



Minnesota State University, Mankato  
**Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly  
and Creative Works for Minnesota  
State University, Mankato**

---

All Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other  
Capstone Projects

Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other  
Capstone Projects

---

2023

## **The Phenomenon of Academic Advisor Training at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities: A Quantitative Descriptive Research Study**

Sara Leigh  
*Minnesota State University, Mankato*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds>



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Leigh, S. (2023). The phenomenon of academic advisor training at Minnesota state colleges and universities: A quantitative descriptive research study [Doctoral dissertation, Minnesota State University, Mankato]. Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds/1308/>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects at Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato.

**The Phenomenon of Academic Advisor Training  
At Minnesota State Colleges and Universities:  
A Quantitative Descriptive Research Study**

**By  
Sara Leigh**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Educational Doctorate  
in  
Educational Leadership**

**Minnesota State University, Mankato**

**Mankato, Minnesota**

**April 2023**

April 7, 2023

The Phenomenon of Academic Advisor Training at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities: A Quantitative Descriptive Research Study

Sara Leigh

This dissertation has been approved by the following Members of the examining committee:

---

Dr. Beatriz DeSantiago-Fjelstad, Advisor

---

Dr. Henry Morris, Committee Member

---

Dr. Lina Wang, Committee Member

**THE PHENOMENON OF ACADEMIC ADVISOR TRAINING  
AT MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:  
A QUANTITATIVE DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH STUDY**

**SARA LEIGH**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF EDUCATIONAL DOCTORATE IN  
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO  
MANKATO, MN  
April 2023**

**ABSTRACT**

Academic advisors can have a positive impact on the progress of an increasingly diverse student population in higher education, but there is no required professional certification or educational background for academic advisors. The lack of required certification puts the onus for academic advisor training and professional development on the campuses where advisors work. By surveying the professional academic advisors in the Minnesota State higher education system to assess available training and professional development, this quantitative study sought to identify and describe the phenomenon of advisor training within the Minnesota State higher education system. Survey data shows a majority of advisors do receive some training and do have professional development available.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to my family for never questioning why I would want to complete a doctorate at such a late date. Thank you, too, for never doubting I could do it, even when I doubted it myself.

Thank you to Jeff and Molly for persuading me to do it in the first place.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background of the Problem .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Academic Advisor Training and the Role of NACADA.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Higher Education System and Changing Demographics .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Academic Equity Initiative.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Problem Statement.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Purpose of the Research .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Research Questions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Significance of the Research .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Delimitations.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Definition of Key Terms .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>CHAPTER II: Review of the Literature.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Student Success and the Role of Academic Advising in Higher Education ...</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Training for Advisors .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Changing Demographics and Higher Education .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Cultural Competency Education and Diversity Training.....</b>	<b>28</b>

Diversity Training as Part of Systemic Change .....	32
Multicultural Organizational Development .....	36
Multicultural Organizational Development in Education .....	38
Descriptive Research .....	43
Summary.....	44
<b>CHAPTER III: Method.....</b>	<b>46</b>
Rationale for Descriptive Research.....	47
Participants.....	48
Survey Setting.....	49
Population Sample .....	50
Sample Size .....	51
Demographics .....	51
Procedure for Data Collection .....	52
Consent.....	53
Instrument .....	53
Validity.....	57
Role of the Researcher .....	58
Procedure for Data Analysis .....	58
<b>CHAPTER IV: Results.....</b>	<b>60</b>
Demographic Data .....	60
Advisor Training Findings .....	61
Cultural Competency.....	64

Professional Development .....	65
Campus Size .....	67
Summary.....	68
<b>CHAPTER V: Discussion.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Summary of Findings .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Implications .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Strengths and Limitations.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Recommendations for Further Research.....</b>	<b>75</b>
References .....	77
Appendix A – Informed Consent.....	87
Appendix B – Qualtrics Advisor Training Survey.....	89
Appendix C – Invitation to Participate in Study .....	93



**List of Tables**

<b>Table 1 – Professional Standards for Academic Advising.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Table 2 – Percentage of Advisors Trained in Conceptual Topics.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Table 3 – Percentage of Advisors Trained in Informational Topics.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Table 4 – Percentage of Advisors Trained in Relational Topics.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Table 5 – Descriptive Statistics of Training Received by Campus Size.....</b>	<b>68</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1 – Respondents by Race/Ethnicity.....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Figure 2 – Number of Respondents for Each Type of Professional Development....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Figure 3 – Number of respondents for Each Topic of Professional Development....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Figure 4 – Years in Advising and Years in Current Position.....</b>	<b>75</b>

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

#### **Background of the Problem**

Academic advisors, the professional staff on college campuses who help students navigate through the higher educational academic landscape, come from a variety of educational backgrounds (Shaffer et al., 2010). Tasked with guiding students through the collegiate experience and ultimately to the successful completion of a degree, an academic advisor may have no formal education in either the academic area they advise, student development, or counseling. Shaffer et. al (2010) and their review of professionalism for academic advisors opened a conversation across the academic advising field that highlighted ongoing issues within academic advising. Academic advising, as a profession, lacks a common knowledge base (Shaffer et al., 2010), and does not have a commonly accepted definition of academic advising (Cate & Miller, 2015). Unlike other helping professions such as nursing, social work, or counseling, where the development of professional skills begins during the completion of the required degree, in academic advising there is no common educational degree or expectations of scholarly study around academic advising.

Habley (2009) called for an increase in scholarly research around academic advising and a recognized curriculum for graduate programs in academic advising. Since that call, scholarly research may have increased, but there is only one established graduate program for academic advising in the United States. This program, affiliated with Kansas State University, serves as the headquarters for the National Academic

Advising Association (NACADA), now known as the Global Community for Academic Advising. The addition of more graduate programs for academic advising may happen in the future, but academic advisors are working with students on campuses now. Without a common educational background, academic advisors need training and access to professional development to develop professional expertise they need to help students succeed. That training and professional development needs to come from the colleges and universities that hire academic advisors. The question is, does the training that academic advisors need happen?

### **Academic Advisor Training and the Role of NACADA**

From the early days of the first professional organization for academic advisors, NACADA, now known as the Global Community for Academic Advising, the elements for training and professional development were established and have changed little. The first National Conference on Academic Advising was held in 1977 (Thurmond & Miller, 2006), and just two years later, in 1979, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was chartered. In 1987 Wes Habley presented a session at the ACT National Center for the Advancement of Educational Practices Academic Advising Conference which described basic components for training academic advisors. That presentation enumerated three components necessary for training advisors: conceptual, informational, and relational (Habley, 1987).

The conceptual component of academic advisor training, per Habley (1987), provides the context and covers the definition of advising; advising's role in student development and persistence; advising and student support services; and the expectations,

rights, and responsibilities in the student and advisor relationship. Higginson (2000) recommends structuring conceptual training to include two frames. First, academic advisors need to understand the students they serve. That understanding includes general student development theories and specific information about the students at the academic advisor's institution. The second frame focuses on academic advising within the institution, again beginning with a general understanding of the theories and philosophies behind academic advising and narrowing down to the role and mission of academic advising at the advisor's institution.

The informational component provides the substance of advising, addressing the policies, programs, tools, and student information specific to that institution as presented in the academic catalog, course schedule, and other institutional resources. The informational component contains the information academic advisors share with students, and as such requires continual updating as institutional policies, procedures, and information change. Initial informational training may be formal, but the methods for updating the information that academic advisors disseminate to students may be less formal, such as meetings or notifications.

The relational component provides the quality of academic advising. This training should include communication skills, interview skills, listening skills, and other relational skills. Unlike the other two academic advisor training components, which are primarily informational in nature, the relational component requires development of an academic advisor's interpersonal abilities. Development and training for the relational component

may include mentorships, shadowing other academic advisors, or role playing (McClellan, 2007).

These core components for academic advisor training have not changed significantly in the decades since Habley (1987) first offered them as a structure for training in the late 1970s. The original three training components—conceptual, informational, and relational—remain the same with minor modifications made with the formal addition of information technology to the informational component (McClellan, 2007), and recommendations to add personal development and self-assessment to the relational component (Higginson, 2000).

Professional development, which can be offered via conferences, seminars, webinars, journals, or lunch and learn discussions, is a valuable pathway for academic advisors to build a base of knowledge and learn ways to take theory learned and put it into practice (Buckley, 2016). Yoder and Joslin (2015) suggested that academic advisors could use professional development opportunities as a form of self-paced, self-motivated, training, but Huggett (2000) pointed out that professional development is not always accessible for academic advisors. Barriers that can prevent academic advisors from taking part in professional development include time, financial support, a decentralized advising structure, and the size of the campus. Despite the barriers, the amount of specialized knowledge required for academic advisors continues to grow (Huggett, 2000).

### **Higher Education System and Changing Demographics**

Institutions of higher education serve an increasingly culturally diverse student population (Grawe, 2021), which means that academic advisors in higher education serve

an increasingly diverse student body and need multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge, and multicultural skills to work with a more diverse student population effectively (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). This change in student demographics makes it crucial for academic advisors to develop their cultural competency proficiencies to provide the support and guidance students expect and need from their advisors (Lawton, 2018). To be culturally competent, individuals need to understand their own culture and at least one other culture (Ladson Billings, 1994, as cited by Lawton, 2018). To effectively advise students and support students through the recognition of each students' cultural background and its corresponding strengths, academic advisors need awareness of their own cultural biases and assumptions. Lawton (2018) emphasized the need for an equity perspective throughout higher educational institutions, and the emphasis on equity should be a best practice for academic advising. Providing training and professional development designed to better equip academic advisors to understand and respond to students from multiple cultural backgrounds is essential. Unfortunately, it is not known if training or professional development, with or without addressing cultural competency, is available to academic advisors, which falls short of Lawton's ideal.

As the students and expectations of academic advisors in higher education have changed, so too have the institutions of higher education changed. The original purpose of higher education in the United States, to educate landowners' sons, has grown from the first college, Harvard, which was established in 1638, to a massive enterprise comprised of two-year and four-year public colleges, research universities, private colleges and universities, and for-profit colleges (Bok, 2015). For example, in 1991, to address the

need for efficiencies, increase accountability, coordinate the delivery of programs and degrees, and improve the ability for students to transfer between institutions, the Minnesota legislature introduced legislation to merge the state technical colleges, community (two-year) colleges, and universities into one state higher educational system. The merger took effect July 1st, 1995, creating the third largest state higher educational system in the United States (Minnesota State, 1996).

The Minnesota state higher educational system includes 33 campuses which consist of 26 community and technical colleges and seven universities. The 33 institutions operating on 50-plus campuses serve communities across the state and offer educational opportunities to 300,000 students each year (Minnesota State, 2023). Across the higher educational state system, 84% of the employees are White (Dees et al., 2021), and in 2020 30% of students enrolled in higher education in the state identified as people of color (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2023).

In 1991, the same year the Minnesota legislature moved to merge the state higher educational institutions, Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson initiated the Minnesota Milestones report card to serve as a results-oriented tool to monitor goals seeking to improve “Equality of opportunity for all cultural, racial and ethnic groups and for people with disabilities” (Minnesota Planning, 1992). Two of the Minnesota Milestone goals were an increase in the number of state high school graduates who go on for advanced training or education, and an increase in the percentage of people of color attending and graduating from higher education. The last year listed to collect data for the report was 2020.



## Academic Equity Initiative

Equity 2030, although not explicitly the replacement for the Minnesota Milestones report card, is the statewide plan developed in 2019 to close the equity gap for all students enrolled in the Minnesota State College and University System by the year 2030 (Minnesota State, 2021). The Minnesota system's 30 community and technical colleges and seven universities each have an Equity 2030 campus scorecard, and the system as a whole has a scorecard to monitor progress toward Equity 2030 goals.

The Minnesota State system equity scorecard has six key indicators that Equity 2030 will measure to track any change within the system and at each institution (Dees et al., 2021). The six indicators are:

- student success
- compositional diversity
- campus climate
- employee retention and diversity
- equity strategy and action
- supplier diversity

Equity 2030 hopes to reshape an entire state higher educational system, which is admirable, but the initiative to change the culture of an entire state system may be missing concepts necessary to create lasting multicultural organizational change.

Student success is the first Equity 2030 indicator, so the role of academic advisors and their impact on that indicator need to be considered. Academic advisors play a significant role in student success by providing a personal contact and serving as a source

of support for students in higher education (Drake, 2011). Drake summarized the impact of academic advising on student retention by citing research across several decades. The research, she claimed, shows that student persistence can be boiled down to three areas of critical impact. First, students need to be connected to learning resources as early as possible. Second, first-year programs such as learning communities and first year courses are essential. Third, solid academic advising is a must.

### **Problem Statement**

The changing demographic in higher educational institutions is well documented (Grawe, 2021) and the role of academic advisors in the success of students is acknowledged (Drake, 2011), but the provision of intentional training for academic advisors to meet the needs of the students on their campuses is an unknown. At a minimum, academic advisors should receive training that covers the three components of conceptual, informational, and relational advising. Missing from the established core advisor training components is Lawton's (2018) opportunity for ongoing cultural competency development. Other professions that work closely with individuals such as nursing and counseling have included cultural competency training in their educational process for years (Constantine & Sue, 2005). The difficulty for advising is that academic advisors do not have a common educational background such as is required for these other professions (Shaffer et al. 2010), so training offered to advisors by their home institutions becomes more important. The problem is that we do not know if academic advisors are receiving training in general—training that includes the recommended

academic advising conceptual, informational, and relational components; or training that addresses cultural competency.

### **Purpose of the Research**

Experimental design involves control over variables, random assignment of subjects, and comparison of control and experimental groups, and is the recommended research design if the researcher wants to establish cause and effect between a set of variables (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Descriptive research does not look to establish cause and effect; descriptive research seeks to identify and describe a phenomenon. To help define a phenomenon and to discern patterns in a dataset is particularly useful when seeking to demonstrate the need for action concerning a particular phenomenon (Loeb et al., 2017). The quantitative descriptive research presented here seeks to identify patterns in the phenomenon of training available to academic advisors. The purpose of this research is to determine if academic advisors are receiving training, or if they have access to professional development, and to learn what academic advisor training, if provided, encompasses. Academic advisors within the Minnesota State higher educational system will be surveyed about types of training they receive from their institutions. The survey will provide insight into the scope and format of academic advisor training across the higher educational system, and if campus size plays a role in academic advisor training and professional development opportunities.

### **Research Questions**

The central question for this research is “Are academic advisors receiving training?” The central question leads to related questions.

RQ1. Are academic advisors receiving training?

RQ 1a. If academic advisors are receiving training, does it include conceptual, informational, and relational training components?

RQ 1b. If academic advisors are receiving training, does that training include cultural competency?

RQ 2. Are other professional development opportunities available for academic advisors?

RQ 3. Does campus size impact the availability of training?

### **Significance of the Research**

Using a descriptive research method, this study has identified the long-established components of conceptual, informational, and relational, that are expected to be covered in academic advisor training. Those components will be used to measure if academic advisors are receiving training, what training is available, and to what extent that training includes recommended components and cultural competency components. To ensure more equitable educational outcomes for all students, it is imperative that advisors, who are not required to have a specific academic background or credential, receive training, and have professional development opportunities available to improve their professional expertise. Training should include the long recognized conceptual, informational, and relational academic advisor training components and, to address changing student demographics, cultural competency development.

### **Delimitations**

There can be several positions on a college campus that include the title of advisor, but the focus of this study is academic advisors. Faculty advisors are not included in this study because the primary duty of faculty is teaching and research in their field of expertise. Advising students is a secondary duty for faculty and is not necessarily required of all faculty. Financial aid advisors may provide information about the minimum number of semester credits a student is required to take to be eligible for different types of financial aid, but the primary function of financial aid advisors is guiding students through the financial aspects of higher education, so they are not included in the study. Student success advisors or coaches, newer positions starting to appear on college campuses, fill a role designed to help students address their needs outside of the classroom and are also excluded from this study.

This study is limited to academic advisors employed by the Minnesota State higher educational system. The data will be compiled from the submitted survey responses about the experiences of professional academic advisors employed in the Minnesota State College and University system.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

In the scope of this study the following definitions will be used:

**Academic advisor:** An individual whose primary professional role is helping students in a higher educational setting “successfully navigate academic interactions” (Larson et al., 2018). Academic advisors guide students through the completion of degree requirements, including general education, major, and minor requirements, and through the processes, policies, and procedures necessary to navigate on the way to degree completion.

**Cultural competency:** A term that emerged in health and social service fields, cultural competency requires professionals to be knowledgeable about cultures outside of their own, self-aware of their cultural biases, and to work with individuals with differing cultural backgrounds in appropriate ways. A culturally competent individual has “the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from cultures or belief systems” that differ from their own (DeAngelis, 2015). This ability is sometimes known as multicultural competency. Over time terminology around diversity has changed. Diversity has expanded from ethnic diversity to a broader definition that encompasses many aspects of human variation. For the purposes of this study, the term cultural competency will be used to describe the cultural diversity found within the United States.

**Professional development:** Continuing education that helps develop areas of expertise or provides specialized knowledge that can improve job performance. Examples of professional development include conferences, seminars, webinars, workshops, mentorships, and professional journals. Evans (2019) includes ‘informal’ professional development as the process of learning that happens on a day-to-day basis, learning from colleagues ‘in-situ’.

**Training:** Directed and focused short-term formal or informal sessions designed to provide information essential for job performance.

### **Summary**

Given that there is no required degree or educational standards for academic advisors, the need for training provided by the institutions in which academic advisors work is essential. The components for comprehensive academic advisor training are well-

established, but that does not mean training is available. In addition, the collegiate landscape continues to change, and there are questions around whether or not the traditional training components include all the competencies necessary. Whether through training or professional development opportunities, academic advisors need to keep pace with the changes and perhaps even serve as change agents on their campuses. This descriptive research study conducted by survey seeks to identify what training is offered to academic advisors, define what subjects the offered training encompasses, and assess the likelihood that training includes subjects of cultural competency.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

The role of academic advisors and the expectations for academic advisor training is just one piece in a larger picture for higher education. Institutions of higher education face changing student demographics and, in response, are working to move from the traditional organizations of the past to multicultural organizations for the future. Providing academic advisors, often a student's most consistent professional contact on campus (Drake, 2011), with training so they can meet the needs of the changing student populations is an essential step in an institution's move toward becoming a multicultural organization.

#### **Student Success and the Role of Academic Advising in Higher Education**

A paper by Grites (1977) presented at the annual conference of the American Personnel and Guidance Association in 1976 and reprinted in 1977 is one of the earliest and oft cited in research concerning academic advising. Grites presented a model for college advising that defines four functions of advising along with four steps in the advising process. This early presentation builds on O'Banion's 1972 academic advising model based on student development theory. Grites is often cited as proof that advising has a positive impact on student success, but his paper does not make that claim; rather, Grites stated that by adopting his model it will be easier to survey and assess the role of advising on the student experience. Reviewing research on the link between quality advising and student retention, Metzner (1989) determined that the sum of the research was inconclusive due to consideration of direct and indirect impacts of quality advising.



Conducting a study at a public university, Metzner showed that good and poor advising, as defined by the students in the study, did not have a direct impact on the dropout rates; however, student satisfaction was impacted by the quality of advising. The indirect impacts of advising, such as GPA, student satisfaction, and utility of campus resources, did have an impact on dropout rates. Even students who defined their advising experience as poor were more likely to be retained than students who did not utilize advising at all (Metzner, 1989).

In Seidman's (1991) study at a state-run community college, newly admitted students were randomly chosen to be in the experimental group, which received specific advising contacts for their first semester, and the control group, which received nothing beyond the regular admission and enrollment information. The impact of the advising did not show in the experimental results during the first semester; in fact, student satisfaction and GPAs differences between the two group showed no statistical significance in the study. It was not until the third semester that the impact of advising registered as statistically significant when 88% of the experimental group re-enrolled for the following semester and only 68% of the control group re-enrolled (Seidman, 1991). This study is mentioned as one of the earliest studies of advising that uses experimental research methods (Kot, 2014).

Habley and McClanahan's (2004) study with American College Testing (ACT) utilized surveys from over 1,000 institutions of higher education. The results showed that the most frequently used resources to improve student retention at four-year public institutions were academic advising, first-year programs such as first-year seminars,

learning communities, and learning support for students such as supplemental instruction and learning centers (math, reading, writing, and tutoring). Surveyed institutions increased academic advising staff and provided advising focused on specific student populations. Surveyed institutions were also likely to pin student attrition on the characteristics of students and not on the characteristics of the institution (Habley & McClanahan, 2004).

In the 2008 edition of *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook*, Kuh (2008) encouraged advisors to familiarize themselves with research on their students and student success. Kuh referenced the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) as a source for students' thoughts on advising. Echoing a much earlier study (Metzner, 1989), the 2005 NSSE indicated that quality advising was the greatest predictor of student satisfaction at four-year institutions. Kuh recommended that advisors follow five principles for effective advising:

1. Advising grounded in a philosophy of talent development.
2. A tag-team approach to advising.
3. Student involvement in mapping their success.
4. Treating every advising meeting as an opportunity for increased student interaction.
5. Recognizing advising as part of the campus cultural.

According to Kuh, these five principles help campuses improve the quality of advising, student involvement, and, ultimately, student success.

Using the 2009 ACT national survey of retention practices, Habley et al. (2010) sought to explain the gap between college attendance and completion rates. The responses of surveyed two-year, four-year public, and four-year private higher educational institutions showed a limited use of possible retention programs and interventions. The survey offered 94 possible options, and just 22 of the 94 possibilities were in use on 80% of the responding campuses. Advising targeted to specific student populations as a method of retention ranked 11th, with 88% of the four-year public institutions utilizing advising for retention. The survey results were presented as an opportunity gap by higher education as researched retention programs, services, and initiatives were not fully utilized (Habley et al., 2010).

Drake (2011) provided a summary of the impact of advising on student retention by citing research across several decades. The research, she claimed, showed that student persistence can be boiled down to three areas of critical impact. First, students need to be connected to learning resources as early as possible. Second, first-year programs such as learning communities and first year courses are essential. Third, solid academic advising is a must (Drake, 2011).

In the 1970s and 1980s Tinto's research emphasized the importance of personal interactions to students in higher education. In the 1990s Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) summarized research on the impact of the college experience on students, while Kuh's work in the early 2000s focused on the impact of first year experience. Drake (2011) highlighted the role of advisors as the source of connection for students. The unifying element across the research is found in good academic advising. Drake's definition of

good academic advising paraphrases an oft-used quote by Wes Habley (1995) that “academic advising in the only structured service on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for on-going, one-to-one contact with a concerned representative of the institution” (p.76). Drake’s definition also states that advising is perhaps the only area where a student can create a “personal, consistent relationship with someone at the institution who cares about them” (Drake, 2011, p. 10).

Smith and Allen (2006, 2014, 2018), through ongoing research on advising learning, related the skills learned through the advising process to skills needed to help students persist and succeed. Smith and Allen (2006) enumerated 12 advising functions in five domains used to define quality advising. Undergraduate students were asked to rank the advising functions and identify their satisfaction with their experience with those functions. The results showed differences by gender, age, and ethnicity. Smith and Allen recommended institutions provide incentives and opportunities for professional development for advisors.

Smith and Allen (2014) reviewed the cognitive development of students receiving quality advising across their five domains and correlated that development to qualities necessary for students to persist and therefore for student retention to improve. With advisor guidance, students moved from the basics of learning the requirements needed to complete their degrees and programs to learning and improving problem solving capacity while working with advisors to work through issues revolving around their academic progress.

Allen and Smith's (2018) survey of nine campuses to determine student satisfaction with advising across their five domains found that no one domain can determine student satisfaction with advising or with student persistence and retention. All five of the domains are equally important for quality advising.

Tippetts et al. (2020) recognized that there is plenty of qualitative research on advising and student satisfaction but discussed the lack of quantitative research in identifying a link between academic advising and student retention. Conducting research at a large public university, Tippetts et al. focused on the impact of on-campus advising by controlling for factors such as GPA, gender, academic load, etc. The results measured the impact of advising during the spring of 2018 on students' registration for fall 2018. The statistically significant results showed that current students who met with an advisor between January and August of 2018 were 9% more likely to register for Fall 2018 (Tippetts et al., 2020).

### **Training for Advisors**

The three component areas for academic advisor training, originally presented by Habley (1987), are the accepted framework for academic advisor training. The three components are conceptual, informational, and relational. The conceptual part of training should cover the larger role of advising including history, important theories, strategies, and expectations for advising. Informational training should provide advisors with the resources that they, and their students, need to follow policy, procedure, requirements, and guidelines. The relational portion of training should focus on creating rapport and building relationships with advisees to facilitate student growth and development.

Higginson (2000) noted that national academic advising surveys through 1993 showed minimal training for most advisors. Higginson defined a three-part organizing framework for advisor training. The first framework element provides a foundation to prepare the training, the second element focuses on delivery considerations, and the third element emphasizes assessment. Within the framework, the training content components have a familiar three-part structure. First are the concept components, which include the advisor's need to understand the student and the institution's advising environment. The second are the information components which include topics the advisor needs to be knowledgeable about, such as rules and regulations, program requirements, and referral services. The third components involve relationship elements which encompass demonstrable behaviors that welcome a student and help them feel comfortable asking questions so they can develop the capacity and strategies for making decisions.

Higginson (2000) included a quote from Habley on the importance of these components: "without understanding (conceptual elements), there is no context for the delivery of services. Without information, there is no substance to advising. And, without interpersonal skills (relational), the quality of the advisee/advisor interaction is left to chance" (Habley, 1995, p. 76).

McClellan (2007) revisited Habley's training components and added two new components to the training triad: technical and personal. McClellan argued that without technological training, without understanding how to access digital records and information, advisors cannot access the knowledge they need. In the 20 years between Habley's presentation and McClellan's 2007 article, the shift from paper records to

digital records was well under way. McClellan made the point technology needs to be a separate training component for advisors, and as time passes and more and more of the information and resources that advisors utilize exist in a digital realm.

McClellan's (2007) second addition to Habley's (ACT) framework was a personal component. The personal component was less about specific knowledge or information required for advising, and McClellan suggested that advisors need training to improve personal reflection, self-awareness, and personal growth to be better advisors. Since McClellan's article was not based on research, he did not offer specifics for the training or why he thought training in this area would improve advisor effectiveness.

Ford (2007) summarized six steps to create an effective advisor training program. The process should begin with reviewing the institution's mission and move to identifying what needs to be addressed in training; the goals and objectives for the training; deciding on content, strategies, and methods; implementing the training; and assessing the program. Step four, deciding on the content, strategies, and methods, contains the familiar tripartite structure, but Ford expanded on the importance of the informational and relational components of advisor training. Interestingly, Ford cited Higginson (2000) and placed learning about students' ethnic backgrounds, financial, and personal needs in the conceptual component. This implied that learning about these topics exists as an overarching concern and not at the relational or personal level. The relational component was left for learning active listening and interviewing skills along with other communication essentials needed to impart information to students.

Voller (2012) discussed training as important to ensure all students have access to knowledgeable advisors. Voller suggested six steps to start developing advisor training. The first, second, and fifth steps include considering the audience for the training, assessing what the advisors need/want to learn, and the best methods for delivering training. The third step suggests outlining learning goals for the training to help it stay on track, and the fourth step concerns the content of the training and recommends Habley's 1987 conceptual, informational, and relational components for training with the addition of McClellan's (2007) technological and personal components.

Mann (2018), citing McClellan's (2007) addition of the personal component to training, and Higginson's (2000) framework for advisor training, recommended an interdisciplinary approach to advisor training that borrows clinical judgment models for training nurses and other health care professionals. Mann explained a model developed by Tanner in 2006 that can be adapted for use by advisors. The Tanner model recognizes the variety of knowledge that nurses bring to interactions with clients, and that knowledge is filtered through the nurse's individual experience and reflected in the care provided. Per Mann, Tanner's model involves noticing, interpreting, responding, and reflecting. These steps are also part of an advisor's process when working with students, according to Mann, meaning the clinical judgment model would be an appropriate addition to advisor training.

Mann (2018) recommended combining the clinical judgment model with stages of clinical competence described by Benner in 1982. In the training model suggested by Mann, advisors move through Benner's stages of competence as they go through training.



Novices are entering the professions with little experience; advanced beginners have gone through training and begin to apply learned theory but still need support; competent practitioners have two to three years of experience and are better at synthesizing knowledge; the proficient practitioner is able to approach situations from multiple perspective and has a greater appreciation of diversity; and in the final stage, the expert practitioner utilizes reflection on their experience, knowledge, and skills to operate in an intuitive and instinctive manner (Mann, 2018).

In a call to utilize a theory-to-practice model, Lee (2018) recommended critical race theory as a theoretical framework to inform development for advisors at predominantly White institutions. Lee did not detail how advisors learn critical race theory but cited several studies concerning marginalized student experiences in college and with advising. Critical race theory can help advisors understand and reflect on their own experience within a racialized society. Through that understanding and self-reflection, advisors learn to affirm, support, and advocate for marginalized students. Advising through such a cultural competency lens would improve these students' interactions with advisors and, according to Lee, the same concepts utilized across campus can improve the college experience for all students.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) provides a set of standards for academic advising programs. The twelve standards for academic advising programs range from requiring a mission, which will guide the development of programs and services to ensuring facilities appropriate to advising (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2018). For the purpose of this study, one of

the standards warrants attention: Part 7.3, Professional Training and Development. Part 7.3 states that advising personnel “must receive training when hired and professional development throughout their employment” (p.16). The standards provide a list of topics for training. The final topic on the list is “strategies for building strong relationships and connections with students from diverse backgrounds through a variety of advising interactions” (p. 16).

The professional guidelines for academic advising consist of the CAS Academic Advising Programs standards; NACADA’s Statement of Core Competencies (NACADA, 2017a), which provides a foundational set of skills, goals, and theoretical knowledge; and NACADA’s Statement of Core Values (NACADA, 2017b), which provides an ethical framework for advising. The CAS and NACADA academic advising professional standards are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Professional Standards for Academic Advising*

<b>CAS Standards for Academic Advising Programs</b>	<b>NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies</b>	<b>NACADA Academic Advising Core Values</b>
	Conceptual	
1. Mission	1. History & role of advising in higher education	1. Advisors are responsible to the individuals they advise
2. Program and services	2. NACADA’s core values of advising	2. Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process
3. Student learning, development, and success	3. Theory relevant to advising	3. Advisors are responsible to their institutions
4. Assessment	4. Advising approaches & strategies	4. Advisors are responsible to higher education in general

<b>CAS Standards for Academic Advising Programs</b>	<b>NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies</b>	<b>NACADA Academic Advising Core Values</b>
5. Access, equity, diversity, and inclusion	5. Expected outcomes of advising	5. Advisors are responsible to their educational community
6. Leadership, management, and supervision	6. How equitable & inclusive environments are created and maintained	6. Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally.
7. Human Resources	Informational	
8. Collaboration and communication	1. Institutional history, mission, vision, values, and culture	
9. Ethics, law, and policy	2. Curriculum, degree programs & other academic requirements	
10. Financial resources	3. Institution policies, procedures, rules & regulations	
11. Technology	4. Legal guidelines of advising practice, including privacy regulations & confidentiality	
12. Facilities and infrastructure	5. Characteristics, needs, and experiences of major & emerging student populations	
	6. Campus & community resources that support student success	
	7. Information technology applicable to relevant advising role	
	Relational	
	1. Articulate personal philosophy of academic advising	
	2. Create rapport & build advising relationships	
	3. communicate in an inclusive & respectful manner	

<b>CAS Standards for Academic Advising Programs</b>	<b>NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies</b>	<b>NACADA Academic Advising Core Values</b>
	4. Plan and conduct successful advising interactions	
	5. Promote student understanding of the logic & purpose of curriculum	
	6. Facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning and goal setting	
	7. Engage in ongoing assessment & development of self and advising practice	

### **Changing Demographics and Higher Education**

Vespa et al. (2021) summarized United States demographic changes anticipated by census data. The year 2030 is expected to witness a significant demographic shift as the baby boom generation of post-World War II passes the age of 65. In addition, it is predicted that in the year 2030 immigration will surpass birth rates as the driver of population increase. The trend toward increasing racial diversity began in the 1900s. In 1900 one in eight people identified as a race other than White; by 1990 one in five people were identifying as people of color, and the trend toward increasing racial diversity continues into the current century. People identifying as two or more races is expected to increase by 200 percent by 2060. In summary, the population of the United States will be older, and as immigration outpaces birth rates the younger, more diverse population will add to the racial diversity of the United States.

As a guide for higher educational institutions to address changing demographics, Grawe (2021) offered demographic data showing falling birthrates and increased immigration which portends a move away from those who have traditionally attended college in the past. While he characterized the coming demographic changes as potential trials, stresses, and difficulties, he advocated preparing now for the demographic shifts projected for 2030. Grawe cited the 2012 and 2016 Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) reports which forecasted a declining number of high school graduates. Arguing that higher education serves niche populations and not high schools, Grawe developed the Higher Education Demand Index (HEDI) to parse out prospective students in the decreasing pool of high school graduates. HEDI data does not change the WICHE forecasts, and even though the National Center for Education Statistics showed a college attendance rate of 70% for high school graduates immediately after graduation in 2016, Grawe explained that this still indicates enrollments in higher education will fluctuate with the population.

Higher education must anticipate a more racially diverse pool of prospective students. Although there are regional variations in racial diversity, for example, non-Hispanic Whites may have been 70% of the college population in 2018-2019 in the Midwest but were only 40% of the college population in the West. All areas need to prepare for a more diverse student population (Grawe, 2021).

Institutions of higher education can prepare for the shifting demographics by recognizing coming changes and by altering their model (Grawe, 2021) and by paying attention to change within their own market. Details about transfer students, first-time

attendees, those who re-enroll, and the value of dual-enrollment or the role of immigration/migration will differ in each educational market. Similarly, institutions must look at their own recruitment, retention, and student persistence as seen through the lens of demographic change. Admitting diverse students is not enough; students need to feel comfortable on campus, and “unresolved issues of inclusion” will cause difficulties with recruitment and retention (Grawe, 2021, pp. 130-131). Those issues of inclusion and helping students continue to reenroll belong to the entire institution. Faculty and support staff interact with students for just a small portion of their academic career. Students connect with staff working at all levels, from food service to administrative. Grawe (2021) provided an example of good practice for the community responsibility to support students: Wheaton College in Massachusetts provides a 1% pay raise to all staff if the first-year retention rate is 90%. Highlighting the leadership of Nancy Griffin, vice president of enrollment management at the University of Southern Maine, the article described the key factor in her successful retention increases as “intensive, student-focused advising” (p. 146). The personalized approach, getting to know each student and the support they need, allows advisors to identify potential problems before they have a chance to develop. Ultimately, for Grawe (2021) there is no one solution to solve how institutions of higher education need to address the ways changing demographics will change their institutions.

### **Cultural Competency Education and Diversity Training**

Focused on the role of organizational psychology in an increasingly multicultural, multiracial, society, Sue (1991) offered a model for counselor training to address

diversity. Sue noted that the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Association for Counseling and Development (AACD) had training standards that do include cultural diversity, but organizations also need to realize that their survival will hinge on how they address cultural diversity.

Sue's (1991) model is based on functions and barriers. Organizations must go through a self-assessment to identify their own barriers so cultural diversity training can be tailored to the organization's particular needs. An organization's functions, related to the need for cultural diversity training, encompass recruitment, retention, and promotion. Recruitment requires diversifying the labor pool, retention requires awareness of the company culture, and promotion requires ensuring access and opportunity for all. Sue equated the three functions to higher education when he compared promotion to graduation. Higher education can admit more diverse students, but there must be efforts to improve education, so those students are also retained and graduated.

Organizational barriers to incorporating diversity include differences in communication styles and characteristics, interpersonal discrimination, discriminatory attitudes and prejudices, and systemic barriers (Sue, 1991). Sue (1991) cited his own study from 1990 that "minorities" are often blamed for not fitting in because they do not communicate in similar ways to the majority in a company (p.101). Although Sue laid blame on policies and procedure, he also recommended that people of color study effective communication to fit in. Interpersonal discrimination and prejudices can be addressed with workshops that raise awareness, increase sensitivity and knowledge, and

work on cross-cultural communication and management skills. Systemic barriers may involve structural change and the altering of the power processes within an organization.

Pope and Reynolds (1997) addressed the need for student affairs professionals in higher education to integrate the core competencies of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills set forth by Sue (1991) for counselors. Pope and Reynolds cited the lack of agreed-upon competencies for student affairs professionals and utilized earlier work to offer a list of seven recommended competency or skill areas:

1. management
2. theory-to-use
3. helping/interpersonal
4. ethical and decision-making
5. teaching
6. evaluation and assessment
7. multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills

Pope and Reynolds included multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills as a unique competency in the list of seven, but unlike the other competencies, multicultural skills should be integrated and part of the other six competency areas.

To successfully integrate multicultural competencies into the other six recommended competencies for student affairs professionals in higher education, Pope and Reynolds (1997) suggested a shift in student affairs education. They argued that graduate programs need to move from a strictly curriculum base to include some



competency base areas, which would help infuse multicultural competence throughout the program.

Chao et al. (2011) addressed cultural competence from the perspective of clinical and organizational research. The tripartite structure of cultural competency, as articulated by Sue (1991), requiring awareness, knowledge, and skills, was examined as the base for cultural competency training for counselors and as used by organizations. Training must include all three components or results can be negative. Chao et al. used the example of the Hofstede (1980) models which categorize cultures along continuums. Training that looks only at differences creates an “other” which is counter to the goal of cultural competency. Training must include awareness along with knowledge and skills.

Awareness, per Chao et al., should include self-awareness but also awareness of the sociocultural or systemic nature of racism. People are more willing to embrace cultural and antiracist concepts if presented on a societal and not individual level. Chao et al. concluded by calling for the integrating of research from different disciplines to bolster multicultural competence.

Kalinoski et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of diversity training in organizations. Diversity training theory and research underlie three hypotheses regarding the impact of diversity training. The hypotheses predict that diversity training (a) will have a greater impact on cognitive and skill-based outcomes over affective-based outcomes, (b) diversity training, which provides social interaction, will have greater affective-based outcomes, and (c) trainee motivation will affect affective-based

outcomes. The analysis of 65 studies supports all three of the hypotheses (Kalinowski et al. 2013).

A meta-analysis of 260 diversity training studies conducted by Bezrukova et al. in 2016 sought to identify the training characteristics that have the greatest effect. The Bezrukova et al. (2016) meta-analysis considered some of the same criteria as the Kalinowski et al. (2013) meta-analysis, and it included several additional criteria in analyzing diversity training. The additional criteria were setting (organizational or educational), longevity of training effects, and training requirements (mandatory or voluntary). Although an educational setting is preferred over an organizational setting, and cognitive-based effects of training last longer than affective-based effects, making diversity training mandatory or voluntary does not impact the effect of training. The result of the Bezrukova et al. (2016) meta-analysis that is most often cited concludes that diversity training is most effective when part of a larger organizational initiative toward multicultural organizational development.

### **Diversity Training as Part of Systemic Change**

Kulik and Roberson (2008) approached diversity training as part of larger initiatives in business that seek diversity. Businesses need to diversify recruitment, provide diversity training, and offer formal mentoring programs to retain diverse employees. Businesses are most often moved to improve diversity for external reasons such as legal obligations and changing customer demographics. Only about a third of companies evaluated diversity initiatives and around 14% evaluated diversity initiatives to determine return on investment. Business evaluations tended to focus on changing

numbers of diverse employees or customers and not on how or why the system was working or not working (Kulik & Roberson, 2008).

Diversity training has two primary functions. The first is to disseminate information to employees. A company may use training to explain why there is a focus on diversity, what benefits can come from diversifying, and as a way to create a positive company culture for diversity initiatives. The second function is to create behavioral change. Training to change behavior often focuses on skill training and awareness training. Skill training works on specific competencies such as conflict management, communication, and sexual harassment management. Awareness training works on increasing awareness of the causes of discrimination. Awareness is often seen as the required foundation before behavioral change takes place (Kulik & Roberson, 2008).

Kulik and Roberson (2008) stated that diversity training should be preceded by a needs assessment to determine if learned skills could be used after training and if employees are motivated and ready to invest in the training. An earlier study by Kulik (2007) found that employees with greater diversity competence were more likely to participate in voluntary training, whereas employees with low diversity competence may not be aware of their deficiencies or may not care if they are deficient. Kulik and Roberson (2008) expressed doubt about the efficacy of awareness training and its ability to reduce biases and encourage behavioral change. In their final assessment, they recommended businesses focus on skills training.

Hogan (2013) developed a skills-based method for cultural competence training in 2007. Hogan identified training for all employees, based on developing four skills in

cultural competency, as the second stage on the path to creating organizational change. The first stage is assessing organizational needs; the second stage is training all employees to provide a foundation for change within the organization; the third stage is development of a strategic plan; and the fourth stage is regular monitoring of progress of the plan.

Hogan (2013) defined cultural change within an organization occurring at three different levels. The first level, the micro level, involves interactions between people within the organization. Increasing cultural competency skills increases communication and respect at the personal or micro level which in turn improves effective work at the meso or middle level, or the committee, team, or department level. As meso level cultural competency improves, macro level or institutional cultural competency change becomes possible. The goal of training for cultural competency skills that develop understanding at the personal level is to create change that spreads through the organization and becomes part of the policies that dictate institutional behavior.

Pope (1994) developed her Multicultural Change Intervention Matrix (MCIM) as part of her dissertation in 1993. The matrix includes three targets of change: individual, group, and institution. Each target has two types of change, first-order and second order. For the individual, first-order change requires awareness; at the group level, membership is a first-order change; and for an institution, the first-order change is programmatic. Second-order change, which is substantial and lasting, is a paradigm shift for individuals, involves restructuring for groups, and is systemic at the institutional level (Pope, 1994). Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2014) incorporate Williams' (2013) models of

multicultural organizational development and how those models fit with Pope's earlier matrix.

Using Cox's 1991 model for multicultural organizational development, Grapin and Pereiras (2019) proposed actionable steps addressing three of Cox's dimensions: acculturation, cultural bias, and intergroup conflict. These dimensions are singled out because they represent "the ways in which members recognize, reconcile, and negotiate cultural differences within the organization" (Grapin & Pereiras, 2019, p. 308). Declaring institutions of higher education (IHEs) as largely pluralistic and not multicultural organizations, Grapin and Pereiras offered ways to move an institution of higher education along the developmental continuum from pluralism toward multiculturalism.

Multicultural education, service learning, and diversity training are the methods Grapin and Perieras (2019) chose to tackle cultural bias. Multicultural education and service learning should be offered as ways to reduce the cultural biases of students. Multicultural education can be taught in a single course, but the best method is to combine diversity courses with the infusion of multicultural issues throughout the curriculum. Service learning provides valuable opportunities for students to become involved with diverse communities through community engagement which may reduce personal cultural biases.

Citing Kalinoski et al.'s (2013) meta-analysis of diversity training, Grapin and Pereiras (2019) concluded that diversity training can provide a positive reduction of cultural biases for faculty and staff. If multicultural education can reduce cultural bias in students, then diversity training can reduce cultural bias with faculty and staff. Longer,

more interactive, and in-person training courses have a greater impact, and trainings should be offered on an ongoing basis. Referring to a more recent meta-analysis by Bezrukova et al. (2016), Grapin and Pereras noted that it is better to combine diversity training with other initiatives on campus because the combination will enhance the effectiveness of diversity training.

### **Multicultural Organizational Development**

From their first publication in 1984, Bolman and Deal led the way in giving leaders a way to view the complexity of organization dysfunction from multiple perspectives to facilitate and direct change or organizational development. The multiple perspectives are outlined in four frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. The four frames can be used to provide a way of addressing different types of dysfunctions within the organization. Organizational problems can be traced back to issues within the four frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Bolman and Deal (2017) address diversity issues through examples and case studies in their work, but cultural and diversity issues are presented as issues that can be solved using the four frames.

After the first edition of Bolman and Deal's text in 1984, Jackson and Holvino (1988) set forth common themes and developmental stages to create a multicultural frame for organizational development. The diversity themes necessary for multicultural organization development are social/cultural representation, valuing and capitalizing on differences, eliminating racism and sexism, and diversity of stakeholders. The themes are part of the organization's development as it moves through stages of development from

the exclusionary, monocultural stage one to the final stage of a multicultural organization that embraces diversity.

For Jackson and Holvino (1988), awareness of diversity issues through education targeted at individuals is an early-stage intervention. Individual awareness is fine, but the goal is organizational development, focused on the system, so the agenda is development of diversity-aware missions, policies, and mechanisms to create macro-level systems change.

Cox's (2001) model for creating multicultural organizational change, although designed for a business audience, put a greater emphasis on training and education for all members of an organization. The Cox model includes five components: leadership, research and measurement, education, alignment of management systems, and follow-up.

Leadership, for Cox (2001), initiates multicultural change by making it clear that diversity matters through being personally involved in the process, by integrating diversity into strategic planning, company vision statements, and management philosophy. Research and measurement are required to provide a baseline of information to track improvement, to provide a cultural assessment of the organizations, and to help create a measurement plan.

Cox (2001) emphasized education and training as a must for an organization to successfully transition to a multicultural organization, but he also referenced a study from 1995 that found only one third of diversity training efforts seemed to have a lasting impact on the organization. According to Cox, all five components for multicultural organization development must be implemented to facilitate lasting organizational

change. Education needs to involve all layers of the organization, should be designed to develop diversity educators within the organization, and it should help participants through three phases of diversity awareness; awareness, deeper knowledge, and behavior change or action.

### **Multicultural Organizational Development in Education**

Summarizing the merging of organizational development with social justice and diversity to create the concept of multicultural organizational development, Jackson (2005) discussed how the corporate model of multicultural organizational development is also being adopted in educational settings. Jackson's (2005) model for change in an educational setting reflects Cox's (2001) model for a company setting in two areas, but with modifications appropriate for educational settings. First, Jackson identified change agents within the organization, recommending formation of a group specifically tasked to drive the multicultural development process, whereas Cox emphasized leadership commitment and involvement in a top-down approach. Leadership must be involved for Jackson's model, but the disbursement of change agents throughout the organization is more appropriate for the less hierarchical structure of educational institutions. Second, Jackson and Cox emphasized the importance of data to identify problem areas and to create benchmarks. Unlike the corporate data in Cox's 2001 model, Jackson recommended an audit to make certain personally identifying information is not included. Educational institutions may have a lone woman or multiracial individual in a department who could be easily identified if the data were released without an audit. Aggregating



some of the data to protect individuals while still maintaining the integrity of the data is essential.

Jackson's model (2005) did not dwell on the specifics of moving an organization to a multicultural organization; rather, it provided the steps in the change process. It is a map to follow, but it did not include an itinerary for the full journey.

Considering the need to recognize and implement multicultural organizational change in business and also in education, Sue (1991) created a cube, or 3x3x3 model, to help assess where the functional focus, barriers to improvement, and competencies needed to address the multicultural issues intersect. The first side of the cube, the functional focus, looks at three human resource functions integral to an organization's success. In business the functions are recruitment of a diverse workforce, retention of diverse employees, and promotion of those employees. The same model with an educational eye looks to the recruitment of diverse employees and diverse students, the retention of the recruited employees and students, and the promotion of employees and the graduation of the students. The second side of the cube enumerates three distinct barriers to multicultural development. The first barrier is cultural differences, the second is interpersonal discrimination, and the third is systemic barriers. The final side of the cube includes the three competencies that can help an organization overcome the barriers and improve the fundamental functions of recruitment, retention, and promotion.

The competency side of the cube can help an organization determine the type of training and competency development that is needed to address each barrier and functional area it intersects. The three competency areas are beliefs and attitudes,

knowledge, and skills. Competency in belief and attitudes equals awareness of and a level of comfort with cultural differences that includes respect for other cultures. For Whites this includes the recognition of systemic privileges and a willingness to address social racism (Sue, 1991). The second competency, knowledge, involves a deeper understanding of the history of different cultures, and the world views, values, and cultural or social attitudes that grew from that history. The final competency is skills. For Sue (1991), the skills competency was firmly based in communication. Whether an educational counselor or a business manager, communication skills are essential to sending and receiving messages as well as recognizing communication differences that exist along cultural lines whether verbal or non-verbal communication. Each intersection determines the type of training required to ameliorate the underlying issues. To provide an example, if retention is impacted by interpersonal discrimination, then training focused on improving multicultural knowledge would begin the process of addressing the issue. Despite Sue's model putting an emphasis on assessment and training, it was made clear that such assessment and training is but a small piece of the larger development process toward a multicultural organization.

Grieger (1996) connected multicultural organizational development with the need for student affairs divisions to embrace multicultural competency. Grieger's checklist of 58 items is meant as a systemic and methodical process to implement multicultural organizational change. Grieger divides the check list into familiar organizational development areas: mission, leadership, policies, recruitment and retention, and multicultural competency training. The difference is Grieger's focus on student affairs.

Grieger included additional areas that require attention to affect multicultural organizational change on campus: scholarly activities, student activities and services, internships and field experience, and physical environment. Grieger's multicultural training checklist included six specific items which can be grouped into four concepts. To meet the checklist requirements, multicultural competency training must be ongoing, include all staff who interact with students, be conducted by qualified trainers, and be funded.

Focused on leadership in higher education, Williams (2013) discussed three different diversity models commonly used on college campuses as they try to become multicultural organizations. Although each model differs in method, all include identity of the individual, implementation tools, motivating origins, and anticipated results.

Williams' (2013) first model is the affirmative action and equity model. As the name implies, this model originated from affirmative action and equal opportunity laws and court rulings from the 1950s through 1970s. Motivated by legal action, this model focuses on improving diversity through policies and plans designed to mitigate overt discrimination and meet legal requirements. The impetus for this model comes from outside the college, which means that offices and individuals tasked with enacting this model are often "at the margins of institutional life" (Williams, 2013, p. 138). Because nondiscriminatory recruitment and admissions is mandated, this model has increased diversity on campus.

The second of Williams' (2013) models is the multicultural and inclusion diversity model. The origin of this model stems from the cultural movements of the

1960s and 1970s. In this model change is motivated by national movements to raise awareness for different cultural groups. Campuses will have cultural centers, a unit dedicated to multicultural affairs, and more study areas such as gender or ethnic studies.

The third and more recently developed model from Williams (2013) is the learning, diversity, and research model. Driven by globalization, changing demographics, and the realization of persistent inequality, Williams' final model seeks to integrate diversity into the curriculum and throughout the college. The incorporation of diversity is recognized as having educational value for all students and as an essential component of student learning. Williams' models of higher educational diversity may seem like a progressive path to follow, but he stated that these should not necessarily be distinct models but rather aspects of each should be included in moving campuses forward toward true organizational diversity.

Diversity initiatives can fail because the transformation required is complex and challenging. Williams (2013) stated that institutional change begins with human capacity to change, and leaders must start with their human resources. Diversity training and education is the fourth area out of five that leaders must address as part of their strategic plan for multicultural organizational development. Using a national survey about institutional diversity, Williams noted that about half the institutions report diversity education and training for students and staff, but the percentage of institutions targeting diversity training for senior leadership drops to 32 percent. Diversity training for all employees creates a motivation and commitment to diversity that is reflected in new initiatives, hiring, and decision making at all levels.

Multicultural organizational development research shows the value of multicultural competence at the individual level as a necessary part of multicultural organizational development (Cox, 2001, Williams, 2013, Pope et al., 2014). If cultural competency for individuals is necessary to implement multicultural organizational change, then it is logical to follow the example of Williams (2013) to answer a question for organizations seeking multicultural development: Are individuals receiving cultural competency (diversity) training? Williams utilized survey data about diversity to assess who received diversity education and training at the surveyed higher educational institutions.

Using surveys as the quantitative method and descriptive research as the frame, it is possible to determine if academic advisors are receiving training and if the training includes topics to improve advisors' cultural competency.

### **Descriptive Research**

Kelley et al. (2003) discussed the value of descriptive survey research as a method useful to highlight and define elements found in a particular setting at a particular time that can be used to identify possible associations within a population.

Loeb et al. (2017) encouraged the use of descriptive research in education, and not just in conjunction with causal research, to provide better understanding of phenomena in education as well as in other disciplines. Descriptive research offers an understanding or overview of what is needed and what can be done, which can be combined with causal research to help explain why an intervention is successful or not. Descriptive research can also stand alone. As stand-alone research, descriptive research

can uncover previously unnoticed patterns or help define a need that had been overlooked by policy makers.

Writing about educational research, Creswell and Guetterman (2018) did not use the terms descriptive or phenomenological research. They focused primarily on qualitative research but did allow that quantitative research can be helpful when seeking to describe or analyze a trend. The use of surveys as a research design is particularly well suited for defining trends for a population, and a cross-sectional survey can help “measure community needs” (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018, p. 387).

### **Summary**

The need to define the phenomenon of training for academic advisors is part of a larger need for institutions of higher education. Review of the literature for this study takes us from the role of academic advisors in helping students succeed in higher education to the need for multicultural organizational development to address demographic changes in institutions of higher education. The role of the individual academic advisor in assisting the move of institutions through the process of multicultural organizational change may seem small, but the literature agrees that moving any institution toward multicultural organizational development requires systemic change that begins with the individuals in the organization.

Vital to the success of the students who represent the changing demographics are academic advisors who’s training to meet the needs of their students has remained static for decades. Training, or the availability of professional development, may or may not exist and may or may not include the cultural competency training necessary to help

academic advisors meet the needs of an increasing culturally diverse student population.

Other helping professions have the advantage of required educational degrees or standards to ensure professionals in the field have the skills they need to help clients.

These other professions also provide examples of cultural competency training, imbedded in and outside of the required education, that could guide future academic advisor training, but the first step requires research to determine and describe the level of training academic advisors currently receive.

## Chapter III

### Method

A quantitative, descriptive research approach was used to explore the phenomenon of academic advisor training. Academic advisors serve as critical campus contact for most college and university students (Seidman, 1991). Academic advisors also serve a critical role in student success (Drake, 2011). Despite their vital role, professional academic advisors enter the profession without a common educational background (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008).

The lack of a common knowledge base for academic advisors means training at each higher educational institution takes on added importance.

NACADA, the Global Community for Academic Advising, advocates advisor training cover three areas, conceptual, informational, and relational (NACADA, 2017a). The areas cover institutional mission and advising philosophy, institutional policy and degree information, and basic communication skills. Not included is training to specifically address cultural competency for advisors, which is essential as student populations become more diverse (Lawton, 2018). As the institutions within the Minnesota State higher educational system seek movement toward multicultural organizational development (Equity 2030, 2023), the need for academic advisors to have training, in addition to training that includes cultural competency, becomes increasingly important. The purpose of this quantitative descriptive research study is to survey academic advisors within the Minnesota State higher educational system to determine if



training recommended by NACADA and cultural competency training are provided or available.

A study using a descriptive research approach answers questions such as who, what, where, when, and to what extent about a particular phenomenon (Loeb et al., 2017). Within a descriptive research approach, a survey was used to assess what, and to what extent, training is provided, or professional development is available for the academic advisors in the Minnesota State higher educational system. Additionally, the survey was used to assess to what extent available training includes established training components as well as aspects of cultural competency. The best method to determine if training is provided and what available training covers is a survey (Musser et al., 2008). From this perspective, the research questions this survey research seeks to address follow:

1. The majority of academic advisors within the Minnesota State higher education system do receive training.
2. The training that academic advisors receive includes some, but not all, of the NACADA recommended training components, and cultural competency training components are the least provided.
3. Academic advisors do have professional development opportunities.
4. Campus size does have an impact on the availability of training and professional development.

### **Rationale for Descriptive Research**

The rationale for using a descriptive research approach is the ability to send a survey to most or all of the academic advisors in the Minnesota State higher educational

system and through that survey define aspects of the phenomenon of academic advisor training within the Minnesota State system. The quantitative assessment of advisor training of a larger population can be used to analyze potential gaps in training (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018).

The use of surveys to assess advising on multiple college campuses has been carried out in the past. Some campuses utilize the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) by adding campus specific questions when the NSSE is administered. The campus-specific questions are limited in number, and the survey participants are first- and fourth-year students on participating campuses. Student responses to advising are not the focus of this study. The NACADA model of surveying professional advisors is better suited for this study. NACADA conducted its first national survey of its membership in 1979 (Habley & McClanahan, 2004). Since that time NACADA, sometimes in conjunction with ACT, has conducted national surveys focused on advising and aspects of advising. Assessing the results of just three questions on the 2011 NACADA National Survey, Voller (2011) stated that most institutions do a poor job training advisors. This survey includes 13 questions and seven of the 13 specifically address the availability of training and the topics covered.

### **Participants**

The participants sampled for this study are professional academic advisors at the institutions within the Minnesota State higher educational system. Different positions on campuses may have the title of advisor, such as financial aid advisor, admissions advisor. Those positions may advise students, but the advising is not focused specifically on

academics and degree completion, so they were not included in the participants. Faculty advisors were also not included in this study. Faculty advisors' primary role is teaching in their area of expertise with advising comprising a smaller portion of their duties. In addition, the role of faculty as advisors varies on each campus. The role of academic advisors, although titles may differ, provides similar services on each campus.

The participants were chosen through convenience sampling. The participants are part of a specifically identifiable population and providing a survey to as many of the individuals within that population as possible, rather than generating a random sample to survey, is convenience sampling. The risks of convenience sampling are a participation rate that is too low to generate significant data to complete the research, and the possibility of motivation bias by those who complete the survey (Stratton, 2021). Research done by convenience sampling cannot be extrapolated to the general population but given the target of this research study that limitation is acceptable.

### **Survey Setting**

The researcher decided to send the survey to professional academic advisors in the Minnesota State higher education system for a few key reasons. First, the researcher worked at three of the institutions within the Minnesota State higher education system. The familiarity of the researcher with the structure of academic advising at different institutions within the Minnesota State system provided a level of understanding of how the titles and specific duties for academic advisors on campuses in the system could vary while the core responsibilities advising students remained similar. The researcher also

experienced the level of training provided to professional academic advisors on different campuses which prompted the desire to clarify questions around training.

The second reason for surveying professional academic advisors within the Minnesota State higher education system is the variability of the institutions. The Minnesota State system includes technical colleges, community colleges, and universities. The campuses vary in size from a few hundred students to over 14,000 students. Most, but not all, employ professional academic advisors to assist students.

The third reason for choosing to survey professional academic advisors within the Minnesota State higher education system was accessibility to the advisors. The researcher knew that familiarity with the institutions would make identifying the academic advisors easier, and that support from the Minnesota State system office would be available should assistance with the survey be necessary. The researcher also knew that academic advisors would be more likely to respond to and complete a survey from a colleague within the same educational system.

### **Population Sample**

The professional academic advisors surveyed were identified by reviewing the website of each campus within the Minnesota State higher education system and creating a spreadsheet of all employees with the title of advisor or academic advisor. Financial aid advisors, admissions advisors, and faculty advisors were not included in the spreadsheet. With the assistance of the Minnesota State higher educational system's advising liaison, a list of the academic advisors participating in the state system advising listserv was made available to the researcher. The researcher's list of campus advisors and the system

liaison's list were compared. The final spreadsheet contained 230 advisors and their campus e-mail addresses.

### **Sample size**

The researcher identified 230 academic advisors working in the Minnesota State higher educational system institutions. The number of academic advisors was determined by a review of all the college websites within the system. A significant population sample, for a descriptive research study, ranges from minimum of 10 percent to 20 percent of the population (Hill, 1998). Due to the anticipated interest in the research subject for academic advisors, the goal for this research study was a survey response rate of at least 20 percent or forty-six completed survey responses.

### **Demographics**

The 30-plus campuses that make up the Minnesota State high educational institutions that employ the academic advisors surveyed for this research vary greatly. Institutions range in size from a few hundred students to over 14,000 students. The institutions may serve relatively homogenous student populations or diverse student populations. Using 2020 student demographic data from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (2023), the demographic breakdown for undergraduate students attending Minnesota State institutions in 2020 was as follows: 63.9% White, 13% Black or African American, 7.3% Hispanic/Latino, 6.6% Asian or Pacific Islander, 4.2% multi-racial, and 0.8% American Indian or Alaskan Native. It is not known if the demographic make-up of the academic advisors mirrors that of the students on each campus.

Due to campus size, it is possible that collected demographic information about advisors would jeopardize the anonymity of advisors submitting the survey. Data was aggregated for analysis, and no individual survey results highlighted.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

After creation and verification of the list of academic advisors in the Minnesota State higher educational system, a message explaining the research and an invitation to the Qualtrics ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)) survey was distributed to professional academic advisors in the Minnesota State higher education system via e-mail (Appendix C). The survey was distributed on October 11, 2022, to the work e-mails of 230 Minnesota State employees identified as professional academic advisors in the Minnesota State Higher Education system. Of the 230 e-mails in the initial request, 11 e-mails bounced back as undeliverable, and 84 surveys were completed. E-mail addresses that bounced back were corrected, if possible, and the survey request was sent out a second time on October 23, 2022. Two recipients contacted the researcher to say they did not actually advise students and would not finish the survey. An additional 23 surveys were completed. The survey was left open until the end of the semester, a total of 52 days from the initial survey request, and the final respondent finished the survey 40 days after the initial invitation e-mail on November 21st, 2022.

In the final review of survey responses, 115 advisors started the survey. Eight responded yes to continue the survey but did not finish. Four advisors responded no and did not continue the survey. One advisor accidentally answered no, then contacted the

researcher to request another link to complete the survey. In the revised total 114 advisors started the survey and 102 completed the survey for a 44% response rate.

### **Consent**

Advisors who opened the survey were asked to read and accept a survey consent form (Appendix A). The consent form notified advisors who agree to participate that personally identifiable information would not be collected, and the survey results would be analyzed in aggregate form. Advisors were assured that they could stop answering survey questions at any point in the survey. The form informed the advisors that results of the survey will be available to them upon request at the completion of the research. Advisors who did not agree to the consent form were not allowed to take the survey, and they were taken directly to the final survey message thanking them for their time.

### **Instrument**

A survey (Appendix B) designed specifically for this descriptive research study was developed using Qualtrics ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)). The demographic questions are the demographic questions created and accessible in the Qualtrics library, and the demographic questions give us more information about the “who” participating in the phenomenon of advisor training. The questions about training were developed using the NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies Model. The NACADA Core Competencies are divided into conceptual, informational, and relational categories. Each NACADA Core Competency category includes a list of specific competencies for academic advisors. The lists of specific competencies were used to create survey questions about training topics for advisors. The training competency questions define the

“what” and “to what extent” in our search to describe the training phenomenon. The final question about campus size utilizes the Carnegie classifications (American Council on Education, 2022) of campus sizes, and it will give information about “where” for our descriptive look at the training phenomenon.

The survey begins with an informed consent statement (Appendix A) and is followed by demographic information about the academic advisor. Academic advisors were asked about the number of years they have worked as academic advisors and about the length of time in their current advising position. Academic advisors were then asked about opportunities for training in their current position. The possible topics covered in training, if provided, were the topics identified as academic advisor core competencies by NACADA. The NACADA core competencies for academic advising are categorized as conceptual, informational, and relational; each category and the competencies within the category are addressed in a separate survey question. Subsequent questions ask about specific topics covered in the training. The questions are divided into conceptual, informational, and relational areas. Each question uses NACADA’s recommended training topics.

The conceptual question asks which of the following topics were covered in their training:

- the role of advising on your campus
- advising approaches and strategies used on your campus
- expected outcomes for advising on your campus
- core values for advising on your campus



- how to create and maintain an equitable and inclusive environment as an advisor

The informational question asks which of the following topics were covered in their training:

- the history, mission, vision, values, and culture of your campus
- curriculum, degree programs, and other academic requirements and options
- specific policies, procedures, rules, and regulations on your campus
- legal guidelines for advising, including privacy regulations and confidentiality
- information technology applicable to advising role
- campus and community resources that support student success
- characteristics, needs, and experiences of the students on your campus

The relational question asks which of the following topics were covered in their training:

- the value of creating or articulating a personal advising philosophy
- ways to create rapport and build advising relationships
- how to plan for and conduct successful advising interactions
- how to promote student understanding of the logic and purpose of required curriculum
- ways to facilitate problem solving, decision making, meaning making, planning, and goal setting with advisees
- the role of assessment, and personal and professional development to improve advising practice.
- how to communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner

Respondents were also given a “none of the above” option for each of the training topic questions.

The advisors who selected the “no” response to receiving training in their current position skipped past the training questions above and were taken directly to professional development questions. The first professional development question asks about the format of professional development available to the advisor on their campus.

Respondents could choose any or all of the following options:

- seminars, workshops, or symposiums available on campus
- seminars, workshops, or symposiums available online
- regional, national, or international professional conferences
- opportunity to take courses on campus
- opportunity to take courses online
- guest speakers or presentations
- other (please specify)

Following the question about types or formats of professional development available, advisors could choose the topics covered in available professional development opportunities.

- frontline/customer service
- student transfer
- mental health
- technology (new & existing)
- diversity

- other

The opportunity for other types of training or professional development outside of their advising role makes up the next set of survey questions. The final question asked about the size of their institution using the Carnegie classifications for very small to very large campuses. This final question was not asked with the initial demographic questions for two reasons. The first was to allay any fears survey participants might have about being identifiable. If this question were to follow the demographic questions, participants might feel the combined demographic answers and the campus size could make them identifiable. Second, this question was necessary to determine if training and professional development opportunities are impacted by the size of the campus.

The primary question this study attempted to answer is: “Are academic advisors receiving training?” This primary question includes four related questions.

R1. Are academic advisors receiving training?

R1a. If advisors are receiving training, does it include conceptual, informational, and relational training components?

R1b. If advisors are receiving training, does that training include cultural competency?

R2. Are other professional development opportunities available?

R3. Does campus size impact the availability of training?

### **Validity**

During development the survey was reviewed by a faculty member who regularly advises. Suggestions for question-and-answer formats were given and implemented. Prior

to distribution the survey was distributed to three individuals who have been advisors but who were not eligible to receive the survey for the research study. Minor changes to wording and suggestions to combine questions were implemented.

In addition to the test group reviewing the survey, Qualtrics ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)) analyzed the survey throughout its creation. The Qualtrics program uses digital analysis to measure elements of the survey for logic and question structure. As the survey is developed, Qualtrics may recommend improvements, and when the survey is complete Qualtrics provides a score that indicates the likely quality of the collected data. The Qualtrics “ExpertReview” score for the distributed survey was “great”, which is the highest score possible ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)).

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher had a primary role in training academic advisors at different institutions over a span of a dozen years. Her interest in academic advisor training and trying to define and determine what advisors need to know, should know, skills that should be developed, and how to help develop advisors in those knowledge and skills areas is decades in the making.

### **Procedure for Data Analysis**

To answer the research questions data was analyzed using the data and analysis programs available on Qualtrics ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)) and the cross-tabulation function of Excel. Descriptive research, which seeks to identify patterns and describe phenomenon, does not require complex statistical analysis (Loeb at al.). Using Qualtrics tools and the cross-tabulation and statistical functions of Excel, the researcher was able to

determine if there are relationships between variables and if any of the relationships are statistically significant. For example, utilizing the basic Qualtrics and Excel tools showing frequency of answers addresses the first question asking if academic advisors do receive training. The frequency tool can also assist with answering the questions concerned with training topics and if certain topics are more likely to be covered in training than others. By utilizing the Excel statistical functions, it is possible to assess if campus size impacts the availability of training and training opportunities.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

The purpose of this descriptive research is to understand a phenomenon, the training for professional academic advisors. This survey provides a snapshot of the professional academic advisors and their experiences with training and professional development in the Minnesota State higher education system during October and November of 2022. That snapshot allows for a better understanding of the training and professional development available to professional academic advisors within the Minnesota State system.

This study sought to answer four research questions:

1. A majority of the academic advisors within the Minnesota State higher education system do receive training.
2. The training that academic advisors receive includes some, but not all, of the NACADA recommended training components, and cultural competency training components are the least provided.
3. Academic advisors do have professional development opportunities.
4. Campus size does have an impact on the availability of training and professional development.

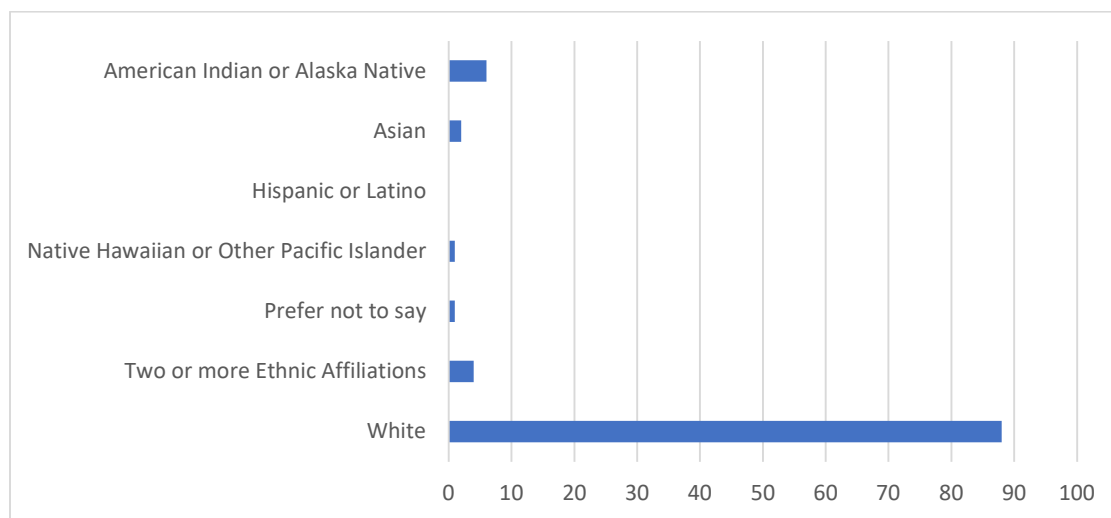
### **Demographic Data**

Out of the 230 Minnesota State academic advisors who were sent the survey invitation, 114 started the survey and 102 completed the survey (44% response rate). Of the survey respondents ( $n=102$ ) 88 (86.2%) self-identified as White, five (4.9%) self-

identified as Black or African American, four (3.9%) self-identified as two or more ethnic affiliations, two (1.9%) self-identified as Asian, one (.98%) self-identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, and one (.98%) preferred not to say. The race/ethnicity of advisors responding to the survey is in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Respondents by Race/Ethnicity*



### **Advisor Training Findings**

To understand a phenomenon through descriptive research does not necessarily require complex statistical analysis. Descriptive research can help us understand and identify patterns through simplifying the data (Loeb et al.). Descriptive research utilizes data to facilitate a better understanding of a phenomenon, and although data includes variables, unlike experimental research the variables are not manipulated to test a hypothesis. The first research question of this study, “Are academic advisors in the Minnesota State system receiving training?” can be answered by tabulating responses and

calculating percentage. The first question is answered in that a majority academic advisors in the Minnesota State system do receive training, but the answer to the first research question shows the majority is not a large one. More than half of the survey respondents ( $n=102$ ) indicated they received training:  $57/102 = 0.5588$  or 55.8%.

Of the respondents who indicated they had received training in their current position ( $n=57$ ), 52 respondents indicated training in at least one of the conceptual training topic areas. The results of the chosen topics covered in training are in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Percentage of Advisors Trained in Conceptual Topics*

<b>Conceptual Training Topic</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>% of Yes Responses</b>	<b>% of Total Responses</b>
1. The role of advising on your campus	50	88	49
2. Advising approaches & strategies used on your campus	39	68	38
3. Expected outcomes for advising on your campus	30	53	29
4. Core values for advising on your campus	26	46	25
5. How to create & maintain an equitable and inclusive environment as an advisor	22	38	21

In total, 14 (24%) of the respondents who received training ( $n=57$ ) participated in training that covered all five of the training topics.

The second set of training options were informational training topics. The informational training topics indicated by survey respondents are in Table 3.



**Table 3***Percentage of Advisors Trained in Informational Topics*

Informational Training Topic	Number of Responses	% of Yes Responses	% of total Responses
1. History, mission, vision, values & culture of your campus	32	56	31
2. Curriculum, degree programs, & other academic requirements & options	53	93	52
3. Specific policies, procedures, rules & regulations for your campus	49	86	48
4. Legal guidelines for advising, including privacy regulations & confidentiality	46	81	45
5. Information technology applicable to advising role	47	82	46
6. Campus and community resources that support student success	46	81	45
7. Characteristics, needs, and experiences of students on your campus	33	58	32

In total, 26 (45%) of the respondents who received training ( $n=57$ ) participated in training that covered all seven of the informational training topics.

The final training topics are in the relational component. The number who indicated training in the relational topic areas are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4***Percentage of Advisors Trained in Relational Topics*

Relational Training Topics	Number of Responses	% of Yes Responses	% of Total Responses
1. The value of creating or articulating a personal advising philosophy	15	26	14

2. Ways to create rapport & build advising relationship	32	56	31
3. How to plan for & conduct successful advising interactions	41	72	40
4. How to promote understanding of logic & purpose of required curriculum	26	45	25
5. Ways to facilitate problem solving, decision & meaning making, planning & goal setting	30	52	29
6. Role of assessment & personal & professional development to improve advising practice	19	33	18
7. How to communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner	23	40	22

The relational component is the training area with the lowest number of advisors indicating they received training that included the topic areas. Only six respondents indicated training in all seven of the relational topic areas, which represents 5% of all survey respondents.

### **Cultural Competency**

Research question 1b asks if cultural competency is offered in training or professional development for advisors. The final option for each of the training topic area survey categories, conceptual, informational, and relational, is the topic designed to address cultural competence per NACADA. Of the respondents who received training ( $n=57$ ), only 10 (17%) advisors said their training covered the cultural competence option in all three topic areas.

Questions about professional development, answered by all the survey completers ( $n=102$ ), included diversity. Of those who completed the survey, 84 (82%) indicated that diversity was a professional development topic available to them.

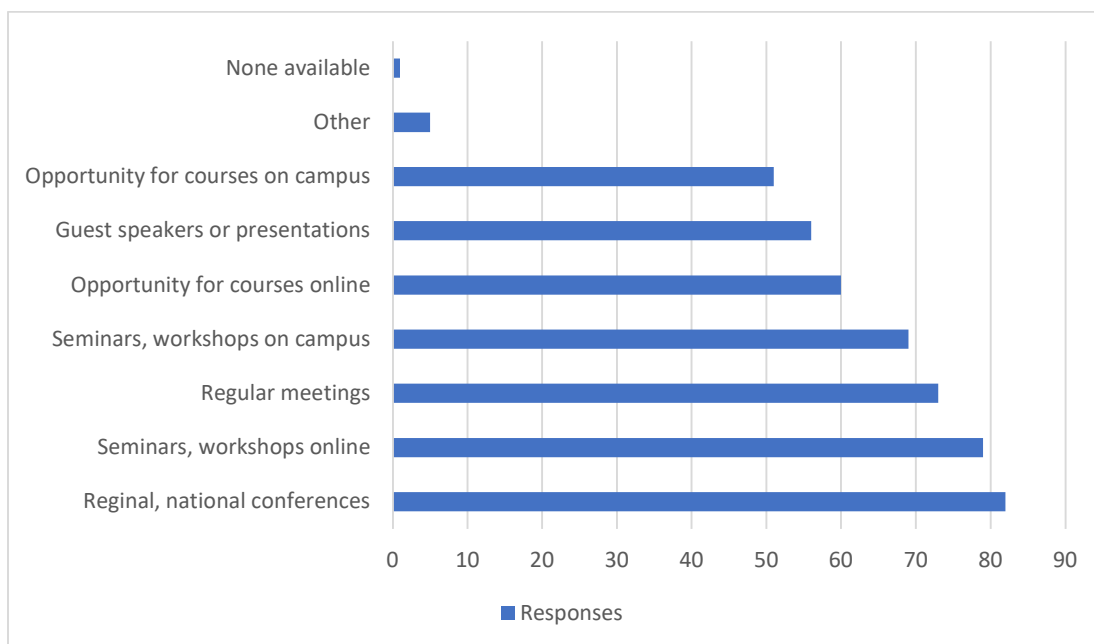
## Professional Development

The second research question asks if other professional development opportunities are available for academic advisors. Unlike the questions about training topics above, the questions about professional development were provided to all survey respondents. Only one respondent indicated that no training or professional development was available on their campus.

Respondents answered two questions about professional development: what types of professional development and what topics of professional development are available to them. The first question asked respondents to choose the types of professional development available to them. Figure 2 shows the number of respondents who indicated each type of professional development available to them.

**Figure 2**

*Number of Responses for Each Type of Professional Development Available*

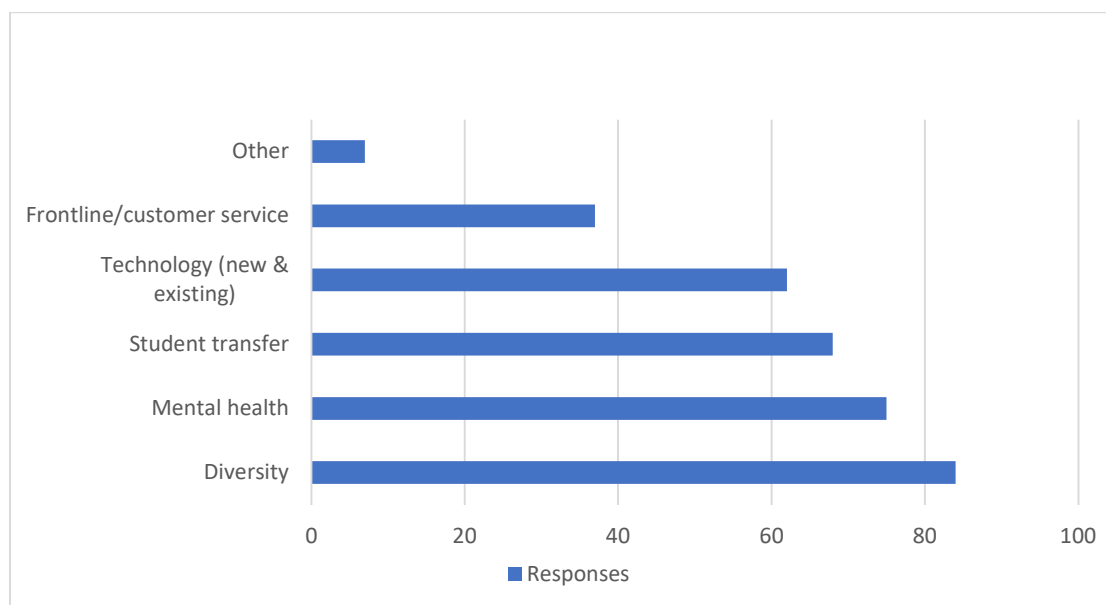


All survey respondents could select professional development topics from a list: Frontline/Customer Service, Student Transfer, Mental Health, Technology, and Diversity.

The numbers in the Figure 3 represent the number of respondents who indicated the topic was available on their campus.

**Figure 3**

*Number of Responses for Each Professional Development Topic Available*



Respondents were given the option to enter any additional professional development topics and the responses were:

- I can seek out any training opportunities I see valuable and retention strategies.
- Starfish, Achieving the Dream, Trio

- Career Champion
- advising, financial aid
- In our college, we have to ask for training or help to learn program info or new technology.
- Mostly what I can find myself.

### **Campus Size**

The third research question asks if campus size impacts the availability of training for academic advisors. To ascertain if campus size does create a significant difference in the availability of training, the answers to survey question 6, “when you started your current position, did you receive training?” and the answers to survey question fourteen, “please choose the size classification that best fits your campus” were used determine if differences are statistically significant. A t-test was run with campus size used as the continuous variable. Respondents who selected “yes” for training reported an average or mean of 3.614 with a standard deviation of 1.176. Those who selected “no” for training reported an average or mean of 3.222 with a standard deviation of 1.295. People who selected “yes” and “no” were on average in medium sized institutions, with people in the “yes” group reporting slightly higher rates of large institutions. However, the institution size of the “yes” group was not significantly greater than the “no” group. A significance test produced a p-value of 0.113 (the p-value needs to be less than 0.05 in order to be considered statistically significant). Because the p-value is greater than 0.05, in this study the null hypothesis is not rejected, meaning campus size does not make a difference in

whether or not academic advisors receive training. Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics of training by campus size.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics of Training Received by Campus Size*

Survey responses	Number	Mean	SD	p-value
No Training	45	3.222	1.295	0.113
Yes Training	57	3.614	1.176	

### Summary

The results of the survey indicate that more than half of the academic advisors in the Minnesota State higher educational system do receive training. The training received covers some, but not all, of the recommended training topics in the conceptual, informational, and relational knowledge base areas. Training that specifically covers areas of cultural competency were the least frequently indicated by survey respondents who received training, yet diversity was the most frequently indicated professional development topic by all survey respondents. Campus size did not have an impact on the availability of training for the survey respondents.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion**

On college and university campuses, academic advisors serve as a consistent contact (Drake, 2011) and source of support to help students succeed (Allen & Smith, 2018), but there is no common educational background or professional certification required for academic advisors (Shaffer et al., 2010). The lack of a common educational background necessitates that academic advisors receive training and professional development opportunities from the campuses that hire them. The academic advising professional organization, NACADA, has advocated for a set of specific training topics necessary for academic advisors to perform at the highest level for decades. In spite of a well-established set of recognized professional training topics, a study of whether or not professional advisors receive training and whether or not that training includes the established topics has not been conducted. This study was conducted to help fill in that gap and describe the current condition of academic advisor training and professional development within the Minnesota State higher educational system.

### **Summary of Findings**

This survey research sought to better understand the phenomenon of academic advisor training in the Minnesota State higher educational system. The survey research findings were able to answer the research questions:

1. Do the majority of academic advisors receive training?
  - a. 1a. If academic advisors receive training, does it include conceptual, informational, and relational topics?

- b. 1b. If academic advisor receive training, does it include cultural competency training?
2. Are professional development opportunities available to academic advisors?
3. Does campus size impact the availability of training?

The answers to the research questions were not always as expected.

The first research question expected that the majority of academic advisors would indicate that they did receive training. A majority ( $n=57$ ) of all respondents ( $n=102$ ), albeit a slim majority of 55%, did indicate that they received training when they started their current position.

Related to the first research question, one of two secondary research questions, was the assertion that received training would cover some of the recommended training topics, but for most advisors the training would not cover all of the recommended topic areas. Respondents indicated that their training did involve the conceptual, informational, and relational components of academic advising as defined by NACADA (2017a), but the specific topics within each component covered in training varied.

It was not surprising that the majority ( $n=56$ ) of the advisors who received training ( $n=57$ ) indicated that their training included informational component topics, since advisors are required to understand curriculum, degree programs, and other requirements, plus policies and procedures, legal guidelines, and information technology necessary for their advising role (CAS, 2018).



Training in the conceptual topics, which include the role of advising, expected outcomes, and core advising values and strategies on your campus, was indicated by 91% ( $n=52$ ) of the advisors who received training.

The relational topics were the least covered in training with 78% ( $n=45$ ) of the advisors who received training indicating their training covered topics in the relational areas. Relational training topics include creating rapport and building advising relationships, conducting successful advising interactions, and communicating in an inclusive and respectful manner (NACADA 2017a).

Given the increasingly diverse student population in higher education (Grawe, 2021), it is increasingly important for academic advisors to improve their cultural competency skills, and that was the impetus behind research question 1b. addressing training in cultural competency. The survey results showed that of the advisors who received training ( $n=57$ ), just 17% ( $n=10$ ) received training in all of the training topics that address cultural competency. Those ten who received training in all cultural competency areas represent just 9.8% of all the survey respondents ( $n=102$ ).

To address research question 2: Are other professional development opportunities available? all survey respondents ( $n=102$ ) answered questions about the types and topics available through professional development. A majority of all respondents indicated that professional development in a variety of types, and covering different topics, is available to them. In fact, of all survey respondents ( $n=102$ ) a majority ( $n=84$ ) indicated that they had diversity focused professional development available to them.

The above results do need clarifying, because survey respondents were asked if professional development was available to them; they were not asked if they participated in the available professional development. Although the most frequently chosen professional development topic was diversity, indicated by 84 respondents, that does not mean the respondents attended or took part in the offered professional development focused on diversity.

Campus size was expected to play a role in the availability of training and professional development by the researcher, but the statistical analysis of the survey results indicated otherwise.

### **Implications**

The results of this descriptive study cannot be extrapolated to a greater population of academic advisors, but the results do provide a glimpse into the state of advisor training during a particular point of time in a particular higher education system. The survey results show a slight majority of academic advisors do receive training, and that the training does cover several of the NACADA recommended training topics in the conceptual, informational, and relational areas. Results also indicate the availability of training and professional development for advisors is not entirely dependent on the size of the campus.

The Minnesota State higher system could utilize this study to develop advisor training modules that could be available to all the campuses in the system. As part of the Equity 2030 initiative, the Minnesota State system could also develop cultural competency modules directed toward the roles advisors serve working with students.

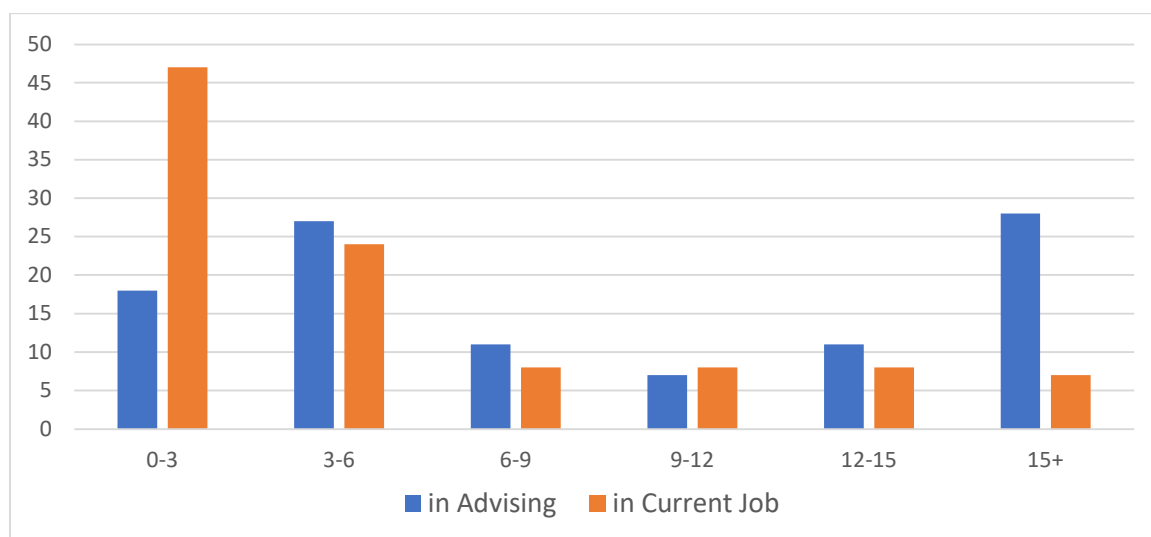
Although some of the training topic areas are campus specific, there are several topic areas that are not campus-centric and assistance from the Minnesota State system could ameliorate the student experience state-wide with an expected, and supported, level of training for advisors.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

The strengths of the present study include the fact that it is a quantitative study with a response rate of 44%. Qualitative studies about academic advisor training and professional development are not uncommon. Qualitative studies can be informative, but the small study populations do not lend themselves to understanding a larger phenomenon. There are few quantitative studies analyzing responses from a larger sample of advisors and attempting to understand or describe a larger phenomenon across the advising landscape. Apart from surveys administered by NACADA, sometimes with several years between surveys, research using larger advisor population samples are not common.

This study is limited by the focus of the research questions. The research questions offer a small look at the survey data collected. The data that falls outside the research parameters could help answer additional questions and further illuminate the phenomenon of advisor training. If survey results show 55.8% receiving training for their current position, that leaves 44.2% who did not receive training. Looking at the data for the respondents who said they did not receive training; the numbers may indicate the reason for no training could lie with the advisor. Advisors were asked the total time they have advised students and the time spent in their current position. The question about

training focused on training for the current position, and it did not ask about training across the advisor's career. When looking at the respondents who replied no to training and comparing the years of advising experience with the years in the current position, there is an interesting set of numbers to consider. A significant portion of the advisors, 19 out of the 45 (42%), who did **not** receive training for their current position indicated that they have advised students for 12 to 15 or 15 or more years. Moving to the number of years in their current position, 19 of the 45 (42%) with no training indicated that they have been in their current position 0-3 years. We do not know how many of the 19 new to their current positions are the experienced 19 from the previous question, but that experience could play a role in why no advisor training was offered. Similarly, it is possible that some of the seven advisors who are new to the career of advising who did not receive training did not receive it because they moved from a position within the institution and were expected to use that institutional knowledge in their new role. Figure 4 shows the comparison between years in advising and years in current position.

**Figure 4***Years in Advising and Years in Current Position*

### Recommendations for Further Research

The demographic make-up of undergraduate students in the Minnesota State Higher Education system in 2020 was as follows: 63.9% White, 13% Black or African American, 7.3% Hispanic/Latino, 6.6% Asian or Pacific Islander, 4.2% multi-racial, and 0.8% American Indian or Alaskan Native (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2023). Survey respondents were 86% white.

The systemwide 2020 undergraduate student population demographics indicated 63.9% of the students identifying as White. With 86% of the survey respondents identifying as White, that indicates a gap of over 20% between the racial identity of advisors and the students they serve. This further highlights the need for cultural competency training for advisors.

While the majority White demographic of the advisors in the Minnesota State system highlights the need for culturally aware training, the topics of provided training and the topics of available professional development opportunities provide a glimpse of cultural competency training in the Minnesota State higher education system. Further research could determine the types and topics of cultural competency training that are missing for advisors.

Additional research could focus on the 44.2% of respondents who did not receive training. The survey data analysis focused on what training topics were offered to advisors, but the advisors who indicated they did not receive training also deserve attention. There is a story from World War II about the military studying bullet holes on airplanes that made it back to base. If the planes had bullet holes, the initial response was to reinforce the areas with bullet holes. It was not until someone pointed out that the planes with holes in those areas made it back to base and they were focusing on the wrong areas to reinforce. They needed to concentrate on the places on the planes without holes, because planes with bullet holes in those other areas were the ones that did not make it back to base. This survey gives us a glimpse of what type of training is offered, but we need to look at where the gaps are in that training. We need to focus on are those who did not receive training and what training topics are not offered.

## References

- Allen, J. M., & Smith, C. L. (2018). Predictors of advising learning. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 55(3), 270–284.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2018.1474754>
- American Council on Education. (2022). *Size & setting classification*. Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.
- Bezrukova, K., Spell, C. S., Perry, J. L., & John, K. A. (2016). A meta-analytical integration of over 40 years of research on diversity training evaluation. *Psychology Bulletin*, 142(11), 1227–1274. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/bul0000067>
- Bok, D. (2015). *Higher education in America*. Princeton University Press.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Buckley, J. S. (2016). Making professional development accessible and impactful for new academic advisors. *Academic Advising Today*, 39(1).  
<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Making-Professional-Development-Accessible-and-Impactful-for-New-Academic-Advisors.aspx>
- Cate, P., & Miller, M. A. (2015). Academic advising within the academy. In P. Folsom, F. Yoder, & J. Joslin (Eds.), *The new advisor guidebook: Mastering the art of academic advising* (pp. 39–54). Jossey-Bass.

- Chao, M. M., Okazaki, S., Hong, Y. (2011). The quest for multicultural competence: Challenges and lessons learned from clinical and organizational research. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*.5(5). 263-274.
- Constantine, M. G., & Sue, D. W. (2005). The American Psychological Association's guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational psychology: Initial development and summary. In M. G. Constantine & D. W. Sue (Eds.), *Strategies for building multicultural competence in mental health and educational settings* (pp. 3–15). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2018). *CAS mission statement CAS standards and guidelines – academic advising*.  
<http://standards.cas.edu/getpdf.cfm?PDF=E864D2C4-D655-8F74-2E647CDECD29B7D0>
- Cox Jr., T. (2001) *Creating the multicultural organization: A strategy for capturing the power of diversity*. Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J., & Guetterman, T. (2018). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson Education.
- DeAngelis, T. (2015, March). In search of cultural competence. *Monitor on Psychology*, 46(3). <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2015/03/cultural-competence>
- Dees, A., Shah, P., and Robertson, T. (November 30, 2021). *Equity scorecard webinar*.
- Drake, J. K. (2011). The role of academic advising in student retention and persistence. *About Campus*. July-August 2011.  
<https://doi.org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.1002/abc.20062>



- Evans, L. (2019). Implicit and informal professional development: what it ‘looks like’, how it occurs, and why we need to research it, *Professional Development in Education*, 45:1, 3-16, DOI: [10.1080/19415257.2018.1441172](https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2018.1441172)
- Ford, S. (2007). *Advisor training steps*. NACADA Clearinghouse.  
<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advisor-Training-Steps.aspx>
- Grapin, S. L., & Pereiras, M. I. (2019). Supporting diverse students and faculty in higher education through multicultural organizational development. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 13(4) 307-315.  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tep0000226>
- Grawe, N. D. (2021). *The agile college: How institutions successfully navigate demographic changes*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Grieger, I. (1996). A multicultural organizational development checklist for student affairs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37(5), 561–573.
- Grites, T. (1977). The 4x4 model for student development. *NASPA Journal*, 14, 33-37.
- Habley, W. R. (1987). The ACT National Center for the Advancement of Educational Practices. In *Academic advising conference: Outline and notes* (pp. 33-34).  
[www.nacada.ksu.edu/Portals/0/Clearinghouse/advisingissues/documents/AcademicAdvisingConferenceOutlineandNotes.pdf](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Portals/0/Clearinghouse/advisingissues/documents/AcademicAdvisingConferenceOutlineandNotes.pdf)
- Habley, W. R. (1995). Advisor training in the context of a teaching enhancement center. In R. E. Glennen and F. N. Vowell (Eds.) *Academic advising as a comprehensive campus process* (p. 76). National Academic Advising Association.

- Habley, W. R. (2009). Academic advising as a field of inquiry. *NACADA Journal*, 29(2), 76–83. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-29.2.76>
- Habley, W. R., & McClanahan, R. (2004). *What works in student retention? Four-year public colleges*. ACT, Inc.
- Habley, W., Valiga, M., McClanahan, R., & Burkum, K. (2010). *What works in student retention: Fourth national survey (report of all colleges and universities)*. ACT, Inc. <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/droptables/AllInstitutions.pdf>
- Higginson, L. (2000). A framework for training program content. In V. Gordon & W. R. Habley (Eds), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 298-307). Jossey-Bass.
- Hill, R. (1998). What sample size is “enough” in internet survey research? *Interpersonal Computing and Technology: An Electronic Journal for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 6(3-4).
- Huggett, K. D. (2000). Professional development in an uncertain profession: Finding a place for academic and career advisors. *NACADA Journal*, 20(2). 46-51. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-20.2.46>
- Jackson, B. W. (2005). The theory and practice of multicultural organization development in education. In M. L. Ouellett, (Ed.), *Teaching inclusively: Resources for course, department and institutional change in higher education*. (pp. 3-20). New Forums Press.
- Jackson, B. W., Holvino, E. (1988). *Multicultural organization development*. PCMA Working Paper Series #11. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/51124>

- Kalinoski, Z. T., Steele-Johnson, D., Peyton, E.J., Leas, K. E., Steinke, J., & Bowling, N.A. (2013). A meta-analytic evaluation of diversity training outcomes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34(8), 1076-1104. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.1002/job.1839>
- Kelley, K., Clark, B., Brown, V., Sitzia, J. (2003). Good practice in the conduct of reporting of survey research. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 15(3). 261-266.
- Kot, F. C. (2014). The impact of centralized advising on first-year academic performance and second-year enrollment behavior. *Research in Higher Education*, 55. 527-563.
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). Advising for student success. In V. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, pp. 68-84). Jossey-Bass.
- Kulik, C. T., Pepper, M. B., Roberson, L., and Parker, S. (2007) The rich get richer: Predicting participation in voluntary diversity training. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28(6). 753-769. <https://doi.org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.1002/job.444>
- Kulik, C. T., & Roberson, L. (2008). Diversity initiative effectiveness: What organizations can (and cannot) expect from diversity recruitment, diversity training, and formal mentoring programs. In A. P. Brief (Ed.), *Diversity at Work* (pp. 265–317).

- Larson, J., Johnson, A., Aiken-Wisniewski, S. A., Barkemeyer, J. (2018). What is academic advising? An application of analytic induction. *NACADA Journal*, 38(2), 81-93. <https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-38.2.81>
- Lawton, J. K. (2018). Academic advising as a catalyst for equity. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2018(184), 33–43. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.1002/he.20301>
- Lee, J. (2018). Affirmation, support, and advocacy: Critical race theory and academic advising. *NACADA Journal*, 38(1), 77–87. <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-17-028>
- Loeb, S., Dynarski, S., McFarland, D., Morris, P., Reardon, S., & Reber, S. (2017, February 28). Descriptive analysis in education: A guide for researchers. NCEE 2017-4023. *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED573325>
- Mann, N. (2018). Application of clinical judgment models to the development of academic advisors. *NACADA Journal*, 38(2), 61-71. <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-17-038>
- McClellan, J. L. (2007). Content Components for Advisor Training: Revisited. *NACADA clearinghouse of academic advising resources*. <https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advisor-Training-Components.aspx>

- Metzner, B. (1989). Perceived quality of academic advising: The effect on freshmen attrition. *American Educational Research Journal*, 26(3), 422-442.  
<https://doi.org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.3102/00028312026003402>
- Minnesota State (1996). *History and background*. Minnesota State.  
<https://www.minnstate.edu/board/docs-summaries/1996/december-history.html>
- Minnesota State. (2021). Minnesota State Equity 2030  
<https://www.minnstate.edu/Equity2030/>
- Minnesota State. (2023). About Minnesota State.  
<https://www.minnstate.edu/system/index.html>
- Minnesota Office of Higher Education. (2023). *Trends in enrollment characteristics of Minnesota postsecondary students*. [Data set].  
[http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/student\\_enroll\\_data2.cfm](http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/student_enroll_data2.cfm)
- Minnesota Planning. (1992). *Minnesota Milestones original report*. Minnesota Planning.  
[https://mn.gov/admin/assets/1992-minnesota-milestones-original-report\\_tcm36-220250.pdf](https://mn.gov/admin/assets/1992-minnesota-milestones-original-report_tcm36-220250.pdf)
- Musser, T., Hoover, T., & Fernandez, M. (2008). Get the horse before the cart: Conducting assessment of advisor development needs. *NACADA clearinghouse of academic advising resources*.  
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/tabid/3318/articleType/ArticleView/articleID/622.article.aspx>
- NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2017a). Academic advising core competencies model. <https://nacada.ksu.edu/About-Us/NACADA->

[Leadership/Administrative-Division/Professional-Development-Committee/PDC-Advisor-Competencies.aspx](#)

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2017b.). NACADA core values of academic advising.

<https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/CoreValues.aspx>

Pope, R. L. (1994). Multicultural organization development in student affairs: An introduction. *Journal of College Student Development*, 34, 201-205.

Pope, R. L., Reynolds, A. (1997). Student affairs core competencies: Integrating multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. *Journal of College Student Development*, 38. 266-277.

Pope, R. L., Reynolds, A., Mueller, J. (2014). *Creating multicultural change on campus*. Jossey-Bass.

Schulenberg, J. K., & Lindhorst, M. J. (2008). Advising is advising: Toward defining the practice and scholarship of academic advising. *NACADA Journal*, 28(1), 43–53.

<https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-28.1.43>

Seidman, A. (1991). The evaluation of a pre/post admissions/counseling process at a suburban community college: Impact on student satisfaction with the faculty and the institution, retention, and academic performance. *College and University*, 66, 223–232.

Shaffer, L. S., Zalewski, J. M., & Leveille, J. (2010). The professionalization of academic advising: Where are we in 2010? *NACADA Journal*, 30(1), 66–77.

<https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-30.1.66>

- Smith, C. L., & Allan, J. M. (2006). Essential functions of academic advising: What students want and get. *NACADA Journal*, 26(1). 56-66.  
<https://doi.org/10.12930/0271-9517-26.1.56>
- Smith, C. L., Allan, J. M. (2014). Does contact with advisors predict judgments and attitudes consistent with student success? A multi-institutional study. *NACADA Journal*, 34(1). 50-63. <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-13-019>
- Stratton, S. (2021). Population Research: Convenience Sampling Strategies. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, 36(4), 373-374. [doi:10.1017/S1049023X21000649](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049023X21000649)
- Sue, D. W. (1991). A model for cultural diversity training. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70(1). 99-105. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1991.tb01568.x>
- Thurmond, K. C. & Miller, M. A. (2006). The history of NACADA. *NACADA: The global community for academic advising*. <https://nacada.ksu.edu/About-Us/History.aspx>
- Tippetts, M. M., Brandley, A. T., Metro, J., King, M., Ogren, C., & Zick, C. D. (2020). Promoting persistence: The role of academic advisors. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 152102512092480.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025120924804>
- Vespa, J., Medina, L., & Armstrong, D. M. (2021, October 8). Demographic turning points for the United States: Population projections for 2020 to 2060. *Census.gov*.  
<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1144.pdf>

- Voller, J. G. (2011). Implications of professional development and reward for professional academic advisors. *NACADA clearinghouse for academic advising resource*: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Implications-for-professional-development-2011-National-Survey.aspx>
- Voller, J. G. (2012). Advisor training and development: Why it matters and how to get started. *NACADA clearinghouse of academic advising resources*.  
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advisor-training-and-development-Why-it-matters-and-how-to-get-started.aspx>
- Williams, D. A. (2013). *Strategic diversity leadership*. Stylus Publishing.
- Yoder, F., & Joslin, J. (2015). Advisor growth and development. In *New advisor guidebook: Mastering the art of academic advising* (pp. 301-315). Jossey-Bass.



## **Appendix A**

### **Informed Consent**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

You are invited to participate in a research study regarding your experiences with training in your role as an academic advisor. Your participation in this study will help us better understand training available to academic advisors. This research is being carried out by Doctoral Candidate Sara Leigh and Dr. Beatrix DeSantiago-Fjelstad, Ed.D.

#### **PROCEDURE**

If you agree to participate as a subject in this research, you will be asked to complete an online survey asking you questions about your experiences with training in relation to your role as an academic advisor. The survey will ask you to respond to a series of questions including some demographic questions. You can expect this survey to require about 15 minutes of your time to complete.

#### **POTENTIAL RISKS OF PARTICIPATION**

Responding to this survey will pose no greater risk to participants than what may occur in everyday life.

#### **VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE SURVEY**

Participation is voluntary. You have the option to choose not to participate in this research. You may stop taking the survey at any time by closing your web browser. Participation or nonparticipation will not impact your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits.

#### **STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Responses will be anonymous. However, whenever one works with online technology there is always a risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality and/or anonymity. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato IT Solutions Center (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

#### **CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS**

This research is being directed by Sara Leigh, Doctoral Candidate (Minnesota State University, Mankato) under the advising of Dr. Beatriz DeSantiago-Fjelstad, Ed.D. (Minnesota State University, Mankato). If you have any questions about this research study, please contact Sara Leigh at 952-567-3957/sara.leigh@mnsu.edu or Dr. Beatriz DeSantiago-Fjelstad at 651-216-2345/beatriz.desantiago-fjelstad@mnsu.edu. If you have questions about participants' rights and for related research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Research Board at 507-389-1242.

#### **STATEMENT of CONSENT**

"By clicking on the **Yes** button, I am indicating my informed consent to participate in this study. Also, the submission of this survey attests that I am at least 18 years of age or older. All questions that may have arisen have been answered by this document or the investigators listed above."

Please print a copy of this page for your future reference.

Minnesota State University, Mankato IRBNet# 1966610

Date of Minnesota State University, Mankato IRB approval: October 6, 2022

## Appendix B

### Qualtrics Advisor Training Survey

**1. How old are you?**

- 20 – 25 years old
- 26 – 35 years old
- 36 – 45 years old
- 46 – 55 years old
- 56 – 65 years old
- Prefer not to say

**2. How do you describe yourself?**

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/third gender
- Prefer to self-describe
- Prefer not to say

**3. Please select the category that best describes your race/ethnicity (please select only one response).**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more ethnic affiliations
- Prefer not to say

**4. How many total years have you been advising college students?**

- 0 – 3 years
- 3 – 6 years
- 6 – 9 years
- 9 – 12 years
- 12 – 15 years
- More than 15 years

- 5. How many years have you been in your current advising position?**
- 0 – 3 years
  - 3 – 6 years
  - 6 – 9 years
  - 9 – 12 years
  - 12 – 15 years
  - More than 15 years
- 6. When you started your current position, did you receive advisor training?**
- Yes
  - No
- (respondents answering ‘No’ skipped forward to Question 11)
- 7. Was the training you received formal (scheduled and covering specific topics) or informal (assigned a mentor or time spent shadowing other advisors) or a combination of both?**
- Formal
  - Informal
  - Both
- 8. Please select all the conceptual advising topics covered in your training from the list below.**
- The role of advising on your campus.
  - Advising approaches & strategies used on your campus.
  - Expected outcomes for advising on your campus.
  - Core values for advising on your campus.
  - How to create and maintain an equitable and inclusive environment as an advisor.
  - None of the above
- 9. Please select all the informational advising topics covered in your training from the list below.**
- The history, mission, vision, values & culture of your campus.
  - Curriculum, degree programs, and other academic requirements and options.
  - Specific policies, procedures, rules, and regulations for your campus.
  - Legal guidelines for advising, including privacy regulations and confidentiality.
  - Information technology applicable to advising role.

- Campus and community resources that support student success.
- Characteristics, needs, and experiences of the students on your campus.
- None of the above

**10. Please select all the relational advising topics covered in your training from the list below.**

- The value of creating and articulating a personal advising philosophy.
- Ways to create rapport and build advising relationships.
- How to plan for and conduct successful advising interactions.
- How to promote student understanding of the logic and purpose of required curriculum.
- Ways to facilitate problem-solving, decision-making, meaning making, planning and goal setting with advisees.
- The role of assessment, and personal and professional development to improve advising practice.
- How to communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner.
- None of the above.

**11. Please select all the *types* of training or professional development available to you in your current position.**

- Seminars, workshops, or symposiums offered on campus
- Seminars, workshops, or symposiums offered online
- Regional, national, or international professional conferences
- Opportunity to take courses on campus
- Opportunity to take courses online
- Regularly scheduled meetings (e.g. monthly)
- Guest speakers/presentations
- Other (Please specify)
- No training or professional development available.

**12. Please select all the *topics* of training or professional development available to you in your current position.**

- Diversity
- Frontline/customer service
- Mental health
- Student transfer
- Technology (new & existing)
- Other (Please specify)
- No training or professional development available

**13. Please choose the size classification that best fits your campus.**

- Very small – fewer than 500 students
- Small – 500 – 1,999 students
- Medium – 2,000 – 4,999 students
- Large – 5,000 – 9,999 students
- Very large – over 10,000 students
- Not sure

## Appendix C

### Invitation to Participate in Study

Hello,

My name is Sara Leigh, and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am conducting a research study about training for academic advisors in the Minnesota State system, and I am asking you to complete the survey in the link below to help me with that research (IRBNet #1966610).

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

**Follow this link to the Survey anonymously:**

[\\${1://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[\\${1://SurveyURL}](#)

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I appreciate your willingness, and your time, to help me with this research.

Sara Leigh  
Doctoral Student &  
Student Relations Coordinator  
University Extended Campus  
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[\\${1://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)