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# The Effects of Academic Advising on College Student Development in Higher Education

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The Effects of Academic Advising on College Student Development in Higher Education

By

Kelly Pargett

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts

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Under the Supervision of Professor Larry L. Dlugosh

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THE EFFECTS OF FACULTY ADVISING ON COLLEGE STUDENT  
DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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University of Nebraska, 2011

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This paper explored the relationship between faculty academic advising and college student development by examining factors such as a student's academic success, including grade point average, campus involvement, expected graduation date, and job placement upon graduation. The research studied the relationship by examining the student's age, gender, academic year, ethnicity, and grade point average. Results from this study will be significant to retention, graduation rate, and overall student success at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In addition, information gathered from student surveys can help the improvement of faculty advising for all advisors on campus. Results also indicated that the majority of the participants had seen any advisor that was available rather than seeing an assigned advisor and developing a relationship with a professional advisor.

The data suggested there was a relationship between academic advising and student development. There was also a relationship between academic advising and student satisfaction with college. Students who have created a relationship with their assigned faculty advisor reported having more satisfaction with their college experience and positively develop as a student. In addition, students who perceived their advisor was using a developmental style of advising indicated that they were more satisfied with their college experience. The more a student and his or her advisor discussed personal

and school-related issues, career options, college policies, academic deadlines, and study skills and tips, the more likely it was that the student positively developed and had a higher level of satisfaction with college. Grade point average was not statistically significant with academic advising or student development.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Student development can have a number of definitions to student affairs professionals. According to Rodgers (1990c), student development was defined as “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education” (p. 27; as cited in Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, Renn, 2010, p. 6). Another definition of student development, according to Sanford (1967), is a growth process within the student in which he/she “becomes increasingly able to integrate and act on many different experiences and influences” (p. 67). Student development occurs “when students are faced with new challenges in their lives, a response or way to cope with the situation must emerge” (Sanford, 1966; as cited in Gardner, 2009, p. 15). “In general, development is about becoming a more complex individual” (McEwen, 2005; as cited in Gardner, 2009, p. 15). Many theorists classify development into three different categories: psychosocial, social identity, and cognitive-structural development. Psychosocial development is defined as “issues that individuals face as they mature psychologically and experience contextual challenges that trigger dissonance, including life directions, and establishing belief systems” (Evans, 2011, p. 169). Cognitive-structural theories “examine how people think and make meaning out of their experiences” (p. 175). Social identity focuses on diversity issues surrounding students and how they can develop in a world of oppression and privilege. “How individuals and groups make meaning of the world they occupy is vital to understanding social identity, making social constructivism a worldview and method appropriate to topics...” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 235). Despite the varying definitions, one

common theme among theorists is that student development is a positive change within the students. However, student development is also a process and each individual's higher education environment will alter that process causing different challenges and obstacles be overcome. It is at the moments of challenge and obstacles when a student's academic advisor can help the individual get back on track of positive development.

The role of a faculty advisor is vital to student development; yet many students do not always reap the benefits of having a positive relationship with their faculty advisor. A faculty advisor plays an important role to students' academic success by mentoring students throughout their academic career and by providing them with expert advice and resources to enhance student learning and development. There is evidence that suggests how important this relationship is to the success of the student. "When viewed as an educational process and done well, academic advising plays a critical role in connecting students with learning opportunities to foster and support their engagement, success, and the attainment of key learning outcomes" (Campbell & Nutt, 2008, p. 4). The relationship between a student and their faculty advisor should continue beyond the academic walls. For example, the student and advisor should have a professional relationship that contains knowledge about their personal lives, specifically extracurricular activities, hobbies, and work. In addition, advisors should be attuned to the students' personal well-being and learning development. Due to the need of this dynamic relationship between the advisor and student, some researchers believe that it is up to the student to seek and maintain a relationship with their advisor and disclose information at their discretion, while others believe it is up to the advisor to reach out to

the student. However, the responsibility falls on both parties. There is a need for dual effort to form a professional relationship between the faculty advisor and the student.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the impacts of faculty advising on student development in higher education. In addition, factors that influence student satisfaction with college and student academic success as a result of the relationship with a faculty advisor were also explored. Such information could provide important information to higher education leaders and the role of the academic advisor. Such information could also benefit future students' academic success and a college or university's retention and graduation rate. The research for this study was based on responses gathered from a student survey of undergraduate students with junior or senior status. The survey used for this study was the Academic Advising Inventory created by Roger B. Winston, Jr. and Janet A. Sandor. The survey was composed of seventy-two questions that focused on the relationship between the student and his/her academic advisor.

### Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between academic advising and positive student development?
2. Is there a relationship between academic advising and a student's grade point average?
3. Is there a relationship between academic advising and student satisfaction with students' higher education experience?

In addition, the researcher explored the following assumption to gain better insight to the role the academic advisor plays on advisee student development.

1. Students who use and have a professional relationship with their advisor have a higher grade point average, have discussed vocational and career opportunities for the student, and are satisfied with their college experience.

### Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were provided:

Student development: “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education” (Rodgers, 1990c, p. 27; as cited in Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, Renn, 2010, p. 6).

Student satisfaction: “Satisfaction is a person’s attitude toward an object. It represents a complex assemblage of cognitions (beliefs or knowledge), emotions (feelings, sentiments or evaluations), and behavior tendencies” (Hamner and Organ, 1978, p. 216; as cited in Aldemir & Gulcan, 2004, p. 110). When a person is feeling satisfied, they are having positive feelings toward that object (Aldemir & Gulcan, 2004, p. 110-111).

### Limitations

The population of this study was limited to the University of Nebraska students in Lincoln, Nebraska. The students in this study were juniors and seniors in select classes and do not represent the University of Nebraska as a whole. All participants

were students enrolled in the College of Business Administration and mostly Caucasian. The participants of the study were mostly Caucasian students. The survey directions asked participants to rate their answers on their academic advisor this school year. Because of the time of year the AAI was administered, some students may not have seen an advisor this early in the year. In addition, the AAI was composed of 72 questions which may have been too lengthy for some participants to answer honestly and truthfully because they wanted to finish the survey quickly.

### Significance of Study

This study examined the relationship between faculty academic advisors and the effect advising has on student development. The research uncovered key insights with strategic importance. Every higher education institution needs to have effective faculty advisors in order to increase student development. Student development can in turn benefit enrollment, retention, and graduation rates which prove that an institution has done its job by giving students an education they desired. This study can help determine if faculty advisors are doing what they say they are doing: enhancing student development and synthesizing students' educational experiences with their aspirations which extend learning beyond the campus. Information from this study will be able to help administrators understand the students' viewpoints of their advisor and determine just how important academic advising is to student development. Do students that have a professional relationship with their advisor get good grades? Are students that rarely seek advising on track to graduate on time? Are students who meet with their advisor regularly more involved on and off campus? Do students who were able to contact their advisor throughout the course of their college career find jobs sooner than students who

did not contact their advisor? Information collected from this study showed the impact faculty advising had on student development, including academic success, student satisfaction, and job placement. The results of this study can be used to increase the effectiveness of academic advising and the impact advising has on student development in college.

### Analytical Process

Because the researcher explored the relationship between faculty advisors and student development, an ANOVA and multiple regression was used to assess this relationship. In addition, a correlation matrix was analyzed to explore various relationships between academic advising and student development, student satisfaction, age, gender, ethnicity, and GPA.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between a student and their faculty advisor is an important relationship to have. The student has an opportunity to get to know their professional advisor over the course of several years, making it easier for the student to address concerns or ask any questions to their advisor. “Academic advising has the advantage of providing students with repeated one-on-one interactions across multiple years” (Pizzolato, 2008, p. 21). In addition, the student-faculty relationship should be one where both the student and the advisor know personal information about the other. For example, the advisor should know where the student works, what their hobbies and interests are, and maybe even some family information. This relationship can provide many benefits to the student. The relationship between a student and their advisor can increase student development and increase academic success for the student. “Academic advising has moved toward providing guidance to students that focuses on meeting their learning and developmental needs” (Pizzolato, 2008, p. 19). In every institution, there are many professors and advisors with whom students might have interactions; however, it is the meetings with one’s faculty advisor that increases student development. In college, “students are exposed to a variety of faculty or adjunct-faculty members for different courses, but course instructors often do not know students well enough or see them frequently enough to attend to each student’s specific developmental needs” (Choate and Granello, 2006, p. 116). Although these continuous interactions with various faculty members do not hinder student development, faculty advisors can help a

student grow academically and personally because of the professional relationship between the student and advisor.

The faculty advisor has many roles and responsibilities when it comes to advising students. “Advisors are expected to share their knowledge of major and degree requirements, help students schedule their courses, and generally facilitate progress to degree in a timely manner” (Baker and Griffin, 2010, p. 2). The ultimate goal of an advisor and for the institution is to see students graduate; however, there is a long road that must be travelled in order to reach that goal. The goal in advising is not to increase or decrease a particular rate, such as decreasing the dropout rate and increasing graduation rate; rather, the goal in advising is to create a relationship with the student so that the student is getting the most out of their education.

The academic advisor for any student presumably holds the key to progress by coaching new and continuing students through general education choices, major selections, minors and possibly certificate options. Misadvisement can have a negative impact on students who enroll in unsuitably advanced courses and lose precious financial aid in an unsuccessful attempt in such courses.

(Hollis, 2009, Advisement Model ¶2)

In a study conducted by Dillon and Fischer (2000), student perceptions of the characteristics and functions of academic advisors were explored by surveying faculty advisors from a Minnesota college. Faculty based their responses on ranking what they thought to be effective characteristics of an advisor (Harrison, 2009, p. 231). Of their responses, the top characteristics associated with being an effective advisor were

knowledgeable, available, communication, advocacy, authenticity, accountability, and approachable (p. 231). Faculty perceptions of advising indicated that these characteristics were necessary in their role of being an advisor to increase student development and guide students in the desired track (p. 231). Not only did this study provide insight to what faculty advisors view as important in advising students, but also a workshop conducted by Marques (2005) found the top five best practices for faculty advising to be:

- 1) Advisors should be involved in and knowledgeable of the student's position and program.
- 2) Advisors should be attuned to the student's personal well-being in the learning environment.
- 3) Advisors should be available to the student in a multitude of ways (in person and by telephone, e-mail, and fax).
- 4) Advisors should be honest with adult learners.
- 5) Advisors should develop and maintain a peer-to-peer relationship with the adult learner.

(Marques, 2005, p. 4-5)

These five best practices to academic advising should be employed by every faculty advisor to ensure that each student has the opportunity to attend college in a supportive environment that enhances learning and development. The faculty advisor will be the one constant person throughout the course of a student's college career and knows more than anyone else the needs of the student (Choate & Granello, 2006, p. 117). In addition,

the advisor can also “tailor advising methods to match the developmental needs of an advisee” and can also “interact with other program faculty, when necessary, to ensure the optimal learning environment for that student” (p. 117).

Despite the fact that there are many roles assigned to a faculty advisor and as much work and effort that goes into advising a student, there should be just as much work for the student to be willing to develop academically and personally. Academic advising can be viewed as the responsibility of the advisor to make contact with the student; however, it is just as much the student’s responsibility to seek advising to further their academic success. Pascarelli and Terenzini (2005) have found in past research “that the quality of effort or involvement students make in meeting the requirements of their formal academic program has an impact on their self-ratings of growth in career-related competencies and skills” (p. 522). Students must make an effort in furthering their academic career and ensuring that they are on the path to degree completion.

College administrators need to make advising an important, monitored, rewarded activity. Administrative ignorance or neglect of advising will usually mean that students will receive less than they deserve from their college education. Good advising is a team effort: administrators, faculty or staff advisors, and students.

Advising is a key component of a college career. (Petress, 1996, p. 91)

Receiving quality academic advising needs to be sought after by both the advisor and the student in order for it to be a successful process and for the student to see the benefits of having an advisor. For example, advisors and faculty members might find it challenging to guide a student who is undecided in their major because the student might not reach

out to the advisor making it more work for the advisor to contact the student. “Faculty members frequently feel quite uncomfortable with the process of helping ‘undecided’ students gather sufficient data with which to make intelligent choices” (Stein & Spille, 1974, p. 61). Student effort is just as important as the advisor being reachable and approachable, which means student focus and preparedness is a key element when meeting with one’s advisor.

There are two approaches to advising students: one is called prescriptive, where the advisor tells the student what needs to be done in order to graduate; and the other is called developmental, where the advisor and student collaborate together to ensure that the student graduates on time. A prescriptive advisor does not allow the student to make their own choices in the direction of their education, but rather is told what they should do according to their advisor. The relationship between a student and advisor who uses prescriptive advising is very “impersonal and authority-based, answering only specific questions and not taking individual development into consideration” (Jordan, 2000; as cited in Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009, Developmental vs. Prescriptive Advising, para. 3). On the other hand, a developmental advisor allows the student to make all choices in their education, resulting in the student feeling as if they have chosen their own path rather than being told what they should do. “A developer extends the kinds of support provided through a mentoring relationship; however, in addition to career and psychosocial support, a developer engages in knowledge development, information sharing, and support as students set and achieve goals” (Baker and Griffin, 2010, p. 5). Allowing the student to choose their own direction will leave them feeling more satisfied with the career path they desire and take an interest in their own education.

Developmental advising “stimulates and supports students in their quest for an enriched quality of life” and it focuses on identifying and accomplishing life goals” (Hale et al., 2009, Developmental vs. Prescriptive Advising, para. 1). In a study conducted at a mid-South university, 429 students were surveyed to determine the style of advising used by their current advisor and also the advising style that the student preferred. Results indicated that nearly all (95.5%) students preferred the developmental advising style and 78% out of all students were actually receiving developmental advising (Hale et al., 2009, para. 1). Although faculty advising is one key to student success, the type of advising is crucial to student development. Every student is different, but past research has shown that most students prefer developmental advising rather than prescriptive advising because it not only allows them to make their own decisions in their education, but it also allows them to create a professional relationship with their advisor in order to seek guidance and support.

Recently, many universities have implemented advising centers that help with the increase in enrollment and influx of students needing guidance. There are various models of advising which include the faculty-only model, split model, supplementary model, total intake model, and satellite model. The faculty model, where a student is assigned to a faculty member in their department, is still the most popular and widely used among all campuses. However, this model has recently been declining and is now only used in 15 percent of public, four year institutions (Tuttle, 2000, p. 16). The split model which implements the use of advising centers has become increasingly popular. In 2000, this model was used in 27 percent of all institutions. One reason the split model has become so popular is because it suits the needs of a certain group of students. “The popularity of

the split model, which includes an advising center for a designated group of students, such as those with undeclared majors, with all other students assigned to academic departments has grown in recent years” (p. 16). The supplementary model uses advising centers like the split model, but students are also assigned to a faculty advisor once the student has declared a degree of study. This model is not as popular for larger colleges and universities; rather, this model is popular among private colleges (p. 16). The total intake model is used in community and junior colleges. This model “involves staff advising all students for a particular period of time and then transferring them to departments” (p. 16). Finally, the satellite model allows each academic unit responsible for their own advising, but conduct advising across the campus. This model has become more popular with the increase in distance education (p. 16).

Although faculty advising and advising centers have recently become more popular, the reason for their popularity is because of higher student enrollment. Higher education today has seen an increase in student enrollment despite the recent recession in 2008. “Enrollment increased phenomenally—in the thirty years between 1945 and 1975, they rose by more than 500 percent, from around 2 million to 11 million students” (Cohen and Kisker, 2010, p. 208). As a result of higher enrollment in higher education, there arose a high demand of academic advising in order to increase the retention of students and guide students to degree completion. As the diversity of the student body and concerns for student retention increased, “so did the need for professional advisors and comprehensive advising systems” (Frost, 1991; as cited in Tuttle, 2000, p. 15).

For most institutions, retention is a key objective of the advising effort. Research confirms that academic advising, student services that connect the student to the

institution, and faculty-student contact can have a significant effect on student motivation, involvement, and retention. (Chickering and Gamson, 1987; Noel, Levitz, Saluri, and Associates, 1985; Frost, 1991; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993; Glennen, 1995; as cited in Tuttle, 2000, p. 16)

Faculty advising is an important component in retention effort. Although faculty advising serves many purposes, the retention of students is a crucial part to the success of an institution. Because faculty advising is a key part to increasing student retention and the fact that there has been an increase in advising centers in higher education, retention has, in fact, increased. According the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), retention of students has increased across all higher education institutions.

Table 1 Retention of first-time degree-seeking undergraduates at degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, control, and type of institution

| Control, type, and percent of applications accepted | First-time degree-seekers (adjusted entry cohort), <sup>1</sup> by entry year |                  | Students from adjusted cohort returning in the following year |                  | Percent of first-time undergraduates retained |              |
|---|---|------------------|---|------------------|---|--------------|
|   | 2006  | 2007             | 2007  | 2008             | 2006 to 2007                                  | 2007 to 2008 |
| 1   | 2   | 3                | 4   | 5                | 6   | 7            |
|   | Full-time student retention   |                  |   |                  |   |              |
| <b>All institutions</b>                             | <b>2,171,714</b>  | <b>2,269,712</b> | <b>1,542,175</b>  | <b>1,619,269</b> | <b>71.0</b>                                   | <b>71.3</b>  |
| Public institutions                                 | 1,524,044   | 1,603,819        | 1,072,644   | 1,132,790        | 70.4  | 70.6         |
| Not-for-profit institutions                         | 466,139   | 477,369          | 369,084   | 375,721          | 79.2  | 78.7         |
| For-profit institutions                             | 181,531   | 188,524          | 100,447   | 110,758          | 55.3  | 58.8         |
| 4-year institutions                                 | 1,458,731   | 1,505,161        | 1,115,529   | 1,152,921        | 76.5  | 76.6         |
| Public institutions                                 | 912,401   | 936,000          | 711,490   | 732,384          | 78.0  | 78.2         |
| Open admissions                                     | 62,724  | 60,815           | 38,839  | 38,724           | 61.9  | 63.7         |
| 90 percent or more accepted                         | 68,835  | 66,114           | 49,274  | 46,731           | 71.6  | 70.7         |
| 75.0 to 89.9 percent accepted                       | 244,177   | 237,913          | 185,457   | 180,287          | 76.0  | 75.8         |
| 50.0 to 74.9 percent accepted                       | 417,093   | 439,824          | 336,199   | 356,969          | 80.6  | 81.2         |

Although retention is important to every higher education institution, there is more to getting an education than what the enrollment and retention rates are, such as the quality of the education being received and the development of the student throughout college. Not only does faculty advising benefit student retention, but it also increases the number of students graduating due to students taking the proper courses and meeting the requirements to stay on track for graduation. “Research consistently indicates that academic advising can play a role in students’ decisions to persist and in their chances of

graduating” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 404). According to the National Academic Advising Association, research has shown that campuses do not have a way of ensuring that students are receiving quality advising from their advisors. This affects student development because students are missing out on one-on-one interaction with a professional in the field (Recruitment and Retention, 2004, p. 8). Because of this uncertainty in quality advising, colleges and universities could be seeing top-notch students transferring or dropping out due to misdirection and poor advising; therefore, little student development is taking place. “Metzner (1989) found that high-quality academic advising had a significant but indirect effect on retention through increased student satisfaction, higher grades, and a decreased intent to leave the institution” (Hale et al., 2009, Student Satisfaction with Advising, para. 1). Keeping students satisfied with their advisors increases the likelihood that they will also be satisfied with their education because they know they are on the right track and do not feel lost. “Given the important role of academic advising in student retention, serious efforts to improve retention should be grounded in the evaluation of student perceptions, desires, and satisfaction with academic advising” (Hale et al., 2009, para. 4). Making improvements in academic advising should be the focus of the institution in order to increase student retention and degree completion among students.

Faculty advising not only has the potential to increase student retention, but it can also help the student be prepared for the workforce upon graduation. As a student develops throughout college, they are preparing to enter the working world and use the skills and knowledge they have acquired for the past two to four years or more. The relationship a student has with their faculty advisor should be a relationship in which the

student and advisor have talked about vocational and career options for the student upon degree completion.

More and more students are asking questions about possible careers to pursue and are taking an interest in career programs and career planning. Students then seem to be taking an active interest in the relationship of education to their life after college. (Walsh, 1979, p. 446)

Because of the relationship advisors and their students have, they should also be able to talk about student goals for the future, and it is imperative that advisors know students' future career goals in order to apply their coursework to their possible career options.

Openly talking about the goals that students have and incorporating those goals into the advising process will continually remind students of their ultimate goal and can help them remain in school; hence increasing student retention and degree completion.

Despite the many roles a faculty advisor must play in higher education, one responsibility of an advisor is to talk about career and vocational goals with their advisees.

Today, academic advising and career guidance surface as central educational activities; colleges and universities that value the career-related needs of their students must develop strategies that will elevate the importance of academic and career advising. Therefore, there must be a commitment to academic advising as a significant educational mission of the university at all levels of the administrative hierarchy...Anything short of this level of commitment may result in an inferior, dissipated program of academic advising. (Wilder, 1982, p. 107)

A quality advising system will incorporate the students' needs, goals, and desires to ensure that students are getting the most out of their education and satisfied with their college academic career. The years a student spends in college is to prepare them for the working world. Students should feel that they are able to contribute to society and become members of an organization and a community. "We should view sound academic and career advising as an essential adjunct to a good instructional program; together they constitute a system which helps students to realize their full potential of becoming effectively-functioning members of a larger community" (Wilder, 1982, p. 108). In order to effectively incorporate career advising into faculty advising, there are steps that institutions should take in order to set up functioning advising system. Those steps include:

1. The institution should definite and appropriate measures to elevate academic advising to a position of recognized institutional worth.
2. The institution should act decisively to develop an academic advising policy statement. This statement should emphasize the institution's commitment to academic advising as an essential educational mission and should be articulated to all students and faculty.
3. The institution should devise a meaningful and equitable reward system for participants in the academic advising program.
4. The institution should develop an appropriate academic advising selection criterion for members of the teaching faculty and others who assume academic advising responsibilities.

5. The institution should appoint a Commission of Academic Advising. The commission should include representatives of various university communities—faculty, staff, and students.
6. The chief academic officer should request appointment of one person from each academic college to coordinate its academic advising program.
7. Academic deans should request assignment of one person from each academic department to assume responsibilities as departmental advising coordinator.
8. The departmental advising coordinator should develop close working relationships with professional staff in career planning and placement, records and registrations, counseling services, financial aid, etc. This kind of relationship will contribute to development of more effective, creative, and broad-based academic advising.
9. Based on the number of majors, each academic department should determine an appropriate number of faculty members to assume academic advising responsibilities.
10. The chief academic office should, after consultation with the academic deans and other staff members, select a cadre of faculty and staff members to serve as academic advisors to undecided students.
11. Appropriate institutional personnel should develop a faculty advisor training module designed to train faculty and staff members who assume academic advising responsibilities.

12. Appropriate institutional personnel should be assigned responsibility to develop a 2- or 3-hour semester career development course, a course particularly attracted to undecided students.
13. Appropriate personnel from career placement and planning should assume responsibility for providing timely information to current and projected job trends, employment outlooks, wage and earning information, and other career information to academic advisors throughout the various colleges.
14. Appropriate institutional personnel should be assigned chief responsibility for development of appropriate evaluation instruments for assessing the academic advising system.

(Wilder, 1982, p. 108-110).

With these steps in place, there can be a checks and balance system in place in order to ensure that faculty academic advisors are providing the best descriptive advising to students they possibly can. They are also held accountable for their advising and to keep up with other advising offices on campus, such as career advising. In order to help students plan for their future career goals, advisors must be able to refer students to the proper offices or be knowledgeable on needed job skills for particular careers and high and low demand careers. Having these types of resources available to students will enhance the relationship between the student and advisor and also increase the likelihood that students will take an active role in their learning and development.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the impacts of faculty advising on student development in higher education. In addition, factors that influence students' satisfaction with college and students' academic success as a result of the relationship of one's faculty advisor were also explored.

#### Setting

This study was conducted in two different classrooms in the College of Business Administration (CBA) building on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's city campus.

#### Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between academic advising and positive student development?
2. Is there a relationship between academic advising and a student's grade point average?
3. Is there a relationship between academic advising and student satisfaction with students' higher education experience?

In addition, the researcher explored the following assumption to gain better insight to the role the academic advisor plays on advisee student development.

1. Students who use and have a professional relationship with their advisor have a higher grade point average, have discussed vocational and career opportunities for the student, and are satisfied with their college experience.

## Subjects

### Population

The population for this study was comprised of College of Business Administration students of junior and senior status from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Participants were selected at random and based upon the approval of their professor. The total number of participants included in this study was 84; however, with 8 participants not completing the entire survey, only 76 participants comprised the sample for this study.

### Instrumentation

One instrument was used for this study: The Academic Advising Inventory (AAI) developed by Roger B. Winstor and Janet A. Sandor in 1984. The original survey and manual were provided for free online with the permission of the creators of the AAI. The instrument was developed to answer two questions concerning advising programs: “How well is the program progressing or operating on a day-to-day basis? and What were outcomes of the programs or what differences did advising make in students’ lives?” (Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 4). There are two kinds of evaluations that address these two questions: formative and summative (Brown, 1978; Brown & Sanstead, 1982; as cited in Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 4). Formative evaluation is the “process, that is, is the advising program on track? Are the expected reactions of students being observed?

What can be done next week to make the program more effective or to overcome an unexpected obstacle?” (Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 4). In addition, the main focus of formative evaluation is identifying any problems or troubles with the current advising system students are receiving and how to monitor those problems (p. 4). Data collected through formative evaluation includes informal discussions with staff, observations, and written student records (p. 4). Summative evaluation “focuses on outcomes, that is, asks questions about whether the program reached its goals or objectives for the year or whether one approach was more effective or efficient than another” (p. 4). Data can be gathered in summative evaluations that allow students and administrators to intervene non-effective advising and to implement new techniques that are going to promote student development.

In addition to formative and summative evaluations, there are two different styles of advising that were addressed in the AAI. The first style of advising was prescriptive advising, which included a focus on the students’ limitations, grades and credits, very little responsibility, and a lack of relationship between the advisor and student. The other style of advising is developmental advising. Developmental advising focuses on the potentialities of students rather than their limitations, students are active in their advising versus lazy, and they get a sense of mastery and fulfillment in their education (Crookston, 1972; as cited in Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 8). In addition, students have a say in the direction of their education and a responsibility rather than being told what to do and throughout the student’s college career, there is a relationship that has been developed between the advisor and student (Crookston, 1972; as cited in Winston & Sandor, 1982, p. 8). Developmental advising “both stimulates and supports students in their quest for

an enriched quality of life” and focuses on “identifying and accomplishing life goals, acquiring skills and attitudes that promote intellectual and personal growth, and sharing concerns for each other and for the academic community” (Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1984, p. 19). The AAI fills a void in academic advising and is used as a tool to compare advising systems across departments, colleges, and institutions (Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 9).

The AAI is composed of five parts. Part I is called the Developmental-Prescriptive Scale and is composed of 14 pairs of statements with each statement representing a developmental style of advising or a prescriptive style of advising (Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 10). The statements were developed by eight expert judges whose writings on academic advising proved to show extensive experience in the field of academic advising (p. 10). The participants answered the questions that best described their current advisor. Within the Developmental-Prescriptive Scale there are three subscales: Personalizing Education (PE), Academic Decision-Making (ADM), and Selecting Courses (SC) (p. 11). Personalizing Education “reflects a concern for the student’s total education, including career/vocational planning, extracurricular activities, personal concerns, goal setting, and identification and utilization of resources on campus” (p. 11). High scores (33-64) in this subscale reflect a developmental style of advising used by the advisor and the advisor and student have created a caring relationship, they negotiate responsibilities, and the advisor takes an interest in the student’s total education both inside and outside the classroom walls (p. 11). Academic Decision-Making includes a process of “monitoring academic progress, collecting information and assessing the student’s interests and abilities concerning academic concentrations, as well as other

areas, and then carrying through by registering for appropriate courses” (p. 11). High scores (17-32) in this subscale reflect a developmental style of advising given by the advisor and the “advisor helps students evaluate academic progress and identify steps or consider alternatives. The advisor then trusts students to carry through and take responsibility for their own decisions” (Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 11). Selecting Courses “deals with the process of course selection, first determining specific course needs and then planning an appropriate schedule” (p. 11-12). High scores (9-16) in this subscale reflect a developmental style of advising between the advisor and student and “advisors who collaborate with students to evaluate academic course needs and then suggest important considerations in planning a schedule” (p. 12). Total summed scores for Part I can range from 14-118 with scores of 53 or higher indicating a developmental style of advising.

Part II of the AAI is called Advisor-Advisee Activity Scale and is composed of five advisor-advisee activity subscales which measure the frequency of a particular activity or behavior between the student and advisor. The first scale is called Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationships (PDIR). This scale analyzes activities between the advisor and advisee such as:

- (1) Interpersonal exchanges that serve as foundation for a friendly personal relationship
- (2) Discussing student’s college experiences—both classroom-related and extracurricular activities
- (3) Addressing personal issues, such as academic or personal problems and values
- (4) Discussing both short-term and long-range plans for the future.

(Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 12)

Exploring Institutional Policies (EIP) is the second subscale and addresses whether or not the advisor and advisee spend time talking about rules and regulations including transferring credits and academic probation, study abroad programs, financial aid issues, and other campus resources and services (Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 12). The third subscale is Registration and Class Scheduling (RCS). This scale includes activities such as signing registration forms, planning classes for the future collaboratively, and adjusting classes if needed (p. 12). The fourth subscale is called Teaching Personal Skills (TPS) and addresses activities such as study skills, tips on studying, and time management between homework and extracurricular activities (p. 12). The fifth subscale is called Academic Majors and Courses (AMC) and addresses activities that include certain requirements for majors, the process of declaring a major, possible academic majors for students based on their interests, and career options for the future and opportunities for student jobs while in school (p. 12).

Part III of the AAI is called Satisfaction with Advising and addresses the satisfaction level of students with the advising they have received either through their faculty advisors or through an academic advisor through an advising center. This scale questions students on their “overall satisfaction, accuracy of information provided, adequacy of notice about important deadlines, availability of advising when desired, and amount of time available during advising sessions” (Winston & Sandor, 1984, p. 12).

Part IV of the AAI is the demographic information that asks general information from the students including the type of advising they have received thus far.

Part V of the AAI is the same format as Part I; however, students answer the statements based on the type of advising they prefer from their advisor. These answers are then compared to the type of advising they are currently receiving (or not receiving).

### Data Collection Procedures

This quantitative survey developed by Roger B. Winston and Janet A. Sandor was developed to survey a large number of students and distributed to different institutions to compare advising systems across higher education. For this study, survey data was collected within the classroom of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. No other higher education institutions were given this survey. The researcher consulted with her advisor for the best method to collect data and the Academic Advising Inventory was then selected. The researcher received approval from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board to continue her study (IRB # 20110511687 EX, Appendix A). After receiving permission from Roger B. Winston by telephone and e-mail, the researcher then began to e-mail various UNL professors at random to receive permission to survey their students the first 15 minutes of class (E-mail, Appendix B). The researcher received no response back from any of the professors, so another e-mail was sent to the same professors in addition to several others. Only one professor responded back allowing the researcher to enter the classroom to distribute the surveys and collect data from his students during class time. Participants were read a brief statement about the survey and directions how to fill out the survey (See Appendix C). They were then allowed approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the surveys as the researcher picked them up when they were finished. Students had the option to not participate in the study and several students did not complete the survey. The students who agreed to participate

in the study were told that if they completed the survey, it was their consent to participate in the study. The survey was distributed to two classrooms total in the College of Business Administration building in September, 2011. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the participants were told to not put their names on the surveys or any form of identification, such as phone number, e-mail, address, etc.

The data received contained the responses completed for each survey.

Unfortunately, not everyone from the sample completed the surveys or completed them in the correct way.

Table 2

*Sample Response by Survey*

| Survey       | Sample | Received |
|--------------|--------|----------|
| Participants | 84     | 76       |

Out of 84 students in both classrooms, 76 participants made up the sample and 76 surveys were completed and used for this study.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

This study analyzed the impacts of faculty advising on student development in higher education. In addition, factors that influence students' satisfaction with college and students' academic success as a result of the relationship of one's faculty advisor were also explored. Specifically, this study explored advising styles and student satisfaction with the advising they received. The purpose of the analysis was to explore

the impacts that academic advising had on student development. In addition, the analysis explored the two different types of advising and the satisfaction levels of the students with the advising they received. Of the 84 students surveyed, only 76 surveys were successfully completed and used for the study. Therefore, 8 surveys were removed from the dataset. The researcher made arrangements to analyze the data collected for the purpose of this study with the Nebraska Evaluation and Research Center (NEAR Center). The researcher computed Cronbach's Alpha to determine if the scales and subscales were internally consistent. ANOVA and Pearson r correlations were both used to determine the relationship between the advisor and the student. The following items were removed from the dataset to increase the reliability of the scales and subscales: Question 1, question 2, question 33, and question 59.

Table 3

*Scale of Subscale Questions Removed*

| <b>Scale or Subscale</b>                    | <b>Questions Removed</b> | <b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Developmental-Prescriptive                  | Question 1               | .707                                  |
| Personalizing Education                     | Question 1               | .727                                  |
| *Academic Decision Making                   | Question 14              | .545                                  |
| Selecting Courses                           | None                     | .241                                  |
| Advisor-Advisee Activity                    |                          |                                       |
| Personal Dev. & Interpersonal Relationships | None                     | .927                                  |
| Exploring Institutional Policies            | Question 33              | .504                                  |
| **Teaching Personal Skills                  | Question 15              | .488                                  |
| Academic Majors & Courses                   | None                     | .832                                  |
| Satisfaction with Advising                  | None                     | .870                                  |

\* Indicates that the  $\alpha$  was below the recommended cutoff of .70.

\*\* Indicates that the scale only had two items.

Part V was found not internally consistent. The questions for this scale were the same questions for Part I. Students may have found it unnecessary to answer the same questions twice even though Part I was asking about their current advisor and Part V was asking about students' preferred advising style. In addition, the AAI was composed of 72 questions and students may have been not answered truthfully and thoughtfully due to length of survey.

After the researcher computed Cronbach's Alpha, the researcher summed the scores for the predictors for each scale in this study. Summed scores for each scale were computed to create predictor variables. There were eight predictors tested in this study. Those predictors were: Developmental-Prescriptive Advising (DPA), Personal Development & Interpersonal Relationships (PDIR), Exploring Institutional Policies (EIP), Teaching Personal Skills (TPS), Academic Majors & Courses (AMC), Satisfaction with college (SATIS), Registration (RCS), and Part 5. Each participant had an overall score that indicated whether they viewed their advisor as developmental or prescriptive. Scores 14-52 indicate participants view their advisor as prescriptive and scores 53-117 indicate that participants view their advisor as developmental.

The researcher removed items 50-53 because these items were already asked in the demographic information at the beginning of the study.

The results of this study are described in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the impacts of faculty advising on student development in higher education. In addition, factors that influence students' satisfaction with college and students' academic success as a result of the relationship of one's faculty advisor were also explored. Such information could provide important information to higher education leaders and the role of the academic advisor. Such information could also benefit future students' academic success and a college or university's retention and graduation rate. The research for this study was based on responses gathered from a student survey of undergraduate students with a junior or senior status. Results from this study will be significant to student retention in higher education. In addition, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln can use the results from this study to improve the advising styles of academic and faculty advisors to ensure that students are receiving the advising they desire and deserve.

#### Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between academic advising and positive student development?
2. Is there a relationship between academic advising and a student's grade point average?
3. Is there a relationship between academic advising and student satisfaction with students' higher education experience?

In addition, the researcher explored the following assumption to gain better insight to the role the academic advisor plays on advisee student development.

1. Students who use and have a professional relationship with their advisor have a higher grade point average, have discussed vocational and career opportunities for the student, and are satisfied with their college experience.

### Participant Population

The population for this study was made up of both juniors and seniors enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Students did not receive extra credit or any type of incentive for participating in this study. With the help of one UNL professor, the researcher was able to distribute the AAI to 84 students in two different classes located at the College of Business Administration.

The sample of this study included 76 junior and senior undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. All participants are students at the College of Business Administration. Only 76 surveys were used due to 8 students not correctly completing the AAI or not willing to participate in the study. Therefore, those 8 surveys were removed from the study. Of the 76 participants, 52 were male and 24 were female with 65 out of all participants being Caucasian/White. Fifty-seven of the 76 participants had a GPA of 3.0 or better, leaving only 19 students that participated in this study with a GPA of 2.9 or lower. Of the 57 participants that had a 3.0 or better, 25 participants had a GPA of 3.5 or better with only 1 student having a GPA of 4.0.

Table 4

*Participants by Gender*

| Female | Male |
|--------|------|
| 24     | 52   |
| N=76   |      |

Table 5

*Participants by Ethnicity*

| Caucasian | African<br>American | Asian | Hispanic | Other |
|-----------|---------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| 65        | 2                   | 4     | 4        | 1     |

## Research Questions/Findings

Three research questions were tested using statistical analysis to explore if there was a relationship between academic advising and student GPA, student satisfaction, student development, and a positive overall college experience for the student. The following is a description of each research question and the relevant findings.

1. Is there a relationship between academic advising and positive student development?

This research question required analysis of all eight summed subscales for this study. A multiple regression ANOVA was run with all predictors tested for this study. Not all predictors in this study were significant with student development. The researcher removed GPA because the initial multiple regressions model was not significant when GPA was included in the model. The final multiple regressions model was statistically significant with PDIR (Personal Development & Interpersonal Relationships) and EIP (Exploring Institutional Policies).

Table 6

*Academic Advising Effects on Student Development*

## Model Summary

| Predictors | R    | R Square |
|------------|------|----------|
| PDIR & EIP | .622 | .387     |

PDIR and EIP was a contributor for 39% of the variability in student development. For a one unit increase in PDIR, there is a .857 increase in the predicted value on development. The better the relationship the student has with his or her advisor, the more they positively develop as a student. In addition, there was a positive correlation between development and PDIR,  $r=.580$ . The more the advisor and student talk about the student's experiences both in the classroom and in their personal lives, short- and long-term goals, and other personal issues, the more a student develops in college. PDIR was the strongest predictor of student development.

Table 7

*Summary of Pearson Correlation and Student Development*

|             | PDIR | TPS  | AMC  | SATIS |
|-------------|------|------|------|-------|
| Correlation | .580 | .427 | .314 | .346  |
| Sig.        | .000 | .000 | .008 | .003  |

The researcher also created a correlation matrix. There was a significant correlation between student development and teaching personal skills (TPS),  $r=.427$ . The more the advisor and student discuss college policies, study skills and tips, and time management, the more the student positively develops during college. There was a significant correlation between student development and academic majors and courses (AMC),  $r=.314$ . The more the advisor and student discuss possible career options and courses for the student to take, the more the student positively develops. Finally, there was a significant correlation between student development and satisfaction with college,  $r=.346$ . The more the student is satisfied with the information they have been provided by their advisor, amount of time available during advising sessions, notice of important deadlines, being about to meet with advisor when desired, and overall satisfaction with their college experience, the more students develop in college.

2. Is there a relationship between academic advising and a student's grade point average?

A multiple regression was run to test GPA and eight predictors for this study. None of the predictors were significant to GPA in this study. The researcher then tested each

scale individually with GPA and no statistical significance was found between GPA and any of the predictors for this study,  $F(7, 68)=.446, p=.869$ .

Table 8

*Academic Advising Effects on Grade Point Average*

Model Summary

| Predictor | R    | R Square |
|-----------|------|----------|
| GPA       | .210 | .044     |

There was only 4% variance in GPA that is explained by the predictors in this study which were all not significant. GPA was not a predictor for any of the eight subscales except student satisfaction in this study ( $p=.000$ ).

3. Is there a relationship between academic advising and student satisfaction with students' higher education experience?

Multiple regressions were used to measure student satisfaction from academic advising.

The regressions showed that academic advising is a predictor of student satisfaction

because it was statistically significant,  $F(2, 69)=.481.790, p=.000$ .

Table 9

*Summary of Academic Advising and Student Satisfaction*

| Predictor | R    | R Square |
|-----------|------|----------|
| SATIS     | .966 | .933     |

Academic advising was a contributor for 93% of student's satisfaction with their college experience. The researcher also ran a linear regression to test GPA and PDIR with student satisfaction. Results indicated that for a one unit increase in GPA, there is a 3.62 increase in student satisfaction; in addition, with a one unit increase in PDIR, there is a .2 increase in student satisfaction. Both GPA and PDIR were statistically significant with satisfaction ( $p=.000$ ).

Table 10

*Summary of Pearson Correlation and Student Satisfaction*

|             | DEVELOPMENT | PDIR | EIP  | TPS  | AMC  |
|-------------|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| Correlation | .346        | .499 | .241 | .313 | .381 |
| Sig.        | .000        | .000 | .043 | .008 | .001 |

There was a significant correlation between student satisfaction and student development,  $r=.346$ . The more a student was satisfied with their college experience, the more personal development took place within the student. There was a significant correlation between satisfaction and personal development and interpersonal relationships (PDIR),  $r=.499$ . Approximately 25% of students reported having higher satisfaction levels with college if they had a relationship with their advisor where they discussed things such as personal issues in and outside the classroom, short- and long-term career goals, extracurricular activities, and other college experiences. There was a significant correlation between satisfaction and discussing institutional policies (EIP),  $r=.241$ . The more the advisor and

student talked about institutional policies, including programs, financial aid, academics and studying abroad, campus resources and many others, the more satisfaction the student had with their college experience. There was a significant correlation between satisfaction and teaching personal skills (TPS),  $r=.313$ . The more the student and advisor discussed studying skills and tips and time management techniques, the higher the satisfaction level the student had with college. Finally, there was a significant correlation between satisfaction and academic majors and courses (AMC),  $r=.381$ . The more the student and advisor discussed possible career choices, classes to take, different majors, the process of declaring a major, and so forth, the more satisfied the student was with their college experience.

Of the completed surveys, the researcher summed the scales to determine how many students viewed their advisor as developmental or prescriptive.

Table 11

*Summary of Student Perceptions of Advising Styles*

| Number of Students who Viewed Advisor<br>as Developmental | Number of Students who Viewed Advisor<br>as Prescriptive |
|---|--|
| 45  | 31   |

Of 76 male and female participants, 45 participants viewed their advisor as a developmental advisor rather than a prescriptive advisor.

Table 12

*Summary of Developmental Advising Style by Gender*

| Females | Males |
|---------|-------|
| 13      | 32    |

Of 24 female participants, 13 of the females felt that their advisor used developmental advising and 11 females viewed their advisor as prescriptive. Of 52 male participants, 32 of the males viewed their advisor as developmental and 20 males viewed their advisor as prescriptive.

Not only did more females and males view their advisors as using a developmental style of advising, but females also reported having a preferred developmental style of advising used by their advisor,  $r=.032$ .

Table 13

*Summary of Amount of Advising Received*

| Assigned | Any | Faculty | Group | Peer | Course | Other | None |
|----------|-----|---------|-------|------|--------|-------|------|
| 16       | 41  | 9       | 2     | 1    | 0      | 2     | 5    |

For the sake of the chart, “assigned” means the student was individually advised by an assigned advisor at an advising center. “Any” means the student was advised by any advisor available at an advising center. “Faculty” means the student was advised individually by their faculty advisor. “Group” means the student was advised with a

group of students. “Course” means the student was advised by one of their professors in a course in which they were enrolled and not by a faculty advisor. “Other” means the student was advised by some other means of advising other than an advising center or faculty advisor. “None” means the student has received no academic advising this school year.

Results indicate that the majority of the participants in this study received advising from any available advisor at an advising center. Only 9 out of 76 participants had received advising from their assigned faculty advisor. Sixteen participants reported that they received advising from an assigned advisor from an advising center, not their assigned faculty advisor. Results also indicate that two participants had received some type of advising in a group setting and not individually, one participant reported they received advising from a student peer, and zero participants reported receiving advising from a professor from a course in which they were enrolled. Finally, two participants reported receiving advising from some other form other than those listed in this study and five participants reported having no advising at all this school year.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the impacts of faculty advising on student development in higher education. In addition, factors that influence students' satisfaction with college and students' academic success as a result of the relationship of one's faculty advisor were also explored. Such information could provide important information to higher education leaders and the role of the academic advisor. Such information could also benefit future students' academic success and a college or university's retention and graduation rate. The research for this study was based on responses gathered from a student survey of undergraduate students with a junior or senior status. The results of this study revealed that academic advising does impact student development and student satisfaction with college. Results from this study will be significant to retention of students in higher education, specifically the retention of students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In addition, results from this study can help advisors and advising systems improve the advising given to students. The results of this study also indicated that academic advising can lead to student satisfaction and student development in college.

#### Summary of Findings

1. There was a relationship between development and PDIR (Personal development and interpersonal relationships),  $r=.580$ . There was a significant relationship between student development and teaching personal skills (TPS),  $r=.427$ . There was a significant relationship between student development and academic majors and

courses (AMC),  $r=.314$ . Finally, there was also significant relationship between student development and satisfaction with college,  $r=.346$ . PDIR and EIP was a contributor for 39% of the variability in student development. For a one unit increase in PDIR, there was a .857 increase in the predicted value on development.

2. There was no relationship with GPA and any of the predictors for this study, nor was GPA significant to academic advising or student development.
3. There was a relationship between academic advising and student satisfaction with college. Academic advising was a contributor for 93% of student's satisfaction with their college experience. Results indicated that for a one unit increase in GPA, there was a 3.62 increase in student satisfaction; in addition, with a one unit increase in PDIR, there was a .2 increase in student satisfaction. Both GPA and PDIR were statistically significant with satisfaction ( $p=.000$ ). There was a significant correlation between student satisfaction and student development,  $r=.346$ . There was a significant correlation between satisfaction and personal development and interpersonal relationships (PDIR),  $r=.499$ . Approximately 25% of students reported having higher satisfaction levels with college if they had a relationship with their advisor where they discussed things such as personal issues in and outside the classroom, short- and long-term career goals, extracurricular activities, and other college experiences. There was a significant correlation between satisfaction and discussing institutional policies (EIP),  $r=.241$ . There was a significant correlation between satisfaction and teaching personal skills (TPS),  $r=.313$ . Finally, there was a significant correlation between satisfaction and academic majors and courses (AMC),  $r=.381$ .

4. Age, gender, ethnicity, or academic year were not significant to academic advising or student development. Of the returned surveys, both participants reported their advisors being developmental.
5. Of 76 participants, 41 reported having received advising from any available advisor from an advising center, 16 reported having received advising from an assigned advising from an advising center, 9 reported having received advising from their assigned faculty advisor, 5 reported having received no academic advising at all, 2 reported that they received some other form of advising other than from a peer, professor, advising center, or faculty advisor, 2 reported having received advising in a group setting, 1 reported having received advising from a student peer, and 0 reported having received advising from a class professor.

## Discussion

There was ample past research on the effects of academic advising and student development. The results of this study are comparable to the results of past research. The results of this study were interpreted with the help of the Hale, Graham, and Johnson (2009) study and had similar findings. In addition, the Hale et al. study used the AAI to conduct their research. Because of the results of past research and the results of this study, the researcher was confident that information gathered from the participants of this study does portray an accurate picture of understanding the impact that academic advising has on student development in higher education.

The first research question for this study was: *Is there a relationship between academic advising and positive student development?* From the results of this study, it was clear from the information received that the relationship a student had with his or her advisor did have an effect on student development. Past research supports this finding, especially the research conducted by Pizzolato (2008) and Choate and Granello (2006). In addition to having a professional relationship between the advisor and student, discussing topics such as study skills, time management skills, and college policies also increased student development throughout college. According to past research, discussing such topics can lead to student success which in turn can lead to student retention as well. Another finding from the information received from this study indicates that the more the advisor and student discuss possible career options and courses for the student to take, the more the student positively develops. Unlike prescriptive advising, developmental advising allows the student and advisor to collaboratively explore possible career options and different courses the student can take to stay on track for graduation. This collaboration not only helps create the relationship between the advisor and the student, but it also allows the student to make his or her own choices in their education. Finally, the more the student is satisfied with the information they have been provided by their advisor, amount of time available during advising sessions, notice of important deadlines, being able to meet with advisor when desired, and overall satisfaction with their college experience, the more students develop in college. According to Hale et al. (2009), students are more satisfied with their college experiences and with their advisor when the advisor uses a developmental advising approach. These findings are also similar to the findings from this study as well.

The second research question for this study was: *Is there a relationship between academic advising and a student's grade point average?* The researcher found no statistical significance to support this hypothesis. In addition, there was very little to no research to support this claim. Past research has indicated that students are more successful in college and achieve degree completion; however, there was very little research that had significance to academic advising and students' individual grades. The researcher perceives this as a positive finding. From the information received from this study, it appears as though students can still receive a high GPA despite the lack of advising that some students received. For example, the one and only participant of the study that indicated that he had a 4.00 GPA had received no academic advising this school year.

The third research question for this study was: *Is there a relationship between academic advising and student satisfaction with students' higher education experience?* There is a relationship between academic advising and the level of student satisfaction with their college experience. The information from this study indicates that academic advising was a contributor for 93% of student's satisfaction with their college experience. This was a significant finding because students reported being more satisfied with their college experience if they had an advisor who used a developmental approach allowing the student and advisor to have a professional relationship. In addition, students were more satisfied with their college experience if they were able to discuss issues and/or concerns about their personal lives with their advisor and also any concerns regarding their class schedule, professors, deadlines, study skills, time management, and so forth. Not only were students more satisfied with their college experience if they had a

relationship with their advisor, but they also reported being 25% more satisfied with their college experience if they were able to discuss institutional policies, choose their own educational path, and discuss career and course options with their advisors. Students also reported that receiving the correct information from their advisor also increased their satisfaction with college. Like past research has indicated, the results from this discussion question has yielded similar results, especially from the study conducted by Hale et al. (2009).

Finally, only nine participants reported that they had actually met with their assigned faculty advisor this year. Because these participants were all juniors and seniors, they have an assigned faculty advisor that they should be seeing at least once a semester. Forty-one of the participants reported they were advised by any available advisor from an advising center. The researcher purposefully chose to include juniors and seniors in this study because they would have a faculty advisor by their junior year and definitely by their senior year. Because the majority of the participants had not been advised by a faculty advisor at all, past research and the results from this study can provide beneficial information about the positive impact of meeting with an assigned faculty advisor and developing a relationship with that advisor.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

One suggestion for future research is to expand the sample to include more students from other colleges at UNL. All participants were from the College of Business Administration and this study should be conducted across the whole university to include students from all colleges and departments. Another suggestion for future research is to

collect the data toward the end of the academic school year to give students more opportunity to see an assigned faculty advisor and to receive advising. The study began in September and many students may not have been able to schedule an advising appointment with their assigned faculty advisor. Another recommendation for future research is to compare the effects of advising across two higher education institutions. Future research would include sampling students at a large university, like UNL and also sampling students at a private, smaller college, like Nebraska Wesleyan. Another recommendation for future research would be to use a different advising inventory. Although the questions asked on this inventory answered the research questions, the researcher felt many students were confused with the layout of the inventory. Eight surveys were removed from the study due to participants filling out the survey incorrectly. In addition, the survey was rather long and some participants declined participation because of the length of the survey. Finally, the researcher would obtain information from the CBA advising center to determine what type of advising the academic advisors use for students.

### Conclusion

Faculty advising has a significant impact on student development in higher education. Past research and the results from this study provide support that shows the importance and impact faculty advising has on students in college. Developing a professional relationship with one's faculty or academic advisor has significant benefits on not only student development, but overall student satisfaction with college as well.

Although student development can be defined in different ways, one way of defining student development is “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education” (p. 27; as cited in Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, Renn, 2010, p. 6). Not only does academic advising increase the likelihood that students will positively develop in college and succeed in college, but academic advising has benefits that reach beyond the classroom walls and beyond the students themselves. For example, academic advising can help increase student retention and enrollment due to the attention students receive and the support provided throughout their college career. With the support of past research and the results from this study, institutions can improve their current advising systems in order to provide the students with the advising they need and deserve in order to be satisfied with their college experience.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Becky Freeman  
472-8127  
bfreeman2@unl.edu

Reviewer: Becky Freeman  
Date: 05/18/2011 01:32 pm  
Comment: Ms. Pargett and Dr. Dlugosh,

Your project has been approved. You are authorized to begin data collection.

1. The approved informed consent form has been uploaded to NUgrant (file with -Approved.pdf in the file name). Please use this form to distribute to participants. If you need to make changes to the informed consent form, please submit the revised form to the IRB for review and approval prior to using it.

Your official approval letter will be emailed to you and uploaded to NUgrant shortly.

Good luck with your research!

Becky Freeman  
472-8127  
bfreeman2@unl.edu

IRB Number: 20110511687 EX

Project ID: 11687

Project Title: The Effects of Academic Advising on Student Development

APPENDIX B

E-MAIL TO PROFESSORS

### **Invitation Letter to Professors**

Dear Professor,

I am writing to invite your students to participate in my Master's thesis called, "The Effects of Academic Advising on Student Development". It is my hope that student participation will enhance the advisor/advisee relationship among college students and administrators. I am specifically reaching out to students with Junior or Senior status.

I ask that you allow me 20 minutes of your class time to hand out the Academic Advising Inventory to your students. There is no other follow-up needed for my study, so no more class time will be asked of you. The participation of students and your time is greatly appreciated.

With your consent, please e-mail me at [pudenz.kelly@huskers.unl.edu](mailto:pudenz.kelly@huskers.unl.edu)

Thank you for your time,

Kelly Pargett  
Educational Administration Master's student

[Pudenz.kelly@huskers.unl.edu](mailto:Pudenz.kelly@huskers.unl.edu)

APPENDIX C

STUDENT RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

### **Recruitment Script**

My name is Kelly Pargett and I am an Educational Administration Master's student at UNL and am beginning to collect data for my thesis. I ask for your participation in my study called, "The Effects of Academic Advising on Student Development". The survey is called the Academic Advising Survey and is composed of 72 questions and will take you between 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The surveys will be administered during class. Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and your name will not be disclosed at any time during this research project. You are free to decide not to participate in this study. You can also withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Your decision will not negatively affect your grades.

I thank you for your participation in my study.

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT SURVEY



- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| <p>4. My advisor shows an interest in my outside-of-class activities and sometimes suggests activities.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p>  | OR | <p>My advisor does not know what I do outside of class.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p>   |
| <p>5. My advisor assists me in identifying realistic academic goals based on what I know about myself, as well as about my test scores and grades.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p> | OR | <p>My advisor identifies realistic academic goals for me based on my test scores and grades.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p>  |
| <p>6. My advisor registers me for my classes.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p>  | OR | <p>My advisor teaches me how to register myself for classes.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p>  |
| <p>7. When I'm faced with difficult decisions my advisor tells me my alternatives and which one is the best choice.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p>                                | OR | <p>When I'm faced with difficult decisions, my advisor assists me in identifying alternatives and in considering the consequences of choosing each alternative.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p> |
| <p>8. My advisor does not know who to contact about other-than-academic problems.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p>  | OR | <p>My advisor knows who to contact about other-than-academic problems.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p>  |
| <p>9. My advisor gives me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively when I seem to need them.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p>                                | OR | <p>My advisor does not spend time giving me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p>  |
| <p>10. My advisor tells me what I must do in order to be advised.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p>  | OR | <p>My advisor and I discuss our expectations of advising and of each other.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p>   |
| <p>11. My advisor suggests what I should major in.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p>   | OR | <p>My advisor suggests steps I can take to help me decide on a major.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p>   |
| <p>12. My advisor uses test scores and grades to let him or her know what courses are most appropriate for me to take.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D<br/>         very slightly<br/>         true true</p>                             | OR | <p>My advisor and I use information, such as test scores, grades, interests, and abilities, to determine what courses are most appropriate for me to take.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H<br/>         slightly very<br/>         true true</p>      |



## PART III

Considering the academic advising you have participated in at this college this year, respond to the following five statements on the answer sheet using the code below.

A = Strongly Disagree      C = Agree  
B = Disagree                  D = Strongly Agree

45. I am satisfied in general with the academic advising I have received.
46. I have received accurate information about courses, programs, and requirements through academic advising.
47. Sufficient prior notice has been provided about deadlines related to institutional policies and procedures.
48. Advising has been available when I needed it.
49. Sufficient time has been available during advising sessions.

## PART IV

Please respond to the following questions. Continue marking your responses on the same answer sheet.

50. What is your sex?  
(a) male  
(b) female
51. What is your cultural/racial background?  
(a) African American/Black      (c) Asian American or Pacific Islander      (e) White/Caucasian      (g) Other  
(b) Hispanic American/Latino/a      (d) Native American      (f) Biracial/multiracial      (h) Decline to respond
52. What was your age at your last birthday?  
(a) 18 or younger      (c) 20      (e) 22      (g) 24      (i) 31 or older  
(b) 19      (d) 21      (f) 23      (h) 25 - 30
53. What is your academic class standing?  
(a) Freshman (first year)      (c) Junior (third year)      (e) Irregular/Transient/Special Student  
(b) Sophomore (second year)      (d) Senior (fourth or more years)      (f) Other than any of the above
54. Which of the following best describes the majority of the academic advising you have received this academic year?  
*Select only one.*  
(a) Advised individually by assigned advisor at an advising center  
(b) Advised individually by any available advisor at an advising center  
(c) Advised individually, not through an advising center  
(d) Advised with a group of students  
(e) Advised by a peer (student) advisor  
(f) Advised in conjunction with a course in which I was enrolled  
(g) Advised in a manner other than the alternatives described above  
(h) No advising received
55. Approximately how much time was generally spent in each advising session?  
(a) less than 15 minutes      (c) 31-45 minutes      (e) more than 1 hour  
(b) 15-30 minutes      (d) 46-60 minutes
56. How many academic advising sessions have you had this academic year in your current situation?  
(a) none      (c) two      (e) four      (g) six      (i) eight  
(b) one      (d) three      (f) five      (h) seven      (j) nine or more
57. How many academic advising sessions in total have you had this year?  
(a) none      (c) two      (e) four      (g) six      (i) eight  
(b) one      (d) three      (f) five      (h) seven      (j) nine or more

## PART V

Part V of the *Inventory* concerns how you view the IDEAL academic advisor. You are to choose the one statement from each pair that best describes, in your opinion, the *ideal* academic advisor (that is, what you would want an advisor to be like). Then determine how important that statement is to you for an ideal advisor. This is *not* an evaluation of your present or past advisors at this college.

Record your answers on the same answer sheet used for Parts I through IV.

- .....
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>59. My advisor is interested in helping me learn how to find out about courses and programs for myself.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D</p> <p>Very Slightly<br/>Important Important</p>  | <p><b>OR</b> My advisor tells me what I need to know about academic courses and programs.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H</p> <p>Slightly Very<br/>Important Important</p>   |
| <p>60. My advisor tells me what would be the best schedule for me.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D</p> <p>Very Slightly<br/>Important Important</p>  | <p><b>OR</b> My advisor suggests important considerations in planning a schedule and then gives me responsibility for the final decision.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H</p> <p>Slightly Very<br/>Important Important</p> |
| <p>61. My advisor and I talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D</p> <p>Very Slightly<br/>Important Important</p>   | <p><b>OR</b> My advisor and I do <i>not</i> talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H</p> <p>Slightly Very<br/>Important Important</p>                             |
| <p>62. My advisor shows an interest in my outside-of-class activities and sometimes suggests activities.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D</p> <p>Very Slightly<br/>Important Important</p>  | <p><b>OR</b> My advisor does <i>not</i> know what I do outside of class.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H</p> <p>Slightly Very<br/>Important Important</p>  |
| <p>63. My advisor assists me in identifying realistic academic goals based on what I know about myself, as well as about my test scores and grades.</p> <p>A-----B-----C-----D</p> <p>Slightly Very<br/>Important Important Important</p> | <p><b>OR</b> My advisor identifies realistic academic goals for me based on my test scores and grades.</p> <p>E-----F-----G-----H</p> <p>Slightly Very<br/>Important Important Important</p>                          |

Continue on reverse side.

64. My advisor registers me for my classes.  
 A-----B-----C-----D  
 Very Slightly  
 Important Important
65. When I'm faced with difficult decisions my advisor tells me my alternatives and which one is the best choice.  
 A-----B-----C-----D  
 Very Slightly  
 Important Important
66. My advisor does *not* know who to contact about other-than-academic problems.  
 A-----B-----C-----D  
 Very Slightly  
 Important Important
67. My advisor gives me tips on managing my my time better or on studying more effectively when I seem to need them.  
 A-----B-----C-----D  
 Very Slightly  
 Important Important
68. My advisor tells me what I must do in order to be advised.  
 A-----B-----C-----D  
 Very Slightly  
 Important Important
69. My advisor suggests what I should major in.  
 A-----B-----C-----D  
 Very Slightly  
 Important Important
70. My advisor uses test scores and grades to let him or her know what courses are most appropriate for me to take.  
 A-----B-----C-----D  
 Very Slightly  
 Important Important
71. My advisor talks with me about my other-
- OR** My advisor teaches me how to register myself for classes.  
 E-----F-----G-----H  
 Slightly Very  
 Important Important
- OR** When I'm faced with difficult decisions, my advisor assists me in identifying alternatives and in considering the consequences of choosing each alternative.  
 E-----F-----G-----H  
 Slightly Very  
 Important Important
- OR** My advisor knows who to contact about other-than-academic problems.  
 E-----F-----G-----H  
 Slightly Very  
 Important Important
- OR** My advisor does *not* spend time giving me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively.  
 E-----F-----G-----H  
 Slightly Very  
 Important Important
- OR** My advisor and I discuss our expectations of advising and of each other.  
 E-----F-----G-----H  
 Slightly Very  
 Important Important
- OR** My advisor suggests steps I can take to help me decide on a major.  
 E-----F-----G-----H  
 Slightly Very  
 Important Important
- OR** My advisor and I use information, such as test scores, grades, interests, and abilities to determine what courses are most appropriate for me to take.  
 E-----F-----G-----H  
 Slightly Very  
 Important Important
- OR** My advisor does *not* talk with me about

than-academic interests and plans.

A-----B-----C-----D

Very Slightly  
Important Important

72. My advisor keeps informed of my academic

interests and plans other than academic ones.

E-----F-----G-----H

Slightly Very  
Important Important

**OR** My advisor keeps informed of my academic

progress by examining my files and grades  
*only*.

A-----B-----C-----D

Very Slightly  
Important Important

progress by examining my files and grades  
and by talking to me about classes.

E-----F-----G-----H

Slightly Very  
Important Important

APPENDIX E  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

## Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions. The following information will be kept confidential. Please mark in the indicated space and answer honestly to the best of your ability.

1. Gender: Male   
Female
  
2. Age: 18-19   
20-21   
22-23   
24+
  
3. Academic Year: Junior   
Senior
  
4. Ethnicity: Caucasian   
African American   
Asian   
Hispanic   
Other
  
5. GPA: \_\_\_\_\_