fischer and Sorenson, 1985; Frank, 1991; Greenwood, 1984; Kramer and Gardner, 1989; Nowicki, 1987; Schubert and Schubert, 1986). Despite the centrality of ethical and legal issues in an advisor's work, these are neither clearly understood nor widely discussed among advisors. In their defense, Gilley (1991) pointed out that "there is not even a professional code of ethics governing American colleges and universities" (pp. 72-73).

A study to determine whether or not academic advising was a profession was done in 1988 by Gordon, et al. A majority of the respondents (eighty-four percent) believed it was a profession. The researchers discovered that although the work has a self-governing professional organization, NACADA—which satisfies one criteria—it does not fulfill the other benchmarks of a profession which include standards of admission, education and training, legal recognition, and a specialized body of knowledge and skills. An inquiry by Hoffman in 1975 pointed to a need for evaluation and staff development to be incorporated into advising programs. Larsen and Brown (1983) surveyed faculty in four midwestern universities. Respondents believed that without a clear understanding of the role and tasks associated with advising, evaluation was meaningless.

As a first step in the direction of professionalization, NACADA endorsed the Standards and Guidelines developed in 1986 by The Council for the Advancement of
Standards for Student Services/Development Programs (CAS), and accepted developmental advising as the theoretical base of academic advising (NACADA Journal, September, 1986). Yet a national study discovered that neither of these had widespread acceptance in colleges and universities (Habley and Crockett, 1988).

Along with the emphasis on professionalization, a number of innovative ideas and activities has risen in the field of advising since 1977. Among those which have received the most attention are the techniques of intrusive and group advising.

Intrusive advising is described as an active process whereby the academic advisor reaches out to student through letters, telephone communication, special programs or visits to student residential areas in order to provide support and mentoring (Winston et al, 1984). Glennon's (1975) investigation of an intrusive program at one university, and a second done at another university ten years later by Glennon and Baxley (1985), uncovered evidence to support this idea as a positive aid in retention. While this appears to establish a case for this approach, three national studies conducted between 1979 and 1987 have noted no gains in its acceptance (Habley and Crockett, 1988).

According to writers in the field, advising provided to groups of students is promoted as a cost-effective way to advise large numbers of students within the time constraints of academic schedules (Winston, 1988). While Crockett (1989b) noted this appeared to be efficient, he cautioned that group advising does not develop the "personal and caring relationship between the advisor and advisee" required by developmental advising (p. 240).

Computer-assisted advising and its terminology is a recent addition to the advising role (Spencer, Peterson, & Kramer, 1983). Computerized telephone registration systems replace the chaotic, mass in-person, twice-yearly gatherings in many institutions condemned by O'Banion and Thurston in 1971. The literature reports that faculty advising can be substantially aided by semester degree audits which indicate what general education and major requirements have been fulfilled and note which ones are left to accomplish.
In addition, computer terminals in some advising offices permit academic advisors to view or update a student's academic record. Enthusiasts also suggest use of computers to match faculty advisors with advisees on a number of characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, academic interest, life experience and motivations, and developmental phase or stage (Kramer and Megerian, 1985). Beyond opinion and anecdotal information, little research has been devoted to these claims.

For much of the twentieth century, writers proposed that advising was the means to knit the collegiate system together and build unity into a student's collegiate experience (Kramer, 1984; Meskill and Sheffield, 1970). However, according to a study by Laff, Schein and Allen (1987), this has remained an unfulfilled goal. They stated, "despite efforts toward curricular reform and student affairs programming, students encounter a 'disintegrated' college environment that often leaves them with disruptively fragmented college experiences" (p. 9). In line with this, Habley and Crockett (1988) wrote that without improvement, advising is destined to "remain a low status/low priority activity, poorly organized and delivered, and largely ineffective in meeting students' and institutional needs" (p. 74). These results are also consistent with Boyer (1987). The following section looks at how advising has developed at one institution of higher education.

The Local Context

The large University which serves as the site for this research originated as an agricultural college in 1863 under the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862. The support for this section was gained through document analysis from materials in the University archives (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988a). Its history parallels the development occurring in many other public land grant academic institutions (Westmeyer, 1985).

Forty-seven students, approximately eighteen years of age, passed an entrance exam and were admitted September of 1867. Rolling admissions allowed that figure to increase to fifty-six admits before the close of the semester. The five subjects which
comprised the academic course of study were chemistry, agriculture, math, English and botany. Students also were required to receive military training and to attend religious services held on the campus. Students admitted in the early years helped to construct classroom, administration and dormitory buildings. The College graduated its first class of twenty-seven students in 1871. Enrollment continued to increase slowly. By 1870 the student population was 123, and thirty-four years later, it had doubled to 250.

A divisional structure was in place by 1907, and four years later the College had established five divisions: Agriculture, Horticulture, Science, Humanities, and Rural Social Science. Each division included several departments. For example, the Division of Humanities included languages, literature, and political science departments, while the Division of Horticulture included floriculture, pomology, and landscape gardening departments. A fledgling graduate school was launched in 1912.

The growing student population, the broadened curriculum and diminishing agricultural nature of the College, which reflected the decline of agriculture in the state, helped to convince the state legislature to change the name from "Agricultural College" to "State College" in 1931. Following World War II, enrollments and academic departments expanded further and student numbers grew from 1700 to about 5,000. In 1947, the legislature changed the institutional designation from college to university. From this point through the mid-seventies, the student population increased to a high point of approximately 24,000. Today the campus has grown to approximately 1,200 acres with eight colleges and schools, and the undergraduate population has declined to about 17,000.

In the earliest years, students entered and took prescribed coursework and graduated as a class in lock-step fashion. Between 1900 and 1930, new departments provided more academic choice and extracurricular activities. Freshmen Week and semester-long Freshmen Orientation courses were means of helping students adjust to collegiate life. During Freshman Week, upper-class students and appointed faculty presented lectures to entering students about academic rules, regulations and student
activities, and shared information about the traditions of the institution and discussed appropriate behavior. When students registered for courses, they completed an information card which became part of their academic record. It was kept in the appropriate dean's office. Faculty advisors used these as advising tools. These also served as a source of statistical data.

The first woman entered the college in the 1890s, but she did not graduate. As the twentieth century progressed, women enrolled in increasing numbers. Female students were perceived as needing special assistance acclimating to college. They were required to take a second orienting course which dealt with social problems they might encounter in academic life. This situation continued through the next several decades.

Until the college and school organization of the University replaced the divisional structure, a three-stage system of faculty advising operated on the campus. It is outlined in the following table:

Table 2.
Three-Stage Model of Faculty Advising Delivery System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Freshmen Advising</th>
<th>II. Divisional Advising</th>
<th>III. Departmental Advising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freshmen</strong> were accepted as declared in a division. First year program was entirely prescribed. Fifteen to twenty students were assigned to an Instructor of Freshmen Courses. During Freshmen Week, information for permanent record card was obtained. Potential next meeting with advisor was at mid-semester grade period if advisor perceived student was in academic difficulty.</td>
<td>Head of the Division met twice each year with <em>sophomore students</em> to direct them in course selection and sign course of study cards. Option for selecting electives depended on Divisional Advisors' perception of students' academic performance and ability. At end of sophomore year, students met with divisional advisor to select a department within the division.</td>
<td><em>Juniors and seniors</em> met with Department Head, or &quot;Special Advisor&quot; of department once a semester to discuss requirements for major. Advisor had authority to &quot;prescribe&quot; coursework and gave advice about electives (at least three) to be taken in a division other than the one in which a student's major was located. This faculty member also signed course of study cards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Freshmen Week and the Freshmen Orientation Course ended as the College completed the transformation into the University. Currently, a two-day summer orientation program substitutes for the former approach. During this time, students complete placement exams, meet with a faculty advisor for thirty-minute one-to-one advising sessions or longer group sessions, in order to select coursework. At this point, students register using a touch-tone telephone system. Through the first two weeks of the semester students may add or drop courses by telephone. Students are not required to see an advisor before dropping courses. Each fall and spring semester the University conducts a counseling period. At this time all students are encouraged—and some are required—to see an advisor before preregistering for the following semester.

The academic mission includes research, teaching, and public service. However, advising currently is not included in the University mission statement. The current catalog lists nearly one-hundred undergraduate majors and interdisciplinary concentrations plus opportunities for minors and certificates and letters, double majors, and second bachelor degrees. Organized advising happens in a variety of locations including colleges and schools, departments, special academic programs. A large student affairs program provides academic counseling among other forms of student assistance. These structural adaptations increase the complexity of the advising system.

Over the years, the advising structure has informally or formally developed into five broad categories. Brief characteristics of the five broad categories described in the following table on page 47 (Table 3. Five Advising Adaptations).
Table 3.

Five Advising Adaptations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidental Advising</th>
<th>Student Affairs Advising</th>
<th>Academic Affairs Advising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Incidental Advising</td>
<td>Academic Support Programs</td>
<td>Academic Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising provided incidentally as a minor or non-defined aspect of primary role.</td>
<td>Advising is provided as one of a number of services such as tutoring or mentoring to designated students based on cultural or ethnic factors.</td>
<td>Faculty, and in some cases, staff provide advising to declared majors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty, staff, and in some cases peers, provide advising mainly for undecided or undeclared students. Undergraduate deans provide academic discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty, and in most cases, staff advise students enrolled in academic programs such as honors, international exchange or continuing education.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*No participants from this area were among those in this study sample.

The delivery system is complex. Advising may be a major or minor responsibility of faculty, professional staff and classified staff, graduate students and undergraduate peer advisors. No one central office or person coordinates academic advising. In general, all faculty are expected to maintain office hours for student accessibility. While faculty may provide academic advising informally as an aspect of their teaching, some faculty also are identified, either voluntarily or by some other method, as chief undergraduate advisor for their academic department.

In 1981, the State Legislature created a Board of Regents. Politically appointed members have statewide policy-making authority over higher education institutions in the state. With this change the University lost much of its independent character. Within the past two years the state reorganized public higher education into a collective of five public
universities. This research looks at what it is like to be an advisor at the original and largest of these five institutions, and the meaning that perplexing social, economic and political issues have for the work and work life among advisors in this public land grant University.

Summary

This literature base briefly surveyed conceptual writing and relevant research and presented summaries of some previous inquiries. It anchors this in-depth interview study of faculty and staff undergraduate advising experience at a public land grant university in a historical context. This helps to delineate areas for additional research as well as providing an understanding and background in issues significant to this study. It places my research in the scope of current understanding, presents ideas for the data gathering approaches of this study, and informs the approach to this study, the research methodology, analysis and interpretation of the data (Fox, 1969; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Wolcott, 1994).

As a field characterized by ambiguity and marginality, academic advising appears to be at a crossroad. Calls for professionalization may signal a profession in metamorphosis, but such imperatives may also have little meaning for many working in the field. This survey of the literature on academic advising points to a need for study on the experience of advisors in order to understand the variations on the range of advising practice and places where commonalities occur (Patton, 1980). I wish to understand how professionalization issues such as standards, definitions and theory proposed for the field relate to the more personal understandings academic advisors bring to their work in one public land grant university.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research into the experience of academic advisors differs from other studies in its focus and methodological orientation. While attention has been given to the opinions and concerns of advisors in research leading to improvement initiatives, such studies mainly have been limited to surveys and questionnaires, and for the most part research has focused on issues of faculty advising. Staff advising has mainly been overlooked. As a result of the incomplete portrait of the experience of academic advisors, their work life remains partially understood at best, and reform agendas for academic advising are often incompletely conceived and implemented.

Possibilities for understanding the complexities of academic advising, and the meaning advisors make of their work, may be gained by considering present realities from the experience of a range of practitioners. This study aims to develop a detailed understanding of the day-to-day work and work life experience of staff as well as faculty who provide academic advising to undergraduate students in a contemporary public land grant university.

The Rationale for the Methodology

Academic advisors, like other education and human service personnel, work directly with clients. This creates the potential for a variety of dilemmas, contradictions, and conflicting issues. Prior to this study, advisors have not described the experience of advising in their own words. Lofland (1971) wrote, "The most phenomenological strategy is that of explicitly adopting as the concept of analysis the linguistic terms used by the participants themselves in designating their own acts" (p. 16). In this light, the notion of what constitutes advising, how advising relationships develop and how advisors experience
and define their work can be more fully understood through in-depth interviews with practicing academic advisors. This can help build recommendations for staff development initiatives.

This is a naturalistic approach with no intention of manipulating the setting. Instead, it explored "naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states" (Patton, 1980, p. 41). As a human-centered inquiry within the context of a specific setting where academic advising happens, this study focused on discovering a deeper meaning of the work of academic advisors through the inductive understandings growing out of the research. It asked how academic advisors manage the deep-seated dilemmas, conflicts and role ambiguity in a complex organizational setting in an environment undergoing restructuring and reform in order to learn what that means to them in their day-to-day work (Seidman, 1991). The primary emphasis was on phenomenological in-depth interviewing with some clarification from participant observation and document analysis added, as needed, in order to further the understanding of concerns about choices, decision-making, and the complexities of academic advising in this context (Patton, 1980; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988a; Sommer and Sommer, 1980).

This research was focused on the concrete details of participants' life stories. This was done in order to discover the meaning their understandings and relationships have for them. This illuminated the complexities of the work, concerns of practitioners, and developed a clearer picture of what advising is like for them here and now. It provided insight and implications for nationally proposed reform initiatives connected to professionalization and standardization. Throughout the interviewing process, the interviewer's intent was to gain a clearer understanding of the individual experience of academic advisors and to stimulate discussion of their stories and recreation of their experience. On a continuum of possible academic advising experiences, this study aimed to discover their common points, as well as variations.
As in all research methods, limitations must be considered and acknowledged. In-depth interviewing by its nature is voluntary. Potential participants decided whether or not they wished to be part of this study. This added the aspect of "self selection" and served to remind that this endeavor might not include participants from each targeted area. However, as participants developed familiarity with the intentions of this study, they became supportive, and referred me to others. In a "snowball" fashion, one interview built on the next (Bertaux, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Other limitations, which were considered, were the individual inclinations and outlooks which "colored" each "interaction and the data elicited" (Merriam, 1988a, p. 76). The information gained through in-depth interviewing is in direct proportion to the ability of the interviewer (Spradley, 1980). Throughout the process, a careful sorting and shaping was necessary to keep the process from being immersed in a morass of material.

Despite some limitations, phenomenological in-depth interviewing offered many positive strengths. It allowed me to hold a purposeful conversation with an academic advisor. It is a flexible approach structured to allow the relevant lived understandings and the voice of each participant to be heard (Patton, 1980; Seidman, 1991). It offered the opportunity to ask a clarifying or redirecting question in order that the participant's experience be understood clearly and accurately. The integrity of this approach adds to the validity of this study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The method of in-depth interviewing is constructed so as to "contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon" of academic advising (Merriam, 1988a, p. 77). This exploratory approach provided an opportunity for me to gain deep knowledge of an advisor's experience, and how they understand that experience. Careful use of in-depth interviewing illuminated a range of advising experiences and variation of advising approaches and practices (Patton, 1980; Seidman, 1991; Spradley, 1980). It provided an opportunity for participants to speak about what was important to
them, and to reflect on and reconstruct their meaningful lived experience and work life (Seidman, 1991).

In the effort to achieve a balanced understanding of the experience of academic advisors at one university, I did some limited participant observation in the "natural field setting" in order to supplement the primary method and to add description (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988a; Watson and Watson-Franke, 1985). Locations for observations was contingent upon the participants selected for this study. Since interviewing is a form of participant observation, use of observation was limited to the time periods when in-depth interviewing was done (Spradley, 1980). In each case I have been careful that any "themes and information emerge from the setting" and to keep any "conclusions" in the context provided by the situations observed and the time periods in which observations occurred (Bogdan, 1972, p. 38).

A portion of the interviews focused on each participant's understandings of the nature of the physical setting, the activities which take place there and its effect on their work. During the preliminary interview discussion, I explained that their descriptions and my observations would be used only as needed to add clarity to the understandings developed from the interviews. In the spirit of safeguarding the rights and protecting the privacy of participants, I used pseudonyms for individuals and coded locations so that information is prevented from being linked with specific individuals (Seidman, 1991; Spradley, 1980). While advising centers and offices may be discerned, my intent is to maintain the anonymity of those involved as much as possible.

As in the case of participant observation, I limited document analysis to a minor role in this study. In order to gain background information, I examined more than a hundred recent publications related to academic advising. These included catalogues; admission materials; faculty guides; the student newspaper; the University newspaper; college, academic department and program newsletters and announcements; alumni information and magazines; promotional and public relations materials; as well as self
study materials and formal reports to the state legislature. I also studied archival documents and information in the University library, covering approximately one-hundred years, specifically relevant to the evolution of academic advising at this institution. Some of the boxes had not been opened since the material had been placed inside and removed to the archives. These materials consisted of correspondence, legal documents and legislation, committee minutes and other formal accounts, research information and evaluative studies related to the development of academic advising since its inception at this University. While most documents were typed, some were handwritten. This added a personal element to my research process. Public records were useful as a standard of comparison with interview and case study material (Sommer and Sommer, 1980). In addition, documents suggested categories and themes. In this way, document analysis contributed to a "meaningful whole" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp. 332-333).

This approach seemed naturally fitted to the goal of this research. In my experience, academic advising requires a listening ear, an observant eye and a reflective perspective. Much of my work with students involves listening to a student's "stories." Sometimes these are ongoing narratives that unfold over several semesters. Sometimes they are to the point, one-time brief accounts. My advising role also requires analysis and assessment of documents such as student records, appeals, transcripts, degree audits, applications for admission or financial aid, academic proposals and other written information. A qualitative research approach with major emphasis on in-depth interviewing, with minor support from participant observation and document analysis, is suited to understanding the work life of academic advisors. This added "thickness" to this study overcame some of the limitations of each method used singly, and strengthened the research process as well as the results (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp. 332-333). Through this methodology, the notion of what constitutes advising, how advising relationships develop, and how advisors experience and define their work can be more fully understood.
 Goals of This Study

Philosophical underpinnings, political and economic realities, complex organizational structure and advising delivery system—in combination with characteristics of the current undergraduate student population—allowed for a wide range of concerns and dilemmas in this setting. As this study was initiated, economic and political developments leading to the restructuring of this University, as well as the statewide system of higher education, was moving from proposed to implementation stages. Issues such as the potential impact of increasing undergraduate attrition and new academic reforms as well as diversity issues were crowding onto the academic stage and revising the concept of academic advising here. Confusion and conflicts were likely to emerge as these events unfolded.

Such perplexities fueled this investigation of the way academic advisors experience and make sense of their work. I wanted to understand the work and work life of academic advisors at this public land grant University from the experience of those doing advising, in order to contribute to the knowledge and comprehension of the role of academic advisors here (Fox, 1969; Lofland, 1971; Patton, 1980).

Designed to reveal a clearer picture of academic advising in one setting, this study aimed to develop an understanding of what brought participants to the work of academic advising, what their day-to-day work is like, and what it means to them. It sought an understanding of the unique history and nature of academic advising at this institution. It observed how academic advising happens on this campus at this time. It examined how the current work relates to proposed reform measures, and it sought a deep understanding of academic advising by asking advisors to reconstruct their experience. This process illuminated advising definitions, perplexities and the processes participants used to resolve dilemmas and ambiguities.

I have written my findings as a description of the work of faculty and staff undergraduate advising experience at one public land grant university (Lincoln and Guba,
1985; Spradley, 1980). To me, academic advising is the most important professional work I can imagine myself undertaking. I wanted to know what it means to other academic advisors.

**Range and Focus**

The focus for this study emerged slowly over several months of informal observation, reflection, conversations with administrators, faculty and staff academic advisors, the experience of the pilot study, and readings including research findings about academic advising. As the planning and design of this study progressed, the following principle guided my thinking: the design of a study using the naturalistic viewpoint "means planning certain broad contingencies without, however, indicating exactly what will be done in relationship to each" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 226). Merriam (1988a) encouraged the researcher to remain flexible and allow the focus to develop and "change over the course of the study" (p. 90). Spradley (1980) added that the initial selection of focus in any ethnographic study is "tentative" to begin, and as the study progresses, this centering concept or "cultural domain" becomes "refined" (p. 101).

Several sources provided the original impetus for the focus and design of the study. The first—and a vital concern—was my personal interest. As an academic advisor for a decade and a half, the role has been almost as extensive as I wish to make it within the context of providing advising assistance. My work has held moments of personal rewards and recognition. It also has included moments of ambiguity, conflict, and sometimes a need for information and support. I often have wondered about the experiences other advisors might be having in their day-to-day advising activities.

A second motivation came from literature proposing reform initiatives for academic advising at the national, state and local level. A number of changes were endorsed by NACADA for the field to delineate the nature, improve the status, and organize the role of advising through professionalization measures. Other initiatives
percolating at the national level included standardized evaluation processes and formal educational requirements or certification for advisors. These reform measures were predicated on data acquired through surveys and questionnaires administered over the past ten or fifteen years. The findings of this prior research provided some important baseline data about academic advising. However, these studies did not represent the experience of academic advisors, and how they make sense of their work.

At the state level, actions were underway to reorder and reorganize the state university system. Prior to this time, five loosely connected campuses made up this institutional complex. Given these changes, it was not clear how academic advising would be affected at a more local level. On this campus, the University was in the process of restructuring its organizational framework and implementing academic reforms. Among the proposed measures were some relevant to academic advising. These changes were being contemplated, and perhaps implemented, without a careful inquiry into the manner in which academic advising happens at the University. At this time, no one had looked deeply into the meaning these changes might have for academic advisors or for students. This provided the third impetus.

The goal of this study is to understand and describe the reconstructed experience of faculty and staff academic advisors in order to gain insight into undergraduate academic advising in one public land grant university. In preparation for this larger project, I did a pilot study with two professional staff academic advisors, Sharon Matthews and Crystal King, in the spring of 1992. Pilot interviews provided an opportunity to test my understanding of in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 1991).

Through the process of in-depth interviewing, each participant and I developed a relationship during which the participant's lasting and moving memories from their life history and their work experience were engaged and shared with me. The relationship was one built on trust. It was an important commitment for each of the participants to reconstruct past experiences and present realities, make deeply meaningful connections and
share them for use in a research project. It was an equally serious responsibility for me to listen or ask questions, and to work with the material in order to create profiles and themes to be used in my comprehensive examination.

The process required me to be patient and sensitive to the way each participant shared information. Interviews flowed on the rhythm and timing of each participant rather than being "conducted" by me. The participant could not be rushed. This meant many moments of silence while I waited for the participants to reflect and consider their experience, and how they wanted to express it. In-depth interviewing as I experienced it, was a conversation with purpose (Patton, 1980). In this case, to develop understanding of the participant's reconstructed experience and how each made sense of the work (Seidman, 1991). Within this purposeful conversation there was some mutual exchange of information, and I shared some relevant information about my experiences when asked (Patton, 1980; Williams and Wolfe, 1979).

At one point during a pilot interview, one of the participants said she was enjoying the process and learning about her feelings of being an advisor in this environment. Another said following our previous session she had noted a feeling not unlike that which she had after a good therapeutic session with her counselor. She discovered value in having a willing and understanding listener and an opportunity to air her feelings.

While limited to two participants, topics revealed a number of shared issues, conflicts and ambiguities in the advising roles of these participants. They communicated some aspects of the social, psychological and political context of their work. In their own words, they detailed the risks, the need for creativity, the isolation and ethical issues which troubled them. These could not have been discovered through a survey or questionnaire method.

Through the pilot in-depth interviews, I learned that although studies previously have not explored in-depth the experience of academic advisors, there is much to be gained from listening to participants' reconstructions of their experience. The information shared...
by participants shed light on the process and role of academic advising, and informed my sense of the feasibility of this study and the reasonableness of my assumptions (Spradley, 1980).

In addition, intentional and focused conversations held with faculty and staff in the period between the comprehensive exam and the drafting of the dissertation proposal confirmed the need-to-know aspect and timeliness of an inquiry into academic advising at this University at this time. These discussions added to the information provided by the literature, the pilot in-depth interviews and my own advising experience.

As a result of these influences, the original center of interest was enlarged from an inquiry into the academic advising experience of professional staff academic advisors to a broader inquiry, including faculty advisors and classified staff advisors. This enlarged participant base represented an expanded range of settings, academic disciplines and programs. This was done in order to help develop understanding of what advising is like in each setting, uncover commonalities, discover aspects of the work which are unique to a setting or an advisor type, and how advisors make connections with other parts of this University where men and women spend their work lives with college students.

The research approach shifted from using a single research strategy, to major emphasis on one primary method with limited support from two others. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that research should be undertaken only after "the inquirer has made every effort to become thoroughly acquainted with the field sites in which the study is actually undertaken (p. 251). Upon closer inspection, the image of academic advising and the environment in which it was provided was less clear and more complex than it previously appeared to be. The more my understanding about the kind of information needed to illuminate academic advising in this university grew, the greater my realization that using some participant observation and document analysis in order to supplement the dominant approach of in-depth interviewing could clarify themes and information raised in
interviews, and in this way, provide a fuller understanding of the experience of participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Spradley, 1980; Merriam, 1988a; Sommer and Sommer, 1980).

The scope of this study was limited to one public land grant research university in order to deeply understand what occurs "naturally" in one university setting (Patton, 1980). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the naturalistic perspective was not to generate information that can be generalized to some greater population, but to inquire about "the many specifics that give the context its useful flavor" (p. 201). The results produced through this theoretical perspective are "thick description" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The general boundaries for this study were defined through this lengthy process.

Building the Sample

Seidman (1991) suggested two criteria to bear upon the number of participants to include in a study. In addition to the depth of experience that in-depth interviewing allows, compelling connections are made when numbers and types of academic advisors sufficiently reflect the particular environment in which the sample is located and provide a sense of the larger population. In order to develop understanding of the variation of "elements" with the population of academic advisors at this University, I sampled "purposely the widest variation of sites and people within the limits of this study" (Seidman 1991, p. 43).

While it was necessary to develop an understanding of the range and variations of advising at this University, it was not possible to interview every advisor at every location on this large campus. Therefore, it was essential to develop some goals for selection. Based on "maximum variation sampling strategy" (Patton, 1980), I included cases that represented the adaptations and "unique variations" of the academic advising system that has developed over time. I was seeking the patterns and commonalities that are shared by advising programs and offices as well as uniqueness of practice. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided a rule-of-thumb to follow in determining sample size. From their experience,
when "interviewing members of some particular group . . . it is usual to find that a dozen or so interviews, if properly selected, will exhaust most available information; to include as many as twenty will surely reach well beyond the point of redundancy" (p. 234). This gave initial guidance in determining the numbers of participants. Saturation of information has been suggested as a second criteria (Bertaux, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1980).

I interviewed twenty-eight participants for this study. In order to develop an understanding of advising at this University which reflected the broad range and variations of the advising system, my original interview plan called for at least eighteen participants: eight professional staff advisors, five faculty advisors, and five classified staff advisors. Participation from these three categories was developed from Wall's (1988b) description of advisors: "persons whose contract or job description calls for them primarily to advise students, rather than to devote most of their professional energies to teaching and research" (p. 68).

Some initial document analysis helped to build the sample. Two current sources for making sense of the complex organizational design of the University included The Faculty Guide and the University Undergraduate Catalog for 1993. (Both publications were updated yearly). Two of the main branches of the University support the advising structure: Academic Affairs and The Division of Administrative Affairs. Colleges, schools, and departments were located under Academic Affairs and reported to the Provost. Student Affairs was located under the large Division of Administrative Affairs and reported to the executive vice chancellor.

From Academic Affairs, I selected participants from the College of Liberal Arts, which had the largest undergraduate enrollment. In order to investigate the range of issues and concerns encountered by advisors in departments and advising centers, I also included three colleges or schools which had professional orientations. Seventeen of the participants provided academic advising in a total of thirteen organizations in the four colleges or schools. These included six academic departments, three academic counseling centers, one
office of degree requirements, one college-based academic support program, one multidisciplinary degree program and a special academic program.

Special Academic Programs, not affiliated with a college or school, connected to a second division of Academic Affairs and reported to the Provost. Some were degree programs. Others, such as the International Exchange Program, were not. From the Special Academic Programs category, I interviewed seven advisors from three degree programs and one non-degree program.

Student Affairs, located under the Division of Administrative Affairs, included student service agencies such as Dean of Students, University Health Services, and Housing Services as well as Academic Support Services. Undergraduate Admissions, Orientation, Placement Services and Financial Aid as well as Multifunction Academic Support Programs were among offices and programs in Academic Support Services. Four of the advisors in this study worked in three Multifunction Academic Support Programs.

The category, Multifunction Academic Support Programs, reflected some conflicts and ambiguities in the University publications. While Student Affairs Services, the umbrella category encompassing Multifunction Academic Support Programs, was listed in the Index of the 1993-94 Undergraduate Catalog, it was not itemized in the Table of Contents. Multifunction Academic Support Programs were not listed in the Index by individual program name, and I could find no description in the text of the Catalog.

The Faculty Guide listed Multifunction Academic Support Programs in five locations. They appeared in the Index, the Table of Contents, and Organizational Charts. In the text, brief descriptions of these three organizations were presented under the category of "Special Programs" along with an assortment of services. However, this collection of services did not share the same reporting line, nor did they necessarily share a common impetus or focus for their work. Finally, in Section VIII, "Student Programs and Services," they appeared in a list under the heading, "Academic Support Programs."
Although it presented a clearer approach to dealing with the information than the Undergraduate Catalog, The Faculty Guide still fell short of organizing material in a manner that matched the organizational charts included in the same volume. Communication problems such as these may make printed resources less useful to advisors, especially those new to advising or this University.

Not all organizational units where advising may occur were included in the sample. In some cases, others might provide limited academic advising incidentally or tangentially to their main role in a variety of functionally related offices. However, in each instance represented in this study, participants were included if a significant portion of their work was advising students. Every effort was made to gain representativeness among the categories in the following table on page 63 (Table 4. Variable Chart for In-Depth Interviewing).
Table 4.
Variable Chart for In-Depth Interviewing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Faculty Advisors</th>
<th>Professional Staff Advisors</th>
<th>Classified Staff Advisors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Length of Advising Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethnic Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Highest Level of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising as Percentage of Work Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides Advising in a School or College Advising Office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides Departmental Advising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides Population Specific Advising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Size of Advising Load</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Process for Matching Student and Advisor: Informal-Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising Practice: Traditional-Prescriptive or Developmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising Approach: Intrusive-Responsive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the variables listed in Table 4, the final sample represented a broad slice of the advising spectrum here. While time, money and my endurance contributed to sample size—the increase from eighteen participants projected in the original proposal, to twenty-eight—and the broadened scope of the study mainly can be attributed to the discovery of further information and variation among advisors here (Patton, 1980). These changes added to the comprehensive nature of the study, and increased the possibility of
presenting a more complete understanding of how advisors experienced the complexities of their work and work lives here, and more fully covered the previous criteria (Seidman, 1991). When the information began to be "redundant," I concluded the study (Bertaux, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1980).

As interviewing progressed, I expanded the college category from the liberal arts to encompass representation from colleges with a professional focus and included College Special Academic Programs and Multifunction Academic Support Programs as well. Settings encompass a total of twenty programs, departments and colleges and a total of twenty-eight participants: nineteen females and nine males. The number of females in this study was double that of males. This reflected the inclusion of professional and classified staff advisors who, most often, are female on this campus. However, advising leadership roles tended to be male in all cases. In the following table on page 65, the gender statistics are presented according to the primary setting where participants worked (Table 5. Representation by Organizational Divisions and Gender).
Table 5. Representation by Organizational Divisions and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation by Organizational Divisions and Gender</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs: Colleges and Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic Departments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College Counseling Centers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College Office of Degree Requirements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College-Based Multidisciplinary Degree Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College-Based Special Academic Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College-Based Academic Support Program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic Affairs: Special Academic Programs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student Affairs: Multifunction Academic Support Programs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the university employment classification, participants represented Classified staff (Administrative Assistant I, Clerk III, Technical Assistant II, Stenographer II, and "03"); Professional staff (staff assistant, staff associate); and Faculty (Lecturer, Associate Professor, Professor). Participants additionally typified descriptive position categories. The advisors variously described themselves as undergraduate deans; directors and assistant directors; chief undergraduate advisors; professional academic advisors; academic counselors; program coordinators; administrative assistants; and advising.
assistants. Participants—with the exception of one professional staff advisor—were employed full time. Most often, the contact listed for any undergraduate department in the 1993-94 Undergraduate Catalog was a faculty member. However, in at least three instances, this was not the case. I also selected participants which reflected this uncommon case.
Table 6.

Employment Classifications and Descriptive Position Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Classification and Descriptive Position Categories</th>
<th>Classified Staff</th>
<th>Professional Staff</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Chief Undergraduate Advisor or Advising Coordinator in an Academic Department</td>
<td>Leletti Cole</td>
<td></td>
<td>Melinda Abercrombie Ryan Casey Ze Mendez John Mertens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff Advisors in an Academic Department</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jane Garaud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Undergraduate Dean in a College Counseling Center</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anunciata Buttons Ana Garcia</td>
<td>Jim Emmert Jay West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College Counseling Center Advisors</td>
<td>Delores Eisenach Mary Perry</td>
<td>Florence Baker (*Jane Garaud)</td>
<td>(*Ze Mendez)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College Office of Degree Requirements Advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gordon Weber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chief Undergraduate Advisor in a College-Based Multidisciplinary Degree Program</td>
<td>Jackie LaPierre</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pierre Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advisor in a College-Based Special Academic Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Carmen Barreto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advisor in a College-Based Academic Support Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-College Based Special Academic Program Advisor</td>
<td>Emily Broadbent Peter MacNeil</td>
<td>Monica Brennan Amanda Cross Eugenia Suffren Sven Neilsen</td>
<td>Kay Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multifunction Academic Support Program Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Angela Pham Patty Huang Teresa Perez Robin Wolf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One faculty advisor and one professional staff advisor participating in this study volunteered in an advising center in addition to advising in academic departments. This is reflected in the information above where indicated by an asterisk and parentheses. It is also
necessary to note the term counselor is often, though not always, interchanged with advisor among many participants. This will be discussed further in the thematic chapters.

As indicated in Table 4, in addition to the factors addressed in Tables 5 and 6, other criteria helped to develop this sample. These included age, length of advising service, ethnicity, and highest level of education.

The age of participants ranged from early twenties to sixty-plus. This did not necessarily correlate with the length of advising service. For instance, the oldest advisor was among those with the least amount of time in an advising position. In addition, this chart is deceptive in another way. Many of those in the decades forty and fifty are close to fifty and sixty years of age respectively.

Table 7.
Age Range of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range In Ten Year Spans</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Participants in their twenties</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants in their thirties</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants in their forties</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants in their fifties</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants in their sixties</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Length of advising service ranged from one year to nearly thirty years within this University. In some instances participants had previous paid or peer advising experience. This is represented here in the understanding that advising knowledge is cumulative.
Table 8.

Years Participants Have Been Providing Advising Arranged in Five-Year Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Years of Cumulative Advising Experience</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One to five years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six to ten years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven to fifteen years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteen to twenty years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty to twenty-five years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty-five plus years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnicity was another criteria for this study. Eight of the twenty-eight participants are reflected in the following table on page 70 (Table 9. Representation by Ethnic Group). For purposes of ethnic classification, they would be considered members in the contemporary "people of color" category. However many participants referred to a variety of heritages including, but not limited to, Italian-American, Irish-American, French-Canadian-American, German-American, or Portuguese-American. This multi-ethnic heritage added to the difficulty of discussing ethnicity. Regardless, participants represented the broad multicultural base consistent with the University population.
Table 9.
Representation by Ethnic Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• African-American</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Caribbean American: This participant traced her heritage to Northern Europe, India, Africa and Central America as well as the Caribbean.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Native-American</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asian, Asian-American: This category became complicated by participants' understanding of what Asian and Asian-American meant to them. Of the two participants who were born in Asian countries prior to immigrating to the United States, one called herself an &quot;Asian-Almost-But-Never-Will-Be-American&quot; because she believed in order to be Asian-American, you must be born in the U.S. The second participant asserted her status as a naturalized citizen meant she was Asian-American.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hispanic: Although a new ethnic term, Latino, is used currently, these participants employed the term Hispanic, and more often, emphasized their country of origin.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range of education represented by participants is broad. In three cases, participants had each earned a second master's degree beyond the one affiliated with their doctorate. This is reflected in the table below and is indicated by an asterisk (Table 10. Range of Education).

Table 10.
Range of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Degree Held</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High school diploma plus college-level work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Master's Degree*</td>
<td>*4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Doctorate</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data and discussion related to the last six variables listed in Table 4 (see page 63), are incorporated into thematic chapters. These include advising as percentage of work role; size of advising load; process for matching student and advisor; advising practice; and advising approach.

Process of In-Depth Interviewing

This study was undertaken to explore the work of faculty and staff advisors in order to develop a deep understanding of academic advising from their lived experience. Based on the three-part in-depth interview process described by Seidman (1991), I held interviews with faculty and staff who provided advising as a significant part of their work life and role.

The first contact with potential participants was by telephone to briefly acquaint myself with them, the study and to ask them for a preliminary meeting. The next contact, the first in-person, was a fuller discussion of the request I was making in order to avoid confusion or dissonance (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Prior to any in-depth interviewing, I explained the reason for the research and my intentions. We reviewed what they were being asked to say or do, the use I would be making of their information, and safeguards. They then were able to make informed decisions about their participation (Seidman, 1991).

At this meeting, I asked for their participation and set up a meeting schedule for in-depth interviews. At the next meeting, prior to the beginning of the first interview, a written consent form was reviewed and signed by the participant and me (see Appendix B).

It was not possible to guarantee that any participant would not be discerned through the information shared in in-depth interviews. However, I arranged all interviews and worked with material in such a way as to protect participants as much as possible. Audio tapes were transcribed by me. All identities of participants, their academic programs, and names of other people, places, programs, or institutions they mentioned in their interviews are confidential and identified by a pseudonym in order to preserve anonymity. Material
taken from the audio-taped interviews and crafted into thematic chapters likewise is identified by a pseudonym.

In each chapter, when their voice is used for the first time, participants are identified by their full name, position and setting. Thereafter in the chapter, they are identified by their first name. It was too cumbersome to give the full details each time they spoke.

A sequence of three separate, ninety-minute in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant. Throughout each of the interviews, I asked participants to reconstruct their experience in their own words. I sometimes asked a question in order to clarify or redirect the process. Three questions guided the interviews to learn what advising is like for participants in as much detail as possible.

In order to establish "the context of the participant's experience" (Seidman, 1991), the first interview concentrated on the participant's life history prior to becoming an academic advisor. It explored the question, "How did you come to be an academic advisor?"

The second ninety-minute interview asked how they understood and managed their academic advising role day-to-day by requesting participants to, "Tell as much about the details of your experience as an academic advisor as possible. What is it like for you? What do you do as an academic advisor each day?" Such questions sought information about their relationship with students, other academic advisors, faculty and staff, and their issues and concerns around their work as academic advisors.

The third interview was an inquiry into the participant's meaning of his or her experience. It asked, "Now that we have talked about how you came to your present position, and what it is like for you? How do you make meaning of your experience as an academic advisor? How do you make sense of your work?" (Seidman, 1991).

The depth of understanding gained from participants' stories compelled me to handle each interview, and eventually the interview material, in a non-judgmental way with
"empathy" (Patton, 1980). Above all, I attempted to remain true to the reflection and
meaning of each participant's voice and words.

Shaping the Interview Data

The researcher's task is to represent the experience of the people he or she
interviews in compelling enough detail and in sufficient depth that those
who read the study can connect to that experience, learn how it is
constituted, and deepen their understanding of the issue it reflects.

[I.E. Seidman, 1991]

Interviewing began on June 7, 1993, and ended December 14, 1993. Interviewing
ceased when the range of participants and the settings seemed sufficient to portray the work
and work life of academic advisors on this campus (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton,
1980). Each interview was tape recorded. Between the second and third in-depth interview,
I stopped and took time to listen to the first two in order to "uncover any areas of
ambiguity" as well as to "review the quality of the information received" (Patton, 1980,
p. 251).

Interviews with twenty-eight participants resulted in eighty-four, ninety-minute
audio tapes, or 126 hours of taped material. I transcribed the taped material onto the hard
drive of the computer using a Macintosh IIIsi at an average time of six hours per tape or a
total of about 500 hours. Each original set of interviews was copied from the hard drive
onto a disk, and I created a duplicate back-up disk. The second disk was removed to
another location for safekeeping.

When printed, the transcripts amounted to approximately 4,000 double-spaced
pages of verbatim material, or about 150 pages per set of interviews. Each page and each
line of text was automatically numbered by the computer. During the transcription process,
whenever the participant or I spoke, I typed the first name of the speaker in the left margin.
Later when I returned to cut the material into topic areas, it was only necessary to put the
Roman numeral for the interview (I, II, III) next to the person's name as suggested by Seidman (1991, p. 100). I printed a set of transcripts on white paper.

Themes were identified following the sequence of actions recommended by Seidman (1991, p. 92). I read each uncut transcription to gain an idea of provisional topical categories and terms. I then reread each uncut transcription, this time I marked extraneous or repetitive material including "umhs, like, you know, and you see" as well as my words. Then I read the transcripts again while I listened to the audio tapes. I concentrated my attention on what the participants were attempting to convey in each passage. At this time I indicated passages of interest with a highlighter. Throughout this process, I used my journal to jot down ideas or questions as well as noting specific categories and initial patterns that I detected in an interview.

The words and phrases used by the twenty-eight advisors to describe and detail their work and work lives indicated the range of their concerns. Those that were repeated and emphasized served as a sign of the depth of their issues. Discussions segmented into topical sections. On the left margin of the printed transcripts, I labeled each section with one or two words that captured the overarching subject of discussion that became clear in this process. The large number of words and phrases grew into a dizzying world of topics. This presented a daunting organizational task. A sample of the most frequently occurring words is illustrated in Figure 1 (A World of Topics) on the next page.
Figure 1

A World of Topics
Once each section had been labeled, I photocopied a set of transcripts on pale green paper, and another set on pale blue. The white set was filed. The green set was earmarked for the potential development of profiles should this add compelling and descriptive material to the final text. The blue set was designated for use in developing thematic chapters.

I cut the blue sheets into the groups of similar meanings and put them in manila file folders marked with the topic name, i.e., student characteristics, advisor roles, and so on. Any aspects of an interview not included in the building of such categories was placed in a "topic overflow" manila file folder. Later, I reviewed this file in order to be more confident that I did not winnow out essential material.

The physical cut-up copies of topic areas were useful in guiding me through the process of copying and moving the material in the computer's memory from the original transcript to topic files. While this represented an additional step, I found it easier and safer to move material from one computer file to another while having a physical sheet of paper for reference. There was less of a chance to omit or lose important material.

I used the "copy" rather than the "cut" function on the computer to move the computerized material from one file to another. The color monitor of my computer allowed me to tint any "moved" passage in its original location. This allowed me to know when I had moved material from an original file to the new one and helped to prevent moving a section more than one time. This process was an additional safeguard against losing material, and it preserved the original transcription. The physical copies of transcripts numbered line by line, eased the process of locating material stored in the computer's memory.

After I had completed the process of copying and pasting material into topic files on the computer, some of the files had grown larger than others. The size of the file indicated frequency and commonality of an issue and suggested the organizing framework for chapters. However, topic files that did not grow large still held meaning since they
extended the range or depth of experience and indicated differences. I also considered how this data might link material or illuminate factors identified in the Dissertation Proposal.

The amount of printed material presented a major challenge in crafting thematic chapters. Eventually this led to increasing the number of thematic chapters from four to seven. Although, from the beginning I intended to craft profile chapters, and did so; upon later consideration, I decided their inclusion was not necessary. Extensive verbatim excerpts from participants' interviews are incorporated into thematic chapters, and the addition of profiles did not significantly enhance the study.

The interview excerpts in the thematic chapters are word-for-word unless otherwise noted. Any language inserted into verbatim material which is not in the participants' words is bracketed. Ellipses indicate any omitted material. Characteristics of oral speech, which are repetitive or do not enhance any given participant's meaning, have been eliminated (Seidman, 1991). Care was taken to preserve the integrity of each participant's voice. Throughout this study, the primary emphasis directing the process is what are the meanings ascribed by participants (Seidman, 1991).

This was a process of continual refinement. It was not lock-step and regimented, but instead flowed like a conversation between the researcher and each participant's reflective voice with the barest of predetermined pattern. A number of principles guided me in this process:

1. The categories and topics grow out of the interviews.
2. I am looking for connective experiences when building themes.
3. I must pay attention not only to compelling aspects of the participant's stories, but to the contradictions, inconsistencies and what they don't say as well (Patton, 1980; Seidman, 1991).
4. Although the "life history material" reconstructed by the participants "will not necessarily describe the events in their past exactly as they happened," the major interest of this study is to gain an understanding of each participant's "view of
the world, his definition of himself and his life" and the "context through which organizational members define the organization and their place within it" (Bogdan, 1972, p. 69).

Cautions and Challenges

The purpose of this research was to build a conceptual understanding of academic advising at a public land grant university. My intent was neither to test individual advisors nor to challenge the advising system in place. No broad generalizations are intended in presenting the themes which emerge. However, when strong agreement or non-agreement occurs, this is presented. Through this research process among advisors at one public land grant university, I have tried to develop an understanding of faculty and staff undergraduate advising experience. Essential to this study was the need to understand the concrete details of the experience and meaning made by participants as they reconstructed their life stories (Patton, 1980; Seidman, 1991; Wolcott, 1994).

I was not a passive spectator in this process. In each instance I was actively engaged with what was presented in that moment. My role was not fixed or stationary. It was, in Patton's terms (1980) "active-reactive," and it required "adaptive" strategies and thinking. I questioned what I was hearing, observing, understanding and how I make meaning of what I experience. Through periods of reflection, I stopped and reviewed what I was learning and checked to see if preconceived notions or ideas were interfering with the process (Patton, 1980; Ellen, 1984a). I undertook this study with curiosity about the experience of other academic advisors and how they make sense of their work. I was sensitive to the importance of context to this study. Throughout the process, consideration of the welfare of each participant was my first concern.

My experience and relationship provided access to a variety of potential locations and individuals. Care was taken that this connection not be used to take advantage of
participants or their services and resources, but instead, be used to further understanding which may benefit participants in some way and perhaps be of use to others.

Although I know what I know, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) have pointed out, "I don't know what I don't know" (p. 247). This informed my initial attitude. Focus developed as my understanding grew from each specific instance. Throughout this study, context guided the process.

During this research process, the rights and the dignity of participants took precedence over the need to collect data. Measures designed to protect the identity of individuals participating in this research have been implemented. My overriding concern is to represent participants and their advising with fairness. As Cohen (1984) stated, my "moral responsibility" is to approach each person with humility and integrity (p. 228).

Informed consent was gained prior to any interview. I provided participants with an understanding of my role and purpose of research, answered questions to the best of my knowledge and ability, and asked for their participation. This participation was obtained prior to the beginning of any in-depth interview.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discussed the "trustworthiness" of any naturalistic research. Four criteria—"credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability"—establish trustworthiness (p. 198). In order to address the issue of credibility, I was immersed in each location over a period of time long enough to enable "prolonged engagement." The insights and understandings gained through this research were based on reconstructed experience with some limited support from observation and documents. These and a personal journal were additional means of achieving credibility. I gained a large amount of information. This became "thick description" which aided transferability. Dependability and confirmability have been attained through clear and careful record keeping.

All participants will be notified of the date of the doctoral final oral exam so that they may attend if they wish. In this way, they can come to know the outcome of the study.
Material gained through the major phenomenological in-depth interview method—with some limited participant observation and document analysis—forms a part of the dissertation. While it was not possible to predict problems and difficulties which might arise at any time during the research, I was guided in the process by codes of ethics for research from education, psychology and anthropology, and through contact with my committee members.

**Summary**

I am inspired by the many things I see both in the everyday world where I live and work and in the variety of locations I visit. I can be inspired by the tiniest detail of a feather or by the awe-inspiring view of a landscape. I enjoy painting a broad scope of subjects which I interpret in my own personal style. My paintings focus on a particular subject at a particular time taken out of the continuum of life, a special thing, a special moment. I like to take subjects that have a universal impact and approach them in a different way. I like to isolate and simplify an image so that the viewer might see the essence of that subject... to paint detail full-size or even enlarged... to be bold with my composition so that the question of the viewer is not "what" but rather, "why?"  
[Paul Brent, Artist (Undated)]

Through the methods discussed in this proposal, my task was to create portraits of academic advisors placed within the landscape of a public land grant university much the way an artist might create a likeness from eye-witness accounts. The final rendering is not conveyed as a photographic reproduction. It becomes distilled essences of lived impressions over a period of time which, when captured on paper, creates connections with the reader through a compelling image recognizable in its common elements and identifiable in its composite form (Bertaux, 1981). Through "detailed description," "direct quotation," and "excerpts from documents," the discovery of patterns as well as variations
and uniqueness enabled me to study the issues of advising on this campus (Patton, 1980, p. 22).

The questions asked in this study attempted to discover experience and understanding that was fuller and richer than that which could be obtained by simply seeking an answer to the question "why." An inquiry approach grounded on the questions of "what," "when," "who," "where," and "how" reduced the need for justification. They allowed the latitude needed for participants to reconnect to their memories and feelings, and enabled them to reconstruct their meaningful experience (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1980; Seidman, 1991).

In order to capture the range of experience of advising providers and their understandings of their role, I employed an approach which mainly depended on in-depth interviewing supplemented by some participant observation and document analysis as needed. I aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the experience of individual academic advisors involved in the complexities of providing undergraduate academic advising at one public land grant university at this time.

The following guided me throughout this process:

1. This process is "not a matter of data reduction as is frequently claimed, but of induction" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 333).

2. Participants will "express their own understanding in their own terms" (Patton, 1980, p. 205).

3. Analysis will be guided by the questions formulated in Chapter I, and theory will be developed from the data (Patton, 1980).

4. I am aware that I bring my own subjective understandings to this work (Merriam, 1988b).

5. Through a deep understanding of individual experience and the context of this study, I can begin to understand this public land grant University (Spradley, 1980).
6. Qualitative research is "tentative" and dynamic (Bertaux, 1981; Lofland, 1971; Seidman, 1991). It includes description, analysis and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994).

7. And "each social situation is a laboratory where some aspect of social life can best be studied because there it is best illuminated" (Bogdan, 1972, p. 70).
CHAPTER IV

THE CHANGING CONTEXT: SCENES FROM A LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY

First Impressions

"We came to . . . the scenic lookout area, and we saw the rolling hills. It was cooler. It was almost like going to Shangri-La!" [Monica Brennan]

"I remember the first night when I got to [the University]," said Angela Pham, a professional staff director of a multifunction academic support program who immigrated to the United States in the 1970s. "It was a rainy night, but it was a very impressive night!" Her voice became animated as she described her first view of the campus. "I asked the driver, a friend of mine, I said, 'Are we in New York?' And he was laughing. He said, 'New York? We are in the countryside!' . . . 'I said, 'It's beautiful!'"

Angela's enthusiasm was by no means reflected by all participants. When Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, got her first glimpse of campus she remembered, "The University I wasn't terribly impressed with; I thought, 'Gee what a monstrosity!'"

Amanda Cross, a professional staff advisor in another special academic program, spoke for many when she said, "The transition, the University in itself was terrifying." Her previous schooling and work experience were in small colleges where face-to-face communication happened easily. She linked her lack of confidence to the complexity of the University as well as the advising system, "I wasn't uncomfortable so much with learning about advising, but I was really uncomfortable with the system in which I was advising, and what was OK and who to trust."

The large size of the University presented a different challenge to Jackie LaPierre, a classified staff advisor in a college-based multidisciplinary degree program. She said, "This is such a big campus, when you think you know it all, there's still something you really don't know!"
Jane Garaud, a professional staff advisor, divided her time among two academic departments and a college counseling center. She issued a sweeping declaration about the University landscape. "This campus is pretty stunning. For me it's sort of like an urban ghetto in the country!"

Angela, Kay, Amanda, Jackie and Jane demonstrated a wide variation of reactions to this campus. Turner (1984) explained that the contemporary concept of a campus has expanded from simple physical properties and characteristics such as buildings, spaces and geographic location to a sense of community, activities and behaviors. Monica Brennan, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, referred to such an encompassing understanding when she said she and her family "still feel lucky to be here in this cultural world." In the process of reconstructing their experience using the three-part framework of in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 1991), all participants anchored their understandings and meanings to the context. The scope, climate, and tone of the campus combined with other changing conditions and added complexity to advisors' work and work life.

While some evinced comfort with the University, many found the size intimidating and organizational systems confusing. Although Angela recalled campus as a beautiful cityscape, Jane's understanding was suffused with troubling urban issues, and Kay saw an unsightly structural mass. When Amanda questioned, "How do I know that they're telling me the right thing?" she bracketed the essential characteristics of size, communication and trust. When Jackie asked herself, "How many other things are on campus that I've never heard of yet?" she pointed to the connection between a complex system and information flow. These, and other characteristics, contributed to the ethos of this "world" where participants spent so much of their lives and led to the central question explored in this chapter: How has the evolution of the University shaped advising here?
"The University came up with this policy that every faculty member had to do research, teaching and extension." [Jackie LaPierre]

The original College was designated a University in 1947. Yet it still retained its college flavor when Jackie enrolled as a student a year later. At this time, advising mainly consisted of scheduling and overseeing fulfillment of requirements within a major. Such assistance generally was provided by the faculty head of a given academic department. Jackie said, "I can't remember going to [the chairperson] on a regular basis other than each semester I went and talked about what [courses] I should be taking."

After earning a bachelor of science in 1952, Jackie obtained a position as a lab instructor on campus. She explained, "It was the old rating. You were called an 'Instructor A,' and that meant you were a research person with a faculty rating." In 1960, when Jackie resigned her position, faculty roles were changing. In addition to teaching, the research and service aspects of the faculty role were being stressed.

Twenty years later, the transformation into the contemporary University was complete. To her surprise, when Jackie investigated employment possibilities here in 1980, she discovered her bachelor's degree no longer qualified her for a faculty position. During the period she was away, not only had faculty roles been redefined, but the University staff employment system had been revised as well. The two major hierarchical staff categories were professional and classified. Jackie was hired as a technical assistant. She explained, "I should probably also state that my rating is as a 'classified.'" This broad support staff category ranges from secretarial to custodial employees.

The changes in faculty roles identified by Jackie mirrored the increasingly complex University and were consistent with what was occurring nationally. Teaching, research and public service were commonly understood aspects of faculty work (Astin, 1985). Ryan Casey, a faculty advisor in a life science department, explained this three-part role was not
equally divided. "Right now it's a pyramid and research is at the apex and teaching and service is at the base," he said and added, "So even if you're good in teaching and service, you're still not going to be as good as the person at research because that's the apex." This imbalance in the faculty role set up tension among faculty and laid the groundwork for staff advising (Sykes, 1988).

The period from 1947 to 1962 established the division between the old college ways of educating students and erected the basic framework upon which to hang the major developments of the next era. Historically, this University came of age between the end of World War II and the Civil Rights Movement. It was revising its image from a rural land grant agricultural College into a major University—at the same time it was required to understand and deal with rapid social and demographic changes and new signals from Federal and State government.

University Expansion

"The sixties was a major time of building for the University!" [John Mertens]

A number of circumstances combined to create the emerging sense of energy, optimism and growth which John Mertens, a faculty member in an art department, encountered when he arrived on campus in 1963. At the start of the sixties decade, a visionary president came on board. According to John, this inspirational president infused colleges and departments with new leadership and galvanized faculty participation in wide-scale planning and development in this period of initiatives. Expansion moved on several fronts simultaneously. John summed up the positive climate of this era, "There was a period of wonderful growth and enthusiasm and excitement!"

In little more than a decade, newly constructed high-rise buildings radically altered the landscape from a rural to an urban-like entity. The undergraduate enrollment outpaced physical growth and rapidly expanded departments. John said, "It was clearer and clearer
that enrollment at the University was going to go way beyond what anyone had envisioned."

Like many other faculty and staff who took on projects and programs tied to the evolution of the contemporary campus, John became involved in the development of the building which was to house his department. As he reconstructed the vicissitudes of the construction experience, John stressed an important understanding, "And another thing that's important is that from the beginning everything in this building has reported to the academic wing of the administration!" John strongly believed academic affairs generally received administrative priority over the student affairs division. He explained what it meant for a program or department to be part of academic affairs, "It's not an extracurricular activity!"

Student affairs also developed as part of campus expansion. Previously known as student personnel, student affairs agencies and services are generally associated with student life needs which buttress the academic experience. At the beginning of the seventies decade, spurred by political, sociological and economic events, the University increased efforts to broaden ethnic and cultural diversity on campus. Intended to complement academic affairs advising, multifunction academic support programs were created under the umbrella of student affairs to provide a variety of assistances to the new student populations. Their activities ranged from recruiting, orientation, and program development to tutoring, advising, counseling and general support. Robin Wolf pointed to a whole life focus in the multifunction academic support program—where she was a professional staff advisor—when she said it served as a "home away from home." The programs, centers and departments in academic affairs did not have such a broad focus on student life.

If construction and program development were outward signs of a new identity, fiscal autonomy was the internal sign. In 1962, the University gained control over most financial decisions within budget limitations. John said, "We had just been given autonomy, fiscal autonomy instead of a line item control being kept by the legislature, and
[the President] was leading the University into a whole new era." Along with greater fiscal control, the budget expanded dramatically.

This new era was full of opportunity for young faculty. Salary and the student-teacher ratio attracted Ryan to a faculty position in a life science department. He said, "I came in '67 at a salary of $9,000 which was actually very good." Prior departments were growing and new academic departments were initiated. By 1970, the University had nearly one-hundred majors available to students. He continued, "Probably from '65 to '73 the University was hiring approximately one-hundred new faculty a year because the enrollments were going up, fifteen hundred students a year. So to keep the one to fifteen ratio, they had to increase the faculty, and this place was still an incredible bargain!" Tuition and fees remained low and constant during this ten-year period.

Pierre Williams, a faculty advisor in a college-based special academic program, arrived seven years after Ryan. The sense of energy and optimism was in full swing. He said, "I came in '74." At this time, the University was at the peak of its growth mode. Pierre explained his understanding of how this phase of the University came to be. "It had decided to be in a growth mode by being more liberal than conservative."

This tolerant attitude was demonstrated by enthusiasm for alternative learning approaches, broadened academic and curricular choice and increased accessibility. New programs were organized under the academic affairs category known as special academic programs. Unfamiliar roles and directions for advising accompanied these changes. Most programs were based on the assumption of faculty willing to commit time and energy to sponsor and assist the student in the pursuit of personalized and relevant academic goals. The transformed faculty would be an expert advisor-ally (Mollner, 1972).

In 1968, when a new dormitory area was opened as a residential college, its thirteen buildings housed more students than the entire University had just a few years earlier. This residential college had an experimental and progressive outlook. Pierre said, "And the rhetoric of the day was 'living is learning,' and it was 'LIVING, LEARNING!'" He added,
"And it was out of that maelstrom that [my] program emerged." In Pierre's program, emphasis was placed on educating the "whole person" as part of a community of learners. Advising was united with one-to-one tutoring which extended into teaching in program seminars. While unique on this campus, these kinds of programs had been instituted earlier in a variety of other institutions of higher education in the United States (Douglas, 1992)

Within this time frame, other initiatives attracted new students and emphasized the use of public resources to promote social progress through higher education. These included a continuing education unit and a university without walls program. These programs responded to the learning needs of part-time, older, non-traditional students. Another option allowed traditional-age students an opportunity to design an interdisciplinary concentration as well, and the International Exchange Program accommodated the growing foreign student population and developed study abroad experiences for University students.

According to Ryan, the excitement of expansion and a young and large faculty upon which to draw were some of the influences leading to the development of the first University Honors Program. It was created in the early seventies and benefited marketing efforts as well as students. Ryan explained, "It was a plus for the University because it was something that the Admissions Office could advertise, that we have an Honors Program."

Despite the benefits, increased academic choice and growth on so many dimensions in a span of a few years led to confusion for students and advisors alike. The need for broad spectrum advising led to the creation of the first college counseling center on campus.

Mary Perry, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, described the situation entering students encountered prior to the establishment of the College of Liberal Arts Counseling Center. "Because there was no advising outside the department, in order to be assigned an advisor, you had to declare a major." She said many students were "totally unaware" about what was available and what they really wanted to do academically.
Increasingly, academic departments became revolving doors. Mary explained, "There was a realization during the late sixties that students often were assigned half a dozen advisors as they came to the reality that what they thought a major was might not be what they found, or what they expected, or what they wanted, or that it wouldn't get them to the end they expected." The impact of these academic nomads led to major change in the advising structure.

By 1970, administration had revised admission processes and created a new category of undeclared/undecided students. Entering students no longer were required to declare a major on their admission application. Students without a declared major were admitted to the College of Liberal Arts and advised in the Liberal Arts Counseling Center.

Like many programs created at the height of the spirit of expansion, the Center was to be staffed by volunteer faculty with administrative assistance provided by non-faculty staff. However, over time, fewer and fewer faculty volunteered at the Center while the numbers of students seeking assistance remained constant. Ryan said the Honors Program—like most special academic programs—was based on a similar assumption of continuing faculty enthusiasm. He explained although initially, there were a, "tremendous number of young faculty that were willing to do this," during the second half of the seventies decade, research began to outrank teaching, and service and faculty volunteering abated.

This marked the beginning of the transition period. Ryan asserted, "It became more difficult to recruit faculty because when the money got tight, the rewards weren't there, and then it was basically, 'You better do your research. That's the primary goal.'" Consistent with changes at the national level, as federal and state funding diminished, research increased in significance. Less emphasis was placed on service and teaching (Douglas, 1992; Sykes, 1988; Westmeyer, 1985).
But to make a long story short, the name of the game was money, and faculty were not getting rewards for advising, teaching and doing the extra duties." [Ryan Casey]

Ryan enthusiastically talked about the atmosphere of collegiality that existed from the sixties into the middle seventies. Faculty gathered together to solve problems and volunteer for teaching and advising assignments whether in a center, residence hall or honors class. A self-designated group of more than one-hundred faculty formed an organization called the Undergraduate Education Assembly (UEA). According to Ryan, they had one main goal: "You did not talk about your research; you talked about what went on in the classroom."

The political upheaval experienced on other campuses throughout the United States erupted here concurrently with the invasion of Cambodia by the United States. Sit-ins, building take-overs and other disturbances verged on the edge of violence and shut down university classes well before the end of the semester in 1970. The UEA was the group the provost and chancellor called upon to provide emergency advising during the difficult final moments of that spring semester. To help reduce student anxiety and confusion, the UEA organized open houses where students could discuss their options. According to Ryan, this action by faculty helped to prevent further escalation of the violence. He continued, "You could take the grade that you had or you could take a 'P.'" Students could also take the final exam early. Not everyone agreed with this effort. "A lot of faculty didn't approve," he said. "They felt we were coddling." However, he continued, "The tide across the country was really turning against the war. So there were really more people in favor of, 'God, let's do anything, but let's not burn the place down!'"

The new decade began with a slow change in the characteristics that marked the previous period. John summarized this passage: "And yes, there have been some amazing
changes in the University. Fortunately [these changes] happened before the end of the sixties came upon us, when we had a lot of other things to sort out: the students who had suddenly become active instead of inactive and repercussions from legislators and economic downturns."

The "repercussions from legislators" and "economic downturns" began seeping into the landscape during the second half of the seventies decade and coincided with demographic changes. Pierre said, although not immediate, enrollment at the University reflected the national change in the numbers of college-going students in the United States. He explained, "The growth throughout most of the country was from about sixty-four to seventy-four." Pierre's figures provide a sense of the undergraduate enrollment over a relatively short period of time. "[This University] in '64 had 5,000 students. In '68, it had 19,000." At it's largest, Pierre said, "In '74 it had 24,000 students." Thereafter, undergraduate enrollment numbers declined. He continued, "Any fluctuation has been downward not upward, and any growth has been at the graduate level not the undergraduate level. And that was a national phenomenon. That big spurt—the baby boom—or whatever it was, had burst!"

Support from the legislature eroded. Economic recession was a key phrase. Once shared faculty priorities evaporated. These changes paved the way for the rise of new campus advising cultures. Ryan traced the beginning of the faculty union and pinpointed two distinct cultures formed as a result: management and labor versus administration and faculty.

For the first decade of his employment on campus Ryan said faculty held informal and regular breakfast meetings with the president and top University administrators. He described the situation. "There was no union back then, no faculty union, and then, things began to get a little tight with the University in the mid-seventies." The investment period was over. A new president was installed during this period. He moved his residence and his office from the campus to the capital city. Ryan blamed this president for abandoning
the campus and creating an inroad for unionization which he believed polarized faculty and administrators.

There was an erosion of the former trust. "And then it basically became the adversary role that remains today," Ryan said with resignation in his voice and insisted, "The chancellor and the provost can talk . . . to the Faculty Senate, but never the way they could back in the early seventies because they are management, and we are labor . . . And that's the way it has to be!" Shared priorities had transformed into shared differences and opposition. Unionization also had a negative impact on faculty advising. Ryan said, "With the Union on board, advising became even more fuzzy because it was, to my knowledge, never written into the contract."

With financial resources limited, Ryan suggested the University changed its hiring practice with potential faculty. He explained:

If you recruit a young scientist, there's money there, and you want him or her to concentrate on the research, and not have the teaching or advising take away from the research time. And probably beginning from the mid-seventies right up to the present, I don't think faculty members when they're hired are ever told; I know in the sciences, advising and teaching is rarely mentioned.

This represented a "tremendous change" from past practice, Ryan said, and continued, "Basically, in the sixties and early seventies, faculty members came on board and were expected to teach in their specialty, but were also expected to teach at the introductory level in the introductory course for majors." During this period, graduate student teaching assistants increasingly replaced faculty as the instructors of many introductory courses. Students with greater access to higher education had less access to faculty.

The advising spectrum broadened as staff academic counselors picked up more and more of the advising role (Smith, 1990). Ryan explained his understanding. "I think what
happened from the mid-seventies up to the present is the growth of people who are not faculty, who probably were not hired to be advisors, but were hired to be staff assistants, and they began to talk to students because the students could not talk to the faculty because they couldn't find them, and simply because of being there either at the right place at the right time or if you want to look at it—at the wrong place at the wrong time—became advisors."

Jane upheld Ryan's point, "I've become an academic advisor here at [the University] just by happenstance really." Assigned to do summer transfer advising in place of a departmental faculty advisor, she discovered an affinity for advising, "The fact that I found this job was really just being in the right place at the right time!"

Historically, especially after World War II, secretaries increasingly provided advising (Douglas, 1992). This study discovered it is the case here; however, this practice has expanded to include a broader range of classified staff.

Jackie pointed out the discrepancy between her employment classification and job description as "technical assistant." "All the ratings say that I work in laboratories and I mix things and all that sort of thing," she explained and added vehemently, "I do nothing of that nature!" What she did do was academic advising. "Although," Jackie said, "I had never done any advising before [departmental administrators] decided I would do the advising."

While Jackie was assigned her advising role, Patty Huang, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, said directly, "I volunteered, and that's how I got into advising." Eventually, she was hired as a professional staff advisor. Leletti Cole, a classified staff advisor in an academic department, also volunteered for her position. She said, "I've accumulated other components to go along with the (secretarial) job like the advising and transfer advising." Neither Jackie or Leletti received an increase in pay when they took on advising responsibilities and tasks. Salary costs can be lowered by
adding advising tasks to classified staff duties rather than employing professional staff in advising positions.

The dispersion of advising duties among a variety of providers began in earnest in the mid- to late-sixties. This was consistent with internal factors of increased size, complexity and diversity of the student body, the introduction of new programs and curricular opportunity and academic majors (Douglas, 1992; Smith, 1990; Sykes, 1988). Outside influences were economic, social and political. These combined factors became more important in the conserving nineties. A central weakness in the advising system was exposed as the transition period unfolded. Faculty were told to do their research, yet the advising system was predicated on faculty willing to advise.

The Conserving 1990s

"There are no movers and shakers anymore!" [Ryan Casey]

As advisors discussed the current period, they had a number of major complaints. Emily Broadbent, a classified staff advisor in a special academic program, quickly summed up the situation, "I don't think the [advising] model we have is OK. . . . From the very first, the very beginning of when students come on this campus, advising is brushed aside." She attributed this to size and numbers of students. "The bigger you get, the more parts you've got that you have to put together, the more people in each program you've got to know about."

Sheer physical complexity of the University contributed a sense of disintegration. Emily painted the situation with a broad brush and emphatic strokes: "I think that the whole University is fragmented!" She explained the prevailing attitude in her special academic program and across the University was limited to, "This is my responsibility, and this is what I know." The intricacies of size cut off possibilities for easy access and unconstrained conversations, and instead, reinforced the sense of isolation and separation
among advisors. Emily was doubtful about improvement. "Again, that's probably going to mean money, and there is no money."

Eugenia Suffren, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, also recognized size as a source of problems; although, she said, there were oases of thoughtful advising. She drew a comparison between the "individualized TLC (tender loving care) advising" in her program to "minimal advising" provided in other settings. She explained the difference, "It's not simply pushing the bodies in and out as you have to when you're dealing with seventeen thousand on this campus." She acknowledged, "And there is a lot of that! And they can pick up a feeling of impersonality, and I think that the tragedy in a way of a big University is that the system has to be that way to handle seventeen thousand undergraduates."

Ryan also pointed to limitations of size when he talked about the general science courses. "In the sciences for example," he said, "there's four or five of them that literally take care of everybody. That's half the freshman class [approximately 1,750 students] in three science courses! So the idea of critical thinking or writing is hard to come by in these courses now." Classes with large enrollment also gave little access to the professor. This meant less time for discussion in class, and more dependence on machine scored tests rather than writing. This minimized opportunities for building the intellectual relationship between students and their teachers.

Initially John rationalized the lack of responsiveness to size. "I guess everything in a large organization is hard to move quickly." However, he could not find any justification for failing to react to changes in the student profile. He said, "But there seems to be pockets of substantial resistance to becoming flexible about meeting the needs of non-traditional students, and there are an increasing number of non-traditional students, and a decreasing number of people who simply can pay for their way and go straight through in four or five years."
For many advisors, flexibility meant access to classes for a variety of reasons ranging from finishing an undergraduate degree part time in the evening to satisfying graduate school or professional school prerequisites or job-related credentialing. Yet the schedule of coursework did not extend to any significant degree beyond early afternoon. Ryan was direct, "God forbid that you should teach at eight o-clock at night!"

To John, lack of adaptability was another sign that leadership was allowing the original land grant mission of the University to erode. This symptomatic shift troubled him:

One reason I'm excited and always have been about this particular institution . . . is that it is a land grant institution, and that means it has public service, not public service to industry, which it has. Every major university has that. . . . [But] I've seen a shift of the University support. . . . So my main pessimism has to do with that shift. I now hear a central administration talking more about public service, but . . . I so far see public service translated to being technology made available. And I don't see a reinstatement of grass roots service programs. And we are a land grant institution, and I think we had better remember our roots!

Jay West, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, reflected this anxiety. He asserted, "This place is a very un-grassroots place." In his experience ideas were not considered as free-standing, abstract subjects. Instead, he said the dominant decision-making ethos was expressed as, "How's this finally going to work politically rather than how close to the truth can we get?" When ideas were proposed the discussion was not centered on the merits of the idea, but its origins, and resolution was determined by its political weight. Communication was not a communal exercise. In fact, Jay said, "It's a very hierarchical thing." Jay spoke for a large number of participants who portrayed a sense of a campus leadership being in charge of everything and superior to everyone. He said, "I was amazed when I first came here and remain amazed how unimportant the deans are. How they're message carriers from [the administration] to the faculty."
A survival mode had replaced the excitement of expansion and the climate of enthusiasm. Amanda explained. "I think in the two years I've been here, I've seen so many things get tightened up and restricted as far as our program is concerned, and I know what this University has gone through, what all schools are facing, the drying up of the student population of college-age students, but it just seems to me that our administration and the University administration are more in collusion." This perception of conspiratorial intent left her uneasy and anxious.

Maintaining the status quo meant the leadership had developed a "bunker mentality," according to Ana Garcia, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center. She explained this excluded and stifled the voices of those who expressed opinions other than those sanctioned by administration.

Jane echoed this criticism and identified a remote leadership. "I think as soon as you lose touch with the students, you've lost it all. And I think unfortunately, that's the problem with many of our administrators here. They have lost touch with the student population." Robin underscored this sentiment when she detailed what this meant to her:

And I want to go to the administration and look up and say, "Hello, up there. Look what's happening down here. Come down from that lofty tower and see what's happening here." I want to invite the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellors and tell them, "Come spend some time with a student. Spend a day with a student. Sit in a boring lecture with that student. Take in an exam with that student. Go eat lunch with that student. Go somewhere socially with that student. Go to meet his faculty advisor, and wait for an hour with that student. Get to know what it's like from the clientele that we're here to serve. Get a cold with that student. Go to University Health with that student." There are so many aspects of life here. It is a different world, and too many people are too far removed from it!
Echoing this understanding from the perspective of a faculty advisor at the departmental level, Ryan reconstructed a conversation that occurred during the period of transition which informed the contemporary picture. He said,

I remember [a former vice chancellor] he looked at me once and he said, "With your name, you should be familiar with Pope John. One of the greatest things Pope John said was 'I opened the windows to let some fresh air in.'" . . . "We don't have time to do that. We don't have time to sit back and put our feet up and say, 'What can we do to make this place better?' All we're doing is fighting forest fires!"

And they're still doing it! . . . I think that what's happened is that the University has gotten so big, that there are no movers and shakers anymore! There's no one person in the University that you can go to and say, "Do it." And they'll do it. A lot of them will say, "I really think it's a great idea. I'd really love to help you, but I can't get involved. It's not in my jurisdiction." And it's too bad! It's too bad that you can't really do that anymore!

The criticisms of campus leadership were consistent with Boyer's (1987) research. In this period of decreasing state support and resources, lack of trust and belief in the good will and ability of administration were powerful themes in the majority of interviews.

The contemporary picture was further confounded by the up and down fiscal relationship with the state legislature. The legislature had made deep cuts to University funding during the past decade. To offset some cutbacks, in 1989 the University responded with a dramatic increase called the "curriculum fee." The income from this fee was retained on campus rather than returned along with tuition to the general fund of the state. The total cost including room and board for an in-state resident student for an academic year rose from $4,696 in 1988 to $8,755 in 1993.

Tuition retention was a more recent aberration in the fiscal lifeline of the University. Historically, the University depended on legislated appropriations while tuition reverted to the state. In 1992, the State Legislature voted to allow the University to retain tuition. John
explained this was supposed to result in more emphasis on teaching and "real incentive to have a larger enrollment." Recently, John said the campus had been notified of a reversion of this measure. "We had a brief time when tuition was returned to the campus. That has been changed this year. Now tuition reverts back, and we get an appropriation instead."

Melinda Abercrombie, a faculty advisor in a social science department, pointed to the psychological effects of financial uncertainty, "Dealing with overall frustrations with budget stuff and the financial crunch of recent years, the frustrations of everybody tend to be higher." Advisors reported a decrease in willingness among colleagues and co-workers to extend themselves for others or give each other the benefit of the doubt.

Monica perceived two additional effects of financial limitations. It had a visible impact on campus which affected her morale as well as her ability to do program planning. "The physical surroundings are not so nice because they don't have enough people at physical plant to keep them up, or you're waiting for four months or five months for a budget and so you don't know whether you can do a certain project until you get a sure sign that you're getting what you're expecting."

Jim Emmert, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, described it this way:

As I've visited various campuses around the country, in the twenty-two years I've been here, I've only been to one other place where the campus was as dirty as this one. . . . Our campus is the pits! . . . The landscaping is pathetic. Sidewalks are pathetic. If you go over there by the new library, you can take your life in your hands. On a wet day, you have to wade through water to get over to [the administration building]. . . . I just find it very frustrating and depressing and demoralizing. . . . Last year, I thought things were going to turn around, our budget was going to pick up. And then this year what I hear is the next two to three years is going to be bad!
John's interviews occurred a month into the new fiscal year 1994. Apparently without forewarning, the campus had just been notified of another financial blow. John's voice took on a puzzled tone, "But then the appropriation was cut." The budget news had a dispiriting effect on those participants aware of it. However, John said defiantly, "We've come up and we've come down, and we've survived, and the University will be strong on the other end, I have no doubt about that. This has happened too many times. And this University will not go down!"

The 1990s had begun as a belt-tightening period (Ramos, 1994). As advisors described a fiscal situation of one step forward and two steps back, it seemed like an economic-political dance.

Glimpses of the Future

"Je n'ai sais pas?" [Gordon Smith]

As this study was initiated, the University was just passing beyond the planning threshold into the implementation phase of extensive change. Statewide restructuring, and campus reorganizing and reforms were of concern to all participants. The state recently restructured its formerly independent universities into a statewide system. Emily asked, "What has the difference been since supposedly these five campuses all came together? I don't know. . . . Does anybody know?" She expressed a common understanding and revealed commonly felt isolation. "I think it is rippling through and I don't understand how it's going to touch us." This increased the complexity of advising students who might want to move within the University system, and increased the frustration level with administration. Emily raised several questions. "And the last time I talked to somebody because a student was wanting to transfer from [one university in the system to another] and at that time no one really knew what was going to transfer. What
isn't? What does that mean? Can a student just transfer from that campus? They're still having to apply, aren't they? she wondered.

No one seemed to know how to answer these kinds of questions. Jim explained:

Namely we don't know how to interpret transfers [within the system]. . . . For instance, I know that there is a great difference of opinion between the President's Office and the local campuses as to how this should all be handled, but when this first came up there was signals from the President's Office that we should be one big happy family. . . . On the other hand . . . on our campus, [the previous chancellor] wanted students from those other campuses basically to be treated just like transfer students. . . . And then there's the question: is the university system the land grant institution or is [just this University] the land grant institution? And I think that varies depending on who you ask.

Concurrent with statewide restructuring, the University also was reorganizing its colleges and departments. Mary was unsure how this would effect her counseling center. "Now that the College [of Liberal Arts] has divided it's also conceivable in the not too distant future, that each of the Colleges could develop its own policy." She said no one was talking to the Counseling Center staff about what this might mean for them or for undergraduates.

Gordon Weber, a professional staff advisor, said the reorganization of his college would not impinge on his work as director of an office of degree requirements, but it would adversely affect others. "I think it's going to make some interesting changes for students in some majors who might under their previous academic deans, where the policies, many of them, are a little different from general policies," he said gingerly and explained, "When athletes were doing badly in that department, the head of the department and the athletic coordinator would ship students to [a certain] major. . . . These were students who after four or five semesters were still below a 2.0!" Given that this major
recently had been reorganized out of existence, he wondered where these students would
go.

Monica reinforced the point made by others that campus reorganization had made
aspects of their work less predictable this year. She said, "So because of that structural
change within the University, there is more uncertainty as well as the delay in the budget
this year for everybody on campus." Essentially, a wait-and-see attitude had developed
around the meaning of restructuring the state university system and campus reorganization.

In 1989, a University self-study reported that the University received "5,000 fewer
applications in 1989 than it did in 1988." Besides numerical tallies, what did this mean for
advising? Two major events occurred at this juncture. First, the sudden and large reduction
in applications was concurrent with the increases in student fees detailed in the previous
section. Second, the decision of the legislature to allow the University to keep revenues
collected from tuition in fiscal year 1992, rather than returning it to the state general fund,
appeared coincidental to the emphasis by administration on retention.

During the year and a half leading up to the period of interviewing in 1993, attrition
management became a prime directive of administration. Campus leadership convened a
committee to examine the retention situation "especially on the retention of first year
students" and recommend solutions. Recent statistics led the Retention Committee to
believe that there had been a significant and unusual erosion of retention rates during 1990
to 1991. However, this bears some analysis.

Prior research findings covering ten semesters of retention and attrition statistics
had been released by the University's internal watchdog research unit in 1989. Between
1982 and 1991, the percentage of students suspended actually declined. The suspension
rate in 1989 was approximately eight percent, and in 1991, the figure was reported as six
percent. One important point made by the 1989 study was the serious deficit of
information the University had about students who voluntarily withdrew from the
University before graduation. The 1992 Retention Report indicated such withdrawals
represented an increase from eleven percent in 1982 to approximately sixteen percent in 1991. Consistent with recommendations in the field, the authors of the 1989 study had announced plans to survey students who voluntarily withdrew in order to develop the data base (Kramer, Moss, Taylor and Hendrix, 1985).

Gordon insisted this was not done. Instead, he believed the 1991 Retention Committee speculated on a number of causes for the increased attrition rate and then presented what amounted to a foregone conclusion. "I think over the past couple of years there's been a lot of fervor generated about our retention rate. From 1980 on—when we had university-wide statistics—it seemed to me our rates were pretty good particularly if you look at a six-year span or an eight-year span of the number of students who actually graduate. So to me, it's all been tied to retention."

He argued the administration had based their retention analysis on an outmoded and inappropriate model of graduation rates. College was less and less a four-year sequential process. More and more students were part-time or need to take a break from higher education for many reasons. He listed some he had encountered. "There are people who can do it in four years, but I think we find a greater number of students changing majors, wanting to add minors, wanting to do double majors, coming back for second bachelors degrees, doing exchange programs, co-ops, and we're not a four-year institution. We also have an increasingly older population of students." Gordon's belief that the issue of retention was miscast as an advising problem and had more to do with contemporary demands and characteristics of students, has support in the advising field (Titley, 1994).

Among advisors the retention debate highlighted an essential difference about the nature of advising. This was the ethical dilemma about one priority for advising: the good of the individual versus the greater good. Ryan and Jay argued the ends of these differing points of view. "Academic advising has got to be more supportive rather than punitive!" Ryan insisted. Jay countered by saying there is confusion between saying "no" and being punitive. He believed advisors must be judicial in their attempt to discern the truth of any
situation, and that their work has broader implications than an application of rules. He explained:

But I've always thought, too, that institutions have responsibilities other than to their [student] customers, that they have more customers than they see. The customers are graduate schools, medical schools, and law schools, and employers who hire people, and citizens who trust the knowledge and the skills these student are getting out of it. . . . I think there's a spectrum in there from being manipulating, punitive, hostile, a bad person, and on the other end of that spectrum is trying to take a lot of grief that you could easily get out of by saying, "Yes." And saying, "No" because of some sense of oughtness that you carry with you.

Pierre expressed the sentiment accepted by the majority who experienced a dichotomy between the retention role and their primary responsibility as advisors. "The principle job, it seems to me, is to help [students] discover themselves, and then proceed to go on and do whatever it is that's important." University leadership and advisors interpreted retention differently. Pierre summarized the two positions. "We say when a student discovers what she wants to do, and that means transferring from [the University] to some other school, that's success. University says, 'That's lost tuition! We're going to call that attrition!'"

Although the authors of the 1992 Retention Report indicated it had been an inclusive process, of the twenty-eight participants in this study fewer than a quarter said they had been involved in any meaningful discussions about the issue or reforms. A number of participants questioned the make-up of the committee as well as its findings. Resentfully, Gordon said, "There was only one person on that committee who, to my knowledge, even deals with undergraduates in an academic advising capacity."
Amanda summarized points made by other advisors. She said:

I wondered for a long time since they started talking about the reform issues on campus, it just brought up a whole lot of stuff amongst those of us who do this work. The punitive nature of the report. The condemnation of advising on campus. The total disregard for the people who do that. And lack of input from those people who do it. I mean, the people who wrote this report primarily were not academic advisors!

Actually, participants on the Retention Committee did include faculty and staff who provided academic advising. However, participation was weighted with administrators and student affairs personnel rather than faculty and staff advisors from academic affairs.

Some were disturbed by a vindictive tone they thought was expressed in the 1992 Retention Report. Gordon voiced suspicions raised by other participants who perceived this as a personalized attack:

I also want to know where the research was on all the changes in retention policies. I didn't see any basis for those decisions except that it was kinder to students. And to me, I felt frankly like that was a report directed out of a particular office, and that it probably had a particular staff person who works in that office as a support person, who probably wrote the report. And I think it's a person who tends to stick their nose into a lot of things and makes pronouncements as if this person were an associate vice chancellor because I guess some of us get in the way of the policies that they would like to implement based on *Je n'ai sais pas*?

While some advisors said that administration might not be pointing their finger directly at them, they expressed the belief that campus leadership was attacking others not provided the financial, human and physical resources needed to do their work. It seemed the prime targets were those who lacked support, were given no authority to make changes and no recognition when they did despite difficult circumstances.
Based on recommendations of the Retention Committee, the administration instituted a variety of academic reforms. These included an extended course withdrawal period to the mid-point of the semester, and a reduced course load policy which allowed a student to carry fewer than twelve credits for a specified number of semesters without falling out of academic good standing. Another change introduced the course repeat policy. This allowed students to repeat courses in which they received an "F" without the "F" counting in their grade point average. A new reinstatement "forgiveness" policy allowed students who had been dismissed or had voluntarily withdrawn from the University to return after a period of three years, and have their prior grades removed from their grade point average.

The majority of participants were wary of most of these changes and the process for creating them. Amanda captured the intensity of the feelings of many participants who felt they were being scapegoated by administration for problems that existed far and away from what advisors did:

And so hearing when they were talking about this reform thing, it wasn't really a reform plan, but it was more, let's blame it on poor advising. And now we're going to create this new system for advising. We're not going to ask anybody who's been doing advising how this would work, or why this would work, or could this even work, but we're just going to say, "Well, you don't know what you're doing and therefore we're going to do it our way." Which of course, is better, "because we said so!"

The Retention Committee questioned the legitimacy of the Undergraduate Deans Assembly, a group of undergraduate deans and major advisors from the colleges on campus who had self-organized in the 1970s as a means of providing clarity and consistency among themselves. They raised questions and debated issues related to University policies, rules and regulations which affected the undergraduate experience. Rather than building on the spirit of communal problem solving demonstrated by the
Assembly, the Retention Committee recommended it be disbanded and replaced by an "official University Academic Advisors Committee." This stung members. Gordon said, "For people who are bastards, we still have some influence because there are people who still consult with us. And we don't care whether or not we're legitimate, we're only a forum where some things get discussed."

Issues left undiscussed by the Retention Committee were admissions processes and standards. Despite this, most advisors believed that during the previous five years the student profile not only represented a downturn in the numbers of students applying, but also represented a corresponding decline in college preparedness. This was consistent with reports by researchers and writers in the field (Boyer, 1987; Kramer, et al, 1985, Strommer, 1994). Given this, many advisors concluded the Retention Report and ensuing reforms were a bureaucratic response covering lowered admission standards. Ze Mendez, a faculty advisor in a humanities department, said, "I don't believe that just lowering the standards and making things easier on the academic side is going to solve all the problems of retention. . . . If a student started out badly at the University, and doesn't mature, then it's only a matter of time before that student will leave the University, and the only thing the University has done is to keep that student around for an extra year. But it comes out to be the same because he drops out as a freshman or drops out as a sophomore."

Jay laughed wryly as he explained how he viewed the situation between administration and advisors, "And then in a funny sense, they turned around and blamed the victim you might say, for the losses when probably the losses are too low. They're not too high. There'd be more people who would profit from being lost, not fewer!"

The Retention Report appeared to solidify the advising-attrition connection. Some participants believed they now were charged with maintaining a sense of academic standards on one hand while extending the academic career of increasing numbers of undergraduates not academically prepared or composed enough to meet those requirements on the other. Pierre described this untenable position:
I think we spend a lot of time generalizing about the entire undergraduate population from the first year students. And our attrition in first year students is awful. On the other hand, that attrition gets a lot of people who don't really know what they're about or aren't serious about what they're about. Or are here only to party. It gets them out of the picture... But there's a great deal of students who take it terribly seriously, and the crisis is the grown-ups aren't taking them seriously. That's the crisis that I see that the institution isn't responding to the crying, desperate need. There are pockets... But we're all periphery... We're in a contracting mode. We're not in an expanding mode, I'm afraid.

Habley (1986) stated that retention is a slim thread on which to hang academic advising. He warned that advising and retention are not interchangeable in meaning or directly linked together in a process-product manner, and asserted such connection could make advising a "whipping boy" (p. 6.). According to most advisors, this had happened here. They believed the authors of the Retention Report had fixed the primary responsibility for the retention problem on advisors. This conflicted with researchers and writers who have pointed to an indirect rather than direct affect of advising to retention (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Winston, 1994).

The appearance of the academic reforms during the period when tuition was retained on campus led many to question whether these changes were prompted by a desire to help struggling students or the struggling University as it plowed through a challenging economic, political and social climate. Gordon insisted the reforms were related to budget problems. "And frankly, I think retention, the big emphasis on retention and giving students another chance, fixing their academic record to cover up lapses made sense when we retained tuition because we needed the money. It's totally an economic goal!"

In a similar vein, Jim asked, "I'm wondering if retention is going to be as important this year as it was last year?" As did many, he associated the emphasis on retention with the retention of tuition on campus the previous year, "I don't want to be too pessimistic, but
it almost seems as though this talk about retention suddenly occurred whenever we got to keep the tuition money."

Jay, like a number of others, had hoped the shortage of students would cause campus administrators to hear what advisors had to say. "I had hoped that when students got short, when students became cash cows two years ago, that that was going to produce at least a temporary listening to us which we maybe could then solidify and build on."

However, according to most that did not happen. Jay was surprised by the response. "And here, at least to my astonishment, there was that woeful exclusion of us. Two or three people had wanted to use their lack of wisdom to determine what all this was about. Now that's abominable!"

The Retention Report stated that the academic reforms were a response to a social need. However, upon investigation the reforms were atomistic. They were a simple solution to a complex situation rather than an innovative process for creating unity or harnessing enthusiasm. They represented a minimal attempt to deal with the issues identified by administration as "dramatic" and serious. Quite possibly, an undesired affect might occur. The streamlined student process reduced the need for faculty advisors to be involved in a student's academic decision-making process. Therefore, it was conceivable faculty would be further distanced from students. Although the stay for marginal students might be prolonged, it also was questionable whether or not the student experience would be enriched by these changes. This was counterproductive to the administrations' assertion that the reforms would more fully benefit students.

Yet according to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), there are unintended benefits to student retention. In their analysis of research studies, they reported the length of time an undergraduate remained in college, the greater the evidence of shifts in their understanding of higher education. Many studies have shown this as a movement from a narrow, conservative parochialism to a broader more inclusive and tolerant attitude with some expansion in intellectual attitude as well.
This section presented glimmers of the future. The days of expansion had passed. Expectations had changed. Competition with other institutions of higher education for a diminishing pool of students, serious fiscal issues, faculty emphasis on research, and questions about competence and trustworthiness of campus administration had become problems for colleges and universities nationally (Boyer, 1987; Kramer, 1985; Strommer, 1994).

Summary

This chapter introduced the organizational setting in which advisors do their work. The many characteristics of any institution create an individual ethos. Context, including the more concrete physical, fiscal, and architectural elements along with abstract social and political issues, held deep meaning for the development of academic advising here. The major characteristics of the University at this time added up to a climate that was more controlling than collaborative, top-down rather than grass-roots, fragmented rather than cohesive.

The imbalance among the three aspects of the faculty role produced a gap in the advising system. In addition, the University added new academic opportunities meant to accommodate the diversifying student profile. These changes led to structural adaptations, and broadened the advising spectrum. This greatly expanded the use of staff advisors. Advising changed from an enterprise primarily based on faculty advising majors in academic departments to a diversified and more complex system which included a variety of advisor classifications. One of the by-products of too many choices was more confusion about academic possibilities for advisors and students alike. The overall sentiment among advisors was that the current model and state of advising was not acceptable.

Advisors had a particular concern that retention issues were being confused with advising. The shifting imperatives of academic reforms and other changes lead to a fuller discussion of how advisors regard the students they advise.
CHAPTER V
NEW PROBLEMS AND OLD CONCERNS:
THE COMPLEX AND CHANGING STUDENT PROFILE

Dimensions of Student Change

"So that whole demographic profile does make it more difficult." [Eugenia Suffren]

"The student population that we have now certainly isn't the same [type of] population we had ten years ago, and it's likely to continue changing." Mary Perry, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, introduced one of the major themes of this study. The changing and increasingly diverse and complex student profile was strongly imprinted on every interview.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the campus was in the process of reorganizing departments and colleges, and difficulties related to this revision could have been anticipated as the major concern to participants. However, Eugenia Suffren, a professional staff academic advisor in a special academic program, de-emphasized the effects of these changes and instead stressed another shift that was troubling her. "The big change is not so much structural in department and major requirements and things like that." Instead, she said, "But the student pool is changing." Hesitant to paint the student profile too broadly, but wondering if other advisors had noticed, she cited key dimensions of increasing change:

We do seem to have a group of kids that on some levels are more dependent, and I don't know whether other advisors feel this, but the kids of the baby boomers or whatever it is—I'm just grasping to understand this . . . but our kids now, say as opposed to fifteen years ago when I started here . . . kids don't seem to come in with the same decision-making skills, the same kind of beginnings of street savvy on how to do stuff on their own. Even if they want to be typically adolescent and dependent, they are
According to Eugenia, the impact of increased emotional dependence was accompanied by other unfavorable characteristics. She continued, "I think that the changing demographics of our undergraduate population have made our job more difficult because we don't have as strong students." For this, she indicted recent admissions decisions. "The University is not enrolling students that come out of high school with as strong academic records." She noted declining academic ability and inclination often was coupled with serious economic stresses. "The financial profile of our students also then goes along with that," she said. Students were faced with the complication of piecing together the financing of their education. "It is more dependent upon financial aid or more dependent upon work," she explained. Social issues presented obstacles as well. "Certainly family, single-parent upbringing means that it's much more complicated for kids to deal," she said, and added that any decision was made more difficult because divided families often doubled interactions. She pointed out divorce, separation or the single family experience also affected a student's level of self-assurance, "And not having the security within the kid herself because of that trauma." To this, she added an increasing anti-academic interest, "And I think also, TV, I mean the impact of video culture on kids and their unwillingness and ability to read." These changing characteristics increasingly resulted in a different kind of advising session, "And they want quick, easy answers so often."

The issues on Eugenia's list were not endemic to her program or even special academic programs, but were consistent with the experience of nearly every advisor in this study. As Anunciata Buttons, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center confirmed, these concerns crossed institutional lines between those in the traditional liberal arts and those in professional colleges. She said, "I think they're less mature. They're not as strong."
In general, participants typified students as increasingly developmentally, academically and economically under prepared. They described a broadening roster of limiting personal complications and social issues burdening more and more of their advisees. The following sections explore how advisors experience these changing characteristics and asks what these shifts in the student profile mean for participants.

Developmental Issues

"Tell me, what should I do?" [Florence Baker]

According to advisors in this study, a growing number of students admitted to the University during the past two or three years were emotionally dependent. Florence Baker, a professional staff advisor in a college counseling center, said more of her advisees wanted her to make academic decisions for them. Her approach was to refuse their request. Instead, she said, "So you have to talk about options again."

As the chief undergraduate faculty advisor in a social science department, Melinda Abercrombie explained she did tell students what they needed to do to fulfill requirements in their major. However, beyond this, like most participants, she encouraged her advisees to make their own decisions. "I'm never terribly authoritarian about it because I feel like a lot of the growing process has to be that people learn to make their own decisions and assess the different options even in terms of career goals." Despite this, some students persisted; she said, "They want you to tell them. [They say] 'Tell me what to do.'" Jim Emmert, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, echoed Melinda and added, "But it seems like more and more students are that way!"

Ana Garcia, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, encountered increasing numbers of students clustering at either end of a range of behavior. "There are the two strains," she said and added, "The very willful ones or the ones who are
very passive, and there's such a range in between, but probably those are the hardest: the willful and the passive." Of these she said, "I think that my worst interactions are the students who come here and say, 'Tell me what to do.'" Of all of her advising sessions, these were the most taxing, "When you finish a half hour you are like, Whew! Tired. Tired. Tired."

Delores Eisenach, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, said, "There's been a change in the character of students over the time that I've been here in that I think they're younger. They're not younger chronologically, but they're younger in terms of independence." She explained this changed the emphasis from straightforward academic assistance to an accent on developmental issues. "The kind of advising I'm doing now is different from the kind of advising I did ten years ago," she said and clarified her point, "I'm doing more work now to help people grow up than I did when I started."

Undergraduates appeared to have many unfounded and unrealistic notions about college and collegiate life. One of these was the role an advisor played in the student experience. Consistent with writers and researchers in higher education, advisors in this study reported more students appeared to be looking for an authority figure to take charge of their academic life and make decisions for them rather than an advisor to assist them in discovering possibilities (Boyer, 1987; Brown and Rivas, 1994; Strommer, 1994).

The somewhat condemnatory tone used by the majority when discussing increasing numbers of their advisees as developmentally unprepared for a university experience might accurately describe many of the students they saw, but it bears some reflection. Jay West, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, offered beginning insight:

Many of us who've worked here have heard all sorts of horror stories about financial aid, about work schedules, about dormitory life
where the fiction is we have eighteen-year-old mature adults. What we have is very immature adults. Not even mature adolescents. Maybe it should be a mature adolescent instead of a immature adult. And thrown them into something very difficult and said, "Now. Survive!"

The rejection of the notion of University standing in for family was probably less of a statement about the capabilities and rights of students as it was tacit acknowledgment of the inability of higher education to represent the diversity of beliefs and intentions of the contemporary family (Bok, 1986). Yet as Boyer (1987) noted, while the concept of *in loco parentis* has been dismissed as unjustifiable in higher education for nearly three decades, there is little agreement about what is an appropriate replacement. On this campus, many advisors asserted abandonment of *in loco parentis* had been supplanted by another equally impracticable concept—survival.

A more complex analysis of these issues can be gained by looking at what major research and theory says in general about the meaning of college for students. Theorists tend to vary in their beliefs about the process of human development and theoretical application relative to differences such as age, gender and ethnicity. Yet some basic agreement can be drawn (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). For the majority, higher education presents a limited period of transition between adolescence and adulthood. However, regardless of age, this is not a benign interval. Entrance to collegiate life most likely represents a break, and often an uncomfortable disruption, with people, traditions and beliefs important to each student (Boyer, 1987). Students are not only learning academic material during this period, but within the framework provided by the institution, they are learning new aspects of their identity, what those new aspects mean, new ways of being or becoming adult, and how to manage all the other variables. In place of what was known, a multitude of new people, information, experiences and beliefs must be accommodated—at the same time as most students adapt to new or increased independence often in a location.
distant from the support provided by their previous social world. While this can be exhilarating, this often is tremendously unsettling work.

John Mertens, a faculty advisor in an art department, said advisors can help students in their development by helping them learn what questions to ask of themselves and their education. "Students have got to gradually take more control of their own destiny, and more responsibility for it, and be somehow taught how to." However, he admitted after more than twenty-five years of advising, this was hard for him, "That's a tricky combination!"

The student-university relationship was complicated by other factors. The size and ethos of this campus made it hard for many adult advisors to know who to trust, but for those with limited life experience, the challenge was even greater. Many students got caught in the big system. It was hard to get much attention. Mary noted this. She said, "They feel overwhelmed. And a lot of them are afraid. They're afraid to talk to an advisor. They don't have their life in order." She added, "It's a much bigger concern than it used to be."

If students are anxious, lack information about themselves and clarity about this institution or their possibilities here, they would likely have difficulty rationally selecting a major or deciding what course selection makes sense for them. Especially in their first year, they may well need strong direction, an opportunity to rebel and someone to argue with, as well as someone to listen and help them build their own options (Solomon and Solomon, 1993). As advisors clearly demonstrated, this was no easy advising task or responsibility to take lightly.

**Academic Preparation**

"There are more students here who are on the edge in terms of academic preparedness." [Delores Eisenach]
As participants spoke about the academic dimension of their advisees, they drew a three-part picture. The majority expressed concern that a large number of students admitted in the past two years were not ready to do college-level work. More and more appeared to be anti-intellectual and academically uncommitted. At the same time, they held unrealistic academic and career aspirations. In order, these issues are discussed in the next three sections.

Major criticism was directed at elementary and high schools. Annunciata was an undergraduate dean in a college with a strong focus on technological science. The curriculum required a high proficiency in math. Annunciata said nonetheless, "We are taking vocational, a larger number of vocational students who graduate from vocational high schools... They're very deficient in math." Emphatically, she asserted, "They should be going to a community college!" Their need for remediation separated them from more prepared students. They could not catch up. "This sets a poor tone for them," she said, and added, "They are easily discouraged." She bemoaned this practice, "But the fact is the poor people, they never had the background to be accepted and admissions has taken them."

At orientation, students interested in science met with Ryan Casey, a faculty advisor in a life science department. His assessment of the students he more often encountered was commonly held by many advisors, and he contributed a common recommendation, "It is sad because I think there are an awful lot of students now at the University, quite frankly, who should not be here." In line with criticism (Bok, 1986), Ryan traced the problem of unprepared students to the deteriorating quality of pre-college teaching, guidance and social problems in public schools. "They are the type of students, who we're dealing with now, that because of the horrible problems in the high schools, they just simply didn't get the advice and counseling and the courses that they needed. I don't think students have to take some of the more rigorous types of courses that used to be required."

Jane Garaud, a professional staff advisor who divided her time among two academic departments and a college counseling center, expressed a similar sentiment, "I
think they don't get the college preparedness that they used to in high school." She added another variable which she thought might account for the change in the student profile: "And I think the population is dwindling, the college age population is at a lull so [admissions] has a smaller pool to draw from." Jane believed lack of preparation and lack of selectiveness in admission decisions had to be the explanation for the retention problem, despite the University leadership's assertions to the contrary. She said, "So many students are on probation, and so many students are up for suspension. The University keeps saying that the quality of the students has not gone down." She challenged, "Well, if the quality of the students has not gone down, and yet, everything else is the same, why such a great increase in probation and suspension?"

Again and again, participants brought up their suspicions about relaxed University admissions standards. Anunciata insisted, "It's mirrored in the whole University's admission's process!" Frustration with admissions decisions represented a flash point for many advisors, but admissions was not viewed as directly responsible for the increased problems they encountered in the current student profile. Most believed the admissions office was under orders from administration to reach enrollment projections.

Despite their willingness to understand the predicament of admissions staff, the majority viewed the results of an increasing number of admissions decisions with despair. Jane noted that faculty at the 1992 and 1993 summer orientations complained that they were stymied by increasing numbers of students admitted to the University with "a 300 verbal SAT" score. Anunciata provided an example of what a low SAT meant to most:

I look at the verbal aptitude and I see a 450 and I say, "That may be why you're having difficulty with your junior year courses. I bet you are not an adventurous reader," is a nice way of saying, 'I bet you never read!'

'No, I don't like to read.'
Many advisors insisted an increasing number of admitted students were unable to read and comprehend basic texts and had difficulty with writing requirements. Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, explained that many students tried to get around the system. She said, "They avoid classes where [reading and] writing is a requirement. They'll take a large class. Chances are, they'll end up with a multiple choice."

Kay brought to light an alternative point. Many public school students, as well as first and second-year college students, often took large general education or survey-type lecture classes where use of multiple choice and true/false tests provided little opportunity to assess expressive abilities and skills. The need to learn quickly what they did not learn in their previous thirteen years in school substantially increased student reliance on tutoring according to Anunciata. "We do provide the tutoring, but what I've tried to say is, 'I don't want the tutors to be the teacher.' And some of them want a tutor from the first week. That's scary!"

Monica Brennan, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, believed it was not easily possible to gain ground at the university level that was lost in previous schooling. She said, "It's more likely the people who do well in college are the people who did well before." Monica was by no means alone in her belief that commitment to learning, encouragement and opportunities for learning must start prior to college, and were difficult—if not impossible—to be initiated in college.

Participants' understanding about the drop in academic qualifications and increased need for remedial help and tutoring was in line with national research and criticism. Astin (1985) reported an increase in the number of college-bound students who responded they would need tutoring when they arrived on campus. At the same time, critics of higher education have asserted that increases in remedial assistance have been made at the "expense" of other academic programs (Bok, 1986, p. 38).

While many participants in academic affairs related the phenomenon of increased student requests for tutoring, in multifunction academic support programs where tutoring
was readily available and often required, the reverse was described. Patty Huang, a professional staff advisor in one of these programs, was frustrated. "We would like to help students, but they won't listen, and that's the problem." Her advisees included, "Freshmen who were accepted to [the University] conditionally because either their English is not good enough, or it can also be grades or their SAT score is low, but admissions accepts students of color below admission standards." As part of their conditional acceptance into "achievement programs" students signed a "contract" with admissions in which they agreed to specific requirements, including tutoring. "But," she said, "some students come in and they don't care what they sign, they won't abide by the rule." Students avoided tutoring. "That's very frustrating," she said, and added, "This is kind of like a hopeless situation."

The academy should have expectations that any student admitted would have critical thinking and analytic skills, reading ability and be able to produce writing at a certain level. However, wide-scale research confirmed the complaints of most advisors in this study. Boyer (1987) wrote, "The separation we found between school and college has led to a mismatch, a disturbing one, between faculty expectations and the academic preparation of entering students" (p. 3). While the lack of student preparation described by advisors was disheartening, there is room for improvement. Institutions of higher education in the state, not just the University, need to work together, as well as with elementary, middle and high schools, to find ways of helping schools prepare students to do college level work.

Anti-Intellectual and Uncommitted

"But it is in a context, if it's not an institutional context, it is a context of trying to get the good, the true and the beautiful, working in the service of the good, the true and the beautiful with people who ostensibly want to be in there with you, who want to make that same trip." [Jay West]
As advisors described their advisees, many saw student academic problems stemming from an anti-intellectual inclination and synonymous with a lack of basic commitment to learning. Jay pointed out that the academy held a fundamental intellectual principle—the cherished "life of the mind." He said, "I think the frustration that many faculty feel, and many of us as advisors feel, is the recruiting of students who are not only not in that boat, don't want to take the trip, that can't be converted."

Many advisors reported an increasing number of students appeared to enroll in the University because it represented the "next step." Ze Mendez, chief undergraduate advisor in a humanities department, said students appeared to come to the University because parents said they had to or their friends were here. He, like most, was frustrated by this attitude. He said, "I can preach to them, but if they're unwilling to change, then there's no way that they will change." He continued:

I would say the last two or three years, the students coming to the University are less prepared. Less willing to do work. In many ways more disorderly than previous students. . . . When I do advising in the summer, [orientation] I do run into a lot of students who I feel are not going to make it at the University because they have very negative attitudes about academics, about the University as a whole, school in general. . . . And when I discuss their interest about coming to the University, they don't like anything. . . . They already come with that negative attitude. . . . It's very frustrating and very upsetting because I cannot perceive of an eighteen-year-old kid who has no interest in higher knowledge.

This story reflected many similar examples. It amply demonstrated the wide disparity of understanding between many advisors who treasured the intellectual and abstract and many students who valued the concrete and practical. Street smart, but academically naive and uncomfortable within the academic culture, was how most advisors considered the majority of undergraduates. In general, these opposing positions appeared to
present a significant and increasing mismatch between many students and most advisors. Jay viewed this as an impediment to much of his advising. He explained:

But I think that these junctures come when there are people from these two different cultures who enjoy the life of the mind. The ten percent of the population that enjoys the life of the mind has been sicced on the ninety percent who don't and they're locked up together for four years and told, "Now, you're going to get along just fine." And there's really a great deal of accommodation that takes place in there. There's the ten percent of folks who do their homework and like to do it and take out the books. And the rest are not sure that this is all that worthwhile or important or something of that sort. They are the people who have street smarts. They're often very hard to get at because they've found another way of learning very, very well. And they're quite impatient with our way of learning. Although I must say, I think they're more patient with ours than we are with theirs as a culture.

Jay, as did many, had faith in the power of thought encapsulated in the concept of "life-of-the-mind" to be able to solve problems and improve life. When he advised, he tried to engender respect and enthusiasm for thinking in addition to having regard for students' emotional concerns, what they wanted, what self-interest dictated, or common or folk wisdom recommended. He hoped they would come to value the academic learning experience and return for more throughout their lives. While Jay saw the situation as anti-intellectual, Ryan viewed it as a lack of self-discipline or willingness to take responsibility. He said, "I think there is that, maybe call it 'lack of focus or lack of commitment.'"

Many advisors believed that a more reasonable assumption grounding student motivation was the notion of doing something, almost anything, and persisting to graduation. Like many, Jay spoke at length about this perspective. Although he characterized the current attrition rate as, "A great loss," he detailed this second disturbing situation which attracted no attention:
And the other great loss, almost most heartbreaking, are not the students who flunk out, or the students who fail, but the students who persist and get a 2.2 degree. Those are the people who don't know what they don't know. Don't know what they don't have. Who employers can't recognize as being unfulfilled people. They've been shortchanged and no one quite knows. . . . George Bernard Shaw has a phrase, "college passmen." People who just pass through, who jump over the hoops, and these large institutions produce thousands of those failures. That's almost one of the things we specialize in is "lowest" common denominator "success," both in quotes.

According to many, such shortchanged students returned to the greater community where they shortchanged others. Anti-intellectualism was not a new characteristic of the college student profile (Douglas, 1992; Hofstadter, 1963; Weingartner, 1992). As Jay indicated, it was a classic problem (Hofstadter, 1963). Although it was an old concern, most advisors believed it had increased in emphasis.

Yet it was futile to expect students to move quickly to replace beliefs they had been developing for eighteen years. Especially since their values were probably reflected on television daily. More than likely they did not feel out of step with the rest of the world, but viewed the academy as on the wrong foot. Many might only have understood education in economic terms as a direct outlay of cash or a delay in earnings. They might have wanted to know what kind of a return they could expect for their money, time and effort.

Advisors need to be able to talk to each student in the language that makes initial sense to that student. Students with an undeveloped respect for the intellectual will not buy the notion that liberal arts builds character. They probably believe they already have enough character. Advisors need to be able to provide practical and concrete examples of how the liberal arts ideal, and other aspects of the academy, can help them have an improved life.
Expectations and Aspirations

"But, I worry if a student who wants to go into the sciences cannot do well on my course because it's very basic." [Ryan Casey]

Unrealistic expectations and aspirations appeared to go hand-in-glove with the previous two aspects of the student profile detailed by participants. Ryan provided an example of a first year student in the introductory science course he taught. She did poorly in his course, yet she aspired to a career in science. In recounting this story, he asked a candid question. "Is it the high school background that was terrible or is the fact that they just can't do science? Is there such a thing that people can't do science? People can't do math?"

The question of giftedness in science may be less of an issue in such a case. Again and again, advisors reported prestigious fields dependent on science and math were powerful and consistent attractions for first-year students. Many students appeared to have an unclear or romantic notion of what it took to do science, to have a career as an architect, a lawyer or an engineer, to become a veterinarian or a medical doctor. As Eugenia pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, and consistent with writings in the field, career and academic aspirations might likely be formed by images deriving from popular culture such as film, video and magazines (Bok, 1986). From what advisors said, they seemed less likely to have originated from a grounding gained in actual contact with scientists or a realistic understanding of what such careers demand. Implications for a more complex understanding may be found by considering alternative explanations.

Of course, it was possible, Ryan's student might not have the depth of inclination or the natural or acquired facility required of math and science majors. It may have been true that earlier mediocre schooling provided inadequate preparation for her and this may have represented a first real introduction to math and science. She might have developed self-
confidence issues related to math or science "anxiety." She might not be ready for the collegiate experience. However, other factors could also come into play.

It is possible she was a first-generation college student. Her family might be proud of her admission accomplishment, but unconvinced of the importance of college and therefore not supportive. They might not know how to be supportive. She might be a first- or second-generation immigrant challenging the traditions of her culture. She might be one of the increasing numbers of students admitted from poor or lower-middle class backgrounds. In this case, just going to college could represent a break with ingrained gender beliefs or employment values in her family. At home, she might have received support for utilitarian skill and job-focused training rather than encouragement for intellectual enterprise. Home life might have lacked appreciation for higher learning or culture, had few or no books, and presented few or no opportunities for sophisticated or cerebral discussion. Economic issues could play a role. With or without emotional support, she might have lacked financial support. If so, her need to work in order to put herself through school might have conflicted with the schoolwork she needed to do.

Finally, regardless of background, moving into this "world" must have represented major change away from the known, and presented new adult requirements for most students. Taken singly or in any combination, these issues could add up to a kind of "culture shock" (Solomon and Solomon, 1993).

**Economic Pressures**

"And the additional burden, they're looking at the economy and the way things are." [Robin Wolf]

Robin Wolf, a professional staff advisor in an academic support program, said that increasing numbers of her advisees had a narrow view of college studies as job preparation. Increasingly, advisors reported that students judged college success by job
security and salary level. Too inexperienced to know were inadequate or incomplete measures, they limited their academic choices to majors which appeared to promise these benefits. This was consistent with major research (Astin, 1985; Boyer, 1987). Robin explained the draw of the professions for her students:

They see the needs in the health industry. They see the needs in engineering. And they see those as money-making things. . . . [And] they want to be able to reap the rewards when they graduate. . . . So it's really very much a notion that if you're not in one of the sciences or business school, you're not getting anywhere! It's very frustrating!

Perceptions about the external world, however accurate, did not necessarily lead to realistic decision-making about majors and what was right for the individual. According to advisors, students for whom college was a luxury seemed to receive the most pressure to take the professional school route. They appeared to be urged by well-intentioned friends and family members to major in business, nursing or engineering or at least take the pre-med or pre-law track in order to be assured of a good job in the future (Solomon and Solomon, 1993). Robin said, "One of the biggest conflicts for me in my job is that parents will often give their a child a role to fill, and it's been drilled into them from infancy, and they come with this preconceived notion that if they major in one of the sciences, if they major in pre-med or something related to that, or if they major in business or if they major in nursing, that they'll have a career, and if they don't they won't have a career."

Like Robin, many worried that students graduated without having an understanding of the opportunities for a greater gain. Not knowing that the majority of professions, even those with pre-professional requirements, favored a strong liberal arts background, students acted on uninformed recommendations (Solomon and Solomon, 1993). This understanding was consistent with research which has shown that some graduates—especially those in technologically oriented disciplines—are more immediately employed
and initially receive greater salaries. However, in time, liberal arts graduates gradually catch up (Boyer, 1987).

John was more and more inclined to make sure students understood the difference between succeeding academically and getting a particular kind of job in the future, and that major and vocation were not necessarily directly correlated the way they might hope. In his advising, John described the system of the academy and explained that disciplines were not finite and separate, but were interrelated. He encouraged students to have tolerance for the ambiguities of college, and to widen their focus. He told them, "College does not necessarily ensure particular kinds of outcomes if you're not willing to be pretty flexible about what constitutes a good outcome, at least initially."

Monica also pointed out, "Just being in engineering or having a degree from the school of management doesn't guarantee anything anymore." While they did not dismiss the vocational aspect of higher education, most participants in this study made the point that job readiness and economic benefit was only part of what a student could gain in the higher education experience.

While it was incumbent on advisors to help students deal with such issues by helping them reconceptualize the collegiate experience as well as their life aims, Jim explained that students sometimes were unable or unwilling to replace unrealistic ambitions with more achievable ones. "Another problem is the ones who know what they want to do, and there's no way they are ever going to do it. They don't have the mental capacity to be a veterinarian or physician. And yet, that's their goal, and their only goal."

According to many advisors, this single-mindedness often resulted in a kind of "damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" behavior. Ryan generally encouraged science students to be conservative in their course load. Yet he said for many students financial limitations meant time was of the essence. They argued against his advice to slow down. "So the most frustrating part of my advising right now is trying to convince students to take two out of the three sciences that you were thinking of."
According to advisors, the effect of outside pressures and economic exigencies meant students were less willing to be undeclared. They often seemed to want to be "on the road" to somewhere rather than take the time to explore ideas and make a plan. In advising sessions, more and more advisees impressed Mary Perry, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, with their need to present her with a statement of exactly what they should be studying, rather than discussing what they could be studying. Yet this was the antithesis of what she wanted. "We want them to come in and have a meaningful discussion about what they really want and how best to get there, and not make plans that are tentative, but sound sure just because they don't want to sound unsure."

Astin (1983) reported retention was strongly connected to the full collegiate experience, and work was a negative factor in persistence. Yet Angela Pham, a professional staff advisor, explained that although the majority of the students coming to the academic support program she directed were traditional-age students, they did not have the luxury of having a full collegiate experience. She pointed to cultural factors which she believed contributed to her students' focus on vocation and job preparation. They must get in, get out, and get to work. "Do you think you can say, "Well, take your time."

"You cannot do that! Even if he is not doing very well, you cannot do that because he has to get out quick! He has to get a job quick!"

In some cases, the student was the major source of economic support for the family left in the home country. "They have to work!" Angela said emphatically. The need to work conflicted with their need to study. Angela continued, "So it affects the studies and everything—mentally, emotionally, and physically as well—because if you work all night, and you don't have any sleep, you come to class and then you sleep in class. You don't hear whatever the professor is saying."

Work often was viewed by advisors as an impediment to the collegiate experience. Although Angela associated the issue of work-while-in-college and paring college down to the essentials with the student population in her academic support program, nearly all
participants reported this happening. Mary said, regardless of cultural or ethnic affiliation, "Now half of our population work at least part of the time in addition to going to school."

The need to earn money left less time to attend to studies and less time to participate in the collegiate experience. John said, "[There is] more pressure to stay on a path and not deviate, and take things that apply directly." Echoing Angela, he said students are encouraged were family to, "Get in! Get out! And be sure there's a job on the other end!"

Mary said the interplay of economics and the need for financial security often limited their advisees' decision making. She explained, "If anything, they often look for the most efficient way to do it, which may not be the best for them educationally." She said students rushed the collegiate process, and stripped their experience to the barest essentials:

And unfortunately, it's complicated by the economy because people are so conscious now of having to get out of school in a set amount of time where they want to graduate early, or they want to go summers and Januayrs. . . . They look at time efficiency. It's a much bigger concern than it used to be.

John said in many cases the sacrifice made by a family was not just additional employment for parents, but debt. This had the effect of chilling student enthusiasm for a broad collegiate experience and reducing student choice and options. He explained the difficulty of expressing one's preferences if they conflicted with those who were making education possible:

In the environment now a student might be less willing to go out and end up with $10,000 worth of Stafford Loans or whatever kinds of loans or debts or whatever when a parent is saying, "But if you would only study so and so, or if you wouldn't do so and so, you'd have more time to learn this other thing that might be more sure of getting you a job!" . . . I suppose that's understandable if everybody concerned is going into debt to make the process possible, plus working all the time to make it possible and doing without all kinds of things to make it possible, they want to be
assured not to end up in the same kind of job they could have had before they came.

According to advisors, another outgrowth of economic pressure was consumerism. Students and families seemed to increasingly place emphasis on the notions of purchasing an education. Delores described it this way: "And I pay for my degree so I get to take what I want." She added, "It is hard to argue with that because it is a certain mind set that everything has to relevant."

According to some critics, higher education was transforming into an entity where learning was reduced to products and services (Douglas, 1992). The notion of student as consumer has led to a new buzzword being applied to advising: customer service (Spicuzza, 1992; Spokane, 1994). Mary, like some others, took issue with this. "It [advising] isn't customer service!" She contrasted the two concepts. "Advising is a very personalized, one-on-one situation, and customer service is just, in essence, developing a set of policies that can be applied to every call that comes in, and I just don't think advising lends itself to that neat characterization." Mary cautioned, "In customer service, you're just looking at one very small aspect of the interaction, and that isn't the way it works in real advising because you can't only care about one aspect of the student because what's happening in every other arena of their life, even if it isn't your primary responsibility, still impinges on how they do here."

Many customer service advocates in other industries would say that Mary's personalized concept of advising was the definition of customer service. However, the range of the problem considered—and its connections to other aspects of a student's life—expand the role of advising from the limited function implied in customer service. A satisfied purchaser of goods or services, and a satisfied learner are not equivalent roles and require a different relationship.
The beliefs and values ascribed to students have much in common with a long-held American understanding that education must have a common-sense approach, be relevant, and immediately useful (Boyer, 1987; Hofstadter, 1963; Westmeyer, 1985). The utilitarian emphasis in the undergraduate population at this University was not new except for the possibility of the increased emphasis on the economic benefit and the specific and elite occupations preferred.

Demographics and Diversity

"What we're dealing with is obviously students with much different backgrounds than the seventies and the sixties." [Ryan Casey]

Advisors in this study described broadening diversity in a number of ways among their advisees which increased the complexity of their advising. In addition to the developmental, academic, and economic diversity described previously, advisors were faced with cultural, ethnic, and language differences, older students, and students with disabilities. This was consistent with higher education nationally (Bok, 1986; Rooney 1994).

Ryan explained a change significant for his advising which was reported by the majority of participants. "The most obvious difference is the multicultural student body that we have now. Cambodians, Vietnamese, Hispanics, Hispanics from [a nearby large metropolitan area], Hispanics from Puerto Rico, totally different." The broadening multicultural profile meant new accents and new cultural nuances and issues. Forthright about his limitations as an advisor, Ryan said, "But the racial issues, the social issues, I don't feel comfortable dealing with them, but I try." Counselors struggled to pay attention, understand, and respond appropriately.

Angela provided an example of how cultural issues often added to the academic problems of advisees. She described a student from mainland China. Her primary
language was not English, and her difficulties communicating in English made her feel uncomfortable in the classroom. Angela explained, "She has problems with sociology because she cannot do all of the readings and the writings and it's too much for her, and when she opens her mouth to say something everybody was looking at her, especially the professor, because they couldn't understand her accent."

In addition, family needs and expectations added stress to those who maintained connections with family members left in the homeland. In the case of this student, the family was sending requests to purchase and send them items which she could ill afford. "The family is still there and she is here by herself, and she receives all of those letters from mainland China from her family back there asking for this and asking for that."

Angela dealt with unusual requests. "And those students, sometimes they come to you, and they say, 'I need to send money to my family, but the channel that I went to before didn't work very well. So can you help me to do that?'" This function was only loosely connected to the advisor role, but it was vitally connected to the broader role she assumed. She said, "So I find a way... Oh, there are many, many other problems in their lives that if you can help solve those problems, you can solve the academic problems here."

To the cultural complexity of the student profile, Ryan added another characteristic: "And there's an added dimension to advising the older students." Consistent with the facts noted by educators, as the traditional-age population steadily declined, older students, those over the traditional age of eighteen to twenty-four, made up a greater percentage of the student enrollment here (Bok, 1986). This included the student returning to pick up the threads of their prior academic education as well as the transitional post-graduate moving from one field to another who needed prerequisite courses to prepare for graduate or professional school application. They presented a wider and different set of expectations and needs for advisors.
Diversity included students with diagnosed learning disabilities. Jackie LaPierrie, a classified staff advisor in a college-based multidisciplinary degree program, described one such student, "an older person already in her mid-thirties." This student was being funded by a state rehabilitation agency to take two classes a semester toward a science degree. "She's having a hard time getting through the first biology course and she hasn't even begun the chemistry. She's in basic math! I don't think she passed anything this last semester!" Jackie said and added she was "befuddled" about how to advise a student with so many and such a depth of problems impinging on her academic progress.

Diversity also included students with undiagnosed or undisclosed learning disabilities. Anunciata provided an example:

Sometimes we uncover dyslexia that way simply because from what they tell me, I can say, "Well, I think you need to be tested." Then we may find out, "Well, you know, there was an individual educational plan sitting out there somewhere that nobody knew about.

The diversity represented by the current profile held many challenges for advisors. One was the amount of advising time necessary to deal with their individual needs. In general, advisors were not prepared for the depth of this need.

Family Influences

"I'm not sure; either I'm getting more candid responses from students these days, than I was a number of years ago, or it's increasingly almost a responsibility of students to not make a decision that might run contrary to what their parents think is good for them, and a lack of an ability to cut loose." [John Mertens]

Families, especially parents, have always exerted influence over most students in American education (Boyer, 1987; Hofstadter, 1963). In this study, family impact was intertwined with emotional, academic, diversity and economic issues. At this time,
participants pointed to an additional difference: parents appeared to be playing a more prescriptive role.

Ryan asked, "Probably the most difficult issue in advising is, does this student want this goal or are they being pressured because of who they are, what they are and where they come from?" Some version of the question Ryan posed appeared in nearly every interview. He explained, "And how do you, as an advisor, resolve that issue and say, 'If you don't want to do this then don't do it.' And they say, 'I have to do it. That's why I'm here. If I don't do it, I won't be allowed to come back.'"

Delores explained a greater number of parents were still actively involved in day-to-day decisions about what their son or daughter did and did not do at school. When she talked to parents, she encouraged them to let go. She explained, "But I find myself more and more often having to add an entire new line of inquiry that we never had to do before which is, 'You really need to let your son or daughter make their own contacts.'" Like others, she made a similar discovery. "And often, when you have a chance to sit down with a student or talk to the student on the phone, you find out that what mom or dad want them to do is not what they want to do, but they've never had the courage to tell mom and dad that that's the case." This transformed academic advising into academic counseling. She explained, "And so, we often wind up doing almost family counseling on the phone. . . . And that is a new phenomenon!"

Jackie said, "And sometimes, it's harder to deal with the parents than the students." She added one characteristic she had noted. She had discovered that many parents feared that their child would make an irretrievable mistake. "Children know when their parents have no confidence in their ability to do anything." Jackie believed this lack of faith made students fearful, and hampered their willingness to take responsibility for decision-making. "The mothers apparently do everything for the kids, and when I get a mother like that I try to subtly say, 'Well, you have to let them do things on their own.'"
In line with this, Mary noted many parents appeared to look at their son or daughter in the same way they looked at them in high school. She said, "In the last year, I've noticed a lot more people looking for guidance counselors than looking for advisors!" This role confusion frustrated her. She explained that one basic difference between a high school guidance counselor and an academic advisor was a matter of where control lies. She gave an example. Parents would tell Mary, "Sally doesn't know what she wants, so set up her schedule for the next four years." When Mary pointed out that it was incumbent on "Sally" to take more responsibility and make decisions about what she wanted to do, not Mary, the parents became upset. "They're really alarmed that at the college level, it doesn't work like high school where someone's going to order your life."

Robin discovered students were often reluctant to go against their parents' wishes. This created a conflict for her: "I want to shake them and say, 'Wake up. You have to live your life!'" She risked parental anger by encouraging students to find the courage to figure out what was right for them. She provided an example of an experience with a student who was majoring in a science area, but was interested in humanities and social science:

And I understand that mom and dad are paying for school, but you need to sit down and have talks with mom and dad about what's important to you. If theater is the most important thing to you in the world, then that chemistry is not going to mean a whole heck of a lot. And even if you are successful with that chemistry degree and you go on to be a chemist, what are you going to do when you still hate your work?"

When she confronted students in this manner, they generally had one of two responses. She explained, "They either really hear me for the first time and start thinking about these things and get real creative and start thinking about, 'I am a person.... This is my life. I need to do what makes me happy in my life.'" In other cases she said, "They shut down completely. They don't want to hear anymore about it at all." These students were not interested in options or exploration. "They continue on their chosen path even if
it was chosen for them," she said. Angry students had rejected not only her advice, but her
as well. She had been told, "I need a new advisor because you're not giving me what I
need." With a sigh, Robin said, "I always hope that students will be the most successful
and that they know themselves well enough, but often at nineteen or twenty they don't
know themselves well enough. Not that I know them any better, but all the indications are
there of what's working for them and what's not."

Monica attributed the student lack of flexibility in sorting out what they wanted to
do to dissatisfaction in their later life and work life. She explained:

I see more and more young people, in particular, and often some
older people, who have not had the opportunity to be self-centered and
interested in their own education. . . . And therefore never really had a
chance to sit down and say, not what am I good at, what do I want to do,
but somehow just sort of got drafted into whatever profession or way they
earn their livelihood.

Ana said her advising experience had given a new meaning to the word "family."
She said, "It teaches a lot to me about family relations, about this power game that is called
family." She asserted, "It's a power issue! It's a control issue!"

Dysfunction within families also entered into the picture advisors drew. As a
faculty advisor in a college-based special academic program, Pierre William's twenty-five
year advising experience included a wide range of student problems from academic issues
to suicide. "That's as low as this business gets," he said. Emotional problems had root
connections, he explained. "And as often as not, it's family. Without getting Freudian about
it, it's the world they grew up in. It's not the world they met at University. It's the baggage
they brought in the station wagon when they arrived on campus the first day."

Jim provided an example of increasing problems in this arena which adversely
affected students he saw. He said:
It's amazing the problems the students here have. I will talk to a student who is having academic difficulties and when you get into the reason why they're having those academic difficulties, it's, 'My mother just left home and left me to take care of these smaller siblings, and I have to go home every week to make sure they're cared for.'

Melinda added, 'For a lot of them, the prospect of going home to dysfunctional families for the holidays is very sad.' The interviews with Melinda were scheduled during the weeks between Thanksgiving and the end of the semester. She says, 'I can see the aftermath of Thanksgiving on some of these kids, and the thought of being home for the entire month of January is awful.'

Working with students and their families was further complicated by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, also known as the Buckley Amendment). Primarily meant to preserve the confidentiality of student academic records, according to Jay, it also had an opposite effect. He fundamentally was not in sympathy with the Buckley Amendment ruling that prevented access—with the exception of specified personnel—to academic records for students eighteen and over without written permission from the student (Fischer and Sorenson, 1985). Jay said, 'I think that's a mistake. I think that insulates students, and Lord knows in that other mode we have loads of intrusive parents, who are far too intrusive, but they're still intrusive. They're just now, ignorantly intrusive. So we haven't saved the student much.' For Jay the Buckley Amendment often added to the lack of information and communication between student and parents.

Yet Delores presented a different perspective. Even though she said FERPA made it more difficult to talk openly with others who might have a legitimate interest and possibly a legitimate need to know the circumstances of a student's problem, it served one purpose. She believed without this Act, extricating students from their parents' grip would be more troublesome. However, she added, 'I have no compunction, if the student is lying to his parents, telling the parents that there is this release of information policy, and telling
them I'm sending a copy to the student because then we are out of the loop. . . . It puts the responsibility squarely back where it belongs, with the student!"

According to advisors, in many cases, students appeared not to have a clear sense of why they were in college. Often they seemed to be living up to the expectations of someone else. Most often, these expectations came from their families. Although the complications of contemporary families increased the difficulty of providing advising, their involvement would allow advisors to deal with some of the issues articulated previously. Part of the role of the academic advisor includes teaching families, as well as students, about collegiate life. This is one main reason to not only expect, but encourage family involvement.

Social Issues

We've moved from the days of in loco parentis to in essence trying to control the social atmosphere. That's a very wide range of responsibility."

[Mary Perry]

The original concept of American collegiate life intended to remove students from the temptations and ills of society and provide parental oversight (Rudolf, 1962). Although it is questionable whether or not these aims ever were effective in the past, they certainly are not viable goals today. Yet this was a cloudy area for most advisors. Mary explained:

The pressures have changed. Things are very different. . . . In some ways, we're saying we're no longer responsible to the parents for the individual students, but we're responsible for the individual student. We are responsible for providing an atmosphere where they can be safe and productive. And that's a large bill to fill. But the issues now are very different.

In recent years, the news media, higher education critics and researchers have highlighted the issues of drugs, alcohol, stalking, rapes, robberies and incivility on campus
nationally (Boyer, 1987; Douglas, 1992). During the field research phase of this project, the campus newspaper headlined these kinds of issues. One of the articles dealt with the admission of individuals with prior criminal records who were living in the dorms. Another pointed out that students accused of, or on trial for rape continued to live on campus in dormitories and attend classes. This was an area of concern for most participants. Melinda said it was a rude awakening to discover there was no policy which disallowed former "convicted felons" from campus. She was struggling with the issue of the individual's rights versus community rights. She wondered whose rights took precedence. She described some of the effects on students:

I've had students come to me saying, 'On one side of me is someone who is apparently on trial for rape and on the other side of me is someone who's being accused of stalking, and I don't feel particularly comfortable.' What do you say to that student? That's when I looked into it, and was told that we have no way to keep these people off campus.

Many participants described their advisees as far more conversant with disturbing issues than they were. The experiences some students had lived through in their lives prior to becoming a University student were shocking to many advisors. Ana said conversations with students taught her much about human nature, society, backgrounds and life in general. At times their stories nearly overwhelmed her. "It's mindboggling," she said, and explained, "I mean, I'm forty-one years old and there are some of these kids that have lived three of my lives in the twenty years they have lived with the experiences that they have had in their life!"

Yet not everything of this nature happened off campus or pre-college. Melinda said students experienced a widening set of negative experiences in their living spaces. "A student will come and say, 'This is what happened in my dorm last night. I'm ill prepared
for the exam today.' Or, 'I just can't go to my classes today.' And when you hear what has happened, you think, 'If I were in your shoes I wouldn't be able to deal with it either.'"

Inequities, grievances, harassment—almost all advisors had listened to students describing encounters with these concerns many times. Some advisors reported more serious issues increasingly had become part of their advising. Melinda described a no longer rare occurrence:

Last semester, we had a . . . major murdered by her previous boyfriend. And it's horrendous enough to have that happen, but then picking up the pieces after and just go on and on and on. And a lot of people just read about it in the paper and they think, "Isn't that wretched?" and then they sort of forget about it. But it's the roommates that used to live with her. The people who were her friends. The people who knew him. People who can't believe it happened. You know what that does to them for the semester, the rest of their lives? People carry this stuff around forever! So that everybody feels more vulnerable. It's just a lot of stuff you end up dealing with.

Worried parents often contacted Melinda. She said, "I get a lot of calls from parents who have certain expectations that their child is going to be in a rather safe environment, a supportive environment. And sometimes those expectations are not met."

Not every participant seemed to face the depth of problems confronted by others. Gordon Weber, a professional staff advisor in a college office of degree requirements said, "I don't get a lot of social issues in here." Although he said he has good conversations with students, his work with students was focused. "We tend to talk about other issues: career issues, things like that, as opposed to personal," he explained.

Despite this, many participants spoke of an increase in hostile attitudes, angry students, or threatening behavior in the students they advised. Melinda explained, "Certainly in recent years those things have been the most frustrating, and that's obviously not academic advising, but it's one of those things where it's an offshoot, and it's something that clouds the rest of it, so you have to deal with it."
Delores explained this changed her advising from a straightforward emphasis on academic concerns to an expanded enterprise. She said:

In the strictly advising dimension, you can make people aware of regulations. . . . If you get them to talk about what they want to do, or what they're looking for, you can show them other avenues of research, and then send them out to find out more about things. . . . But then there are the more complicated ones where it's not strictly academic, but impinges on the student's academic life.

Melinda said it was frustrating to be put in the position of reassuring students when no one knew who was responsible for a criminal act, or when someone has been accused, but legally had a right to be in the same classroom while the judicial system worked out the resolution. She said the severity of social issues had changed her role:

Twenty years ago, I didn't have women coming saying this is what's happening, and I'm afraid, and what should I do. It's different now [pause]. . . . It's not easy. I've learned a lot about the legal system. And again, I didn't expect to be dealing with such issues, so I was rather ill prepared. . . . Five years ago, I knew nothing about the nature of restraining orders for example. I didn't know what constituted a violation of a restraining order. I didn't know what the consequences of that would be.

Some credited their academic background or common sense when they dealt with difficult cases. A handful said they had supportive colleagues. Despite this, no level of planned support existed on campus to help advisors deal with social problems that ranged from family problems to complicated addictions to violent acts, including murder. The severity and range of contemporary problems had led to a redefinition of her role according to Mary. Almost as an afterthought, she reminded herself, "When you consider there are thousands and thousands of kids that are our clientele, this is a small number." Yet she, like many, was compelled to talk at length about it.
There are times when I feel that I'm not equipped! . . . Sometimes even the simple, so called simple cases which really aren't, the student who's the pawn in the middle of a very bad divorce, that's one thing. But then you get another situation where two brothers may be hospitalized and the parent is suicidal and another one has come to the end of his rope, and the poor student that you're seeing has been the adult in the family for so long, that now they're giving up. . . .

Social issues have taken such a front desk or the front burner in some of their lives that it's difficult for students to function until those issues are resolved. . . . We've seen much more evidence of [social issues] in the last couple of years where it really interferes with their ability to perform. . . . A student in fear is a student who has their semester compromised. Up until two years ago, I think I'd maybe seen a handful of students who had restraining orders either against other students or other people who might visit them on campus. And we've seen dozens of students now with restraining orders! That's a big difference.

We've been threatened. . . . And certainly if you're here off-hours, you're here by yourself. . . . There's common sense things you can do, but in reality, if you really found yourself in a difficult situation, it would be unlikely that that would make a big difference. . . . And yet, if you don't make yourself available later afternoons and nights, you take yourself out of circulation. For a lot of students, it's the only time they come and see you, and especially now when more and more students are working. . . . And that work is most often in the daytime. And if you bring in parents, or outside third parties, it's often just not possible for them to take time off during the day, or a whole day off work. All you do is present yet another form of hardship for them if you're not accessible.

It makes you more aware of how you structure your environment, but I don't think you can let [potential problems] color your perspective. . . . You start then to worry about all the externals, and you lose your focus on what you're really there for.
Advisors clearly could not afford to be complacent. Yet they could not work with such concerns haunting their minds, and still be functional and successful. Safety issues could not be allowed to impinge on advising decisions or services.

**Positive Aspects of the Student Profile**

"And to be clear, there's lots of room for the outstanding programs of this University!" [John Mertens]

While nearly all advisors were critical of current undergraduates, their assessment had some grounding in research (Astin, 1985; Boyer, 1987). Despite this, the majority, like John, hastened to counter the impression that all students were in such dire straits. John emphasized, "And to be clear, there's lots of room for the outstanding programs of this University!"

Ana said she had many interactions with "many people in difficult situations." Yet, like John, she resisted the urge to allow this to color her belief about all students on campus. "Now let me tell you that I have to remind myself and I think anybody in a position like ours has to remind themselves that we mostly see people under stress and difficult circumstances." She emphasized, "This is a small percentage. It is not representative of the world. It is representative of that portion of the world that is having problems here at this point."

Melinda noted signs that signaled a positive change in the student profile in her academic department. In recent years, she said she had seen a return to the mentality she encountered when she first began advising—an awareness and concern about social issues. More seniors told her they wanted to make a commitment to social improvement by volunteering time and energy to human service agencies. She said, "There's a good side to it to where I'm beginning to see when you're in this job long enough, 'what goes around
comes around' to some extent, but also you begin to spot trends, and you begin to see cycles."

Monica also was encouraged by the pulse of change she sensed in her bell-weather interdisciplinary students. "I think the pendulum is starting to shift." She said emphasis on social issues was promising. "We have larger and larger numbers of students interested in the humanities and social science fields as opposed to business."

Advisor recommendations for moderation is well advised. In general, academic advisors tended to talk to students with problems. Those without problems generally did not come for help. Therefore, while their descriptions of the current student profile they were advising were valid and credible, it was not possible to generalize about all students, particularly from the problems experienced by only twenty-eight advisors.

Summary

This chapter looked at what advisors said about the students they advised. According to advisors, the student profile was increasingly diverse and increasingly complex. Student diversity not only included cultural differences, but advisors described a clear trend toward developmental immaturity and declining academic ability. It was often coupled with serious economic stressors among students they advised. They pointed to an evident anti-intellectual attitude growing among undergraduates. Added to these were serious behavioral considerations.

At the same time, diversity and complexity meant some students were more adventurous and comfortable with the independence of collegiate life. At this point in their lives, students were trying on new identities, building new extension of themselves, learning what kinds of connections worked for them. If the University is to be a transformational moment in a student's life, the academy must discuss what that means, what forms it will take and how responsibilities will be divided. There must be ongoing
discussion and ongoing adjustment on the part of the academy as well as student. The next chapter looks at collegial issues among those entrusted with advising undergraduates.
CHAPTER VI
THE CHANGING SPIRIT OF COLLEGIALLY

Introduction

"Education does not necessarily make us very human beings. It makes us repositories of knowledge, but that does not translate into social grace and emotional support to your colleagues if it's needed." [Ze Mendez]

Advising is built, at the bedrock level, upon relationships with others. An essential connection is between advisor and student. A second is between advisors. The undergraduate experience is enhanced when advisors cooperate with one another and with other colleagues on campus. Collegial relationships—developed through formal or informal contact—improve knowledge of campus, of possibilities or potential problems and, in general, positively affect an advisor's ability to help students. Despite this, among advisors in this study, the complaints about one another were abundant. Much criticism appeared along organizational lines and employment classifications. This forms the framework for this chapter which looks at the significance of collegial relationships, and asks what this means for the quality of advising.

Conflicts and Priorities Among Faculty Advisors

"One of my pet peeves is when a faculty member will talk about his research opportunities and his teaching load. I'll say, 'What's wrong with saying teaching opportunities and research load?'" [Jim Emmert]

Faculty hold a variety of advising positions on this campus. In order to reflect this range, four departmental chief undergraduate faculty advisors, two special academic program faculty advisors, and two faculty undergraduate deans in college counseling centers were interviewed for this study. They each held a minimum of a doctorate. Their
ages ranged from early forties to sixties. The number of years they had been advising extends from approximately five to more than twenty-five years.

Melinda Abercrombie, a chief undergraduate faculty advisor, contributed a less-common example of faculty advising experience. When she first came to her social science department in the late 1970s, no advising program existed, and advising was erratic. "It was very unstructured and very disorganized," she emphasized. This changed when the faculty leadership made a commitment to advising and teaching undergraduates. Melinda was asked to organize advising for the department (Polson and Jurich, 1979). As she spoke, Melinda described positive collegial relationships and respect for her work. She said, in general, faculty in her department accepted the advising and teaching responsibility. "We have sixty faculty," she said and added "Everybody who's here on our faculty realizes that undergraduate teaching is a major part of the commitment here and I think that makes a strong difference." The director of undergraduate studies and the department chairperson were "sensitive" and "supportive," and she felt confident that she could depend on their assistance with any troublesome situation if needed. Clearly she derived much satisfaction from colleagues in her department.

As positive as Melinda was about her faculty colleagues, the majority were critical about faculty priorities. Ryan Casey described an experience which contrasted dramatically with Melinda's, and was more consistent with the experience of other faculty participants. Like Melinda, he was the major faculty advisor for his life science department. Although, like her, he was on a faculty contract, he worked year-round rather than the nine-month academic year. Similarly, his work was divided between teaching and advising, and he was not required to do research. However, while Melinda stressed her department's commitment to undergraduate education, Ryan said, "Virtually in a department of fifty, probably I have five people who I can count on. The other forty-five do no advising!!"

Pierre Williams, a faculty advisor in a college-based special academic program, admitted that nearly every department had three or four faculty who welcomed
undergraduates. Yet he conceded, "But they're the freaks. They're the oddballs."

Participants asserted that faculty were divided between those with an advising and teaching orientation and the research inclined, and the former took a back seat to the latter. Ze Mendez, chief undergraduate faculty advisor in a humanities department, introduced one underlying motive for conflict among faculty priorities:

And in the academic culture you are told that research is the most important thing! But you have to respond to the needs of the students which is to give them a good undergraduate education. . . . There should be more emphasis on the aspects of teaching. . . . You have to go beyond the imparting of knowledge. . . . You create a constructive human being in the process. . . . And the other part, which is a very important component of an all round education, advising is overlooked at this University. There is a lot of lip service to it but nobody does anything about it.

The question of whether advising is part of teaching, and teaching is an important part of the faculty role, was identified as a major concern. Jim Emmert, a faculty undergraduate dean and director of a counseling center, said, "There's a lot of rhetoric on the campus about how important teaching is, but if that rhetoric isn't translated into something more tangible at some point, people are going to realize that's all it is. It's rhetoric!"

Ryan understood the pressure on faculty to do research. Yet like many, he connected faculty lack of participation in advising to a lack of allegiance or loyalty to the University:

I try to say to colleagues, "Why don't you want to advise or teach because this place is allowing you to basically do what you want to do? You're not in industry. You're not punching a clock. You're not pushing a product. You're not selling stock. You don't have to answer to stockholders. You have to basically answer to yourself." In many cases, it's almost comparable to maybe they're working for some bio-tech concern!
Pierre reflected an assenting belief. "They might just as well be working in industry as they are at the University!"

While faculty had much to say about faculty priorities, staff advisors also were critical. Mary Perry, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, explained her perception that the majority of departments were narrowly focused on their discipline. "It's interesting that a lot of the departments view their charge as just handling departmental requirements, letters of recommendation," she said and added, "Their idea of connections is connections within the field."

Educators have written extensively about faculty orientation to discipline and field rather than the institution that employs them (Boyer, 1987; Douglas, 1992; Smith, 1990; Sykes, 1988; Weingartner, 1992). Rooney (1994) noted the criticisms made by Crookston in 1972 have continued to plague contemporary advising. Crookston (1972) pointed out that many faculty considered advising an additional activity and a "burden." Yet Astin (1993) discovered that the collegiate experience and retention was positively affected when a faculty was oriented toward teaching undergraduates.

Lack of Preparation to Advise

"I have no prior background in advising." [Kay Brown]

Some participants connected faculty reluctance to advise to inadequate preparation. Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, said this was her experience:

About seven years ago I learned that this job was available. . . . I applied. . . . After I got the job, I was told that my assignment was to teach a course and to advise about seven students. . . . I didn't know what I was supposed to do with these [advisees]. . . . But the long and short of all of that, is that I came to the foreground without any background in counseling or advising. I really didn't know what it was all about.
Kay was by no means the only faculty advisor in this study to reflect this experience. Jay West, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, said,

I have no training for this job. . . . I had Psych 101 as a sophomore, and didn't particularly take to it. . . . But very early on when I was I doing advising, I realized that I was going to have to learn a whole lot more or no more. That it wasn't going to do me any good to read a few psych books or take a couple more psych courses. They weren't going to be sufficient. And they were going to clutter up my mind with partially digested, partially accurate theories. And so I figure what I will do is remain forever an amateur, and bring to it simply my own layman's approach so that I'm talking layman to layman with the student and trying not to get into the psychological gambits. Although there are some I do get into, but those still come out more of my own life experience. I didn't think I could become a responsible psychological counselor, but I can be a responsible fellow human being or something like that. When I keep it on that level, it also takes me off the hook. I do it for them. But I do it for me, too. It gives me an apology in advance.

Staff development and advisor training was almost a catch-as-catch-can situation. Although he was speaking about faculty training, Jim described a common occurrence:

When you first come in as a faculty member, you're handed a stack of student folders. The person who is training you says, "These are your advisees." And that's it. That's the extent of the training procedure. Your first student comes walking in and they say something stupid like, "What courses should I take next semester?" And the advisor says, "Well, I don't know. Let's check." . . . So he calls the chief undergraduate advisor in his department and gets the answer. And that's the way the learning process works. It's called on-the-job training. I don't know whether any other method would work any better. If I were to get all the new faculty on campus together for some kind of one-day training session or whatever, there'd be so much stuff there that they couldn't take it in, and they wouldn't learn much. . . . But if the person is interested in learning how to be an
advisor, then that's the way they're going to learn. And they're probably going to remember that the next time.

Curriculum matters, the variety of majors and concentrations, rules and regulations, mandated legislation and how these options and rulings affect the individual student presented serious complications for advisors. Across campus, training generally occurred in the context of actual cases advisors were trying to resolve. Mary explained advisor training in her center: "They'll come in with questions about how to handle some specific aspect of a student's case, and we try to address that."

Ryan said faculty often told him they felt unprepared to advise undergraduates. "I've found that a lot of faculty don't feel comfortable in advising because they don't feel as though they're equipped," he said. Each new set of academic reforms created an increasing confusing tangle of possibilities and exceptions. "They feel that the gen ed requirements, the language requirement, their own major is too difficult to understand, plus what do you do with the student who got a "D" in this course two years ago," he explained. He said these changes leave faculty wondering, "Should they repeat it? Should they not repeat it?"

John Mertens, a faculty advisor, said faculty in his art department often stressed their confusion about academic rules and regulations. Yet he believed the focus on procedures was a misconception of faculty advising. "They say, 'I can't advise because I can't remember all those requirements,' forgetting that probably the reason they're advising their particular students is that those students are studying with them, and they are in a position to know them the best, and therefore they are in the position to listen the best."

In recent years, Ryan said when pressed, colleagues often responded, "I don't feel very comfortable in trying to help them because I'm not a professional counselor." As described in the previous chapter, most participants in this study believed the student profile represented increasing developmental problems. Faculty unease with the emotional issues students brought, or might bring, to advising sessions was consistent with Boyer's

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(1987) research. Despite Ryan's reassurance that in extreme instances they could refer students to specialists, they resisted. They told him, "I don't know the right questions to ask them to help them figure out where is their niche in society." Ryan explained how he countered this. "I try to explain to my colleagues that you don't have to be a true job placement person. You just have to, in a sense, give them some ideas based on your own experience of how you arrived at your decision to be a professional . . . and this may allow them to pursue some of the same avenues that you did."

Yet faculty were not rewarded for taking on difficult cases or unpleasant issues. With no stake in advising, Jay explained faculty often took only a half-swing at a problem:

I would say, over fifty percent of the faculty advisors we get when faced with some personal crisis that a student presents, will bunt, and will immediately say, "Well you ought to talk to the dean about that, or you ought to talk with mental health about that." . . . They have all these life experiences. None of which, seems to occur to them, enables them to bring something to this conversation with the student. . . . So it's very difficult to get people to do those fringes out at the end, or in many cases, to get advisors to venture into those fringes even when they know they're there, when the hints are there because they know when they ask the question, they know they're going to get an answer they feel they're woefully unequipped to handle. And in one sense they are. And in another, they're not. Where else is a student going to get even equally good conversations that dispassionate?

Pierre said faculty concern about their ability to deal with the breadth of student issues was reasonable. He said, "But to bring it back to advising, research faculty are even less prepared to advise than they are to teach." He called this lack of preparation a "professional developmental crisis" which needed to be addressed if faculty were to become engaged in advising.
According to many staff advisors, the combined effect of faculty priorities and inadequate preparation to advise led to a mechanical response. In Anunciata Button's college where she was a professional staff undergraduate dean in the counseling center, faculty advisors were expected to have an advising session with students each semester. However, she reported many did not spend time with students. "They're supposed to have discussed with the student whether this is reasonable, how the student is doing, but some of them just say, "Let me sign your form."

In line with this criticism, Carmen Barreto, a professional staff advisor in a college-based academic support program, explained many faculty in her college not only did not know basic academic rules and procedures, but appeared to have little interest in their advisees. Sometimes "horrified" Carmen described the perfunctory manner of some faculty:

"It's just, 'Fine. Come in. I'll sign. Whatever. Just go. These are your requirements. That's what you have to do. That's it.' They don't go the extra step to get into the personal touch with the student. We have too big of a campus to let our students just be numbers."

Many reported an increasing faculty belief that high school guidance counselors recommended this University because students were inadmissible at more prestigious schools. Ryan said some faculty used this as justification for not spending time with undergraduates, "And unfortunately, a lot of young faculty, I think, have that view of our students, that they're not very good. So why advise them? Why waste their time?" Instead, his colleagues preferred Ryan cull the student cohort for them. They told him, "Don't give me anybody who's going to need help or anything because I haven't got time. Just give me somebody that's good, and I'll spend time with him." Like many, Ryan insisted advising was a requirement of the faculty role, but also recognized students did not benefit from forcing disinclined faculty to advise.
The issues of advising preparation and inclination acted to keep advising as something separate rather than an integral and important part of the faculty role (Boyer, 1987; Rankey, 1994). It led to inconsistency in the advising system. Some did advising, some did not. Yet faculty might have had valid reasons to concentrate their energies on research. It may have been less an unwillingness to advise, than the fact that there was little energy or time left after the demands of research and teaching.

Rewards and Political Realities

"It isn't negative vibes for doing well, it's only negative if you are devoting time or energy to it." [Jay West]

Jay related an instructive conversation he had had with another faculty advisor in the spring of 1993. He was informed the relative importance of advising compared to research was "small potatoes." It drew faculty away from their main purpose. He said:

I was talking with one of our faculty advisors who said, 'I'm going to cut back my time here because although I think I do it well, and I like it, I see that only about ten departments are represented here. And I'm one of the ten. And where are the other fifteen? And in my department, it isn't honored at all as with teaching. In my department, it's OK to teach well, and it's OK to do this sort of service, but only if you don't expend any energy on it. If you are expending energy, people will say, "Why are you doing that?" ... And I said, 'Judas priest, what sort of world is this!' I've had, I don't know—five—but they're representative of many more faculty, where I can get down to the moment of hiring them, and I'll start talking about rewards, and they'll say, "I don't much care about that. Can you promise me no negative rewards for doing this?" And I will say, "No, I cannot." And therefore, they will not come because they recognize that the reward system, and the institution views this sort of stuff negatively in many cases.
Many participants pointed to rewards and political realities which created conditions that allowed for an uncommitted, unprepared and mechanical advising response. In light of this, monetary inducements were seen by some as an option to encourage faculty to advise. Mary and John presented two sides of this argument. She proposed, "The first preference would be to try to raise enough money to have incentives for faculty." John doubted that monetary rewards would motivate faculty to advise or improve advising. "I don't think good advising will happen because of something you do like that." Instead, he said, "I don't think the climate will change that much." and added, "I think we will continue with what we're doing."

Personal and intrinsic rewards were motivators for some advisors like Ryan. He talked about the "fringe benefits" of collegiality that developed from his advising. "One of the things that I really enjoyed about advising . . . is that I got to know a tremendous number of faculty, and I still do." This gave him a sense of unity in the academy. "You really feel a part of the university as opposed to a member of a department."

Like Ryan, Jim's academic background was science. He said he had planned to emphasize research in his academic career, but discovered it did not satisfy him. Instead, he turned to teaching, administration and advising:

I went the direction of advising and teaching rather than the direction of research simply because I enjoyed working with people more than being by myself in the laboratory. . . . When I came here I was told, as other faculty members who come here are told by their peers trying to be helpful, "Don't worry about this teaching stuff. You get rewarded on the basis of your research." . . . But I didn't do it that way, and I got rewarded enough.

Pierre believed the self-confidence that developed with age and stability in one's position enabled a faculty member to say, "I'm now chair of the department, and I'm going to take my time and work directly with students rather than spend it in the lab or whatever." Prior to the security of tenure, faculty could decide to place less emphasis on research and
more on teaching and advising; however, consistent with research, advisors in this study believed untenured faculty would not be supported by colleagues and administration if they did (Boyer, 1987).

This understanding was reinforced by departmental personnel committees who were rewarding colleagues or supporting their tenure (Smith, 1990; Sykes, 1988). Ze explained his understanding:

And I've been in committees that where people will, my colleagues, I'm talking about the personnel committee, and they say, "The department should be proud. We should be honored to have such a person in our midst," Only because that person's published one or two books, but they'll never say that the department should be proud to have somebody around who is really making sure that our undergraduates are happy and doing the proper things. When that happens, I'll say, "Yes, the culture has changed when you are rewarded for the things that you are doing, no more weight is given to a specific area, all areas are important to the well-being, to the function of the department."

The evaluation and reward system had a negative impact on faculty relationships. (Douglas, 1992; Smith, 1990). Ze described the effect:

We're supposed to be more civilized because we have more education, but on the other hand things that we do just prove otherwise. . . . I think education is used many times by people to be manipulative in order to create strategies to further their personal agenda. And in many ways also to find ways to be above your colleagues or try to damage your colleagues. I find the whole culture in the University sometimes very vicious. . . .

But to me it seems that we have too many at the University who do that sort of thing. And I think the whole system, the system as a whole, is responsible for the creation of that. Any type of organization you're going to have the same thing, but I think it's even more so here than other places. . . .
If I had to do it, I could do it, but I'd rather be direct, and tell people how I feel rather than play games. There's too much game playing at the University sometimes.

Ryan, like others in this study, had discovered dedication to advising and teaching put him in a "one-down" position and an "other" category among his faculty colleagues. In his case, his department administrators told him,

   So just hang in there, Ryan, and do the advising! We can't ask other people to do it because it's going to take away from potential grant money. . . . And I think to a person, they would say, "We'd love to help you, but there's only so much more money to go around." And the squeaky wheel gets the oil. And right now the squeaky wheel is the researchers hollering. "If you don't give it to me, I'm going to leave." I could say, "If you guys don't help me, I'm going to leave." And they'd say, "Sorry Casey. We'll see you. Let us know when you leave so we can have your desk." I have no ammunition!

Human caring and relationship building with undergraduate students is integral to advising. This appeared to conflict with self-reliance and individual endeavor, the traditional values of the researcher. Ryan explained, "One teaches in a university because it gives them the freedom essentially to do what they want to do, to pursue whatever research they want to pursue. We become very, very independent. And very, very selfish."

Political realities and not the lack of rewards or knowledge may be the major impediment preventing faculty from making a commitment to advising (Astin, 1993; Boyer, 1987). The University emphasized the importance of teaching and advising, but offered no substantive support. This section detailed a divided faculty and an uneven faculty advising system. What happens when faculty abdicate the advising role? In 1972 O'Banion wrote, "But while there is general agreement concerning the importance of academic advising for the efficient functioning of the institution and the effective
functioning of the student, there is little agreement regarding the nature of academic advising and who should perform the function" (p. 62). In a similar vein Ryan asked, "Now what's the solution? Is the solution to hire non-faculty to advise?" That had happened here. Professional and classified staff advisors worked in college counseling centers, special academic programs and academic departments. The following sections looks at their experience.

**Undergraduate Deans**

"In the beginning as an advisor in this college, I was seen as someone who was not a [faculty] and therefore could not possibly know what was going on." [Anunciata Buttons]

The category undergraduate deans was a more complex position description than any of the others in this study. Undergraduate deans managed college counseling centers, coordinated college level advising services, handled many of the academic discipline problems and provided advising. Faculty held positions as undergraduate deans and directors. In one case this position was in addition to that of associate administrative dean for the college. In addition, professional staff also filled some of these positions.

The faculty crossover into undergraduate dean positions made for a particular difficulty in determining where their descriptions and details about their relationships with colleagues should fit. Should they be with faculty, or with staff undergraduate deans, for they are both. The perplexity caused by the multiple positions and organizational affiliations of faculty undergraduate deans was resolved by primarily keeping descriptions of faculty relationships in the previous section.

Two professional staff undergraduate deans representing two different college counseling centers were interviewed for this study. Each held a doctorate. Their ages
ranged from late thirties to fifties, and the length of their advising service was just over ten years.

The major concern for professional staff undergraduate deans was legitimacy among faculty. This had a broader effect than reducing the spirit of collegiality. It had implications for their power to make anything happen. Anunciata reflected the common experience. She said many in the college saw her as an interloper who could not understand the academic process the way faculty do. Her first, and continuing initiative, was to convince faculty colleagues of her ability to lead, manage and coordinate advising services as well as advise (Kramer, 1981). For much of her time in this position, Anunciata had dealt with this challenge:

And I think what happens is that you prove yourself in different ways. And if you assist someone in resolving an issue, you've garnered brownie points. And if you helped a student, you've garnered brownie points. And if you're diplomatic about it, you've garnered brownie points. . . . So the issue for a long time, yeah, proving myself. Making sure that whatever I did I did more. . . . I work longer hours than anybody. I'm here nights, other people are not. I mean, I'm here a lot more.

She further carved out a niche by building on her generalist position. She maintained that not everyone cared to be an advisor, nor should they be. "I'm not sure that every faculty member is going to want to know, or is going to have to know, or is going to make the effort to know all the things I know, and if they really care about being the person solely responsible for issues like advising, then they have to keep up with everything, and then they have to know what the rules are." When challenged by faculty, she justified her position by telling them, "I had to know a bit about everything across the college which they didn't have to know about." She explained she liberated them from the responsibility of knowing all the regulations and procedures of the College and University. They were thus enabled to focus on advising related to their discipline.
Despite this, credibility with faculty continued to be an issue. Whenever she had a complaint from a student about a professor she was very careful about her approach. "If a faculty member seems uncaring in a class and so forth, I see it as one of my responsibilities, and I make it clear to them, that this is a conversation between you and me." Some faculty were unwilling to work with her to resolve cases. At the time of her interviews, Anunciata had just decided to submit unresolved cases to the dean rather than trying to work with the department head. "He [the dean] has leverage over the departments that I don't because I'm on the same level as department heads," she said and explained, "If I tell a department head, they're going to say, 'Butt out! It's none of your business!'"

Jay added to the understanding of the complexity of working in this "psychopolitical arena" (Kramer, 1981, p. 15). Jay described it this way:

There's always a multi-set of tensions in here: what the student wants, what the advisor wants to respond to it, what the administration of the office thinks ought to be going on, what the faculty who's made the rules in the abstract want to go on. And the same faculty who will make abstract rules and raise holy hell if they're not implemented, would in individual cases with an individual opt not to follow those rules.

Professional Staff Advisors

"But because the teachers themselves can't do all the advising and don't, the role of the professional advisor in the university is much more important."

[Monica Brennan]

A total of eight professional staff advisors in academic affairs settings who were not in undergraduate dean positions were interviewed for this study. They represented the variety of academic affairs programs, centers and departments. Their ages ranged from mid-twenties to fifties, and their educational level extended from the baccalaureate degree to the doctorate.
Jane Garaud, a professional staff academic advisor reported to two different academic departments. She also volunteered in a college counseling center. Jane explained how she came to be an advisor:

It was never intended that I would be an academic advisor... It happened because faculty here at this University do not like to be academic advisors so I am a staff person who was forced into the job of being an academic advisor because no faculty was willing to do the job.

When she was targeted for the advising responsibility for her department, she was a fairly recent employee, and did not understand the system in general nor the advising system specifically. In fact she candidly admitted, "I never realized there were academic advising jobs working in a college before I came here." At that time, she had limited knowledge of other advisors on campus, and said she was very much left to her own devices to learn how to be an advisor.

Jane's experience was consistent with major research. Astin (1993) wrote that faculty in large research universities have less and less to do with teaching and advising undergraduates. Although she had discovered an affinity for advising and improved her counseling skills during the two years she had been providing advising, Jane said in the beginning it was very difficult. "It was very scary because I was afraid that I was going to make a horrible mistake with a student's schedule giving them the wrong courses or the wrong advice about what courses they should take or how their courses were transferring in. I really felt unsure of myself about what I was saying to the students."

Gordon Weber, a professional staff advisor in a college office of degree requirements, pointed to the limitations caused by a lack of power or authority in addition to a lack of preparation among most staff advisors. He concurred with most that faculty did not provide advising, and asserted that departments recognized they needed more than a computer terminal to assist students and handle paperwork. Barely covering sarcasm, he
said, "But it's an administrative chore, so hire somebody who's not competent, who doesn't mind, and who's underpaid for the convenience of working here on this campus, but they don't have the authority to question faculty about the things they are doing!"

Eugenia Suffren, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, presented an opposing and less common experience. She described herself as an "outspoken" and "unusually articulate woman" who was "not intimidated by men" or credentials. She had been an advisor for nearly fifteen years, taught at a university level and done research as well. She considered her Ph.D. as a kind of union card. It legitimized her academic claim and helped to level the playing field. She asserted, "I've never had any reason to feel a lack of confidence in dealing with other academics!" Despite this she explained a major challenge of her work was with faculty colleagues across the campus. She spent much time convincing the unconvinced, "That we can be trusted to deliver respectable, legitimate coursework."

She carefully negotiated and shored up liaisons with departments and faculty and said, "Frankly that is often a process that has let me into a lot of work with my peers on campus, counselors and chief undergrad advisors." Good relations and trust building with faculty were major concerns since Eugenia's special academic program depended on advisors to recommend her program to their students.

At the time of her interviews, Amanda Cross, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, was ending her second year as an advisor. While Eugenia endeavored to build linkages and develop collegial relations between her program and academic departments and colleges, Amanda had little time to do this. Her diplomatic efforts were engaged within her special academic program. "Beyond this door," she said pointing to the one leading from her advising office, "is 'Never-Never-Land' and you don't know what's going to happen."

When Amanda made decisions that affected other parts of the special academic program, she was never sure what kind of reaction this would generate among co-workers.
She explained, "It could be the exact same decision, the exact same reason for that decision today as you made yesterday, but today it might get questioned because it's a different student, or because you're wearing green, or because it rained last night!" Such capricious behavior left Amanda feeling uneasy and alone.

Unlike Amanda, Monica Brennan, a professional staff advisor of a special academic program, said the gratification she received from coworkers in her program kept her going. "It would be a lot harder to take if I didn't have it so good in terms of my colleagues day-to-day and the students directly and get that reinforcement," she insisted.

While some professional staff advisors reported support from co-workers within their programs, all had to work to dispel doubts and mistrust of colleagues outside their programs. For those who lacked positive collegial relations within their departments, the advising task was made more arduous and increased their insecurity. If professional staff advisors had difficulty being seen as credible and capable by colleagues and co-workers, what was it like for classified staff?

**Classified Staff Advisors**

"When students come in, if you're sitting at the front desk, first of all, they don't really think that you know anything, or at least have any kind of authority!" [Emily Broadbent]

The six classified staff interviewed for this study were drawn from two special academic programs, two academic departments and a college counseling center. Their ages ranged from twenty-three to sixty-three and they had been advising from one to nearly twenty years. All had responsibilities formerly handled by a faculty, or in two cases, a professional staff advisor. Of the six, four held bachelor's degrees, one had a master's degree and one was working toward a bachelor's degree.

Peter MacNeil presented an upbeat experience in the special academic program where he was a non-benefited classified staff advisor just beginning his second year of
advising. He had discovered. "Interoffice there's political kinds of issues about how things
are done." Despite this, he saw this adding up to a complementary and positive climate. He
said, "All of my colleagues here are extremely professional, and they're great people." He
was confident that the majority of his co-workers wanted to help him improve his
advising. "I'm new at this," he explained, "And many of them will take the time to sit
down and teach me what I need to know."

At the opposite end of the spectrum, it was co-workers not favorably disposed to
her which interfered with Emily Broadbent's ability to do her work. A classified staff
advisor in her second year of advising, she had been distressed by relations with co-
workers in her special academic program. She explained:

We tend not to be very kind to each other here. My feelings have
been hurt several times. . . . It's almost like being a child and being scolded.

Emily blamed her combination receptionist-advisor position. She said holding two
antipodal positions created a credibility gap difficult to bridge, "I don't think anybody in this
[Program] thinks I'm an advisor," she said. Coworkers in the program appeared not to
know how to respond to her, what to ask her to do and seemed unwilling to listen to her
ideas. She continued, "It's really hard when you feel that your best judgment is going to be
challenged." She focused her criticism on the administrators of her program who appeared
indifferent to the situation. "It's very difficult working in this [program] because there's no
support from the top, and that's real hard." Unresolved interpersonal issues and lack of
administrative support threw her off-balance and caused her to modify her behavior. She
said, "It makes you hesitate about making a decision that you normally would make."

Leletti Cole, a classified staff advisor in an academic department, had been
providing advising for six years. Although she was the departmental secretary, her name
appeared in the space reserved for the chief faculty undergraduate advisor in the 1993
undergraduate college catalogue. Like Emily, she also was critical of the administration in
her department. "I don't think people really appreciate what they have with me here in this
department." In her intermediary position, she believed she was taken for granted, and said
dryly, "If it wasn't for my family I probably would have been gone."

In a college counseling center, Delores Eisenach said, "I am [a Clerk III still] which
is ridiculous! There are a lot of us [classified staff in advising positions] on campus." She
had been advising for approximately fifteen years. Her position previously was filled by a
tenured faculty. Following his retirement more than a decade ago, another was not
appointed, and the work devolved to her. "It's really professional work," she insisted.

According to advisors, negative outcomes and low morale were derivatives of the
lack of collegiality. Emily expressed this sentiment. "I think what happens is that we're not
working together toward what's best for the student!" When Emily looked around campus,
it seemed as though staff in other programs and departments had the support she did not
have. "We don't have that, and it's almost like you envy. It's an envy for someone who can
have that." Although she conceded this was mostly an impression. "I don't know about
other advising much on campus," she said and added, "I don't deal a lot with the other
offices on campus." A similar lack of contact with other colleagues was apparent when
Leletti said, "I really don't know what other advisors are doing. I tend to think I may be
doing a little more."

In general, classified staff advisors reported fewer opportunities for making
connections and building a frame of reference for their decisions than other participants did.
They did not participate on committees and therefore did not benefit, as professional staff
advisors did, from the modicum of status gained from such representation.

The Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Skism

"The emergence of student affairs as the self-appointed advising arm in the
undergraduate world is a historical development we can understand, but it's
only going to be as good as the people involved on any given campus because a lot of the people I see in student affairs don't understand the academy." [Pierre Williams]

Pierre elaborated on the dichotomy between academic affairs and student affairs first identified by John in Chapter IV. He said, "We have professional colleagues who at one level are good advisors, but don't share the intellectual commitment of the positive part of the academy, and that's cause for concern."

Earlier, Ryan identified two cultures transformed by unionization from faculty and administration into labor and management. Professional and classified staff advisors in academic departments, college counseling centers and special academic programs contributed a third and fourth. Jay identified a fifth culture, "The original Snow article was on the two cultures of sciences and humanities, and I think the two cultures now are student affairs and academic affairs." Jay said student affairs was composed of non-academic "student personnel workers, everything from admissions to psychological counselors to LD workers." From the point of view of many participants in academic affairs, the student affairs culture was a haphazard mixture of programs and activities, and represented different traditions, customs and focus of attention. Jay identified an essential conflict. "Beliefs are different even though the desired outcome may be similar."

Tension appeared between the student affairs emphasis on social imperatives and the academic affairs emphasis on intellectual development. In his criticism of higher education, Weingartner (1992) claimed that student affairs represents a campus "subculture" which often is at odds with the traditions of the academy (p. 129). Multifunction academic support programs were organized under the student affairs umbrella. Participants described how these understandings played out in terms of relationships with one another and support for each others' work.

Like a number of participants, Pierre saw the difference as an intellectual one. He firmly believed student affairs staff generally lacked an understanding or concern for the
fundamental principles of the academy. "They certainly don't understand intellectual work, and not even in terms of becoming a scholar, but in terms of helping a starting out university student to figure out what's worth studying," he insisted. This lack of contextual understanding of academic disciplines and how other fields might relate to one another accounted for the difference in the kind and quality of advising between academic affairs and student affairs according to Pierre and many others. He narrowed his argument further, "A lot of these folks don't understand the difference between sociology and anthropology, and how that might be important to this young person."

Jay saw the problem as not only a lack of understanding of the intellectual ideals of the academy, but one of focus. Jay was immensely bothered by the position taken by student affairs that they were responsible for all aspects of student life, and their apparent disregard of the "life-of-the-mind" ideal. He explained:

The worst example of that is the student affairs person saying, "We don't pay much attention to what students are doing academically. You can have them down there in your sandbox," was the phrase used, "for fifteen hours a week, but the remaining, whatever X hours a week they are with us. They are in the dorms. They are in activities. They are in student affairs life." And although I really didn't like the allusion, there is a huge truth to that. I spent an hour bemoaning this at a party last night where the graduate teachers were bemoaning the behavioral problems they are encountering in the classroom now where people just don't pay attention, or act out or all sorts of stuff. And those are the things that student affairs does attempt to address. They are trying to do the civility and they are trying to do multiculturalism and they are trying to do all sorts of stuff [for students] their mother should have taught them.

During a period of economic growth, these conflicts might make little difference; however, now, reduced resources pitted one division against the other. A note of competition was in Jay's voice as he wondered about University priorities and the frustration level of those in student affairs.
I've always said, my goal is to run a third-rate operation. If I can come in behind research and teaching, if I can come in third behind those two, then I've done wonderfully well, but once you get past one and two there are about sixty competitions there, so if I can come in third of the sixty, I'm happy. But it may be in student affairs that they're much higher up. Maybe they're a one or a two or maybe there's whatever they're doing and then a lot of other things. It may be that the degree of frustration is not as great on the student affairs side as it is on the faculty side.

However, Teresa Perez, a professional staff advisor in a student multifunction affairs academic support program, clearly was frustrated. She believed the placement of her program in student affairs was an unsound decision, "Minority programs, even though they say, 'Academic', A-c-a-d-e-m-i-c support service, they're under Student Affairs to begin with!" She felt her program was at odds with others included in this division. "Look at who's under that umbrella: [all] services to students, public safety, the alternative and minority programs, dean of students!" She was keenly aware of the difference, "Academic Affairs is strictly academic. Teaching! Teaching! Teaching!" Teresa explained what this meant to her. "I think the problem that I ran into is that this program doesn't have any power. . . . And I feel powerless." The location of multifunction academic support programs in student affairs meant they played a less central position. She fumed at the lack of representation of support programs on decision-making committees. "We're not welcome. We're not involved in anything." This was a significant point of contention for Teresa. She explained:

When I think about these programs I think it's like, the University I think they feel like damned if they have us here and damned if they don't have us here because if they don't, then that looks pretty bad. I mean, here's the . . . state university, land grant, blah, blah, blah, blah. And they don't have any programs for minorities? They don't have any support for minorities? Minorities are not welcomed there? Wait a minute! OK, let's
have some programs.... But now, just keep them there isolated and somewhere, no power, no nothing. Small budget so they don't scream and holler that they don't have any money. . . . And they use our programs at admissions and in recruitment. Oh, yes! "At the University. . . . we have all kinds of support for you. Come on over! Come on over!" . . . So it's a tool for them. But I don't think we're welcome really. I don't think we're very welcome. It's a hard thing to deal with. . . .

Yesterday in a meeting someone put it like, Hispanics are being put in certain places, or minorities in general are in certain places. And you can't get out of it. . . . The word they used yesterday was "ghettoize!" . . . Ghettoized! . . . At one time, many, many years ago, we were under the umbrella of the provost, and we were switched, but again this has to do with [the University] and how they see problems with minority students as problems of the under prepared. . . . It's all political. It's all political!

Teresa recounted a telling story of an experience which confirmed her suspicions about the situation. She said:

And one time, I was talking to this crowd of people, all of them summer advisors, and telling them about the ESL students and what they should do about ESL students and how ESL works. And lo and behold one of them gets up over here and says, "Why are we bringing those students in here? . . . Why should we be dealing with these unprepared students? We should do away with this." And I was stunned. . . . I literally wanted to kill the person because I don't know if they are doing this without thinking, or they really know. They are really smart enough to know. And they're really racist pigs! Down-to-earth racist pigs! And it comes out. It manifests itself like this. Or they're so ignorant. So very ignorant of what they say. And they think they're saying something good because you can turn that around and make it good. You can say, "Don't bring them here because they're going to flunk out. We don't want the students who come here to flunk out. We don't want that. Send them to a community college." You can turn around and say that, "That would be better. A more sensitive way." No. No. No! Racist pigs!
This story highlighted a central conflict among advisors. That was the argument between those who saw the essential role of the institution as intellectual and regarded adequate preparation especially in the areas of writing, reading and analytical reasoning as vital prerequisites for college admission, and those who saw the essential role as social and economic and believed academic preparation could be achieved through remediation after admission to college. These opposing positions were made more complex by the confusion caused by social class and race issues. Advisors spent little time discussing such issues or ideas with one another. They received no encouragement from campus leadership to do so.

Anunciata provided another example of how these kinds of tensions played out. Just prior to the period of her interviews one academic support program had tried to increase its authority over the academic progress and advising of students of color enrolled in her college. Anunciata fought against this and informed the staff in the program her college had its own support services for students of color. She told them emphatically, "You're not going to advise my [science] students, who happen to be minority, when you don't know the curriculum!" Exasperated by the approach of the University administration, she said, "Everyone [else] wanted to pussyfoot around!" In the process, she said some questioned her motives. "I didn't want to be perceived as being a racist," she said and added, "The point was, nobody [in administration] wanted to bite the bullet when it was so obvious to me that we're an academic unit!"

Among most advisors here, their location in student affairs raised a non-academic flag over the multifunction academic support programs. The dichotomy between the academic affairs and student affairs segments of the University worked against collegial relationships. O'Banion (1994) wrote that over the years student development leaders had painted themselves as caring and "student centered" and "on the side of right" and therefore everyone else, faculty and administrators, on the side of wrong (p. 117). Jay contributed an understatement when he said antagonism between these cultures meant, "Communication
is more difficult." Reciprocity between these two aspects of the advising support system here was questionable. Instead, the division had the effect of reinforcing another "us and them" situation within the academy. Such understanding also negatively segmented the student experience (Douglas, 1992). The following section details the experience of advisors in academic support programs in order to gain a clearer sense of their understandings of collegial relations.

Professional Staff Advisors in Multifunction Academic Support Programs

"We are totally different!" [Angela Pham]

Four student affairs academic counselors were interviewed for this study. They represented three different academic support programs. Their ages ranged from middle thirties to late fifties. Two individuals had bachelor degrees and two held doctorates. One was a director of a program and an adjunct faculty.

If many in academic affairs were made uncomfortable with student affairs involvement with academic advising, all was not harmonic here either. Angela Pham, a professional staff academic counselor in a multifunction academic support program, explained initially she was employed by another academic support unit. Within a few years, she was instrumental in the development of the one she directed at the time of her interviews. She explained, "When I came on board in 1983, the [program that hired me] had about twenty Asian students on their roster." On her own, Angela initiated recruiting efforts. "I did a campaign!" she said emphatically. By the end of the first year she had increased enrollment in the program to approximately a hundred-seventy-five students representing a fairly broad spectrum of Asian countries. She says, "I was the only [Asian] advisor."

When she compared the number of students she was serving to the numbers served by of the other staff in the program, she discovered that their individual caseload
was about 70 students compared to her 175. In response to her complaints, the director of the program assigned a graduate student teaching assistant (TA) to work with her part time. Angela said, "It was very helpful, but one counselor and one TA . . . was not fair."

Students representing a wide range of Asian countries increased the difficulty of her advising. "It's always very complex!" she said and added, "When you speak a different language, that means the culture is completely different." The cultural incompatibility made the combination too difficult. She insisted, "People can have all of the good will, but it's not easy to really understand each other because of the differences in cultures and backgrounds."

Eventually, Angela took matters into her own hands. She explained, "I talked to the vice chancellor for student affairs myself directly." She told him, "I don't think that just myself is enough to serve that population. Number one. And number two, I don't think it's appropriate because . . . it was designed for Hispanic students, of course, everything should go to Hispanics, to serve Hispanic students. And so there's not much left for Asians."

In 1990, the University responded to her request to have a separate program for Asian students. This action created a rift with the director of the program she left. She says she understood his negative reaction, "I don't blame him for that. He was very angry because he was hoping that the Asians would be together with the Hispanics so that he could expand the program."

Problems not only arose between academic support programs, but as it did within academic affairs, conflict occurred between co-workers in academic support programs as well. Halfway through her second year advising, Robin Wolf, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, reported a mismatch between her high level of enthusiasm and others in the program. She described what occurred:

Staff meetings are without a doubt, absolutely without a doubt, one of the worst things! . . . I was told not too long ago, maybe my boss would call me a complainer. . . . In staff meetings, people hate me! It's like, 'Oh
there she goes again.' I'm like, 'Why don't we try this?' No? 'Then why don't we try this?' No? 'Then how about this? Do we have this?' No? 'Can I try this?' And I get a lot of, 'That's been tried. That's old.' . . .

I want people to see it as an important program. I don't want people to see it as this kind of old, outdated dinosaur of a program. I want to breathe life into it. . . . Sometimes I get really angry and frustrated.

Robin also encountered a second barrier presented by co-workers. The result was a dampening of her enthusiasm. She explained:

I recently did a presentation for about two hundred and fifty people at a national conference. I've only got a bachelor's degree. I've only been at this job for a year and a half, but I put in a proposal to do this, and it was accepted. . . . And it was the first time that I had presented in front of so many people. . . . It went really great, but I got zilch from them. Zero recognition from the program. . . . And in fact, everybody gave me a really hard time about going. . . . For what it was worth professionally, and for my own sense of confidence, I still don't know if it was worth the trouble that I had to go through to do that. And to come back and to be totally unrecognized whatsoever is really like a slap in the face. So it's frustrating.

Staff development for me is kind of like an afterthought. I think that's not just in my program and not just in my department. I think it's across the board here.

Advisors in student affairs multifunction academic support programs clearly wanted to be a part of the intellectual circle represented by academic affairs. The conflicts they experienced within and across institutional boundaries were similar to those described by advisors in the other arenas. The general belief that the multifunction academic support program advisors had little to offer those in academic affairs meant everyone was missing information necessary for good advising.
"I personally don’t think I’m treated well in this institution."

[Ana Garcia]

Overall, participants did not fall back on concerns such as gender problems or racism to defend a position or attack a decision made by others. However, these issues did appear in interview material. Therefore, it was necessary to examine the meaning this had for individuals and for collegiality.

Anunciata said that while she felt fairly compensated for her work, she encountered unfairness. She explained, "It's been an issue more of respect, and that's been harder to come by." While she believed her gender may play a role in how she was perceived by the mostly male faculty in her college, Anunciata acknowledged her doctorate in education rather than a science area was also a differentiating factor which left her wondering, "Not because of anything more than perhaps these two issues that I keep coming back to, the two themes which are: is it because I am not a [scientist] or is it because I am a woman? And it's hard to know between those kind of things."

Most female participants did not directly identify gender as an issue. Instead, like Anunciata, they understood it as complex. Female administrators were identified at least as often as their male counterparts when participants described discriminatory behavior. And females were named as often as males in being out of touch with staff. Document analysis indicated an uneven gender situation in employment categories. More females with doctorates were designated professional staff advisors than males. Males with doctorates, if not faculty, tended to be in the more powerful undergraduate dean and director positions. Those providing advising in classified positions were overwhelmingly female.

Ethnic and cultural issues expanded the complexity. Tension existed between those who stressed membership in people of color and those who wanted their individual ethnic
or cultural identity to be separate. When asked what it was like to be among the minority in
advising on this campus, Leletti responded vehemently:

First off let me say I do not like the word minority! People of
Color! I prefer People of Color or a member of the First World. I prefer it
because I don't think of myself as a minority. People of color make up the
majority globally, and soon to be in this country! Think about it!

Patty Huang referred to herself as "an Asian-American" professional staff advisor
in a multifunction academic support program. She presented a middle-ground position:

I think, legally, they are Asians if they are not born in the United
States. If they become citizens, they are Asian-Americans. But to some
people, they feel that Asian-American only refers to those who are Asian
who are born in this country. I'm not sure.

Despite this, Patty acknowledged, "Yes, we also belong to people of color. The
bigger umbrella." She shed some light on the difficulty of fixing descriptors to cultural and
ethnic groups:

It's cultural. . . . A term . . . can change. . . . Who knows how many
years from now we'll be using a different term. And in order to be
politically correct, you have to keep following and maybe people don't like
to be called this or that. I tend not to use that word. [minority] We used to.
And it's not Hispanic anymore. It's Latino. Personally, I am not that critical
about even if someone said we are a minority. . . . Minority, we used to use
that. If a person doesn't know that we shouldn't use that word anymore, I
don't feel offended.

In direct opposition to Leletti's position, Angela was offended when she was asked
what it was like to be a "person of color" providing advising on this campus. She
explained:
You can call me Asian-American. You can call me Asian. . . But if you call me a minority, that's fine, too, because yes, we are a minority in here. We are not the majority. Our number is very small, and that means a minority. . . . I myself don't like the term of "People of Color." What color do I have? Yellow? . . . Why do you call me "People of color?" I'm not a person of color! Everyone has a color. White is a color, too. Black is a color. White is a color. Brown is a color. Yellow is a color. So they distinguish if it's not white, it's color. I don't like it!

While most participants saw little to be gained by characterizing all decisions that go against their wishes as racist, no one denied that such problems existed. Several were disturbed by nuances of relationships which could be interpreted in more than one way. Like Ana Garcia, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, often they did not know whether it was subtle oppression or something else. Although she said, "I don't jump to analyze or try to interpret anything that way," sometimes Ana wondered. She explained her puzzlement:

I personally don't think I'm treated well in this institution. I'm treated well by the people that I deal with closely and with some of my colleagues who I know respect me well. I don't know if it's because advising is not treated well in general at this institution, and it's almost looked down on, or not trusted as being well intentioned . . . or if it's personal. . . . And that the fact that I happen to be a Puerto Rican woman. . . . But I do not have access to everyone I should talk to, or who would benefit from hearing what I have to say, but other people might have that access.

Although she understood that this might not be consciously and purposefully negative, but arising from ignorance, lack of ingress troubled her. She said, "It's not dealing with students that might be disrespectful or intolerant or difficult to deal with. That's not what frustrates me about this. It's when you think you have a professional opinion to
discuss, and you're willing to discuss it in a fair manner, and when it's not done in a fair manner, that frustrates me."

While race is never irrelevant, it was very complex as Carmen discovered. She explained, "We are a minority student program office." In this case, Carmen said the problem was not only one of racism but was a gender issue as well. "And then myself, as a female Hispanic, has just been three or four times as bad because I have to deal with that."

She provided an example of a recent problem in her program when an administrator of color hung a sign in the receptionist area of the office. Large letters spelled out a bias. "He put up a sign saying, 'ENGLISH ONLY IN OUR OFFICE!"' she said. Emphatically, Carmen challenged, "So, when you hear racism on campus, go look at the minority offices, and that's where it's starting." Such insensitivity virtually went unremarked according to Carmen. Discouraged, she asked, "If the rest of the campus is seeing that within an office there's is no network, no communication, then why should the rest of the campus care?" In the meantime, Carmen said the conflict was barely tolerable, and there was no collegiality. "And it's really uncomfortable because you wouldn't expect these problems in our office. . . . I used to go home and sit and cry. . . . I wouldn't recommend this as a first job for anybody."

The area of race among advisors was rife with contentious problems and differences of belief. These raised barriers to collegiality. Most tended, like Carmen, to keep their feelings and ideas to themselves.

While age was not directly identified as a major restrictor by most, it was given as a partial reason for some older participants not aspiring to "higher" administration positions. Ze spoke for most when he said, "And since I have never been chair of the department and we just got a new chair and even if I'm chair after that person, at the age I will be, I don't think that I'll go much beyond that. There are certain limits to what I can do."
This sample included the single, never married participants as well as some currently married or divorced. Marital status did not seem to limit or enhance relationships with colleagues. However, participants such as Leletti, a single parent with children at home, expressed less flexibility to entertain an extended day and this had impact on the development of collegial relations. "I could really see getting involved with a lot of things that go on this campus, but I feel that I don't give enough time as it is to my family and I wouldn't want to be in that position to have to make those kinds of choices," she said and added, "I like being able to leave here at the end of my day."

Many said the stress periods in academia were also the times when their own children were starting school or they were celebrating holidays. Pierre explained these high stress times meant, "Just no family life!" Student crises appeared to increase around holiday times, Melinda said, "It's tough because I'm dealing with my own stresses related to family holidays and things like that. I'm raising two adolescents. So it's a tough time for me in general."

Peter, the youngest participant and also unmarried, pointed to his single status as a positive factor at this crucial time in his own development. It allowed him greater freedom of time and ability to make a commitment to his career. In order to find time to handle all his responsibilities he said, "What I usually end up doing is coming in either an hour early or staying late into the night, ten or eleven o'clock because when there's nobody in the office and it's very quiet, I can get an incredible amount of work done and not be interrupted." He divided his time between two positions. "They're full-time positions, both of them, and I'm doing them both half time. So I have to put in extra hours for both sides which for me, being single and young, is not a problem. I enjoy doing it. If I had a family that would be much more difficult."
Summary

This chapter explored understandings participants have about each other and what this meant for collegiality. It was clear that good advising depended upon good relations and contact with other resource people throughout the campus. In the University environment studied here, the large and diffuse advising system reduced collegiality. The size of the University decreased opportunities for chance meetings and informal conversation. Advisors lacked knowledge about one another. They knew little about their common experiences or concerns. This led to uninformed and often negative evaluations of one another. They were more willing to see differences among themselves. This led to less collaboration and little collective action on common problems. This fragmentation led to a sense of territorialism. Competing interests acted negatively not only on the experience of advisors, but also the experience of the undergraduate student (Boyer, 1987). The lack of communication and collegiality was an expensive liability for the University.

The majority were critical about faculty priorities which placed research above teaching and advising and resulted in isolation of faculty members. Faculty were seen as ill-prepared in advising skills and lacking necessary, and often, basic information. Training opportunities for advisors in general were inadequate. Other categories of advisors, particularly professional staff undergraduate deans, were concerned about attaining legitimacy among faculty. Staff advisors felt that the creation and appointment of staff advisors was often happenstance and not a planning priority. Classified staff advisors in particular had to struggle to be viewed as credible making it difficult to build connections. An evident rift in belief systems between student affairs-based advisors and academic affairs-based advisors inhibited collegiality. Advisors, from every category, felt a lack of recognition. Gender was not seen as a key problem in building a collegial network nor was race, but no one denied that problems existed in these areas.
Left unresolved among participants was the question of who should be doing advising. The next chapter examines what the understandings and relationships detailed by participants mean for their roles and responsibilities.
CHAPTER VII
DIVIDED ROLES AND SEGMENTED DAYS

Introduction

"Sometimes people say, "What do you do as advisors? Isn't this what faculty do? What do you do?" [Patty Huang]

In his research into organizational structures in higher education, Habley (1983 and 1988) discovered seven basic advising models. At this University, the organizational structure for advising most nearly fit Habley's description of the Split Advising Model. In this complex case, academic departments become "sub-units" and college counseling centers provide initial entry point advising for most students. However, during the past three decades, the University also developed variations on the Split Advising Model by adding other "primary units" and "sub-units." These included special academic programs and multifunction academic support programs. Given this, it appeared to have led to multiple models of advising on this campus.

The delivery system reflected this complexity. Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, provided some insight. She said:

I do know that there are different definitions and different levels and different types of advising. For example, an academic advisor in a department serves a much different function than say somebody doing the things we do. They're much, much different! And I also know that between programs that actually do advising there's also big differences, but I know this only because I suspect it.

What did advisors do? Were distinctions so marked? Or was the work misapprehended as Anunciata Buttons, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, indicated when she asserted, "People in our college don't have a sense of what this office does." Was it a case of an unclear role as Ryan Casey, a faculty advisor in
a life science department, declared, "Most people don't understand what we do... Even people who have gone to college don't really understand what a college faculty member does." John Mertens, a faculty advisor in an art department, gave the issue some focus and a place to begin. He said, "And that really comes down to what are we really trying to do."

This chapter examines what advisors do. It looks at the functions and activities in advisor roles, and how they manage their roles. Because advising roles were connected to organizational place and employment position, the advising structure and delivery system provide a frame for examining the range of roles and responsibilities described by advisors.

Multiple Models of Advising

"My advising is in a unique framework here!"

[Anunciata Buttons]

Prior to the end of the sixties decade, all admitted students were required to declare a major on their application. When the University changed this criteria, incoming students who identified themselves as undeclared or undecided were funneled into the College of Liberal Arts and were advised at the Liberal Arts Counseling Center. Mary Perry, a classified staff advisor in this Center explained the original concept, "We were just going to be the holding tank for this College." She said this purpose has changed. "Over time, because of restrictions and overcrowding, we've unfortunately become the holding tank for the University."

At the time of this study, the majority of freshmen entered as undeclared or undecided. Students might remain in this designation for as long as five or six semesters. Therefore, the College of Liberal Arts Counseling Center served not only the greatest numbers of students, but the greatest numbers of students wavering indecisively between one course of study and another. The numbers ranged from approximately 8,000 to 10,000
students. Advisors in this center were faced with the overwhelming problem of trying to help thousands of students, unsure of their academic or life direction, determine which set of college or major requirements to follow. To impose some order, the center treated undecided students as if they intended to remain in the College of Liberal Arts, and advised from that point of view. Mary noted this was a limitation. "This doesn't work as well because, in essence, we're imposing our requirements on students who well may not stay with us."

Two main functions carried out in the Liberal Arts Counseling Center typified the fundamental underpinnings of the two other professional college counseling centers explored in this study. Mary explained. "We help undeclared students with all aspects of their advising, and then declared students with any exceptions they may want to academic regulations."

During the past two decades several other colleges on this campus set up counseling centers. These agencies served students who had indicated an interest in a program or major in the college at the point of entrance to the University, but admission to their specific academic choice was postponed until they satisfactorily completed designated coursework during their first year. These students were more accurately in a "pre" category rather than clearly undeclared or undecided. For this study, such colleges were designated "professional" in order to differentiate them from liberal arts. The enrollment in each of these colleges ranged from approximately 1,200 to 2,000 students. In comparison to the center serving the Liberal Arts College, these served fewer students and had fewer advisors working there.

Anunciata said her center encompassed more functions, elements and tasks when compared to other centers. Like undergraduate deans in other counseling centers, she helped pre-declared students develop academic goals leading to a major, interpreted academic rules and regulations, handled academic discipline and appeal cases and organized orientation activities for her college. However, unlike others, among the priorities
of this center, she included developmental activities and a variety of "programs for undergraduates." Evaluation of faculty also figured into her initiatives. "I manage the total student evaluation for all the faculty," she said. "Now, why is this important?" she asked and answered, "Well, it can reaffirm the anecdotal information from students about the quality." She held up a recently delivered letter voicing a student complaint about a faculty member. "I have these up the kazoo!" she emphasized. She specifically separated her role from advisors in academic departments. "It's not going to be like [a departmental advisor] when she's advising."

According to Carstensen and Silberhorn (1979) the departmental model was commonly acknowledged as the "primary" advising structure. In some cases, although not all, when students declared a major upon admission, they bypassed advising centers and were advised in academic departments. This created two significant differences between academic departments and counseling centers. In addition to advising students who were declared majors, department advisors generally restricted the focus of their advising to departmental concerns. Mary believed this represented a limitation. "They're not charged with college requirements or University requirements so students tend to get specialized advising in the departments, but may not hear the whole story," she said. At the departmental level, the lack of a need for a broad overview of campus pointed to a need for other kinds of advising programs and offices.

Ze Mendez, the chief undergraduate faculty advisor in a humanities department, also volunteered at the Liberal Arts College Counseling Center. He provided an example of how his priorities and perspective were affected when he worked in one or the other setting. He explained:

The type of advising I do in my office is very different from the type of advising I do in [the Liberal Arts Counseling Center]. Here usually I establish a good rapport with the students. And I see my role more or less to interact with them in such a way that will help them accomplish their goal
which is to finish the major. . . . But at [the Center], I counsel students with problems, with academic problems and also personal problems. . . . Over there I don't have a good rapport with everyone. Actually, it's good not to have a good rapport with everyone at [the Center] because you have to be objective . . . and apply the rules uniformly.

Special academic programs added further complexity to this discussion of advising models. Individually constructed to concentrate on specific academic needs of certain undergraduates, and to provide curricular flexibility, each was unique. Eugenia Suffren, a professional staff advisor, said her special academic program operated "like a small college of 700 or 1,000 or more students." The International Exchange Program had a bursar, financial aid and transcript office, admissions program and registrar's office, "Every function of a small college," she emphasized.

This bears some qualification. Although it had many similarities with a small college, Eugenia's special academic program was not an exact replica. It had a broad array of functions, but it did not offer its own coursework. Instead, students earned credit, but not a degree, through academic exchange with other institutions of higher education. Three of the other special academic programs in this study did offer coursework leading to a bachelor's degree. Two of these had faculty as well as staff positions. In addition, while the four special programs selected for this study shared an admission process, only one other had the breadth of administrative functions itemized by Eugenia.

Like others, Emily Broadbent, a classified staff advisor, contrasted her role in a special academic program with those in academic departments. She emphasized the need for a more extensive knowledge base of procedures and regulations. "I think in [our program] we probably have to know a lot more than the advisors in a specific major."

According to Amanda Cross, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, in order to do her job she needed a generalized perspective. She stated, "I think that in our
office, our method of academic advising is different from the majority of academic
advisors at least at the University because I think of us sort of Jacks-of-all-trades!"

A fourth adaptation was created by the student affairs multifunction academic
support programs. Hines (1984) connected the establishment of these units with the
increasing diversity of students. Paralleling what had been happening in other universities,
on this campus, multifunction academic support programs were established to provide
advocacy and direct support to students primarily based on ethnicity or cultural descriptors.
Language, economic factors, and academic preparation were additional determining criteria.
These programs did not have their own coursework or programs leading to a degree.
Instead, students were offered a complex of academic, career, personal and graduate school
counseling, tutorial services, and cultural activities. These programs were part of a dual
admissions approach and staff participated in orientation. Students placed in multifunction
academic programs were also admitted into one of the colleges as undeclared, undecided or
a pre-major. In some cases they also might be admitted into a special academic program,
or academic department. This was a complex arrangement. However, it gave some
students two primary places on campus to get academic counseling assistance.

Angela Pham, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support
program, worried that some might see these programs as too expensive. She defended the
need for them. "I believe that there should be a special program and have people with
different backgrounds, in different [ethnic and cultural] backgrounds to be able to deal with
and help those students." Teresa Perez, a professional staff advisor in another multifunction
academic support program, stressed the unique aspect of her role. Like others, she
compared and contrasted her program and advising with academic departments and faculty
and stressed the need for a broad overview:

An advisor in one of the minority programs must know a lot, lot, lot
more than an advisor in the History Department or the Sociology
Department because in the Sociology Department, you know about
Sociology, and you know about the deans and you know a couple of other places. . . . But in [here] you have to know about all of the departments, about the administration, about financial aid, about housing, because in here, everything falls in here. . . . If they have a problem in the dorm, they come here. Faculty? They come here. Deans? They come here. Police? They come here. We are connected to every angle here. . . . I'm a walking encyclopedia! Yes. I'm a walking encyclopedia!

Clearly, academic departments served as a mirror for other advising models. The multiple models of advising on this campus led to two major divisions in advisor roles. Advisors appeared to be either generalists or they were specialists. A few had feet in both arenas. Generalists had an expanded role. They often spoke about the breadth of their knowledge base as well as the range of their functions. They often dealt with the broad life issues of their advisees. Theirs might be termed a whole-life role. Specialists had a more traditional role. They mainly focused their attention on academic concerns of students. Their need for a big overview was less important than their need to know about their academic area and field in depth.

A Complex Delivery System

"I make those decisions and help students with those academic dean-like things, whereas if they need advice they go to the departmental advisor." [Jim Emmert]

Advisors in college counseling centers commonly included professional staff and faculty. The lines of reporting generally ran from faculty or professional undergraduate dean and director of a center to the administrative dean in the college. Undergraduate deans in college counseling centers were usually, although not always, at the same level as a department head in the academic hierarchy.
Jay West became undergraduate dean and director of the College of Liberal Arts Counseling Center in 1971. "When I came here there was one assistant dean for the College, a director and a secretary and a file clerk," he said and added, "They were trying to keep the files and do degree audits, and there were a few faculty counselors." He built on the original staff pattern, and at the time of this study, had created the broadest delivery system. It included undergraduate and graduate student peer counselors, classified staff, professional staff, and faculty, and was the only center to utilize volunteer advisors.

Jim Emmert, a faculty undergraduate dean, directed a counseling center in a professional college. In addition to his position, this center operated with a professional staff advisor and two classified staff secretaries. Clerical staff did not provide advising. All faculty in this college were expected to advise. Jim described the process as arithmetical. "Our College, for the most part, divides up the student undergraduate majors among the faculty." Unlike the practice in the Liberal Arts Counseling Center, faculty provided advising in their offices rather than in a centralized location. Jim interpreted and applied University and College rules and regulations and served as a resource to faculty advisors.

Anunciata provided a third variation. As undergraduate dean and director in another professional college counseling center, she had created a very structured staff framework to streamline her operation. She explained, "It includes a hierarchy of the undergraduate dean, and then the chief undergraduate faculty advisors in each department and then finally faculty advisors assigned students." Information was funneled from Anunciata to the chief undergraduate advisor to advising faculty in each department. All pre-majors received advising in the center. Once a student declared a major the advising responsibility transitioned to a departmental faculty advisor. As was the case in Jim's college, faculty provided advising in their offices rather than at the center. Not all faculty in Anunciata's college provided advising, but this role fell to those with a limited research schedule.

Two classified support staff and several work study student assistants completed the staff. Anunciata called her support staff her "extra eyes and ears," but as was the case in
Jim's center, they provided no advising. Florence Baker, a professional staff advisor in a college counseling center, believed dependence on classified staff advisors was not universal on campus. In the professional colleges she said, "I think that clerical staff will tell people how to go about doing certain things, as far as course by course, but I think that it's very limited."

Academic departments presented some adaptation in staff patterns also. Often considered "traditional," faculty advising in academic departments is the oldest form of institutionalized advising in America (Grites, 1979; Rudolph, 1962). In this form, the lines of reporting travel from faculty advisors to department head to college administration.

Melinda Abercrombie, a faculty advisor in social science, managed a centralized departmental advising office (Hines, 1984). Although all faculty provided advising, as chief undergraduate faculty advisor, for nearly fifteen years Melinda had coordinated the departmental advising program. Initially it was designed as a temporary position. "But," she said, "It worked so effectively for the department, namely in relieving other faculty from doing a chore they considered a chore, something they weren't good at, something that they weren't particularly interested in. Periodically when the advising system would be reviewed, it would be reviewed very positively, and everybody said, 'Oh, let's continue with it.' So, it became something of an institution."

It appeared the chief undergraduate advisor most often provided the bulk of departmental advising. Ze said he preferred to do this rather than deal with continual interruptions. He explained, "The problem of giving it to other people to also do advising is that a lot of times when advisees would come they [faculty] are always calling me up here in my office. So the faculty advisor would come to my office to ask questions because students come up with things and are asking them questions that they cannot answer." This relieved other faculty in the department of advising responsibility.
In some cases, departmental secretaries provided much advising. Leletti Cole, a classified staff advisor in an academic department said, "There are two [advisors] in this department... myself and Professor Lee who's the chief undergraduate advisor."

Jane Garaud, a professional staff advisor, occupied a split position between two academic departments and volunteered in a college counseling center. She contrasted the two different advising patterns in the academic departments. In one, she said:

They have an incredible undergraduate secretary who does so much for the students. . . . They have a chief undergraduate advisor in the department who is on staff for many hours a week. They have a pre-major advisor who's also on staff a lot. And they also have the director of undergraduate studies who provides a lot of help. In addition to that they have somebody who is dealing with internships and honors. . . . And during counseling week, every faculty member has a list of advisees and must place outside their door their hours when students can sign up to come see them for advising.

In the other department, she described a different pattern:

In [this] department, the undergraduate secretary does some advising. They have a director of undergraduate studies who does most of the advising. . . . I do sort of spill-over advising. But the rest, the remainder of the faculty do not advise. . . . There's quite a few faculty in [the department] whose office hours are not Monday from one to two or Wednesday from three to five, but by appointment only. . . . They work at home. So they're here a very, very limited amount of time.

Like college counseling centers, special academic programs had broad staff patterns, although they were not identical. They might include student peer counselors, classified and professional staff, or faculty or some combination. In most cases, special academic programs reported to the provost's staff. However, in at least one case, the line of reporting was to a dean in a college.
In student affairs multifunction academic support programs, professional staff advisors provided all of the advising. They reported to a professional staff director or assistant director. Classified staff and faculty did not advise in these settings. As Patty Huang, a professional staff advisor, detailed staffing patterns in her multifunction academic support program, she said, "I hope that we can increase the staff members here because we are serving five hundred thirty students and we have just three of us full-time counselors. And if you look at other support programs, they have about the same number of students about five hundred, too, and they have more counselors." Teresa Perez, a professional staff advisor in another multifunction academic support program, acknowledged staff patterns sometimes had little to do with numbers of advisees. She said, "I can give you a very accurate list [of students in the Program]. An accurate number. It's about three hundred. [There are] . . . about eight of us." This situation had recently developed as the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the student population had changed. Organizational adaptation had not caught up to these changes.

A Multifaceted Role

"So it's a multifaceted role!" [Anunciata Buttons]

"I wear a variety of hats: teacher, advisor, researcher . . . and there are other hats as well." Pierre Williams, faculty advisor in a college-based special academic program, used a "hats" metaphor to quickly sum up his complex role. In the multifunction academic support unit she directed, Angela used similar words to describe her work. "I really wear many hats," she explained. "I do teaching. I do advising." To this list she added, "As an administrator I have a lot of duties going to meetings here and there and making sure everything is going smoothly here." Consistent with the variety of advising models and complex delivery system, most advisors described a multifaceted, complex role.
At the outset of his interviews Jay was concerned that his experience might be widely different from others doing advising. "One of the difficulties you're going to have talking with me is the distinction between an academic advisor and administering academic advising, and those are wildly different jobs or professions," he insisted. As an undergraduate faculty dean, Jay once thought of his role, "roughly in terms of thirds, about one-third teaching, one third administration and one third actual advising." During his interviews, he decided this equation needed revision. "Maybe," he says, "there's another way of looking at it, in quarters: one fourth teaching, one fourth doing administration, one fourth doing advising and one fourth advising staff." He imagined his divided role might cause him to abstract his thinking, produce "a strange perspective as an advisor," and make him an anomaly more conversant with the administration of advising than the provision of advising.

Despite Jay's sense of difference, as interviewing progressed, it became evident that a combination role was representative of the majority of participants regardless of their employment classification. The difference was how roles were constituted. A classified staff advisor in a special academic program, Emily called hers a "dual" role. Her position was split fifty-fifty between the "front desk" receptionist role and her advising role. Mary also detailed a combination role. She said, "Now I'm about equally divided between a third advising, a third computer and a third [faculty and peer] training. It isn't quite the division I would have picked myself." She expected her three-part job would continue.

In a few cases, advisors had wide latitude of choice over their role, but most did not. Jackie LaPierre, a classified staff advisor, said her role was not written into her job description. She explained the decision to have her fulfill the advising role in her college-based multidiscipline degree program was made just before the start of the previous fall semester "I had never done any advising before that. I had no idea what to do. . . . I didn't even know what courses were required until I got a book and started to read."
John Mertens, a faculty advisor in an art department, described how he came to be an advisor. "I'd start by saying that there really wasn't a route," he said and added, "Every bit of advising always came about because of some other role that I had, and that's still true." Ana Garcia, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, also described an indirect route to advising. She intended to be a professor, but could only find temporary faculty positions. Eventually she was hired in one of the college counseling centers. After several months, she said, "At that point, I knew I liked doing advising. . . . So right there, the line is not always straight! It's not always just from here to there, and you have a straight line!"

This was not unusual. Jay spoke for the majority, "As with most people in the field, I never intended to become one." Most did not plan to become an advisor, but they did.

Although advising was an unplanned career direction, for nearly all advisors, advising was the preferred aspect of their combination roles and the one they would be most reluctant to give up. Mary said, "I really enjoy it. In fact, I like the student contact time more than I enjoy the computer time or even the faculty training time." As a faculty advisor in a life science department, Ryan also discovered an affinity for the work. He explained:

It was more fun advising and teaching. I have found it very rewarding. I don't regret it at all. . . . It's basically what I love. If somebody told me, 'Well, would you like to so some administration and we'll take you away from teaching?' I would say without thinking about it at all, "No! If I can't teach, I don't want to do it!"

Role Diversification

"It's quite varied in that way in what one is called upon to do. It's not just academic advising!" [Monica Brennan]
The ambiguity created by role diversification meant advisors could be expected to do anything. Monica Brennan, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, said although advising was, "the primary role," she had to handle other tasks. "When you don't have the staff which has sort of segregated duties, you do everything from a budget decision to logistically juggling of what to do with equipment or how to get physical plant to come and take it away." She echoed many others when she asked, "And it certainly is not relevant to my role as an academic advisor, but if I didn't do it, who else would given what the staffing is?" Most advisors described broad variety in their responsibilities and tasks.

Initially Mary's classified staff role was not focused on advising. She said change occurred not so much by sanction as by default. "It benefited the unit to have full-time staff willing to take on added responsibilities and do what the unit needs." In addition to advising, these extra duties included training and supervising peer counselors. The number of student counselors in this center ranged between twenty-five and fifty and most worked from six to a maximum of ten hours a week. Keeping track of this number of short time employees complicated the day-to-day schedule. As peer counselor supervisor for the center, Mary observed student counselors, investigated complaints, handled errors they might make and generally kept track of these short time employees. Mary also had an interfacing function with faculty advisors and undergraduate deans. She decided which cases need to be reviewed by whom. "Occasionally," she said, "we all meet together to talk about particularly difficult cases."

As they detailed elements of their comprehensive roles, while tasks and responsibilities might vary, it was clear, no one was just an advisor. Eugenia outlined such an inclusive role as she described five dimensions typifying her work day in her academic exchange program. This included "preparation counseling" which meant "helping students figure out where they want to go and making the fit," with requirements of academic department, University and cooperating institution, "which is more routine academic
counseling." In addition she also provided technical, personal and financial management counseling and program administration. She explained, "The other pieces I encounter include the technical side of placing them." Technical assistance on academic procedures easily slid into personal counseling. "What I was running into a lot this morning were some emergencies that may arise if students who are abroad encounter difficulties and are beginning to think that they must withdraw. Well, how do you counsel them? So that ends up being personal counseling and often a lot of contact with families and parents." Eugenia helped students and their families sort out what could be salvaged if a student decided to abort the program mid-stream. "I do financial management counseling because there are financial implications to withdrawal other than academic counseling." Eugenia also administered portions of the program. This work was not related directly to advising, but related to re-negotiation or reallocation of the nature of relationships with exchange institutions and the University. Therefore, some of her time was spent, "keeping track of what's going on in departments here." This helped her to make an educated response to inquiries.

Teresa put the punctuation on the comprehensive role. She said that students informed her—"You're my everything!"

As she described her position, Anunciata detailed an innovative role. She said, "I'm sort of the umbrella person." She laced her interviews with, "This is not my area of responsibility, but!" She had added a developmental dimension with faculty as well as students. Anunciata attended workshops on grantwriting and improvement of teaching. She explained, "If I can become better informed, I can assist our faculty." She had developed a career and academic development library in the counseling center. She had written a grant to create and fund an annual opportunity for five undergraduate female students to work on research with faculty in her college during the summer. These students also attended a weekly seminar which she facilitated. She explained this was in addition to conventional tasks. "I run that in conjunction with summer orientation which is four days a
week plus the suspensions and dismissals." She also maintained close contact with students in the professional and honor societies in the college. She said, "I go to whatever banquets they have, whatever parties they have, when I can, because I'm the ongoing link with them in many ways." She began forging this link early by "running the frosh reception in the fall." By building a number of tie-ins to students beginning at orientation, she made it possible for them to connect with her in a variety of ways. Most recently she had instituted an outstanding service program to reward students for their contributions to the college, and was working on an alumni plan. She said "It's not my area of responsibility, but . . . I don't think we do it very well."

Others had a more conventional role. Melinda managed a centralized departmental advising office, but did not supervise faculty advisors. She was not directly involved in selection, training or evaluation of faculty advising. She provided advising to majors, and clarified departmental requirements for faculty. As part of the more technical aspect of her job, she approved courses a student might have taken abroad or helped them plan for an exchange experience.

Melinda taught two mornings a week. Advising took up the majority of her time. "Usually the bulk of my advising goes on the remaining three days of the week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday." She left time in her daily schedule for "walk-ins" as well as appointments with potential majors, and she admitted students into the department.

Some faculty advisors, like Melinda, had a teaching schedule, but did not do research. This was not the case for all faculty advisors. Ze maintained a research schedule along with teaching and advising. He qualified this by saying, "However, since I do advising, I probably do less research than other people who simply dedicate themselves to research."

The provision of information was a major aspect of Melinda's role. As was increasingly common in academic departments, she produced a departmental newsletter. In addition to presenting workshops on internships and exchange opportunities, she said, "I
send memos to remind departmental majors about pre-registration and invite them to sign up for career appointments as well as workshops on resume writing, the job search process and interviewing strategies." She also kept faculty apprised about changes in rules and regulations, and said, "I've already had to go through our incomplete policy twice this week with faculty." As part of direct support to faculty she proctored exams. Like other faculty advisors, by staying up-to-date on student academic progress, she was able to support student applications for jobs, graduate school, scholarships or awards. However, she did more than record keeping or one-to-one advising. She also provided mediation, "If for example, a student is requesting an incomplete and the faculty member may be unwilling to give it, it is not unusual for me to get involved in resolving that situation."

A fourth variation was the modified-limited advising role. While it included some of the tasks of other roles, it did not have the breadth of activities or the depth of responsibility for the welfare of students. The emphasis of this type was clerical-procedural. Leletti described a modified-limited advising role. She handled grade rosters, submitted grades to the registrar and maintained the exam schedule and department files. As a resource person, she provided information to faculty and teaching assistants about procedures and rules. However, among her tasks, she listed some that in other academic departments generally were handled by faculty:

I have students that just come in and haven't decided to choose a major, but just come in to talk about what is offered in the department and why it would be the department to be in, and, I go over their transcripts with them. . . . I try to prepare a tentative academic outline for them for their course of study here. . . . I end up adding students to the major, and at the same time, students come in that want to change their major. . . . I do advising for a lot of second majors and second degree candidates. . . . I probably handle the majority of prior approval forms here. . . . I sign their forms and approve them. . . . I go over the basics of internships. . . . I've got a computer and I'm hooked up to the main frame so I can call up the students' files. . . . I also have authority to add and drop them to [major]
courses during registration period. . . . And I do all the clearance for graduation.

Extent of Their Roles

"I wake up in the morning and every day is different, and I don't know what I'm going to find." [Melinda Abercrombie]

As advisors reconstructed their day-to-day work, one universal experience stood out: they had to be prepared for anything. Ryan spoke for the majority when he said, "In terms of the day-to-day advising, it's never really routine." He added a caveat that there were exceptions, "It is routine, for example, during summer counseling because incoming freshmen have a limited menu of courses that they can pick from, and that they're equipped for." However, he said, "Advising is anything but routine after the first year!" Eugenia said this meant, "It's obviously not dull, routine all of the time! And that's, I think, really the challenge of advising that I find. And it's never the same. It's always different. Every single kid you advise is a different case!" Delores Eisenach, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, amended this enthusiasm. She said, "Day to day it is fairly chaotic. You deal with whoever comes in the door. You never know what your day is going to be like. It keeps it from being boring, but some says you wish for boring!"

The issues advisors encountered ranged from procedures and scheduling to qualitative issues. Several advisors spoke about life or death situations. Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, said:

My typical day usually begins before I get to work. . . . I usually go to bed hoping the phone won't ring at 7:30 in the morning. And sometimes it doesn't, but it often does at 7:30, eight-o'clock in the morning. . . . And I leave a pretty open schedule. I say, "If you need to call me." So I set myself up for it. [laughs] And then, of course, I can't turn around and say, "Don't call!" I tell them to call. I've tried to be a little better about that actually.
"Don't call before six in the morning." In the evenings I try to keep it before eleven. . . . But I usually take it in stride.

What I don't like are the ones, people call and it's something really traumatic. Last semester I had three. One woman's son was shot. He was about twenty-two. . . . And I had a woman whose daughter eight years old just dropped dead, and they still don't know what was the cause of it. . . . One child burned in a fire. . . . They make the things like the divorces and the other assorted, stress related kinds of problems seem like nothing.

Students tended to bring academic rather than personal problems to Patty. "Of course, sometimes, they have academic problems that can derive from their personal problems, and that's why they are not doing well, but most of the time, we are doing academic advising." Mary detailed what she meant by the "straight academic questions," she and others generally handled in the counseling center where she worked:

Most of what we see in [this] office are students continuing on probation continued or immediate reinstatement who need an academic plan, or students who aren't meeting their academic plan, or students who need really dramatic help like they are hospitalized . . . and are in five courses and really need some help about what to do about the whole academic record. . . . We handle University withdrawals too where students left, and never took care of it.

Jay had discovered "levels of trauma" in the student experience. However, the event did not need to be extreme in order to incite a dramatic response. "Whether you get a "W" on your record or expungement when you're dropping a course, seems to me not very important, but some students really will freak out over that."

John's experience was inconsistent with the beliefs of many advisors in centers and programs who believed advisors in academic departments had much narrower roles than theirs. Students brought him a broad variety of issues. He believed his main role was to alleviate the pressure:
Then there are the ones who are here on a scholarship that requires that they spend immense numbers of hours doing something. And their teachers are pushing them to not do this other thing which is taking so much time because they aren't doing as well as they should be. And no one is hearing them say, "If I cut down here, I lose my scholarship. I won't be here at all." . . . And [my role is] helping them figure out whether they should try to continue all this; whether they should try to go part time and relinquish their financial aid; whether they should drop out and run the risk that they won't get back here; whether they should tell a parent or a sister or somebody, they can't come home and take care of them, and try to live with the feelings that produces; and not really offer solutions, but offer to listen to them and try to help them sort out the alternatives.

Eugenia said personal health and family problems were among the most difficult problems she encountered. "What is hardest about that is really just dealing with that as a personal counselor," she said. She provided three recent examples of situations confronting students, "Dealing with the father who's diagnosed with cancer. Or the mother who has had a nervous breakdown and is not getting better. Or the sister who tried to commit suicide, and you're the closest person to your sister and so therefore you feel you have to be home. And [my role is] putting that in perspective, helping the student."

Melinda confessed she never would have imagined she would be dealing with the degree of severity of problems, the frequency of problems or the types of problems she faced. "I suppose very idealistically, I thought I'd be sitting helping students pick courses helping them decide on careers, and talking about different aspects of what they could do with a bachelors . . . and all that sort of nice stuff, not realizing that I'd be spending a good deal of my time dealing with grievances, or restraining orders, victims of rape, suicides, murders."

Other aspects of their roles gave them discomfort although to a lesser extent. Administrative tasks were among the least liked. Angela said, "Oh, my God! Those long
meetings!" The benefits of administrative duties paled in comparison to working with students for most. Eugenia spoke for this position, "And that's a lot more gratifying than the paper pushing that I do as an administrator."

Robin Wolf, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, said writing letters of support for students in academic jeopardy presented a conflict for her. "And I wonder sometimes if I'm doing a service or a disservice," she said and added, "For students who I can support wholeheartedly and completely, it's not an issue." The problem arose with students she could not support, yet at the same time, she also knew, "Dealing with the population of students I deal with, often if they're suspended or they're dismissed, that's the end of the line for them educationally. They don't come back to school."

Effect of Their Multifaceted Roles

"It's exhilarating and nerve wracking at the same time!" [Peter MacNeil]

Despite variations in roles, advisors did share many commonalities. As advisors spoke about the effect of their multifaceted roles they linked the issues of time, pace, and advising load, and how this affected their typical day.

Time and Pace

"I have students coming in one after another, continuously, non-stop!" [Patty Huang]

Throughout interviews the work often was rendered in circus or dance terminology. Annunciata described it as "constant juggling." Monica spoke about the celeritous pace and the "juggling" she was forced to do. Mary drew on a similar analogy, "The juggling act is very difficult." Emily found the continual changes in procedures and regulations disconcerting. Too many things were happening at once. "Sometimes it's very confusing
because things change from semester to semester. . . . So it's really keeping on your toes about all the different deadlines from semester to semester," she asserted. Phone calls from people outside the University—especially parents who needed counseling—add complexity. Jay explained, "Trying to counsel them when you can't divulge anything about the students to them because of confidentiality laws, and trying to work around that which is to get them to tell me what they know about the student and respond to that or to set up hypothetical situations and respond to that, but that requires more and more tap dancing to be able to dance around all those issues!"

Juggling many kinds of activities created a high paced atmosphere for many. Advisors generally needed to be able to adapt quickly and switch gears easily. "And the eternal phrase in the office is, 'Oh, I have just one quick question,'" Eugenia said. Her realistic response was, "There is no question that takes only a minute especially if you want to be thoughtful." Yet it was not the need for information that created pressure. "What is difficult is that many kinds of things are happening within the course of say three hours," she said and gave an example, "Tomorrow I have twelve advisee appointments set up." She sighed and said, "And I've just got to, by the end of this afternoon, look at my desk, and be able to clear it enough that I can spend those hours with these students without quite the same kind of frantic pace as this morning."

Anunciata also expressed discomfort with the pace of her work, "The problem that I find with myself, and this is the part I don't like, is that I am resolving problems every fifteen minutes. My days are every fifteen minutes!" She added dramatically, "I'm up to here!"

As a classified support staff, Mary's day was a montage of interrupted activities. "If there's any one frustration here, that's it! There are three people on line facing you and the phone is ringing and somebody else is standing next to you with a file with questions." The computer added rather than reduced pressure. "The computer is always on because
everything now has to be checked," she said and added, "It's very frustrating because you get the idea that you never have undivided attention, and you don't to be honest!"

Patty described her work as "hectic." She said the two busiest times of the year occurred the first two or three weeks of each semester and during pre-registration counseling. She said, "And those days, at the end of the day, ask me how I feel. I'm feeling so tired. I've been seeing one after another one after another one. . . . In one day that can be ten or twelve students!"

Time constraints and the pace of their work made it hard for colleagues and co-workers to talk with one another, to build collegial relationships or cooperative endeavors. Florence spoke for many. "Sometimes," she says, "there's just not enough time." Upon reflection she said, "But in a way, it's working. It sends a message to me that [my colleague] trusts the decision that I make."

Time pressure also directly affected the quality of advising. Melinda's voice took on a tone of yearning as she said, "I wish I had time to be an even better listener." Like almost every participant she said, "It's tough because there's so much to do and so little time to do it."

Lack of time and competing tasks meant Monica could not use her career development expertise on behalf of all of the students in her program. "I certainly could spend more time counseling if I had that time, but I haven't," she said. She focused on the immediate. "I just solve the immediate problem and send you on your way."

Ryan said, "We don't have time to spend with these freshmen and sophomores. . . . In terms of advising, you'd like to talk to these kids about academic and career options." He said there was no time to point out alternatives to students in his academic department, and added, "We have too many students. . . . We don't have the time!" Instead, his advising often was restricted. "It's just, "This is what you have to take. Are you doing OK? Fine. Next!"
This situation put Emily in a quandary. She questioned the appropriate response, "Do I try to hurry this along to get to the next person?" The lack of human resources caused Jay to have a similar question. He had decided it was not the numbers served, but the quality of the service. "It does far more good for you to do one person well than it does for you to do a dozen people badly," he told the advisors in the college counseling center he directed.

As advisors described the pace of their activities, the work of the majority appeared to be out of control. They were being asked to do too much, handle too many tasks and responsibilities. There was no time to provide extra help for advisees. In his research Boyer (1987) discovered often advising was done in hasty sessions around the pre-registration crisis time. Advising done in quick, once-a-semester sessions was reduced to a clerical function, the most minimal kind of advising assistance (Gordon, 1994). Despite the encouragement Jay gave to the advisors in his college counseling center to take their time, there were no rewards for slow advising.

Advising Load

"This year, I took all morning appointments, and afternoon walk-ins, and that worked moderately well except afternoons were really crazy, and again you get that feeling of, 'so many students and just not enough time!'" [Robin Wolf]

Most of Robin's role was advising. Yet she was confident that a smaller advising load would allow her time to work more closely and effectively with her students. "I have about fifty students," she said and added, "I would love more than anything if I could cut my case load in half to be able to do the job that I want to do and know that I'm giving the best advising possible."

Advising loads ranged from twenty-five to more than a thousand students. The advising load varied significantly from department to department, program to program and
center to center. Ze, chief undergraduate faculty advisor in a humanities department, said, "Our department is very small. We have about a hundred majors."

In some cases a program or department had recently become popular with students. This had happened in Jackie's college-based multidisciplinary degree program. Her initial advising load two years earlier was 125 students. At the time of her interviews, it had increased to 375 majors. "And," she said, "There's still me, myself and I doing that same job." Melinda had the most extreme departmental advising load although she made it clear that all faculty in her department provided some advising, "My latest fact for this [annual] report ends being 1,040 majors and pre-majors in the department." As primary advisor, Melinda reflected on her advising load, and sighed, "I look at those departments with about forty or fifty majors, and think, 'What a luxury to work in that kind of operation!'

Initially Pierre's advising load was derived by a formula. He explained, "Advising X number of students is equivalent to teaching one course. And so we said, 'OK, we will hold ourselves to the University norm for number of courses taught in an academic year.' Of course, there is no norm." His advising load was about twenty-five students.

Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, considered her advising load of fifty students a heavy one given her committee work and teaching responsibilities. Yet she knew many faculty who had many more advisees. She worried such large advising loads meant students might fall between the cracks. However, she acknowledged it depended on an advisor's definition of advising:

If advising basically is just making sure the students stay on track, making sure they read the audits, if that's what it is, then it really doesn't matter how many students you have. . . . But if you're seen as somebody who can truly assist and help and somebody they can fall back on when things really get rough, somebody they can depend on, if it's that, then seeing a hundred students becomes too much. And if advising also is to help those students who need that additional support so that they can
graduate, so that they can succeed academically, than a hundred is too much.

Ze mirrored this concern. He described a common problem, "Having just one advisor in a department... and that person is responsible for all the majors, he cannot do a very good job of advising and reaching all those students. Some of them are going to fall through the cracks."

In general advisors believed there were too many students and not enough advisors. The larger the number of advisees, the briefer the contact, the shorter the focus and the less opportunity for the connectedness most believed was essential to their role. Ender (1994) asserted that more than twenty to thirty advisees was too great an advising load for a faculty member. However, it was important to note that advising load can be deceptive. For instance an advisor with one-hundred undeclared freshmen had a much different load than the advisor with one-hundred declared juniors or seniors. Individuality also played a role. Some students were encountering bigger problems than others and needed more assistance. There could be a need to cover more material, or the issue might be complex. Sometimes it took longer to understand the situation, and develop and consider options. Some who advised the most had the lowest number of advisees. The more students with greater needs that an advisor had, the fewer they could see. Therefore, numbers were not reliable as primary or only evaluative criteria.

No Typical Day

"Now a typical day. It varies so much that it's hard to say what a typical day is." [Jackie LaPierre]

Like most, Melinda said, "A typical day, unfortunately, is impossible here, but there are some things that happen on a regular basis." Robin qualified her description of what is typical in her daily work as a professional staff advisor in a multifunction support
program by saying, "I guess for me a typical day varies depending on the time of the semester."

September, for most, was a high stress point. Thanksgiving to Christmas was another. Pierre called these recognizable portions of the academic year the "metabolism of the semester." This academic cycle provided a forewarning sense of possible types of problems which might occur at particular times. "But those are mostly predictable," Pierre said. However, advance warning did not ease the stress. Robin said she blocked out periods of the academic year when she knew she would be "on-call" with her advisees "twenty four hours a day, seven days a week."

Timing may be consistent, but the types of issues are not. Florence laughed as she emphatically described her typical day with one word. "Unpredictable!"

Mary also qualified her description of her typical day, "That's why, in a way, it's funny to talk about ordering your day because it sounds so neat when you just talk about the activities, but the bottom line is unfortunately, most of it goes on at the same time." A representative day commonly held many interruptions for most.

While some advisors made half-hour or even hour-long appointments with students, in order to accommodate the large numbers of students needing assistance, the most common advising unit was the fifteen minute advising appointment. Florence said the short advising appointment was problematic. "I've always felt, wished, that I had the luxury during counseling week for half hour appointments because I could certainly fill that, but I don't. I have fifteen minutes, and then Ann gives me a break every hour and a half."

About fifty percent of Anunciata's day was spent in one-on-one appointments with students. "Plus," she said, "I have walk-in hour every day for students with simple problems or requiring signatures." Ze also had a combination of scheduled and unscheduled sessions. He explained his process, "The only time I ask students to make appointments is during the pre-registration week, and each student is allotted a half an hour
to talk to me about the coming semester, what courses should be taken, or any problems they may have at that time."

The majority of participants generally segmented their day into discrete parts. Gordon Weber, a professional staff advisor in a college office of degree requirements, said approximately fifty percent of his work day was spent advising, the other half included administrative duties for his college. "I try to keep my mornings free because that's when most of my committee meetings are scheduled," he explained. Angela split her day into two unequal parts. "Now with this position, as the head of the Center, I probably spend about sixty percent of my time advising, forty percent I spend on the administrative work."

However, not all advisors divided their work day. Florence had one of the most uniform work schedules. She outlined her day, "I'm here at 8:30." Nearly one-hundred percent of her time was spent advising. "It's being available to students, and advising students in the College either by appointments or walk-ins, pretty much every day." Recently she had made a change in her advising schedule. She said, "I used to think, 'Oh, the students are here, I have to be here.'" She had discovered this was too taxing. She said, "I find I have to get away from here to clear my mind. I have to think about something else for just a little while. . . . Now I take an hour for lunch. Then I'm back at one to four thirty, and that's pretty much it, for the job."

Leletti was adamant that her work schedule was 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. She said, "I never bring my work home. As a matter of fact I get quite upset when students find me in the telephone book and call me at home. And I let them know, too! That is home, and it's separated from my job, and I really don't appreciate having calls at home."

While some advisors had a consistent work day, many advisors reported an expanded day. In Mary's case expanded days led to extended weeks as well. She explained:

They're not going to write in that coaches bring up recruits on the weekend, and that we do recruitment for new students on the weekend. Technically no one is employed nights and weekends, but we do
orientations then. . . . So, there's some less than subtle pressure to accomplish a lot of these things that actually aren't in your job description. And for example, we go into dorms, if dorms have questions or dorms want a program, and to get the best attendance if you really want to make it a success, you do that at night as well. . . . And we don't get release time during the day to compensate. So it's an additional requirement to our job.

Patty gave another example. She also noted a potential repercussion of long days:

In the springtime, we do a phonathon. Last spring, [the University] accepted seven hundred . . . students. . . . And we called them, and urged them to come. . . . And of seven hundred, I think we got about two hundred. . . . During that about ten days or so, I worked twelve hours a day! I come in about 8:30 in the morning. I'm here all day. I bring my lunch. I never even go out for lunch. . . . No! . . . My husband says, "You spend so much time on the weekends and evenings calling students!" And I say, "I cannot reach them. I call them during the day and leave a message. And they don't call me back. And I want to talk to them." . . . I just told you that I enjoy helping students solve their problems. It's rewarding, but sometimes I feel that I may get burned out someday because it can be long hours.

Issues of Health and Well-being

"It's very fatiguing, very fatiguing, very tiring." [Monica Brennan]

A major wellness theme permeated every interview. Pierre spoke for the majority, "If somebody said, 'What's the first word that comes to mind to describe advising, I would say "exhausting, absolutely exhausting!" You can meet with five students in a day, and it takes three days to recover depending on what's going on in those sessions." Pierre underscored his sense of fatigue. He said, "We get burned out. Quite frankly."

Stretched to the limit, Ryan said, "At times I feel burnt out because I don't, I don't see a tremendous willingness from other people to pitch in." He added, "But I am getting
to the end of the road when I begin to wonder. I could drop dead tomorrow and everything would survive, but you wonder, there doesn't seem to be the willingness of people to do it."

Jackie had noticed a change in herself. "I saw that beginning to happen last year, but I was just not as anxious to give full counseling as I had been before." She predicted her attitude would continue to deteriorate. "I'm too tired."

The combination of the number of students and other responsibilities led to the sense of tiredness expressed by most advisors. Irene explained:

"We change from one student with one situation to the next to the next to the next. And I often have to clear myself from the previous one in order to deal with the next one. . . . And it's not easy when you have one after the other after the other every half hour.

Eugenia also identified with this common concern. She says, "Doing it ten times. Students in a row coming in for advising sessions is where I say, 'Am I as fresh as I was this morning?'" She laughed as she answered, "Not always!"

Florence reflected a common sentiment, "Some days, it's one thing right after another. You go home and you just feel like, 'Wow, where do I start trying to sift through this!'"

Melinda described a "clinical" aspect of her role as more and more advising sessions dealt with non-academic problems. She said it took a toll on her. She explained:

"I feel as though I should have been more steeled for it, but I don't think that was possible for anyone to predict what type, what direction this position would take. . . . Sometimes I feel guilty that my teaching suffers to some extent because of having to devote an inordinate amount of time to problems. . . . There are plenty of times I go home tearing my hair and thinking, 'God!' That's why I look forward to respites and vacations to give me a chance to try to make sense of it. Most of it is very rewarding, and I enjoy it. But there are other times that can be extremely frustrating."
Researchers and writers in the field have noted the effect of too much work, time pressure and its relationship to stress (Astin, 1993; Titley, 1994). Like many, Anunciata said she was making a change, "I'm at the point now where I want to back off a bit from the intensity of my involvement with students. Sometimes I get very tired."

Some saw a benefit in their diversified role. It reduced the tedium of routine which nearly every participant found disagreeable. Mary said:

I think some people form a break for themselves by the fact that their job includes other either non-advising or related, but not one-on-one student advising activities. Almost all of us carve out space for ourselves by assuming other responsibilities or being given other responsibilities.

Ana described how she handled the stress:

Something that I do at the end of the day though is I go home and I take a shower! . . . And when I am very tired, when I have had difficult day, and when the water hits me, I kind of visualize the things going down the drain! Then I come out of the shower, and I'm really tired, but it's kind of different.

Sven Neilsen, the director of a special academic program, used one-to-one communication and staff meetings, as a way to help staff maintain balance. "We talk to each other an awful lot, and that's part of our health care," he said.

Summary

Whether academic affairs or student affairs; or whatever the setting—college counseling center, academic department, special academic program or multifunction academic support program; whatever the employment position—undergraduate dean, faculty advisor, professional or classified staff advisor, participants emphasized their
differences and divisions, yet almost as a chorus spoke of commonalities such as busy schedules, the length of their day and work week, time and pace pressure, and the cumulative effect of their day-to-day realities. The frustration of balancing advising versus other duties characterized most participants' interviews. Their mixed duties such as teacher-advisor-researcher for faculty or advisor-administrator-counselor for others, diffused emphasis on advising. This was one of the major unifying and problematic themes in their work. Tasks changed daily so that no days were predictable. Advisors were often faced with broad new challenges and had to be willing to learn and adapt. However, they preferred that to routine.

Advisors felt, in general, that there were too many students who needed too much time from too few advisors. There were no clear divisions between classified and professional staff advisor roles. Likewise, there was no clear difference between what undergraduate faculty deans or professional staff undergraduate deans did. While there was mutuality in their roles, there were some unique aspects. Advisors divided themselves into either generalists dealing with broad life issues or specialists dealing most often with specific academic concerns. This examination of advisor roles uncovered four general types: comprehensive, innovative, conventional and modified-limited. Difference appeared in the kinds of tasks and functions advisors handled, and their level of responsibility. In general faculty and those professional staff in undergraduate dean positions appeared to have the most latitude in their positions. They had greater procedural authority, and ability to reshape and reframe their roles. They exercised the most control over day-to-day activities and schedules as well as the ability to add or decline responsibilities. They had some power over the design of their work boundaries, and the organization and structure of their programs or counseling centers. Others, most notably, classified staff, were frustrated by their inability to give much form to their daily work. They had little choice but to be reactive.
Possibly the most telling understanding of advisor role was made clear by Ana's metaphor. She described the advisor role as the unifying force holding the disparate parts of the University together:

You have to be very stiff glue in some parts. And very soft glue in some others. . . . You're a person who helps the individual manage the place and keep it together and structure it. . . . We are not the heart, but we are the smaller parts. . . . We are the connecting tissue.

The next chapter examines how advisors defined advising. It also looks at theory underlying their advising.
CHAPTER VIII
DIMENSIONS AND THEORY: THE ART OF ADVISING

Introduction

"We can begin to understand what's going on when people engage art, and that travels right over into the advising, when people engage the art of their lives if you will." [Pierre Williams]

One of the concerns of those interested in professionalizing academic advising is writing a comprehensive definition. At the national level, much debate is focused on what academic advising can be expected to accomplish. Ana Garcia, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, set a cornerstone of advising as most participants in this study understood it. "This job that I do is a constant one-to-one, one-to-one, one-to-one." She asserted:

Every single thing that we do is subjective. It is very personal. . . .
There is no objective decision. Every decision is based on an individual that we have in front of us with certain circumstances with certain needs with certain positive qualities to develop.

According to Ana, advising began with the student and it was highly dependent on the advisor. It was not a value neutral and objective process, but rather it was personal and individualized to the advisee. This chapter examines how advisors described took the abstract concept, academic advising, and made it concrete, meaningful and personalized.

The Range and Boundaries of Advising

"If we can make any sort of difference by helping that student figure out what is going to make them happy, how they can be productive and happy in life, then that's what academic advising is all about." [Jane Garaud]
Most advisors broadly considered their focus the whole person whose life extended beyond the classroom and the academy. Florence Baker, a professional staff advisor in a college counseling center, explained what she kept in mind when she faced any advisee, "Always being very sensitive to the fact that a person is an individual and they have all kinds of other stuff going on outside of the classroom." As part of any advising session, many felt it was incumbent on the advisor to gain an understanding of what these outside activities were and how they might be affecting a student's academic life. Florence detailed the main core of her advising definition:

Advising is helping people complete their requirements on time; helping them complete them in a semblance of order that's appropriate for them; looking to see where strengths and weaknesses are; just really looking at each individual person, and not ever telling them what to do, but telling them what their options are.

Advising was dependent upon language to make one-to-one, individualized connections and to convey understandings. Sven Neilsen, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, added another specification. He said, "Academic advising to me, assuming that it's this larger definition of education and investigation and mentoring and all those other kinds of things, academic advising is a dialogue process." Like Florence, he insisted, "It's never been, at it's best it isn't, telling people what they need to do." However, not everyone agreed.

In contrast to this viewpoint, Jackie LaPierre, a classified staff advisor in a college-based multidisciplinary degree program, mainly restricted her advising to routine scheduling and registration tasks. She said, "Advising to me is helping students first of all with academic problems." The factual transmission of information underlay Emily Broadbent's definition of her work as a classified staff advisor in a special academic
program as well. "Kids are coming in with questions all the time. You have to know the answers, and if you don't know the answers, you have to find them out!" she said with firm determination.

John Mertens, a faculty advisor in an art department, took issue with this line of reasoning. He insisted advising predicated on telling students facts, rules and regulations was not advising at all. "The essence of what I see advising as being ... is trying to help people figure out that things are possible," he asserted and added, "I don't think advising starts with simply knowing all the facts!" Disturbed by such a prosaic understanding, he said, "A student can find out how many of this and how many of that they need to take, and make a shopping list, but advising really isn't that!" He emphasized, "I mean that's simply procedures!" John's definition of advising reflected this understanding. "I would define advising as being a process of listening and helping sort out, and, as necessary, being a bit persuasive to get people to take chances or try things or open up their eyes a little bit, and very little of the actual check-list kind of thing because that doesn't bother too many students."

Some writers in the field have asserted that most advisors do not provide full-spectrum advising as part of an ongoing process, but typically focus once a semester on academic requirements (Ramos, 1994). For the majority of advisors in this study, advising was broader than reviewing rules or regulations and selecting courses. However, many saw longer term benefits of these activities. Jane Garaud, a professional staff advisor who divided her advising among two academic departments and a college counseling center, believed that course selection and scheduling could contribute incrementally to student development, "Maybe it's just course selections right now, but that course selection is going to make a difference in what they study, and what they learn, and how that changes into a career."

To most, the encompassing nature of advising meant it was more than a compilation of tasks or simply overseeing academic requirements and progress. Jay West,
a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, said, "The good advisors know how to do it." He added, "The bad advisors don't. They just do the routine stuff, and consider their day well done when they have done fifteen instead of five."

Clearly, procedural tasks need to be accomplished, but according to many advisors they cannot constitute the entire discussion (Weingartner, 1992). However, in some cases, discussion about procedures could provide an inroad for further advising, or it could provide a starting point for a later advising session. It might be a case of laying the groundwork for a relationship.

The Vectors of Advising

"I think it's partially a matter of discovering what people's own momenta, momenti, or vectors or directions are, and then, enabling, encouraging, supporting them to go farther in that direction then, perhaps, they had initially thought about going."

[Jay West]

According to Jay, fuller advising was predicated on discovering a student's impetus and intentions. Knowledge of a student's momentum and direction, allowed advisors to use the student's own power. This dynamic combination benefited students by enabling them to move further and more positively on their course headings.

Vectors also existed for advising. Advisors depended on six orientations to reach out to students. These included conventional areas: information, teaching, or counseling. In addition, three deviations were described by several participants. For this study they are designated: blended, multivariate and culturally specific advising. While participants tended to emphasize one orientation over another, they were not mutually exclusive, but often appeared in some combination. The following sections further examine these vectors of advising.
Advising as Information

"I know more information than any advisor in any department!" [Teresa Perez]

The sign outside Emily's office read "Office of Information and Academic Advising." She did not like this combination of functions. It meant she had to handle requests for information about departments and services at the University as if she was the institutional "telephone operator." She did not believe it was possible to effectively combine this broad information role with advising. She also viewed it as a misuse of her, "I don't think that the powers that be see it first of all as a problem, and second of all it's an easy solution because, after all, advisors are supposed to have the information, so you can use the person who's got the information for dual purposes!" Reinforcing her point, she said, "The two don't go together at all!"

Ana had a different viewpoint. The tie-in of information to advising was a natural to her. Many people within and outside the institution looked to the college counseling center for a broad variety of academic information. Ana explained advising began from first contact. "We begin doing it when the students write and ask for information about the University. That's already advising. You see, information-giving is advising."

Regardless of the question, Ana explained requests for information often led to further communication. Once engaged with a caller she had an opportunity to investigate a bit further and discover other needs the inquirer had not discovered or disclosed. Analysis, modification, sense making and decision-making: some or all of these could evolve from a simple request for information. She continued, "And we have a lot of the answers, and if we haven't, we know where to refer the student." Ana said other agencies and individuals requested information, "And often we are asked to represent the agency in general which means then that we do have to know it all, or to try to." Although she readily amended, "No one knows it all!"
Jay described his understanding of information as part of advising, "I say we use information giving as a means to the end of advising. Advice is the penumbra that surrounds it." The outer fringe of basic procedural information encircled the inner core. While the provision of information was common to all participants regardless of setting or position, to the majority, advising was not reducible to a convenient set of facts or information.

Advising as Teaching

"I want to emphasize that an advisor is really a teacher!" [Anunciata Buttons]

Advising as an inherent aspect of faculty work was the most commonly voiced belief. Ryan Casey, a faculty advisor in a life science department, said, "I think if you enjoy teaching and you do a good job at it, you're actually an advisor." Ze Mendez, a faculty advisor in a humanities department added, "I think one is an extension of the other." Although he did not see advising as a substitute for teaching, he saw little difference. "The two of them go hand-in-hand," he said and added, "The good teacher is also the good advisor!"

According to Jay, the subject matter of advising ranged from the cosmic to the trivial. It extended the scope of the classroom and laboratory. Describing advisors as "a kind of total teacher instead of a partial teacher," Jay explained:

Where academic advising fits into that is that's basically what you're doing in academic advising, at least, I think when you do it well, what you are is a teacher who's teaching on a far broader spectrum than the classroom teacher. In fact, you are teaching at the edges of the spectrum, the stuff that is so trivial, that a classroom teacher won't even address it to the stuff that's so broad and so cosmic that no classroom teacher has the time or even knows how to get a grip on it, or for that matter do most advisors, but when the students ask the questions, you come up with the best you can.
The best advisor-teacher invested time and energy with students beyond the imparting of academic information. Although most students saw drop deadlines or other academic procedures as evidence of bureaucracy at work, from Jay's perspective these were really excuses for getting the student into the counseling center for an advising-teaching session. A faculty advisor's first and major task, once the student was with them, was to go beyond the immediate mundane procedural transaction. They had to use this, perhaps, one-time encounter to build an advising edifice on a small transaction. Jay explained what he told advisors in the college counseling center, "I put it to them this way, 'The student views a conversation with you as an unpleasant means to the end of getting a piece of paper signed. . . . Our view of it is having a student come in to sign a piece of paper is the unpleasant means to the end of having the conversation which precedes and follows."

Whether in an academic department, a college counseling center, a special academic program or an academic support program, staff advisors asserted, like faculty, they were also teaching (Lloyd-Jones and Smith, 1954). Ana provided an example of the teaching she did in an advising session. "It's learning how to make the right choices, and that can be taught from making a very simple choice about a class to take or a section of a class," she said and continued, "We teach people how to get from here to there, how to relate to systems and how to relate to others."

Anunciata Buttons, a professional staff undergraduate dean of a college counseling center, tied her teaching to rules and regulations. When students came to her for exceptions she quizzed them, "Why do you deserve it? And why don't you deserve it? If you deserve it, then this person deserves it, and this person deserves it." She required students to look beyond their own situation. "I have to help them learn that," she said, "because it's really learning how to be discriminating, and they don't have any sense of that." She continued, "So that's where the teaching comes in. That's what we're teaching. We do an awful lot of that."
Angela Pham, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, said teaching was integrated into her advising. "I always loved teaching and because advising is part of teaching, I love advising as well." When she was advising she also was teaching. "Advising and teaching for me are together. They're all mixed together."

Most advisors agreed that advising and teaching were linked in some manner, but two saw a difference. Prior to being hired as a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, Amanda Cross had been a tutor at a college. When she made the shift from tutor to advisor she said she discovered teaching and advising were dissimilar. "It was going through that process of that mental transition of switching roles because I wasn't tutoring students anymore which is very different from advising."

Pierre Williams, a faculty advisor in a college-based special academic program, also saw a difference between teachers and advisors. He described it this way:

Good advising is teaching. Teaching is built around texts. Faculty and students get together around texts. Whether that's a musical composition or whether it's a poem or whether it's historical documents, it's texts, or it's developing the skills to create texts. . . . There's always that text there or the development of a text that brings us together. In advising, there is no pre-established text in the same way. We're in the process. It's almost like a studio class. We're helping the students develop the reflective abilities to better write their own stories. To better structure their own lives. And so it's the development of a text. The metaphor that I often use is, "We're the Virgil to their Dante." That they're in the process of writing the poem of their life, and we're in the business of helping them do that as best we can.

Pierre identified another difference between advisor and classroom teacher. Regardless of what a teacher did, the grade book and the computer generated end-of-semester report card always stood between the student and the instructor. He explained:

We're not the lawyers, we're not the therapist, and we're not the teacher. Our purpose is the student. We don't give grades. They don't pass
or fail advising, but if they go to talk to teacher X about work in a course, there's always that there, no matter how good the instructor is at humanizing that, at setting it aside, and focusing on the person, and the person's learning, and then getting around to the grade later.

Advising and counseling sometimes have negative bureaucratic associations (Weingartner, 1992). However, Pierre asserted effective advising suspended these issues. He summarized, "They can take risks with us that they can't take with other grown-ups it seems to me."

There was a subtle difference in these understandings of advising as teaching. Participants described two approaches. Some saw advising as teaching. In this understanding, advisors were automatically teachers. Others saw teaching as advising. Therefore, one must be a teacher before one could be an advisor. In these instances, advising grew out of a combination of depth of knowledge and teaching ability. Ryan spelled out this point of view. To him this made a case for faculty advising. "I'm not saying that you can't be a good advisor if you don't teach, but I think you have a broader audience out there if you teach and you advise," he said and added, "I think by trying to be an effective teacher, you have to keep with that particular [academic discipline] area which in a sense makes you a little bit more up-to-date advisor also."

In general, regardless of orientation, participants who saw advising and teaching in some combination used advising sessions to encourage students to greater self-understanding in the process of learning to make appropriate academic choices. This was consistent with some writings in the field. Ramos (1994) wrote, "You are the instructor or facilitator; the student is a learner; your office is the classroom; facilitating student growth along several dimensions is the curriculum; and the O'Banion model is the lesson plan" (pp. 90-91).
"We've all had people call us late at night saying, 'I don't know what to do.' and trying to keep some kind of boundary between being a therapist and an academic advisor and still support people." [Sven Neilsen]

While explicitly stating he was not a therapist, Sven tentatively associated the word with his advising. He taught a seminar in a special academic program which engaged students at a lived level and gave them permission to make sometimes traumatic and painful experiences explicit. "There are some psychological issues and it bring things out into the open that haven't been exposed," he said. Cautiously he continued, "I hesitate to use the word because I don't feel qualified to monitor or facilitate it, but there's no doubt about it, and the students talk about it that way, too." He provided an example:

I had a student once who was a deputy fire chief, and he was trying to write about the structure of the fire department. How it was organized. How the men related with each other. And he just couldn't do it. . . . But little by little, it became clear that he was holding himself responsible for something [tragic] that had happened in the department years ago. . . . He hadn't been admitting it to anybody, but he'd been carrying it around deep inside himself, 'This was my great failure!' . . . And in the writing . . . he exorcised the old demon and then he could go on.

Sven continued, "So, that's another aspect a sort of a counseling, therapeutic aspect of my advising process." Although he qualified this with, "And we're not trained counselors or therapists by any means," Sven had to find a way to deal with disclosures of sometimes deep-seated issues while balancing the needs of other students in the class. These issues often followed him out of the classroom. "It's not just a classroom process," he said and added, "People then bring those issues to advising sessions." Yet he found it difficult to know where to draw the line. "How do you remain an academic advisor?" he asked.
Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, said students seemed to want to share their life situations with her. She ran through a list of typical problems connected to academic concerns. "I get all of the family problems. I get the health problems. I get the mental health problems. I get the dependency type problems." Like others, this presented a difficulty for her:

It becomes a problem because I don't really have the skills nor the authority to tell people what to do with their lives or their problems. I can make suggestions on places they can go for help, but that's not what they really want. They just want somebody to listen. And so, I accommodate. I just let people—just talk if they have problems they want to just give voice to. I try very hard not to say or make judgments one way or the other to give them advice or anything of that nature.

But there's always that fear. When somebody comes and say, "Well my husband just smacked me." And I'm tempted to say, "Why don't you just throw the bum out!" But you know that in doing that, that you are also putting yourself in jeopardy, because you are not the one, and you don't have a professional kind of relationship, so the best that I can do is I say, "Well, people in other situations do A, B, C and D." So I don't directly give anybody advice of that nature. . . . There are people who are suffering from depression. . . . You say, "Well there's this particular service being offered and maybe you could look into it." But they really want to tell you about it, so I just let them talk. And then I say, "Yes, maybe this would be the best place to go and share this." . . . because there's the issue of liability, and I don't want to give somebody advice that turns out to be the wrong thing to say, or the wrong thing to do. I'm not comfortable with that counseling component at all, so the only thing I can do is say, "This is what others do." or "If it were me, here's what I would do." or "Here are some agencies and some options that you might want to talk to." It's very, very, very tricky.

Jay tended to use the two terms interchangeably, and said, "I think advisors ought to be counselors." The shadowy border between advising and counseling was up to the individual advisor to negotiate. Jay noted, "What you do is you cross the line as far as you
feel comfortable and as far as the student feels comfortable. That's different excursions with different people on different days and different subjects." He explained:

There are some life experiences where a student is talking with you, and you say, "Oh. I've examined all of this. I know all of this. I can really relate to this. I can talk about this. I can turn up options." And there are other times where you say, "Gees. I know nothing about this. This is totally outside my pale. And yet, on the other hand, I bet when the student walks out of here, this may be our only turn at bat. This may be the only person the student's going to talk to, and if I don't do something, will nothing be done? Am I going to traipse over there and take the law into my own hands, so to speak? How far am I going risk this?"

As a safeguard and to ease his discomfort, Jay prefaced such a session by pointing out that he probably was not the best authority on the issue they brought to him. "The only thing I can do is to reflect from my perspective: what I see, what I hear, what I think you ought to look at, and sometimes what I think you ought to do." In this light, he cautioned them to say only as much as they felt comfortable telling him. He detailed his understanding:

Basically, the problem students identify isn't the problem. It's a symptom. . . . Start with that assumption. . . . The reason they're having a problem is usually because of something that will fall into the counseling side rather than the advising side. . . . And you can advise them, drop the course, bail out. I always do that. . . . I apprise them of their rights.

The majority of advisors who accepted the counseling dimension generally depended on their life experience as a yardstick and as resource material. However, many students brought problems and expectations totally outside advisors' life experience or educational preparation. Some used this as a point of departure and referred students.
Others did not. Jay said a simple request often masked a deeper problem. He got to this by asking:

"Now let me ask you why you want a gut course? . . . Tell me what lies behind that?" That's when you're out of advising and out of the symptom, which is not doing well, and back into the cause which is where we ought to be far better trained than we are in human dilemmas. That's where you start turning up stuff that is totally outside my life experiences.

While not equating their work as therapy, a number of participants identified a therapeutic dimension enclosed within the organic whole of advising.

Not all advisors agreed that advising should be equated with counseling. Ana was uncomfortable with the practice of interchanging the word counseling for advising, and asserted that doing so caused confusion. "I think that's a very difficult distinction between advising and counseling, and I think that when those two words become one, things get more complicated."

In the academic counseling orientation, the interaction of academic, personal, career and developmental issues were equally important. The emphasis was on self-exploration, clarification of values, reordering priorities and becoming more discriminating about their lives. Most participants candidly recognized they were not qualified to monitor or facilitate a situation therapeutically even as they expressed a wish to support their advisees. However, many also said they had increasing opportunity to provide more than academic counseling. This raised a question about the realistic boundaries of the advising process.

Blended Advising

"The counseling and advising in that stage of what we do becomes very blended, and we're doing a little bit of both." [Amanda Cross]
"I want to do short-term, more advising stuff, than counseling!" Amanda insisted she was too impatient to be a therapist. Yet like others, she noted a counseling dimension in her advising. "When you get to work ongoing with students as we do when we have degree students, there's a lot of counseling!" She continued:

And my instincts are strong so if a student comes in who I really think is in trouble then I go more into that counseling place and find out the support that they may have or what they really need or what's going on with them because as so often happens in our office, they don't come in telling us exactly what the problem is. They come in with a problem, and then you find out that this isn't computing correctly. And then you do a little digging, and you start to find out, "Oh, well there's a real reason why this happened." Then you can help them correct it. But we're not so responsible for that person's well-being.

In these instances she said, "The counseling and advising in that stage of what we do becomes very blended, and we're doing a little bit of both." Blended advising was an amalgamation of counseling techniques and traditional academic information. "But there is always in that long-term advising process, that blending for me," she said and emphasized, "They cross-over."

Amanda explained that although students might volunteer bits and pieces from their past, unlike therapy, blended advising generally was not contingent upon collecting a thorough life history before students began to move forward. The intent of counseling was to provide healing or relief. Blended advising was not about a cure. "It is more of a two-way relationship," Amanda said. In addition academic rules provided a safety net. "But the whole responsibility, and this is how it's different from counseling, the whole responsibility is not in my office," she explained and added, "Whereas in counseling there aren't a whole lot of rules where you can say, 'The higher authority says this!'"
Blended advising allowed wide latitude for decision-making and choice. However, academic decisions, while not "life or death" are vital. They do affect the student, sometimes deeply.

Multivariate Advising

"But I think if you once study multivariate analysis thoroughly and deeply enough, you start thinking in terms of it and start thinking that almost nothing is 'yes' or 'no,' or almost nothing is right or wrong, almost everything is conveniently viewed in the multivariate context."

[John Mertens]

John explained he had honed his original prescriptive advising approach to a more flexible one, and he had reversed his orientation. The student now was the priority not procedures or regulations. "The essence of what I see advising as being . . . is trying to help people figure out that things are possible!" he asserted.

In his thirty years of advising he had come to the conclusion that students needed more than a marketing approach or a reading of their rights and responsibilities. He explained:

I really think an effective advisor has to be able to rather effectively argue the case not just from two perspectives because very few things are on a continuum. Usually, it's almost always multi-dimensional, and I think an effective advisor has got to be able to say, "Here are some of the things you've got to think of on this side and this side," and turn it around, and give at least one or two or three other viewpoints, otherwise you're really not advising, you're persuading, or telling, telling, telling.

He believed that many of the undergraduates he was meeting lacked inner confidence or resources to solve their problems on their own. He had become convinced that, "Students who need advice seem to, first of all, need to have someone listen to them that they are persuaded in one way or another will be impartial, fair and confidential." It
was necessary to understand the fuller situation and how intervention was desired or needed or whether the student would prefer to work it out himself or herself. He said, "I think that's a very delicate decision. Yet the best advising probably starts that way."

There was an improvisational aspect in his advising. He continued, "I find that there are these situations where you are suggesting, advising, counseling, and then suggesting again." Not all advising was done under the rubric of an individual advising session. Advising could take the form of interaction and personalization of material in a classroom. Like most faculty advisors, John's advising had an incidental quality as well. He said the unplanned aspect of his advising was typical, and seemed to occur wherever he was. "But almost never does anyone make a formal appointment, and say they'd like to come for counseling. They just appear." Advising that is subsumed into other aspects of work and work life is still advising (Smith, 1990).

John said, "That's how I think it is now, because I don't do formal advising. I don't do assigned advising, and I don't do scheduled advising." He added other critical elements of his "multivariate" approach. "And then the best advising seems to rely on a wealth of experience as broad as possible so that there's a chance of knowing or being able to find out how to know whatever the student is trying to find out." At this point, facts became useful.

The multivariate orientation was a broad interpretation of advising. As John explained it, it did not exist as a pure or separate activity, but was integrated into all of his activities with students. Like orientations described previously, it was not a schooled approach, but arose from John's life experience.

Culturally Specific Advising

"I see it as not only an academic job, but it's also a social job."

[Angela Pham]
Commitment to a student's family, community and future generations figured strongly in Angela's advising orientation. She insisted the culture of advisee and advisor were pre-eminent considerations. She said, "The cultural background is very much a part, and is very important in the counseling business." The student was not just an individual and her work was not just one-to-one, but one-to-the-larger community represented by the student's cultural affiliation. She provided an example:

In the Confucian society, females are nothing, but males have all of the responsibilities and charges. . . . That's an important trait that you can use in counseling Asians. . . . You just say, "Do you still have younger brothers and sisters at home?" 'Yes, I have five.' "What can you do? Do you think that you want to let them down and let them wander the streets and beg, or do you want to help them"? 'Of course, it's my duty. I have to help them. I am the big brother. "So you have to dry your tears, and you have to study a little bit harder, or you have to take tutorial, or I can help you to solve the conflict, solve the problem, and then you go on and get your degree, and get out of here quick and get a job! Your mother is waiting for that." And he will go, 'OK.'

According to Angela, culturally specific advising connected to the fundamental values of students' original culture such as respect for duty and role in the family and social hierarchy. Angela explained these traditions often conflicted with the more flexible approaches described by others. Culturally specific advising tended to be more prescriptive. She explained, "And so advising is not only giving advice, but solving their problems. . . . It's a big job, and it's not easy because you don't want to make decisions for people, but that's what they expect."

Some writings in the field support this understanding. The establishment of a non-directive relationship and the provision of options rather than authoritative direction may seem like the reverse of equity for many students of color (Brown and Rivas, 1994). Authoritative assistance can set the foundation for further dialogue and development. In
this view prescription may even serve as a counterbalance to developmental advising rather than simply reflect unreconcilable polarity between the older practice and the newer theory. As she spoke, Angela framed an issue. "Because you come from the same background, I think that there is some kind of desire to communicate that to a person who has the same background who can understand you maybe better than others!" This raised a question. Was it necessary to match students with an advisor from the same culture? In the viewpoint described by Angela, the answer was affirmative. Advising was a cultural process. In this orientation, there was a greater focus on understanding and addressing the social aspects of the lives of students in order to directly enhance their socio-economic conditions as well as their academic welfare. Culture determined not just approach, but who should act as a student's advisor.

Initially the sense that a student is not alone culturally may provide students with a beneficial sense of security. However, developmental theory is clear that a sense of discomfort is necessary as part of the transformational process for humans (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). College is considered a change experience. The effects are not just psychological, but sociological. Simply matching student and advisor by one variable such as ethnicity, age, or gender lessens the opportunity for change and the impact of the collegiate experience. Other variables also must be considered such as student and advisor preparation and competency (Sedlacek, 1994).

Summary of the Vectors of Advising

The vectors of advising examined how advisors constructed their advising. Although advisors described six variations, four appeared as major orientations. (See Figure 2. Basic Elements of Four Academic Advising Orientations, on the following page.) Blended and multivariate advising seemed to be adaptations based on selected aspects from the other four. Orientations could be visualized as a continuum. The procedural orientation which focused on informing and directing was at one end. Next, the
traditional-classical form stressed intellectual development within the boundaries of academic rules and regulations. A third orientation, academic counseling, emphasized helping students reorder their priorities and become more discriminating about their lives. The interaction of academic, personal, career and developmental issues were equally important. Culturally specific advising was at the other end of the continuum. In this case, advising was a cultural process. The primary concern was on social aspects of an advisee's life impinging on the academic. The social group and student appeared to be equally important. It is important to note that an orientation preference did not limit an advisor from engaging other orientations as needed.
Traditional Classical Orientation
Emphasis is on developing an understanding of the life-of-the-mind and helping students to respect and incorporate the ideals of the academy into their lives. Intellectual development of the student is important within the context of the academy.

Academic Counseling Orientation
The interaction of academic, personal, career and developmental issues are equally important. Emphasis is on helping students with self-exploration issues, clarification of values, re-ordering priorities, and becoming more discriminating about their lives.

Procedural Orientation
The major concerns are maintaining a prescribed course of action and following a set of established steps. Flow chart advising. Advising rules and regulations take precedence.

Culturally Specific Orientation
Advising is a cultural process. The broad context of student life is the major concern. Social group and students are equally important. A greater focus on understanding and addressing the social needs in order to directly enhance socio-economic conditions of student life as well as their academic welfare.

Figure 2
Basic Elements of Four Academic Advising Orientations
Theory Into Practice

The vectors of advising provided six variations on advisor orientations. Descriptions indicated content in advising sessions ranged widely from cultural, ethnic, family, developmental and career issues to a narrower focus on factual information, curricular concerns, regulations, and procedures. Advising approaches varied from an emphasis on teaching to counseling to information provision or some combination of these elements. The next section is an inquiry into the guiding principles and theory underlying participants' advising.

Developmental Advising

"I think no one in this suite of offices knows that basic information . . . about the various stages of development and the various theories about it."

[Jay West]

In 1972, Crookston described a new form of advising and named it developmental counseling or advising. Faculty acting as "role models, mentors, and friends" were to be the main providers of developmental advising (Ender, 1994, p. 105). In 1972, O'Banion contributed a five-part system to operationalize the advising process. Teaching, counseling and administrative techniques were to be utilized in an orderly, consistent and ongoing student-centered relationship in which advising providers engage all available resources to help students evaluate themselves, develop goals, and make a personal adjustment to all aspects of collegiate life (Chickering, 1994; Creamer and Creamer, 1994; Ender, 1994; Rooney, 1994).

Over the past two decades the notion of developmental advising has generated publication, research and discussion. Enthusiasm for this strategy has led to a range of assertions. Creamer and Creamer (1994) stated, "Academic advisors know that substantial
literature exists about their profession and that much of it is theoretically rooted" (p. 17). Gordon (1994) insisted all advising must be predicated on the developmental paradigm. Pardee (1994) asserted, "Little doubt exists that the theory of developmental academic advising is widely accepted" (p. 59).

Such fervor conflicted with the understanding of participants. Despite the indirect influence of developmental theory reflected in some advising approaches discussed earlier, and regardless of position, length of advising service or educational level, most participants were not conversant with developmental advising. When Jackie declared, "I have no idea what it means!" she was speaking for the majority. In line with this, Ramos (1994) noted, "As common as this concept is to those who have been active in the field, I suspect there are still many who are not familiar with it" (p. 89).

Pierre was the only participant consciously employing developmental theories in his advising. Much of his theoretical foundation grew out of humanistic research. He said, "His name brings laughter in the 1990s, but it's Carl Rogers as well as Maslow and that whole fairly large circle."

During his twenty-six years as a faculty advisor, Pierre said, "I was very carefully looking at what it meant to be an advisor and where are the limits." He saw two ends of the advising continuum. At one end was, "Straight academic advising. Walk in the door. Sit down. Here are the requirements. What is it you're interested in doing?" Developmental theory was at the other end.

As John described advising he said it presented a perplexity. He had honed his former inflexible authoritarian approach and was, "Surer of what really makes a difference, and willing to say that kids do crazy things, and they don't have to suffer unbearably because of them." Yet he acknowledged another side, "But at the same time, that sometimes the kindest thing you can do is make sure they do just suffer just enough so they figure out that they have to get themselves out." This was difficult he said, "And that's
real tricky. Whether you are parenting or advising, I don't think it matters a great deal. That's a very tricky boundary."

When Pierre was investigating the use of theories in his advising, one of the questions he asked was, "When do you clue the students into what's going on?" Some students needed to discover problems and answers for themselves. Some needed more support. He said, "Sometimes going up against the brick wall is the constructive thing. Sometimes putting out the safety net and getting him away from the brick wall is the right thing to do."

Eventually, Pierre said developmental theory provided a way to figure this out. It gave clues to potential tensions that might arise in his advisees' lives relative to their developmental stage (Erikson, 1963 and 1968; Kolhberg, 1984; and Perry, 1970). This gave Pierre a sense of when to push, ease up, who should do the pushing and what pushing meant in each individual case.

Initially the creation of advising centers on campuses was viewed as the mechanism through which developmental advising would gain a toe-hold in the academy. However, Winston (1994) asserted large advising loads in centers prohibit the development of essential long-term relationships.

Jay candidly admitted, although he had read about developmental theories and attended workshops on this topic, he had never internalized them. Rather, he says that advisors in the college counseling center worked out of their own real life experience rather than theoretical instruction.

Ana believed students were too complex to limit the theoretical foundation to one model, and said, "I think that advising should have the possibility of different models to be used with different students. Not to decide that we're going to have this model of advising here. This is it. And you have to plug into this model!"

Mary Perry, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, also resisted the notion of one theoretical construct. "I'm not sure there's ever going to be one approach
that works all the time," she said. Instead, advisors needed to be fluent in a variety of approaches and techniques. "As soon as we start taking options away from ourselves, we limit our effectiveness in some way." Although Mary said, "Developmental advising is a wonderful concept," she believed it was impracticable. "Developmental advising implies that we have time for unlimited numbers of meetings in a relaxed thought-provoking setting closer to what a clinician would do, and if we had the time and the money and the staffing that would be an ideal, but our reality is pretty far from that ideal." She identified another problem. "Oftentimes I think the most important work we do is with the emergencies, and not everybody is prepared to hear developmental advising at each point in time." Many of her advisees required immediate action or at least believed they did. She explained that students in a crisis state were not willing to understand their developmental stage. Their interest lay in resolution of their specific and immediate situation (Strommer, 1994).

During the two decades since the terminology entered the advising vernacular, research has shown the claims of developmental advising remain unproven (Ender, 1994; Fielstein, 1994; Frost, 1993 and 1994; Habley, 1988a; and Spokane, 1994). Laff (1994) points out the developmental advising picture is further complicated since there are many theories of human development. Early evangelists have moderated their enthusiasm (Winston, 1994; Grites, 1994). According to what this study discovered, developmental advising has many limitations. It is time heavy. It does not take into account other influences on students such as the collegiate setting, the structure and organizational features of college, the social environment, the institutional characteristics, or the breadth and depth of the experience students have had prior to entrance to college.

Directive Versus Non-Directive Advising

"My own philosophy is one that is not terribly directive." [Melinda Abercrombie]
While not fully embracing developmental advising, some elements of this theory underscored advising here. A large number of participants used the word "directive" as synonymous with "prescriptive and authoritarian" two terms with negative connotations in developmental theory. While most distanced themselves from directive, one said any advising contained an element of directiveness.

Melinda Abercrombie, a faculty advisor in a social science department, described the basic premise for her advising, "I see it as a guiding process, but one in which to a great extent, I listen. I sit back. I give my opinion, but then I don't push, push, push." There also was a self-preservation aspect in her philosophy. It prevented her from becoming "totally enmeshed in everybody's entire life process!"

A number of advisors believed their usefulness was less in trying to be purely objective, but to have a point of view as long as it was packaged in such a way that it did not discourage students. Options provided a means of doing this. Jay told advisees, "Let me lay out four or five options of ways you can go, and let me comment on each of the pro's and con's for each of those." He added, "That can still be very non-directive." He provided an example:

And that sometimes frees me to be very opinionated. Not directive. I never try to be directive. But opinionated. I will say this, "The only thing I can do for you is to give you my judgment, my perspective. I'll give you that in as unvarnished way as I can understanding my own limitations. And you understand them because you know what I don't know about you. You know what I don't know about this situation. All I know is what you've told me. But on the other hand I've seen some things like this, and I've thought about this, and here's the way I would look at it. And I'll tell you that many times I'd be scared to death if you followed where my line of reasoning took you because I know how partial this knowledge is. But nonetheless, here's what I can furnish you." It takes awhile to get to that position. Not to be afraid of your advice. Or not to be afraid that someone will follow your advice.
In this view, the student often had the power and right of choosing. Florence reinforced this point, "But most of all letting them make the decisions because that's a real important part of their growth, and their gaining confidence in themselves." Melinda also said much of her work was generating options based on her own knowledge of possibilities. She explained, "So that's a lot of it, knowing what the options are, and researching different things, and being aware of who has done what in the past and what seems to work, and having a sense of what people's strengths and weaknesses are."

In a similar vein, John tried to be non-directive in his advising. He said, "I'll certainly give candid advice about what I know about fine teachers." Enthusiastic about "fine teachers," he was cautious about criticizing others, "I almost never give advice about somebody to avoid unless they have really done something extreme, and then I'll say, 'Just, just be wary here, because this situation tends to be, highly multiple choice, regulation oriented, and if you can thrive that way fine, but why don't you consider laboratory or essay or personal oriented situation "B" at least.'"

Pierre took issue with the notion of non-directed advising or learning. He explained:

The rhetoric of the early and mid-sixties was "non-directed learning." But that was [nonsense]. . . . But the language was non-directive, and we were very conscious of the contradiction. . . . We used to call it "student centered" rather than "faculty centered" or "student centered" rather than "advisor centered" or "undirected."

Pierre said students presented two different kinds of needs. He continued:

I never give advice. "Thou shalt not give advice" is just written right across the top of my desk. . . . If people come looking to do that, then that's a whole different kind of advising.

If people are coming and saying, "OK, I want to develop these skills. What do I do? How do I get trained? How can you help me be a better one of these?" that's different from the young student coming to
university saying, "I don't know why I'm here. I don't know what I want to be when I grow up. Half my ambitions come from my father. The other half come from my older brother." And I say, "OK. Let's explore."

I make lots of suggestions. I pride myself on being able to lay out a series of choices. That if you want to do X, here are a variety of ways of X. And here are some reasons for thinking about doing X. And here are some reasons for not doing X.

Most advisors used option-building as a means of helping students identify goals for their academic route or life path. Options allowed advisors to provide alternatives for students to consider while remaining non-directive. Most believed choosing among alternatives was a student responsibility. As noted earlier, writers have criticized this approach when used with students of color. Some may see it as off-putting, uncaring or exhibiting a lack of knowledge and ability to advise (Brown and Rivas, 1994).

Learning Style Theory

"I think that's what we have to do as advisors is recognize everyone as an individual, and an individual set of problems and an individual set of ambitions and so forth." [Jim Emmert]

Learning style theory had been added to the advising repertoire of some of the advisors in this study. Jim Emmert, an undergraduate faculty dean of a college counseling center, expressed a recently acquired understanding. "I try to realize that not every student is striving for the same goal," he said. This change occurred as a result of coming in contact with learning style theory. He explained, "I never had this idea when I was a faculty member or a department head, but I went to a conference a few years ago in which there was a person there who gave us a workshop on learning styles." As he learned about each learning style, Jim easily thought of people who fit the descriptions. At that time he was struck by an sudden awareness, "I had never recognized those differences in my students."
Learning style theory explains that each person has a characteristic and preferred way of experiencing and making sense of their "world" (Gregorc, 1982; Kolb, 1981). In general, this preference can be charted into one of four categories. In Jim's case, the insight he gained at the workshop helped him recognize aspects of his learning style, what this meant for himself, and what this might mean for his advising. He explained:

I like everything well-organized. Outlined. Right down the line. Everything in order. I don't like this off-the-cuff talking. I never liked discussion groups because I wanted to hear what the professor had to say. He was the expert. . . . I didn't give a hoot what some other student in the classroom, who didn't know anymore than I did, had to say about it. And so, that's my learning style. . . . But I think the way we teach is primarily, we model our teaching after those professors we had that we thought were our best teachers. But it turns out that those professors who we thought were the best teachers, were the ones who taught according to our learning style.

Although Jim had become more sensitive to the variety of learning styles, Sven was the only participant to enthusiastically employ learning style theory in his teaching and advising. He used it to help students understand the academic environment and how it, and they, interacted. He said it gave them power, "And doing the learning styles really helps them [students] think about what their experience with formal education has been in a different light. They can see that in many places it's not that they were inferior in some way, but there was this mismatch between the learning style that the professor had assumed and their learning style."

Advisors can use learning style theory to help students develop clarity about a number of issues. It not only shows an individual some of their ways of learning, but validates the manner in which they do it as well. It also enables students to factor their way of knowing and learning into course selection and academic planning.
Values Clarification Theory

"One of the courses that I took that was really helpful was the values clarification course." [Delores Eisenach]

Delores Eisenach, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, described a values clarification course which had significant influence on her self-understanding when she was an undergraduate and continued to inform her advising. Values clarification is a process of getting to the essential core of prized beliefs in order to increase knowledge and understanding about oneself (Raths, Harmin, and Simon, 1975). Delores was one of a handful of advisors who identified this specific theory and connected it to her advising. She was firm in her belief that values clarification was a necessary constituent in contemporary advising. "And that's a process that too many people get into too late," she said and continued, "They get into that process when they start to think about careers."

Although the majority were unfamiliar with the theoretical constructs of values clarification theory, many emphasized the importance of helping students develop clarity about their beliefs and understandings. Whether students were considering academic possibilities or engaging in extracurricular activities, advisors commonly saw student choice and behavior connected to student values. The initial decision students made to apply and accept admission to this public land grant university was a beginning demonstration of their beliefs. However, these beliefs did not remain static. Monica Brennan, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, asserted the broad diversity in the University environment acted on each student. "In a way it's an equalizer to have people here who come from conservative families to liberal families, poor families to rich families, all those people could be taking the same English class and therefore influenced by the same set of ideas, . . . their own tradition vis-a-vis the world." She added, "It's a matter of helping people establish their values." She elaborated, "Ideally liberal arts college education was to make someone a citizen of the world. So it is a
question in a way of our values ultimately of what an education should be, and not necessarily training to make money on the job, but training to be a human being in society that will be useful." In addition to the knowledge gained about subject matter which allowed them to become a better writer, speaker, thinker and analyzer, she believed students should take the principles gained through studying the humanities and social sciences and apply them to their lives beyond college (Boyer, 1987; Douglas, 1992).

Like Monica, many emphasized the influence of advising on the development of student awareness and acceptance of the virtues of the academy. Jay described the advising process from this point of view:

Trying to transmit the culture's values to acculturate another generation may be basically what it is. Which probably is why some people want not to follow the rules because they say, 'Well your premise is wrong. The culture isn't right to begin with. Therefore, to acculturate someone is simply to mislead them.' But often all we're trying to do is acculturate them to an academic way.

Consistent with research and critics of higher education, Jay, like most advisors, had discovered that many students were not aware or did not accept this premise about higher education. According to advisors, for a great number of students, formal learning was separate from the "real world," filled with requirements and disconnected activities (Astin, 1993; Boyer, 1987; Douglas, 1992). In order to help students make connections and put their experience in context, Jay labeled and described the academic environment for them. He explained:

One of the things I like, and students respond well with this, is I say, "What we're talking about is academic enterprise. . . . It is two inches wide. That's embedded in the spectrum called thought or intellectual activity which is a yard or a mile wide. Don't confuse the two." . . . Intellectual activity is far broader than academic which is a very select, specific thing, but it's quite valuable in what it does in terms of getting at verifiable truths.
Jay said this changed the message from one of conversion, "You've got to be like us!" which most students resisted, to one of possibility for themselves within the culture. However, not all potential could become an eventuality. Melinda noted this increased the difficulty of her advising, "That's sometimes the painful part of the job, when people come in with unrealistic expectations." Jay explained in the process of clarifying values he sometimes deflated unrealistic dreams as well. With a wry laugh he said, "I define academic advising as saying terrible things with a kind tone of voice." Advisors needed to bring up a variety of issues, although at times these were unsettling. "You learn you can say more and more and more difficult, offensive things so long as a student is persuaded that what you're doing is trying to work in the student's interest," Jay said. Therefore, he often added a tag like, "You don't have to listen." He believed this grabbed students' attention, diffused some of their antagonism to authority, and allowed him to say things that might be personally uncomfortable to say or hear.

Pierre actively did values clarification with students. "People come in and say, 'You know I don't want to be X because I have to make this much money a year. I just won't be a happy human being if I don't make this much money.'" Pierre helped advisees investigate what that meant for them. "Sometimes," Pierre said, "their impression is right, and sometimes they learn, 'I really don't have to be a neurosurgeon to get all that money. There are other ways of being happy in the world.'"

As most advisors described the fundamental underpinnings of their advising, it had been shaped by intuition and personal beliefs and values developed through experience (Merriam, 1988b; Simon, 1988). In general their guiding principles did not stem from philosophical inquiry or any specialized education, and was not consciously connected to theory. They did not use any technical vocabulary to distinguish their discussions as one could find in psychological or teaching language.
Summary

The writings of the field contain not one definitive explanation of academic advising, but rather document a wide-ranging understanding of the work, how it should be provided and who should provide it (Rankey, 1994). As is the case in the field, personal assumptions and beliefs growing out of their individual experience, defined their work, led to their orientation and determined the range and boundaries of their advising.

Participants described the nature of advising as they understood it. It was dependent on the individual student. It was personal, subjective and individualistic. It was an exchange of ideas and opinion colored by beliefs and values. It was dependent on language and an advisor's ability to communicate. The main functions of advising were to generate academic options for students, help students clarify their values, and increase their ability to think critically about present decisions and the meaning these might have for their future. While rules and procedures constituted the major emphasis of a few, these were a secondary consideration for most. Advising, for most, was not a step-by-step process. Advising was delivered via a variety of vehicles: information, teaching, counseling and in blended, multivariate and culturally specific approaches.

A few participants recognized developmental advising theory, but like other theories, direct connection of this one to their advising was very limited. Yet some of the elements of various theories, such as developmental theory and learning style theory, were included in their descriptions of their advising. Advisors seemed to work out of their own real life experience, but apparently their life experience had put them in touch informally with theories with which they are formally unfamiliar. The next chapter explores how advisors use advising tools and techniques in their work.
CHAPTER IX
TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS

Introduction

"Advising is a difficult procedure because there are so many variables, and things to be aware of." [Jim Emmert]

Previous chapters examined how advisors described and defined their roles, and uncovered the lack of a commonly held theoretical base for their advising. This chapter offers a discussion of the approaches used by participants in order to help students find direction and build a portion of the road map of their lives. It also looks at instruments and resources utilized by advisors and how these were allocated.

Individually Constructed Strategies

"About the only technique I learned in advising, and I'm so conscious of using is asking "two why's." [Jay West]

In lieu of formal theory to undergird their advising, participants created their own approaches and explanations (Borgard, 1981). This section explores two. The first was unique to one person and the second was more common among advisors here.

Jay West, a faculty undergraduate dean and director of a college counseling center, had developed a personally constructed approach which could be called "The Second Why" as a means of helping students resolve their dilemmas. The key elements in the process are dispassionate conversation, suspension of disbelief and delayed judgment. He explained:

Someone's in there and they're saying they're having a problem or maybe I'm asking about a problem, let's say, "Why did you flunk out of school?" And they'll say, 'Well because I spent too much time with the fraternity.' That's where I've found that now the conversation is ready to
begin. And I say, "Why did you spend too much time with the fraternity?"
And the second why in people's explanations is where you start getting at things. The first answer to "why" is kind of descriptive. I never thought of it that way until now, sort of descriptive.

The second one is the one that's analytical. "Why did you have this difficulty?" 'Because this happened. Because I ran out of money' or because of this or that. And "Why? You know a lot of people run out of money. You've run out of money before. So why at this point did that factor cause you to have so much difficulty?" And usually that stops them. It's something they can't answer easily. It must be some level of awareness that they haven't gotten to, and that's where you begin to think, "Well maybe this is useful."

A second element, borrowed from theater, is suspension of disbelief on the part of the advisor. Jay was willing to listen even when the information he was hearing appeared to be outrageous:

But the way I handle it, and I try to preach it to the staff is, "You've got to be willing to be conned. You are not in here to catch thieves, liars and so on. You are in here to make converts. You've got to be willing to be conned, and take what they say at face value."... But I think we're conned often. Very often.

In line with this when Jay sensed a student was withholding information or fabricating a story, he magnified what students were telling him which added to their discomfort. Even as he was agreeing to their demands he pushed them to a greater extent in their untruth. He continued:

"Objectively I see no reason for doing this," I'll say. "There's one thing that sways me. And that's the effectiveness of the story that you're telling me. If someone else told me, I wouldn't believe it. But you have a reputation. Everything we know about you says you tell the truth. You are an honest person. That counts for something. . . . And on that basis, you
have earned a consideration by your truthfulness and your voracity and your life. And if ever we were to figure out you weren't, we would take an entirely different look" I've had people in this situation stop and say, "OK. I'm, you know, I was lying." Or come back and say that. Not many.

But I'm preaching what I want to preach at them, which is you've got a very delicate, fragile, valuable thing here. Or you've got a limited number of chips to play or whatever it is, and you damn well better think about it. Is this the price you want to pay for the commodity that you're buying?

Jay's story, like others, indicated that students lack an ability to be analytical about their lives and experiences. The Second Why provided a way to help students begin to learn how to be more thoughtful. According to Jay, the Second Why removed the second party, the hostile institution, the dean label, the unfair regulations and put the emphasis on the student. It changed the adversarial situation from one with mythic proportions to one of human choice. Through dispassionate conversation, he hoped students would begin to understand their own reactions to situations.

Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, described another individually constructed technique which several other advisors had also self-developed. This might be termed "The As If It Were Me" approach. When Kay considered the situation a student brought to her she brought it back to herself and her personal problem-solving line of reasoning. She said:

It becomes the "if it were me." . . . And if it were me, how would I deal with this? . . . I tell people, "Well, me," and I always put it on me. I don't say, "You should ever be anything." I say, "For me this is the way I approach things.

Regardless of approach, listening to student stories figured prominently in the advising of the majority of participants. Jay sometimes exercised his power to alleviate or resolve a situation once he was clear what it was. Despite this, although Jay repeatedly
reassured students that he had heard them, registered their appeal and granted it on the spot. Often they were incapable of immediately coming to a full stop in their presentation. Jay simply had to wait out the storytelling:

In fact, that's one of the worst parts of advising for me is being in these conversations where I know where the conversation is going, and I have to wait twenty minutes until it gets there. Now I get surprised often enough that I can live with that. . . . But I've tried all sorts of ways of trying to get, to save me the boredom of the twenty minutes. Which starts with, "I was born on a dark and stormy night." It starts way back with their history. It's a narrative that exists in time. If you ask them what the issue is, they cannot tell you what the issue is. They can tell you what happened. And you have to listen to them tell you what happened, and you have to find out what the issue is because they can't even name it. And so sometimes you can speed it up a little bit, but most of the time, that's the price you pay for whatever rewards you get from it. You just simply have to listen.

Pierre Williams, a faculty advisor in a college-based special academic program, attributed his forbearance to his educational experience. He explained:

And I think partly because of my training in literature and partly because of my training in theater, I just let students talk. And I figure that if I have situated myself in a professional relationship with them well enough, and they trust me in a fairly short period of time. I will hear the things I need to hear. . . . And so, I let them tell their stories whatever their stories are.

Kay said the listening sometimes took on a ministering dimension. She explained:

I just leave an open ear so that people can call, and if they want to talk, just let them talk. Sometimes that's all it really takes. . . . They don't know where to turn, and sometimes the minister isn't available so I guess I become the pseudo-minister.
John Mertens, a faculty advisor in an art department, also recognized the ministerial function of advising. He related this to the discussion one of his high school teachers had had with a student trying to decide between a career as a politician or a minister. John said, "One teacher said, 'You know there's a great relationship here, that you may or may not be seeing, and you have to decide how you want to help people. And that's by being identified as someone who helps people or by being someone who gets into a position of authority of some kind, and is able to help people.'"

As the stories of advisors revealed, the closer the relationship between advisor and student, the greater the potential for the ministerial tone to be present in an advisor's approach. They also demonstrated there was not only room for both types—the politician and the minister—but advisors appeared to choose one over the other. The advising approaches detailed by advisors depended on listening and analytic ability, and sometimes forgiveness. Just as educators speak about a "teachable moment" there are timing issues in advising which might be termed "advisable moments."

Appeals and Petitions: Two Views

"Sometimes they think we're being unfair because we want to be fair." [Jim Emmert]

Written appeals and petitions dealing with academic discipline cases were handled by undergraduate deans. One purpose of written petitions was to require students to think about their situation, and perhaps become more analytical than emotional. It also allowed more than one mind to work on the problem if needed. Jay and Jim provided two different examples of the petition continuum.

Flexibility was built into the approach described by Jay. In one out of fifty cases, Jay said students needed to have the outstanding issue removed in order to be able to have a more meaningful discussion. Jay would tell them:
"I don't want to talk about this anymore. I don't even want to hear what you're telling me about this. You're back in school. . . . You don't have to persuade me or the institution of anything. Now you hang around, and let's talk a little bit about it."

Without directly expressing it, Jay's style of advising was sending a message to students. He continued:

I'm also saying something about the institution. That the institution really is ultimately humanly oriented. . . . I don't ask for obituaries and death certificates or court papers and so on. I don't like that. I feel that's the wrong set.

The approach Jay detailed contrasted with that described by Jim Emmert, a faculty undergraduate dean in another college counseling center. Consistency was a cornerstone of Jim's approach. He said, "As I mentioned, my associate and I have tried to make our number one priority in this office fairness to students. Sometimes they think we're being unfair because we want to be fair." He explained what he meant:

For instance, if a student comes in and wants to drop a course late in the semester, the only way he can do that is with extenuating circumstances, and we ask him to verify those circumstances, and if they can't verify them, then normally nothing happens. They don't understand why we don't believe them. Why we don't trust them.

He provided a concrete example of a student who requested a late drop because of the trauma of his girlfriend's pregnancy. Jim asked the student to verify the situation:

And he said, "That's going to be hard because I haven't spoken to this girl since I found out she was pregnant." . . . And he said, "Well, I don't know. I'll have to see what I can do." And so he went away for the weekend. And came back in the first of the week with this letter from a physician. And the letter said, "I am so and so's doctor. I've been checking
her for her pregnancy. And so-and-so is the father of this child. I'm not sure whether they're going to get married or not." First of all, I thought that sounded like a really weird statement to come from a physician. And then, when I noticed that the letterhead was a Xeroxed copy, I got more suspicious. And then, when I noticed that the physician was a cardiologist, I got even more suspicious.

Jim informed the student that he would verify the letter from the physician. When he did, he discovered the doctor had not worked in that office for two years. He continued:

So the kid had gotten this letterhead somewhere. Made a xeroxed copy of it. Typed a letter on it. And brought it in to me as his verification of his problem. Well he never came back. Obviously he knew I would find out pretty quickly once I made this call. But that's the kind of thing you have to deal with. And so, you can't look a kid right in the eye and know whether he's telling you the truth or not. You'd like to, but you can't. The only way we've found to maintain the fairness is just to make sure we treat them all the same. That means they all get a letter of verification for their extenuating circumstance.

One detail is clear from these two examples, interpretation and application of the rules and regulations was individually determined and revealed a personal style (Douglas, 1992).

Advising Contracts and Agreements

"There's one nice thing about it, I can say, 'Sorry you didn't meet the objectives of your contract that you signed,' which gets me off the hook!"

[Anunciata Buttons]

Advising contracts were used in several different advising settings on campus. Pierre Williams, a faculty advisor in a college-based special academic program, Patty Huang, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, and

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Anunciata Buttons, an undergraduate dean in a college counseling center described three different interpretations and usages of advising contracts.

The first was a study plan which described a student's learning objectives and plan for a semester and included a student created evaluation at the end of the semester. As a faculty member, Pierre utilized semester-long contracts as part of the learning and empowerment process for students in his program. He said, "One of the motifs that's built right into that contract process is, 'What am I doing here? And how am I going to do it so that it's the most meaningful for me?" With advisor assistance, the student stated, "This is what I want to accomplish this semester." Pierre said objectives defined in each semester's study plan ranged from personal to academic.

At the end of each semester, students were asked to evaluate their progress and the process in writing. The objectives established in the prior study plan and two additional questions provided the focus of this inquiry. He said the first question, "What am I taking out of it?" subsumed another question, "What did I learn about the world and myself?" This provided the grist for an advising session on, "What does that suggest for the next semester?" The outcome of this dialogue was the basis for the next semester's contract. He explained in this process students learned to make their academic experience real and meaningful for themselves. As the semesters passed, Pierre said, "They begin to see it as a developmental process."

The second type of academic contract was arranged between the Admissions Office and incoming students who were admitted to the University on a probationary basis. These contracts were monitored by academic support program advisors. Patty explained, "They sign a contract saying, 'I agree to see an academic advisor like once a month or perhaps more.'" Admissions contract students agreed to participate in specific kinds of tutoring as well as other academic assistance. These contracts spelled out specific academic achievement objectives.
Anunciata described the third type of contract. Primarily these were academic discipline contracts or academic plans developed for a student in academic jeopardy. The undergraduate dean of the college in which the student was enrolled set forth the objectives relative to courses and grades and evaluated student progress. Anunciata said, "These are kids who are on contract to me because they failed last semester!" Students petitioned Anunciata and asked for a second chance to succeed academically after they had been suspended. The contract allowed a one semester opportunity to make a difference. Anunciata explained what such a contract included:

We set forth what the objectives are going to be, very straightforward, and we'll put together what it is. Will only take four courses. Good. You don't take five when you're failing. You define what they are. We say what's a reasonable semester average, because I'm not unrealistic. I don't think you're going to get your cum up in one semester, but you should be passing your semester. . . . Then we say that you will complete a mid-semester progress report.

Students did not always fulfill their contract. In the cases described by Anunciata and Patty, failure to complete a contract was grounds for dismissal from the University. Anunciata said these were also an accountability measure. They placed the responsibility on the student not her. In Pierre's case, failure to complete the study plan would initiate a serious evaluation of the original agreement, and a revision of the next plan. Academic contracts appeared to be successful tools for those who used them. However, no one on campus had investigated the ramification of these aids.

The Limitations and Possibilities of Group Advising

"In this college, we do very little group advising." [Florence Baker]

The increasing numbers of students needing advising assistance called for innovation. A fresh approach was provided by the group advising concept borrowed from
psychology (Grites, 1984). However, advisors who had used the group advising technique were vocal about its limitations. Mary Perry, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, represented this understanding when she said, "We tried, briefly, small group advising, and it wasn't successful for us." She provided a common assessment. "We found what happened was that it made for a very efficient initial meeting when you talked about all the commonalities, but what we found over time is that each of those students ends up coming back, and we do the individual meetings separately," she said and added, "All you're doing is talking in broad generalities."

According to many, group theory contained an assumption that individual students were capable of identifying the irregularities in their academic records and how these interacted with requirements and programs here. Instead of helping them, she believed more often group provided an opportunity to complicate the situation. For instance Mary discovered, "They [students] wait until after the registration period's done. They go home and think about it. Then they call back with more questions they were either unwilling to ask in front of a group or just couldn't individualize at the same time they were trying to follow a presentation intended for a group." At the point when students returned for help often it was after they had made an irretrievable mistake or one which put them at a disadvantage.

Group advising also appeared to contribute to the sense of impersonality. Advisors expressed a sense that group prevented them from knowing students other than in a general way. Mary explained:

I think the other thing is if you want to establish a long-term, ongoing academic relationship, you also want people to understand you are invested in how they're doing and their individual needs, and as soon as you bring in a group, you take that away. They're becoming a number. And especially, for example, on this campus where it's large enough, and they already are assigned numbers, and are referred to by numbers, there are
very few places where we can still make an individual difference. And this happens to be one of them.

According to many advisors who had used it, group did not develop into a time-saving or cost-saving measure. In addition, most participants felt the concept conflicted with one major advising commitment which was to encourage students toward independence and thinking individually about their future and their options.

Mary's center did employ group advising as a front-line action during the pre-registration crunch time each semester. "We've tried group advising in a kind of a triage setting during pre-registration when the numbers are great, the people who wait until the last day, who come in the last two hours, and there's three-hundred people and three advisors." This was consistent with advocates in the field (Grites, 1984).

Here again the issues raised by participants would come into play. It was likely that many students would be uncomfortable or reluctant to reveal aspects of themselves or their record in front of a group of people they did not know. In other cases, student confusion might be overlooked until time had passed, and they discovered they had made a mistake. Another complication of group advising was the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Group advising ran the risk of conflict with the intent of this legislation. Mary explained, "You can't talk about the specifics of somebody's record in a group, or if you do, you're either breaking the law or you're embarrassing them." FERPA protected the confidential nature of students' academic records. Exploring individual academic or other issues within a group setting might run counter to that protection.

Meetings with parents and students was another way group was used in some settings. Mary described the two step process her center used. "We start our group interviews differently in that we always see a student first." As the primary client, the student met with an advisor for about ten or fifteen minutes to discuss the agenda. At that point the student decided whether or not to sign the release of information form. This was
assurance that he or she wanted a parent or parents present. This gave the student some control. "Of course, you can't control what's going to happen in the group," Mary said.

Carmen Barreto, a professional staff advisor in a college-based academic support program, presented a contrasting viewpoint. She said:

In [our College] especially, it's really important for them to learn how to work in group. . . . We do group tutoring. We do as many group things as we can. . . . During pre-registration, I don't have enough space in my day to do every student. So I tell them, "OK, come in, come in, come in." We'll do two or three at a time or something like that, and they'll help each other. . . . And then, we have the professional organizations, which is something I've been dealing with this summer, their agenda for the year, and putting together their budget, and we have a meeting every other week in my office.

Sven Neilsen, a professional staff director of a special academic program, also saw benefits to group advising. He successfully built it into his teaching. He talked about the intensely painful personal issues such as alcoholism, domestic abuse and divorce that arose in his classes, and asked, "And what do you do when all of a sudden child abuse issues come up or drug abuse issues come up or people start talking about things that they really aren't proud of in themselves and that they've hidden from themselves for years, and out they come?" Reiterating he was not a therapist, he explained not all students bring up difficult issues, but enough did to make the situation tense at times. He said, "And we have to find a way to talk to students about that process, about what's coming out."

He acknowledged it was not an easy process to deal with such powerful personal issues. "And they're really hard to deal with sometimes, and it's hard for the group to deal with, and hard for the instructor to deal with or the advisor." Yet he considered the experience valuable for himself as a teacher and advisor, and an important aspect of the students' academic journey. He said students often helped each other. The discussions of
life and sometimes death issues could be transforming for the group drawing them into a common bond.

As Mary evaluated her experience with group advising, she said the negative effects outweighed the positives of group work for staff as well as for students. "But when it comes down to specific academic advising, we haven't seen any benefit to group advising yet," she summarized.

While group advising represented a potential tool in theory, of those who had used group advising, most felt it presented difficulties in practice. The subjective nature of advising and their own beliefs about the importance of the individual seemed to preclude group.

Orientation and the Extracurricular

"Some people say it doesn't really matter what you take as a freshman because you have plenty of time, but I think that's not true."

[Monica Brennan]

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) indicated the extent that a student becomes committed to part of the institution was correlated to his or her academic success. Orientation was the initial window for new students to gain a deeper look at the University and to initiate commitment. Most participants said advising was necessary at this inceptive point in order for students to begin to make an effective match between themselves and possibilities.

Monica Brennan, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, spoke for most when she pointed out the undergraduate timer began at orientation. She said, "You need immediate good advising, and placement in the right courses for you in order to make the most of your education and your choices." However, she was concerned that this rarely happened, and said, "But I would think that most freshmen at this University have had to sort of sign on the dotted line before they've really thought about a major."
Ze Mendez, a faculty advisor in a humanities department, was critical of the orientation program as well. He said, "During the summer or at the beginning of the semester, the orienting that they get is not sufficient for them. The students are still lost."

Monica encouraged students to become involved with extracurricular activities as a means of finding a mentoring faculty to help them find their way. "Belong to some smaller entity on campus whatever you do whether it's the marching band so that you can find somebody who cares about you enough to give you good academic advising. Otherwise you can easily get lost in the shuffle."

John told his art students, "Do something that you become committed to because you're not likely in your first semester to become committed to an academic discipline unless you happen to enter in one and you have no questions about it." John emphasized this point, "I can't tell you the number of times I've told parents that, and spoken to parents and incoming students and told them that and preached 'the last thing you want to do is go to classes, study and go back home again.'" John said, "The students are usually relieved to hear somebody say that." However, parents were not. John had noticed, "But there's an increasing feeling that that which does not contribute directly to the quote "progress" of the student toward graduation and a job is suspect."

John cautioned students to become involved in a faculty directed organization which had a regular timetable, would not impinge upon their academic schedule and would stay under control. John argued against freshmen involvement in student-run organizations. He explained, "And students are so impressionable at eighteen that they can be easily persuaded that the needs of whatever organization they are in are so important that they should take precedence over the paper that is due the next day." Boyer's research (1987) highlighted the retention benefits from student involvement in carefully chosen extracurricular activities.

Jackie LaPierre, a classified staff advisor in a college-based multidisciplinary degree program, presented an alternative viewpoint. She advised students to attend to their studies,
and meet faculty through the mediums of the classroom and the laboratory. "I'm the kind of person who just thinks, 'You've got to do the real stuff, and forget this superfluous stuff over here,'" she explained.

A number of traps exist for faculty and staff working with undergraduates. One is believing classroom and lab learning constitute the whole of undergraduate education (Weingartner, 1992). Another is believing the extracurricular means sports or athletics or is superfluous to the collegiate experience. However, as John and Monica indicated, the extracurricular is much broader than athletic activities. In addition, faculty involvement is critical to any extracurricular experience. The advisor needs to have a holistic sense of what learning in higher education is and use this to inform his or her practice. Students who wisely link the extracurricular with the curricular gain the most from their undergraduate education (Boyer, 1987; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991).

Human Resources for the Advisor

"I never [refer] somebody to somebody unless I have called them, and I usually try to reassure the student by calling the other person right then and getting them on the line." [John Mertens]

Human resources commonly utilized by the participants were key contacts in academic departments, administrative offices and other programs. Consistent with writers in the field, most often, these were personally developed responses and connections (Grites, 1984). The following sections look at two major types of referral.

Academic Referral

I believe in trying to hook people up with faculty members as early as possible because there's a limit to my expertise in certain professional areas." [Florence Baker]
A first priority for many was making connections between students and faculty. To ease the process for hesitant students, Florence Baker, a professional staff advisor in a college counseling center, often provided her advisees with an introductory topic for their initial conversation with a faculty advisor.

John stayed aware of "the fine teachers in as many departments as possible." He felt confident when he sent students to them that the student would be treated well. He urged students to, "Take a course with that individual. It doesn't really matter too much what they're teaching." Lacking staff development, advisors generally attributed longevity as the main factor contributing to effective referral since it took much time to develop key contacts and a broad base of information. John explained:

I think you have an advantage doing that if you've been at a place awhile because advising like that relies upon almost the same thing that really good administration relies on and that is knowing people. It doesn't happen by memos. It doesn't happen by written requests. And it certainly doesn't happen by letters to the editor or any such nonsense as that. It happens by knowing somebody that you can call on the phone and say, 'Here's a problem. What can we do about it?' And I think, over the years, I think I've figured out that the best advising is listening and then having some idea of who can help. And having people who will, if you call them, they will listen . . . and they do something.

As was the case with the majority of participants, John frankly acknowledged that he did not know all the answers, but could locate people who might be able to help. "Often somebody else who's known to be receptive to people who need help and getting them on the line." His approach to referral was to make a telephone connection while the student was with him. John typically reviewed the main aspects of a student's case in the presence of the student, and made an appointment for the student.
Health Referral

"You can refer students to mental health or counseling when they are referable in a sense, and when they are to a certain degree open to what they are going to be able to hear what you are saying." [Ana Garcia]

Effectively assessing the potential for health referral, especially mental health referral, required caution, tact and skill. Sven's antenna alerted him when a student began demanding more one-to-one advising time. He said another signal was, "People calling up at home with problems that are not related to academic work, but need someone to talk to."

A third warning sign appeared in writing assignments. "When parts of their past starts coming in writing that isn't attached to anything else. It's just kind of exploding out of a person and it's not in context." These were important signs that something was amiss.

Echoing most other participants, he said in these cases, "What I try to do, when I feel over my head, is refer somebody to a professional to the counseling services at the university or to other services, because I don't want to do something wrong. I don't think I can take on that responsibility because I'm not trained."

Jay also turned to referral in cases where he sensed trauma or something unusual.

He provided an example:

When I run into students who are having trouble because there's a divorce in the family and the mother is dating a man who is beating her up and invading her bank account and taking the family, how do I help that student? I have nothing in my experience. So a lot of it is nothing more profound than saying, 'Here's a couple of people who might be able to help you. Places where you might go to talk.' And saying the sort of thing as I often do to students who are reluctant to talk with anybody is, 'Look, you're perhaps embarrassed by the situation here. And what you can do is, you can talk with someone who has seen your problem a thousand times. You've seen it once. I've heard it once. There are people who specialize in your life. And have heard it a thousand times. And have five possibilities to offer,
where you and I could think of one or two. You would be pretty stupid not to consult or not to ask."

Wary of hitting a sensitive nerve, he said he gingerly used "almost psychological manipulation" to persuade reluctant students to seek appropriate assistance. Yet he asked an important question, "At what point do you just cut your losses and say, 'I don't belong in this conversation at all?' But to what extent then are you ethically obligated to keep it going even when you don't know?"

In such cases the literature suggests advisors would refer students (Ramos, 1994). However, most advisors said referral was not always possible. Like several other advisors in this study, Jay sometimes used a reverse approach especially when he sensed the student in front of him would not go the next step for help. When faced with such a case, he excused himself from his office. He would telephone the director of psychological services for the University and ask for advice. He explained:

One, I want to read this into the record in case you're seeing this person or in case you ever do. So I'm going to tell you the name of the person and the situation, and what I've said, and what I perceive. I want somebody to have this on record. And secondly . . . maybe I won't give the name at the time— [and instead] say, this is a hypothetical situation, and given this, what responses ought I to be making? Or what do you think ought to be done? I try to get him to counsel me so that then I can, in turn, know what direction to take with the student. That may happen once a month, once every six weeks where I try to get somebody to counsel me.

While most of her students came to her advising center in order to resolve a problem that was preventing them from their academic responsibilities, Ana Garcia, a professional staff undergraduate dean, said this was not always the case. She explained:

But I have some [students] that are deranged, completely out of touch with reality. Those make me sad, very sad, and sometimes a little bit
scared because nowadays you really don't know what can come out. And people who have no sense of reality, that's hard.

Mary also reflected the difficulty of referral especially in cases where mental health appeared to be a question. She explained the campus mental health services were not an option with students who were out of control, or nearly so. She said in these cases mental health put the responsibility for evaluation and action back on advisors, "Unless you decide it's serious enough so you want the police to come, and pink slip them to a psych facility for three days, those are tough positions to be in where you feel threatened, but there's no real way out because if you do call mental health, in most circumstances if they feel they are disintegrated in their behavior to that degree, they basically think the police are the best option."

Angela Pham, professional staff advisor for a multifunction academic support program, explained health issues were a time consuming in her advising practice. She said her advisees tended to be indirect, rather than direct, about what was bothering them. She described the process she used to learn to identify the problem:

And how do you find the problem? You have to gain their trust first. Now to gain their trust, you have to go along with their conversation, and talk with them about whatever they want to talk about. And gradually go into their academic performance.

When she suspected a health problem, she did not tell students what she had surmised. She also carefully avoided the word "mental." She explained:

Suppose that I detect a mental problem. I wouldn't say that, "I believe you have a mental problem. I will refer you to [the psychologist] to get some help." No! I wouldn't dare to say that because the student would yell and scream right away. . . . And would accuse me of many things. . . . The word mental is a taboo! They will get very angry, furious, and then fly out of the office right away. . . .
Four or five sessions are needed before you come to the point, and say that, "This is not very serious. It's just that you need some expertise. And I don't have that kind of talent or that expertise to help you. I can support you morally and spiritually, but to solve your problem maybe there is an office." . . . You say, "Oh, I know a doctor who's very caring. And he will take good care of you. Why don't I call him?" Or, "Why don't I send him a note. You take this note with you, and go and get an appointment, and see him."

As was common among advisors in this study, Angela personally initiated connections with at least one person in each department who is willing to work with her and be a personal contact for her students. She said, "I try to make connections." She added cultural sensitivity to her referral, "And that's why it's so important for counselors, at least for Asian counselors to get the names of people."

The problems inherent in referral included not only a need for cultural sensitivity, but sensitivity in general. Longevity appeared to be a key ingredient. It not only provided experience, but over time, some advisors had built up a repertoire of personal approaches and connections. For the advisor new to the role, and especially one new to the University, there were few readily apparent resources. Regardless of their length of advising service, referral depended on an advisor's ability to recognize a problem and interpret the need for a particular kind of referral. In addition, referral was a one-way process. While getting the student the appropriate assistance was the immediate goal, there was no follow-up. No one helped the advisor learn whether or not she had referred properly, or if his referral approach could be improved.
"The first thought off the top of my head is it's easier to do yourself than it is to train some students to do it, because they're not going to be here next year, and you have to train another group of students to do it."

[Jim Emmert]

Student paraprofessionals were another advising resource (Habley and Crockett, 1988). However, peer counselors were not utilized campus wide. While some participants said they would have difficulty doing their work without student assistants, others had reservations about students being counselors of other students. Jim spoke for the second perspective when he explained the philosophy of his college included commitment to teaching and advising and these were faculty roles. "And I think that would carry over to peer advising," he said and continued, "I don't know of any peer advising done in this College on an official basis. I have a feeling it would be more work then it was worth."

The time and energy needed to prepare students to advise was in line with one limitation identified by King (1988). Dependence on peer counselors also meant perpetual training since the turnover rate was great (Habley, 1979). Other issues limiting the use of peers included accountability, continuity and supervision.

The concept of peer counseling needed some qualification. Mary clarified a major point, "Before the Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), they actually did a great deal more one-on-one peer advising. Since that time, their role has changed primarily to resource and referral kinds of information." In Mary's college counseling center, students were allowed to schedule appointments with faculty advisors, answer phones, pull schedule cards and records, and help students process a change of major, but they no longer provided direct student counseling.

Confidentiality was a primary concern, and peer counselors signed a release or contract regarding disclosure about any material they might encounter by accident. Accountability risks increased as the number of peer students increased. "It's been
difficult," Mary said and added, "Over the years there were periods where I wished we had more professional advisors." She believed some departments were putting themselves at risk by giving students a wider latitude with confidential records. She said, "I understand, legally, with the release, there are offices on campus that allow students to handle grade cards because they couldn't function without them, but we've made the choice not to do that here." While the majority of peer counselors may have abided by this "contract," in no way did it contain, in practice, the sharing of any information by peer counselors. Its major purpose was to protect the staff and faculty from lawsuits.

Another concern was continuity. Mary explained the part-time status of peer counselors conflicted with student need to develop an ongoing connection with an advisor:

It's important for students to be able to come in and have an ongoing relationship with somebody who's there a set period of time. One of the problems with peer advisors is that they work a few hours a week, so unless a student either knows their schedule or comes in at the same time, the chances of getting the same person aren't good.

Mary said parents often were uncomfortable meeting with a student counselor doing intake. "Some people come in and if they see a first contact with a student, they somehow they think they're getting a lesser advising."

Despite these issues, Mary acknowledged the benefits of student counselors. She said the institutionalized grapevine was an important source of information. Typically this unofficial communication process worked well among students. Mary said, "Students will ask other students questions about professors and classes that they would never raise with a staff member ever, and we don't really want to lose that because that has, especially nowadays where they often don't get access to faculty evaluations, part of that's important especially for a non-traditional student." In addition student counselors functioned as a kind of safety valve. "A lot of times the student on probation doesn't want their first contact to
be with a member of the professional staff." A student counselor could provide a sense of what might happen in an appointment with an undergraduate dean.

Two special academic programs in this study depended on peer advisors. Eugenia Suffren, a professional staff advisor, described how peers functioned in her special academic program. "We have a lounge and we have open advising hours ten to twelve and one to four every day." During these walk-in hours, peer counselors were available for initial inquiries, and they provided basic information on the program and offerings. Eugenia believed they were essential. While they only had their own experience to rely on, their function was to talk about that experience and the meaning it might have for other students interested in the program. She explained a special aspect of their role. "The peer counselors, the students that see students first, are pure advisors, pure counselors." They are not trying to balance the demands of counseling with those of administration. She noted, "And the rest of us feel stressed on how to balance that."

Monica's special academic program also relied on peer counselors. However, she described a different system. Peers in her program had administrative duties, "We have seven peer advisors and four work study students who are our secretary/clerical staff and no other secretary/clerical staff." All took part in training with Monica before they began advising potential students or reviewing student proposals. They were paid a stipend of $250 a semester for six hours a week. Monica said, "It's a token, but at least it's a little something." Dependence on students for clerical work presented a major liability in more than one way. The part-time status of student workers made supervising tasks such as keeping files up to date more difficult. Monica said often papers were misfiled or lost, and much time was spent searching for incorrectly filed documents. Part-time employees meant keeping track of which peer should be at work, and Monica said this was time consuming. In addition, peer advisors typically held a position for a maximum of a year. Turnover meant continuity was lost, and the ongoing need for training was a continual drain on advisor time.
The uncertainty in the University budget process meant Monica did not have advance notice in the spring semester whether or not she would have money to pay peer advisors the following fall semester. Therefore, she was unable to advertise, select and train peers ahead of time. In addition, students often did not plan that far in advance. At the start of each semester when potential students accessing the program had the most questions, Monica was busy interviewing, hiring and training new peer advisors. "So we're doing it at the same time," she said, and continued:

Sometimes we have nine or ten people sitting here asking us questions with the phones ringing, and we're trying to interview students. We're answering the phones. We're interviewing students for the jobs so that we can have someone to answer the phones. And we're trying to do academic advising with the students sitting here, so it's complicated.

This created a sense of discontinuity in the office. She said, "It makes for a lot of chaos!" Since the peer counselors need several weeks of training before they could advise students with any assurance of confidence or competence, she said, "You just have to let the advising go or do it top-of-your-head triage kind of thing, not do it as it should be done, [but] like an emergency room!" Almost immediately she corrected herself, "And yet, even there, I think there's more specialties and more delegating. I think in the emergency room they're still giving their utmost to their main function, whereas I would say, we're not." She reiterated, "It's triage!"

Clearly there were some benefits as well as many limitations to the use of peer counselors. The peer counselors received the major benefit. They had an opportunity to talk to other students who wanted to hear their stories and learn from their experiences. It offered peer counselors possibilities for a closer connection to the spirit of the campus and an opportunity to increase their sense of unity in their own academic process as they helped others do the same. The second beneficiaries were undergraduates who had some of their
anxiety about facing an authority such as an undergraduate dean reduced by discussing the situation with sympathetic students first.

The literature expressed support for peer advising as low cost alternative advising and a means of freeing professional advisors from routine tasks (King, 1988). However, the experience of most participants reflected a different understanding. Advertising, recruiting, interviewing, selecting and training peer advisors took much time and energy. The short term as well as part-time status of peer advisors meant perpetual repeating of these tasks. Peer students needed supervision, and posed a concern for accountability, confidentiality and continuity. Finally, as Mary pointed out, use of peers could constitute a public relations problem. Parents most often were dissatisfied when they met with a peer counselor, even as an intake person, to discuss their son's or daughter's academic program. Peer advising is not a realistic substitute for faculty or professional staff advising, but if carefully organized and supervised, it can be an important supplement.

Publications

"I know if someone came in to take over my job, the old office Bible that I have here would need a lot of reconstruction!" [Leletti Cole]

Guidebooks were one of the most utilized resources, although as Leletti Cole, a classified staff advisor in a social science department, pointed out, they were not always up to date or in universal use in every setting.

Handbooks were individually constructed by advisors for their academic departments, college counseling centers, and special academic programs. Melinda Abercrombie, faculty chief undergraduate advisor, like most, was proud of the handbook she had developed for her academic department. She said she had had requests for it. "I was shocked the first time because not only here on campus, but other schools, other campuses of the [University] system have asked for it."
Jackie credited her college counseling center's guidebook as her source for answers to advising dilemmas, and like many, referred to it in almost sacred terms. The professional staff advisor in the college counseling center created the handbook, and regularly sent updates to advisors in departments. Enthusiastically Jackie said, "And it's wonderful, absolutely wonderful because the first semester, I told you how fast I started advising, that was my Bible!"

Anunciata created guidebooks for students as well as other advisors in her college, "We also made sure that we produced handbooks and different kinds of materials that would assist students, in planning, so that they weren't left out in the cold. And to also use these as guidelines for the faculty members." In the handbook Anunciata produced, she added something unique. She said, "We designed the flow chart for advising purposes so people who were even the worst advisors at least knew how to tell students the path for them to take."

The University Rules and Regulations Handbook was another publication discussed by advisors. They referred to it in order to help them understand, interpret and enforce the principles and standards governing student academic life. They were much less positive about this publication than they were for the ones they constructed. Jim expressed the complaints of the majority:

Just take the University [Rules and Regulations] for Undergraduates, that book. I'm sure most faculty don't know a third or a tenth of what's in that book, but it's there for reference. Of course the index is so poor, you can't find anything in it.

Advising had a complex information base. In order to advise appropriately, an advisor must acquire and memorize a large body of academic rules, regulations and procedures. However, according to advisors, the information they needed was not readily
available. When it was located, it was often unclear. Therefore, they created their own reference materials.

Technical Resources

"That's not an advising tool! It's an administrative tool!" [Ana Garcia]

The advising literature has promoted computers as advising tools (Rooney, 1994). On this campus, computer-assisted advising included the production of degree audits, registration, and a recording system (Kramer, 1984). The following details some of the issues and problems with technical resources.

The Computer-Generated Degree Audit

"The degree audit! It's marvelous. It's absolutely marvelous. It's impossible to read!" [Pierre Williams]

The computerized degree audit had recently been introduced as an advising tool on this campus. It was intended to be a means of simplifying and streamlining the academic structure for students and advisors. The degree audit garnered a mixed review among participants.

Eugenia described the degree audit as a "mechanical, excellent thing." Although she did not depend on the degree audit in her initial counseling, she said, "It's helpful down the road when they're getting into the details of what courses they should take, but that's where there's this delicate balance because really that's kind of overkill for the first three or four visits."

Pierre briefly checked the audit at the start of initial advising sessions as a means of helping the student and him get their bearings, although he would like a more "user friendly presentation." He described how he used this tool, "You can discover slippage that has happened and take immediate corrective action," he said and gave an example, "The
student took a course and the grade hasn't shown up. Bam! Fill out the change of grade or whatever appropriate form, and then you can move on to education!"

Despite this, Pierre saw a major shortcoming in this tool: "It's no more cohesive. They can take that audit and they can say, 'Well, I need another social/behavioral world thing,' and they put it in because it's convenient." He also worried that it might substitute for advising. "But that's what constitutes advising for most people. 'Here's the list of requirements. Here is the list of what you've taken. And the stuff that's in-between is what you need to do. Bye! Next.'"

According to the majority, the current format was cumbersome. This led some participants to disregard degree audits. Jackie's experience typified this position. She said, "Degree audits are so ridiculous to read. I just throw them in the wastebasket when they come!"

No advisor viewed the degree audit as a substitute for advising, and it had some serious liabilities. Some advisors, as Jackie demonstrated, simply threw audits away. Potentially it reduced the need for students to meet with an advisor. It did not enable advisor or student to identify individual abilities, interests, skills or aims. It did little to increase unity in a student's undergraduate experience.

Computerized Advising

"Unfortunately too, is that as the system has been refined, every time they've added something, they've added it so that it's done at the major department or the advising office so it's added a few more steps along the way." [Mary Perry]

The campus had become "computerized." Rather than freeing her up to do other things, Emily Broadbent, a classified staff advisor in a special academic program, felt the computer complicated her work life. "To [answer phones] and try to remember where to go back to [on the computer] is very hard." There was only one computer in the advising
office, and other advisors needed to use the computer, too. She said, "Somebody else will come in and interrupt the process." Confusion inevitably followed. She worried that data would be lost or compromised.

Rather than simplifying her work, Mary said the computer added another dimension to her job at a point where there was little flexibility. With computerization, the University registrar shunted some work previously done centrally to academic advising locations. She described some former registrar office functions now delegated to her:

We do everything from entering overrides for the foreign language and overloads and all that. We do registration holds for people who are coming back from probation, suspension or dismissal. . . . We have holds on there for people on reinstatement that we take on and off. We spend a lot more time entering and deleting data. . . . And now we look up course masters and trace people with the computer. . . . Overloads don't sound like a big deal until you think about the fact that you're doing them for a college of 10,000, and all of a sudden it's not such a small item anymore!

Yet Mary was still expected to handle all of her prior tasks. She said she spent more and more time shuffling data through the screens. "It's another way of redefining the job, the task," she said and added, "By the time we see people and keep our anecdotal records, to then have to go back and update—sometimes several streams—is a big task."

The transfer of prior registrar office work to advising locations was likely to continue.

At the opposite extreme, Anunciata explained the computer streamlined communication between faculty and herself. She was enthusiastic about the computer, "We do most of our work on E-mail, which is wonderful because they don't have anymore time to meet than I do."

Among most advisors in this study, the computer was neither seen as a time saver or as a replacement for previous practices, but an additional complication to their role. Jay said computers were not a boost to the morale of faculty advisors. "Putting computers on
their desks turned a lot of them off." Surprisingly, most of the faculty advisors in his center were not computer literate. In fact Jay said, they were not remotely interested in becoming computer literate. He said they, "Don't want to be. Don't even want to turn them on and use them, and didn't like the message." They boycotted the machines. It was not viewed as an improvement or a step-up. Jay learned faculty did not want to turn to an inanimate object for quick access to information. Instead, he discovered, "It was an alien. It was an unwelcome third party sitting in there." Jay explained what he thought faculty advisors really wanted:

What they wanted was Mark Hopkins' log. They wanted to sit on one end of it, and have the student sit on the other end. Literally it could have been a hewn log, I think, they would have felt a lot better about it.

Some writers in the field have advocated computers as a source of up-to-date information (Rooney, 1994). Despite the fact that accurate, easily accessed information can be useful, other writers warn that technological advances might gradually wear away the interpersonal process at the heart of advising (Ender, 1994).

On this campus, the introduction of computers as part of the advising role led to the decentralization of many former registration, scheduling and clerical functions. This contributed additional tasks rather than streamlining chores for advisors in this study. In the minds of many giving them computers was not giving them a valuable tool, just more work. In addition, computers appeared to be plopped down on their desks. They were informed they were going to use them. Most advisors appeared to have no say in this change. This seemed to contribute to resistance.

Hard Copy

"There's so much administrative paperwork to be done!" [Peter MacNeil]
While the computer was generally not viewed as an advising tool or very important to the advising process, hard copy documentation was viewed as a necessity. Ana held up a folder containing written materials about a student's record. "Here you just open a few pages and you see that this person had a contact in '85." She explained the same action on a computer took longer. Ana demonstrated. "Here you have to move the screen back and back and keep reading that way. It's harder to read." In addition, she informed, some documentation was kept off the screens anyway. Details such as the reason the student sought assistance, the analysis, decisions about what should be done, the contract or study plan and process were not included. This was kept in confidential files and maintained by the advising office.

Although most participants were surrounded by paper, and one would think they would be glad to see the piles reduced, Anunciata spoke for many participants when she said, "I really want a trail for everything we do, because when I came into this [college counseling center] nobody knew what was happening to anybody. I found a box of actions, late withdrawals, medical excuses all thrown into a bin that should have been in student's files, and it was simply because there was a lousy management." The lack of a paper trail allowed indiscriminate decisions. "There was never a trail on anything we did which allowed everybody to deal willy nilly with students, which meant that any student coming in here was never guaranteed of a fair shake!"

She said keeping records of advising transactions helped her determine if exceptions to rules could be made. Narrative and anecdotal information was viewed as an accountability measure. It eliminated whimsical decisions and power plays based on a lack of information. Anunciata continued, "I'm obsessive about documentation because it allows me then to see all these students as many as I do, but also remembering precisely what it is that we have discussed. Holds them accountable. Holds me accountable." Without accurate records she said, "And you could act as a power person then because if you change your mind, guess what? You have legitimacy and the student does not."
Little Emphasized Resources

I think the [Office of Placement Services] should be on this campus! I don't care how gorgeous the facility is, I think it's a disservice to students.

[Anunciata Buttons]

Sometimes what is left off a list or little expressed is as telling as what is itemized or described. In this light, for the purposes of this research, some little-emphasized resources are worth some discussion.

Student affairs services such as the Ombuds Office, Mental Health, Counseling and Special Needs Program and Dean of Students Office were mentioned by several participants as resources they consistently draw upon. For the most part their comments were positive. Yet reliance on these services was not universal. In general, advisors did not present a picture of interdependence among these campus agencies, but were apt to see them as separate and isolated. A number expressed the belief that many students did not know these services or how they might be of use to them. John said he had found this to be the case. He said, "Many [students] do not know for example, that we have an Ombuds Office, and that these people are absolutely confidential and really can be relied on."

One program which received some criticism was the Office of Placement Services. Annunciata, like many, said students did not utilize this service. At first she said, "It's just that they [the students] are lazy!" And then, she added, "I have to admit that I get in my car and go there." Although the bus system had regularly scheduled trips to this location, most believed distance prevented access. The location of this Office more than a mile from central campus meant it was not on the beaten path. Annunciata believed other offices such as business offices or some research offices not frequented by students should be relocated and the office of placement services should be on the central campus. She said, "And if you look at advising in a total way, then all of that should be integrated on campus. Send the other [administrative] offices off!"
Delores Eisenach, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, like most, identified location as a problem. However, she said a second problem was organization. Like some other advisors, she had found the service disorganized. Third, she concurred with some others who expressed dissatisfaction with the unwelcoming atmosphere of the placement office. Delores summarized these sentiments:

I get very little feedback about [the Office of Placement Services]. I don't know if it's because they are so far [off campus] and that people just don't go. My impression of them is that they're very fragmented and that people have a hard time getting what they need. . . . I've been there. It's a rather odd building. . . . There wasn't anybody at the intake desk when I came in. I just wandered around. And there's a bunch of closed doors around and there are signs all over like "information" on the walls to an extent that it's a little overwhelming. . . . It just didn't seem to me that, at the point I was there, they hadn't taken a lot of initiative to try to make it sensible to students. There wasn't even a directory over the desk that people could look at so that they could find their way to the different things. . . . It's not on your way to anything else. So you have to make a special trip.

Melinda explained how she overcame some of these concerns. Rather than referring students there, she had taken a different tack. "I have representatives from the [Placement Office] come down on a regular basis to run workshops for our majors on resume writing, the job search process, interviewing strategies and things which will inform our majors about what resources are available."

High school transcripts and SAT or ACT scores were not emphasized among advisors in this study. For the most part, transcripts from other institutions were used only by advisors in special academic programs with admission functions. Internal transcript information, now accessible on the computer, was used by some advisors for documentation in academic discipline cases. Transcripts also were used in the process of
helping a student transfer from one college to another, to a special academic program or declare a major.

There were few opportunities on campus for advisors to discuss legal or ethical issues around the use of such materials. Most participants were familiar with some FERPA guidelines especially around the issue of confidentiality. Only Carmen specified affirmative action policies in relation to her role. She presented a controversial view:

And I'm not one for this Affirmative Action type of thing... I hate getting something because I'm a woman or just because I'm a minority. It really makes me angry because it's not telling me, I can do it. It's, "Oh. Just because of your race or your sex you're getting it." No. I want to get something because I work hard for it. And I deserve it... I guess I'm not a person who walks with a chip on my shoulder. "Oh, I'm a woman. I'm a minority. Life is just awful. I can't do anything. People are just going to step all over me." ... I don't walk into the room saying, "Oh, my God. They're all white men!" It's just they're colleagues... I'm not always trying to stuff racial issues down their throats... And yes, if something comes up, I will speak my mind, but they know that I'm there to get what needs to be done, done. And I'm not there to lecture anybody which I think if some my colleagues took that attitude we could do a lot more.

And my views are not accepted by most of my minority colleagues because most of them feel, we're minorities, we deserve this, this, this and this. And no! We don't deserve anything. We should work hard for it. And prove that we can do it. We deserve the chance, the opportunity but we don't deserve the final thing that you're working for unless you work for it. We don't deserve an "A" in a class because we're minorities and we've been deprived. Baloney. You work hard for that "A" because white's are just as poor as blacks and Hispanics or poorer.

Research reports or journals from the larger field of academic advising were not identified as a resource. While some recognized NACADA (The National Academic Advising Association) and knew the annual campus Outstanding Advisor Award was
connected to this organization, most participants were unfamiliar with its programs and offerings. No one knew the Standards and Guidelines developed by The Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs (CAS).

Summary

The development of advising approaches were generally constructed out of personal experience. Human resources were developed through the initiative of each advisor as well. This led to a "do it yourself" sense of advising. Advisors presented a sense that change or allocation of resources had been imposed by University administrators rather than being done in a collaborative manner. The response to most administrative changes was to reinterpret their use or disregard them. Such resistance served to undermine any initiative or reduce its potential affect. The following chapter looks more closely at what may be at the bottom of this state of affairs. Advisors described in detail their sense of standing in the academy.
CHAPTER X
THE STATUS OF ACADEMIC ADVISING: THE STONE OF SISYPHUS

Introduction

"It may be like the priesthood, that if you're called and can't resist it, then that's a perfectly good reason for doing it... But a person who is in any sense calculating about a career would not wish to do this sort of thing, would not wish to sign up for Sisyphus' stone the very first day."

[Jay West]

Amanda Cross, a professional staff academic advisor in a special academic program, declared, "It's not a comfort to know that we're not the only place on campus where advising is not even appreciated, let alone, valued!" Misery clearly did not love company. Amanda was not the only participant to reflect this understanding. "In general advisors here don't feel that they are valued," said Ana Garcia, an undergraduate dean in a college counseling center. From one end of campus to another over six months of interviewing, regardless of role or position, one repeating theme linked all twenty-eight participants: the lack of regard for advising, and its low place in the value system of the University. This chapter explores the meaning status had for the work and work life of staff and faculty advisors.

How Staff Advisors Experience Status

"We've been in vacuums, existed with limited presence." [Gordon Weber]

Staff advisors had much to say about their sense of importance. Most of their complaints were directed at administration. Emily Broadbent, the first participant interviewed, minced no words as she placed staff advising in the hierarchy of importance. It simply was not. "[Campus administration] looks at it as a job that needs to be done and a place that they can send these students to find out where to go, but that the important stuff
is not getting them into the right place, but that once students are at that place that they get, it's the teaching or the faculty who are the important people, and the research or whatever is important because that gets you a name in the paper or gets you money." A classified staff advisor in a special academic program, Emily took issue with the notion that faculty teaching ranked higher than staff advising. "And I see advising as the front end of all that because we've got to get these kids going to the right place, but it is not seen as important!"

Amanda described the situation this way:

And if you like students, it sort of separates you. It puts you in this other category that's not as important as . . . It's sort of like we're bastard children, or the scapegoats in the family where you get to do all the stuff nobody else wants to do. And then there's the golden child that does nothing except exist and they get to be golden. And scapegoat never knows, can never quite make that leap, and you don't know why.

The issue about the relative significance of staff advising was echoed many times. Delores Eisenach, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, added that her college administrators did not value staff contributions to discussions about reorganization. She gave a recent example. After the director of the center resigned, a major change was being considered. The dean of the college came to the center and met briefly with the staff, informed them that the center might be reorganized, and told them she would return to discuss the situation. However, Delores said, "We never heard from her again! . . . It was that feeling of being so totally outside the loop that you're so frustrated. At least if I could have felt that there was some way that I could express an opinion or someone I could talk to at least explain to them what my feelings about the situation were." Instead, she said she had, "No input."

Emily said her administrator seemed to view the advising office as a kind of catchall for odds and ends of tasks. She said, "Our office is like a place to put little extra things that [other] people don't want to do." Yet she believed her main value was buffering
the administrative wing of the program from undergraduates or others with questions, "If there is a problem and nobody knows the answer, it's almost as if they don't care if we know the answers. It's just a place that they can send people." She said, "To be honest, I've thought of it. What is it that we really are?" She answered, "We're the dumping ground!"

Emily provided an example. "She wanted us to find students that we could write about for publicity for next year, who are graduating, who have interesting stories like they were in World War II." Emily questioned the administrator. "[I] said, 'Isn't this publicity?'

To Emily this was a question of another staff member shirking responsibility. "Why can [the publicity coordinator] say, 'Oh no I'm too busy. I can't do this.' And we can't. Why can't we? I don't know why. Is that part of what we're supposed to be doing?" For Emily this demonstrated more than an uncaring attitude, or lack of recognition. It was watching other staff receive praise for the job she had done. She said, "But for example, if publicity gets done, and it's done well, they're not going to go, 'Hey, advising did a good job!' It's going to be publicity." This did not build collegiality among the staff in her program.

Robin Wolf, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, also felt that her administrator did not understand the magnitude of her work, "appreciate" or "support" her. She gave the following illustration. "This semester I had a student tell me in front of my boss, he said, 'You should give her less students because she doesn't have enough time for me. I've been in her office three times and met with her for three hours and I need three more hours, and she doesn't have enough room for me.'"

Despite the student's intercession on her behalf her administrator was not impressed or supportive. Robin said, "My boss said, 'Yeah? Well, that happens. Get her to make some time!'"

Salary issues commonly appeared on the list of staff advisors' dissatisfactions. According to Monica Brennan, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, "Most of us are underpaid given the breadth of what we do for the institution." She attributed the salary inequity to the method administration used to classify and evaluate
staff advisors. "The [classification] system is inappropriate for evaluating academic advising," she said, and explained the rating instrument used had been developed by for-profit businesses to determine management levels and pay scales. A primary criterion was the number of employees supervised. Monica explained, "We don't supervise reams of people obviously, but what we do requires special training and experience. You just can't walk into the job." To her it was another reflection of the attitude of administration here. "Just to have used that kind of a system for an academic institution showed a great deal of insensitivity on the part of the administration."

Amanda recently had been required to pick up the work of another full-time staff member who had resigned. Although in essence her administrator was adding a part-time position to her full-time position, she said, "There has been no discussion or an attempt at a discussion with me about what that means." These additional duties were added without compensation. Amanda regarded this as an unjust measure. "So if we can pay Amanda twenty-five thousand dollars to do two jobs, why should we have to pay another person twenty-five thousand dollars and spend fifty thousand dollars to get the same thing we can get for twenty-five?" she asked.

Not dependent on her income, Patty Huang, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, laughed at the question about her financial rewards. As a professional staff advisor in a special academic program she said, "You don't get good pay being an advisor." Robin also reflected this common perception. "It's a job that I really value and I think has value!" Yet she said, "It's a job that's desperately underpaid which is also a crucial factor."

Staff advisors had status issues with faculty as well as administration. These were expressed as a lack of power as well as respect.

Angela Pham, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, explained her availability and accessibility were drawbacks, "Angela, is the one who has time. Why? Because she is not teaching. She's supposed to stay there. To be
there! Available! I think that's the attitude, and it is very insulting." She added her cultural perspective to her perception of the faculty viewpoint. "In Asia, in Asian cultures, we look down on counselors because they are those who fail in teaching." Angela thought faculty here had a similar perception. "I have the feeling that in universities or colleges, at least here, I have a feeling that faculty look down on counselors, and that's why you see that advisors, counselors, whatever you want to call them, we have no power at all!" Angela connected her lack of power to the notion that her work was viewed as less genuine by faculty as well as administrators. You don't have power. Why so? Because it's not a real career like any other, like teaching! . . . And don't ask for power because they will say, 'Aghhhh!'

Ana explained her job as a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center placed her between liberal and conservative faculty and made it a kind of "no win" position. "Those are people who are at a level that are in between two constituencies at some point, or interpreters or connections that are in between that often are damned if you do and damned if you don't." She said this meant any decision she made could never be right, and she endured much criticism. She explained, "It depends on what faculty member in the College is talking about us. If it's someone who believes that no one should have a break for anything regarding anything, then we are the major rule-breakers of the University! If it's someone that anything, everything goes, then we are the major nay sayers of the University!"

Amanda also described a middle ground position. She said, "We have to do these certain things because that's the rules, but they're not necessarily logical rules or clearly defined, and they're often not upheld when you say, 'This is the rule.' Show it in the book. This is how it really works." Students often challenged her and took their case to someone in a higher position of authority. "But there is always the student who doesn't want to take "no" for an answer," she said and added, "The student makes a big stink, and then you get the phone call from somewhere else on campus saying, 'So and so filed a complaint"
against you.' Or, 'So and so's in my office. What's the story?"' As a result she explained
she often walked a tightrope. "And so we end up back peddling and sort of taking back
what we initially said to fix the situation." In addition to a lack of power, she reflected a
sense of isolation, 'There is no other person to discuss this with.'

Monica suggested how the situation could be improved. "Even just an occasional
pat on the back, written or orally from the powers-that-be would be much appreciated."
According to Monica, this had not happened. She said, as a result, in the past, some
advisors had come together in a group in order to create their own rewards. "So we have to
do our own pats on the back," she said, "And organize our own academic advisors award
reception, and seminars and workshops, and we're tired of doing that."

Monica explained that organizing took an extra effort, and other than some brief
publicity in the campus newspaper, nothing seemed to come of their work. This outcome
was consistent with critics of higher education (Smith, 1990; Sykes, 1988). The award for
outstanding academic advisor in conjunction with the National Academic Advising
Association (NACADA) was not a satisfactory solution to Ryan Casey, a faculty advisor
in a life science department. He explained, 'I think it makes you feel for a limited period of
time at any rate that you've been recognized, but you realize that it doesn't go very far.'
Monica said the lack of support and recognition led to a sense of futility and drained
volunteer spirit. "And that's why [the group] basically disbanded." The absence of these
volunteer efforts appeared to have had as little influence as their presence did. Disheartened,
Monica said, "So rather than miss us, it's just as if we don't exist. We don't exist! That's the
way it is!

The University appeared to exploit staff advisors by not validating their positions. It
gave them the authority to make decisions without the legitimacy necessary to underline
that authority. This also contributed to their lack of legitimacy with faculty. The
fragmentation within the advising system detached staff advisors from one another. They
did not gain a sense of belonging or confirmation that comes from membership in an established group. They seemed to be left without support or connection.

**How Faculty Advisors Experience Status**

"Well, I think it's the same old story, in terms of prioritizing, it [advising] is not right up there." [Melinda Abercrombie]

Rewards and political realities not only affected collegiality among faculty, they affected the status of faculty work. Although most staff advisors strongly believed teaching was more valued than advising, when viewed as an aspect of faculty work, advising gained no standing according to Ryan. "I suppose you could put advising in the category of teaching," he said and added, "But still there's not the recognition for teaching."

In the fifteen years she had been a faculty advisor in an academic department, Melinda Abercrombie had noticed variation in the extent and quality of advising services around campus. "I see tremendous differences from department to department." Many believed the lack of advising as a universal faculty priority accounted for this unevenness.

There appeared to be at least some in the higher administration of this University who had never done academic advising, and therefore did not know what it meant to do it. It was conceivable their contacts had been with ineffective advisors whether they discovered them or off-loaded them. If this was the case, their judgment of advising could almost be self-fulfilling.

Jay West, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, said, "In fact, when you go to departments, and try to recruit advisors, most chairmen instinctively try to give you their third rate people," He provided a telling anecdote. The chairperson of an academic department assigned a faculty member to Jay's counseling center. Jay said, "I called up and said, 'This man's a terrible advisor!'" The chairperson responded, "I know." Jay said, "He's a terrible person!" And the chairperson answered, "I know that."
insisted, "I don't want him in here!" To Jay's demand, the chairperson retorted, "I know that, and if you can figure out any place in the universe where I can put him where he'll do less harm than in your shop, I'll happily put him there!" Jay said, "And he had him working for us, and was giving him release time unrequested to get him out of the classroom." Jay said he never figured out a better answer.

Like other college counseling centers, the one Jay directed depended heavily on the participation of faculty to provide undergraduate advising. While staff advisors said that they lacked authentication of their presence, faculty advisors said that they lacked validation of advising as part of their role. Apparently no reason existed, other than personal interest or sense of duty, for faculty to advise undergraduates. Jay expressed concisely what others said at length, "It's disrespect. Lack of respect, and minimal rewards." Jay explained this increased the difficulty of recruiting and retaining good advisors in his college counseling. Like some others, he expressed his understanding of academic advising. "So it's a bad profession in that sense. It's not a profession I would urge anyone to go into."

The Implications of Advising Space for Status

"You could probably measure a certain amount of valuing by space."

[Jay West]

As John Mertens, a faculty advisor in an arts department, had discovered three decades earlier, the physical location of a department or program made "major significant statements." He insisted a central location indicated a higher status than others. Among advisors in this study, other aspects of the spaces where they worked also were indicators of their status. In addition to interviewing, I did some participant observation. My observation notes allowed me to add descriptive details to participants' narratives. This section examines spaces and settings where advising happened, and how these affected advisors' sense of status.
Pierre Williams was a faculty advisor in a college-based special academic program. His office was located on a corridor in a large brick building. Although it had no elevator which limited access, and no air conditioning, he was pleased because his building incorporated classrooms. He said this enabled him to have chance meetings with students in hallways. "Space is very important to me," he said and clarified, "It's important about making meaning." He explained, "There are faculty spaces, and there are student spaces, and there are administration spaces, and there are other kinds of spaces, and you are more or less empowered in the various spaces depending on who you are."

Ryan's office was directly off one of the large laboratory rooms in the brick building housing his science department. Office and lab were separated by a door which he closed on hot summer days. An old air conditioner filled the lower half of the only window in the room. The building was constructed decades before, as so many were on campus, without air conditioning. Ryan's desk was placed against the wall below this window. The air conditioner blew directly on him. With a chuckle he said, "The shades are the same. The desk is the same. The physical arrangement is exactly the same as it was when I came here twenty-seven years ago." He pointed out he cannot be accused of squandering departmental money. In all these years, he said, "Nothing has been done to it." He recounted an incident:

About two years ago a mother, father and daughter came in and sat where you are sitting. At the end of the advising session, the father got ready to leave and he said, "Well this has been the most informative half-hour I've ever had at the University." He said, "You don't know who I am do you?" And I said, "No, but now that you mention it, I think I do know who you are."

His visitor was one of the trustees of the University. Ryan laughed:

And he said, "This is no [main administration building] is it!" I said, "No. It certainly isn't." He said, "This is amazing. How many parents do
you interview in here?" I said, "An awful lot." And he said, "You really should have something with at least paint on the wall!"

Inadequate and Inappropriate Space

While some advisors had few complaints about their space, they were the minority. In general, criticism fell into three categories: 1) the lack of adequate space, 2) the lack of appropriate space, 3) and the specter of temporary space. Of these, inappropriate space appeared most crucial.

Seven staff advisors worked in such noisy and interruptive settings that an in-office interview was out of the question. Their office spaces had been carved out of large rooms intended, and used in the past, for very different activities. At the time of these interviews, in a number of settings, temporary fabric dividers stood in for walls, and the walls did not reach the high ceilings. The hard floor surfaces increased noise level. Of these advisors, only Gordon Weber, a professional staff advisor in an office of degree requirements, had a door that closed and wooden walls. Yet because his walls ended about a foot before intersecting with the ceiling, the sounds of the large and busy outer office drifted like smoke into his room.

Some physical changes had been made to the college counseling center office space where Mary Perry, a classified staff advisor, worked. Carpet had been installed in the previous year. Advising cubicles made of thin plywood partitioned a portion of the large room. Mary said it was not only an unattractive space in which to work day after day, but unsuitable for the intended purposes, "You can hear everything!" To try to increase privacy, the staff had recently reconfigured their activities. Mary explained, "We had to move programs to try to avoid putting two people at the same time in the two offices that abut each other because it [their conversation] is too clear."

Make-shift spaces contributed to the stress on advising staff. Eugenia Suffren, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, worked in eight-by-eight foot
space created by fabric dividers about four and a half feet high. It was one of about ten located in a sea of other similar cubicles carved out of a large rectangular room approximately fifty feet long by thirty feet wide. The ceiling soared about twenty or more feet above. This compartment allowed little personal definition of space or privacy.

Eugenia was bombarded, like the rest of the staff, by visual and auditory distractions. The noise level could become cacophonous when the fifteen or twenty occupants of this room were talking to students, one-to-one or in small groups, and these discussions were accompanied by occasional laughter, typing sounds, ringing phones, footsteps and sounds of chairs scraping across the hard tile floor. Eugenia said, "You've got to, if you're going to be a good advisor, have that serenity when you sit down and talk with the students and not be interrupted all the time, and that's a challenge for me."

Interruptions and privacy were a problem for all advisors working in open spaces. Emily said, "The space is very poorly, very poorly set up for any kind of privacy. It doesn't even need to be a private conversation, but just to have an uninterrupted conversation because I lose track."

The college counseling center Jay directed was strung along a long and wide hallway. Staff traveled from room to room to room into the hallway and down the corridor. "I always think of [this] as a European railway car," Jay said and explained, "You have to walk out of one compartment into the corridor and you walk down to the next compartment if you want to see somebody. It's the least communal space that anyone could have envisioned!" He believed physical space produced certain effects in people. He explained, "You're given a certain place to work in that they value that immediately." Jay saw the physical circumstances of the center as a "couldn't care less" attitude by college administrators. "But the deans, first of all hardly ever come over here," he said. This led to an out-of-sight, out-of-mind situation.
The issue of confidentiality was linked to space. Eugenia acknowledged, "One of our problems is the lack of any kind of confidential advising space." She said it had a direct and negative effect. "What is affected is one's attempt to be a good advisor."

Emily's dual position in her advising office translated into more than one space where she did her work. "First of all for me," she said, "I don't feel like I have a home... I feel like I'm traveling from here to here to here, and I don't have everything that I need in one spot that I can sit there and work at it." For part of the day, she sat at the one office computer. She explained, "I spend my time at the computer, but then if anyone wants to use the computer, then I'm in the way there." When that occurred, she had to pick up her paperwork and find another desk. Wherever she worked in the office, she was concerned about losing files and papers. "I feel like the front desk, if I have work there, I'm always afraid someone's going to, by mistake, pick up [a transcript]. . . . And it makes me nervous." Describing the front desk space as primarily a social area, she said, "I had transcripts on the front desk this morning. I had a letter for an appeal to the [Academic Regulations Committee]. And they're still sitting on the front desk." She was a nomad in her own office. Anxiously she said, "I feel like I'm the one who carries her stuff around in the office, and I don't know where to put some things." Emily was clear where to place blame for this situation. She said, "But I think the people in administration are very much responsible for that!"

The University expected advisors to provide a variety of services and maintain confidentiality yet compelled many to do so in near-public spaces. The CAS Standards speak to the attitude and behavior required of advisors including confidentiality. However, they do not address the environmental factors impinging on their work. Despite individual efforts, if one's space lacks walls and is open to the general public—as all of the space in Eugenia's program—confidentiality is compromised.

Some advisors connected safety as well as security concerns to space. According to Mary, during the periods of high traffic and crowding, student frustration was more likely
to be taken out on staff. She described the counseling center space as illogical "rabbit warren types of offices." She said, "Space is one thing I think they could look a lot more seriously on this campus because for example, even on a non-threatening level during pre-registration trying to move 10,000 people through or even the 4,000 undeclareds to pick up their forms in that small a space is a difficult thing, and the more you press people, the more psychologically frustrated they feel."

Temporary Space

Another problem connected to inadequate and inappropriate space was the issue of "temporary" space. Many staff advisors in this study had been told they would be in their locations for a limited amount of time. When Teresa Perez, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, was told this, she believed it to be true. For the first year or so, she kept her materials and student records in cardboard boxes until she realized the notion of temporary depended on one's perspective. She explained:

We have a space problem here. . . . We have been facing a space problem for years because first we were in [another building]. . . . And then, from there they said, "OK, we're going to move you to a new building because we're going to remodel in here. . . . And then you'll come back." . . . Wouldn't you know this is like ten years now. Ten years! . . . And over here, what happened is this building was built for something else at the time. . . . So in here we had to double, double up. . . . So sometimes it was like, well, you've got to leave the room because I got this person coming crying or with all kinds of problems. So we would have to physically move out someplace and talk outside or whatever. . . . The problem has been documented in our annual report every year, every year for the last, I don't know how many years! . . . Everybody from the chancellor to the director knows about it. But we're still here.

Jay said, "The standing joke is, we've been going to move to [another space] in a year. That's been true, probably, a dozen years. 'A year from today we'll move!"" Like
squatters, a good number of programs conducted their business in a kind of preparatory state.

At different times over the past decade-and-a-half, Monica had been told not to get too comfortable in her space because a move was "in the works." Her program was housed in temporary quarters in the basement of a large building in order to accommodate proposed renovations. "I used to say it was twelve years ago, but it's now probably fifteen, sixteen or seventeen years ago," she said.

Temporary space not only provided advisors a concrete reminder of the low regard for advising, it directly affected the ability of advisors to accomplish the aims of their programs. Peter MacNeil, a classified staff advisor in a special academic program, pointed out that students did not know where to find them. He said, "Again, our problem, because we have moved three times in the last five years, students really don't know where we're located on campus either, so it becomes very difficult for us not to have a permanent location where students know where we are and they can come in." This confusion extended to colleagues on campus as well.

Any move required a reorientation, but temporary space held special concerns. Most often advisors had to accommodate temporary space since it was financially imprudent to make temporary space accommodate them. Adaptation meant time and effort taken from advising to adjust to a new location, to become familiar with their surroundings. When ordering business cards or printed materials such as brochures which needed telephone numbers and addresses, they were confronted with the question how much to order based on how long they estimated the temporary space might continue. In some cases, advisors had been in the interim location for several years. This sense that their spaces were subject to change at any moment produced uncertainty, and contributed a sense of instability in the advising system.
Amanda synthesized what the majority of participants expressed. She said:

It's not a comfort to know that we're not the only place on campus where advising is not even appreciated let alone valued. . . . But on this campus with the advisors I know that is the consensus. That nobody gives a damn. And ultimately, it's not just that they don't give a damn about us, it's that they don't give a damn about our students. And so, if that's not what we're about, then what are we about? . . . And I don't understand it. It's like where are our values? What are we teaching our kids?

But no one talks about it on this campus like why we're here. Why students are here. Education's not just about earning a hundred and twenty credits within ten semesters and getting a degree and getting out of here. . . . And it's not just to have a successful dorm experience or drink the most beer at the party on the weekends. It is about learning. . . . And that's not what's talked about on this campus. . . . I don't get the sense here that education is valued. It's what we sell. And we want to sell a lot of it so we make the money. . . .

We value research, and we promote research, and we want to be known as a research institution. . . . The degree part is promoted. The product. . . . All this time, I'm thinking that where we work is sort of unique on this campus, and now I'm realizing that where we work is just symptomatic of what this campus is all about. . . . I mean, [our Program administrators] are successful here because they are reflective of what this institution is about. And [my boss] said it best in the staff meeting the other day, "Money is important! . . . We can always get students." . . . It's really overwhelming, but it's true. That's the message!

And on occasion, our bosses come to us for advice and information, but they don't come to us as experts. . . . And if they do get information from us then they take it and use it as if it were their own. They repeat it as if it were their own ideas or from their own knowledge that was forthcoming.
We are not valued for our expertise. We are not treated as experts. We are not considered experts in anything. We are considered troubleshooters, people who will prevent a problem before it gets out of control. But should a problem get out of control whether it was or was not of our making, we're going to be held accountable for it. And one of the ways they can hold you accountable for it is to threaten to replace you or not keep you there any longer. . . . And so that's kind of how we're treated, just like, "As long as you make me look good, then I'll keep you here. But as soon as you taint me in any way, then you're not important. Even if I didn't fire you or attempt to fire you or something like that, I'm not going to speak to you. And I'm not going to treat you with respect or courtesy." . . . So you can do all of this stuff, just don't make any waves! . . . So our role is very ambiguous.

It seems to me that there's a lot of misunderstanding about what we actually do. . . . It's not just that they don't know. It's that they don't, it's not even that they don't want to know, they don't care to know. They don't care about what we do. They only care that it gets done. And that part feels really bad. . . .

And one of the things that if they make what we do really professional, they would have to pay us for that. And the bottom line is that they don't want to pay us for it. . . . And they're stupid because most of us who do this work thrive a lot more on recognition and praise then we do on money. . . . They don't get it. I don't even think we want praise. We just want appreciation. That's just to say, "What you do is really important. And because it's really important, we're going to recognize that what you do is important."

For a long time I thought that the only place that what we did was not valued was in this [program]. That if I worked somewhere else on this campus, and had the same job description and did the same things, that that would be valued and respected. . . . But [in the past two years] I realized what I was hearing was real true frustration from people who work really hard to do everything they can for students and then, when there's a problem, it's blamed on them or they're scapegoated for the problem because somehow they're not doing their job.

And that's what feels frustrating to me. It's that academic advising is not valued on this campus. And yet, that has become the scapegoat for why
students are dropping out of school because they're getting poor advising. . . . We get scapegoated that advising is the problem, and then someone who has nothing to do with advising comes along with a solution that's going to fix the problem which isn't really the problem in the first place. And so, it's really hard to work in a place where the students know that what you do is important. And the advisors know that what they do is important. And there are even some faculty in administration, other administrators who think that what we do is important, but the atmosphere of the campus is such that advising is not valued in any outward way. . . . So it's just that realization. It's true, we are marginal. We're treated as marginal, and yet they really know that we're really pivotal to everything!

Complex Factors of Satisfaction

"If serendipity plays a part in your life, it was the best thing that probably happened to me. I don't think I could have picked a field where I would have been happier." [Mary Perry]

The stories participants told presented a puzzling contradiction. Despite their often strong assertions that they were scapegoated, left out, poorly paid, undervalued and unrecognized, most participants thought advising was the best work. Ryan expressed this sentiment, "I would continue to do this despite how upset I get about the lack of recognition or the lack of help, lack of recognition of what an advisor should do and what an advisor does, and adequate help." While Ryan said he would continue to provide advising despite no help, Monica said she would continue regardless of her low pay, "And yes, I wouldn't be satisfied just earning a salary type of job, but by contrast, I'm not doing this job for the salary. Not that I don't need it, but if that were of paramount importance to me, I probably wouldn't be in this job, because it's not what's gratifying for me about it."

Satisfactions proved to be a complex topic. Jay described a personally constructed reward system. He explained, "I think the satisfactions are largely intrinsic. They're not extrinsic because of . . . the absence of rewards for academic advising." However, most of the participants nevertheless found rewards enough to continue their work. Throughout
interviewing, despite their frustration, participants described compensations for the low status of their daily work. Their understandings fell into seven areas: Connections With Students, Problem Solving, The Student Development Process, Long-Term Connections, Personal Connections To Themselves, Diversity of Issues and Unintended Benefits Derived From Low Status. Based on this framework, this section looks at the intricacies of satisfactions.

Connections With Students

By far the interview data revealed the greatest satisfactions described by advisors derived from their connections with students. Mary especially enjoyed the energy and idealism of the traditional-age group she advised. "I think there's nothing like college-aged students! . . . You see success every day!"

Peter was equally enthusiastic about the opportunity advising gave him for making connections with undergraduates. He said, "It's seductive! I get sucked into it . . . I can put in eighty hours a week and that's fine. I don't really get burned out with it. . . . But again, what keeps me fresh is the students coming in. They interrupt the paperwork. I'm glad to be interrupted!"

Jackie LaPierre, a classified staff advisor in a college-based multidisciplinary degree program, targeted the immediacy of one-to-one communication with students. She explained, "I liked the laboratory teaching more than the lecturing because in the lecturing there was no interaction to speak of between you and the class, but in the laboratory, there was a lot of interaction between individual people from person to person around the room, and because I enjoyed that, I enjoy the advising in the same way."

Patty also identified the immediate feedback from students as her incentive, "The students are so appreciative! . . . They would come in to see me, and they have tears in their eyes. . . . And when they leave my office they will be smiling, so that really made me feel that maybe, I should consider this as a career."
Students gave other more concrete rewards to advisors. Most advisors got cards and many reported receiving flowers and dinner invitations from grateful students. Ze Mendez, chief undergraduate faculty advisor in a humanities department, described what this was like for him:

I think it's very rewarding in terms of what you do for others, because it's in personal terms. I feel very happy when the students are happy. And they are suffering, and then they see me. And then they thank me for doing something for them. And they write me a card. And they say, "Ze, I am very thankful that you are my advisor. You've really helped me tremendously." That's very rewarding. I do not get cards like that when I teach. But when I do advising, sometimes I get cards like that.

Problem Solving

Problem solving with students provided an opportunity for advisors to get gratification. Monica expressed this when she said, "That this is the time and this is the place where they can come with any questions, problems, and we might really be the thing that keeps them in school or lets them do "A" work rather than "B" or "C" work." She added, "That's the gratification of my job. That's why it's a meaningful job."

Amanda said the emotional context and making linkages for students appealed to her, "It's such an intimate kind of relationship without being intimate in some ways, but you really get to know a student and what makes them tick, and what they want to do, and why they want to do it. . . . And help them make those connections on campus so that they're really studying what they want to study."

John's rewards also came from giving students a boost on their academic or career journey, "I think the more satisfying part of advising is . . . that you do find it's possible to, in some way, to help a little bit. Not to remake them, but to try to just find something that will help them sort something and move on their way."
Gordon spoke about a group of benefits he derived from his work. The first was helping students solve problems and helping them see alternatives for themselves. He elaborated:

The thing that overall can give me the most pleasure in my work is when I'm in an individual session with a student or a series of meetings with a student, I have a feeling that the communication has provided a structure that's helped a student learn something or figure something out or get greater clarity about what they're doing in college or how everything else relates. And watching a light bulb go on over somebody's head is just one of the most exciting things!... That is just glorious!

The Student Development Process

Carmen Barreto, a professional staff advisor in a college-based academic support program, reported, "I like the advising because I get to know the students better. It's a more personal relationship, and I get to see them from the time they get here till the time they graduate." This allowed her to observe them develop academically and emotionally.

Florence Baker, a professional staff advisor in a college counseling center, also connected her rewards to student development. She especially was excited by helping students with self-confidence issues:

I see students from that early phone call [in the spring] before they're really even admitted to when they're graduating, and it's just, "Wow! How this person has changed! How much more confident they have become!" It's really rewarding... But it's that type of thing to see a person come and be just, "This is a big place. Can I do it?" And just building their self-confidence.

Sven Neilsen, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, also reported great satisfaction when his students demonstrated self-assurance. When his students began to take themselves—and their learning—seriously. He said, "We talk a lot
about that moment when somebody stops being a received knower and just is taking in stuff and starts really taking more responsibility for the class. Starts asking questions. Starts just becoming a more viable learner and much more of a tolerant person who wants to learn." He felt successful in his teaching and advising when his students broke free of their old passive ways of being.

Like many who stressed the importance of student development, Teresa pointed to the yin/yang of advising. She said it this way:

And it is exciting and I should add, it is sad at the same time because you meet a group of people. They just came in. This is the brand new group. And they're all different. They all have stories. . . . There are not many jobs like that. Not really. And it is exciting to see all of this.

If you can see a flower and you can take a picture of it like they do frame-by-frame. And you see it, "v-r-o-o-m!" open in front of your eyes. It's such a beautiful thing!

And four years from now. What a change! What a change they go through. . . . They come in and the conversations are a little different. And you think, this person has matured intellectually in all kinds of ways, and you were part of that. You were part of helping that person grow.

And it is sad. It is very sad because you become attached to some people. . . . And then they're gone.

Long-Term Connections

Long-term connections with students was another means of affirmation for the advisors in this study. Continuity often extended far beyond the undergraduate years and participants were able to observe development process over decades.

Anunciata Buttons, a professional staff undergraduate dean, kept a file of those who wanted to stay in touch and maintain their connection to her and the college counseling center. "They send me their business cards. They write me letters. They contribute to [student organizations in the college]." She said she told them, "I expect you to help the
next generation, and they do! They're marvelous!" These relationships were a major reward for her. "It's wonderful!" she said.

Undergraduates regularly checked out their career ideas with Melinda. Often this activity continued after graduation. She said these enduring connections provided positive reinforcement, "They often tell me what they're thinking of doing and watch for my reaction, and that continues after graduation. I continue to get calls from people who are making career changes or thinking about applying for other types of graduate programs. It's nice when the relationships continue."

Jim Emmert, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, saw a lifelong thread connecting him and his undergraduate students. Whether he was ever to know the effect of his advising on their life course or not, he believed in a never-ending linking of his influence, to some degree, to the lives of his advisees. He said:

The way I make the most sense out of it is to at least hope that I've been of help to students, and helped them get through their academic career here at the University. And hope that the academic career here will be meaningful to them as they get out into the rest of their lives. And they will find what they've done here useful, and productive and profitable for their own development.

Community, contribution and character have historical roots in higher education (Wayland, 1842). Eugenia received gratification from helping students develop vision and the maturity to deal effectively with the future as productive citizens. "And that has to do with understanding what the world is like, being open to diversity, being open to the rest of the world, and, having an edge on dealing with that," she said and added, "And so, that's what really keeps me going, just knowing that we're working on that, directly."

Angela brought such an extended understanding to her vision of advising. She explained:
When you sit down and talk calmly with students and guide them and help, I feel very much rewarded. I feel like I am returning favors that I received in my past life. As a University job, you are paid for the job and you do the job, but it's more than that for me. . . . You are in contact with [students] and you are helping. You try to sort out their ideas. Help them to solve their problems and guide them through their years here in school. Help them toward their goal, and to be successful. You are part of their success. You are part of their future. I see it's not only a job for the present, but a job that will carry into the future. . . . And so, I sit here advising students and counseling students, but I see beyond those students to their families and the community.

Jane Garaud, a professional staff advisor who divided her advising among two academic departments and a college counseling center, believed that by making a tangible difference in the lives of her advisees while they were undergraduates she ultimately affected their life and career. She saw a ripple effect of her advising:

I realize that why I come here every day is to serve the students. . . . I would say that is the most joy that I get out of coming to work is because I realize that's where I make a difference. . . . I'm not just helping one little student problem, although I may be addressing that at one particular time, but how I can really affect the population of students that's coming out of this College who are then in turn going to affect what's going on in society in general. And that's sort of the bottom line and that's why I really enjoy being an advisor. . . . It's just one little part, but I feel that I'm making a difference when I talk with students. I don't feel that I make such a difference when I sit behind a desk and I push papers around. . . . Some of my job entails very bureaucratic work that is to me, not useful.

Personal Connections to Themselves

As they described the benefits, many highlighted a personal connection. Although Ana had planned to become a professor of literature, early in her advising she had discovered helping students solve problems in order to make sense out of their academic
experience made a positive difference in her life. She had revised her original plan, and did not regret this choice. She said, "I think that if given the chance now to go back and only be a teacher, I'm not sure that I would take it."

In many cases, advising students provided affirmation of themselves and their broader work roles. Jane asked, "How can I make sense of my busy day, my busy job, and doing all these different things? Because I know that usually when I come in every single day I'm going to talk to students, and affect those students hopefully in a positive way, and I get a lot of positive feedback from the students to reinforce that, and to make me go on and continue, and want to continue doing that." Jane was especially enthusiastic about her "repeat" advisees and saw this as positive evaluation, "Anytime that a student comes back and asks for me specifically, it makes me feel very good because obviously they wouldn't come back if they didn't feel that I gave them valid advice."

Robin said advising undergraduates had led her to questions about her own development. At this time, she was just beginning to ask herself some questions:

I think I've learned a lot about myself just in a year and a half. And one is, I'm good at helping people. . . . I think I could continue doing this kind of work because it's very fulfilling working with people and helping them to figure out what it is they want to do with their lives. It's very exciting. But the more I do that the more I realize, "Hum? What do I want to do with my life? Is this something that I want to do with my life?"

Delores explained her enthusiasm for advising were linked to her spiritual beliefs. "It's not just a job if you want to do it well. It's almost a mission. I think that's what keeps me here."

Satisfactions were not only connected to students and the campus. A number of participants, most especially faculty, had rewarding links with others in their field. Pierre said, "Part of what make sense for me is I see real connections between the people who come and sit and talk here and the intellectual work that I do."
For Ryan, contacts with other science faculty advisors outside the University provided much satisfaction. Conferences allowed for many discussions about his science area as well as the problems he experienced as a professor and advisor. "And seeing in many cases that they experience the same difficulties in terms of advising or recognition by colleagues for advising as I do. That's been a lot of fun and it's been educational and enlightening."

Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, provided a clear synthesis of much of what others said. She described it this way:

My work has a great deal of meaning in my life. It has a great deal of meaning basically because it allows me to connect with people, and it makes me feel as if I am doing something that is of benefit not just to me but to others.

And there is that part of me that has to give. And it satisfies that need. And there's also the part of me that wants to receive, and it also satisfies that because I learn so much from the people I deal with. It's a different kind of learning and not the same kind I can get from a book. And I like that balance. It keeps pulling me back and forth. . . . I like that because it keeps things in perspective.

It gives me a reason to get up in the morning. . . . Every time I walk out the door, and I come here I know that there's at least ten different adventures waiting for me! And I just can't imagine life without that kind of stimulation!

Diversity of Issues

Variety was another necessary spice in most participants' work. The adventures Kay spoke about provided great incentive for many. Always learning something new and different was an attraction for Sven. His voice became animated as he spoke about the diversity of backgrounds of his students, and the joy he received from being connected vicariously to their career and life experiences. He delighted in his ability to call on personal
events and aspects of his life to inform his teaching. "I'm also a father and a husband and I think that really gives me a lot to draw on, too."

Ana said her work was "not monotonous" and "not boring." Often when students came for an appointment they would tell her, "You probably have heard this." She responded, "Try me because it's not true." To her, no two students were the same. Although the process might be similar, the content of the process and the details made it unique and spontaneous. She explained:

So it's interesting and it's never boring. Never boring. Actually, often really I like those very, very busy periods when I have walk-in students because you don't know what the next one is bringing. And it's kind of exhilarating. Those days you really, really get out there and think, "Wow. There are many answers that I gave. There are many things that I tried to help. There are many people that I think got something out of going there." . . . In my opinion they are the best days for what we do because they are not framed. You never know where it's coming from. It's like being presented with one challenge after the other and trying to help overcome that challenge. . . . It's kind of uplifting.

Jay explained his combination role of teaching, administering and advising provided the diversity he needed. It also enhanced possibilities for intrinsic rewards. He said:

I always say I have three chances for something to go right. And usually something will go right in one of those three. If I'm advising all the time, I can have days where I can't communicate with anybody. And it's just demoralizing teaching some days when you know you've set yourself and the class back. They will never read anything again. And administering is like if you can win ten percent, you're a roaring success. And that's built in frustration and failure. . . . There are not many jobs where people come in and say, "Do you think you could make something good happen?" And you can say, "Yeah."
Jay's primary rewards came from teaching, especially when he seemed to be making converts to the life-of-the-mind. "I'm forced again into religious imagery with this all the time," he said and added, "That's really the way I think about it. I really think of it as making converts." In addition, Jay said there was one more intrinsic dividend less lofty than the others. He explained:

It's simply giving information or cutting through red tape for people which is a satisfaction in itself. It's very mundane. It doesn't take any genius to do it, but probably most of the positive feedback you get doesn't come from your sage, wise advice, but simply from knowing how something can be done.

Subtle or obvious, differences in the problems brought by students to advisors prevented advising from becoming repetitious or routine. This was an oft repeated satisfaction.

Unintended Benefits Derived From Low Status

There was another side to the list of satisfactions generated by advisors. Gordon recognized one hidden benefit of the status issue. "But at least I have a situation where I'm free to run this office however I want." This benefit was a result of being far from the lion's eye. The lack of attention left advisors to their own devices most of the time. Most recognized this as a form of power.

Leletti Cole, a classified staff advisor in an academic department, identified the same advantage. She said, "I have a lot of autonomy being right here." She viewed this as so valuable she was not willing to give it up. "I've been asked to do other things on campus, and I've turned them down, mainly because I like having the autonomy, freedom over a small sphere of activity."
Dependence on Intrinsic Rewards

"Regardless of what you do day-by-day, you have to be really keeping in mind that what you do is valuable, that you know it's important, that if you know that you are doing it well, that you are doing it well." [Ana Garcia]

Throughout their interviews advisors expressed the sense that good advising existed not because of the system, but despite of it. Ana said advisors needed to create their own personal rewards in a system which neither recognized, rewarded, nor validated their work. However, Gordon asserted advisors could not stop at their satisfactions, but needed to consider dissatisfactions and move to action. "We owe it to ourselves to develop a level of credibility with other people around the campus, and then with students, that allows us to play a role we feel very good about that nobody else is picking up."

Emily refused to accept that satisfaction must come only, or even predominantly, from intrinsic rewards. The lack of interest or validation from the administrators in her program caused her to be self-protective. She explained she was less invested and more ambivalent about the meaning of her role. She said, "Once in awhile I just get very fed up, and I go maybe I'll just go be a word processor. I get that way not so much with what happens in the [advising] office, but with what happens in the [program]. Despite this she said, "But I could see myself being here until I retire. Maybe."

In their interviews, advisors revealed the value system or reward system was often self-created. It existed apart from, and instead of, any formal institutional mandate.

The Lack of Centrality of Advising

"There are exceptions, of course, where faculty really do advising in that sense, but because it isn't regarded highly or rewarded, it doesn't take a central place." [Sven Neilsen]
There was a danger in work that lacked a sense of centrality and which depended to such a degree on intrinsic satisfactions. If a sufficient number of advisors were willing to build their rewards mostly on inherent benefits existing within the work, then administrators never had to address the issues of adequate resources or other forms of validation.

Sven insisted this occurred because advising was misidentified. "Advising on this campus is really seen as student support services! It's not seen as education! It's not seen as faculty work!"

It also allowed leadership to exploit those who did pick up the advising responsibility. One element connecting all advisors in this study was their willingness to pick up the work dropped by others. They tended to hold the virtue of responsibility to a great extent. They appeared to have a strong concern for other human experience and the ideals of the academy. Honesty and dependability were regarded as important virtues among advisors. As Jay spoke about the advisors in his center he said, "You would give them your last five dollars to take to the grocery store. You just wouldn't even think twice."

It may be possible to have an overdone streak of conscientiousness at the expense of other virtues. Yet the chaos in the advising system, and the complexities of the advising structure, meant advisors were left to figure out how much of anything was too much. There was no rule book or staff development for dealing with the morass of many different people, problems and competing values.

Part of the frustration many advisors felt was attributed to working in a "profession" that was not allowed to be professional. It was not validated to any extent by a larger community. Gordon said, "It's not recognized specifically on a campus like this as being a significant activity."

Traditionally institutions of higher education pay some deference to accumulated expertise whether gained from books, degrees or through hard earned experience in the field. Many advisors had developed a kind of second-level insight into the human
dimensions of problems that came from working with difficult people. One question is how to make that visible so it can be appropriately acknowledged.

However, among advisors there was a reluctance to beat their drum too loudly. Part of this was a fear of sounding self-serving. In addition, the majority appeared disinterested in maneuvering within the larger group or becoming politically confrontational. There appeared to be some relationship between this and the status issue. This is an area that needs examination not only by the University, but since the status of advising is generally problematic in higher education, the field needs to investigate this further as well.

Summary

Among advisors in this study—regardless of employment classification, position or academic setting—most spoke of the low value placed on advising by campus leadership. They often thought others saw their work as peripheral rather than central. They detailed low salaries, lack of power, inadequate, inappropriate and temporary space, and unfair criticism of advising for campus-wide problems like low retention.

Despite these understandings, participants elaborated on the rewards and recognition they did receive. Advising often was intensely personal work because of the importance of personal satisfactions. Their discussions with students often provided immediate gratification, and long-term connections allowed them to observe the development of their advisees. Advising gave them an opportunity to use their problem solving abilities with a broad diversity of issues. Advising allowed for advisors to make connections to their own, as well as students' pasts and futures. Their work with students often held a mirror up to their own eyes, and led them to evaluate their own lives and decisions. The entrepreneurial nature of advising and the isolated environment also rewarded them with a sense of autonomy. Despite their criticisms, the majority appeared committed to the ideals of advising, their work and undergraduate students.
CHAPTER XI
REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Each ... era reflects unique circumstances and poses its own opportunities and problems."
[I. Michael Heyman, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution]

Introduction

In this study, I interviewed twenty-eight faculty, professional and classified staff academic advisors who provided undergraduate advising as a substantial part of their work roles. In interviews, advisors reconstructed their experience and understanding of their work and work life at a public land grant university. Interview material was developed into seven thematic chapters that described and examined the context and historical development of academic advising; the changing student profile; the missing spirit of connectedness and inadequate preparation; divided roles and fragmented delivery system; self-constructed advising definitions and orientations; individually developed advising techniques and use of advising tools; and the issue of status. In this chapter, I offer my conclusions and recommendations.

The Context and Historical Development of Academic Advising

As they reflected on their work and work life at this University, advisors repeatedly cited a common set of related and troubling concerns about structural problems and organizational issues. During the sixties and seventies, rapid growth on many fronts increased numbers of faculty, staff, students, buildings, programs, departments and services. This created an exciting world of activities and opportunities, but it also contributed structural barriers and logistical problems. As the University became more complex, the academic advising support system likewise grew in complexity. Changes in faculty roles, and the increasing use of staff to provide advising, rapidly expanded the
delivery system. The organizational framework for advising developed with little forethought and less evaluation, but mainly grew as a response to changes in the wider environment. Most advisors described a fragmented advising support system. The lack of cohesiveness and a corresponding need for self-sufficiency worked to support isolation. Kay Brown, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, explained what this meant for her:

My only real experience actually with advising on this campus is in this office. . . . I don't have that much contact with what really goes on in the rest of the University. . . . You tend to become really self-contained.

The formal advising structure encompassed many perplexities. It was working, but not working effectively. This led to many contentious issues among advisors. The most dramatic evidence of this was the divisive issue of retention.

Alarmed by the increasing attrition rate, the University established a Retention Committee to investigate the situation and make recommendations. According to many advisors, the Retention Committee placed an unreasonable amount of blame for undergraduate attrition on advisors.

Many advisors questioned the motives of the University administration, as well as the recommendations of the Retention Committee. They were convinced that economics and politics provided the impetus for the retention initiatives and academic reforms. They reported that the state was underfunding the University. Jim Emmert, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, put it this way: "As I talk to my counterparts around the country in other land grant schools, here where we've taken a thirty percent cut in our state support over the last four years, they talk about a really rough year if they only get a three percent increase in their budget. There's just no comparison!"

Reductions in state financial support during this period coupled with the legislated mandate to retain tuition, along with other normally retained fees, on campus for the first time led
many advisors to conclude that the academic reform measures were a stop-gap tactic rather than a real plan to improve retention and the undergraduate experience.

Others believed reforms were a cover-up for lowered admission standards which brought increasing numbers of unprepared undergraduate students to campus. Carmen Barreto, a professional staff advisor in a college-based academic support program, saw these actions as short sighted, and having potential for negative publicity. She expressed the level of frustration felt by many:

First of all, I think one of the big problems is that anybody and everybody can basically get in. . . . In the long run, they're hurting the University so much because they think it doesn't get around?

Most advisors expressed skepticism about the value of the academic reforms. Delores Eisenach, a classified staff advisor in a college counseling center, summed up the understanding of the majority of advisors. She asserted:

The fact is that there are some people who are never going to be University candidates. . . . We could have every special program, every support program in the world if they gave us infinite amounts of money, and there would still be some people who worked at it very hard, who had all the support that they should have needed, and still failed. And that's something that especially the people in [central administration] don't accept. They look at every person who leaves the University as a failure on our part. People leave for good reasons. People leave because they shouldn't be at a school this big. . . . We don't have the major they want. There can be positive reasons for people to leave the University. There can be appropriate negative reasons for people to leave the University. . . . But as long as they look at retention as something where perfection is possible, there's always going to be a tendency to cast advisors in the bad guy role.

The connection of retention and advising in a cause-and-effect manner left advisors feeling unjustly scapegoated for something they believed was beyond their control. They
were angered by what appeared to be administrative disregard for their experience and knowledge. Jay West, a faculty undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, expressed a common understanding: "My reservations about the plan that people come up with, the thing that makes me so irritated, and so baffled, is the willful ignoring of the people who do it!"

From the administrative perspective, such inclusion might have done little to change their actions. The large size and complexity of the University, coupled with the apparent need for quick action, left little time for comprehensiveness. Throughout the interviews, there was a sense that administrators were caught in conflicts of their own.

Although leadership did try to respond to the attrition problem through academic reforms, one isolated administrative action could not hope to remedy the problem. The reforms were a band-aid solution to a complex situation. The opportunity for a more in-depth understanding of this issue was missed. The Retention Committee did not develop a clear answer to the question of why retaining students was so difficult. They did not learn why students choose to stay. Although they knew how many students were suspended or dismissed, they did not know why it was not a larger or smaller number. Most importantly, they did not investigate why the greatest increase in attrition occurred among students who voluntarily withdrew.

The Changing Student Profile

In describing their advisees, advisors detailed a broad range of unfavorable characteristics. Some were quick to say that they knew they did not see all students and were only describing those they advised. Yet collectively, they identified the same basic problem areas.

According to advisors, students were less prepared developmentally for college. Advisors reported increasing encounters with students they described as passive. They said more and more students appeared to want to be told what to do.
Consistent with writers in the field, advisors attributed the increasing academic problems in the student profile to demographics (Strommer, 1994). They believed the dwindling college-age population generated a smaller pool of college-prepared high school graduates. To support their understanding, they pointed to an increased need among current undergraduates for remediation in high school level work from basic algebra to fundamental written expression. Ze Mendez, a faculty advisor in a humanities department, summarized this feeling. He said, "Until we can go back to where we were in the middle eighties when we had a lot more applicants to the University, and we could be choosier, then this [need for extensive remediation] is going to happen."

Advisors also reported that more and more students seemed anti-intellectual and narrowly vocationally oriented. Ryan Casey, a faculty advisor in a life science department, said he encountered more students who appeared unduly naive and less willing to take on difficult math and science courses. They told him, "I want to do something with plants or with the environment, but I don't want to do any chemistry or biology or math." Ana Garcia, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, added, "I hate for people to think of education as just, just a training shop."

Advisors also identified a lack of economic preparation among the student profile. According to advisors, more and more students held jobs off-campus throughout the academic year. They believed this was a conflict for undergraduates because it meant divided attention and time which compromised the collegiate experience.

In addition, many reported an escalation in social problems and negative behavior. While they were critical of schools and linked academic deficiencies to a decline in teaching and a lack of guidance, some acknowledged that enormous social pressures in schools—as well as in communities and in families—also contributed to the problems in the student profile. Patty Huang, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, explained a common understanding flowing from this belief: "Social problems contribute to family problems. It has changed in such a way that [students] don't have a
sense of responsibility. I think it's very hard to change kids after [they] grow up in a family and don't get good care." They explained the impact of family problems meant more and more students appeared to be placed in the position of head of family or caregiver, and had to work to help support those at home. Consistent with research (Boyer, 1987), advisors believed this directly conflicted with the demands and opportunities of undergraduate collegiate living and learning.

In addition, advisors asserted that increasing members of students appeared to be living up to someone else's expectations, and they appeared to have less choice over their academic decisions. Patty explained:

"Sometimes their parents force them to major in such and such an area. That's very common. They insist on, "I want you to be an engineer. I want you to go to pre-med." And the student has no interest at all.

In other cases advisors said anxious parents, fearful that a label such as "learning disability" might harm their son or daughter, stood in the way of help available by keeping the disability secret. Mary Perry, a classified advisor in a college counseling center, explained, "Now we often see with a student who comes in with a parent, they know the student has diagnosed learning disabilities, but they won't let him get help because they don't want a label, or they're so afraid."

A large number disclosed that they had become conversant with much legal terminology and processes in the previous five or six years. Many believed that student behavior posed some safety risks for advisors especially those who worked alone or in the evenings or on weekends in isolated settings. Most advisors did not know how to recognize when a situation was beginning to move to a dangerous place, and were unprepared to deal with the extent of the problems they encountered.

In their discussions, advisors did not connect the organizational complexities that complicated their own lives to those that could complicate student lives. Many advisors
were ready to explain their own shortcomings in organizational terms, but to locate student shortcomings in personal terms.

This very large campus with many parts and institutional impersonality was overwhelming to many advisors. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that many undergraduate students might be just as overpowered, confused and alienated (Astin, 1993). As advisors indicated, most students arrived on campus without an understanding of what was available, what it might mean for them, and how to access it (Solomon and Solomon, 1993). The two-day orientation the previous June might have been inadequate and failed to provide the kind of experience needed to ease the transition of students into the University when they arrived in September (Boyer, 1987; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). In addition, the liberal arts ideal of learning-for-the-sake-of-learning that many advisors held as a primary ideal could have conflicted with class issues and the economic picture facing students (Hofstadter, 1963).

Another issue may contribute to this discouraging portrait of current undergraduates. Throughout their descriptions of their advising role and day-to-day experiences, advisors spoke frankly, and often at great length, about the disregard they felt directed toward them. Part of the explanation for their critical assessment of undergraduate students may be related to the status issue. Those who believe they do not get any respect, may be less inclined to give respect. Those who believe they are given short shrift, may be less disposed to be generous.

One point was evident: the campus had not caught up with the needs detailed by advisors in the student profile. A majority of students appeared to need early and immediate advising assistance beginning with the orientation process (Boyer, 1987; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991).
The Missing Spirit of Connectedness and Inadequate Preparation

Commenting on their positions within the larger University, advisors conveyed a sense of their settings as islands of isolation rather than organic parts of the whole. They described the difficulties of trying to understand the intricacies of the system, and to know how one organizational element affected another. It is ironic, given their dependence on communication in their role, that many advisors reported much misinformation and confused communication among advisors. Emily Broadbent, a classified staff advisor in a special academic program, reflected this situation, "I don't think there is a person who knows the real [picture]."

Many advisors had contact with a narrow band of the academic spectrum. They defined boundaries and limited or created relationships with other advisors on campus based on unfounded or unclear knowledge about each other and what they did. Even though as Emily said, "It would be good to know a lot about how other advising offices on the campus work," such interaction was not common. Rather than spanning the campus, advisor affiliations were more often bounded by their employment classifications or organizational divisions. Advisors tended to stay in a small locus of operation rather than venturing out to visit each other's centers or offices. Teresa Perez, a professional staff advisor in an academic support program, put it this way:

I have a word for that, I call it "flying solo." "Flying solo." Nobody can help you. Once you jump out of the plane after you have taken all the classes, and the plane takes off. The teacher isn't going to go, "Wait a minute. That's not the way you do it." Once you jump, you solo. You'd better know what you are doing if the parachute doesn't open! So in a way, I make my way.

Committees provided a substitute context for other means of communication in this large institution, but committees alone could not provide adequate opportunity for communication. Even in cases where advisors did attend the same meetings, they seemed
to remain unfamiliar with each other's programs, processes and problems. The range of
issues was great, and committees tended to focus on a small section of a problem or issue.
Gordon Weber, a professional staff advisor in a college office of degree requirements,
provided an example of the limitations of committees:

The whole process of communication on this campus is very
bad. . . . We had an open house yesterday for people from across campus
just to get them knowing about some things we're doing particularly in our
minority recruitment program. And, the assistant dean from one of the
colleges said, "I didn't realize that you could still do [this] major. And I just
might send over some of our majors." And I said to myself, "Oh, we've
been sitting at the Undergraduate Deans Assembly together all these years!"
and it was his first time ever in this building.

Those not included in committees were left with little occasion for their voice to be
heard. Their only way of reaching out was problem by problem. They might telephone
someone to ask for assistance, and in the process of getting information, would try to
develop a relationship. Few other opportunities existed for advisors to meet together as a
group to exchange experiences and discuss what was happening in their area. The lack of
knowledge and interaction worked against cooperation and collaboration among advisors.

The majority of advisors in this study had no academic preparation for their role.
Although arguing against a particular degree such as "Academic Advising," most believed
a basic core of knowledge was necessary. Jackie LaPierre, a classified staff advisor in a
college-based multidisciplinary degree program, asserted, "I think students would certainly
get better academic advising if they were advised by somebody who had been well
trained." Ana spoke for many who believed at minimum a master's degree should be
required. She said, "I think that people who are going to be leading other people like
students should have a high level of education, and by colleges, it should be at least related
to the subject matters in the particular college."
Some felt advisor certification should be required. Amanda Cross, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, spoke for this perspective. She felt that certification for advising, like licensing for social workers, would make advising more valued and legitimate. "I think about how little we're valued on this campus, and I think how it would be nice to feel that on some other level there was a value being placed on it.... And I think that that may be true for advisors if you could say you were certified in whatever they would call that, that people would have to recognize that as a real thing whether they understood it or not."

Although most lacked preparation for their role, according to advisors, the University had no staff development program in place for academic advisors. Robin Wolf, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, explained her program was one of a handful that held a yearly staff retreat, but she did not see this as professional development or an opportunity to refresh and renew. She elaborated:

I know other programs that go on staff retreats together and stuff like that, but our staff retreat is always about what needs to happen, what doesn't need to happen. People put issues on the table that they've had with the program and the process. But it's not a retreat. It's not a "treat!"

There was a vacuum for professional development for faculty advisors as well as staff academic advisors. All of the faculty in this study acknowledged they were mainly self-taught advisors (Boyer, 1987; Rudolph, 1962). Pierre Williams, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, explained:

You asked me session one what [preparatory] experiences I'd had with advising. Well, it was about a sentence and half! It could have been one word, "None!" Or, so little I didn't notice it! And I'm not atypical by any means. And so if people have been trained to be research chemists or literary scholars they have even less basis on which to advise students then they do on which to teach students.
The foundational structure of advising on this campus was mainly divided between academic affairs and student affairs. In academic affairs, advising generally occurred in academic departments, college counseling centers and special academic programs. In student affairs, while aspects of advising might be incorporated into areas such as admissions, the registrar's office, or dean of students office, three multifunction academic support programs were dedicated specifically to academic counseling. Academic affairs was the traditional location of academic advising on this campus. Student affairs multifunction academic support program advising had been institutionalized for a far shorter period of time, and seemed to play a supplementary role. This organizational structure was felt by advisors as a hierarchical advising arrangement. Student affairs multifunction academic support program advisors believed they were viewed as subordinate to academic affairs advisors. Too little money and too few resources compounded the problem. Regardless of affiliation, advisors believed they were in competition with one another for recognition, rewards and resources. Whenever campus leadership increased an allocation of resources in one area, it most often was felt as a reduction in another.

Academic affairs advisors and student affairs advisors appeared to represent two cultures with incongruent philosophies and conflicting priorities (Weingartner, 1992). Advisors in academic affairs generally emphasized the abstract "life-of-the-mind" standpoint. For these advisors, this indirect and platonic sense of doing good could be understood as only the fully examined life is worth living. The major examiner should be the student not advisor, and it was up to students to take much responsibility for their learning, academic directions and behaviors. These advisors generally believed that a primary emphasis on student retention over intellectual development was antithetical to the mission of a research university. To them, leaving at any point could be as much a part of learning as staying. Many advisors in academic affairs saw those in student affairs as non-academic, possibly anti-intellectual and interfering with the process of higher education.
Advisors in student affairs multifunction academic support programs generally provided advising to students of color. Socially influenced, these advisors were very broadly linked to the outreach aspect of the land grant mission of the University. Their job was to serve the wider community as well as being concerned about student welfare. Their emphasis on creating a "home-away-from-home" for their advisees was connected to the paternalism-maternalism attitude of *in loco parentis*. This led to a strong social work dimension in their work. They tended to be more pragmatic and applied. They wanted to quickly solve a problem and wanted the student to feel comfortable about it. Student retention was a student affairs supported issue, and was integral to the role of multifunction academic support program advisors. Staying was essential to learning, and leaving before graduation was losing. Advisors in student affairs multifunction academic support programs were inclined to see academic affairs as exclusionary, elitist, possibly racist, and disciplinarian in intent.

Advisors from these two large fragments of the University seemed to be without a common meeting point or language. Further understanding of the significance of this problem might be found in the metaphor offered by Jay. He explained, "It's like people from two different religions, who want pretty close to the same end result, but the how vocabulary and the whole way of getting there, and the rites would be quite different to achieve that."

The issue of connectedness and disconnectedness among advisors led to the question, "Who should advise?" Most advisors were critical of other advisors or had reservations about advising done in settings other than their own.

In general, professional and classified staff advisors voiced many complaints about faculty advisors. Most, like Angela Pham, a professional staff advisor in a multifunction academic support program, described a faculty disinterested in undergraduate education and generally lacking in ability to advise: "Many, many failing teachers, professors, become counselors now," she asserted.
Jane Garaud, a professional staff advisor who divided her advising among two academic departments and a college counseling center, argued the case for professional staff advisors: "As someone who is a professional person who enjoys it very much, I feel there must be a lot of other professional people out there who really want to do advising and this University isn't allowing them to do it, and recognizing them, when it's really desperately needed."

In fact, it was increasingly common to discover staff providing advising. This included secretarial and clerical staff who sometimes filled positions or handled functions vacated by faculty. The role, if not the title, of chief undergraduate advisor, a position previously designated a faculty responsibility, had devolved to some clerical staff. Some had no choice, but others like Leletti Cole, a classified staff advisor, had achieved this position by volunteering for advising tasks in her academic department. She put it this way:

I have expanded just being the type of person I am and being able to take charge, and just being in the right place at the right time. The more I grasped the job and what was needed, the more I could take off the hands of the chief undergraduate advisor and a lot of the faculty, and now I do it.

While Leletti appeared to be confident in her role, Emily blamed herself for not having knowledge of campus. She said, "But I'm not familiar with the whole University process enough, and, I'm probably too lazy to go out, and really do that."

This situation may very well not be laziness at all. In her position as a classified staff receptionist/advisor, Emily may have lacked an opportunity or time to build relationships or find out how others were doing advising. Based on this inquiry and my analysis, I do not think it appropriate or wise to use secretarial staff to do the work of professional advisors or faculty. While I admire their willingness to take on difficult tasks and fill the vacuum of advising needs, their position as a secretary meant their first commitment and main focus was the smooth running of the department or program. In
addition, classified staff generally did not communicate with faculty beyond their academic department or program. They sat on no committees. Most had no way of developing a broad overview of campus or higher education. This made it very difficult for them to help students build appropriate options or to recommend academic routes or careers. Most were not prepared to raise the kinds of questions students needed to consider, or ready to handle the hard problems students encountered.

Finally, it was an exploitive situation. Classified staff were not paid for advising. In the six cases in this study, classified staff were providing advising as a major aspect of their role. Some were helping students select coursework or approving programs of study leading to a degree. Others were training faculty or peer advisors. This situation needs further investigation.

While many were critical of faculty advising, Ryan made the case for faculty advising. He said, "Advising has to be done in many cases, or should be done by faculty because faculty at a university of this size are really at the cutting edge of their respective disciplines so they really know to some degree, obviously with no absolute certainty, but to some degree what the future is ahead, and if the student wants to pursue a degree or a specialty or a job opportunity, these are some of the things that they should be aware of."

Ryan offered the pragmatic compromise he had pioneered. He said, "What I tried to do in my department is to have non-faculty do advising for the first couple of years when there's not a tremendous amount that you can tell a student other than generalizations." The second tier advisors in his model were faculty "specialists in the field." At this point he said advisors needed to understand a specific field and how research information would play into any given student's program of study or future career. Echoing other faculty who talked about the difference between faculty advising and professional advising, he said, "It's much more specialty advising as opposed to family practice advising."
Faculty were critical to the advising system because they were at the center of the University. They were in a position to know their academic discipline and field deeply, to know other faculty well, to know how their discipline interfaced with others, and to have connections beyond the University. They were uniquely qualified to introduce undergraduates to the empowering benefits of the "life of the mind," an ideal often held aloft, not just by faculty, but by many staff advisors as well (Boyer, 1987; Weingartner, 1992).

Although many faculty as well as staff participants said faculty were not advising, I saw something different. Faculty had not changed, but life around them had. Faculty appeared to continue to do advising as they always had in the past. However, dramatic changes in the student profile, increasing complexity of rules, regulations and reforms, and no staff development increased the difficulty of advising. The system also mitigated against faculty advising (Astin, 1993). Faculty priorities were balanced among research as well as the service and teaching aspects of their role. Pressures and stresses in these areas left little time to learn about advising changes. It is also necessary to point out that many advisors said advising was subsumed in teaching. Therefore, there was valuable incidental advising happening between faculty and students much of the time (Smith, 1990).

Consistent with research and writings in higher education, faculty were not rewarded, but might be penalized by not receiving tenure, promotion or other benefits if they appeared to place advising before other duties, especially research (Boyer, 1987; Smith, 1990; Sykes, 1988). Advising often was an unsafe venture until they were established. It appeared that senior faculty could afford to take on the advising role, but young faculty could not.

While advisors were apt to be critical of one another, most were very critical of campus administration. Administrators appeared to be another group within the University who were not working together, but working apart (Boyer, 1987). Perceptions varied.
slightly from advisor to advisor and setting to setting, but in general, the majority described an out-of-touch distant central administration indifferent to them and to undergraduates.

**Divided Roles and Fragmented Delivery System**

Advisors characterized their roles in terms of individualized actions and divided responsibilities. The complexities of the University and their work roles left many and broadly varying tasks in the hands of advisors. All advisors did not share a common set of duties or emphasize the same tasks. No one was just an advisor. Advising was mixed in with other functions. Basically advisors were left to interpret and construct their roles. Some were specialists. Others were generalists. And, some appeared to be in-between. Teresa described it this way. She said, "I'm a trouble shooter really... I have to be prepared for anything. Anything!" Carmen reflected an expanded understanding of the extent of her role, "It's anything that's going to get the student to get his or her degree... It's a little bit of everything. I'm a teacher, a counselor, a mom, a dad, a sister, a friend."

Individualized role conceptualization allowed not only a personal understanding of the work, but changed the meaning of advising from setting to setting.

Consistent with the field, the advising support system was composed of individuals with different academic backgrounds, talents, abilities, assumptions and values which they brought to their advising (Schein, 1994). The complex staff pattern included faculty as well as professional and classified staff advisors who had a wide range of titles and positions. Membership in the system was obscure as well. There was no title of "academic advisor," other than that of the designated chief undergraduate advisor in academic departments.

In line with advising literature, two commonly expressed frustrations were a lack of time and an overlarge advising load (Strommer, 1994). The process of developing an advising load ranged from the informal and responsive to having an assigned load. Some provided advising to whomever walked into the office. They might see the student only once. A very few provided advising by appointment only. They might see the same group
of advisees, generally about fifty, over one or more semesters. Most had some combination of one-time-only advising encounters and repeat advising sessions.

The institutional policy for faculty advising was described in the faculty guidebook. In addition to teaching, service and research, faculty were generally expected to schedule office hours for advising undergraduates. The actual interpretation and application of this policy was left up to individual academic departments. This led to a number of different patterns. In some cases, one person provided the bulk of advising for a department. In others the responsibility was coordinated by one person and shared by most faculty. In some cases advisees were assigned to faculty selected because they had the least taxing research schedule.

The size of advising loads varied from office to office and advisor to advisor. Yet regardless of numbers of advisees, most insisted the combination of their multifaceted roles and the changing characteristics of the student profile prevented effective advising. The majority believed that there were too few advisors with too little time and they faced too many students who needed too much from them. Given this, most described a coping strategy, rather than any attempt to work for change.

Most presented themselves as overworked and under appreciated. Those that tried to accommodate the numbers of advisees seeking assistance from them reported the escalating pace was felt as long-term stress. In some cases, as they described their role, they sounded more like medics in a MASH unit doing triage on a battlefield than advisors providing advising on a university campus. The lack of connection among advisors and the confusion in the delivery system not only acted against collegiality and smooth functions, it directly affected how advisors considered advising matters brought to their attention.

In general, advisors described an advising support system in disorder and confusion. Jane provided an instructive description of a fairly typical day during the fall semester in the college counseling center where she advised for part of her work week:
Last Tuesday when I was in [the College Counseling Center] there were about thirty people waiting for me. . . . They were lined up outside the door! . . . There hadn't been anyone [any advisor] there since 12:30 that afternoon. . . . There was no one there for two hours! . . . And literally, I could only see six people while I was there! . . . That's twenty minutes a person and all these students that I saw came in, "I don't know what to do with my life. I don't know what to take. I don't know where to start." And twenty minutes of my time is not a heck of a lot of time to talk to a person about those types of issues.

And, who am I going to get to see? Pick out the most desperate ones? I don't know. Pick out the ones who were here first? I don't know. . . . It was just chaos! It was chaos in that office.

And there's no walls—working in [the Center] is just, the conditions are just appalling. You find that you're right on top of each other. There's no dividers. There are some people at times coming in that are in tears and are crying and there is no privacy so you can talk with that student! . . . You grab the Kleenex box, and you try to keep things as private as possible, but, it's horrendous!

Most of them [students] are undeclared so they have no other place to go, and [the Center] cannot provide services to these students. . . . When you think about it most of the freshman class is undeclared. How big is the freshman class? Four thousand? . . . There are still undeclared sophomores. . . . The office is open forty hours a week. . . . There's not enough advisors to cover thirty hours a week. And that's with one advisor! . . . They keep logs down there of how many students are coming in. They save them and they show them to [the deans], and to other people and they go, "Oh, yeah, well we need to get more advisors, you know." And they shake their heads, and they walk away.

I was so upset when I walked in on Tuesday afternoon that there were so many students there. I was ready to call the Chancellor's Office and say, "You come down here and look at this!" . . . This just epitomized the problem of academic advising at this University. Here it is. Students trying to figure out their future or their next semester, and how that's going to affect their lives, and there's no one here for them to talk to. No one! . . .

It makes me feel good when I speak to the ones that I do, but I felt so bad that so many students were turned away or they were talked to in
haste. . . . I know that certain students are affected positively. But there is a feeling of despair about the ones that don't get seen that get left behind.

It is important to note that the counseling center where Jane worked was not the only program, department or center to reflect large numbers of students needing help, but the situation she described was the most extreme. The undeclared and undecided undergraduate advising area was in greatest disarray. Jane's verbatim account presents a counterpoint to the criticism levied by advisors about student passivity. That is, students might not be so passive if they did not face lines of thirty other students and have to wait for two hours to get twenty minutes with one overwhelmed advisor. At least sixty percent of the first- and second-year students were in the undeclared/undecided category, and this was the group with the largest attrition.

On this campus, the entire advising support system seemed to be coming apart at the seams. It was not just diverse or complex, it was chaotic. No mission statement existed for academic advising. The advising support system lacked overarching campus coordination and varied from setting to setting. Haphazard advising presented no way to realistically evaluate what was happening. There was no way to know who was doing what, responsible for what, or what was of value. Disorder allowed some advisors a personal advantage for increasing their influence.

Self-Constructed Advising Definitions and Orientations

Advisors provided academic advising based on individually constructed definitions. While the diversity of understanding, and the complexity of the advising support system challenged the creation of one definition of advising—which could sufficiently encompass the breadth and depth of advisor roles—this issue appeared to go unaddressed on this campus.
Like their definitions, advising orientations were self-constructed. Most advisors distinguished advising from the routine activities of scheduling and registration, procedural assistance and other clerical functions; yet for a few, this constituted the measure of advising. Orientations ranged from a focus on academic procedures and information, to teaching, to academic counseling and the newer understanding, culturally specific advising. Several participants broadened their description to include counseling and advising in a blended fashion or a situationally selective multivariate style.

Advisors interchanged the term advisor and counselor, often in the same sentence. There was no common set of skills or competencies required of academic advisors. Like their definitions and orientations, knowledge base most often stemmed from individual experience rather than having roots in theory or formal education (Schein, 1994). There was no commonly accepted understanding about what the content and practice of advising should entail. Yet advising was not a value neutral endeavor. Personal beliefs, academic orientation, culture, perceptions, experiences and context provided individual orientation to the work. On this campus, advising was ambiguous, and this equivocalness meant everything-but-the-kitchen-sink could be tossed into one's advising. Thus, both content and practice might lack cohesiveness.

Individually Developed Techniques and Use of Advising Tools

Just as advising definitions and orientations were personally fabricated, advisors' use of techniques and tools was based on the adaptive and creative ability of each advisor. Techniques generally were unshared with other advisors. Tools were inconsistently used, and sometimes not used at all.

In this study many had gained their understandings on-the-spot. It seemed that one unstated, but underlying expectation was that advisors would keep up with what was happening. There appeared to be an assumption that an advisor could be a "quick study," and they would somehow absorb what they needed to know. However, according to my
research this was not the case. Almost all advisors complained that it was difficult to keep up with the changes in procedural advising information. They were never sure what was accurate or up-to-date information, and it was slow to reach them. Many did not know how to interpret changes.

Advising is dependent upon a strong referral base. Yet according to most advisors, they generally developed connections on their own. This represented an additional burden for advisors. It was a loss to the system, not just in time, but it made referral inconsistent.

Many advisors wondered what were reasonable boundaries of their work. Boundaries were not the same for everyone. Jay acknowledged this ambiguity, "There's not literally, I think I could say or swear on a stack of Bibles, there isn't a day that I don't learn something. Don't get dead ended. Don't get out of my depths." Many advisors were unsure when to refer to students to other resources. Not only was it difficult to know where to draw the line, it was hard to know how to handle the letting go. Jay described it as a conflict between his own need for separation from the advisor role and feeling a great sense of responsibility to students:

I've literally drawn a line in my own mind at [College] Street, when I've had students walk with me out of the office. . . . [I say] "I'm sorry. This is as far as it goes once I cross the street. . . . And you can call me if something bad comes up, or you can see me at nine in the morning, but I've got to cut it here." And I've never liked that. . . . But there are degrees of that sort of thing, of letting go of people that you know are in difficulty and you know the difficulty hasn't been resolved, and there isn't even a good game plan for resolving it. To what extent do you make the call back? And when do you call back? When do you pursue the student? When do you release the student on his or her own recognizance? Those are ethical questions you run into all the time.

Many ethical and legal issues were embedded in the work of advisors. However, other than confidentiality, these were not discussed. The major concern about
confidentiality was protecting student records. Mary explained the protective process utilized in the college counseling center where she worked:

Oftentimes for psychiatric illnesses or crisis in the family or rape or assaults, we do remove it. . . . We don't keep that kind of information in our running student files because we don't want to risk the confidentiality. . . . They have to give us permission to remove it. . . . We put a note on the record card that says a [confidential] administrative board file exists. And then, they're kept under lock and key.

Despite these assertions, during limited periods of participant observation, and in at least three different settings, I observed that work study students had full access to confidential materials, including transcript information they were filing for staff advisors. In addition, several participants in this study worked in cubicles without a door which prevented them from safeguarding confidential materials, or having private discussions with students.

The Issue of Status

Advisors shared the same opinion on one major issue: they all agreed on the lack of regard for advising, and its low place in the value system of the University. Advisors were skeptical of the good will of the administration, and described the prevailing style as "top-down." The biggest failing of central administration from the advisors' point of view was omitting them from discussion of matters that affected their work and work lives. They believed that their experience and expertise held no value for the University administration. They felt they were left without voice, unappreciated, even illegitimate. At the same time, advisors, to a person, identified the same common factor that sustained them in their work life: the primary benefits in their day-to-day work were the rewards and recognition they received from their advisees.
Ironically, as advisors described their work life, most did appear to be peripheral, on the outside, even though they were charged with knowing much about the inside workings of the University in order to help undergraduates successfully negotiate the academic system. The majority of the participants in this study were not involved in collecting, analyzing or discussing data regarding student needs, preferences or performance for use in institutional policy making or problem solving related to academic advising.

The problems created by inadequate, inappropriate, and temporary space increased the difficulty of advisors to provide competent and confidential assistance to students. To many advisors, it also served as concrete evidence of the lack of their value.

Recommendations for Improvement

According to advising literature, academic advisors in American institutions of higher education assist students with choices and foster an understanding of the consequences of those choices in order to help them successfully negotiate the academic environment of higher education, develop a broader world view, and move into successful futures. In each case, advisors must act in the best interests of each student and represent the institution fairly. Through such positive advisor-student relationships, they facilitate the growth and development of students (Boyer, 1987; Chickering, 1994; Crookston, 1972; O'Banion, 1972; Winston et al, 1984). This is professional work. It deserves to be taken seriously.

The entire discussion of structural problems and organizational issues presented in this study details why change needs to happen. The ten recommendations which follow come from the material discussed in the previous chapters:

1. The University needs to develop a mission statement for advising. It needs to bring clarity and order to the academic advising support system. Advising should be reconceptualized as a team effort (Frost, 1993; Rooney, 1994; Spokane, 1994). There is a
need for professional staff as well as faculty advisors with a wide range of backgrounds because diverse solutions are needed in a complex situation (Rankey, 1994; Titley, 1994).

2. The University should create a high-level academic advising position with authority to put into play professionalization initiatives and in-service staff development (Boyer, 1987).

3. Criteria needs to be in place for selecting advisors. Basic educational standards for professional staff advisors must be established and followed. Job descriptions need to be appropriate, and what advisors do should relate to their job description. An increase in educational requirements would mean the University would have to raise its financial commitment to meet those qualifications.

4. Advising must shed its image that anyone who gives advice is an advisor and anyone can do it. An inquiry should be made into the practice of using classified staff in advising positions. Currently, the situation is exploitive and such cases should be reviewed. If classified staff provide advising as a major aspect of their work and have the appropriate background, they should have a professional staff advisor position. They—and their advising—could benefit from this classification. Otherwise, advising responsibilities and duties should be removed from the position.

5. For faculty, it must be made clear that advising is part of the academic life of faculty and the academic world, and is not just something that a professional counselor does. Faculty should not be penalized for advising. Instead, advising must be part of the tenure and reward system for faculty (Astin, 1985; Douglas, 1992).

6. Staff development initiatives and evaluation must be developed and be ongoing. Advisors described how they learned to be advisors. Generally, they explained they had little or no preparation. While this is consistent with major research and criticism, the changing student profile presented some significant difficulties which called for specialized training. Advisors need skills to educate students about the realities of different careers and jobs, the academic preparation needed, and for life beyond work. Advisors need better
training in issues of diversity and race relations, particular needs of older students, those
with learning disabilities and other special needs of students. They also need knowledge
and practice in handling a variety of situations including those which may be escalating to a

Evaluation must be a part of staff development in order to learn what is—and what
is not—working. The issue of accountability and assessment should not be to
advisor-proof the academic system. Evaluation should be part of staff development, and
understood as supportive improvement not penalty.

Advising leadership should make every effort to create more, and more varied
opportunities, for advisors to meet for informal as well as formal discussion and reflection
in order to help develop understanding of unique issues facing others as well as those they
share in common. Phenomenological in-depth interviewing made clear that most advisors
enjoyed telling stories and hearing them. This fact offers another way of doing staff
development. In-depth talking to other academic advisors about their advising experience
can enable them to give each other crucially needed affirmation as well as ideas about
places to improve. In addition to the immediacy of their own concerns, advisors need to
discuss educational philosophy and advising theories. Staff development could be provided
in a variety of formats and utilize small, as well as large, group experiences. This need not
be an expensive proposition.

Collectively, this group of twenty-eight advisors held a vast store house of
knowledge and wisdom. Much of the expertise needed for staff development resided in
advisors themselves. Staff development could be built on their problem solving strength,
their collective knowledge and experience. Some might teach a seminar to other advisors or
facilitate an advising forum. Staff development could be campus coursework, or it might
be a staff development refresh and renew day every six months. For others, staff
development could include working with a seasoned advisor.
7. Advisors should participate in professional organization activities. They need to be encouraged to do research related to advising, and present it in an on-campus public forum or at a conference. Funding should be provided for advisors to attend conferences. Professional memberships and "malpractice" insurance coverage should be part of the benefit package for advisors.

8. A number of participants talked about their need for a break. It was difficult to work with students to help them reassess if advisors could not take the time to do it themselves. The University should organize professional leaves for staff advisors similar to sabbaticals for faculty.

9. Consideration should be given to the creation of a campus-wide comprehensive advising handbook. Although many advisors had guidebooks, these were developed separately by individuals in departments, programs and colleges. Many of these were excellent sources of information and support and could serve as models. Along with consistent information and format, a comprehensive advising handbook would need to allow for specific information individualized to each department, program and counseling center. Advisors should be consulted and included in the process. Professional staff advisors and faculty advisors should be publicly listed in materials for students and employees. Copies should be available to anyone who needs one. In addition, computers could be used to provide immediate information to advisors as needed.

10. The conditions of the workplace affect not just how the work is done, but the spirit in which it is done. The significance of the space issue should not be underestimated. The problem of inappropriate, inadequate and temporary space for advising affected advisors' sense of status and contributed to low morale. This needs immediate attention. Advising does not need to be centralized in one space, and advisors do not need to be in physical proximity all of the time. Instead, the emphasis should be on appropriate and accessible space that allows for confidentiality, yet also has some communal space. In addition, adequate and appropriate resources must be developed and made available.
Summary

Much has been written about the negative effects of the fragmented organizational structure in American universities (Boyer, 1987; Douglas, 1992; Frost, 1994; Smith, 1990; Sykes, 1988). On this campus, the context and historical development of the academic advising support system reflected some of the effect of such fragmentation. It was not just complex, but had become balkanized (Haney, 1974; Weick, 1979). This made it more difficult for advisors to handle the needs in the changing student profile. In addition, it led to a missing spirit of connectedness. The divided roles that advisors described meant advising was intermingled with other duties and responsibilities. The advising delivery system had developed without a plan, but had simply grown like topsy-turvy. Further difficulty arose from inadequate preparation, lack of staff development for advisors, and dependence on advisors to self-define and construct their advising orientations. This led to individually developed techniques and use of advising tools.

Compounding this state of affairs, advisors' belief in the disinterest of central administration for their contributions, as well as advising, reduced status and morale. Yet advisors were charged with complex responsibilities around student development and retention.

Despite these serious issues, voices of the advisors in this study clearly pointed to possibilities for reasonable change. It is through their experience and understanding of advising that advising improvement could become a reality. Improvement in the organization and delivery of academic advising would make advising more effective in meeting student and institutional needs.

The individual complexity of American institutions of higher education prevents generalization. However, some of the details, descriptions and examples in this study may serve as a guide for discussion and help advisors become clear about their own experience and understandings.

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APPENDIX A

REFLECTIONS ON MY LEARNINGS: GREEN TURTLE AND BLUE HERON
"The writing has taken you a very long time," the critic contended. "No," the author asseverated, "The writing has taken a short time, living has taken a long time." [Donna Lynch]

This dissertation represents nearly four years of working with the material. Condensed, it might be much less than two years. However, just as life is not lived in a vacuum, time, even dissertation time, is not compressed. Instead it is fitted into, around, under, but never above or instead of, other life priorities that must take precedence.

Early on, I spent many hours in the University library reading about the philosophical and historical underpinnings and approaches to qualitative research as well as many naturalistic studies. Library research turned up two especially exciting discoveries. The first was the investigation into the student personnel program that Calvin S. Hannum did in 1938 for his master's thesis at Massachusetts State College. It was fascinating to see that many of the problems identified more recently in national research were not a new phenomenon at least at a local level. The library archives provided the source for the second exciting discovery. One cold February morning, I unearthed President Kenyon Butterfield's speech delivered to the faculty of Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1924. (Part of it is presented in Chapter I of this dissertation.) This was possibly the most emotional moment of the entire graduate process. President Butterfield's words written and delivered nearly seventy years earlier about the lack of unity in his undergraduate experience resonated deeply with my own experience.

Until one does something, one can only imagine what it might be like. Despite this, it was very helpful to me to read, not just the studies of others, but their accounts of their experience doing research. A most important exercise was reading other dissertations. This gave me a clearer sense of graduate student research. It was especially helpful when students wrote about their process and what they learned. In this vein, I offer my personal
reflections of my experience. These are presented in a three-part arrangement reflective of
the framework for in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 1991).

During the early library research period, after learning what the research focus was,
a reference librarian confided, "You should interview me. I give more academic advice
than anyone else on campus!" That one revelation, startling in its assertion as much as its
commanding brevity, stirred me and immediately struck home. It reemphasized that
almost everyone equated advice with advising, and considered advising something they
could easily add to their work. It also connected to a question considered in national
literature: Who should do academic advising?

This study was undertaken in order to learn more about the work and work life of
academic advisors in academic departments, programs and counseling centers in one
public land grant university in the United States. It was fueled by my belief that greater
knowledge about the lived experience of those who do advising can isolate patterns of
similarity as well as variations in advising experience. Understanding the range of common
and idiosyncratic human experience can lead to ideas for improvement (Patton, 1980). A
variety of methods could have been used to increase knowledge about academic advising,
but I believe the organic, complex and changing domain of advising required methodology
with the capacity to capture and make broad and deep sense of this phenomenon. It was the
personal sense of a need to know more than could be learned in other ways that compelled
me to employ phenomenologically based in-depth interviewing as the major methodology
for this study (Seidman, 1991). Some limited participant observation and document
analysis provided support and clarification of material from interviews.

When I first set out to do this work, I had some internal anxiety about the process. I
worried that I might waste time asking "worthless" questions in interviews. I wondered if
participants would be willing to talk in depth about important issues or their critical
concerns. I wondered if my interest would make an effective research project. Sometimes I
just basically wondered if I could do it!
The process of doing research cast me in several roles. Responsibilities included funding (fortunately I had a paying job), production, logistics and choreography, acting, direction, writing, and presenting. It was like being a one-person research impresario. The process required both intellectual as well as physical stamina and fortitude, a strong belief in the process and a commitment to subject. As Wolcott (1994) pointed out, this is "labor intensive" work (p. 415). Once begun, it never left my conscious mind for very long. Everything seemed to be connected to it, and it to everything. My journal is thick with notes on paper, some written while I stood in line in the supermarket, waited for appointments, or even while stopped at stop lights. I carried a small notebook with me at all times. One such scrap screamed, "It never leaves my mind!" Fortunately, the insight gained from the earlier reading about the experience of other researchers had provided some mental preparation for this exhaustive experience.

The process of gathering data offered many challenges. An initial one was logistical (Wolcott, 1994). This included tasks such as locating willing participants and scheduling interviews. It was difficult teasing out the campus advising structure and delivery system in order to develop a sample from as many sectors as possible. A second challenge was physical. Like the old saying about postal workers, during interviewing from June into December, I walked through heat, rain, and sleet carrying a tape recorder, extra tapes and batteries, and a journal. I crossed and crisscrossed the very large campus from interview location to interview location at twenty different sites more than a hundred times during that six-month period.

The three questions that framed the interview process provided a landmark as I asked advisors to travel far out on the stream of their lives in order to reflect and reconstruct their experience (Seidman, 1991). In addition, Patton (1980) provided a useful typology. He described six fundamental types of questions. The orientation provided by this typology before and throughout the interviewing process, helped in formulating questions that elicited information about what advisors do and how they do it, what they...
know or believe, their feelings, their sense about something, their work roles, and getting basic background information.

The nature of in-depth interviewing mirrored some aspects of the advising process. It took time, required a trusting relationship, and required some self-disclosure. Each advisor let me travel some distance with them into their world. Their exposures shed light on my own advising experience and my life. It became clear that I was learning more than I had expected to learn from them. In a sense I became their student or a student of their lives and understanding. Although the study was about the experience and understandings and meaning of others, it was easy to connect it to me. Ellen (1984b) wrote, "Interviews are only partly with informants, for we are simultaneously talking to ourselves," (p. 226). Not all interviews reached the same intensity of communion just as advising sessions are variable. Yet in-depth interviewing allowed expression of those values which are permanent in human nature: the need for respect, recognition and communion of the spirit.

There was an emotional aspect in interviewing. Certain advisors had a strong appeal. I had to pay attention in order to resist being caught up in their ability to tell amusing stories or humorous asides. Participants seemed to have a stronger orientation to one, more than another, of the three periods (past, present, and making meaning) encompassed in the framing questions. One of my tasks was helping them stay on the main focus of the interview without limiting their ability to describe their experience or understanding. In hindsight, as I listened to some passages of the tapes, I realized I had missed an opportunity to ask a question which might have illuminated more details or further clarified a description. However, quite possibly due to the number of participants, the final result was rich with description.

Once the interviews were completed, I spent hundreds and hundreds of hours typing the tape recorded words of participants onto the computer screen. It helped to have transcribed the tapes myself. Interviews were indelibly inscribed in my fingertips as well as my brain. This provided an informal preview of the material.
Transcribing harvested an abundance of interview riches, and thousands of pages of verbatim transcripts. An early note made in my journal speaks of the large volume of data generated by the primary research approach. Working with the material is a benign sounding phrase. But the processes and procedures of dealing with information gained through qualitative research are complex. The process I used is described in Chapter III. However, the following discussion of some problems and special challenges of doing this research adds to that understanding.

One problem might be called the eloquence factor. Some advisors were fluently expressive, yet I could not use every word they said. Others were adept at anecdotes. In order to create a dissertation that had some reasonable boundaries in terms of length, it was necessary to omit many fascinating asides and divergences. Another concern was related to political issues. I had to watch for subtle or blatant messages an advisor might want me to deliver within this text.

In line with imperatives of in-depth interviewing, I wanted to preserve as much as possible their voice, the sense of their personality, what they said and what they meant. In reading other qualitative studies I was moved by the ability of some researchers to retain the essential flavor of the voice of a participant, and how this added an effervescent light and richness of detail to their work. In cases where this did not happen the voice was flat, a monotone. I wanted to preserve the stereophonic voice as much as possible. I wanted to engage and inform the reader yet maintain the integrity of the original speaker and do justice to the process.

The process required me to be judicial in every moment. Something had to be left out in every stage. This was an especially difficult problem for me when it came to writing. It was hard to select passages from some interviews and give up material from others. Even knowing that it was impossible to include everything was not a sufficient answer. The questions became: if not now—when? It not here—where? If not all—what? This led to the next question. How? I had to work through the sense that I was shutting off their
voice, cutting them out or doing harm to them in some way. Besides an equity problem, this reflected my predisposition to comprehensiveness (Haney, 1973).

If comprehensiveness was my particular orientation, redundancy was my particular specialty! After awhile everything began to seem significant and compelling. It was difficult to know which sentence or paragraph would add to the understanding. The answer to what was relevant was just about anything and everything (Wolcott, 1994). This led to redundancy. As useful as redundancy was to the data gathering process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), in the writing process, it made for ineffectual expression.

I gained a sense of peace with this issue when I, almost belatedly, accepted the notion that inclusion of everything is not clarifying or equitable and does not fulfill the ideal of the phenomenological method. Meaningful presentation became the goal rather than complete coverage. This understanding gave me permission to move ahead (Seidman, 1991).

In the process of shaping the chapters, it was helpful to keep a number of questions in mind. What was being described by advisors? What were the contradictions, opposing views, and common understandings among advisors? Organizing topics in this way helped to build the main tension in each chapter. It was necessary not just to know the major themes, but the smaller, yet important, points, that created the sub-text in the material. Not lock step and regimented, this was a sift and sort process, almost archaeological. Within these tasks I discovered glimmers of possibilities.

Speech patterns in interviews, like those in conversations, do not neatly divide themselves into themes. A participant may embark on one aspect of their experience, segue to another and return to the original topic with a summation sentence which either omits or refers to the segue. This increased the difficulty of separating intertwined ideas. An additional problem was overlap. Some passages fit into more than one topic or thematic area (Patton, 1980). This led to an early decision to note this effect next to the passage,
duplicate the section and put it in more than one folder. However, this made for bulky sets of cut up topics, and more redundancy.

Throughout this process I came up with a number of "bright ideas." Most burned out. A handful remained. One of these was the decision to begin each chapter and segment with a quote from a participant who spoke directly to the topic.

During this process, I discovered I was thinking increasingly metaphorically. One of my early notes jotted into my journal as I worked with the immense amount of data was: This is like dancing with a twenty-eight-legged octopus! This was a commentary on the dialectic between the twenty-eight voices, the emerging text and researcher. Playing with metaphors not only enabled the process of working with the material, but it was a fun part of this process. At times, dealing with an ocean of words covering more than 4,000 pages of material was daunting. Adjectives were like slippery minnows darting quicksilver in the water of conversation connecting the concrete rocks of nouns to the verbal motion of the waves above. However, the joy of inventing and applying metaphors points to one of my many handicaps: getting to the point. My writing can become laden with description, metaphors, and examples. In this excess, often my point gets lost.

More often than not, in my daily living, it is not necessary to consciously reflect on all my experiences although I consider the time I take each day to review and reflect well spent. A more pressing necessity is to adjust to the life flow and stay aware of the forces impeding or propelling me in that stream. But in the process of working with the material, I have climbed out of the life river periodically to sit on the near bank of description or the far bank of analysis, or sometimes in the center of the stream, I have clambered up the slippery rock of interpretation. Beyond showing what was happening through description, the methodology required some analysis in order for the reader to know what advising was like here. Interpretation was needed in order to understand and make sense of the big picture, and perhaps suggest implications for the future (Wolcott, 1994). My struggle to
analyze and interpret sufficiently and effectively led to many late nights of cutting and rewriting.

One important change occurred as the result of reading the first draft of the dissertation aloud with the chairperson of my dissertation committee, Irv Seidman during June and July, 1997. While I was writing the first draft, the freshness and immediacy of the interviews had stayed with me. Without consciously considering the effect of tense, I had been writing in the present. Almost as soon as we began reading, it became evident to me that the present sounding sentence structure seemed incongruous with voices preserved from the past. I learned that some time must pass so that I can disengage from the experience enough to put it into perspective.

A second benefit of reading aloud is the, "judicious pruning" Wolcott discussed (1994, p. 195). During the process, I learned about the ineffectiveness of the "passive" voice. I also learned about the necessity of taking a risk and expressing my opinion and saying "I." I changed the title of this dissertation. The original title, "The Work of Academic Advisors: A Study of Faculty and Staff Advisor Experience at a Public Land Grant University" became the more meaningful, "Among Advisors: An Interview Study of Faculty and Staff Undergraduate Advising Experience at a Public Land Grant University."

Sometimes what is omitted can be as telling as what was included. Although I cannot say all that was omitted since many fleeting thoughts occurred and evaporated before I could capture them on paper. Sometimes it was not difficult to remove material. I wrote much that in the "pleasure palace" of my mind seemed inordinately insightful, creative and important, but once on paper was not so. However, generally, omission required some serious questioning.

I eliminated two chapters that had taken months to write. One dealt with how participants became academic advisors. While the stories of their life journeys were fascinating to me, they did not add significantly to the understanding of academic advising.
Rather than make this focus an entire chapter, I incorporated some points such as preparation to be an advisor and the effect of serendipity into other chapters. The second omitted chapter was on spaces and settings. As in the first case, relevant aspects were excerpted. These were included in Chapter X because circumstances in which advisors do their work were connected to their way of being, and how others understood the importance of their work. Omissions from this final draft also included the ten profiles I had constructed. After careful assessment, they did not add substantially to the focus and intent of this study. Significant portions of the verbatim material in profiles was incorporated into the text of the thematic chapters.

A quotation attributed to Betty Talmadge, an American broker, asserts, "Life is what happens to you when you're making other plans." Often, during the process of working with the data, this quote ran through my mind like a mantra. It provided a humorous note of balance during the stretches of tedium as well as serving as a stabilizing force during the many moments of life stresses and strains when I had to put down the material and attend to the priority of everything else (Wolcott, 1994).

This is a time-heavy process. From drafting the proposal through months of interviewing, more months of transcribing, a year of analysis and reflection, another of theme building, and another of writing and editing, the months and years accumulated. Throughout I continued reading to stay up to date and for reference material.

This work required a tremendous amount of "alone" time which conflicted at every turn with the everyday needs and desires of my family and friends. I was isolated from many of the serendipitous joys, although not the negatives, of day-to-day living (Wolcott, 1994). I often felt pulled in different directions. During this period I experienced a great sense of failure when I was unable to live up to my original timeline and the expectations of many people. In hindsight, I vastly underestimated the amount of time, energy and thought that would be consumed by the volume of information that needed to be analyzed.
and interpreted. The timeline was revised, readjusted and refined again. But it kept expanding. From some vantage points the timeline seemed to extend forever.

One May, I was especially disappointed in myself for taking so long to work with this material. Several of my friends had begun doctoral programs at approximately the same time as I, and they were all going to graduation. This was difficult. I endured many questions from well-meaning, I think, people who thought they had a right to comment or speculate on the speed of my effort. In my frustration I wrote a lengthy analysis of my progress in my journal. In the process I learned that during this period, my life had been particularly full of complexities and life and death drama. There is an exercise that some psychologists use to determine stress levels. It is probably sufficient to say that for much of the period of working with the material, I would have registered "critical" if I took the test. When one serious issue was resolved, another rose to take its place. I could have rushed the process. However, it was my dissertation. This was my production. My name would appear on the binding of the black book on the shelf of the twentieth floor of the University library. This and my commitment to the advisors who had entrusted me with their life stories, my dedicated professors and those special souls who cared about me, encouraged me to do the best I could.

This journal writing was an important exercise and exorcising. Discouragement was replaced by a sense of achievement. Not the achievement of graduation, but the achievement of an internal sense of integrity. Despite some major life traumas, I persevered on my path.

Shortly before I turned my dissertation draft into my three committee members I had a dream. I saw myself and an unknown companion climbing the last few yards to the crest of a mountain. At the top, it was treeless like the tundra. The sky was very blue and clear. The view expansive. The sense, exhilarating. Hills, lower than the one where I stood, rolled away below into distant smudges of blue and purple. I exclaimed, "I want to live here forever!" My companion, smiled, but said nothing. As I looked to the right, my gaze
traveled down the extent of the mountain to a level far below. I saw two figures toiling
there in the fields. My gaze turned left. As I scanned the horizon, I saw a higher mountain
in the distance. I pointed and said, "There's another mountain!" At this point I knew I could
not stay where I was. I would always be confronted by a mountain I didn't know. My
companion and I wordlessly began the descent.

Awakening, I was deeply moved by the indelible strength of these images, but
puzzled by the meaning. It took a day to figure it out. The solution came to me in a rush
and in a series of pictures. I was taken back to a moment several years earlier. I was in my
Amherst home sitting at the kitchen table. In front of me was a stack of about 4,000 printed
pages. Overwhelmed by the magnitude of what I faced, I felt a need to describe the
moment. I attempted to write about it in my journal, but words failed me. I took a piece of
paper and drew a picture of the meaning of the process that lay ahead of me. I drew a line
indicating a wide geographical expanse like a great plain. Beyond was a series of hills that
rose into mountains. They curved around the edge of the great plain. At the top of the
furthest and highest I put a sign that read "the finish." Then I drew a little green turtle. One
foot was tentatively poised above the edge of the great plain, and her eye was fixed on the
first distant hill.

The dream symbolized that journey. It let me know I was nearing the finish line at
the top of that high mountain I had drawn so long ago and "forgotten."

One Monday morning this past spring, I was nearly through writing the first draft
of the dissertation, but I was feeling stuck about a problem with one chapter. For two days,
I had pushed hard to get beyond this sticking point. I begrudged the work day ahead that
was taking me away from being able to chip away at the problem. As I drove across the
farmland and turned toward my place of work, a very large bird with a long pointed bill
flew in front of my car. It was easy to recognize a blue heron. For about a quarter mile, it
maintained a low flight course about twenty feet ahead of me until the last turn onto the
street leading to the University of Massachusetts. Then it veered away. The blue heron
continued to fly slowly following the curving stream bed that ran along the left of the road. As I watched the bird, I noticed that there were little sandy bars here and there along the edges of the stream. Almost immediately, I knew that getting away from the problem of the chapter was exactly what I needed to do. I needed to get out of the stream of working with the material and get above it, through reflection, for a different view. Doing so made a significant difference when next I sat with the material.

The dream and the metaphor from nature taught me important lessons about working with the material. Like the little green turtle, there are places where one has to be methodical, stay close to the process and persist. Like the blue heron, there are other places where one must step back or above and away from the material. By rising above, it becomes possible to discover patterns not apparent to the turtle. It is through the patterns left on the sand rather than each individual wave that we come to know the nature of the ocean. It was through the patterns revealed through qualitative research, I came to know deeply the nature of advising at one public land grant University.

Along with the transformation of the material, there has been transformation of me. It has been a rewarding process in a number of ways. There was intrinsic satisfaction in discovery, in analysis, and in the act of creating something that is of value to me. I have greater self-knowledge. I believe I have improved not only my analytical ability, but my writing ability as well. I grew to enjoy the process. I would like to do more. As a result of doing this dissertation, I am a better reader of research done by others. I have a deepened respect for qualitative methodology, the researchers and the literature they produce.

My expectations for this work are minimal (Wolcott, 1994). I probably will never know more than a handful of the readers of this dissertation. However, I look forward to discussions with any other like minded people who may be interested in the contents of this dissertation. One of my fantasies is that someone will come along fifty years from now and discover something of value in this dissertation, just as I discovered Hannum's
thesis and Butterfield's speech. And this will add a sense of light to their journey just as the thesis and speech added light all through my dissertation process.

On this beautiful October day, I look beyond the windowsill of my life and ask, "What comes next?" The next adventure is just beyond, like stars peaking through the canopy of leaves in an early autumn forest, like high twinkling stars, but not out of reach.

October 10, 1997
APPENDIX B

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS
WRITTEN CONSENT FORM FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

I. INTRODUCTION: I am Donna Lynch, an academic advisor and a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Massachusetts. The subject of my doctoral research is the work of academic advising. Using the methodology of phenomenological interviewing, I am focusing specifically on the experience of academic advisors and the meaning they make of that experience.

II. THE INTERVIEWS: You are being asked to be a participant in three, ninety-minute, in-depth interviews. The first interview will center around the question of how you came to be an academic advisor. The second interview will focus on what it is like for you to be an academic advisor. The final interview will explore what your experience as an academic advisor means to you as you reflect on past experience and anticipate the future.

I am conducting this research in order to gain a clearer understanding of your experience and that of other academic advisors. I am interested in the concrete details of your life story, in the influences on your decision to become an academic advisor, what your experience is like and the meaning you make of your experience.

These three questions provide the structure of the interviews. My intent in the interviews is to stimulate discussion of your stories and recreation of your experiences. While I am not seeking specific answers to these questions, they provide a framework for the recollection and sharing of your experience. During these interviews, I may ask a clarifying question, but mainly my role is to listen as you recreate your experience within this three-part framework.

III. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS: The interviews will be audio-taped and later transcribed by me or a professional secretary. My goal is to analyze and compose the materials from your interviews for:

a. a written and oral presentation to my dissertation committee,
b. articles I may write on academic advising,
c. a dissertation and a book I may write on academic advising
d. presentations to professional associations and others interested in this topic,
e. and finally, I may use the transcripts for instructional purposes.

In all written and oral presentations in which I may use materials from your interviews, I will use neither your name, names of people close to you, nor the names of other identifying people or organizations. Transcripts will be typed with pseudonyms for your name, the names of people close to you and other potential identifiers.
IV. WITHDRAWAL OPTION: While consenting at this time to participate in these interviews, you may at any time withdraw from the actual interview process.

V. EXCERPT OPTION: While having consented to participate in the interview process and having done so, you may withdraw your consent to have specific excerpts from your interviews as indicated used in any printed materials or oral presentations if you notify me within seven days after each interview.

VI. ADDITIONAL CONSENT: In signing this form, you are agreeing to the use of the materials from your interviews as indicated in section III. If I later want to use material from your interview in any way not consistent with what is stated in this information, I will contact you to request your additional written consent.

VII. FINANCIAL CLAIMS: In signing this form, you are assuring me that you will make no claims on me for the use of the materials in your interviews.

VIII. MEDICAL PROVISION: Finally, in signing this form, you are thus stating that no medical treatment will be required by you from the University of Massachusetts or me should any physical injury result from participating in these interviews.

At your request, I will be happy to supply you with audio-tape copies of your interviews.

I, ____________________________ have read the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated above.

______________________________ Date
Signature of the Participant

______________________________ Date
Signature of the Interviewer

Address:
Amherst, MA 01002

Phone number
SAMPLE LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

1 October 1993

Dear:

Thank you for participating in my interview study of faculty and staff undergraduate advising experience at a public land grant university. Your sincere reflection and reconstruction of your experience which brought you to your work as an academic advisor will help to illuminate the depth and breadth of advising practice, and shed light on the process and role of academic advising here.

At this time, I have completed approximately two-thirds of planned interviews. By the end of December, interviewing should be finished and transcription will begin. Once the tapes are transcribed, I will begin to work with the material. Should your information result in a profile or vignette, I will mail it to you so that you may see what I have done, and discuss it with me if you would like. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Thank you again for generously sharing your life experience and daily realities around academic advising. Your contribution will add much to the understandings emerging from the research.

Sincerely,

Donna J.S. Lynch
Amherst, MA 01002
APPENDIX D

WHAT ADVISORS SAID ABOUT THE INTERVIEW PROCESS
WHAT ADVISORS SAID ABOUT THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

One responsibility of a researcher doing a qualitative study is to help readers understand her research process. Watson and Watson-Franke (1985) provided a list of nine questions to help guide the process of reconstructing what occurred during the data collection period and how the researcher organized, analyzed and interpreted the material collected (pp. 16-21).

The discussions of the process and procedures in Chapter III incorporate most of these questions. Appendix D addresses the last of the nine questions. Through verbatim material, some advisors tell what it was like to participate in this in-depth interview study of faculty and staff undergraduate advising experience at a public land grant university.

Most participants said the interview process was helpful to them in some way. For many it was the first time anyone had asked them about themselves, the undergraduate students they advised, the campus environment or their work. For most, it provided an opportunity to explore their own life history and work experience with someone fully committed to hearing them and understanding what their experience was like as well as its meaning for them. Unless otherwise noted, material included here was from participants' third interview.

Amanda Cross, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, spoke for several who discovered the process affirmed her experience and connected to past threads of her life. She said:

I knew this was sort of a summation type interview, but I was thinking about it last night when I was driving home and sort of how I got into this [advising]. So this whole thing has started me thinking about it. For the last two years, I kept thinking like, well, it's sort of a fluke that I'm an academic advisor, but in reality, it's not at all a fluke. It's like all of my life experiences have led up to this role for me in academe because I really do see very clearly it's just the building bridges thing. . . . And that's been
really interesting to me to see how everything I've done has sort of led me to this without me ever, I mean, whoever thinks about that consciously, unless you do something like get interviewed for someone's dissertation where you can really like think about it!

This has been fun. It's real affirming for me to think about what it is that I do and how I got to do it. It's not the kind of thing you normally do. It's been a real opportunity for me to really think about what I do and how I do it. And how I got to do it. And I would continue doing it, or why I would continue doing it. Because it's now a little clearer, it also evokes a whole lot of new questions, but that's what's exciting about it. I really like it!

Jackie LaPierre, a classified staff advisor in a college-based multidisciplinary special academic program, said she felt less isolated, had a greater sense of her own strengths and more insight as a result of this process. She described it this way:

I did want to tell you that I've enjoyed this, being able to expound about myself, and that I have gotten some insights from it. And I think it was a positive thing for me to take part in, and I'm delighted that you asked me. I certainly felt that, I mean I can't say how it's going to benefit me, but I think overall I see my work picture in a better light. I sort of feel that I am doing a tremendous amount of different things and I'm doing a pretty good job at it. And I should be proud of myself for that. So that's something. I tend not to give myself any praise usually. So this has helped me to see that...

Also it was beneficial for me because I got to talk to you a little bit about other advisors on campus. Although we didn't talk about any specific ones, you know how my situation sort of fits, that I'm not the only classified employee that's advising and that others are probably feeling a little bit underpaid and overworked.

I think when you interact with other people or especially when we interact here, and I start talking about myself, it gives me an awful lot of insight into myself that I may have had before. But it doesn't seem as obvious until you have spouted it out to somebody else because when you talked about this art piece here, I was like, "Yeah, I do. I do have a lot of pieces [of myself] that I fit together and they do fit together in quite an
organized way." And I guess that is me, and I knew that before. . . . [But by yourself] you just can't fit together somehow these little pieces that are very different from each other. So that gave me insight into me, and I suppose when you have more insight into you, it helps you to understand yourself better and perform better.

Reflecting a similar understanding, Eugenia Suffren, a professional staff advisor in a special academic program, said, "This has been a very interesting way to reflect on that [advising]. And I appreciate this opportunity because you don't sit back and do it very often. So I'll be interested in what you make of it all."

Anunciata Buttons, a professional staff undergraduate dean in a college counseling center, explained the process of reconstructing what her advising was like in the second interview helped her to think how she might make some changes. At the end of that interview as a result of the process, she said, "I have to tell you that this is the best time of year to actually go through this because I am thinking totally about how I'm going to revamp counseling here in the summer.

The majority were enthusiastic about the study. Pierre Williams, a faculty advisor in a special academic program, reflected this support and belief in what I was attempting to do. He said,

But there are certain fundamental principles that need to be attended to I think, which brings me to, I think, my last thought about your work. I don't really know exactly where it's going or how you are going, or obviously don't have a clue what other people are saying. I don't even know who they are. My guess would be that your research looking for the fundamental principles of academic advising is going to be very consistent with those other three [the curricular, the pedagogy, and the learning or student development]. That's what I would anticipate. . . . And that's partly why I said earlier, I didn't imagine anybody had preceded you in this, but things that you were alluding to sound to me like national surveys or smaller scale surveys, and they are behaviorist or they are behavioral. . . .
There's a tremendous audience out there for it. I guarantee you.... And there are people on campuses all over the globe... who are asking your questions without doing your research.... My sense is that if they [other advisors in other institutions of higher education] knew about your work, you would have an immediately wider audience, and the would hook you up to the international programs.

Jane Garaud, a professional staff advisor who worked in two academic departments and a college counseling center, stated, "I just think you project is wonderful, and I hope that copies are sent to all those people who they should be sent to! And you can use my real name!" Ryan Casey, a faculty advisor in a life science department, simply said, "I enjoyed it. It's been fun! It has."

The tremendous acknowledgment of the worth of my research comforted me throughout this long process. It reinforced my determination to tell as true and deep a story as I possibly could about the lives of these advisors, how they described the work they did and what that work was like for them.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following are functional definitions of terms applied in this study:

**Academic Counselor**
A term generally referring to a professional staff member trained in providing academic advising assistance and career counseling. In some cases this title may indicate a position which requires ability and skill in some areas related to therapeutic counseling. This title may be interchangeable in some instances with that of professional staff academic advisor.

**American College Testing Program (ACT)**
A national organization established in 1959 as an independent, not-for-profit service. In addition to college admissions testing, ACT focuses on advising, retention, career development, continuing education and professional certification.

**American Higher Education**
For the purpose of this study, the term, American Higher Education, refers to the historical development and understandings of college and university education in the United States from the Colonial period to the present.

**Council For The Advancement of Standards For Student Services/Development Programs (CAS)**
This is a membership organization of twenty-two professional student personnel or student affairs organizations including the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). The main aims of CAS related to advising are to:
1) create and establishing standards of practice for academic advising,
2) help colleges and universities to implement these standards,
3) and develop evaluation processes for academic advising and advisors.
Decentralized Advising

Professional advising staff and specifically identified faculty advisors are located in various geographic locations in programs and departments. Staff advisors generally report to program directors who are either faculty or professional staff administrators. They may be assigned to a special program such as athletics, honors, continuing education, interdisciplinary studies, or they may provide assistance in a college's advising center or departmental office. Faculty advisors most often are located in academic departments. They generally provide academic advising related to a student's chosen major. Some faculty are assigned to advising offices and centers and provide general as well as discipline or major-specific help.

Faculty Advisor

Full-time, or in some cases, part-time faculty who may volunteer or may be required by their college or department to provide academic advising service to undergraduate students.

Professional Staff Academic Advisor or Academic Counselor

This is a non-faculty position. The professional staff academic advisor is responsible for a wide variety of advising related functions such as the evaluation of transcripts, facilitating workshops and creating programs dealing with timely issues, providing career assistance, developing academic programs, tracking students in their major, handling discipline problems and administrative duties.

Classified Staff Advisor

Non-instructional, clerical staff who provide informational and explanatory and other routine advising assistance to undergraduate students. They assist professional and faculty advisors.
Peer Advisor/Counselor

Undergraduates who are trained to provide information and explanatory assistance to other undergraduate students. They may volunteer, receive academic credit or a stipend for their assistance.
APPENDIX F

LIST OF WORDS AND PHRASES FOR FIGURE 1 "A WORLD OF TOPICS"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word/Phrase</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abstract versus pragmatic advising</td>
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<tr>
<td>academic counselor versus academic advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>academic cultures</td>
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<td>academic generalist</td>
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<td>academic preparation</td>
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<td>academic specialist</td>
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<td>accessibility</td>
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<td>admission standards</td>
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<td>advising approach</td>
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<td>advising load</td>
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<td>advising spectrum</td>
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<td>amateur versus professional advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>anti-intellectual</td>
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<td>attrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>autonomy</td>
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<td>beliefs, assumptions and values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blended Advising</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>challenges</td>
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<td>Chief Undergraduate Advisors</td>
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<td>Civil Rights</td>
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<td>civility</td>
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<td>Classified Staff Advisors</td>
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<td>closed doors-open doors</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;College Passmen&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>collegiality</td>
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<tr>
<td>communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer-assisted advising</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>contracts and agreements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>confidentiality, trustworthiness and credibility</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conventional Role
coordination
criticisms and complaints
cultural and ethnic concerns
Culturally Specific Advising

defining advising
delivery system
demographics and diversity issues
deterioration of pre-college education
Developmental Advising
divisions and differences

economic pressures
escalating violence
ethical questions
evaluation
expansion
expectations and aspirations
extracurricular activity advising

Faculty Advisor
fairness and equity
family issues
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FERPA
Financial Aid
first-generation college students
fragmentation
frustrations
functions

gender issues
G.I. Bill of Rights
grade inflation

grievances and harassment

Group Advising

Human Development Theory

*In loco parentis*

incidental advising

individuality

Innovative Role

isolation

leadership

Learning Styles

legal issues

Life-of-the-mind

life experience versus theoretical instruction

Long-term advising

Modified-Limited Role

Morrill Federal Land Grant Act

Multifunction Academic Support Program

Multivariate Advising

NACADA

Non-directive

option building

organizational climate

orientations

passive students

Peer Advisors

persistence
political realities
Prescriptive Advising
power and authority issues
procedural considerations
Professional Staff Advisors
professionalization and standards

recognition
referral concerns
remediation
resource development
resources
restraining orders
restructuring issues
retention and reforms
rewards and recognition
role functions and facets
role perceptions
role diversification

satisfactions
"Shangri-La"
skills
social problems
space issues
specialist versus general practitioner
staff development needs
status problems
stress and health considerations
structure and models
Student Centered Advising
student characteristics
Student Development
tasks
teoretical constructs
techniques
"Tell me what to do."
tools

Undeclared-Undecided
University Environment
Urban Ghetto

Values clarification
Vocationalism

Whole Life Advising


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