

THE ADAPTABILITY OF ACADEMIC ADVISING TEAMS  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

Leigh A. McFarland

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of

The College of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Florida Atlantic University

Boca Raton, Florida

December 2011

Copyright by Leigh A. McFarland 2011

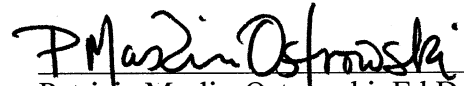
THE ADAPTABILITY OF ACADEMIC ADVISING TEAMS  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

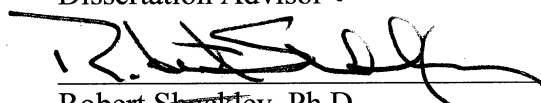
by

Leigh A. McFarland

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

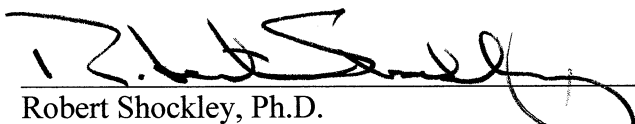
SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

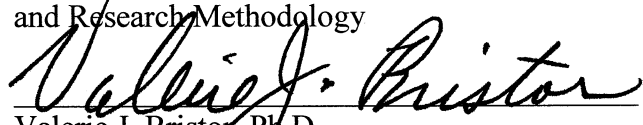
  
Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Ed.D.  
Dissertation Advisor

  
Robert Shockley, Ph.D.


  
Floydette Cory-Seruggs, Ph.D.

  
Anne E. Mulder, Ph.D.

  
Robert Shockley, Ph.D.  
Chair, Department of Educational Leadership  
and Research Methodology

  
Valerie J. Bristor, Ph.D.  
Dean, College of Education

  
Barry T. Rosson, Ph.D.  
Dean, Graduate College

  
November 9, 2011  
Date

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, to my dissertation chair, Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, thank you for your support, advice, patience, and timely responses. You have been an inspiration, bird by bird! Thank you to Dr. Anne Mulder, you have given me direction and motivation during this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Floydette Cory-Scruggs, my mentor and my friend, you have provided support and encouragement when I needed it most and I will always be grateful. To Dr. Robert Shockley, thank for your guidance through this journey.

To my cohort, I am thankful we had the opportunity to share this experience.

To my parents, without your love and support I could not have done this.

To Grandpa, your belief in me allowed me to get here.

To my friends, Barbara and Diana, thank you for listening and cheering me on.

## ABSTRACT

Author: Leigh A. McFarland  
Title: The Adaptability of Academic Advising Teams  
in Higher Education  
Institution: Florida Atlantic University  
Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski  
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy  
Year: 2011

The purpose of this single site case study was to identify how four advising teams in a medium-sized public university adapt to the changes presented to them and what role leadership and culture play in that adaptation. This was accomplished through analysis of advisor and administrator interviews, office and meeting observations, and reviews of documents relating to advising and university changes in curriculum and systems. The study was guided by team culture and the five core adaptation strategies described by Eckel and Kezar (2003).

The study indicates that although part of the same institution, each advising team has a unique culture and approach to doing their work. In turn each team has a different approach to their adaptation to the change that affects them. The study began with an examination of how and if the advising teams use the five core adaptation strategies described by Eckel and Kezar (2003). It was found that these adaptation strategies were

not utilized because they require authority and the advisors do not have the organizational control necessary to use these strategies. However, the study revealed that the advising teams adapt to their environment through coping mechanisms depending on the type of adaptation. It was also found that the responses the advising teams have to particular change events depends on when they find out about the change as well as the culture and leadership of the teams. Consequently, their resilience to changes is a result of their ability to either absorb the change or alter their system quickly in reaction to the change. Implications are presented for universities and the advising teams in addition to recommendations for future study.

## DEDICATION

To my Gracie:

Reach for the stars my dear, you can do anything you set your mind to! I love you.

To my Bradley:

Your love and support are all I could ever want! I love you.

THE ADAPTABILITY OF ACADEMIC ADVISING TEAMS  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

LIST OF TABLES .....xi

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION..... 1

Statement of the Problem ..... 4

Purpose of the Study ..... 5

Research Questions ..... 6

Conceptual Framework ..... 6

Definitions..... 8

Significance..... 9

Researcher’s Role..... 10

Limitations and Delimitations..... 10

Organization of the Remainder of the Study..... 11

2 LITERATURE REVIEW..... 12

Academic Advising..... 12

Advising History ..... 13

Advising Defined ..... 16

Advising Theory..... 18

Advising and Student Retention..... 19

Advising Budgets and Institutional Support ..... 20

Advising Role in Policy Design and Implementation..... 22

Organizational Behavior ..... 24

Change in Higher Education ..... 26

Systems ..... 27

Complex Systems..... 28

Leaders and Change ..... 30

Power..... 32

Teams ..... 33

Adaptation ..... 34

Organizational Culture ..... 36

Culture Defined ..... 36

Culture Concepts ..... 38

Artifacts ..... 38

Values and Beliefs..... 38

Unconscious Assumptions ..... 39

Culture of Higher Education ..... 39



	Culture Framework .....	40
	Chapter Summary.....	44
3	METHODOLOGY.....	45
	Site and Sample.....	46
	The Case Studies .....	47
	Sampling Interview Participants .....	48
	Advisors and Directors.....	48
	University Administration.....	49
	Sampling for Observations.....	49
	Sampling Documents .....	50
	Data Collection.....	50
	Interviews.....	50
	Advisors and Directors.....	51
	University Administration.....	51
	Observations.....	51
	Documents and Audiovisual Review .....	52
	Data Analysis .....	52
	Chapter Summary.....	57
4	RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	58
	Team Culture.....	59
	College Beta .....	60
	Advising Structure .....	61
	Team Leader.....	62
	Team Values.....	63
	Team Interaction and Support.....	64
	College Gamma.....	66
	Advising Structure .....	67
	Team Leader.....	68
	Team Values.....	70
	Team Interaction and Support.....	71
	College Delta.....	73
	Advising Structure .....	73
	Team Leader.....	74
	Team Values.....	75
	Team Interaction and Support.....	76
	College Epsilon .....	78
	Advising Structure .....	78
	Team Leader.....	80
	Team Values.....	80
	Team Interaction and Support.....	81
	Advisor Voice .....	83
	College Beta .....	85
	College Gamma.....	86
	College Delta.....	88
	College Epsilon .....	88

Advising Team Obstacles .....	89
College Beta .....	90
College Gamma.....	91
College Delta.....	92
College Epsilon .....	92
Advising Team Trust and External Perceptions of Advisors.....	93
College Beta .....	94
College Gamma.....	96
College Delta.....	99
College Epsilon .....	101
Advising Team Strategies for Adaptation to Change .....	103
College Beta .....	106
College Gamma.....	109
College Delta.....	112
College Epsilon .....	115
Chapter Summary.....	118
5 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	119
Discussion of Findings.....	121
Team Culture.....	121
Advising Structure .....	121
Team Leader.....	123
Team Values.....	123
Team Interaction and Support.....	124
Advisor Voice .....	124
Advising Team Obstacles .....	125
Advising Team Trust and External Perceptions of Advisors.....	126
Advising Team Strategies for Adaptation to Change .....	127
College Beta .....	128
College Gamma.....	128
College Delta.....	129
College Epsilon .....	130
Conclusions .....	131
Recommendations and Implications .....	131
Recommendations for Future Study.....	132
Implications for Administrators .....	133
Implications for Advising Teams.....	135
APPENDICIES .....	137
A Recruitment Procedures .....	138
B Advisor Recruitment Letter.....	139
C University Administrator Recruitment Letter .....	140

D	Observation Tables.....	141
E	Document Tables .....	144
F	Table 20– Case Study Research Summary Matrix .....	151
G	Interview Protocol for Academic Advisors.....	152
H	Interview Protocol for Advising Directors.....	155
I	Interview Protocol for University Administrators .....	157
J	Interview Consent Form.....	159
K	Observation Protocol.....	160
L	Document/Audiovisual Protocol.....	161
M	Table 21–Advisor Demographics .....	162
N	Table 22–Method Site and Sample .....	163
	REFERENCES .....	164

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	1. Definitions for Primary Codes .....	55
Table	2. Definitions for Additional Codes .....	56
Table	3. Finding: Team Culture .....	60
Table	4. Finding: Advisor Voice .....	84
Table	5. Finding: Advising Team Obstacles .....	90
Table	6. Finding: Advising Team Trust and External Perceptions of Advisors .....	94
Table	7. Changes Affecting the Advising Teams .....	104
Table	8. Finding: Strategies for Adaptation to Change .....	105
Table	9. Research Questions and Findings Summary .....	120
Table	10. College Beta Observations .....	141
Table	11. College Gamma Observations .....	141
Table	12. College Delta Observations .....	142
Table	13. College Epsilon Observations .....	142
Table	14. University Observations .....	143
Table	15. College Beta Documents .....	144
Table	16. College Gamma Documents .....	145
Table	17. College Delta Documents .....	147
Table	18. College Epsilon Documents .....	148
Table	19. University Documents .....	149

Table 20. Case Study Research Summary Matrix..... 151

Table 21. Advisor Demographics..... 162

Table 22. Method Site and Sample ..... 163

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Recent changes in higher education have increased the demands on administration, staff, and faculty in the higher education system. Higher education is being affected by shrinking resources for education in many states (Fain, 2008), as well as the demands of the global marketplace (Kienle & Loyd, 2005). The type of students entering college has also changed in terms of ethnicity, age, and enrollment status (M. C. King, 2008). The university is a multifaceted organization that continues to grow in complexity “with legacies of policies, practices, and personnel that carry over from one academic administration to another” (Timmerman & Metcalfe, 2009, p. 46). Duderstadt and Womack (2003) claim that universities are more complex than most businesses:

It comprises many activities, some nonprofit, some publicly regulated, and some operating in intensely competitive marketplaces. It teaches students; it conducts research for various clients; it provides health care; it engages in economic development; it stimulates social change; and it provides mass entertainment (e.g., athletics). (pp.163)

Higher education institutions must respond to demands of the public and the government that funds them (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; d’Ambrosio & Ehrenberg, 2007). The pressures of public higher education institutions are immense:

Societal pressure to provide greater access, improve student completion rates,

limit expenditures, control tuition more judiciously, and fuel the economy with new ideas and innovative human capital are all issues that have become critical factors in assessing college and university productivity. (d'Ambrosio & Ehrenberg, 2007, pp. 5)

Academic advising teams, the focus of this study, have a complex role helping to respond to the issues and achieve the goals of the university (Grites, Gordon, & Habley, 2008). They are some of the first people to interact with new students and their parents. Student retention, in addition to university and societal changes, affect the advisor's ability to create quality relationships and deliver accurate information in a timely fashion (Keup & Kinzie, 2007; Kuh, 2008). The academic advising role has multiple functions: curriculum teacher (Kuh, 2008), institutional referral agent (Rawlins & Rawlins, 2005), institutional policy specialist (Fox, 2008), career consultant (N. S. King, 2008), retention officer (Self, 2008), and course scheduler (Hagen & Jordan, 2008) among other duties.

The role of the academic advisor is to assist students in their academic journey. An academic advising program or team is described as having several components: an identifiable leader; articulated vision and goals; advisor development and assessment; and adequate funding (M. C. King, 2008). According to the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education (2007) "the primary purpose of Academic Advising Programs (AAP) is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational plans" (p. 241).

Academic advisors typically work with students on a one-on-one basis (Fox, 2008), yet, as the number of students attending higher education institutions increases so do the workloads of academic advisors, especially when institutions do not have the

resources to hire more advisors (Travis, 2009). The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) suggests an advisor to advisee ratio of 1 to 300 (Habley, 2004). However, many universities have a ratio of 1 to 500 or more (Travis, 2009).

In a joint study conducted in 2003 by American College Testing (ACT) and NACADA, effective academic advising has a positive effect on student retention and satisfaction among diverse types of higher education institutions (ACT, 2004). In fact, the survey results show that “many colleges fail to capitalize on the benefits of quality advising, particularly when it comes to helping students stay in school” (ACT, 2004, para. 2). Nutt (2003) claims that “academic advisors offer students the personal connection to the institution that the research indicates is vital to student retention and student success” (para. 4).

Grites et al. (2008) state advisors cannot avoid the changes happening in higher education. There are serious constraints on resources that affect advisor loads and their ability to serve students. As budget constraints continue to affect public institutions, staff and faculty must begin to adapt to the changing environment and find innovative ways to provide a quality education for their students (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003). Grites et al. posit that advisors are in a unique position to offer significant input on policy:

As federal, state, accreditation, licensure, and other policies that affect student growth and learning are being developed, academic advisors need to apprise their own campus decision-makers of the potential impact of such action. Too often such actions are deemed necessary and ultimately enacted due to a single complaint or occurrence.... The academic advising program needs to build and



maintain its case for appropriate actions that might be imposed upon them. (2008, pp. 466-467)

Connick and Innes (2003) affirm that “collaborative dialogue among stakeholders is the most productive way to address many complex and controversial policy questions” (p. 177). Eckel and Kezar (2003), however, describe higher education as a loosely coupled system where what is important to one part of the organization may not be important to another part. Therefore, some of the problems encountered by academic advisors may often go unnoticed or unheard due to the advisor’s position in the university in regards to the hierarchy and the policy making process. Advising is the connection to other areas on campus. M. C. King (2008) posits that “one could list every office on campus and find some connection to academic advising” (p. 249). While academic advisors lack positional power to initiate change, they possess an expert power which can instigate change in policies or procedures (Hayes, 2007; Hodge, Anthony, & Gales, 2003). The way in which advising teams anticipate and prepare for potential change is the key to their success in adapting to such changes (Grites et al., 2008; M. C. King, 2008).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem is that although academic advising teams interact directly with students, parents, faculty, the registrar, and admissions, they are rarely consulted about changes to policy and procedures in the university (NACADA, 2000; Self, 2008). Being in this position, advising teams tend to be the most knowledgeable about what changes need to happen and how they should be implemented (Grites et al., 2008).

Often times the status of academic advising is undermined because of the lack of comprehensive training and understanding of the profession (Brown, 2008; Schulenberg

& Lindhorst, 2008). Although advisors collaborate across campus, and multiple campuses, the role is seen as a single action of class scheduling (Brown, 2008). Self (2008) posits that unfavorable perceptions of the role of the professional advisor is an issue. Self states “It can be difficult to educate and explain to others who may not understand the general responsibilities and roles of professional academic advisors and the value and importance of their presence” (2008, p. 270). Further, the study of advising and advising practices are necessary to the documentation of the advising profession in order to build a case for or against support from the administration in their respective institutions (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). Advisors are encouraged to take on a more academic approach “articulating its unique role in higher education” through scholarly research (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 44).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this single site, multiple case study is to identify how academic advising teams respond to changes in the organization and to understand how adaptation strategies are used by four advising teams in a medium-sized public university in the Mid-West Region of the United States. This was accomplished by studying the advising teams through a lens of organizational culture. Adaptation strategies are generally defined as the approach used by the advising team to respond to changes in the institution. Changes are defined as changes in academic policies and procedures, specifically, curriculum changes and the addition of forms and systems. Culture is defined as the shared values and beliefs among a group, in this case the academic advising team.

## **Research Questions**

The primary research question for this study is: How do higher education academic advising teams adapt to changes in the institution? The questions that will be investigated are:

1. What is the culture(s) of the academic advising teams being studied?
2. What are the strategies used by the academic advising teams to adapt to institutional changes regarding the curriculum and the introduction of new systems?
3. What are the perceptions of the academic advising teams of their ability to adapt to institutional changes?
4. What role does leadership play in the academic advising teams' ability to adapt to institutional changes?

## **Conceptual Framework**

Using organizational culture as a key part of the conceptual framework, this study will examine how academic advising teams adapt to institutional changes, specifically changes in the curriculum and systems imposed by both the faculty and the university administration. Hatch (2004) and Tierney (2008) affirm that culture is seen as dynamic and in a constant state of flux. Tierney posits that although traditions and values are deeply rooted in a culture, ultimately culture is formed by how the members interpret their environment. Tierney argues "From this perspective, culture is neither static nor monolithic" (p. 2). Kezar and Eckel (2002) claim that using culture as a framework when studying change will help to structure the process. They state that when studying the change process the researcher risks losing the meaning of the study by confining analysis

to the micro-level or generalizing change strategies to broad categories. They claim that “the challenge is to chart a middle ground and identify findings informative at a level that can be used to guide change processes.... One solution to charting meaningful middle ground is through cultural perspective” (p. 436).

Kezar and Eckel (2002) found that there would be a better chance of acceptance from those in the institution if culture was considered when beginning a change process. When organizations embark on change, the culture of that organization will most likely be a factor (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Culture is a collection of beliefs and values created by a group working together toward a common goal (Schein, 2004; Tierney, 2008). Eckel and Kezar (2003) studied several universities through the framework of five change strategies: senior administrative support, collaborative leadership, flexible vision, staff development, and visible actions (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). As cited in Eckel and Kezar’s (2003) study, these strategies were based on Bergquist’s 1997 book about cultural archetypes and Tierney’s 1992 article on individual institutional culture frameworks. The intent of Kezar and Eckel’s study was to “understand the effect of culture on specific change strategies” (2002, p. 443). Through their research they found that there was a strong relationship between institutional change and culture. They also found that further research is needed to explore culture and the change process.

By examining the culture of four different advising teams this study attempts to identify the adaptation strategies used. This study looks at the advising teams within a university by using Eckel and Kezar’s (2003) five core strategies as a framework. Culture provides a guide for looking at these strategies at the micro-level. By investigating the

culture of the teams, this study seeks strategies used by academic advising teams to adapt to institutional changes.

### **Definitions**

Academic Advisor – One who assists “students in the development of meaningful educational plans” (CAS, 2007, p. 241). For the purposes of this study, the term academic advisor will refer to full-time professional academic advisors and exclude faculty advisors and faculty academic advisors.

Academic Advising Team – An academic advising program or team is described as having several components: an identifiable leader; articulated vision and goals; advisor development and assessment; and adequate funding (M. C. King, 2008). For the purposes of this study, an academic advising team will refer to a group of two or more professional academic advisors within a college who advise undergraduate or graduate students that may or may not have all of the above components.

Adaptation – A learned process where an organization alters their habits and behaviors to the external changes (Berkhout, Hertin, & Gann, 2006).

Change – Planned or unplanned events that affect people, space, and time in a positive or negative manner (Poole, 2004).

Culture – The phenomena which directs group behavior through shared values and beliefs (Schein, 2004).

Faculty Academic Advisor – A faculty member who has responsibilities of both a professional academic advisor and a faculty advisor.

Faculty Advisor – A faculty member who acts as a mentor, advising students on their curriculum and career choices.

Power – A concept one person or group has authority over another person or group typically described in relation to leaders but also linked to one’s situation or position (Braynion, 2004; Hodge et al., 2003).

### **Significance**

One can read the *NACADA Journal* and find numerous articles on academic advising that range from advising theory to assessment of students’ learning through advising. Although the literature reviews the role of advisors in a team setting (typically called advising centers), none discuss strategies used to adapt to changes in the institution as a team. This study will add to the body of literature on advising as well as that of organizational culture and leadership roles during times of change. In fact, on the subject of advising, Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) claim that:

All members of the academic advising profession need to speak more specifically about the ways in which academic advising yields new insights that can transform institutions, and these insights should contribute to the scholarly literature in higher education. Advising professionals should be conducting research...seeking grant money to research and implement programs, and publishing results in diverse academic journals in which this field is presently underrepresented. (pp. 51)

University leaders, practitioners, and policy makers will benefit from this study which has uncovered the ways advising teams adapt during times of change and how they build more integrated systems of work. University leaders and practitioners will also benefit from this study with a more comprehensive perspective of how their support, or lack of, affects the advising teams at their institutions. The benefit will be a better

understanding of the academic advising system and the complex changes that the advising teams encounter. In particular, university leaders will gain knowledge of the role of academic advising teams in the higher education system. University and higher education policy makers will benefit by understanding the importance of integrating academic advisors into the policy making process.

### **Researcher's Role**

Until recently the researcher was an academic advisor at a medium sized institution. While she is no longer an advisor, she does relate to the issues which advisors face in academia. An interesting point should be made in reference to the conceptual framework and the researcher's role. Schein (2004) writes that when studying an organization through the lens of culture one must be aware of their own assumptions of how things should work. Some of the researcher's assumptions about an adaptable advising team include a team which has an interested leader who is supportive of the team. What is meant by an interested leader is one who invests time in their team and who is concerned about the development of the members of that team. Schein states that while doing culture research researchers must attempt to keep from imposing or reflecting their culture onto that organization. Due to past relationship with this profession and stated assumptions, the researcher has done her best to be conscious of her personal beliefs and biases of how she thinks the team culture should operate. The steps to prevent researcher bias from detracting from this study are listed in Chapter 3.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

A limitation of this study is the small sample size, 49 participants were interviewed. This number is fewer than expected due to two colleges and some

administrators choosing not to participate. Although the researcher has been as objective as possible, another limitation is her personal beliefs and biases. A third limitation is the exclusion of the college disciplines in order to increase confidentiality. The study is delimited to four colleges in a public university. The colleges employ two or more full-time, professional academic advisors who offer advising services to undergraduate and graduate students. This study will generalize to other similar universities that have similar advising structures.

### **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to the study, including academic advising, organizational behavior and change, and culture. Chapter 3 outlines the research methods and analysis procedures used in the study. Chapter 4 explains the findings for the four colleges that participated in this study. Chapter 5 offers conclusions and implications to universities and advising teams as well as recommendations for future study.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter begins with an exploration of academic advising. Since the focus of the study is on academic advisors, the culture in which they work and their involvement in change is explored. Given that the research questions ask about the participant's reaction to changes at their institution, the next section is an investigation of organizational behavior and change theory. The analysis includes a look at how complex systems and people relate to change. This section also presents a discussion of the role of leaders in the change process, the concept of power, as well as the ability for adaptation by teams and organizations. The final section of this chapter offers a definition for culture, examines the culture of higher education, and concludes with a summary of the conceptual framework.

### **Academic Advising**

Academic advising began as a task performed by the faculty, but as educational institutions grew it was recognized that there was a need for a staff of non-faculty advisors (Cook, 2009). As academic advising began to emerge as a profession, the National Academic Advising Association, known as NACADA, came into existence (NACADA, n.d.). NACADA helped define the profession and gave advisors the platform to explore advising theories and delivery models. Due to the more recent issues of budgetary problems and concern for upper administrative support, the advising

profession must consider the advisor's role in the institution and work to make a strong case for their place in the institution (Habley, 2009).

**Advising history.** When the American higher education system began, college degree offerings were restricted to a curriculum in liberal arts. Typically students were being trained to become ministers, lawyers, and doctors (Kuhn & Padak, 2009). The number of students was limited and most colleges had two or three instructors which included the president. During this time there was a great emphasis on the relationship between the student and the faculty member (Hemwall, 2008). This relationship was viewed as the key element in the matriculation of the student. The faculty acted as both custodian and teacher to the student (Cohen, 1998). They oversaw all aspects of the student including moral and academic growth (Cook, 2009). Over the years the curriculum broadened, institutions grew in number and size, and college became more affordable. By the mid 1900s the student population grew to about 11 million and the faculty to over half a million (Cohen, 1998). The idea of academic advising as means of student retention began to emerge. Cook (2009) states that a study conducted in 1948 showed that a main reason for students leaving college was a lack of direction and planning in regards to their academic choices. In the late 1950s, while advising remained a primary function of the faculty, administrators began to see the need for a coordinated effort in the area of advising and counseling (Cook, 2009).

The 1970s brought a new set of concerns for higher education administrators. Cook (2009) affirms:

Growth of community colleges, open admissions, and federal programs of financial support brought first generation college attendees, students from lower

socioeconomic circumstances, less academically prepared students, adults, those with disabilities, and other new students who required a different approach to services, including academic advising, than had been traditionally offered. These changes laid the groundwork for the expansion and specialization of academic advising. (pp. 22)

As more research institutions began to emerge, the role of the faculty and their relationship to undergraduate students began to change (Hemwall, 2008). Frost (2000) posits that the gap between faculty and students began to widen due to increased responsibilities on the part of the faculty and the demand for individual attention by the students. Gordon, Habley, and Grites (2008) state that the changing student needs prompted an “examination of how advising was delivered on some campuses, and as a result, reorganization took place at many institutions” (p. ix-x). Studies began to emerge showing that advising was growing from a routine faculty based activity to a process of helping the student achieve their goals (Cook, 2009; M. C. King, 2008).

In the late seventies and early eighties a call for more comprehensive academic assistance for students resulted in research on the effectiveness of advising and the vehicles used to deliver the required services (Cook, 2009). This resulted in a series of surveys conducted by the American College Testing Service (ACT) about academic advising practices (Frost, 2000). These surveys conducted in 1979, 1983, and 1987 found that support for advising increased then became stagnant citing little support in the way of training and reward systems (Cook, 2009).

As institutions began to view the practice of advising differently, “the advising center was introduced on some campuses as a vehicle for offering a more visible and

centralized location” (Gordon et al., 2008, p. x). The structures of organizational advising models differ from institution to institution. Some form of academic advising center has emerged at most institutions. M. C. King (2008) presents three models for advising centers: decentralized, centralized, and shared. An institution can also have multiple models, one being at the university level and another at the department level. M. C. King states, whatever the model there must be a leader who is “positioned and empowered within the administrative structure to accomplish the mission of the advising program” (p. 248).

Frost (2000) states that “continued formalization of academic advising on most campuses was one response to two forces: student populations that were increasingly numerous and diverse, and faculties that were devoted to research” (p. 11). As a result of the increase in professional academic advisors, the NACADA was created in 1979 to enhance the practice of academic advising and student development. In 1979 NACADA began with 500 members and now serves well over 10,000 members. Some opportunities for professional development provided by NACADA include national, regional, and local conferences, research in the area of advising, and production of a refereed journal. As stated on their website, NACADA’s (n.d.) mission is to:

- Champion the educational role of academic advisors to enhance student learning and development in a diverse world;
- Affirm the role of academic advising in student success and persistence, thereby supporting institutional mission and vitality;
- Anticipate the academic advising needs of twenty-first century students, advisors and institutions;

- Advance the body of knowledge on academic advising; and
- Foster the talents and contributions of all members and promote the involvement of diverse population. (para. 2)

These statements reflect the values of NACADA members. Academic advisors not only encourage growth among students and institutions but also higher education in general. They are responsible for these areas as well as for their own personal and professional development.

**Advising defined.** Several authors have offered their definition of the duties and responsibilities of academic advisors. Kuh (2008) suggests that academic advisors serve in many capacities helping students understand the curriculum as well as “develop as independent thinkers and problem solvers and teach them how to navigate the institutional culture” (p. 81-82). Rawlins and Rawlins (2005) believe that “providing information, enforcing policies and school regulations, and functioning as resource persons are important aspects of advising” but it is just as important to have a “humanizing interaction” with students allowing for a deeper, more trusting relationship (p. 18). The academic advising process should not be an isolated act, advisors must work in concert with faculty and student affairs and the advisee must take responsibility for their actions and choices (Council for Academic Standards in Higher Education, 2007; Love, 2003). Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) claim that academic advising has been depicted using an array of descriptions from counseling to teaching to friendship but none adequately describe “the uniqueness of academic advising and masks the scholarly contributions the field makes to higher education” (p. 43).

Academic advisors must possess certain skills and competencies in order to be effective (Fox, 2008; Love, 2003). The relationship between the advisor and student are important to the matriculation of the student (Fox, 2008). Interpersonal and problem solving skills are essential. Interpersonal skills include the ability to actively listen and communicate. The interpersonal skills also include the ability to ask questions and interpret needs in order for the advisor to refer students to appropriate departments based on their needs (Fox, 2008). Advisors must also possess problem solving skills that build on the interpersonal skills. Love (2003) claims that these skills depend on the relationship between the two parties and involve rational and intuitive aspects. Love states that “advisors need to encourage students to listen to, explore, understand, and trust their instincts and hunches” (p. 511).

Some institutions employ faculty only to provide academic advising; over the last two decades most institutions have hired full-time, professional academic advisors to help students navigate the bureaucracies of the institution (M. C. King, 2008). However, the literature still leans toward discussing faculty as advisors in addition to professional advisors (Hemwall, 2008; M. C. King, 2008; Self, 2008). Full-time, professional academic advisors assist students with more than academic issues. The academic advisor’s role is to know the policies, rules, and regulations regarding admissions and registration, and to know the institution’s resources (Grites et al., 2008; Self, 2008). Since the faculty members develop the curriculum and are involved in research in their subject area, they are best equipped to advise the student about issues such as career path, curriculum-related electives, and graduate school possibilities (Hemwall, 2008; Self, 2008). However, depending on the structure of the institution the role of the academic

advisor may vary from general advising to specific program guidance (M. C. King, 2008; Self, 2008).

**Advising theory.** In relation to academic advising, prescriptive and developmental advising are the most widely noted theories in the advising literature (Lowenstein, 2005; Smith & Allen, 2006). Prescriptive advising is described as an exercise in supplying information to the student about courses and remedies to problems. “With prescriptive advising the emphasis is on telling students what to do and what they need to know rather than providing them with choices and opportunities for decision making” (Smith & Allen, 2006, p. 56). The description of developmental theory in relation to academic advising is to educate the student as a whole (Lowenstein, 2005). This theory looks at the entire development of the student including skills, goals, attitudes, and personal growth allowing them to practice decision making and problem solving skills (Hagen & Jordan, 2008; Lowenstein, 2005; Smith & Allen, 2006). Developmental theory is the framework from which professional academic advisors have worked over the past few decades. Hagen (2005) states that this theory was a good match for advising when the profession began because most of the practitioners were from student affairs and had student development backgrounds.

Hagen (2005) suggests that developmental theory served the profession well in the beginning but advisors must look at the practice through other lenses now in order to support changes in the field. Hagen states that the advising profession has begun to develop new theories in advising which draw from various disciplines such as social work, psychology, philosophy, and business. Some theories are based in conflict management (Hagen, 2005) while others are based in the idea that advisors are teachers

of the curriculum (Lowenstein, 2005). Hagen and Jordan (2008) posit that academic advisors should employ multiple theories similar to “other fields of scholarly inquiry” (p. 19). Lowenstein (2005) states that advisors are not bookkeepers; they help students get meaning from their curriculum while understanding the progression of classes. The concept of advisors as teachers has been around for some time. Lowenstein argues that the profession must focus on a learning-centered paradigm in an effort to encompass all that advisors do for the students and their institutions.

A learning-centered paradigm, as explained by Lowenstein (2005), is a way for academic advisors to help students create meaning from their learning and “an education out of the raw materials of the various courses...” that a student may take (p. 71). Not many students arrive at college fully understanding the process or the reason for the curriculum. The advisor has the opportunity to introduce the student to the rationale behind the classes and the ways in which they interact. In this paradigm, advisors help the student put the puzzle pieces in place, find a rationale for not only the curriculum but also the rules and policies of the institution, and to develop the knowledge from previous classes and relate them to new classes. Lowenstein claims that when academic advising is viewed through this model that this “...paradigm offers to make the advisor’s role one of the most exciting and essential in academe” (p.73).

**Advising and student retention.** According to Keup and Kinzie (2007) “the quality of academic advising is the most powerful predictor of satisfaction with the college environment” (p. 19). Advising for first year college students is recognized as an important factor in student retention (Nutt, 2003). Almost one-third of college students do not return to school after their first year (“Academic Advising Services,” 2005). The



importance of advising and student retention is not limited to first year students. Kuh (2008) states that a recent survey on student engagement revealed that students at any level who meet with their advisor at least twice during the academic year are more likely to engage in “educationally purposeful activities” at the institution (p. 71). In fact, research implies that “the primary factor directly affecting whether a student stays in college and graduates is the quality of the interaction he or she has with a concerned person in the campus community” (“Academic Advising Services,” 2005, para. 5).

Advising is one of the few structured activities on campus that is open to all students and allows for a connection to a person on campus (“Academic Advising Services,” 2005). The academic advisors connect the student to many different campus services, provide academic guidance, and give a personal link to the educational institution (Nutt, 2003). Nutt (2003) suggests that while advising should be the “hub” of the services provided to the student, it is not the only one, strong connections must exist between all of the departments on campus.

**Advising budgets and institutional support.** Duderstadt and Womack (2003) claim that higher education must become more accountable for its actions, specifically in the area of financial resources and quality of service. According to St. John and Parsons (2004) “the most amazing thing about government support for American higher education is that it occurred at all” (p. 24). More and more students enroll in college each year, yet funding from the government for public higher education institutions decreases. States put restrictions on tuition costs in an effort to keep college affordable, leaving the institution to make up the difference in rising costs while maintaining quality (St. John & Parsons, 2004).

Academic advising teams usually bear the burden for decreased funding through staff shortages and lack of available resources. Grites et al. (2008) state “the field of academic advising will likely remain a target for reductions when resources are dangerously scarce” (p. 463). M. C. King (2008) suggests being creative with the resources by introducing programs such as group advising or peer advising. However, there are still many instances where one-on-one advising is best (N. S. King, 2008), one example is that of privacy for the student.

As mentioned previously, the 2003 ACT/NACADA survey found that the advisor to student ratio was 1 to 285 (Habley, 2004). This survey is in contrast with a recent article by Travis (2009) which cited many academic institutions claim a ratio of 1 to 500 or more. Habley (2004) points out that the ACT/NACADA survey included advisors who advise special needs students, such as at-risk students or students with disabilities. Habley states that special needs advisors usually have far less advising loads than academic advisors who serve the general population of students. He also states that experts are not on the record regarding the number of advisees an advisor should have. However, Habley confirms that off the record it is speculated that the number should be 1 to 300. This ratio is used by the professionals in the industry. Habley suggests that some considerations should be made when determining this number. First, advisors who have responsibilities other than advising students should have smaller loads. Second, advisors who advise students with disabilities, international students, students having academic difficulty, and students enrolled in programs having institutionally rigorous or accreditation requirements should also be responsible for fewer students. Habley posits that all of the

factors mentioned should be taken into consideration by the administration when considering the role of the advisor in the advising team at the institution.

Grites et al. (2008) argue that advisors should be aware of the challenges ahead of them and the academic advising profession should take every opportunity to “demonstrate its capacity for ensuring the success of students, institutions, and indeed higher education itself” (p. 462). The authors suggest taking a proactive approach in reaching the decision-makers on their campus through adopting the national standards set by NACADA, becoming involved in the policy efforts on campus, and demonstrating “the cost benefits of good advising programs” (p. 467).

**Advising role in policy design and implementation.** In a survey conducted in 2000 by NACADA, academic advisors were asked to reply to the statement “level of satisfaction with the extent to which the opinions of advisors at your institution are heeded in institutional decisions.” Based on a 5-point Likert scale, 44.3% replied dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, 30.9% replied satisfied or very satisfied, and 22.6 % replied neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. When asked about the level of support provided by the institution, the responses showed that 45% of those polled were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (NACADA, 2000).

Although there are many theories in the policy analysis literature such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), Multiple Streams (MS), and Policy Diffusion (Nowlin, 2011; Sabatier, 2007), a general process is often cited (Colebatch, 2006; Weible, Sabatier, & McQueen, 2009; Weimer & Vining, 2005). Colebatch (2006) states:

The dominant paradigm in texts on policy practice sees the policy process as an exercise in informed problem-solving: a problem is identified, data is collected,

the problem is analysed and advice is given to the policy-maker, who makes a decision which is then implemented. (pp. 309)

However, Colebatch points out that, in reality, this is not the way the policy process happens. “The textbook account represents a norm, an ideal to which policy workers aspire but which circumstances may prevent them attaining” (Colebatch , 2006, p. 311). Typically differences will exist between those that create and those that implement the policy (Colebatch, 2006; Emad & Roth, 2009; Joaquin, 2009). Weible et al. (2009) argue that although the textbook linear process is a weak theory it may be necessary for researchers to use as a tool when trying to understand the life cycle of a policy (p. 133). Colebatch states that the policy process is not necessarily linear when it comes to implementation.

This thought of policy process as a linear model leads policy makers to think of policy implementation as something that comes after policy design (Emad & Roth, 2009). Policy design is described as the intention of creating policy to deal with an apparent problem. Colebatch (2006) states that policy can change as it evolves, “new issues emerge; the interaction may produce changes in the valuation of alternative outcomes, and the most acceptable outcome may not have been the intention of any of the participants” (p. 311). Problems arise that were not necessarily expected during the formulation phase that may create obstacles for implementation (Colebatch, 2006; Joaquin, 2009; Timmerman & Metcalfe, 2009). Joaquin (2009) discusses the issues with adaptation to policy change in relation to the gap between formulation and execution of the policy. Connick and Innes (2003) support a collaborative policy design model inclusive of the stakeholders. The authors posit that “collaborative policy making

represents a different paradigm more suited to the postmodern, fragmented and rapidly changing information society” (p. 178). The influences of those at the implementation level are an important consideration in addition to those at the top who are creating the policy (Joaquin, 2009). Weimer and Vining (2005) discuss the concept of Elmore’s *Backward Mapping* which would allow the policy to emerge from those who it affects most. This is also referred to as bottom-up policy design (Weimer & Vining, 2005). The concept is to look at the change that is desired and offer an opportunity to those it would affect to be a part of the design in addition to the implementation process (Weimer & Vining, 2005).

### **Organizational Behavior**

Organizational behavior focuses on how people, groups, and the organization itself work and participate in change efforts and adaptations to new conditions (Hodge et al., 2003; Middleton, 2002). The study of organizational behavior began with authors such as Fredrick Taylor who wrote about *Scientific Management* and Douglas McGregor with his focus on the employee’s view of management (Griffin & O’Leary-Kelly, 2004; Sims, 2002). Middleton (2002) states that the field of study has grown over the years by delving further into how the organization works and how the people are affected. Griffin and O’Leary-Kelly (2004) claim that in an effort to understand the “cause-and-effect linkages among key variables, managers and organizations would thus be in a position to enhance these outcome variables by manipulating their causes” (p. 3).

One seminal author in the field of organizational behavior is Peter Senge. In his research on learning organizations, Senge (2001) discusses the need for organizations to use the fifth discipline which he calls systems thinking. This should be developed

together with four other “component technologies” that are part of becoming a learning organization; personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. In order to develop all five together, managers and leaders must be willing to work toward that goal. He claims that it is systems thinking, the fifth discipline, that brings it all together. Systems thinking provides the structural elements and tools to make necessary change in organizations.

In his 1996 book *Leading Change* another seminal author, Kotter, discusses an 8-stage process by which an organization must incorporate everyone into the change happening in the environment. The process is a system within itself and requires that the executives and management change their way of thinking. Kotter discusses how organizations provide lengthy workshops and question and answer sessions to executives and managers giving them an ample amount of time to understand the vision. Yet, when it comes to the subordinates, a 30-minute presentation is given and leaders do not understand why vision and change are not supported by the employees.

The organizational behavior has an effect on change. The acceptance of or resistance to change efforts can depend greatly on the system in which the organization operates and the leadership that it employs. Change is contingent upon the effort and ability to adapt for both the individual and the group (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Lemak, Henderson, & Wegner, 2004). Allen, Gunderson, and Holling (2010) describe two types of change that humans manage: discontinuous change and surprise versus continuous change and predictability” (p. 8). One suggests little time for adjustment and the other ample time for adaptation to change.

**Change in higher education.** Duderstadt and Womack (2003) claim that “we live in an ‘audit’ society, in which accountability and performance matter” (p. 2). Recently, change in relation to higher education has come in the form of budget cuts and the emergence of online educational programs (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003). Change in higher education has brought with it a new set of concerns and type of student, including higher costs and a demand from the public for a different kind of educational process (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Academic advising is not an isolated act, therefore, the changes happening in higher education directly affect the advising functions (Grites et al., 2008).

In contrast, Birnbaum and Shushok (2001) claim that higher education is always in a crisis of some sort but that it always continues with its “lodestone a utopian ideal” (p. 78). There are three types of crises in higher education according to Birnbaum and Shushok: (a) the pandemic crises of finance, (b) the chronic crises of confidence, and (c) the chronic crises of stagnation. Birnbaum and Shushok claim that the financial crises will most likely be around forever, the crises of confidence is debatable, whereas, the crises of stagnation may have some merit. “It is difficult to support the critics’ argument that higher education doesn’t change, although whether it is changing quickly enough and, more to the point, whether it is changing in the directions desired by the critic are other matters” (p. 69).

Change is difficult and unless managed properly with focused leadership, could easily fail or create turmoil (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Kotter, 1996). Many authors have offered prescriptions for change such as Kotter (1996) who presents an eight stage process and Senge (2001) who presents five disciplines. In other studies, both Higgs and

Rowland (2005) and Kezar and Eckel (2002) found that there was no single approach to change that was most effective. Higgs and Rowland claim, however, that whatever approach is used, should take into account the intricacies of change. Change is also described as a cyclical process always happening even in stable environments (Hodge et al., 2003).

**Systems.** Systems theory is a flexible type of theory which describes how organizations relate to the environment using inputs and outputs to create feedback giving the system an opportunity to improve (Lemak et al., 2004). Systems can be closed or open. A closed system is not desirable for organizations because without interaction with the environment an organization can collapse (Hodge et al., 2003). Open systems have sources of inputs and generate outputs to the external environment. This theory works in both the bureaucratic and organic types of organizations. Burns and Stalker (2001) discuss an organic systems theory as one that allows for flexibility and the expression of ideas throughout the organization by all members of that organization. The organization must be looked at as a whole rather than in parts. The organic theory recognizes each member as an individual with potential to push the organization to bigger and better things. It is dynamic and changes with the environment. Several characteristics of the organic type of organization includes: a commitment by all, lateral organizational structure, and a high level of communication throughout the organization (Burns & Stalker, 2001). It is expected that those with the expertise become the authority in their particular area. Burns and Stalker claim that it is not a hierarchical, trickle down effect but a consensus to the location of authority.



In trying to understand the nature of organic theory and change it is also important to consider the characteristics of the individual person. Argyris (2001) has interesting points on “some properties of human personality” (p. 359). He discusses the infancy stage of human development as being passive and adulthood as being active; moving from dependence to independence. As the human personality grows one becomes more aware of one’s surroundings and the ability to control one’s environment. Therefore it can be inferred that an organic system is the ideal form for the human personality because it allows for the adaptation to changing environments. However, Argyris also discusses the possibility of restrained expression by oneself or external conditions and a latent dependence in the human personality. These would suggest the need for a mechanistic or bureaucratic type of system. Dooley (2004) further explains that the systems model is top down because it “is mechanically maintained through equilibrium seeking processes” (p. 357).

**Complex systems.** The theory of complex systems, among other management theories, emerged from the natural sciences and has been adapted to organizations in the workplace (Capra, 2007; Dooley, 2004). In both the natural sciences and organizational theory there has been a move from reductionist to systemic thinking (Capra, 2007, p. 5). Complexity theory takes a step in moving away from seeing the workplace in a mechanistic view. Complexity theory deals with the organization as a living entity rather than a stagnant structure.

By looking at organizations as living systems the concepts of self-renewal and system learning can be applied to organizational change. The themes of people, space, and time are a common thread in regards to change theory. It is thought that one of the

reasons complexity science is so interesting to researchers is that it takes into account time which is important when studying change (Dooley, 2004). Poole (2004) states that time is important when studying change because it is used for “assessing when changes occur, the rate of change, and the extent of change, and also to establish the opposite of change, stability” (p. 21). Studying time helps to explain the “how” and “why” of change (Dooley, p. 354).

One area of complexity science is Complex Adaptive Systems (Zellermayer & Margolin, 2005). Dooley (2004) states that complex systems can be considered adaptive if they use non-evolutionary processes to change. He explains that complex adaptive systems must be able to self organize and evolve in a quicker time frame than biological organisms do in their evolutionary process. Therefore it should be noted that when using the term evolution in relation to organizations, the time frame is much shorter than it is in the biological world. Sammut-Bonnici and Wensley (2002) discuss co-evolution in complex adaptive systems. They describe it as follows:

A complex adaptive system starts with simple rules and goals for the individual, which create an organized complex formation. The end result is a configuration that seems to have its own life... The process is bottom up, starting with a few simple rules for individuals, which create a flowing complex system. (pp. 307)

One focus of complex systems and change is the subject of non-equilibrium. It is suggested in biological sciences that adaptable systems are nonlinear functioning far from equilibrium (Capra, 2007). Applying this to organizations and groups, fluctuations and crisis typically bring about change in systems (Dooley, 2004). However, change is not limited to something catastrophic. Dooley (2004) suggests that an organization that is far

from equilibrium is susceptible to change by many factors such as “the departure or arrival of a new individual, a comment made by someone, [or] a performance measure that slightly slips” (p. 368). It is suggested that change is not a gradual process but comes about through punctuated equilibrium which is described as “episodes of rapid change and long periods of stasis” (Sammut-Bonnici & Wensley, 2002, p. 302).

**Leaders and change.** Leaders play an important role in the change process in both support and action (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Schein, 2009). The view of leadership has evolved over the past several decades from the belief that someone is born with the ability to lead to the belief that it can be fostered (Northouse, 2004). The theories of leadership have progressed from Stogdill’s trait theory which looked only at the leader to Burns’ transformational theory which considers the leader and the followers (Northouse, 2004). There is also a debate regarding the differences between leaders and managers. Some authors, such as Zaleznik (1998), claim that leaders and managers are different “creatures.” Other theorists, like Kotter (1996), believe that a true leader must possess both leadership and management qualities. The act of leadership is a process involving influence within a group to attain a common goal (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). As Kouzes and Posner (2002) state “leadership is a reciprocal process between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow” (p. 23). They also state that effective leaders work with their followers, they do not rule over them. Schein (2009) posits that a leader’s role in a team is to help cultivate the relationships among the team members. Schein goes on to say that for a team to remain on task they must have the opportunity to process their roles in the team and the leader is in that position to help.

Leaders guide their organizations to what that organization aspires to be (Pisapia, 2009). This aspiration is typically about change and Pisapia (2009) points to the strategic leader as one who can help facilitate change:

I define strategic leadership as the ability (as well as the wisdom) to make consequential decisions about ends, actions and tactics in ambiguous environments. Strategic leadership marries management with leadership, politics with ethics, and strategic intent with tactics and actions. (pp. 7)

A study about leadership and change by Higgs and Rowland (2005) found that the successful changes happened when leaders facilitated change as opposed to shaping the change. Higgs and Rowland claim that in all of the contexts studied, shaping behavior inhibited the change process. Schein (2009) suggests that leaders must immerse themselves in the culture in order to effect change. Schein states,

What makes leadership so complex is that it involves both learning to accept help, by becoming genuinely involved in the culture of the group, and how to give help to the group and to individual subordinates as areas of improvement are identified. (pp. 105)

Dervitsiotis (2006) states that “for change and adaptation to occur in a social system, human agents as system parts must be willing and able to interact and to communicate” (p. 796). Dervitsiotis goes on to say that trust is a key component to adaptation because it allows the lines of communication to be open which in turn can generate new ideas that may be necessary for change. Pisapia (2009) and Schein (2009) claim that leaders must foster trust with employees so that they are productive and thrive in the changing environment. Pisapia states that “when employees lack trust in their

leaders, stress and divisiveness prevails, performance erodes, and talented workers leave for more motivating environments” (p. 128).

**Power.** Power is multi-dimensional and described in the literature in relation to authority, resources, knowledge, structures, and influence (Arts & Van Tatenhove, 2004; Braynion, 2004; Hodge et al., 2003). French and Raven’s five bases of social power are thought to be a foundation for many leaders (Braynion, 2004). Hellriegel and Slocum (2004) describe the five bases: reward power is based on the ability to give incentives such as merit pay; coercive power is punishment for lack of desired performance; legitimate power is the formal position held by the leader or manager; referent power is based on the admiration or respect the followers have on the leader; and expert power represents the ability or talents possessed by the leader. These sources are not typically used independently and the effectiveness depends on the authority and situations in which they are used (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2004).

Braynion (2004) addresses Luke’s Marxist view of power where one person has power over another to make them do something they may not do normally. “From this perspective power is demonstrated through who has the decision-making power” (Braynion, 2004, p. 452). Power lies with those who are in the position to possess the power. This would seemingly be those who have the control over resources or who have the ability to influence the leader (Arts & Van Tatenhove, 2004).

Power is often linked with the organizational leader (Braynion, 2004). However, there are also concepts of power according to one’s situation or position. Hodge et al. (2003) refer to the concept of situational authority as a hybrid model between the authority figure and the staff. “Generally, it is delegated to a staff expert by a manager.

The staff expert is restricted rather specifically in the areas in which the authority can be exercised” (Hodge et al., 2003, p. 305). As noted by Hayes (2007) power is not always held by the authority figure. “Sometimes individuals and groups who do not have legitimate authority are able to exercise considerable influence and may even have more power than legitimately appointed managers” (Hayes, 2007, p.152).

Power can also be determined by the position one holds in the organization. Hodge et al. (2003) claim that lower-level employees can gain power in an organization based on their essential skills and knowledge. They can also gain power by pushing an exact enforcement of policies. “Sometimes such actions can be used to change archaic rules or to force other changes or actions” (Hodge et al., 2003, p. 313).

**Teams.** In most organizations it is common to work within a group or team to solve problems or perform decision-making tasks (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2004; Larson, 2010). The synergy of a team is an important aspect in reaching the goals that management or the team seeks to accomplish (Larson, 2010). McGrath and Tschan (2004) describe “the nature of groups as complex systems that embed and are embedded in other systems” (p. 55). Hellriegel and Slocum (2004) describe successful teams as those with a common goal, consensus of guidelines, free communication, mutual support, capability for conflict resolution, and the ability to re-energize and reform (p. 196). Schein (2009) posits that a good team is “one in which each member *helps* the others by performing his or her role appropriately so that equity is felt by all and mutual trust remains high even when performance pressures are great” (p. 88).

Teams in organizations are affected by the events around them, some are controllable and predictable and some are not. McGrath and Tschan (2004) discuss

directed and undirected adaptation in teams (p. 66). They describe directed adaptation as a calculated act which is planned by the system. Undirected adaptation is progressive, the authors liken it to the evolution of a species. Joaquin (2008) posits that response to changes depend on the characteristics of the team which is made up of individuals. Ideally a team becomes cohesive so they can learn from their past actions and improve performance (Larson, 2010). However, with cohesiveness comes the danger of groupthink which is described as “an agreement-at-any-cost mentality that results in ineffective team decision making” (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2004, p. 213).

**Adaptation.** Adaptation is defined as an adjustment to external forces (Berkhout et al., 2006; de Zilwa, 2007; Deverell & Olsson, 2010). As with complexity, the study of adaptation is rooted in the natural sciences (Allen et al., 2010). Berkhout et al. (2006) believe adaptation is a learned process where an organization alters their habits and behaviors to the external changes. Adaptation is also considered to be similar to transformational change where there is influence from the management in the organization (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). “Adaptations are adjustments that respond to a lack of fit with the changing external world, in which the organization restores equilibrium between environmental demands and internal structures” (Eckel & Kezar, 2003, p. 35).

Deverell and Olsson (2010) state that an organization must have the ability to develop well defined beliefs so that they can read the changes in the external environment and translate them back into their unit to effect successful changes of their own. There must be a coping cycle that exists which will allow groups to deal with the external change that they are facing (McGrath & Tschan, 2004; Schein, 2004). Deverell and Olsson also state that adaptability is related to the underlying characteristics of the

organization. “In order to be able to adapt, organizations should have the capacity to interpret incoming signals and to adjust the organization accordingly” (Deverell & Olsson, 2010, p. 120). If groups begin to have difficulty adapting to changes in their environment, the leader is responsible for guiding the development in the culture of the group (Schein, 2004). Eckel and Kezar (2003) claim that adaptations are not only reactions, they can also be proactive actions to change. They state, “adaptations can be either intentional or emergent and nonplanned” (p. 35).

Adaptation is a result of resilience (Allen et al., 2010). Resilience is discussed in relation to ecology. Holling and Gunderson (2002) provide a definition for ecosystem resilience that can be applied to teams and organizations: “Resilience is measured by the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed before the system changes the structure by changing the variables and processes that control behavior” (p. 28). Allen et al. (2010) state that systems have the capacity to absorb conflicts in the environment but when boundaries are exceeded the system will change at a swift pace. The authors state that resilience is attributed to positive feedbacks as a system moves away from equilibrium. Conversely, stability is associated with negative feedbacks and resists any moves away from an equilibrium state.

McGrath and Tschan (2004) discuss feedback loops and adaptation responses to change. First they posit that groups may “time shift” their response to a change event (p.66). They define five coping responses: the first is preventive coping which happens long before the change event, anticipatory coping happens just before the event, dynamic coping happens during the event, reactive coping happens immediately after the event, and residual coping is long after the event. The authors state “preventive and anticipatory



coping may try to prevent the event, but more often they are attempts to mitigate its consequences” (p. 67). McGrath and Tschan describe three types of responses to change in systems: negative feedback loops, positive feedback loops, and no response. Negative feedback loops refer to systems that try to stop the change. Positive feedback loops is when the system switches to a different function or increase the disorder to create a new form or self-destruct. A no response could either be a delayed response or a failure by the team to notice the event. The authors suggest that time shifting may make the change event difficult to comprehend. They state that the event does not happen in isolation and the size and importance of the event should be taken into consideration.

### **Organizational Culture**

During institutional change the culture of the institution will most likely be transformed (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Culture is considered to be both an abstract occurrence and a structured set of rules (Schein, 2004). Definitions for culture typically include common themes such as artifacts, values and beliefs, and unconscious assumptions. The study of culture in organizations offers “a framework for creating order out of the complex and often baffling dynamics of organizational life” (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 8). It is argued that those paying close attention to the culture of their environment will be most effective in the change process (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Hatch, 2004; Tierney, 2008).

**Culture defined.** Schein (2004) describes culture in part as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration...” (p. 17). Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) posit that

culture provides meaning, opportunity for interpretation of values, and guidelines for problem solving within a group. Schein further describes culture:

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of culture as a concept is that it points us to phenomena that are below the surface, that are powerful in their impact but invisible and to a considerable degree unconscious. In that sense, culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual. We can see the behavior that results, but often we cannot see the forces underneath that cause certain kinds of behavior. Yet, just as our personality and character guide and constrain our behavior, so does culture guide and constrain the behavior of members of a group through the shared norms that are held in that group. (pp. 8)

Kuh and Whitt (2000) claim that culture is constantly changing and being “recreated by ongoing patterns of interactions between individuals, groups, and an institution’s internal and external environments” (p. 163). Hatch (2004) asserts that organizational culture is dynamic; at times parts of the culture may change while other parts remain stable. Change cannot occur without altering some part of the culture (Eckel & Kezar, 2003).

Schein (2004) argues that it is typically the leader, formal or informal, of a group who manages and changes culture. However, as Bolman and Deal (2003) state, leaders should look at change initiatives through different lenses to ensure a successful process. Schein (2009) posits that organizations have subcultures and leaders must understand the various cultures and help the members of the organization through the change process. Bergquist and Pawlak (2009) state that change can produce anxiety. Leaders can help to contain and reduce that anxiety by looking at culture through multiple perspectives. Very

often people are not aware of the culture within their organization; many times it has an unconscious existence (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Eckel and Kezar (2003) state that understanding the culture of one's institution is important for successful change.

**Culture Concepts.** Through examination of the literature regarding culture it is apparent that there are three common themes. The themes range from easily discernable to difficult to identify based on how deeply they exist in the unconsciousness of the group members. These themes include: (a) artifacts, (b) values and beliefs, and (c) unconscious assumptions (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) posits that researchers run the risk of not getting the full story when examining culture. Sometimes employees will not necessarily talk about true events and stories unveiling the culture of the team. He discusses examining artifacts and espoused beliefs in an attempt to uncover the underlying assumptions that exist in the team.

**Artifacts.** Artifacts are described as visible objects (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Schein, 2004). Artifacts are both tangible and intangible (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) posits that artifacts include "all the phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels" from the physical environment to the group processes to the mission and vision of the organization.

**Values and Beliefs.** Values and beliefs guide the behavior of the group or organization (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) refers to this as espoused beliefs and values. Schein claims that these are the beliefs and values typically created by the upper administration of the organization. Schein also asserts that beliefs and values are based on prior learning otherwise they merely remain as artifacts. Bolman and Deal (2003) claim that values define an organization. "Values are intangible and

define a fundamental character that distinguishes an enterprise from others” (Boleman & Deal, 2003, p. 252).

*Unconscious Assumptions.* The unconscious assumptions are the deeply ingrained beliefs and behaviors that are not usually apparent to the group (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Kuh & Whitt, 2000; Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) states that the unconscious or underlying assumptions are the result of successful solutions that have worked repeatedly. Although these assumptions may form the culture of a group they are typically not understood by the group and are most often identified when they are in conflict with the values and beliefs (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Kuh & Whitt, 2000). The unconscious assumptions are not only taken for granted by the group but there is little room for variation of the assumption in question (Schein, 2004).

**Culture of higher education.** Higher education institutions have begun to realize that academic advisors are crucial to the success of student retention (Gordon et al., 2008). Yet with high advisor to advisee ratios (Travis, 2009) and low perceived administrative support from advisors (NACADA, 2000), this seems like a contradiction. Argyris and Schön (as cited in Bolman and Deal, 2003) describe this paradox through theories brought forward as espoused theory and theory-in-use. Espoused theory is a belief of how one takes action on a situation. Theory-in-use is how the action is actually taken. In the example of higher education administration and academic advisors, administration may state that they value advisors but their actions may show a different story through lack of adequate training and low salary (Brown, 2008; Self, 2008).

The culture of higher education is portrayed as a loosely coupled system (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Okunoye, Frolick, & Crable, 2008). A loosely coupled system is described

by Okunoye et al., (2008) as independent organizational components located within a larger organization. The complexity of the higher education system is further compounded with the existence of multiple stakeholders, unclear goals, and the rapidly changing environment (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Okunoye et al., 2008).

Loose coupling has positive and negative aspects. The independent nature of the departments can allow units in the organization to react to particular issues without having to involve the entire system (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). On the negative side, Eckel and Kezar (2003) claim certain issues that are viewed as a potential crisis may not get the attention of the rest of the organization. Other negative aspects include potential resistance to change by departments and the slow speed in which information travels between units (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Okunoye et al., 2008).

**Culture framework.** Kezar and Eckel (2002) found that by using culture when embarking on change there is an opportunity to "...provide a richer description of the often empty strategies..." employed by administration (p. 456). Kezar and Eckel found that ignoring culture can hinder the change process therefore making it ineffective. Their findings were based on their participation as researchers in a longitudinal study conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE). The ACE study observed 26 academic institutions over the course of five and a half years. Eckel and Kezar (2003) present six of the institutions and the five core change strategies that were common of successful transformations: senior administrative support, collaborative leadership, flexible vision, staff development, and visible actions. Kezar and Eckel (2002) state that two cultural

frameworks were adopted in the study; Bergquist's 1992 cultural archetypes and Tierney's 1992 individual institutional culture frameworks.

Since Kezar and Eckel's study in 2002, Tierney and Bergquist have updated their cultural frameworks. Tierney's (2008) framework of organizational culture consists of six categories: environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership. Tierney created his framework through a single case study research at one university. He states that "each cultural term occurs in organizational settings, yet the way it occurs, the form it takes, and the importance it has differs dramatically" (p. 29). Tierney describes each of the categories in terms of questions such as: How does the organization define its environment? How is the mission used as a basis for decisions? What constitutes information, who has it, and how is it disseminated? Tierney claims that this framework is a web of relationships that overlap and connect with the people of the organization within the six categories.

The second framework that was adopted in the ACE study was the cultural framework presented by Bergquist (1992) describing the four cultures of higher education. Bergquist's framework builds upon Tierney's structure of organizational culture. Bergquist's four cultures are collegial, managerial, developmental, and negotiating. Bergquist has since revised the cultures changing the negotiating culture to the advocacy culture and including two more, giving a total of six cultures of the academy. In a new collaboration between Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) they present the six cultures of the academy: collegial, managerial, developmental, advocacy, virtual, and tangible. The collegial culture is directed by faculty and focuses on the disciplines, it is informal and non-hierarchical. The managerial culture is focused on the organization

itself, it is fiscally responsible and pushes for strong supervisory skills. A more open and personal culture is the developmental culture where professional and personal growth are encouraged. The advocacy culture is where equality is created between the faculty, administrator, and staff allowing for the necessary confrontation and possible power struggle that may be necessary for the relationship between these groups. The virtual culture responds to the globalization of academia by giving an open perspective on how a modern university may look at its role in the world of technology. In contrast, for those with a more traditional view of the university, the tangible culture provides the time-honored values and standards of the physical university. Bergquist and Pawlak state that while most educational institutions primarily embrace one of these cultures, the other five are typically present as well.

These cultural schools of thought were the basis for the conceptual framework of the ACE study. The intent of the study presented by Kezar and Eckel (2002) was to “understand the effect of culture on specific change strategies” (p. 443). Through their research they found that there was a strong relationship between institutional change and culture. Kezar and Eckel state that further research is needed to explore culture and the change process, Eckel and Kezar (2003) state that the five strategies are interwoven with a common theme: “they are all approaches to making people think differently” (p. 78). The five change strategies identified in the study are:

1. Senior administrative support which represents the resources and encouragement provided by the upper-level administration (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Eckel and Kezar (2003) claim that this concept is based on the actions of the administration.

2. Collaborative leadership is “a process where the positional and nonpositional individuals throughout the campus are involved in the change initiative from conception to implementation” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, p. 440-441).
3. Flexible vision allows for a more “emergent and opportunistic” way of creating a vision and allowing it to grow and change as the institution evolves (Eckel & Kezar, 2003).
4. Staff development varies depending on the extent of the change but Kezar and Eckel (2003) cite that it is important when embarking on change.
5. Visible action is the process of showing what accomplishments have been reached along the way (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). “We learned that specific content of the action was not important; what matters is timing.” (p. 98)

Eckel and Kezar (2003) state that the change process is not linear since several strategies must occur simultaneously. They also claim that the five core strategies are not in themselves the only strategies always used for change. The study found 15 supporting strategies for transformational change: (a) putting issues in a broad context, (b) setting expectations and holding people accountable, (c) persuasive and effective communication, (d) invited participation, (e) opportunities to influence results, (f) new interactions, (g) changes in administrative and governance processes, (h) moderated momentum, (i) supportive structures, (j) financial resources, (k) incentives, (l) long-term orientation, (m) connections and synergy, (n) external factors, and (o) outside perspectives (p.110). Eckel and Kezar claim that the institutions that made the most progress toward change employed most of the supporting strategies along with the five core strategies.



The conceptual framework for this study is based in organizational culture and particularly on Eckel and Kezar's (2003) study using the five core strategies as a guide. This study offers a framework that is particular to higher education and the core strategies are broad enough to translate to divisions within the university. The five strategies will offer a clear lens for looking at the organizational culture of the advising teams. The key strategies help to solidify the interview questions and give a focus for data collection which will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed the historical context of academic advising units and discussed various theories of how advising units work in their institutions. It next reviewed organizational behavior and change in relation to systems, leaders, and adaptation. The final section defined culture and described the five core strategies presented by Eckel and Kezar (2003) which guides this study. The next chapter addresses the methodology used in this study.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this single site, multiple case study was to identify how academic advising teams respond to changes in the organization and to understand how and if Eckel and Kezar's (2003) five core adaptation strategies are used by four advising teams in a medium-sized public university located in the Mid-West Region of the United States. A qualitative approach was chosen for this study in order to explore how academic advising teams adapt to change and to obtain a holistic view (Stake, 1995). Creswell (2007) states that in addition to the need for exploration, "we also conduct qualitative research because we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue" (p. 40).

A case study approach was selected because it provides insight into advising teams, a specific system (Creswell, 2007). In particular, a single site, multiple case study approach was chosen as the research design because of the opportunity to provide a cross-case analysis of the academic advising teams within the bounded system of the university (Merriam, 1998). Each academic advising team is a case in and of itself, acting as an instrument to better understand adaptability strategies (Stake, 1995). Each team is a bounded system that was studied through interviews, observations, and document analysis (Creswell, 2007).

The primary research question for this study was: How do higher education academic advising teams adapt to changes in the institution? The questions that were investigated are:

1. What is the culture(s) of the academic advising teams being studied?
2. What are the strategies used by the academic advising teams to adapt to institutional changes regarding the curriculum and the introduction of new systems?
3. What are the perceptions of the academic advising teams of their ability to adapt to institutional changes?
4. What role does leadership play in the academic advising teams' ability to adapt to institutional changes?

### **Site and Sample**

The site chosen for this study was a medium-sized, public university in the Mid-West Region of the United States. In an effort to maintain confidentiality, the institution will be referred to as “Alpha University” or “AU.” In addition, each college will be referred to as a Greek letter (College Beta, College Gamma, College Delta, and College Epsilon). The researcher received approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) prior to collecting any data.

A review of AU's website shows that this university has four campuses with a total of six academic colleges. The main campus is the east campus which has the majority of the student population, including the dorms and most of the academic programs. The next largest campus is the west campus which houses half of the academic programs offered at AU. The other two campuses, north and south, are much smaller with

select programs for the communities they serve. There are 28,194 graduate and undergraduate students enrolled, 707 faculty, and 1,763 staff members. Of the staff, there are 54 professional academic advisors, assistant directors, and directors.

This university was purposefully chosen because of the college advising structure and because the university was undergoing change. The structure of the professional academic advising system is set up in teams under most of the colleges and teams would be the unit of analysis. Faculty governance documents reveal in recent years severe budget cuts had prompted AU to ask the colleges to make important choices and decide how to cut their budgets. Some of the colleges cut staff, including advisors. Of the four colleges studied, there was one person in one college who was cut based on budget. While the other three colleges did not experience any cuts to existing advising staff, there were also no additions when positions became vacant. Minutes from faculty governance meetings and an enrollment report in 2007 reveal discussions about increases in student enrollment and faculty but no mention of staff increases. During the 8 months of data collection upper-level administration had secured a grant that, in part, enabled AU to add advisors which will be discussed in Chapter Three. How advising teams adapt to change, such as budget cuts, is the focus of this study.

**The Case Studies.** The goal of this single site, multiple case study was to identify and to understand the adaptation strategies used by academic advising teams in all six colleges at Alpha University, however, only four colleges provided access to the researcher. Of the two colleges that did not participate, one college advising director denied access telling the researcher that the group did not have time to participate. Interestingly enough, in more than one interview and without being prompted, advisors in

the four colleges participating likened the above mentioned college to that of a sinking ship. The next college that did not participate in the study was not because the researcher did not get permission from the director, but because the advisors chose not to participate. One interview was conducted with a person in a supervisory role in that college who revealed that no clear structure exists between the advisors and the departments and many times the advisors were left to make decisions without guidance or procedures in place. Regardless of the reasons, two colleges were excluded from the study, resulting in a total of four college advising teams. The disciplines offered in each of the colleges in the study are not revealed in an effort to further maintain confidentiality.

**Sampling Interview Participants.** While the focus was on the advisors and their team, the researcher also interviewed administrators at AU identified by advisors as being able to contribute to an understanding of the advising program. The researcher used snowball sampling to identify administrators who are perceived by advisors to be important to the decisions outside of the advising teams that affect the advising teams. There were a total of 49 participants interviewed, 33 advisors and directors and 16 administrators (See Table 22 in Appendix N).

**Advisors and directors.** The participants in this study included a stratified purposeful sampling of academic advisors and their directors in four academic colleges at AU. It should be noted that the advising director is considered part of the advising team and may or may not actively advise students. Over 30 people were identified as part of the academic advising teams within the four colleges. Professional academic advisors whose primary function is to advise sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students were included in the study. Advisors who serve only freshman or those who serve

students across the institution were excluded. This decision was intended to provide consistency in terms of responsibilities required by academic advisors who were studied. Advisors who serve freshman and students across the institution may follow a different structure and are usually not located within the colleges at AU.

Participants were selected according to the criteria and identified by using the university website and speaking with the directors in the particular colleges. Permission was sought from each college advising director prior to the researcher making contact with the advisors per IRB request. A description of the procedures that were used to recruit advisor participants and the recruitment letter are located in Appendices A and B.

***University administration.*** As stated previously, snowball sampling was used to identify key people in the university administration for interviews regarding the academic advisors and their participation in changes at the university. Once the administrators were identified, they were contacted by email and phone requesting their participation using the recruitment letter found in Appendix C. The researcher contacted 20 university administrators; 16 participated in the interviews. Those not responding after a second email were not pursued.

**Sampling for observations.** Maximum variation sampling was used to choose sites and events pertinent to the study. The researcher had the opportunity to do 21 observations that included orientations, the advising center waiting areas in the four colleges, college advising team meetings at the four colleges, university-wide advising meetings, and faculty governance meetings. Tables detailing the observations are available in Appendix D.

**Sampling documents.** The documents the researcher viewed included college and university websites, college advisor training manuals, the university catalog, and meeting minutes. A total of 33 documents were reviewed. Tables detailing the documents are available in Appendix E.

### **Data Collection**

Three primary forms of data collection were used: interviews, observations, and document analysis. These methods were used in an effort to strengthen validity and reliability. Table 20 in Appendix F describes the relationship between data collection methods and the research questions. The data was collected for a period of 8 months from June 22, 2010 to February 11, 2011.

**Interviews.** A total of 49 interviews were conducted with academic advisors, their directors, and university administration using standardized interview protocols (Appendices G, H, & I). Merriam (1998) states that interviewing is one of the best ways to collect data, specifically in case studies. All participants were asked to sign a consent form, approved by IRB, acknowledging their participation in the study (Appendix J). Interviews are confidential and names have not been used. Participants were contacted via email with a telephone follow up (Appendices B & C) to set up interviews. When permitted by the participant, the interview was audio recorded at their office or at a mutually agreed upon location and later transcribed. Handwritten notes were taken during the interviews. All digital recordings and transcribed interviews have been put on a password protected data storage device. This storage device along with the handwritten notes that were taken during the interviews and the signed consent forms are stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home, preventing access by anyone but the researcher.

***Advisors and directors.*** Interviews with academic advisors and advising directors were conducted in order to gain insight into the perspectives of the advisors regarding their ability to adapt as a team to the changes in the institution. There were 33 advisors and directors that participated from the four colleges and the interviews lasted an average of 36 minutes, the shortest interview was 16 minutes and the longest was 1 hour and 10 minutes. Interview protocols for the academic advisors and advising directors (Appendices G & H) were followed. Examples of the open-ended interview questions that were asked are: How would you describe the decision making process in your advising group? Describe the biggest obstacle faced by the advising group in this college. Over 20 hours of interviews were conducted with advisors and directors.

***University administration.*** Interviews with university administration were conducted in order to gain insight into the participation of advisors in university changes. The university administrator participants were identified by the academic advisors. There were 16 university administrators, who participated and the average interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. An interview protocol for the university administrators (Appendix I) was followed. One example of an open-ended interview question that was asked is: Do you think that advisors should be consulted on the changes that occur at the institution? If so, to what degree? If not, why not? Over 6 hours of interviews were conducted with university administrators.

***Observations.*** Observations were conducted to gain a perspective on how the advising teams perform their duties and daily activities within their departments. An observation protocol (Appendix K) was followed to ensure that both descriptive and reflective notes were recorded. Creswell (2007) states that a protocol is important for



researchers to organize and gather their thoughts while at the particular site. Information that was gathered included a description of the physical setting, the participants, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors, and the researcher's behavior (Merriam, 1998). The researcher wrote field notes and was an observer only, not a participant. Over 27 hours of observations were conducted (see Observation Tables in Appendix D).

**Documents and audiovisual review.** Documents and audiovisual materials were collected and reviewed in order to gain a perspective of how advising teams adapt to change in their institution. Merriam (1998) suggests that while documents may be more factual than other data collection forms, the researcher must still determine authenticity and accuracy. Also, since the documents are not generated specifically for the researcher, one must extract the important information from the data. The documents were used to compare and contrast the data collected by the interviews and observations. Appendix L contains the Document/Audiovisual Protocol and Appendix E contains the tables listing the documents that were reviewed.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis for this study was directed by the research questions and the conceptual framework. Data analysis commenced with data collection by keeping an analytic journal, reading the transcribed interviews, and reviewing observation field notes and document summaries. The researcher created analytic memos while exploring the raw data from the interviews, observations, and documents that were relevant to the research questions.

Merriam (1998) states that triangulation can strengthen validity and reliability, accordingly, triangulation was used across the role groups as well as with interviews,

observations, and document analysis. Creswell (2007) cites that to further strengthen validity the researcher can clarify the researcher's bias and use member checking by sending the transcribed interview to the participant for approval and/or clarification, therefore, researcher bias was addressed in Chapter 1 and member checking was used with all of the interviewees.

The researcher has also presented the findings of this study to an expert panel that consisted of three advisors who were not part of the study but familiar with the university and professionals in the field of advising. Two of the advisors have collectively been in the field for more than 18 years. The third member of the expert panel has been an advisor for one year but has worked in an admission's office in a university setting for multiple years. The expert panel was asked to review and comment on the preliminary findings that emerged from the study. The researcher presented the findings to the panel in a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. The panel commented on the findings suggesting a re-structuring for clarity purposes and affirmed that they believed the findings were credible.

As the data was collected the researcher entered the transcribed interviews, observation field notes, and document summaries into the ATLAS.ti software program. ATLAS.ti is a software program designed to place all documents in one location so the researcher can analyze the text and uncover codes leading to findings in the data. ATLAS.ti helps the researcher visualize relationships among the data.

Creswell (2007) states that one strategy of analysis in case studies is to find common themes that rise above the cases. Creswell also suggests that with multiple case studies a within case analysis be performed followed by a cross-case analysis which was

done for this study. Based on the research questions and Eckel and Kezar's (2003) conceptual framework a first round of primary codes was used when beginning analysis. Using the first set of six codes, the researcher used ATLAS.ti to manage the data and identify key words and phrases (see Table 1) that emerged from the interviews, observations, and document reviews based on the research questions and conceptual framework. The researcher began by applying the codes to one case study. Through identifying these primary key words and phrases with one case study, a set of additional codes became apparent (see Table 2) and data were further analyzed with the five new codes. The codes were defined to assist in the analysis at the beginning of each study. Themes became clearer and connections were made creating the basis of the findings presented in Chapter 4. Table 20 in Appendix F provides a matrix of the research questions and the relationship to the data collection methods and the codes.

Table 1

*Definitions for Primary Codes*

Primary Codes	Definitions
Team Culture	Based on the team values, beliefs, and how they do their work.
Changes	Areas that advisors focused on when asked about changes at the University or in their College that affect their work.
Adaptation Strategies	Indications of how advisors adapt to changes that affect their work including the use of the five core adaptation strategies suggested by Eckel and Kezar (2003).
Obstacles	Statements of what advisors perceive to be their biggest obstacle as a team.
Trust	Advisor indications of their trust for decisions made by the university and the college that affect their work.
External Influences	How communication is disseminated to the group and how the group is affected by decisions made from those outside the group.

Table 2

*Definitions for Additional Codes*

Secondary Codes	Definitions
Likes and Dislikes	Comments by the advisors about what they like most and least about their jobs.
Team Interaction	The interaction and support among the advisors within the college advising team and the team leader.
Team Communication	Communication among the team and between the team and the team leader.
Training	How advisors are trained in the job including the use of advisor theory and skills necessary for the job.
Self Perceptions	How the group feels it is perceived by those outside the group and their feelings toward those outside the group.

After the first case was analyzed, the other three cases were analyzed separately using the combined set of the primary codes and the additional codes. A cross case analysis was performed by developing a matrix in Microsoft Word and comparing the colleges based on the codes that emerged. The researcher looked for similarities and differences among the cases as described by Creswell (2007). Once the data was analyzed, coded for each of the case studies and a cross case analysis was performed, the data from the university-at-large was examined and entered into ATLAS.ti. The university-at-large data includes interviews with the university administrators, observations of AU events, and document reviews of general AU information. The researcher next analyzed how the findings were or were not supported by the data

categorized under university administration. The researcher then presented the findings to an expert panel for review, as mentioned previously.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed the methodology used for this study and the reason for choosing a qualitative approach. The chapter next outlined the selection of the site, choosing the interviewees, the observations conducted, and the documents that were reviewed. Following this the data collection methods of interviewing, observing, and document review were described. Finally the data analysis procedures were explained including the coding method and the use of ATLAS.ti. Next, Chapter 4 addresses the findings of this study.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Findings**

The purpose of this single site, multiple case study is to identify how academic advising teams respond to change in the organization and to understand how and if the five core adaptation strategies suggested by Eckel and Kezar (2003) are used by four advising teams at Alpha University (AU). The research questions below, along with the conceptual framework, guided the analysis of the four cases which resulted in the findings.

The primary research question for this study is: How do higher education academic advising teams adapt to changes in the institution? The questions that were investigated are:

1. What is the culture(s) of the academic advising teams being studied?
2. What are the strategies used by the academic advising teams to adapt to institutional changes regarding the curriculum and the introduction of new systems?
3. What are the perceptions of the academic advising teams of their ability to adapt to institutional changes?
4. What role does leadership play in the academic advising teams' ability to adapt to institutional changes?

Five overall findings are presented. The first finding is that each advising team has a unique culture and approach toward their work. In the discussion below a profile of the four colleges describing their team culture, leadership, and interactions with each other is provided. The second finding gives a voice to the advisors documenting their likes and dislikes about their job. The third finding examines the obstacles faced by the advising teams. The fourth finding explores the advising team's trust in the decisions made by their college and the university. This finding also investigates how the advising teams think they are perceived by their college and university. The final finding suggests that the advising teams do not utilize the five adaptation strategies recommended by Eckel and Kezar (2003) for use in change: senior administrative support, collaborative leadership, flexible vision, staff development, and visible actions. Instead it was found that they are proactive in their work while being reactive and resilient to changes in budgets, policies, and procedures at the university. It is determined that the advising teams adapt by using coping mechanisms and feedback responses to change events as presented by McGrath and Tschan (2004).

### **Team Culture**

Based on interviews, observations, and documents, the first finding shows that each advising team has a unique culture and approach toward their work (see Table 3). Capturing this perspective, one advisor states "we are not the [AU] family, we are the [AU] galaxy and each planet is different." Yet it is also found that the teams are similar in that a majority of the advisors are overwhelmed with duties assigned to them, which go beyond advising students. It was found that advisors are engaged in everything from representing the college at orientations and open houses to certifying students for



graduation. In one case, an advisor even makes the course schedule and assigns professors to classes for that particular department. This section presents a profile of each of the four colleges and the advising team culture represented by their team's structure, leader, values, and interactions.

Table 3

*Finding: Team Culture*

<i>Finding</i>	<i>College Beta</i>	<i>College Gamma</i>	<i>College Delta</i>	<i>College Epsilon</i>
Team Culture				
Structure	-Dean's Office -Multiple advisors per major -Professional -Ratio: 1/600	-Dean's Office -Multiple advisors per major -Professional -Ratio: 1/1000	-Dean's Office -Multiple advisors per major -Professional -Ratio: 1/500	Departments One advisor per major -Professional & faculty Ratio: 1/30-500
Leader	-Associate Dean -Supportive -Guidance	-Director -New/Unknown -Communication	-Associate Dean -Supportive -Guidance	-None
Values	-Student success -Mission -Training manual	-Student success -Mission -Training manual	-Student success -Mission -Training manual	-Student success -No mission -No manual
Interaction & Support	-Strong synergy across campuses	-Strong synergy within campuses	-Strong synergy across campuses	-Weak/non-existent synergy across college

**College Beta.** College Beta has 4,977 undergraduate students and 489 graduate students according to the AU website. College Beta has had a significant change over the last three years in the structure of their advising office which they call the Center for Student Services. Their changes have been gradual, adding advisors and absorbing advising duties from the college's departments. Three years ago there was one director and three advisors. At that time they advised students about the general education requirements then referred them to their major department for advising from faculty academic advisors or a departmental staff member who also acted as an advisor. Two

years ago the Center for Student Services added two advisors at the east campus, one to act as a general advisor and one to take care of incoming freshmen. Then, this past year, they moved the staff advisor from the department into the advising offices and added two new advisors.

*Advising structure.* The Center for Student Services in College Beta is positioned under the dean's office. The Center for Student Services is part of the dean's budget as is the case in three of the four colleges in this study. The director of the team reports to the dean of the college. There is one director, two assistant directors and six advisors; all nine participated in the interviews. Two of the advisors were only in their positions a few weeks. One advisor is located at the west campus and the rest of the staff is at the east campus. Both assistant directors advise students as a main part of their job duties. The advisors in this college are major based in their advising duties, meaning each advisor is assigned to advise students in a particular major. This college has a high advisor to advisee ratio with more than 600 students per advisor. Even with the addition of two new positions this is still well above the 1 to 300 ratio suggested by NACADA.

The responsibilities of the academic advisors include advising students in person, on the phone, and via email. The advisors attend orientations, open houses, and other events hosted by the college. They help students determine what is needed to graduate in this college and the procedures for moving onto graduate school in their desired field. One advisor describes his job,

I am a problem solver. I give GPA pep talks and assist in directing students in their career goals. Many times the student is insecure and they need someone to talk to. I can help put a human face on the institution.

These advisors also teach a freshman college success skills class for the majors in College Beta. The advisors in this college have become savvy in generating money to offset expenses for professional development. They have set up an auxiliary program where they facilitate a test preparation course that is related to the majors in this college. They also give new transfer students an e-advising option providing an in depth PowerPoint with program sheets. Student must submit their completed program sheet for advisor approval.

*Team leader.* The team leader for College Beta is an associate dean within the college. Each associate dean in College Beta has a different area of responsibility. For example, one is in charge of development and another is in charge of graduate studies. The associate dean who is the team leader for the advisors in College Beta also holds the title of director for the Center for Student Services. She is responsible for overseeing the advising offices, being the college liaison for the AU enrollment management committee, dealing with course scheduling conflicts, consulting on assessment and accreditation issues, and completing final certification for students who are graduating.

The director describes her relationship with the advisors as collegial. When asked about her interactions with the advisors she states, “I have daily interaction with them, on a professional level. I make sure things happen without my standing over them.” Yet, as one advisor put it, “this can be good but it can also be bad.” It is good in the sense that the advisors can do their work and can be creative in the delivery of their advising allowing for a comfortable system of work. It can sometimes be bad because the director may not address serious issues causing situations to become intolerable. According to this advisor, in these cases the advisors must create their own methods for resolving differences.

Another issue that has been raised by the advisors across two colleges, College Beta and Gamma, is the “trickle down” of information from the director. Two advisors in College Beta claim that they believe their director receives information that she does not share. Yet, when an upper-level administrator is asked about the “trickle down” of information he states that he believes the information that he gives the directors is filtered down to the advisors. He claims that he sends out information “electronically to all the members prior to the meeting. And of course, they can share that widely...all they have to do is forward the email.”

The director claims to have a good working relationship with the dean of the college. “I have a great relationship with the Dean. I can barge into his office just about any time and bend his ear on something and he will do the same thing to me.” She is involved in bi-weekly meetings with the dean and associate deans. The director of College Beta also feels that she has a strong relationship with the university administration. She states, “There are not too many administrators that I don’t feel comfortable picking up the phone and calling.”

***Team values.*** Four of the eight advisors talk about student success as a primary component of the team values. One advisor states, “We all have a common goal of trying to see these students succeed. We are looking at their long term goal and trying to get them there.” The other four advisors discuss consistency as being important and two of those claim that keeping the integrity of the programs is a big concern. One advisor states, “overall I believe the value is to give credibility to the degree that the student is getting at [AU].” Another advisor states, “Consistency is very important with us. There is a lot of ‘shopping’ that goes on between students, they will bounce between advisors.”

“Shopping” refers to advisor shopping which is when a student goes from one advisor to the next looking for the desired interpretation of a policy that meets the student’s needs.

The Center for Student Services has an advisor handbook that has a design which is based on a journey and told in a story format. In the advisor handbook, their mission statement affirms that they are here, in part, “to enhance the academic experience of the undergraduate majors.” All of the academic advisors know there is a mission statement. The handbook includes a section on ethical principles as well as how advising should be conducted. One of the assistant directors states that while the advisors are free to be creative in the execution of their job, they must still follow certain policies set forth by the college and AU. The handbook states that the advisors should be cognizant of their behavior, such as listening to the students and understanding what they are looking for in their major.

***Team interaction and support.*** When talking to the veteran advisors and the director about their culture one expressed concern about ensuring that the new people and those moved from the departments were a proper fit for them:

It’s been a small group so we have been able to develop a core system and now we are bringing new people in, we just had that conversation, that it is really important as we grow we still maintain, when picking new people to come in and join us, that they are collegial, friendly, outgoing to the students as well as to their colleagues.

Although the offices of the advisors at the east campus are in different parts of the building, they interact with each other often. There is also close interaction with the advisor at the west campus. The team holds weekly lunch meetings to ensure policies and

issues that have been encountered during the week are addressed. The meetings are run by an assistant director in a formal manner. Robert's Rules of Order are used in an effort to "get business done," according to the assistant director. One advisor commented, "I think we are becoming more of a team...as we have grown, we realize that we have to kind of work together...When I started we were more like individuals just trying to get things done." The two newest advisors have found that the team is very "democratic and collaborative." Of the eight advisors, six state that input is welcome and two claim that a consensus is attempted when decisions are made. However, as one advisor put it, "a lot of times consensus doesn't happen, then [the director] will step in and make the decision." At the meeting observed, the director seems to be confident in the team, more than once referring to them as professionals.

The two new people say that they feel very welcome. One describes how the advising office was shut down for a short time to have a small gathering for her in a conference room. The other new advisor confirms, "what really warmed my heart was when I first came they shut down the department for about an hour or so to kind of get to know the new person, I thought that was really nice."

The website for College Beta has a section for student services. The information includes a student handbook, graduation procedures, access to advising appointments, an e-advising option, and more. Students can make an appointment online through an automated system. This system is also used to keep advising notes on the student allowing any advisor in College Beta to see what another advisor has told that student previously. The student handbook covers topics such as the automated systems at AU, essential university and college contacts, and college academic procedures. None of the

other colleges in this study have a student handbook included on their website. The AU catalog, however, does not provide information about or the need for advising. Three of the four colleges studied list advising information in the catalog.

The two new advisors state that they spent several weeks learning the job with an assistant director. In addition, they shadowed several advisors in the department so that they could get an idea of the different styles. After several weeks of this process they began taking appointments at which time one of the veteran advisors sat with them while they met with students. According to the assistant director and the two new advisors, the Center for Student Services advising handbook is used during training. Although the advisors are major specific, they talk about how they are cross trained in case it is necessary for one of them to step in to pick up any slack. One advisor stated, “we do divide our case loads...there are majors that I do not [advise]...but I am prepared to deal with those if an advisor isn’t available and there is an emergency situation.” In general, the advisors claim that they “have a good group of people,” and “a close knit relationship.”

**College Gamma.** According to the AU website College Gamma comprises 6,780 undergraduate students and 1,737 graduate students. This college advising center, called the Academic and Student Services Center, has recently added a new director. The previous director was promoted to an associate dean position. While an extensive search for a new director was slow to yield an acceptable candidate, one was finally chosen and began shortly after this study commenced. Another change in the past 2 years includes the addition of a pre-professional program that allows for a selective admissions process into the college. The program requires a higher GPA than AU’s minimum. Students not

meeting this requirement are to remain in a pre-professional designation in the college or change their major to a different college.

*Advising structure.* The Academic and Student Services Center in College Gamma is under the dean's office. The director of the team reports to an associate dean in the college. A total of 12 people were interviewed; two directors, two assistant directors, two graduate advisors, and six undergraduate advisors. This is the only college participating in the study that has professional advisors for both undergraduate and graduate students. The advisors are spread over two campus locations with an assistant director at each campus. Shortly after the study began the director was promoted and a new director from outside the group was hired.

The assistant directors advise students as needed during peak periods but unlike College Beta it is not a main focus for the positions. Again, unlike College Beta, all of the undergraduate advisors are responsible for all of the undergraduate majors in their college. With the exception of the two professional advisors who advise graduate students, the advisors are responsible for anywhere from 800 to 1,000 students each, about triple the 1 to 300 ratio suggested by NACADA.

The duties of the advisors in College Gamma are somewhat similar to those in College Beta. They are responsible for advising students not only in person but also via email and on the phone. They outline students' degree programs giving them a guide to follow for graduation and ensuring they meet the criteria as a major in the college. Every semester the advisors in the Academic and Student Services Center perform graduation checks on students who have submitted applications to graduate. Each advisor is



responsible for a certain number of students who are graduating. One advisor talks about the work they do,

We basically guide the students through the rules and regulations of the degree program. We try to help them understand the repercussions of what they are doing, for example, if you don't like or are not good in math don't do certain majors because they are heavy in math. We also explain things like a minor means completing this or a double major means that. We also talk with students thinking of coming back for a second bachelor and cover the pros and cons of doing that as opposed to getting a master's.

Another advisor states that they are here to help the student make that connection to the university. Although the advisors try to limit their meetings with students to 30 minutes, sometimes it is necessary to talk to them longer so they understand the big picture.

They also take turns conducting orientations for their college and conducting group advising for the pre-professional students. Each advisor has a specific duty in addition to their advising load. For example, one advisor is charged with signing forms for students who want to take classes at another institution, another advisor is charged with reviewing the catalog and faculty governance minutes looking for policy changes, and another is responsible for coordinating open houses and assigning advisors to the multiple orientations that occur each year. Similar to College Beta, some of the advisors teach a freshman college success skills class oriented toward the college majors.

***Team leader.*** As stated previously, the team leader for College Gamma was in transition at the time of this study. The previous team leader was an assistant dean in the college also holding the title of director for the Academic and Student Services Center.

He was responsible for not only the advising offices but also student progress programs, assessment, and accreditation for College Gamma. The new team leader holds the title of director for the Academic and Student Services Center in College Gamma. His responsibilities include overseeing the advising offices, working on student retention, and coordinating with departments and faculty about student concerns.

The previous director states his interaction with the advisors changed over the last several years. “When the dean increased some of my other administrative duties I had two advisors that moved into associate director positions. So, I supervise the associate directors and they supervise the advisors.” Five advisors state that the previous director was open to the input from the team. One advisor states, “I think management here does a pretty good job of asking us. They say, this is the issue, how should we handle it?” However, in response to the previous director, one advisor states, “the upper administration in [the college] will go to meetings and hear about changes but they do not pass along the information to us. Many times we do not get that information until we see it in the catalog.” This comment is similar to the perceptions of the advisors in College Beta.

The new director claims that while he has a vision for the department, he is trying to get a feel for how the office works and he wants to hear the advisors opinions. The majority of the advisors were interviewed prior to the start of the new director. Thus far the interaction is formal between the director and the advisors, uncertainty and apprehension exist about the new director. Two advisors state that they look forward to what the new director plans to do with the offices. One advisor states, “He seems like a well-educated, decent guy capable of doing the job...I think he's more than deserving of

the opportunity to learn and prove himself. And, hopefully he'll provide us with the resources that we need.” Another observes that “I think he's feeling his way and his first priority seems to be image.” This is apparent when viewing the change in the office settings. At the start of the study the waiting areas on the east campus seem very somber and serious. The graduate office was quiet with low lighting, one almost felt as if they were not allowed to talk or ask questions while in the space. When the new director began he literally turned the lights on and opened the shades making the space open and welcoming. This change appeared to disturb some of the advisors and support staff.

The new director reports to and meets with an associate dean in the college on a weekly basis. He also meets weekly with department chairs and he states that he has an open line of communication with the dean. The previous director states because his duties changed over the last couple of years his communication with upper administration in the college changed also. He states, “There is not a day that goes by where I do not talk to somebody that has the word dean in their title.” The previous director also states that he has extensive interaction with the upper administration in the university. The new director knows he will have interaction, but as of the interview, three weeks into the position, he was not completely clear about what that would entail.

***Team values.*** Although the Academic and Student Services Center in College Gamma had a mission posted on their website at the beginning of this study it is no longer there as of the writing of these findings. Of the 12 people interviewed in College Gamma, five know there is a mission statement posted on the website, two know there is a statement but do not know where to find it, and five did not know a mission statement even exists. Five of the eight advisors talk about the importance of customer service and

six of the eight talk about student success as being a shared value. One of the advisors states “I think all of us here are definitely geared toward helping the students.” The mission on the website stated that the purpose of the advising office is to assist students in reaching their educational goals. That is still valued among the staff even though no longer posted. The new director reports that “our job is to provide services and information to students so that they will graduate and to do so in a professional manner.”

There is a New Advisor Training Manual for College Gamma. One advisor has attempted to maintain the manual as one of his advising duties but it has not been updated recently. This training manual covers the necessary academic requirements for the college and university. It also contains contact information for personnel in the college and the university. There is no mention of the process of advising in these documents as with the handbook in College Beta.

***Team interaction and support.*** This is a fairly large college with an equally large advising team. When asked about their interaction with the advisors in their college, six of the eight advisors address positive and supportive interactions with the advisors on their campus. Those same advisors state that they do not talk to the advisors at the other campuses very often. The advisors in College Gamma are split between two campuses. At a staff meeting observed, it appeared the advisors did not know each other because the advisors from the two campuses were not talking to each other, only to those from their own campus. Observations of the offices identified that there is a different culture at each campus. Based on the interviews and observations, the advisors at the west campus are informal in their interactions with the administration and each other when talking about issues but formal with the students in terms of appointments and structure. Conversely,

the data for the east campus shows a more formal rapport with administration, and sometimes each other, but informal with student appointments which are set up on a walk-in basis.

Typically the team has one or two college-wide advising meetings a semester. One advisor states, “We start out every semester wanting them to be monthly, but we probably have two big ones a semester.” Three advisors claim that in reality there is only one staff meeting per semester but they would prefer monthly meetings so that information can be more easily shared. The new director states that he plans to implement monthly topical meetings. Six of the eight advisors feel that the decision making process is collaborative in most instances. One of the advisors declares, “We have input. I think management here does a pretty good job of asking us.” However, participants admit that some issues are hierarchical, such as departmental and university decisions.

The website for College Gamma has a section devoted to advising and student services. The page is basic giving some general information about advising, times, locations, and contacts. Students can make an appointment online using an automated system. This is the same system College Beta uses, however, the licenses are owned by the colleges, not the university so they are not linked. Therefore, if a student moves from College Beta to College Gamma the advisors cannot see any notes from the previous college. At first glance there is not much information on the website but when clicking on a link for new students another page comes up that has quite a bit of information about admission to the college, available forms, registration procedures, and more. This page is a little confusing to navigate, but very useful containing information for not only new

students but continuing students as well. The catalog also mentions student services for this college giving an overview of services and contact information.

Although the undergraduate advisors deal with all of the undergraduate majors in this college, there was no mention of cross training among the graduate and undergraduate advisors. The training process for new advisors is to read the collection of papers and observe one or two advisors for about a week to a week and a half. Then they begin to advise students while a veteran advisor sits in the office with them. One advisor described the process as they just “hit the ground running.”

**College Delta.** The AU website illustrates that College Delta consists of 3,348 undergraduate students and 1,286 graduate students. The advising team in College Delta, called the Office for Student Academic Services, is the only college in this study that has not had a significant change in the structure of their advising office. They are also not getting any new advisors at this time even though their advisor to student ratio is one to over 500. When asked about not receiving any of the advising positions the assistant director states, “We communicated, based on numbers, that we could have used one, but it didn't turn out to be.”

**Advising structure.** As with the previous two colleges, this advising team is positioned under the dean’s office and they are folded into the dean’s budget. The director reports to the dean of the college. At the time of the study there was one director, one assistant director, and six advisors. One advisor quit as the study began. Only five of the remaining seven members of the advising team participated in the study. While I was granted access by the director, she chose not to participate due to reasons that are confidential. The other individual that chose not to participate was an advisor. Although

they did not participate in interviews, they were part of the staff meeting and orientations that were observed. As with College Gamma the advisors are spread over multiple campuses. Although the advisors in College Delta are located at three campuses, they are much more connected and engaged with each other than the advisors in College Gamma.

Similar to College Gamma, the assistant director advises students as needed during peak periods but it is not a main focus of the position. For example, as a result of the departing advisor, the assistant director picked up some of the workload prior to the department hiring a new person. The advisors in College Delta are responsible for all of the undergraduate majors in their college. As mentioned previously, each advisor in College Delta is responsible for more than 500 students, again, above the 1 to 300 ratio suggested by NACADA.

The responsibilities for the advisors in the Office for Student Academic Services in College Delta are somewhat similar to those in Colleges Beta and Gamma. The similar duties include advising students in person, on the phone, and via email. They also attend orientations at their specific campus, along with open houses and other events hosted by the college and the university. One advisor states, “I help people navigate the bureaucracy at [AU].” Due to the nature of the majors in this college, the advisors also assist in internship placement and security clearances in addition to helping non-AU students get specific certifications required for the state in this particular field.

**Team leader.** Like College Beta, the team leader for College Delta is an associate dean within the college who also holds the title of director for the Office for Student Academic Services. As stated previously, the director declined to be interviewed as part of this study, therefore her exact duties are unknown. Although she was not interviewed,

comments were made about her leadership in interviews with the advising staff, which are supported by the observation at the staff meeting. When talking about the director one advisor states that she feels the director “encourages input” and believes “that we can do our job the best that we can.” This confidence seems evident in the observation of the staff meeting where input from the advisors is encouraged. In the meeting the director encouraged the group to be a team and referred to them as professionals. She conveyed confidence in the group by asking them to make thoughtful decisions on student issues and to ensure communication with each other across the campuses.

*Team values.* The mission of the College Delta advising office is clear, stating that they try to provide a “comprehensive system” of support to students. All members of the advising team who were interviewed know there is a mission statement except for one participant. The mission is on their website as well as in their advisor handbook. The advisors talk about student success and being helpful to the students as well as the departments in the college. Of the four colleges, this team seems to be most positive toward their college, dean, and the departments. One advisor states, “I know [this] office is basically devoted to serving the faculty and students in the various departments...it is one of service, to provide any kind of backup for the departments...” It was communicated during the interviews that they feel a connection to their college and each other, even across the campuses.

There is an advisor handbook for College Delta. It is a 3-ring binder that is kept in the offices at the east campus. In the handbook is information on office procedure such as how to answer phones and where to direct calls. There is information about advising responsibilities and procedures for filling out and submitting necessary forms. The



handbook also contains information about advising theory. There is a section titled “Developmental Versus Prescriptive Advising Theory” where there is a narrative about these theories, when to use them, how, and why.

***Team interaction and support.*** College Delta has five advisors, a small number in comparison to Colleges Beta and Gamma. The director, assistant director and two advisors are located at the east campus, there are two advisors at the west campus, and one at the south campus. Although spread over three campuses they appear to be a cohesive group based on an observation of a staff meeting and comments made during the interviews. For example, it was noted in the observation that the advisors were having casual conversation prior to the start of the meeting. All four advisors interviewed claim that they communicate with each other well. Two of the four stated that because they have an easy and open rapport with each other, consistency was not an issue for them. One commented, “We’re all very consistent about following the rules so that if one counselor tells a student something, then another advisor tells them, it’s going to be the same answer, in case the students decide to go ‘shopping.’” As stated previously, “shopping” refers to advisor shopping which is when a student goes from one advisor to the next looking for the desired interpretation of a policy. When asked about their interaction three advisors talk about how everyone is just a phone call away, “we really help each other out. If anyone has questions we can pick up the phone and call each other.” Another advisor states, “I think we really all try to be on the same page.” The physical distance between campuses is not perceived as a communication barrier for this group and does not contribute to advisor “shopping.”

This team holds a meeting at least once a semester. They try to meet face to face

during the fall and spring semesters with interim meetings by telephone. Typical meetings have an agenda that includes information on emerging issues, team goals, and, as one advisor put it, “what we need to improve on, generally they're very positive working meetings.” They will also occasionally have team building exercises. Since summer is usually very busy they typically do a phone conference. In the meeting observed the director stresses the importance of them being a team and having strong communication. This was one of their summer interim meetings, so it was a phone conference. Discussions included recent issues that have emerged. Most of the talking was done by the director and the assistant director. One or two advisors chime in, but essentially it is meant to be informative which is stated by the director at the beginning of the meeting.

The website for College Delta provides a lot of information for students such as scholarship and internship opportunities. The website also provides the usual information on advisor contacts and locations. Students must call the advising offices to make appointments; this college does not have an automated system. Their mission is stated on the website along with their strategies to meet their goals. The Office for Student Academic Services is mentioned in the catalog but there is there is no mention of how to get in touch with anyone in the office.

The way this group approaches the hiring of their advisors is distinct from the other three colleges. The search committee typically includes someone from outside the college who is familiar with advising and with whom the college advisors usually work. According to the assistant director, the training consists of a couple of weeks of shadowing the assistant director and having the opportunity to review the manual. He will

introduce the new advisor to all the forms used for advising at the university and in the college, as well as introduce them to the key players in the registrar's office and the admissions office. "So it's really trying to integrate them into the University community, and helping them to understand their role here in the College," according to the assistant director.

**College Epsilon.** College Epsilon has 2,068 undergraduate students and 410 graduate students across three departments according to the AU website. This college underwent a major transformation in the last year combining six departments into three. When this transformation happened one advisor was reassigned and another was terminated. One concern for the college was to strengthen the academic success of students entering the upper division programs. The college created a pre-professional program where students complete certain classes with a particular GPA prior to beginning their major coursework. Because of the departmental re-structuring and the addition of the pre-professional program, the advising positions have been reorganized.

**Advising structure.** This college is fragmented in the way advising is arranged. One of the three departments has faculty academic advisors only. The other two departments have professional advisors. The advising arrangement was in transition during this study. At the time the study began there were five professional advisors and four faculty academic advisors. Shortly after being interviewed, one professional advisor moved into an advising position in the college's pre-professional program. Her previous position in one of the departments was filled with two faculty members who were now responsible for the students she had advised. This department merged with another that already had instructors as academic advisors which are referred to here as faculty

academic advisors. This department now has only faculty advising the students. Prior to being interviewed, one professional advisor was terminated when two other departments in the college merged. The students who were advised by the terminated advisor were transferred to the veteran professional advisor in the other department. The final two departments that merged retained both professional advisors in their department; one is located at a different campus.

Unlike the other colleges where the advising team is under the auspices of the dean's office, the advisors in all three departments report to their respective department chairs. This college has essentially compartmentalized their advisors under the departments. Although faculty academic advisors were not part of the original sampling plan, it was decided that in order to accurately represent this college it was important to talk to the faculty academic advisors. Typically, the role of a faculty advisor at AU is to be a mentor. This is the only college that has faculty academic advisors as defined in chapter one. The researcher was unable to secure interviews with all six faculty academic advisors, but did interview three of them.

The duties of professional and faculty academic advisors have similarities and differences. The similarities are the responsibilities to attend orientations, certify graduating students, and complete all paperwork required by AU, as are the duties of the advisors in the other colleges. The faculty academic advisors are also responsible for teaching classes and in some cases still expected to do research. The professional advisors have some duties that are not similar to their counterparts in the other colleges at AU. One advisor makes the course schedule for the department including assigning professors to classes. Another advisor has responsibilities that include being the secretary and the

budget coordinator for the department along with academic advising. A third academic advisor played a major role in compiling and coordinating the information for the reaccreditation of the department. The advising load in this college is inconsistent for the professional advisors, ranging from 30 students to over 500. The advising loads for the faculty academic advisors also vary widely; they are responsible for anywhere from 100 to 400 students depending on the major. Some advisors are above the advisor to advisee ratio of one to 300 suggested by NACADA and some are not.

*Team leader.* There is no identifiable team leader for College Epsilon. The advisors report to their department chairs who are not involved in the advising process for undergraduate students.

*Team values.* Of those interviewed, the professional and faculty academic advisors share the same values, they all want to help the students succeed. One advisor stated that “we are all here for the students. We basically try to do what is best for the students.” Some of the advisors help students a little more than others. A professional advisor commented that she has heard AU administrative offices say,

[College Epsilon] advisors are very protective of their students. They want to know why we do so much for the kids, they say they need to learn how to do this. We feel the kids are busy getting A’s in their classes, why shouldn’t we push a little paper for them and help them out?

Yet another advisor stated,

they are adults...So I want to give them freedom to make mistakes and their own decisions...you register yourself, ‘cause you are an adult and if you want to drop a

class you drop it...I do suggest they see me once a semester to make sure they are taking the classes in the right sequence.

Despite the different advising styles, the advisors all care for their students and want to help them succeed and find jobs when they graduate.

College Epsilon did not have a mission statement pertaining to advising, perhaps because the advisors are dispersed across departments. When College Epsilon advisors were asked if they had a mission statement two of the professional advisors state that they follow the college's mission, which does not mention anything about advising. The other five professional and faculty academic advisors simply state that there was no mission statement. However, they all indicate that they are concerned about the success of the student and seeing the student through to graduation is a priority.

During an interview with one faculty academic advisor, he talked about how the faculty academic advisors were paperless because everything was on the computer. He did not understand why the other advisors across the university did not do the same thing. However through interviews and document analysis it was found that two of the four college advising teams studied have become paperless. And, the four professional college advisor teams use the same systems that the faculty academic advisors use to do their work. The statement about being paperless further solidified the disconnect between the faculty and professional advisors.

***Team interaction and support.*** As a team the advisors have limited interaction. While all of the professional and faculty academic advisors, except for one, are located on the same campus, they are not in the same building. There is little to no interaction between the professional advisors and the faculty academic advisors. In fact one

professional advisor wondered what they do over there and how they deal with their advisees as well as teaching classes. When asked about interaction with the faculty academic advisors one professional advisor said, “they are always teaching. They are always very busy.” And when the faculty academic advisors were asked about interaction with the professional advisors in the college, one stated, “a little bit. Not very often...the other departments handle it differently. They have full time professional advisors...they don’t teach. So, it’s very different.” The faculty academic advisors see themselves as a team, “in this department, we work like...we’re a team...we make a lot of decisions together.” The professional advisors do help each other and talk informally about their programs and issues that may arise. In fact the advisor at the south campus stated, “I don’t know what I would do without them. They are so kind and helpful, no one makes me feel like I am bothering them.”

In terms of meetings, there were mixed responses. One professional advisor said that they meet formally twice a semester with the Associate Dean of Academics for the College. However, the associate dean states that his main interaction with advising is with the faculty who advise graduate students. Another advisor said they only meet at orientations or for scholarship meetings. Although the advisor at the south campus relies on the other advisors, she is not part of any group meetings and rarely sees the other advisors. The researcher did have an opportunity to observe a formal meeting between the faculty academic advisors and the professional advisor in the pre-professional program regarding the issue of transfer credits. It seemed to be a confrontational situation, both sides were defensive. The faculty academic advisors stated that they did not have the time to review transfer cases to determine course compatibility. One faculty academic advisor

stated that the professional advisor needed to simply read the course description from the transferring institution and the one from AU to determine if the courses are similar. The professional advisor claimed that she was not a faculty member so it was not in her area of expertise to determine the transferability of credit from another institution. Once the associate dean and the department head were able to understand the issue they began to ask questions about the process. It turns out that this situation happens infrequently, a couple times a year. It was decided that the faculty academic advisors would look at the credit transfer form from the professional advisor. The faculty academic advisors state that as long as they get the form in a reasonable amount of time, they would review it and return it to the professional advisor.

Although the advisors report to their respective department chairs, there is a separate Student Services Office in College Epsilon. The advisors are not formally part of this office as is the case in the other colleges. This office is where students can go for career advising, petitions, tutoring, and more. The professional advisors have interaction with this office but it is unclear how much interaction the faculty academic advisors have. The website is somewhat informative but it does not have the amount of information that the other colleges have on their websites. There is no advisor handbook for this college and the advisors obtain training by being in the position and asking the other advisors for help. The importance of advising is mentioned in the catalog but no contact information is given.

### **Advisor Voice**

The second finding describes by college how the advisors voice their likes and dislikes about their jobs (see Table 4). This finding is based on comments from those who



advise, directors or assistant directors who do not advise are not represented. It was found that advisors enjoy the interaction with students. They also tend to take ownership of their students calling them “my students” or “my kids.” They report that they dislike the university bureaucracy and policies, managing unpleasant students, and their low salary. The advising directors and assistant directors are not included in this analysis because their jobs have more administrative duties. However, the assistant directors in College Beta are included because they actively advise students. Each team’s voice will be presented next.

Table 4

*Finding: Advisor Voice*

<i>Finding</i>	<i>College Beta</i> <i>n=8</i>	<i>College Gamma</i> <i>n=8</i>	<i>College Delta</i> <i>n=4</i>	<i>College Epsilon</i> <i>n=7</i>
<b>Advisor Voice</b>				
<b>Likes</b>				
Student interaction	6/8	8/8	3/4	6/7
Advising office support	1/8			
Each day different	1/8		1/4	
Job stability			1/4	
No answer				1/7
<b>Dislikes</b>				
AU bureaucracy	4/8	2/8		
Computer system	1/8			1/7
Unpleasant students	1/8	3/8		
Low salary/budget	1/8		2/4	1/7
CSS unsupportive	1/8			
Nothing	1/8			
Poor communication		3/8		
Busy times		1/8		
Paperwork			1/4	2/7
Lack of outreach			1/4	
Unable to research				1/7
Inadequate student financial aid				1/7
Potential to misadvise				1/7
No answer				1/7

\*Advisors may have given more than one answer.

\*\*These numbers include advisors and do not include directors and assistant directors who do not advise.

**College Beta.** The eight members of the advising team, six advisors and two assistant directors, in College Beta discuss their likes and dislikes about their job. Regarding what they like, six of the eight state that the student interaction is most enjoyable, one cites the support of the Center for Student Services, and another comments on how each day is different.

In terms of student interaction, one advisor talks about being a part of the student's journey from beginning to end and seeing that student succeed. Another advisor states "I like when my students are successful, I like when they come in all excited about something." Other advisors talk about how they enjoy feeling that they make a difference in the students' perception of AU.

One advisor says he likes the support he feels from the Center for Student Services. He affirms, "The thing I like most is the belief of the department that you are capable of doing your job." Lastly, an advisor discusses her enjoyment of working in an environment where each day is different, presenting different challenges.

On the subject of dislikes, the team answers vary. Four of the eight advisors comment on the bureaucracy of AU, one of the four also cites the computer system as a problem. One of the new advisors claims that there is nothing he dislikes so far. The other three advisors comment on different subjects: unpleasant students, low salary and budget constraints, and lack of support from the Center for Student Services. The four who dislike the bureaucracy are mainly concerned with, as one advisor put it, the affect of "the rampant politics" on the advising system at AU. Another advisor states "I resent and dislike some of these decisions that are made unilaterally regarding things like registration." One of the other dislikes mentioned is dealing with unpleasant students. The

advisor that cites this as a dislike claims that it typically happens because students who transfer from another institution may not get what they thought they were going to in terms of transfer credits which makes the student upset toward the advisor. Another advisor mentions low salary (see Table 21 in Appendix M) and budget constraints as a dislike of her job. She states that there are things their team would like to do but cannot because they do not have the budget. Although one advisor stated that he liked the support he got from the Center for Student Services, another said that there was no support and claims that there is little acknowledgement and recognition which is discouraging.

**College Gamma.** In College Gamma, eight academic advisors talk about what they like and do not like about their job. All eight advisors say that they enjoy working with students to help them reach their educational goals. One advisor states, “I have the opportunity to make someone’s life better. I am able to tell the students things they wouldn’t know I can help guide them on their academic path.” Another advisor affirms,

I find it very rewarding when, especially with students that are at risk, you give them advice and they take it and succeed. Really developing that relationship with students so they know they have someone that they can talk to when they have a problem.

On the subject of dislikes, the advisors confirm four areas: unpleasant students, lack of communication, the bureaucracy of policies and procedures, and the peak busy times in the office. Three advisors talk about unpleasant students, one advisor states,

You can have 100 wonderful interactions with students, and then along comes a student that, for whatever reason, maybe you're not be able to meet their

expectations, and somehow you get blamed when things don't work out the way that they had hoped...and they go above you and make all kinds of waves, it's very disappointing.

Three other advisors cite the lack of communication particularly on the college level. One advisor states, "I think a lot of times stuff is just put on advisors and no one asks advisors how it's going to affect them or the students...we end up having to enforce policy that doesn't really make sense." Another advisor points to lack of communication between campuses stating that a policy may change but the information does not get filtered down to those at the other campus. The advisors typically find out when a student tells them instead of the department or college.

Two advisors dislike the bureaucracy and the policies of AU. One advisor claims, the policies keep changing and it adversely affects the students,

The policies are there for a reason but they seem to change quite frequently, whether it be the university or in the college.... I just think that sometimes policy happens so quickly, especially for incoming students they think one thing, this is what I'm going to have when I get to the school, then they get here and policies have changed. That can really affect them adversely; they may not be able to do something that they thought they could.

Lastly, one advisor states that he dislikes the busy times during the year and comments,

When it's registration time everybody is here in person, via email, and on the phone. The phone is constantly ringing off the hook, email can be upwards of 200 a day during registration. And of course the line that goes out the door in our

office. When it gets to registration crunch time the stress level can be pretty intense.

**College Delta.** The four advisors in College Delta who were interviewed talk about their likes and dislikes in relation to their job. Three advisors state that they like the student interaction and seeing the student succeed. An advisor states, “I get to connect with a diverse population of students.” Another advisor affirms, “I love the interaction with the students.” One advisor says she likes both the stability of her job and “the peaks and valleys, yes it gets crazy but then you also know once the semester starts it will get back to normal.”

When asked about dislikes, two comment on salary, one says the required paperwork, and another points to the lack of outreach opportunities. The two advisors who comment on salary claim that the university does not value them. One advisor states, “I think that colleges never pay enough money to people that can really give value to their institution. The people that can give value will be advisors” (see Table 21 in Appendix M). In regards to the required paperwork, one advisor states that it can be overwhelming at times. Paperwork can include petitions, advising forms, graduation applications which can be upwards of 200 or more in College Delta. Lastly, an advisor talks about the lack of outreach opportunities. In her previous position she had the chance to travel and attract people to the institution where she worked. Now that she is embedded within a university; she does not have those same opportunities.

**College Epsilon.** Of the seven professional and faculty academic advisors interviewed in College Epsilon, six answered questions regarding their likes and dislikes about their job. All six specifically refer to the students saying that helping students

succeed in their goals gives them great enjoyment and is the best part of their job. One faculty academic advisor affirms that what she likes best is “the fact that I get to help students. If they need help, they can come to me whether it is academic or not.” A professional advisor states, “sometimes I push my kids hard but the transformation to competent, responsible, dedicated adult is a powerful thing to witness.”

In the area of dislikes, the six advisors cite several different subjects. Of the three faculty academic advisors, two refer to the amount of paperwork involved in the job and one expresses concern over lack of opportunity to conduct research. One of the faculty academic advisor goes on to say, “Another thing that is frustrating is the number of different computer programs and databases that I have to have access to in order to advise students.” The dislikes among the three professional advisors are the inability to offer financial resources for students, the potential to misadvise, and low salary. One advisor has concerns about financial resources for the disadvantaged students in the department. Another advisor is anxious about the potential for misadvising a student, “I get worried about the possibility of misadvising the students, if I did that I could mess up their track for graduation.” Lastly, an advisor expresses disappointment over the salary paid to the advisors, although, he states that he likes the people and the position (see Table 21 in Appendix M).

### **Advising Team Obstacles**

The third finding addresses obstacles and not surprisingly, the major obstacle encountered by the four advising teams is resources (see Table 5). This finding is based on comments from all members of the advising team which includes advisors, assistant directors, and directors. This is highlighted in documents and interviews with

administrators who indicate that a goal of the upper administration is to increase student enrollment at the university without mention of increased resources. The advisors and directors were asked what they thought the biggest obstacle for their team was and 20 of 33 answered lack of resources which includes staff, money, and time. Another three advisors stated student follow through is the major obstacle. Of the remaining, seven state separate issues and three did not answer the question. Each team's view of obstacles will be discussed next.

Table 5

*Finding: Advising Team Obstacles*

<i>Finding</i>	<i>College Beta n=9</i>	<i>College Gamma n=12</i>	<i>College Delta n=5</i>	<i>College Epsilon n=7</i>
Advising Team Obstacles				
Resources	5/9	12/12	4/5	
Student follow through	2/9		1/5	
Lack of advisor input on issues	1/9			
Recruitment opportunities				2/7
College bureaucracy				1/7
New college program				2/7
No Answer	1/9			2/7

\*These numbers include all team members; advisors, assistant directors, and directors.

**College Beta.** The nine members of the advising team in College Beta were asked about the biggest obstacle their team faces. Five state the biggest obstacle is resources, two claim student follow through, and one advisor claims lack of input on enrollment issues. Those citing resources as an obstacle talk about limited staff, even with the addition of advisors, and the growth in the number of students. An advisor from College Beta explains:

The constraints of time...there's advising that can take ten minutes, but then there are some that can take more than the allotted thirty minute meeting. Then there

are times that you need to see a student over and over. It's like fighting the waves and there's nobody to blame. Budgets are what they are, we don't have enough time to sit and hold their hand and they shouldn't need their hand held quite frankly, but sometimes you need to, you want to.

Two advisors mention the lack of follow through on the part of the student as an obstacle. For College Beta, student follow through is described as getting students to make and keep appointments. One advisor states,

That is the biggest obstacle, letting them know that we are here and that they really need to come see us and continually come to see us so we can keep them on that track and get them to their educational goal.

Lastly, one advisor comments on the lack of input on enrollment issues claiming that departments do not do a good job scheduling courses. She claims, "The departments should do more than just look at the data, they should talk to the advisors to find out where the needs are."

**College Gamma.** The 12 members of the advising team in College Gamma say that resources are their biggest obstacle. The problem of resources encompasses staff, money, and time. Eight of the participants specifically point to the advisor to student ratio which is one advisor per 800 to 1,000 students in College Gamma. One advisor sums up, "it's just not manageable to see all the students and right now we're trying to do graduation certification, there's just not enough hours in the day for us to get everything done." Another advisor says,

I'm surprised we've been able to function and we've not had more complaints. It seems whatever we're trying to do is working to an extent, but if the goal is more



growth, I mean how much more can you grow without the people and the resources?

**College Delta.** Four of the five advising team members interviewed in College Delta state that resources are their biggest obstacle as a team. Once again, staff, money and time are the resources that are lacking. The assistant director states,

The biggest obstacle would be having the luxury of doing all the things that we would like to do if we were given the resources and the manpower. There are a lot of things that we could think of pertaining to student retention that we simply don't have the opportunity to do because we are dealing with too many students.

One advisor believes the team's biggest obstacle is student follow through. She states that they will send letters to students giving them specific program-related, required tasks. However, most students neglect to complete what is necessary to enroll in certain classes requiring the advisors to withdraw the students from class.

**College Epsilon.** When asked about major obstacles faced by the advising team, five advisors respond with three specific concerns. Two advisors, one professional and one faculty academic advisor, state that the biggest obstacle faced by the team is lack of recruitment opportunities to attract students to the college. One professional advisor talks about the new pre-professional program as being an obstacle, mainly because it has never been explained to him and he does not understand how it will impact his job or the students he advises. Two faculty academic advisors speak about the college bureaucracy as an obstacle, they question who are they supposed to report to, the dean or their department chair? They feel it is supposed to be their chair yet they are assigned tasks from the dean's office. This was discussed earlier (see Group Culture) pertaining to the

meeting they had with the pre-professional office. The confusion felt by the two advisors was supported by an associate dean who states that no one really knows who they are supposed to report to when advising issues arise.

### **Advising Team Trust and External Perceptions of Advisors**

The fourth finding covers the subjects of trust and how the advisors believe the university and colleges perceive the advisors (see Table 6). This finding is based on comments from all members of the advising team which includes advisors, assistant directors, and directors. It was found that more than half of the advisors trust or mostly trust their college but not the university. They also believe that the university has a negative perception of advising. Twelve advisors across the four colleges think that the dean's office in the college has a positive perception of them. However, they believe the majority of faculty in their college do not understand the advisor's role. How each advising team considers trust and the external perceptions of their team will be presented next.

Table 6

*Finding: Advising Team Trust and External Perceptions of Advisors*

<i>Finding</i>	<i>College Beta</i>	<i>College Gamma</i>	<i>College Delta</i>	<i>College Epsilon</i>
Trust in College				
Yes	2/9	8/12	3/5	3/7
Sometimes	2/9	2/12	2/5	3/7
No	0/9	0/12	0/5	0/7
No answer/opinion	5/9	2/12	0/5	1/7
Trust in University				
Yes	1/9	0/12	3/5	1/7
Sometimes	1/9	5/12	1/5	2/7
No	3/9	3/12	1/5	1/7
No answer/opinion	4/9	4/12	0/5	3/7
College's Perception				
Positive	4/9	3/12	1/5	4/7
Negative	2/9	3/12	0/5	2/7
Depends*	2/9	5/12	4/5	1/7
No answer/opinion	1/9	1/12	0/5	0/7
University's Perception				
Positive	1/9	5/12	2/5	4/7
Negative	6/9	5/12	3/5	2/7
No answer/opinion	2/9	2/12	0/5	1/7

\* Under the category of *Depends* participants claim that their dean's office has a good perception but a majority of the faculty do not know what the advisors do.  
 \*\*These numbers include all team members; advisors, assistant directors, and directors.

**College Beta.** Five of the nine advising team members answer questions about their trust in the decisions made by the college and the university. Two members of the advising team state that they trust the decisions made by the college, two say not always, and another had no opinion. One of the advisors who trusts the college's decisions states, "With the economy the way it is, before we had to hire advisors our college did the best to keep everyone working. In that aspect, I do trust the decisions made in the college." One of the advisors who states that they do not always trust the decisions made by the college claims, "I think that sometimes there are too many people not looking at the big picture."

Of the five advisors who comment on their degree of trust regarding the decisions made by the university, three state they do not trust the AU decisions, one says not always, and another says she does trust the AU decisions. Those saying they do not trust AU feel that they are not valued by the university, therefore they do not trust AU's decisions. Along this line one advisor states,

I think if there were committees set up that involve the student services staff when making decisions about what should take place, what cuts, what should we do, what should we improve in regards to students, then I would, but because they're making these decisions without our input whatsoever, then no.

Conversely, a different advisor claims, "I believe the university will make the best decision, what is in the best interest of the students."

Eight of the nine members of the advising team give their perceptions of what they believe their college thinks about academic advising. Four think the college's perception is positive. One team member claims the college dean values the work done in the advising offices and another believes the perceptions are becoming more positive every day. Two team members, however, believe the college has a negative perception of advising. One advisor affirms,

It's not a priority. It's not valued. I think you can see that in terms of how we're paid. I think a lot of the advisors either have master's degrees or even Ph.D.'s and they're not paid. I can tell you that there are department secretaries within the college that make more money than the advisors within the college that have more education and training and have been here longer.

Two more team members say the college perception depends on who you are talking about in the college. They believe that the dean's office thinks highly of them but that most faculty do not. One advisor claims, "we are seen as, oh yeah they just take care of the students but they don't really know what it takes to take care of the students."

Seven of the nine give their perceptions of what they believe the university thinks about academic advising. One advising team member thinks that AU's perception of advising is getting better, specifically with the addition of advising staff. However, six of the team members feel that the university does not perceive them well. One advisor states,

They don't fund us enough and I'm not talking about my pay I'm talking about the number of advisors. They give us auditing and registration systems that are absurd, antiquated... we are constantly waiting for new systems to come on line and have been in the process for five years now. They don't give us the tools, they don't give us the funding, and they certainly don't give us the respect...

While three upper-level administrators agree advisors do not have the necessary resources for advising, some administrators interviewed feel that advisors do not do enough. This confirms one advisor's feeling in College Beta that AU administrators do not know the roles of advisors. Another advisor claims, "I feel it is not a priority." She goes on to say,

We should be able to access the same information regardless of what college we are in. Some of our advising standards should be similar. Those are the things that the university is missing. We need more unity as a group for advising.

**College Gamma.** Ten of the 12 members of the advising team in College Gamma answered questions about their trust in the decisions made by the college and the

university. Eight members said that they trust the decisions made by the college. One advisor affirms, “Yes, I trust them to make the right decisions for the students and us.”

Two claim that they sometimes trust the decisions. One advisor states,

I trust them to make the right decisions as far as curriculum. I just...I wish that there was an advisor involved...if you're going to develop a new minor, can't we be involved in that process, so that we can identify the issues that are going to come up?

Nine of the 12 team members comment on their trust in the university decisions.

One advisor has no opinion, five advisors say sometimes, and three advisors say they do not trust AU decisions. Of the advisors that say sometimes, one states, “you hope decisions are not made for selfish reasons and that they are really valuing their employees, but sometimes the university can make decisions just because it benefits the University and not care about its people.”

In regard to perceptions 11 of the 12 team members comment on their perception of what the college thinks of academic advising. Three believe it is positive. One advisor states,

I think that they respect and appreciate what we do... for the most part, they've always been supportive. For example, when there was no money, there was always some way for us to go to our annual conference, the dean's office paid a portion of it.

Three advisors believe the perception is negative. Similar to College Beta, five members of this advising team believe that the perception is based on who is asked in the college.

One team member states,

The people who really know, think it is very important and there is a very positive perception...Outside of those I think they see advisors as high school guidance counselors. They think they are just people who tell students what classes to take.

Which is, as we know, about 15 percent of an advisor's tasks.

One advisor states that there is a lack of awareness on the part of faculty and some staff as to the advising role. Another advisor confirms, "I would say overall faculty don't understand the purpose of advising or maybe don't really know what we do." This sentiment was affirmed by an upper-level administrator. He commented on the importance of advising and the lack of faculty awareness,

[At the faculty governance meeting] one faculty member said he didn't think there were any problems with advising. I mean that is their thinking, they just don't have a clue that the advising system here is in horrible shape and it is a serious problem. It is something we have to figure out. It is just such a critical component of student success.

Eleven of the 12 team members talk about what they think the perceptions of the university is toward academic advising. One advisor had no opinion and five advisors thought it was positive. One team member states, "I would think that the University as a whole values advising and what it might bring to the student's experience." Another advisor points out that they did fund new positions, so they must believe there is a value. Conversely, five advisors believe there is a negative perception about academic advising on behalf of the university. Similar to College Beta, one advisor states, "I don't know if we are valued as much as we should be. I mean there are secretaries that make more money than us." Another advisor affirms,

I would like to think the University supports advising but I think they see it as a small part of the big picture. I don't think they really care too much, as long as no one complains and everyone's happy, they don't say, I want to make advising better...

**College Delta.** All five team members interviewed in College Delta answer the questions about trust in the university and the college. Three of the five team members say that they trust the decisions made by their college and two say that they do most of the time. One advisor who says he trusts the college states, "I think that they're made in the interest of the students and the interests of the academic programs." All of the advisors speak highly of their dean, one advisor says, "I think the people that have been through the different levels have a better understanding of how things should be, like our current dean. I trust her decisions; I think she is doing what's best for us." One of the advisors who claims to mostly trust the decisions made by the college says that she thinks the college administration has an understanding of what is needed for advising but not fully. She claims that maybe if the advisors could give some input things may go a little more smoothly. Another advisor affirms, "If I question things, it might be a procedural thing, like why we do something in a particular way."

Three team members state that they trust the decisions made by the university, one mostly trusts the decisions, and one does not trust AU's decisions. The advisor who says she does not trust AU's decisions states,

No because I don't think that they're always for the benefit of our college or our students. I trust my college I don't think I trust the university as much which is



kind of weird when you think of it, us versus them....But I don't think that's unusual.

Of the three advisors stating they trust the university, one claims he has no reason not to trust them.

One of the five team members interviewed states that she believes College Delta has a positive perception of advising while the other four team members believe it depends on the college department. An advisor states, "Some people know what we do and some people don't. Faculty that do advising know but the faculty that do not have no idea." One mid-level administrator asserts, "I think it's under appreciated, especially by faculty, and especially the faculty on the academic side, many times they don't realize what the advisors are doing." Another advisor believes that the college thinks it is important yet the lack of budget allocation implies a lack of support. The advisor who thinks the perception is positive refers to the support of the dean, "certainly this dean is very understanding... I think she's very pro student services."

In regards to the perception of the university, two team members think the university's perception of academic advising is positive and three believe it is negative. One advisor who believes the perception is negative states,

I can only surmise by it's actions or lack of actions and I don't think it takes it all that seriously.... I'm sure there are people in the hire echelons of the university that do believe that advising is important, but when it really comes down to comparing it to other things, I don't know if it really cuts it....I don't think they really care. They want to get numbers in numbers out...I'm not going to blame

them for it...I wish they would respect the professionalism of advisors and I wish they would respect our intelligence.

Another advisor states, "Sometimes it seems like the perception could be better because maybe we'd have more advisors for the work load." Conversely, one team member has a positive attitude toward the university's perception. He states,

Well, I think that I am of the opinion that this University recognizes the importance of advising. And I know that there could be some people who choose to have a negative connotation, but I choose not to...we all know that in recent years some colleges have been overwhelmed because they were under staffed and I think that the University responded at a time when it was probably very difficult to, and so that in and of itself is an example of the recognition of the importance.

**College Epsilon.** Six of the seven professional and faculty academic advisors interviewed discuss their trust of the decisions made by the college and five of seven talk about their trust of the decisions made by the university. In terms of trust in the college, of the six advisors, three state that they trust the college's decisions and three say sometimes they trust the college's decisions. One advisor in particular who states that he sometimes trusts the decisions says, "I question them, but I find it is better not to question. I think sometimes I wonder why they make certain decisions. Sometimes their decisions don't make sense." Another advisor says that she does not like the idea of combining the departments. Yet another advisor claims his distrust is based on the decisions made because of the budget cuts in terms of the termination of faculty and staff.

Of the four professional and faculty academic advisors who discuss their trust of the decisions made by the university, one states he does trust the university decisions, two

state that they sometimes do, and one states he does not trust the decisions. The advisor who says he trusts the university decisions states that he believes the university is trying to do what is best for AU and his college. One of the advisors who states that she sometimes trusts the decisions expresses concern over the merging of the departments. She claims that this decision to merge had to go through AU and what is needed are more programs in up and coming fields to attract students, not merging.

All seven professional and faculty academic advisors give their perceptions of what they believe their college and the university thinks about academic advising. Four advisors state that the college's perception is positive, two state it is negative, and one claims that it depends. For example, this advisor claims the departments all have different advising configurations, some faculty and some professional, and she believes the use of professional advisors is the better configuration,

To me I don't think that's very effective [faculty academic advisors] because the professor's role here is to teach and to do research. Therefore they don't have the time for the students. They say here are the courses and that's it and they leave. They do not get the interaction with the students; they don't get to know them. I think advising should be one person's role. They should have a specific person for each program because I think that will be better for the students and for the department. It will help to retain the students.

Conversely, of the four who believe the college has a positive perception on academic advising three state that they think it is of increasing importance to the college because of the college's recent push for student retention. One advisor states that she does not

believe that the college thinks about advising that much, but that is not necessarily a bad thing, “I think if they thought about it a lot, it’s usually because it’s not going well.”

Four of the advisors think that the university has a positive perception of advising. Whereas two believe the perception is negative and one had no opinion. Of those who believe the university has a positive perception, one advisor states, “I think they see that we play a very important role.” Another advisor comments, “I think that a lot of people on a university wide basis are beginning to take advising more seriously and see it as a more important aspect.” On the negative side an advisor states, “I don’t feel that they value academic advising very much. I feel that they say that they do, but I don’t feel that they really do. I just don’t think I see that in action.”

### **Advising Team Strategies for Adaptation to Change**

The fifth and final finding identifies the changes that advisors say affect their work and describes the strategies used by each advising team to adapt to changes (see Tables 7 and 8). This finding is based on comments from all members of the advising team which includes advisors, assistant directors, and directors. The most often cited changes include university curriculum and college program policy. Following those changes advisors also mention that they were affected by the changes in advising staff, technology, and a new state law regarding excess credit hours, among other issues.

Table 7

*Changes Affecting the Advising Teams*

<i>Changes</i>	<i>College Beta</i>	<i>College Gamma</i>	<i>College Delta</i>	<i>College Epsilon</i>
Addition of advisors	7/9			
AU Curriculum	2/9		3/5	1/7
Computer system	2/9	2/12	1/5	
Excess credit hours	1/9		1/5	1/7
AU program addition	1/9			
College program addition		4/12		3/7
College major policy change		3/12		
Office procedures/paperwork		4/12		
New director		3/12		
Departments merging				1/7
Change in advising duties				1/7
No changes addressed	2/9			

\*These numbers include all team members; advisors, assistant directors, and directors.

Table 8

*Finding: Strategies for Adaptation to Change*

Strategy	College Beta	College Gamma	College Delta	College Epsilon
Issue	New Advisors	University Curriculum	Pre-Professional Program	New Major
Adaptation	Undirected	Undirected	Directed	All Issues
Feedback Loop	Positive	Positive	Negative	All Issues
Coping	Anticipatory	Reactive	Preventive	Undirected
Summary	Resilient/Constant Change	Resilient/Irregular Change	Resilient/ Stable Appearance	Undirected
				No Response
				Dynamic, Reactive, & Residual
				Resilient/ Inconsistent

As will be evident in the discussion of each college that follows, the study found that the strategies used by academic advising teams for adaptation to changes at their university are not based on Eckel and Kezar's (2003) five adaptation strategies identified in their study of changes in higher education institutions. Adaptation strategies identified from the analysis of interviews, observations, and documents suggest that the advising teams are proactive in their service to students and resilient to the changes in policy where they have no control. How the team culture informs their adaptation to change will be presented next.

**College Beta.** When asked what changes affect them most, the advising team members in College Beta give varying examples. Seven of the nine members of the advising team talk about what changes have affected them; some team members talk about more than one change. Three team members discuss changes relating to the addition of advisors and how the Center for Student Services is affected. While this change is welcome, the way it has been introduced and implemented is perceived by the three advisors to be undesirable. One advisor states "instead of hearing it from the president or provost, we read it in the paper." Another advisor asks how the Center for Student Services is supposed to support the new advisors,

While the university gave us the funding for these new position they only gave us funding for salary. They did not think about the "extra stuff" that comes with a new person such as phone, computer, space, so our college has had to dip into their pocket to provide these resources.

Another change that two advisors discuss is the modification of the university curriculum at the lower division. One advisor claims, "We found out about it once it was

put in place.” When asked if the advisors were consulted about the change one advisor states,

I’m not sure it is necessary to consult advisors on curricular issues, we are not faculty... We have run into issues regarding the implementation of the change. Someone should probably have consulted us about how to go about doing that because they tried to implement that after we already began advising students for the upcoming fall semester.

A mid-level AU administrator confirms, “faculty didn't look at the impact that change was going to do to students and how advisors were going to have to deal with it, or even how whole programs were going to deal with it.” The university curriculum change was approved through faculty governance at the end of a spring semester, to be implemented for the upcoming fall. Yet, in general, the advisors begin to advise students for the fall semester during the middle of spring.

Other changes mentioned by advisors in College Beta include the cap on excess credit hours by the state, the university computer system, and the addition of a program at the university that has increased their enrollment. These changes affect them in different ways, for example, the cap on excess credit hours remains an uncertainty. The advisor knows it is coming, has an idea of the implications to the student, but does not know how the registrar’s office plans to enforce it. Therefore he is having difficulty advising students. He is forced to tell them, “This is coming, I don’t know how it will ultimately affect you, but be aware that it is coming.” The university computer system is also a problem for some of the advisors. Two have cited issues with the system that they claim was outdated before it was even put in place. Lastly, one team member confirms that a



graduate level academic program was established which affects their undergraduate enrollment. The advising team felt it had to struggle to get the attention of the university administration in order to get more advising positions to accommodate all of the incoming students.

According to the advisors, problems related to these changes stem from poor communication and the exclusion of the advisors who implement the policies, from the policy design process. A faculty advisor in College Beta talks about the poor communication between AU and advisors as well as advisors across colleges. And, while the advisors have some resources for communications such as the advisor list-serve and university wide advisor committee, they lack a platform to engage in long term discussion. She states,

We do need some way of facilitating rapid communication of good ideas for advising...we don't have a handbook for advisors or a go to frequently asked questions that all advisors can access. That's kind of ubiquitous in the advising community here.

The advisors believe they were not warned far enough in advance about the changes therefore, they could not offer suggestions to the administration regarding the affect this change would have on the students. One advisor claims that because they are not valued, the college and university do not care about their opinion or expertise with the students.

The culture of the team informs their adaptation to changes. This group is warm and friendly internally, that is within their team, but somewhat unreceptive to the external environment of the university and sometimes their own college. The hostility is evidenced in some of the comments made regarding the trust the team has in the college

and the university. Feeling not valued causes them to be resentful of the changes that affect their system.

These advisors have a collective voice so they can attempt to influence the decisions made by the college via their director. This was the case with the addition of the advisors when the director voiced concerns to upper administration about handling the recent influx of students. While their adaptation is a reaction to external events, they do demonstrate resilience to the changes in their system. In terms of the addition of the new advisors, the veteran advisors made a choice to methodically streamline their meetings through the use of Robert's Rules of Order, allowing everyone to have a voice and avoid a disorganized meeting. They also updated their handbook in an effort to ensure everyone is in agreement on the policies and procedures of the Center for Student Services.

However, not all of their adaptation has been true resilience. In the case of the university curriculum change the advisors had to go through a trial and error period because the policy was passed after they had begun to advise students. For example, they had advised students based on the old curriculum and they had to then revisit the advised students to see who came in under the new curriculum. Yet, although it entailed additional time and effort, the advisors still methodically went through and found the students who were affected and called them back in to correct their plans for graduation.

**College Gamma.** The changes that affect the team members in College Gamma include: the addition of the pre-professional program, a change in policies for college majors, modifications in office procedures and paperwork, the new director, and a switch in the computer system for advising. According to a few participants, some changes have more of an impact than others. Ten of the 12 team members comment on the above

changes. Four team members talk about the new pre-professional program which does not allow a student to declare themselves a major in this college until they have completed certain prerequisites and are at a specific GPA. Two team member state that the program was put in place to get control of the number of students in the college and retain a higher caliber of student. However, as the previous director states, “it has taxed our resources to the limit.”

Another change that impacts the advisor’s work in this college is the change to policies for the college majors. Three advisors comment on this issue, one advisor claims that a new major was put in place and that the advisors did not find out about it until they saw it in the catalog. Not only did the advising office not find out about it until it appeared in the catalog, substitutions were freely being made by the academic department for some students then denied for others. One advisor says,

I think they do what they think is the best thing for that student at that time and they forget how many people that's actually going to affect, because students are going to tell other students. And then they're forced to make a policy or a decision about how they're going to deal with it.

A mid-level administrator confirms the confusion stating, “Sometimes policies have changed within the colleges and the departments have forgotten to tell the advising section.” It can get very confusing for the student and frustrating for the advisors when they are not consulted or made aware of changes.

The change in office procedures and paperwork is cited by four team members as a change that affects them. These changes come from external and internal college sources. For example, one advisor comments on the paperwork now required by the

graduate admissions office, he states, “I thought we were in an age where paper was being done away with, the undergraduate office is virtually paperless. Now we have to deal with all these forms...” Also, the addition of the new director is mentioned by three team members. The previous director had been with the advising office for about 10 years. The team members are somewhat hesitant and are waiting to see what the new director’s plans are for the team and the office.

Lastly, two team members comment on the computer system. The new system was put in place to encompass all of the academic components along with human resources and financial affairs. One team member expresses his disappointment in the new system and the way it affects the advising staff, “I think it doesn’t bode well for morale. It creates a lot of work and ill will and the students think negatively about the advisors and it has nothing to do with them. It is demoralizing.” The advisors were not involved in the process to add a new system and many components are not user friendly to the advising process. The disappointment in the system was also expressed in one of the university-wide Committee of Academic Advisors Meetings. One mid-level administrator states that it took almost one full academic year to get the system to produce a readable, understandable transcript.

Like College Beta, the problems related to these changes are linked to poor communication and the exclusion of the advisors from the policy design process. They are also linked to a lack of consistency. Many times advisors are surprised to learn about a waiver or special consideration. The perception of the advisors is that these special considerations are not consistent, they appear ambiguous to the advisor and the student.

The adaptation strategies are summed up by one of the team members when describing the advising process of the team,

So we have had to devise creative ways like small group advising for sophomores, trying to be proactive, doing a formal graduation audit that is on a shared drive so if the student comes back, the advisor can see what another advisor has done so they don't have to re-invent the wheel.

The culture of this team somewhat mirrors the majors in the college. The team has a serious demeanor toward their work, the college and university, and the changes that affect them. Because of their serious attitude they tend to be somewhat resistant to changes and resentful of the process. Their culture has recently been threatened with the addition of the new director. This new director brings a potential of a more open system giving students more options for advising instances and essentially taking control away from the advisors. For example, the website now shows opportunities at the east campus for students to choose walk-in advising, schedule an appointment, and even come in on a Saturday, whereas before this campus had walk-in advising only.

The goal of the team is to adapt by being proactive as often as possible. This is the case with the change in the college to the pre-professional program. The change was known, therefore, additional workload was expected and an attempt was made to be proactive. However, some of the changes have been unknown causing the team to be reactive, for example the change to the college major found in the catalog by one of the advisors.

**College Delta.** When asked about changes that affect them, the advising team in College Delta indicated three adjustments: the change in the university curriculum for

undergraduate students, the addition of the new computer system, and a state law mentioned by one advisor in College Beta about excess credit hours. The modification to the university curriculum was discussed by other colleges as well. One of the advisors in College Delta talks about having to change all of the college advising forms so they reflect the new curriculum. Because of the changes some students now fall under the old catalog and some under the new, therefore advisors have to pay close attention to the matriculation year to ensure they do not misadvise. Like College Beta, these advisors understand that they are not the people who should make the policies but they do believe it would be beneficial to the university and the students for the advisors to be part of the policy design process. When asked if the advisors should have been consulted about the policy, one advisor states, “Yes, maybe we could have given them ideas about it and how to handle it.” A mid-level administrator confirms, “It would be easier if the policies were clearer. There would not be a wide interpretation and a constant rewriting of the catalog every year.”

Another change that affected the advising team in this office was the change in the university computer system. Similar to College Gamma, this college had some problems with the new computer system. While the system was primarily designed for human resources and financial affairs it was also decided that it could be used for student information. One advisor states,

They weren't necessarily looking for a software program that would also be easy to use for student information. Hopefully, maybe, they have found that it works really well for them and it satisfies all the important parties. I think for student advisors we have basically learned to live with a crappy system, but we get

around it, we figure out what we need...

An upper-level administrator claims that the change was necessary and has been a painful transition. He states that a lot of time has been spent on the training for the new system and that the change has been hard on everyone, including those who are not advisors.

Lastly, the change regarding the cap on excess credit hours is also mentioned by an advisor in College Beta. The concern is based on not knowing what this new policy will mean to the students in their college. The advisor affirms, "We're a little worried about it because we don't know how it's really going to be implemented. So we don't know what effect it's going to have on the students."

As with the other colleges, the issues with the changes are attributed to poor communication and lack of consultation with the advisors about policy design. Three advisors in College Delta state that policies would be stronger if they were involved in the design stage in order to give a perspective on implementation. The university curriculum is a significant change that affected their work, the advisors say that the policies were communicated to them at the last minute in a university wide advisor meeting. Many times the advisors will have to go digging for information to find out how and why, and sometimes when a policy was created so that they can explain to the student the purpose and how it affects them. However, as one advisor says, "we make it work, we make everything work."

The positive attitude of the team is a reflection of their culture, which also happens to be a reflection of the majors that are in this college. The team speaks highly of their dean and looks to be a supportive entity in the college not only to the students but also to the faculty and departments. Their interaction with each other is also positive,

sometimes they are serious and sometimes they joke with one another. They are however, genuine in their concern for their students, the college, and the community.

Due to the positive attitude of the advising team, their adaptation tends to be a bit smoother than that of College Beta or Gamma. College Delta has found the place between stability and chaos where changes can happen without throwing the team into complete disarray. The assistant director states, "I believe that the academic advisors here are serving the departments and the mission of the College by providing information on decisions that have been made and how that impacts a student." Their responses have been attempts to lessen the impact of changes on their system. This has occurred in this college with the change to the university curriculum. When it was clear that there would be a change, two advisors reorganized the advising forms that are used. Their coping mechanism is dynamic and responsive because they did not know about the change in advance. However, the team made a conscious effort to absorb the change through being attentive to student progression and passing the information along to the departments articulating the changes.

**College Epsilon.** The seven professional and faculty academic advisors interviewed in College Epsilon were asked about what changes have affected their work the most. Three advisors state that the addition of the pre-professional program was a change that affected them and the other four advisors each state something different; addition of excess credit hours imposed by the state, College Epsilon departments merging, change in advising duties, and the modification of the lower division university curriculum. Of the three advisors who talk about the addition of the pre-professional program, one advisor, who is on a different campus, states that she does not understand



how it affects students or why it is being implemented; no one has ever explained it to her. Another advisor states that since it is just starting, there is a lot to be worked out in terms of the implementation of the program.

The issue of excess credit hours was also mentioned by advisors in Colleges Beta and Delta. This change that has not yet been implemented and the advisors do not know the specifics of the change. One advisor is concerned because of what she perceives the change to be and the affects it may have on the students in her department. Another advisor finds the merging of departments a change that will be difficult because he now must absorb the advisees from the other department which will more than double his load from 200 students to over 500. The advisor was not consulted about the change until after the decision had been made and the previous advisor was terminated. Another change that affected one of the advisors was an addition to her duties that include creating the course schedule and assigning professors. This change causes the professors to direct their irritation in regards to their assignment toward her rather than someone in an authoritative position such as the department chair. The last change mentioned is the change to the university curriculum for lower division students. The advisor states that he heard about it at the last minute requiring him to figure out as much as he could on his own prior to advising his students.

In general, when talking about all of the cited changes, four advisors claim the main problem is lack of communication. It appears that the administration, be it college or university, does not communicate the purpose of the change or how to implement it which causes confusion on the part of the advisors. Although advisors in this college may have an early warning that the change is coming, by not knowing what the change

involves, they have a difficult time predicting how it will potentially affect them. Because of this the advisors are either surprised by the change or have trouble implementing it due to insufficient information.

The advising in this college is fragmented and so is their culture. They are not a team in the traditional sense because they do not work together to solve problems or make decisions. Because they rarely work together, their reaction to changes appears to be slower than the other colleges. Except for the bond among the faculty academic advisors, collectively the advisors do not know what is happening in the other departments in their college.

The advisors adapt to changes based on where they are located in the college, i.e. their department and office. Because they are not a unified team as the advisors in the other colleges, they face different challenges when adapting. The faculty academic advisors have a strong relationship with each other and act as a sub-team within the college. When an issue occurs, they band together and push back against the threat they perceive as was the case in the meeting between the faculty academic advisors and the professional advisor (see Team Culture). Due to their position as faculty and their cohesiveness under one department, they are able to push for the changes in policy that they perceive will allow them to do their work. They are also able to rely on each other for support when having to figure out how to implement changes. However, because they do not have one formal leader over all of the advisors, they are caught off guard to the change events in the college and university.

The professional academic advisors must rely on themselves and their own abilities to adapt to the changes that affect them. These advisors do not have a team with

a leader as found in the other colleges, nor do they have the positional influence of a faculty member, thus they are vulnerable to their department chairs. Not having a collective voice to confront the college administration leaves them susceptible to being assigned duties that are not necessarily that of a professional academic advisor. The professional academic advisors lack power in their positions and lack the support of a team to give a collective voice to specific issues.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented five findings. The first finding of group culture provided a profile of the four colleges describing their team culture, leadership, and interactions with each other. The second finding gave a voice to the advisors documenting their likes and dislikes about their job. The third finding examined the obstacles faced by advising teams. The fourth finding explored the advising team's trust in the decisions made by their college and the university. This finding also investigated how the advising teams think they are perceived by their college and university. The final finding suggested that the advising teams do not utilize the five adaptation strategies recommended by Eckel and Kezar (2003), instead they are proactive in their work and reactive and resilient to the changes in policies and procedures at the university. Chapter 5 discusses the conclusions to this study and offers recommendations for future study and outlines implications for universities and academic advising teams.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this single site, multiple case study is to identify how academic advising teams respond to changes in the organization and to understand how adaptation strategies are used by four advising teams.

The primary research question for this study is: How do higher education academic advising teams adapt to changes in the institution? The questions that were investigated are:

1. What is the culture(s) of the academic advising teams being studied?
2. What are the strategies used by the academic advising teams to adapt to institutional changes regarding the curriculum and the introduction of new systems?
3. What are the perceptions of the academic advising teams of their ability to adapt to institutional changes?
4. What role does leadership play in the academic advising teams' ability to adapt to institutional changes?

The findings will be discussed followed by the study conclusions. Table 9 provides a summary of the research questions in relation to the findings. Then the implications and recommendations are made for universities, advising teams, and for future research on the adaptability of academic advising teams in higher education.

Table 9

*Research Questions and Findings Summary*

<i>Research Questions</i>	<i>College Beta</i>	<i>College Gamma</i>	<i>College Delta</i>	<i>College Epsilon</i>
1. What is the culture(s) of the academic advising teams being studied?	-Internally friendly -Externally aggressive -Cohesive bonds across campuses -Supportive environment -Value students and the college programs	-Somber and serious attitudes -Campus cohesive bonds -Value students, customer service, and professionalism	-Positive attitudes -Allegiance to college -Cohesive bonds across campuses - Supportive environment -Value students and the college	-Fragmented team -un-communicative -Value students
2. What are the strategies used by the academic advising teams to adapt to institutional changes regarding the curriculum and the introduction of new systems?	-Positive feedback loops -Anticipatory and reactive coping mechanisms -Resilient team in a constant state of change	-Positive and negative feedback loops -Preventative, reactive, and residual coping mechanisms -Resilient team with irregular changes	-Positive feedback loops -Dynamic, reactive, and residual coping mechanisms -Resilient team with a stable appearance	-No response loop -Dynamic, reactive, and residual coping mechanisms -Resilient individuals but inconsistent
3. What are the perceptions of the academic advising teams of their ability to adapt to institutional changes?	-Majority cite resources as a team obstacle -Team perceives that they adapt but slowly	-All cite resources as a team obstacle -Team perceives that they adapt but the rate is dependant on the change	-Majority cite resources as a team obstacle -Team perceives they adapt because they do not have a choice	-Majority cite college issues as obstacles -Individuals perceive that they adapt but it is based on an individual basis not as a team
4. What role does leadership play in the academic advising teams' ability to adapt to institutional changes?	-Supportive leader	-New leader, uncertain potential	- Supportive leader	-No single leader

## **Discussion of Findings**

**Team Culture.** The first finding found that each advising team has a unique culture yet they have a common interest in that they value the students. This finding answers the research questions, what is the culture(s) of the academic advising teams being studied and what role leadership plays in the academic advising teams' ability to adapt to institutional changes. It is evident that Colleges Beta, Gamma, and Delta have similar aspects and College Epsilon tends to be the outlier in the structure of the teams and the duties performed. The similarities across the four colleges are the valuing of student success and the workload in terms of advisor to student ratio. The relationships among the team members in Colleges Beta and Delta are strong and comparable, while College Gamma team members have strong relationships within campuses but not across campuses. The lack of a cohesive team in College Epsilon results in fragmented relationships.

**Advising Structure.** One of the most obvious similarities in Colleges Beta, Gamma, and Delta is the structure of the advising centers. Colleges Beta, Gamma, and Delta are positioned under the dean's office in their college and they each have a single director to whom they report. Because each of the three colleges are under the auspices of their dean's office, they also fall under their dean's budget. Whereas College Epsilon advisors report to their department chair and fall under the department budget. There are positive and negative sides to these structures. A centralized team under the dean's office allows the advisors to have one voice when responding to issues that affect them, while, advisors in College Epsilon tend to be on their own with no collective voice. Also, multiple advisors in one location give students the necessary attention needed even if an

advisor is out of the office. This is not the case with College Epsilon, where in two of the three departments, if an advisor is out there is no other advisor to attend to the student in that particular major. Conversely, having an advisor tied to a particular department means that the advisor is involved in the intricacies of the department. This would allow the advisors to convey departmental details to the students which could assist the student in navigating their degree requirements more easily.

The structure of the advising teams in Colleges Beta, Gamma, and Delta fall within the realm of complex adaptive systems as described by Dooley (2004). He states that a complex adaptive system must be able to self organize and evolve in a short time frame which is what the three college advising teams have been able to do. College Epsilon does not have an identifiable team, rather they are a set of individuals who communicate with each other sporadically, if at all. One could argue that College Epsilon itself is a complex adaptive system and the advisors are a part of that system. However, this study was looking at the adaptation of advising teams and College Epsilon advisors do not fit the definition of a team. Therefore they are not within the realm of a complex adaptive system.

Another aspect where Colleges Beta, Gamma, and Delta are similar and College Epsilon differs is the duties performed. While all four colleges are similar in their basic duties of helping students schedule courses, attending orientations, assisting in graduation goals, College Epsilon advisors have additional duties required by the departments. These advisors have responsibilities that are beyond those of the advisors in the other colleges such as course scheduling and budget responsibilities. Since there is no collective team to outline specific advising duties, the advisors are at the mercy of their department chair.

Another similarity across the four colleges is the advisor to advisee ratio. The industry standard is 1 to 300 (Habley, 2004), yet all of the advisors, except for three advisors in College Epsilon, are well over the standard.

**Team Leader.** This study revealed supportive cultures in Colleges Beta and Delta fostered by the team directors. In College Gamma there is an uncertain culture because of the change in directors. College Epsilon has no support because there is no single director over the advisors. The directors in Colleges Beta and Delta help their teams through the change process by providing support through displaying confidence and trust in the abilities of their teams (Schein, 2009). However, communication of changes between the director and the advisors was an issue in College Beta. At times a “hands-off” approach can be perceived as lack of communication between a leader and the followers (Dervitsiotis, 2006). While a majority of the advisors in College Gamma state the past director was supportive, it was unknown what path the new director would take. Based on his comments, the new director appears to be taking the approach of getting to understand the culture of the team (Schein, 2009), however, the team appeared apprehensive about the new director. College Epsilon does not have an identifiable director for the advisors because the advisors fall under the individual departments.

**Team Values.** An important aspect in advising is interpersonal skills and making a connection with students (Fox, 2008). A noticeable similarity among the four colleges is the concern for the success of the student. The majority of advisors across the colleges cite that they value the students and find it important to help the students reach their educational goals. This is supported by the mission statements in three of the colleges.



*Team interaction and support.* Colleges Beta and Delta appear to have a strong rapport within their teams and with their colleagues across the college, whereas College Gamma team members have strong relationships within the campuses but not across campuses. Colleges Beta and Delta appear to have a synergy between the team members (Larson, 2010). College Gamma has a synergy among those on each of the campuses but not between campuses. Lastly, in College Epsilon the faculty academic advisors have a good relationship with each other but not with the other advisors in the college. As for the other advisors in College Epsilon, they do communicate but it is on a limited basis and infrequently. Unlike the other three college advising teams, College Epsilon advisors do not act as team when solving problems or performing decision-making tasks (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2004; Larson, 2010).

Another observation about the culture of the teams is that they somewhat resemble the characteristics of the majors that they advise. While there is a risk of stereotyping the teams based on majors, the features of the disciplines did emerge during the study. Unfortunately, because of confidentiality purposes the majors are not mentioned, therefore further discussion is limited. However, it can be noted that certain descriptors of the four colleges studied such as serious or positive do relate to the stereotypes of the majors in those colleges.

**Advisor Voice.** The second finding describes how the advisors voice their likes and dislikes about their jobs. This finding adds to answering the research question, what is the culture(s) of the academic advising teams being studied. The advisors likes and dislikes relate to the skills they possess and their lack of power.

The majority of advisors cite student interaction as their most satisfying experience. The importance of advisor and student interaction is an aspect of developmental theory where advisors help students develop skills, goals, attitudes, and personal growth allowing them to practice decision making and problem solving skills (Hagen & Jordan, 2008; Lowenstein, 2005; Smith & Allen, 2006). The advisors talk about helping students navigate the university and reach their educational goals. This supports the value that the advisors speak about of wanting students to succeed which is dependent on the interpersonal skills of the advisor (Fox, 2008).

In the area of dislikes the answers advisors gave vary widely across the four colleges. While the dislikes vary, they collectively point to issues that relate to either the bureaucracy of the institution or the budget cuts that have been incurred. Due to the advisors' positions in the university, they have little power over the decisions made in terms of policies and budget cuts. They typically perceive themselves as powerless because they do not know when changes are happening. However, they have a power that is described in the literature as a lower-level power where they possess the skills and knowledge of the policies and procedures (Hodge, et al., 2003). This power, although typically restricted, may still give the advisors the needed leverage to be able to influence the changes that affect them.

**Advising team obstacles.** The third finding addresses the obstacles faced by the advising teams. This finding answers the question, what are the perceptions of the academic advising teams of their ability to adapt to institutional changes. The advising teams cite resources as an obstacle to their ability to complete all of the tasks required of them, yet they perceive they are resilient and able to adapt to the obstacles.

Adaptation is an adjustment to external forces (Berkhout, et al., 2006; de Zilwa, 2007; Deverell & Olsson, 2010). At times the advising teams perceive their adaptation to changes to be hindered by lack of advising staff which affects the amount of time they have to complete tasks. Time is a factor in adaptation in terms of how teams cope with changes (McGrath & Tschan, 2004). Teams that are slow to cope with change may find it more difficult to change. However, lack of staff in relation to time spent on tasks is a real issue for the advising teams. In the interviews the advisors did not indicate an inability to adapt to the changes they face. Although, they may feel overwhelmed by the change events they do not self destruct, they find ways to make the changes work even when under staffed.

**Advising team trust and external perceptions of advisors.** The fourth finding covers the subjects of trust and how the advisors believe the university and colleges perceive the advisors. This finding adds to answering the question, what are the perceptions of the academic advising teams of their ability to adapt to institutional changes. The majority of advisors trust their college but not the university. This is also reflected in the perceptions where advisors believe the university has a negative perception of academic advising. A trusting environment can be beneficial to an organization. Trust in the leaders and the organization leads to productivity in a changing environment (Pisapia, 2009; Schein, 2009).

The lack of trust in the university can be attributed to the inherent portrayal of higher education as a loosely coupled system (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Okunoye, Frolick, & Crable, 2008). The advisors often feel that the university does not know or understand their work and the pressures they face in terms of the delivery of accurate advising. They

perceive lack of time due to being under staffed as a deterrent in their ability to adapt to changes. Although the university has added advisors, it is not perceived to be enough, and the colleges are still under staffed.

The belief of a negative perception from the university stems from the lack of advisor involvement in the policy design process. Many of the advisors cite a desire to be part of the policy process in an effort to make implementation a smoother transition. Typically there is a gap between the formulation phase and the implementation phase (Joaquin, 2009). A collaborative process in policy design would allow unforeseen considerations to be built into the implementation process (Connick & Innes, 2003). Although advisors recognize that faculty are the governing body of the curriculum, many feel the faculty are too far removed from the advising process to allow for reasonable implementation strategies.

**Advising team strategies for adaptation to change.** The fifth finding identifies the changes that advisors say affect their work and describes the strategies advising teams use to adapt to change. This finding answers the question, what are the strategies used by the academic advising teams to adapt to institutional changes regarding the curriculum and the introduction of new systems. The findings indicate that the academic advising teams do not use any of the five core adaptation strategies described by Eckel and Kezar (2003): senior administrative support, collaborative leadership, flexible vision, staff development, and visible actions. These adaptation strategies require authority and the advisors do not have the organizational control necessary to use these strategies. It was found that advising teams adapt to their environment through coping mechanisms and feedback loops that are described by McGrath and Tschan (2004) and the response to

changes for each college depends on the change event. Below, the coping techniques and feedback loops for changes in each college will be discussed.

*College Beta.* The adaptations for College Beta have been undirected because they have not known about the changes until decisions had already been made externally. The response of this advising team to change events is associated with a positive feedback loop where they magnify the impact of the change creating an alternate system in order to cope (McGrath & Tschan, 2004). Their coping strategy for the new advisors was anticipatory because they found out shortly before the new advisors were on board. This allowed them to begin to plan for the new arrivals by updating their advisor handbook.

Their coping strategy for the change in university curriculum has been reactive because the policy had already been made. Therefore they cope immediately after the decision is made by recalling previously advised students to correct their program sheets. Again, a positive feedback loop is associated with this change because they have had to switch systems and the change has put them in a state of disorder for a period of time.

*College Gamma.* College Gamma has had instances of directed and undirected adaptation. The directed adaptation came with the decision of the college to create a pre-professional program. The advising team knew this was coming and knew the specifics of the change. As McGrath and Tschan (2004) state, directed adaptation is where there is “intentional action on the part of the system” (p. 66). This allowed the team to be proactive and use preventive coping methods to prepare for the change. The response is a negative feedback loop where the team attempts to lessen the impact of the change by taking action prior to the change event. This was done by ensuring all of the advisors

were aware of the changes, understood what the students needed to declare a major, and forms were created to help students track their progress.

An example of undirected adaptation in this team was the creation of a new college major. Since they did not find out about the new major until it was in the catalog, their coping mechanism was reactive as soon as they saw the change. However, their coping continued to be residual for a period of time because of the inconsistency of the academic department with enforcement of the change. The team's response was a positive feedback loop where the disorder was heightened beyond the change itself.

*College Delta.* The changes discussed by advisors in College Delta are all undirected adaptation to changes because they did not know about the changes in advance. Their coping mechanisms have been dynamic and reactive because they deal with the situation as it arises or after the event. Their response is related to positive feedback loops discussed by McGrath and Tschan (2004). However, while they may magnify the issue it appears that it does not throw them into extreme disorder. In the case of the university changing the curriculum, one advisor stated that they changed their advising forms and they pay attention to the matriculation year of the student.

Their lack of noticeable disorder during a change suggests that they are a calm, stable unit where change does not adversely affect them. However, they are in a state of non-equilibrium because they are changing as much as the other colleges. The appearance of being stable could be a problem for them because when looking at their numbers, they have a 1 to 500 advisor to student ratio, and clearly they need more advisors. Yet, they did not clearly communicate the need for more advisors and therefore they were not included when AU added advisors.

*College Epsilon.* In College Epsilon their adaptation is undirected and their coping mechanisms are dynamic, reactive, and even residual (McGrath & Tschan, 2004). In cases of departmental modifications and staff changes, their response almost appears as a no response but a time shift may exist for them due to the fragmented nature of their advising structure. However, McGrath and Tschan (2004) state that “an apparent ‘no response’ may be an artifact of the observation process. It may be imputed to a system by an observer erroneously, because the system’s response to the event was time-shifted” (p.67). When the change in the departments and staff occurred, there appeared to be no attempt to lessen the impact but also no attempt to magnify it. The appearance of a “no response” or the actual slow response to the changes are likely the result of College Epsilon advisors having no identifiable leader. Leaders are an integral part of the change process (Schein, 2009).

In summary, the advising team in College Beta appears to be in a state of continual change. Their resilience is a result of being far from equilibrium in positive feedback loops (Allen et al., 2010). College Gamma appears to have gone through states of punctuated equilibrium (Sammut-Bonnici & Wensley, 2002) where at times they were in a stable state, as when dealing with the pre-professional program, and other times in disorder, when dealing with the major policy change. College Delta has managed to show constant stability even during times of change. However, this stability may have caused them to be overlooked for new advising positions. Lastly, College Epsilon, although resilient, is not consistent with advising in their structure. So, while one department may be in a state of disorder another might be stable.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. Higher education academic advising teams adapt to changes in their institutions by either absorbing the change or altering their system quickly in reaction to the change. It is apparent that although advising teams are not consulted on changes, they ensure changes are implemented. The resilience of advising teams to adapting to changes is a result of their ability to either absorb the change or alter their system quickly in reaction to the change.
2. The use of a conceptual framework designed to analyze large organizations, such as that of Eckel and Kezar (2003), do not always translate to the micro-level of the organization even when taking culture into consideration. Other factors may be involved such as level of authority to implement change. The lack of higher level authority of the embedded team within the organization might hinder some of the factors suggested by Eckel and Kezar.
3. Leaders play an important role in the adaptation of the advising teams. The support and encouragement of the leader can help to facilitate the changes faced by a team (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Schein, 2009). Leaders must become part of the culture in order to effect and help the change process (Schein, 2009).

## **Recommendations and Implications**

The following sections give recommendations for the future study of the adaptability of academic advising teams in higher education. Implications for administrators and advising teams are also presented.



**Recommendations for future study.** Based on the findings of this study, the following are four recommendations for future study of the adaptation of academic advising teams:

1. Follow up studies that include interviewing and/or surveying students would be useful to distinguish which colleges do advising best and why. Advising teams approach their advising duties differently including how students make appointments. Surveying students about their experience with the advising process would provide some measure of the quality and effectiveness of advising teams. In addition, a focus group component to the study would help in the investigation of the culture allowing the unconscious assumptions to come forward in a group setting.
2. Follow up studies are needed at different universities with and without the same advising models. Repeating the study at universities with the same advising model would allow for a further cross case analysis to assess discrepancies and similarities at comparable universities. Repeating the study at universities without the same advising model would allow for a comparison of the different advising models.
3. Further examinations of the perceptions of the advising teams would be useful in developing a model for the measurement of perceptions. A more inclusive tool is desired to measure the advisor opinions. A mixed methods approach might be a feasible course of action for a follow up to this study. It would be useful to administer a follow up survey with further questions about perceptions.

4. An investigation of the feedback loops and coping mechanisms described by McGrath and Tschan (2004) would be valuable for replicating this study based on those adaptation strategies.
5. An investigation of the relationship between the college disciplines and the culture of the advising teams is recommended. While there is a risk of stereotyping the teams, an exploration of this relationship would contribute to understanding the influence of the particular college majors on the team being studied.

**Implications for administrators.** Universities should take an active role in the development of academic advising. Recent studies have shown a correlation between a strong advisor/advisee relationship and student retention as well as student satisfaction (“Academic Advising Services, 2005; Keup & Kinzie, 2007). The following are five implications for administrators:

1. Include an academic advisor in committees that are making curricular decisions as consultants and not necessarily as voting members. Advisors understand that they do not and should not have control of the curriculum. However, since they help students schedule courses, guide them in their degree program, and implement policies, their input would be beneficial to the creation of the policies providing insight about how the changes would affect the students. While it is not feasible to have all advisors on all committees, one or two advisors would be sufficient. The advisor participants should be actual advisors and not directors because the advisors have more interaction with the students on a daily basis and they work with the systems more often than the directors.

2. The facilitation of the trickle down of information must be restructured. Advisors do not get information in a timely manner due to a disconnect between the advising teams and the faculty and the university administration. An informal but structured monthly email newsletter could include information from the faculty governance meetings, catalog updates, and college events.
3. Create more opportunities for advisor training and professional development. One such opportunity is a yearly university wide advisor retreat. This retreat could be scheduled during down times for advising which are typically in fall and spring semesters after the semester begins but before the schedule is posted. These retreats would give advisors an opportunity to meet other advisors across colleges and share ideas about creating best practices for advising at their universities.
4. One appointment system would be valuable for advising teams which can be used by advising offices across colleges at a particular university. When a student moves from one college to another, advisors would know what was already communicated to the student. This would essentially reduce the amount of time the advisor would have to spend preparing to see a student changing colleges and better serve the student. It would also offer a vehicle for communication among colleges when a student is getting a minor or pursuing a double major between colleges.
5. A university administrator with authority should be charged as a liaison between the university and the advising teams. While the advising teams may be housed under their colleges, they would benefit from a university level authority figure

who could coordinate interaction and facilitate communication with upper-level administration.

**Implications for advising teams.** While universities must support and encourage advising, the advisors must also become advocates for themselves and their work. The following are three implications for academic advising teams:

1. Create a strong, cohesive advising team. This is especially important as teams grow. A first step would be to develop an advisor handbook that includes information on the university as well as instructions on how to advise. In addition to the basic information on the university and the systems, subjects in an advising team handbook should include a discussion on the skills necessary for successful advising such as listening objectively, communication skills, advising theory, and ethical practices.
2. Grites et al. (2008) discuss how advisors must become more aware and involved in the policy making in their institutions as well as the state. Although advisors do not necessarily have the time to devote to action on state legislation, they can be more cognizant of the policy making that is happening in their own backyard. Often times policies pass through a faculty governance system. Agendas, minutes, and even the meetings are typically open to anyone wishing to access them. While many times advisors cannot participate in the meetings, it would prove insightful for them to attend and hear the discussions. By doing so, many of the changes in policy would not come as a surprise. Advisors may even have the opportunity to give input.

3. Another suggestion coming from the literature linked to the findings is to work on demonstrating the cost benefit of a good college advising team (Grites et al., 2008). Many times quantitative measures are sought when looking at the successes of programs. Advisors must do more than emotionally plead their case; they must prove it with empirical data. Advising teams need to collect data in areas such as student retention and graduation rates. These exercises also make a strong case for the advising teams across the institution to share ideas and methods.

In closing, this study served to put a spotlight on academic advising teams, the work they do in the institution, and how they adapt to changes that affect them. By using a case study approach the adaptation strategies of academic advising teams were investigated. Although the study found the five core strategies suggested by Eckel and Kezar (2003) were not utilized, it was found that the teams were embedded in their own culture of adaptation using coping mechanisms and positive and negative feedback response loops.

The literature talks about the necessity for students to connect to the university and advisors have an important role in making this happen. One administrator in this study discusses the importance of the student connection with faculty, however, at the undergraduate level it is the professional advisor that dedicates time advising the student and that should be valued and fostered by universities. Although faculty play a role as mentors, if professional advisors are employed, the university can enhance the vital connection to the institution for the student and increase retention rates by cultivating the professional advising teams.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Recruitment Procedures

1. I identified the advising director for each college by looking at the college's website. I then contacted the advising director in each college via email to ask for permission to conduct the study. The email will include the recruitment letter in Appendix B. If there was not an easily recognizable advising director, an associate dean was contacted.
2. In consultation with the advising directors of each college, I identified the advisors in their college.
3. I then sent out the email below to the advisors stating my intentions. Those who do not respond via email were called.
4. Interviews were scheduled either by email or phone. All interviews occurred in the advisor's offices at a mutually agreed upon time.
5. Once the advising interviews were completed, the university administrators were contacted via email using the recruitment letter in Appendix C.
6. Interviews were scheduled either by email or phone. All interviews occurred in the advisor's offices at a mutually agreed upon time.
7. Anyone stating they were not interested in participating was not pursued. Any university administrator not responding to a second email request for an interview was not pursued.

## Appendix B: Advisor Recruitment Letter

Dear Prospective Participant,

I am a doctoral candidate at Florida Atlantic University and the topic of my dissertation is the adaptability of academic advising teams. I have successfully completed all the requisite coursework expected prior to conducting research for completion of the dissertation. My chairperson is Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership.

I am asking for your participation in this study. The purpose of this study is to identify and to understand the adaptation strategies used by academic advising teams at your university. You will be asked to participate in a confidential interview lasting for approximately an hour at a mutually agreed upon time and place. You will be asked questions regarding your perspectives of the adaptability of advising teams to the changes in the institution. If you agree to participate, please reply to the email I will be sending out and I will contact you to make arrangements for us to meet.

Your time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Leigh A. McFarland  
Doctoral Candidate  
Florida Atlantic University



## Appendix C: University Administrator Recruitment Letter

Dear Prospective Participant,

I am a doctoral candidate at Florida Atlantic University and the topic of my dissertation is the adaptability of academic advising teams. I have successfully completed all the requisite coursework expected prior to conducting research for completion of the dissertation. My chairperson is Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership.

I am asking for your participation in this study. The purpose of this study is to identify and to understand the adaptation strategies used by academic advising teams at your university. You have been identified by someone I have interviewed as a potential participant for an interview. You will be asked to participate in a confidential interview lasting for approximately an hour at a mutually agreed upon time and place. You will be asked questions regarding your interaction with advising teams in the institution. If you agree to participate, please reply to this email and we can make arrangements for us to meet.

Your time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Leigh A. McFarland  
Doctoral Candidate  
Florida Atlantic University

Appendix D: Observation Tables

Table 10

*College Beta Observations*

Observations	Date	Place	# of Participants	Duration
Freshman Orientation	6/24/10	east campus	185	70 minutes
Staff Meeting	7/22/10	east campus	9	100 minutes
Office Waiting Room	8/26/10	east campus	14	40 minutes
			Total	3 hours, 30 minutes

Table 11

*College Gamma Observations*

Observations	Date	Place	# of Participants	Duration
Transfer Orientation	6/22/10	east campus	51	135 minutes
Waiting Room-Graduate	6/24/10	east campus	3	35 minutes
Waiting Room-Undergraduate	6/30/10	east campus	13	30 minutes
Freshman Orientation	7/9/10	east campus	45	95 minutes
Staff Meeting	8/18/10	east campus	14	115 minutes
Waiting Room-Undergraduate	8/24/10	west campus	9	45 minutes
			Total	7 hours, 35 minutes

Table 12

*College Delta Observations*

Observations	Date	Place	# of Participants	Duration
Freshman Orientation	8/6/10	east campus	17	60 minutes
Staff Meeting	8/6/10	east campus	8	85 minutes
Transfer Orientation	8/18/10	east campus	13	110 minutes
Office Waiting Room	8/24/10	west campus	5	45 minutes
Office Waiting Room	2/4/11	east campus	5	30 minutes
			Total	5 hours, 30 minutes

Table 13

*College Epsilon Observations*

Observations	Date	Place	# of Participants	Duration
Freshman Orientation	7/21/10	east campus	18	20 minutes
Freshman Orientation	7/23/10	east campus	28	50 minutes
Advisor/Department Meeting	2/1/11	east campus	10	60 minutes
			Total	2 hours, 10 minutes

Table 14

*University Observations*

Observations	Date	Place	# of Participants	Duration
Faculty Governance Meeting	9/10/10	east campus	53	110 minutes
Faculty Governance Meeting	10/1/10	east campus	55	130 minutes
University wide advisor meeting	10/8/10	east campus	38	135 minutes
University wide advisor meeting	2/11/11	east campus	54	150 minutes
			Total	8 hours, 45 minutes

Appendix E: Document Tables

Table 15

*College Beta Documents*

Documents	Author	Title	Date of Document	Date Retrieved	Summary
Advisor handbook	College Beta Center for Student Services	College Beta Advisor Training Manual	No Date	10/4/10	Training information for advisors
Handout	College Beta Center for Student Services	College Beta Contract for Success	No Date	7/22/10	Advising tool for at risk students
Handout	College Beta Center for Student Services	Program Sheet	No Date	10/21/10	One sheet for each major in College Beta which provides the required classes
PowerPoint	College Beta Center for Student Services	e-advising	No Date	10/21/10	Provides information for students to self-advise
Student handbook	College Beta Center for Student Services	College Beta Student handbook	No Date	10/21/10	Information for students in College Beta
Website	College Beta Center for Student Services	Center for Student Services Website	No Date	2/12/11	Information on services and documents

Table 16

*College Gamma Documents*

Documents	Author	Title	Date of Document	Date Retrieved	Summary
Advising Form	College Gamma: Academic & Student Services Center	Group Advising Form	No Date	6/22/10	Course requirements for new students
Advising Form	College Gamma: Academic & Student Services Center	Undergraduate Recommended Courses	12/15/05	6/22/10	Registration form to assist students in selecting classes
Advising Form	College Gamma: Academic & Student Services Center	Form 6: Application for Upper-Division	8/28/09	6/25/10	For student to apply to move out of the pre-professional program
Advisor Training Manual	College Gamma: Academic & Student Services Center	New Advisor Manual: Undergraduate	Summer 2008	7/13/10	Training information for new advisors
Freshman PowerPoint	College Gamma: Academic & Student Services Center	College Gamma Information Session	No Date	8/9/10	Information about the college and programs

*(table continues)*

Table 16 (*continued*)

Documents	Author	Title	Date of Document	Date Retrieved	Summary
Instant Message	Advisor & Director	No Title	No Date	7/13/10	Example of communication between director and advisor
Transfer PowerPoint	College Gamma: Academic & Student Services Center	College Gamma	No Date	8/9/10	Information about the college and programs
Website	College Gamma: Academic & Student Services Center	Academic and Student Services Center Website	No Date	8/9/10 and 3/12/11	Information on services, documents, and contacts

Table 17

*College Delta Documents*

Documents	Author	Title	Date of Document	Date Retrieved	Summary
Advisor Handbook	College Delta: Office for Student Academic Services	College Delta: Resource Manual	August 2009	8/6/10	Training information for advisors
Email	Assistant Director	Staff Coverage	8/11/10	8/12/10	Example of communication for coverage after staff vacancy
Website	College Delta: Office for Student Academic Services	Office for Student Academic Services Website	No Date	9/12/10	Information on services, documents, and contacts



Table 18

*College Epsilon Documents*

Documents	Author	Title	Date of Document	Date Retrieved	Summary
Course Projection Sheet	Departmental advisor	Under-graduate Course Projection Sheet	12/09	8/6/10	Training information for advisors
Handout	College Epsilon: Student Services	Contact Information	No Date	7/21/10	Contact information for student services and College Epsilon advisors
Newsletter	College Epsilon	Quick Facts Newsletter for College Epsilon	2009/2010	7/21/10	Handout for transfer orientation
Website	College Epsilon	College Epsilon	No Date	1/28/11	Information on services and contacts

Table 19

*University Documents*

Documents	Author	Title	Date of Document	Date Retrieved	Summary
Catalog	AU	AU 2010-2011 Catalog	No Date-online version	11/23/10	Information about advising in the colleges
Email	University Administrator	Policies Relating to Students' Academic Progress	11/22/10	11/22/10	New policies regarding majors, registration, and student status
Minutes	AU Faculty Governance	AU Faculty Governance Minutes	12/3/10	1/20/10	Discussion on enrollment growth
Minutes	AU Faculty Governance	AU Faculty Governance Minutes	4/9/08	1/20/10	Discussion on AU budget reductions
Minutes	AU Faculty Governance	AU Faculty Governance Minutes	10/17/07	1/20/10	Discussion on AU budget reductions
List Serve	AU	Advisor List Serve	No Date	constant through study	A resource for advisors to ask questions and submit comments
President's Report	AU President	President's Report to the Faculty Governance	10/1/10	10/1/10	Discussion of enrollment increase

*(table continues)*

Table 19 (continued)

Documents	Author	Title	Date of Document	Date Retrieved	Summary
Printed Speech	AU President	2010 AU Inaugural Address	10/29/10	11/19/10	Presidential speech which mentions grant to add advisors
PowerPoint	President's Office	AU Student Enrollment Projection	9/17/07	1/20/10	Provides projections for increases in student enrollment and faculty.
PowerPoint	Undergraduate Studies	Academic Advising at AU	Spring 2010	10/15/10	Presentation to the Board of Trustees about academic advising
Task Force Document	eLearning Task Force	eLearning Task Force Suggestions	8/30/10	11/19/10	Suggestions for eLearning Academic Advisors
Website	AU	Alpha University	No Date	6/7/10	Information on AU demographics

Appendix F: Table 20

Table 20

*Case Study Research Summary Matrix*

Investigated Research Questions	Data Collection Method	Interview Questions	Observations	Documents	Primary Codes	Additional Codes
1. What is the culture(s) of the academic advising teams being studied?	Interviews Observations Documents	AA: 6, 7, 8, 9a-f, AD: 3, 4a-f	Freshmen & transfer orientations, Staff meetings, Waiting rooms	Advisor manual/ handbook, Handouts/forms, PowerPoints, Website, Instant messages/ emails	Team Culture, Trust	Likes & Dislikes, Team Interaction, Team Communication
2. What are the strategies used by the academic advising teams to adapt to institutional changes regarding the curriculum and the introduction of new systems?	Interviews Observations Documents	AA: 9a, c, e, h, 10, 11, 12a-d, 13, AD: 4a, c, e, h, 5, 6, 7a-c, 8	Staff meetings, Waiting rooms	Advisor manual/ handbook, Handouts/forms, PowerPoints	Changes, Adaptation Strategies, Obstacles	Team Interaction, Team Communication, Training
3. What are the perceptions of the academic advising teams of their ability to adapt to institutional changes?	Interviews	AA: 9c, d, 14, 15, 16 AD: 4c, d, 9, 10, 11	-	-	Team Culture, External Influences	Self Perceptions Team Interaction, Team Communication
4. What role does leadership play in the academic advising teams' ability to adapt to institutional changes?	Interviews Observations Documents	AA: 9g, h, 10 AD: 4g, h, 5	Staff meetings, Waiting rooms	Advisor manual/ handbook, Handouts/forms, Website	Team Culture, Trust, External Influences	Team Interaction, Team Communication, Training

## Appendix G: Interview Protocol for Academic Advisors

Time of Interview		Date	
Place		Interviewer	
Interviewee		Position of Interviewee	

I am Leigh McFarland and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Department at Florida Atlantic University. I am conducting this study in an effort to identify and understand the adaptation strategies to change used by academic advising units at this institution. All data, including this interview, will be collected and coded to maintain confidentiality. This data will be used for my doctoral dissertation titled: The Adaptability of Academic Advising Teams in Higher Education. The interview will take approximately one hour. Do you have any questions? Do you give your permission to audio tape this interview?

### Background Information.

1. How long have you been an advisor at this institution?
  - a. When was your start date?
  - b. Anywhere else prior?
2. What degree levels and majors do you advise?
3. How many students do you advise?
4. What is your highest degree and major?
5. Please choose the salary range closest to what you earn:
  - a. Under \$30,000
  - b. \$30,001 to \$40,000
  - c. \$40,001 to \$50,000
  - d. \$50,001 or higher

### Job Description.

6. Please describe your job as an advisor.
7. What qualities do you think an advisor should have?
8. What do you like about your job? What do you dislike about your job?

9. Please describe your interaction with the other advisors in this college.
  - a. Do you hold regular meetings together? If so, describe a typical meeting.
  - b. What are the values and beliefs within your team?
    - i. How did this belief(s) come about? Particular person? The group?
    - ii. [If already a belief when you came on board] How did you learn about the belief(s)?
  - c. How does your group approach problems?
  - d. How would you describe the decision making process in your advising group?
  - e. Does your advising team have a mission statement? If so, what is it? If not ,do you use the university’s mission?
  - f. How do new advisors get hired?
    - i. Are you and the team involved in the hiring process?
    - ii. How do new advisors get trained? Is there a manual? Who trains?
    - iii. Do you speak freely with them giving them “the dirt” about the college and university?
  - g. Is there a periodic evaluation completed in regards to your performance?
    - i. If so, how often and who performs the evaluation?
    - ii. If not, do you know why not?
  - h. Do you get professional development opportunities?
    - i. Is so, what?
    - ii. If not, why not?

10. What kind of interaction do you have with the college administration? College faculty?

11. What kind of interaction do you have with advisors outside of this college? With university administration? With faculty outside your college?

Change Process.

12. Tell me about a change in the college or at the university that influences (or influenced) your work as an advisor. How did you hear about the change?
  - a. Was the advising team consulted about the change? Do you think the advising team should have been consulted? Why?
  - b. Why do you think that the advising team was not consulted?
  - c. From your perspective where do most changes originate from?
  - d. When changes are made by the college or university do you understand why? Is it explained to you? How do you find out why?

13. Is there a person or group that you or your team collaborates with most?

14. What do you think the college’s perception of academic advising is? The University?

15. Do you trust the decisions made by the college? The University?

16. Describe the biggest obstacle faced by the advising group in this college.

17. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

18. Is there anyone else you think I should speak to regarding the adaptation strategies used by academic advising units at this institution?

Thank you for your participation. If I have other questions may I call you?

## Appendix H: Interview Protocol for Advising Directors

Time of Interview		Date	
Place		Interviewer	
Interviewee		Position of Interviewee	

I am Leigh McFarland and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Department at Florida Atlantic University. I am conducting this study in an effort to identify and understand the adaptation strategies used by academic advising units at this institution. All data, including this interview, will be collected and coded to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. This data will be used for my doctoral dissertation titled: *The Adaptability of Academic Advising Teams in Higher Education*. Do you have any questions? Do you have any objections to an audio tape of this interview?

### Background Information.

1. How long have you been at this institution?
2. What is your highest degree and major?

### Job Description.

3. Please describe your job for me.
4. Please describe your interaction with the other advisors in this college.
  - a. Do you hold regular meetings together? If so, describe a typical meeting.
  - b. What are the values and beliefs within the team?
  - c. How does the advising group approach problems?
  - d. How would you describe the decision making process in your advising group?
  - e. Does your advising team have a mission statement? If so, what is it? If not do you look at the university's mission?
  - f. How do new advisors get hired?
    - i. Are the advisors involved in the hiring process?
    - ii. How do new advisors get trained? Is there a manual? Who trains?
  - g. Are evaluations completed regarding the job performance for the advisors?
    - i. If yes, how often and who does them?
    - ii. If not, why not?
  - h. Do the advisors get professional development opportunities?
    - i. If so, what?
    - ii. If not, why not? Do you think it is important?
5. Describe your interaction with the college administration. University administration.



6. Describe your interaction with advisors outside of this college.

Change Process.

7. Tell me about a change in the college or at the university that influences (or influenced) the advising group.
  - a. Were you consulted about the change in advance?
  - b. Were the advisors consulted before this change happened? How and by whom?
  - c. How do you think the advisors feel about the decisions that are made without their consultation?
8. Is there a person or group that you or your team collaborates with most?
9. What do you think the college's perception of academic advising is? The University?
10. Do you trust the decisions made by the advising team? The college? The University?
11. Describe the biggest obstacle faced by the advising team in this college.
12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?
13. Is there anyone else you think I should speak to regarding the adaptation strategies used by academic advising units at this institution?

Thank you for your participation. If I have other questions may I call you?

## Appendix I: Interview Protocol for University Administrators

Time of Interview		Date	
Place		Interviewer	
Interviewee		Position of Interviewee	

I am Leigh McFarland and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Department at Florida Atlantic University. I am conducting this study in an effort to identify and understand the adaptation strategies used by academic advising units at this institution. All data, including this interview, will be collected and coded to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. This data will be used for my doctoral dissertation titled: *The Adaptability of Academic Advising Teams in Higher Education*. Do you have any questions? Do you have any objections to an audio tape of this interview?

### Background Information.

1. How long have you been working at this institution? Where were you before here?  
Your position?
2. What is your highest degree and major?

### Job Description.

3. Please describe your job for me.
4. Please describe your relationship and interactions with the academic advisors at this institution.
5. From your perspective, what is the job of the academic advisor at this university?

### Change Process.

6. Tell me about a change in the college or at the university that influences (or influenced) the advisors and talk about how they were or were not involved in the change.
7. Do you think that advisors should be consulted on the changes that occur at the institution?
  - a. If so, to what degree?
  - b. If not, why not?

8. What kind of obstacles do you encounter with academic advisors when changes occur?
9. Do you trust the advisors to make the right decisions regarding policy? Why or why not?
10. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?
11. Is there anyone else you think I should speak to regarding the adaptation strategies used by academic advising units at this institution?

Thank you for your participation. If I have other questions may I call you?

## Appendix J: Interview Consent Form

### ADULT CONSENT FORM

---

1) **Title of Research Study:** The Adaptability of Academic Advising Teams in Higher Education

2) **Investigator:**

Principle Investigator: Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership/Main Investigator: Leigh McFarland, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Educational Leadership

3) **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to see how an academic advising team responds to change in the university and to understand how and if the five core adaptation strategies are used.

4) **Procedures:**

You will be asked to be part of an interview lasting about an hour at a time and place that we agree on. You will be asked questions about your viewpoint of the adaptability of advising teams to the changes in the university. With your permission, you will be audio taped during the interview.

5) **Risks:**

The risk to you being involved in this is no more than what you would have in a normal day. You may say no to joining the study or you can choose to withdraw at any time without penalty.

6) **Benefits:**

Potential benefits include: advising teams gaining further insight into the adaptability strategies they use and administrators gaining further insight into their decision making processes.

7) **Data Collection & Storage:**

All of the results will be kept confidential and secure and only the people working with the study will see your data, unless required by law. Number codes and fictitious names will be substituted for all identifiers. The data will be kept for two years in a password protected computer in the researcher's home office and then destroyed.

8) **Contact Information:**

For problems or questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Florida Atlantic University Division of Research at (561) 297-0777. For other questions about the study, you should call the principal investigator, Dr. Patricia Maslin-Ostrowski at (954)236-1036, or the main investigator, Leigh McFarland at (954) 762-5184.

9) **Consent Statement:**

I have read or had read to me the preceding information describing this study. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and freely consent to participate. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I have received a copy of this consent form.

I agree \_\_\_\_ I do not agree \_\_\_\_ to be audio recorded.

Signature of Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix K: Observation Protocol

Event		Campus	
Time		Date	

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
Description of Event	
Physical Description of Setting	
Participants (demographics and attitude)	

## Appendix L: Document/Audiovisual Protocol

Document       Audiovisual Material

Site:

Date Received or Viewed:

Name or Description:

Event or contact with which document was associated:

Significance or Importance of Document:

Notes:

Appendix M: Table 21

Table 21

*Advisor Demographics*

Demographic	Number
Highest Degree	
Bachelor	5
Bachelor with some graduate coursework	3
Master	14
Years Working at AU as an Advisor	
Less than 5 Years	13
6-10 Years	5
More than 10 Years	4
Salary	
\$30,001-\$40,000	10
\$40,001-\$50,000	11
More than \$50,001	1
*Demographics have been collapsed to ensure confidentiality	

Appendix N: Table 22

Table 22

*Method Site and Sample*

Demographic	Alpha University	College Beta	College Gamma	College Delta	College Epsilon	Total
Students (U)	23,207	4,977	6,780	3,348	2,068	---
Students (G)	4,987	489	1,737	1,286	410	---
Interviews	16	9	12	5	7	49
Observations	4	3	6	5	3	21
Documents	12	6	8	3	4	33



## References

- Academic advising services key to student retention, but underutilized. (2005, Winter). *Activity*, 43(1). Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/activity/winter2005/advising.html>
- Allen, C. R., Gunderson, L. H., & Holling, C. S. (2010). Commentary on part one articles. In L. H. Gunderson & C. S. Holling (Eds.), *Foundations of ecological resilience* (pp. 3-18). Washington, D. C.: Island Press.
- American College Testing. (2004). Many U.S. colleges overlooking a potential cure for college dropouts. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/news/releases/2004/6-23-04.html>
- Argyris, C. (2001). The individual and the organization. In W. E. Natenmeyer & J. T. McMahon (Eds.), *Classics of organizational behavior* (3rd ed., pp. 358-374). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Arts, B., & Van Tatenhove, J. (2004). Policy and Power: A conceptual framework between the 'old' and the 'new' policy idioms. *Policy Sciences*, 37, 339-356.
- Bergquist, W. H. (1992). *The four cultures of the academy*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bergquist, W. H., & Pawlak, K. (2008). *Engaging the six cultures of the academy*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Berkhout, F., Hertin, J., & Gann, D. M. (2006). Learning to adapt: Organisational adaptation to climate change impacts. *Climate Change*, 78, 135-156.
- Birnbaum, R., & Shushok, F., Jr. (2001). The crisis “crisis” in higher education: Is that a wolf or a pussycat at the academy’s door? In P. G. Altbach, P. J. Gumport, & D. B. Johnstone (Eds.), *In defense of American higher education*. (pp. 59-84). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2003). Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Braynion, P. (2004). Power and leadership. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 18(6), 447-463.
- Brown, T. (2008). Critical concepts in advisor training and development. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp. 309-322). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Burns, T., & Stalker, G. M. (2001). Mechanistic and organic systems. In W. E. Natemeyer & J. T. McMahon (Eds.), *Classics of organizational behavior* (3rd ed.) (pp. 375-380). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Capra, F. (2007). In F. Complexity and life. In F. Capra, A. Juarrero, P. Sotolongo, & J. van Uden (Eds.), *Reframing complexity: Perspectives from the north and south* (pp. 4-25). Mansfield, MA: ISCE Publishing.
- Cohen, A. M. (1998). *The shaping of American higher education: Emergence and growth of the contemporary system*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Colebatch, H. K. (2006). What work makes policy? *Policy Sciences*, (39)4, 309-321.

- Connick, S., & Innes J. E. (2003). Outcomes of collaborative water policy making: Applying complexity thinking to evaluation. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 46(2), 177-197.
- Cook, S. (2009). Important events in the development of academic advising in the United States. *NACADA Journal*, 29(2), 18-40.
- Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2007). Academic Advising Programs: CAS Standards and Guidelines. In M. Stuart Hunter, B. McCalla-Wriggins, & E. R. White (Eds.), *Academic advising: New insights for teaching and learning in the first year* (Monograph No. 46 [National Resource Center]; Monograph No. 14 [National Academic Advising Association]; pp. 241-250). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- d'Ambrosio, M. B., & Ehrenberg, R. G. (2007). Introduction: Changing issues, environment, and expectations. In M. B. d'Ambrosio & R. G. Ehrenberg (Eds.), *Transformational change in higher education: Positioning colleges and universities for future success* (pp. 1-15). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- de Zilwa, D. (2007). Organisational culture and values and the adaptation of academic units in Australian universities. *Higher Education*, 54, 557-574.
- Dervitsiotis, K. V. (2006). Building trust for excellence in performance and adaptation to change. *Total Quality Management*, 17(7), 795-810.

- Deverell, E., & Olsson, E.-K., (2010). Organizational culture effects on strategy and adaptability in crisis management. *Risk Management, 12*(2), 116-134.
- Dooley, K. J. (2004). Complexity science models of organizational change and innovation. In M. S. Poole & A. H. Van de Ven (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational change and innovation* (pp. 354-373). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Duderstadt, J. J., & Womack, F. W. (2003). *The future of the public university in America: Beyond the crossroads*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Eckel, P. D., & Kezar, A. (2003). *Taking the reins: Institutional transformation in higher education*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Emad, G., & Roth, W-M. (2009). Policy as boundary object: A new way to look at educational policy design and implementation. *Vocations and Learning, 2*, 19-35.
- Fain, P. (2008, March 7). Florida's colleges grid for deep budget cuts. *The Chronicle of Higher Education, (54)*26.
- Fox, R. (2008). Delivering one-on-one advising: Skills and competencies. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp. 342-355). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Frost, S. H. (2000). Historical and philosophical foundations for academic advising. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley & Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook*. (pp. 3-17). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Gordon, V. N., Habley, W. R., & Grites, T. J. (2008). Preface. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp. ix-x). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Griffin, R. W., & O'Leary-Kelly, A. M. (2004). *The dark side of organizational behavior*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Grites, T. J., Gordon, V. N., & Habley, W. R. (2008). Perspectives on the future of academic advising. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp. 456-471). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Habley, W. R. (2004). Advisor load. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/advisorload.htm>
- Habley, W. R. (2009). Academic advising as a field of inquiry. *NACADA Journal*, 29(2), 76-83.
- Hagen, P. (2005). Theory building in academic advising. *NACADA Journal*, 25(2), 3-8.
- Hagen, P. L., & Jordan, P. (2008). Theoretical foundations of academic advising. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp. 17-35). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Hatch, M. J. (2004). Dynamics of Organizational Culture. In M. S. Poole & A. H. Van de Ven (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational change and innovation* (pp. 190-211). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hayes, J. (2007). *The theory and practice of change management* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillian.

- Hellriegel, D., & Slocum, J. W., Jr. (2004). *Organizational behavior* (10th ed.). Mason, OH: South-Western.
- Hemwall, M. K. (2008). Advising delivery: Faculty advising. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp.253-266). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Higgs, M., & Rowland, D. (2005). All changes great and small: Exploring approaches to change and its leadership. *Journal of Change Management*, 5(2), 121-151.
- Hodge, B. J., Anthony, W. P., & Gales, L. M. (2003). *Organizational theory: A strategic approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Holling, L. H., & Gunderson, C. S. (2002). Resilience and adaptive cycles. In L. H. Holling & C. S. Gunderson (Eds.), *Panarchy: Understanding transformations in human and natural systems* (pp. 25-62). Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Joaquin, M. E. (2009). Bureaucratic adaptation and the politics of multiple principles in policy implementation. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 39(3), 246-268.
- Keup, J. R., & Kinzie, J. (2007). A national portrait of first-year students. In M. Stuart Hunter, B. McCalla-Wriggins, & E. R. White (Eds.), *Academic advising: New insights for teaching and learning in the first year* (Monograph No. 46 [National Resource Center]; Monograph No. 14 [National Academic Advising Association]; pp. 19-38). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

- Kezar A., & Eckel, P. D. (2002). The effect of institutional culture on change strategies in higher education: Universal principles or culturally responsive concepts? *The Journal of Higher Education*, 73(4), 435-460.
- Kienle, A.W., & Loyd, N. L. (2005). Globalization and the emergence of supranational organizations: Implications for graduate programs in higher education administration. *College Student Journal*, 39(3), 580-587.
- King, M. C. (2008). Organization of advising services. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp.242-252). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- King, N. S. (2008). Advising delivery; Group strategies. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp. 279-291). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2002). *The leadership challenge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). Advising for student success. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp. 68-84). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G. D., & Whitt, E. J. (2000). Culture in American colleges and universities. In M. C. Brown (Ed.), *ASHE reader series: Organization and governance in higher education* (pp. 160-169). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Kuhn, T., & Padak, G. (2009). From the co-editors: Academic advising for liberal and practical education. *NACADA Journal*, 29(2), 3-4.

- Larson, J. R., Jr. (2010). *In search of synergy in small group performance*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Lemak, D. J., Henderson, P. W., & Wegner, M. S. (2004). A new look at organizational transformation using systems theory: An application to federal contractors. *Journal of Business and Management*, 9(4), 407-423.
- Love, P. (2003). Advising and Consultation. In S. R. Komives, D. B. Woodard, Jr., & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (4th ed., pp. 507-524). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lowenstein, M. (2005). If advising is teaching, what do advisors teach? *NACADA Journal*, 25(2), 65-73.
- McGrath, J. E., & Tschan, F. (2004). Dynamics in groups and teams. In M. S. Poole & A. H. Van de Ven (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational change and innovation* (pp. 50-72). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Middleton, J. (2002). *Organizational behavior*. Oxford, UK: Capstone Publishing.
- National Academic Advising Association. (n. d.). *NACADA's mission*. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/AboutNACADA/NACADAinfo.htm>
- National Academic Advising Association. (2000). NACADA 2000 Member Survey Preliminary Results. Retrieved from [http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Research\\_Related/Survey/prelimresults.htm](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/Research_Related/Survey/prelimresults.htm)
- Northouse, P. G. (2004). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.



- Nowlin, M. C. (2011). Theories of the policy process: State of the research and emerging trends. *Policy Studies Journal*, 39(S1), 41-60.
- Nutt, C. L. (2003). Academic advising and student retention and persistence. *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources*. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/advisingIssues/retention.htm>
- Okunoye, A., Frolick, M., & Crable, E. (2008). Stakeholder influence and ERP implementation in higher education. *Journal of Information Technology Case and Application Research*, 10(3), 9-37.
- Pisapia, J. R. (2009). *The strategic leader: New tactics for a globalizing world*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Poole, M. S. (2004). Central issues in the study of change and innovation. In M. S. Poole & A. H. Van de Ven (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational change and innovation* (pp. 3-31). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rawlins, W. K., & Rawlins, S. P. (2005). Academic advising as friendship. *NACADA Journal*, 25(2), 10-19.
- Sabatier, P. A. (2007). *Theories of the policy process*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Sammut-Bonnici, T., & Wensley, R. (2002). Darwinism, probability, and complexity: market-based organizational transformation and change explained through the theories of evolution. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 4(3), 291-315.
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Schein, E. H. (2009). *Helping: How to offer, give, and receive help*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Schulenberg, J. K., & Lindhorst, M. J. (2008). Advising is advising: Toward defining the practice and scholarship of academic advising. *NACADA Journal*, 28(1), 43-53.
- Self, C. (2008). Advising delivery: Professional advisors, counselors, and other staff. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, & T. J. Grites and Associates (Eds.), *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed., pp. 267-278). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Senge, P. M. (2001). The learning organization. In W. E. Natenmeyer & J. T. McMahon (Eds.), *Classics of organizational behavior* (3rd ed., pp. 468-472). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Sims, R. R. (2002). *Managing organizational behavior*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.
- Smith, C. L., & Allen, J. M. (2006). Essential functions of academic advising: What students want and get. *NACADA Journal*, 26(1), 56-66.
- St. John, E. P., & Parsons, M. D. (2004). *Public funding of higher education: Changing contexts and new rationales*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tierney, W. G. (1992). Cultural leadership and the search for community. *Liberal Education*, 78(5), 16-22.
- Tierney, W. G. (2008). *The impact of culture on organizational decision making: Theory and practice in higher education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

- Timmerman, N., & Metcalfe, A. S. (2009). From policy to pedagogy: The implications of sustainability policy for sustainability pedagogy in higher education. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 39(1), 45-60.
- Travis, S. (2009, October, 11). Long line to get college advice – Budget cuts resulting in shortage of advisers. *Sun Sentinel*, pp. 1B.
- Weible, C., Sabatier, P. A., & McQueen, K. (2009). Themes and variations: Taking stock of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. *The Policy Studies Journal*, 37(1), 121-140.
- Weimer, D. L., & Vining, A. R. (2005). *Policy analysis: Concepts and practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Zaleznik, A. (1998). Managers and leaders: Are they different? In *Harvard business review on leadership*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Zellermayer, M., & Margolin, I. (2005). Teacher educators' professional learning described through the lens of complexity theory. *Teachers College Record*, 107(6), 1275-1304.