Faculty Advisor Perspectives of Academic Advising

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A considerable body of research connects students' college experiences to their interactions with a faculty member. Quality academic advising is key to student success and the faculty advisor is a valuable piece of the advisor-student interaction. To ensure student success through academic advising, it is important for institutions to understand how they can best support faculty in their advisor roles. This qualitative study explored the experiences of eleven faculty members at a mid-sized, Midwestern public institution in their role of academic advisor. The findings suggest faculty consider their greatest advising responsibilities are to ensure students fulfill graduation requirements, explain graduate school and career exploration, teach students to navigate systems, and empower students. However, faculty advisors experience challenges navigating software, view academic advising as an isolated process, receive unclear expectations, and observe workload inequity. An awareness of these difficulties should impact how higher education administrators support faculty advisors and how they demonstrate their appreciation for the advising work faculty do.

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In documenting the history of academic advising in U.S. higher education, Cook (2009) outlined that until the 1950s, faculty members were still the primary academic advisor for college students. According to the 2011 NACADA National Survey, approximately 18.4% of U.S. institutions rely on full-time faculty to advise students and approximately 59.7% use a combination of full-time faculty and professional advisors (Carlstrom & Miller, 2013). The body of research on academic advising illustrates that faculty-student interactions and academic advising are important to a college student's success; this extends beyond academics to include social satisfaction and overall satisfaction with a college experience (Astin, 1999; Kim & Sax, 2009; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Battacharya, 2010; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005); Williamson, Goosen & Gonzalez, 2014).

Quality faculty advising is important to student success because faculty advisors help students understand and navigate the institution, make connections between academics and future goals, and feel connected to the institution (Drake, 2013). In addition, the potential for student connection through academic advising holds significant implications for retention and persistence of college students within departments and the institution (Astin, 1999; Hossler, Ziskin, Moore III, & Wakhungu, 2008; Khalil & Williamson, 2014; Roberts & Styron, 2010; Siegel 2011). A large body of research exploring academic advising analyzes student satisfaction (Alexitch, 2002; Anderson, Motto, & Bourdeaux, 2014; Lynch, 2004; Teasley & Buchanan, 2013). Because quality academic advising is a key to student success and faculty advisors are still responsible for a significant portion of advising work, it becomes a student problem when faculty are not given clear expectations of advising, trained in their role of academic advisor, or recognized appropriately for their work in advising (Drake, 2013).

The importance of academic advising is often communicated through institutional or departmental missions, division of faculty duties, and recognition for excellence in advising (Kerr, 2000). Faculty are typically evaluated in their work through their research, service, and teaching. Advising is often considered a part of service activities: "While providing services to students should not be denigrated… the success of academic advising rests with acknowledging that it is as much a part of an institution's educational mission as is disciplinary instruction" (White, 2015, p. 272). When faculty advising is embedded as part of learning and teaching within an institution, "[it] can be measured to include more aspects than satisfaction, such as advising content, process, and outcomes that align with institutional missions, values, and goals" (He & Hutson, 2017, p. 67).

In higher education, the perception continues that faculty are uninterested in facilitating academic advising (Habley, 2004). This qualitative study explores the experiences of eleven faculty members at a mid-sized, Midwestern public institution in their academic advising roles. The purpose of this study is to explore responsibilities faculty

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advisors at a teaching-focused institution assume, challenges faculty experience in advising, and how faculty perceive the advising support they receive from their department and institution. This information will help administration better understand faculty attitudes about advising and the institutional support faculty need in the role of advisor. The current study provides administrative leadership with insight into how faculty members perceive an institution's support for academic advising. This insight may prompt more effective advising support to improve student advising and promote student success.

Literature Review

Drake (2013) drew significant connections between academic advising and teaching, viewing academic advising as "an educational activity with student learning at its core" (p.18). Effective academic advising goes beyond course enrollment and "enables the academic advisor to take a holistic view of each student to maximize that student's educational experiences in an effort to foster his or her current academic, personal, and career goals toward future success" (Grites, 2013, p. 45). This view of academic advising suggests that faculty that serve as primary advisors are positioned to affect a student's learning and educational experience. Further, because quality student-faculty interactions are key in predicting student success, literature suggests interactions with faculty advisors may integrate students academically and socially into an institution and increase retention (Astin, 1999; Bean & Eaton, 2001). The scholarly research about academic advising explores faculty-student interaction, the effects and benefits of academic advising, and perceived responsibility and motivation of faculty to advise students.

Faculty-Student Interaction

Astin (1999), in his developmental theory of student involvement, found "frequent interaction with faculty is more strongly related to satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement or, indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic" (p. 525). Further research found interactions with faculty also benefit students socially because, through this interaction, students feel a greater connection to the college and sense of belonging (Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010; O'Keeffe, 2013). Frequent and substantial interactions with faculty members is a significant part of student learning and development, and some have associated it with positive academic outcomes (Komarraju, et al., 2010; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). Cotton & Wilson (2016) have specifically associated positive academic outcomes to faculty-student interactions that are academic in nature.

Faculty and students both perceive barriers to significant and frequent faculty-student interaction. (Cotton & Wilson, 2006; Vianden & Smith, 2011). Cotton and Wilson (2006) found that time, being uncertain of faculty interest in meeting, insecurity, and having little awareness of what faculty do beyond teaching were barriers for students. In addition, often students may not know what topics an academic advisor can explore with them outside of specific homework and course needs (Cotten & Wilson, 2006). There is also a power differential between student and faculty member that may make students uncomfortable with approaching a faculty member. Vianden and Smith (2011) found that faculty can struggle to establish boundaries between being a friend and professor when interacting with students outside of class—faculty often feared interactions that are not academic in nature and take place in "unstructured environments" (p. 35). Faculty also worried they will not fit into the student culture or students will not take interest in their work outside the classroom (Vianden & Smith, 2011).

The Benefits of Academic Advising

Like faculty interactions, academic advising is an influential tool in student retention in higher education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, Roberts & Styron, 2010; Tuttle, 2000; Umbach & Wawrzynski 2005), as it integrates a student academically and socially into an institution. In addition to academic advising's effect on retention, research has shown that academic advising has positive effects on a student's academic integration and success in college (Bean & Eaton, 2001; Drake, 2013). Academic benefits continue to increase for students once they declare a major and begin working with a faculty advisor in their program of study. Interactions with an academic advisor also facilitate institutional communication: through advising meetings students gain information about the institution, get a sense of the institutional culture, better understand

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policies, and learn how to navigate campus (Baker & Griffin, 2010; Smith & Allen, 2006).

Academic advising additionally benefits students because it helps to establish meaning and context in their education. According to Lowenstein (2013), treating academic advising as a learning process benefitted students as they explored various career opportunities and areas of study: "Learning in the advising setting gives coherence and meaning to students' educations" (p. 246). As educators, advisors connect academic content to a student's interests and future goals while helping students achieve their learning goals. Advisors ultimately guide students in deeper, critical thinking (Hemwall & Trachte, 2005).

Perceived Responsibility and Motivation of Faculty to Advise Students

Allen and Smith (2008) explored which aspects of advising faculty view as their responsibility. They found that faculty valued providing accurate information about academic requirements, connecting a student's major to career goals, referring students to academic resources, and aligning courses with academic interests and goals (Allen & Smith, 2008). However, faculty did not see connecting general education requirements to career goals or referring students to non-academic campus resources as a part of their role as a faculty advisor (Allen & Smith, 2008).

Faculty might be motivated to advise students effectively if they view advising as a method of teaching and learning. Hemwall and Trachte (2005) argued that a learning paradigm in academic advising would give it a more prominent role in higher education learning: "Academic advising should facilitate student learning about the mission of the college, lower and higher-order thinking skills, and the means of achieving the goals imbedded in the institution's mission statement" (p.76). Further, academic advising should have helped students make meaning of their whole curriculum, giving perspective to their whole education experience (Lowenstein, 2005). Lowenstein (2013) asserted that "advising is a locus of learning; it is not a service that directs students to the place where they can learn" (p. 245).

Advising's consideration in tenure and promotion also motivated faculty (Dillon & Fisher, 2000). Lowenstein (2013) said, "just as institutions consider the credits a worthwhile trade-off for students in meeting degree requirements, they value the advisors' work in [reflective learning] and treat it as in-load teaching rather than a discretionary extra" (p. 250). Institutions should adopt policies that recognize advising as a significant responsibility for professors, establish the importance of advising to the institution, and reward the faculty advisors for engaging in this important reflective learning work.

Methods

A social constructivist epistemology grounded this study, focusing on how faculty participants experienced the phenomenon of academic advising at their institution. Individual's social and cultural environment impact how they make meaning, specifically how "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 20).

Phenomenology was appropriate for this study because it relies on descriptive explanations of experiences. Phenomenology "describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 57-58). This study explored various experiences in order to understand how faculty advisors' views and experiences with advising in addition to how their experiences may affect their practice and student success. This study considered student success as a student integrating to the institution, understanding institutional information and culture, understanding policies, and navigating campus successfully (Bean & Eaton, 2001; Baker & Griffin, 2010; Drake, 2013; Smith & Allen, 2006).

This study was conducted at a mid-sized, teaching-focused, Master's-comprehensive, public institution in the Midwestern United States. Students with a declared major are assigned a faculty advisor within their major. Some academic programs and departments have primary-role advisors or graduate students as part-time advisors. Institutional policy does not require students to meet with an academic advisor—each academic department decides whether to require academic advising meetings. Additionally, faculty members that advise students are not required to take academic advising training.

Sampling

This section provides information regarding this study's participants (see Table 1). This study

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Table 1. Interview Participant Advising Demographics

Interview	Pseudonym	Position	Years Advising Experience	Average # of Advisees/term	Informally Advise/Mentor (not listed as advisees)	Years at Current Institution
1	Morgan	Associate Professor	12	60	70 to 80	6
2	Laura	Assistant Professor	2	10	10+	3
3	Nicole	Associate Professor	12	3	20	7
4	Denise	Associate Professor	10	12 to 14	12 to 14+	8
5	Robin	Assistant Professor	4	5	n/a	5
6	Vicky	Professor	13	20 to 30	n/a	14
7	Ben	Assistant Professor	15	12	n/a	15
8	Kim	Assistant Professor	5	9	19 to 24	6
9	Daniel	Associate Professor	8.5	6 to 8	n/a	9.5
10	Kevin	Assistant Professor	5	17	17+	3
11	Heather	Assistant Professor	2	18	18+	3

used snowball sampling—i.e., where key informants recruit participants (Patton, 2002). This sampling method allowed the researcher to find participants who were required to advise students and were engaged in conversations about academic advising within their departments. The research began with four recommended participants to inform the current study. Two key informants, who were also subjects in the study, assisted in recruiting another seven participants. Eleven participants ultimately contributed. This was a sufficient sample size based on the information power of the sample as determined by the strong quality of dialogue and the analysis strategy (Malterud, et al., 2016). The analysis strategy uses "in-depth analysis of narratives or discourse details" (Malterud, et al., 2016, p.1756) with fewer participants engaged in in-depth interviews. Throughout the interviews, the researcher and participants maintained "strong and clear communication" (Malterud, et al., 2016, p.1755).

In this study, faculty are defined as tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track instructors. Participation was not limited by full-time or part-time instructor status. The researcher e-mailed the chair of a humanities department to gain approval to conduct the interviews and then began recruiting participants. A participant recruitment email was sent to recommended faculty members at the university. The represented departments do not have an appointed full-time professional academic advisor; students rely on faculty advisors for guidance.

Data Collection and Analysis

Byrne (2004) saw qualitative interviewing as an effective research method for "assessing individuals' attitudes and values—things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire" (p. 209). In addition, as phenomenology is the foundation for this current study, participants were asked broad, open-ended questions that would "lead to a textural description and a structural description of the experiences, and ultimately provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants" (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 61). Individual interviews were conducted with eleven faculty participants. The interviews gathered descriptive accounts of their advising experiences. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The interviews were semi-structured, utilizing a sequence of questions developed prior to interviewing. As interesting topics arose during the interviews, the researcher addressed them (Leech, 2002). Advisors were asked about recent experiences in advising. Example interview questions included: "Think about a recent experience you had in advising a student–what are challenges you had to confront in this experience?" and "What methods of support do you think are effective in helping faculty advisors be successful in their role of advisor?" These questions aimed to understand how faculty advisors experience academic advising, what faculty advisors view as their responsibility in advising students, and how faculty feel supported by their institution or department in their advisor role.

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Data analysis occurred in two phases. The researcher first used descriptive coding to summarize significant and common experiences throughout the individual participant interviews, referred to as coding for patterns (Saldaña, 2013). This was done using a summarizing phrase or keyword. Second, initial codes were reanalyzed to find connections between ideas (Saldaña, 2013). This process categorized and grouped codes to find similarities and differences in the experiences of faculty advisors. The research coded for the challenges and responsibilities faculty perceive in advising. Themes emerged within these broader topic areas. Coding and categorizing allows for a deep analysis of data that is "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked to consolidate meaning and explanation" (Grbich, 2012, p. 21).

To ensure reliability throughout the current study, the researcher utilized multiple-coding. Multiple-coding occurs when two or more researchers code or analyze the same data and compare their findings (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). This ensures that themes and experiences from interviews were not misinterpreted or mistakenly transcribed.

Findings

The findings identify what advising activities faculty advisors recognize as their responsibility, as well as the challenges faculty face in advising students. Interviews yielded four major themes that articulate the responsibilities faculty advisors recognize in their advising practice and four major themes articulating challenges of faculty advising.

Faculty Advisor Recognized Responsibilities

The study found that all participants recognized course enrollment, program requirements advising, and ensuring that students are on track to graduation—what this study will refer to as the "nuts and bolts" of advising—as faculty advisors' main responsibilities. Ten out of eleven participants identified their responsibilities as advising for the future, advising students about career and graduate school plans, helping students navigate institutional systems, and empowering students to think critically about their educational and career goals.

The Nuts and Bolts of Advising. The first theme emerged from the faculty's perceptions of primary responsibilities of an advisor. Participants addressed the "nuts and bolts" of advising by describing the importance of facilitating general education, major, and minor studies along with ensuring students are on track to graduation. These responsibilities were commonly cited by participants as the first concerns when advising a student. Nicole said, "The first thing I always look for in advising is: 'are you on track to graduation?' . . . then we can talk about bigger picture issues." Advising for completion of curriculum requirements was often viewed as just the tip of what it means to be a good academic advisor.

Advising for the Future. Eight of eleven participants directly addressed future career plans and exploring graduate school options as a frequent practice and responsibility**.** Many participants cited these interactions as the "most significant conversations" they have with students. Morgan described her view of advising as follows: "Advising for me is talking to students about how things are going in school, talking to students about where they would like to be in the future, and how they might structure experiences to achieve their goals."

When advising for the future, many participants were adamant about the importance of being an honest resource to students. Laura recounted her approach in exploring career opportunities with students:

> I'll typically ask them, "So why are you interested in that career? Where did your interest start? What do you hope to get? What is your kind of end goal here with that? Do you feel prepared for that? If not, what can prepare you for that? Are you aware of the job market for this? Does that persuade you in any way? And what are your interests in a larger sense?" And let's talk about some other, possibly more viable, areas that you can go explore to fulfill those interests.

This type of goal-oriented advising often fostered a mentor relationship between a student and their faculty advisor. Morgan explained her view of this: "I see advising as advice for students from the beginning of their career. And if I sign on as their advisor, I tell them I will always be their advisor."

Helping Students Navigate Systems. The third theme identified in the interviews was helping students navigate systems. Ben defined advising as "negotiation between the individual needs of the student and . . . the expectations of the institution and future institutions and organizations they

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might work at or go to school." Morgan also discussed this responsibility in advising: "The best way that you can help people is help them to navigate a system, but not navigate it in telling them what to do, but helping them learn how to do that so they can do it for themselves."

In discussing how Denise's method of advising has evolved over time, she said, "Just navigating the university is a pretty complicated endeavor, so I think that I have become more aware, more patient, and just smarter about where to send students." As individuals who have spent a large part of their education and careers learning how to navigate academia as a system, faculty often felt it is their responsibility to be a resource to students about where to go for help on campus. Kim reported:

> My advising really comes from a desire to help students better understand . . . the systems of our institution, and the systems of academia more broadly. . . One of the most gratifying things is being someone who can hear what they're going through and know confidently what resources to point them towards and feel like I made a difference.

Empowering Students. The fourth theme emerged when participants discussed important conversations they have had when advising students**.** Morgan described her approach to advising as: "My goal is always to have a conversation with [students] and help them ask the questions they need to ask to come to the answers that they want to come to." This idea of empowering students to make their own decisions for their goals was a common challenge for advisors but was also considered an important part of the role. Denise commented, "I'm not looking to baby students. I want to mentor them . . . I think it's really important to empower students to be proactive, to have some agency in the advising process."

When discussing one of the most important conversations between advisor and student, Robin reflected on "encouraging [the student] to go by initiative rather than having other people work things out for her." Ben recounted empowering students to take ownership of their education and described the deeper questions he prompts students to think about:

> I've had a lot of conversations with students that have sort of followed that progression where students ask some very small thing, like, "Does this count for that?" And . . . the question that I'm asking them to think about is, "Why would this count at all, for anything? In what ways might it count for you, personally?"

Challenges of Faculty Advising

During the interview process, participants discussed the challenges they face in advising and how they perceive institutional support. Participants frequently mentioned: navigating technology involved with electronic student reports, advising as a task often done in isolation, unclear expectations of faculty advisors, and workload inequity. Ten of the eleven faculty advisors interviewed reported a lack of support in advising initiatives and challenges at the institutional and departmental level.

Technology. Faculty advisors commonly named technology as a challenge. Denise said, "Operating [the system] is . . . a literacy issue in and of itself." In addition, Vicky thought it would be helpful to experience what the students view on their side of the software: "Students are often asking questions that are related to their process of going through registration and I have no idea what that's like." Laura indicated:

> One of the things I kind of had to figure out on my own was just how our advising system works . . . Just navigating how it looks to see what a student has or needs to take has been just kind of trial and error on my own.

Daniel suggested that consistent training and follow-up training on the software would help: "There should be some annual training for advisors. They might bring in specific examples that relate to potential problems . . . and what to do." Vicky suggested online videos detailing how to use the advising software would also be welcome.

Advising as an Isolated Initiative. Several participants discussed the importance of working with other faculty members and having colleagues informally mentor or help with advising questions. Laura said, "In terms of support, I've had mentoring from one particular colleague and that has been my primary source of just learning about

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this and it's been invaluable . . . However, I don't know that that's the case for everyone." In fact, for many advising has felt like an isolated experience. Denise reported, "I don't think my department provides much support. I think that . . . there's a cohort of people who are interested in advising and we support each other . . . there are pockets of knowledge, but I don't think that that knowledge is widely disseminated."

Ben also pointed to advising as challenging or under-supported because advising is often done in silos or small pockets of people. He suggested a form of support for advising is to centralize knowledge and information: "At this institution there are a lot of people who feel like . . . there's so much to do already. There's too much to do, and we often work alone even though, if we did it together, we could do it better."

Unclear Expectations. Many participants felt their institution or departments had vague expectations and requirements for advising and reported receiving very little support in the form of guidelines on how to conduct advising meetings. Laura expanded on this thought when discussing various types of advising, such as academic, career or future advising, and personal advising: "It doesn't say on my job description to act as a counselor for students, even though they come to us often for that work."

Kevin, in comparing two campuses at which he advised, thought unclear expectations of advising is a product of the culture of academic advising at the institution. Kevin said that one of the institutions made an effort to "instill a philosophy of advisement that was really whole student advisement—that we had to help them evolve as adults." However, "that's very different from here. Here it's just, 'this is what you need to do to graduate.' I never even really have seen a policy that says we are required to meet with students each semester" (Kevin). Laura also commented, "If they never contact you and you never contact them, it's hypothetical that they could just go through their career without ever talking [to an advisor]."

Workload (In)Equity. Participants commonly discussed how departments and the institution could better support faculty advisors. Morgan said, "I think people care differently about advising in different ways and, if you don't care about advising, I don't think you should have to do it." Denise stated, "I know there are some people . . . who have like one or two advisees who then they never meet with and those of us who are good at it continue to have more and more people piled on us." Denise noted that this can affect how faculty members feel about advising: "There's a danger in being too good at your job."

A common suggestion for making advising workloads equitable was to think about how to redistribute the workload responsibilities under the category where advising falls: service. Robin wondered, "Are there ways where people who tend to enjoy advising can have more advisees and more of an advising load, where those who are focused on other areas can focus more on those things and have more service, more committee work maybe?" Building on this idea of redistribution of responsibilities to fit individual strengths and values, Morgan argued:

> Help [other faculty] find parts of their job that work for them . . . And let me keep doing the advising part I love to do . . . I actually don't think it's unfair. I took it on myself. I like it. So, I think for the institution to recognize that as a viable form of service is really important.

Discussion

This study explores how faculty experience academic advising at a teaching-focused institution. By exploring how faculty perceive advising, this study uncovered challenges often experienced by faculty advisors and used these experiences to pose suggestions for how institutional leadership can better support faculty in their academic advising practices, promoting greater student success.

Faculty Perception: Making the Largest Difference through Advising

The findings suggest that faculty consider their most important responsibilities in academic advising to be ensuring students fulfill graduation requirements, facilitating graduate school and career exploration, teaching students how to navigate systems, and empowering students toward autonomy. These findings extend Allen and Smith's (2008) work on faculty advisors' perceived responsibilities—i.e. all participants indicated helping students fulfill academic requirements as a primary responsibility.

In addition, over three-fourths of faculty participants considered future advising—defined as helping students connect their academic

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experiences to career or graduate school goals—as an important responsibility. However, the current study's findings also challenge Allen and Smith's (2008) research by showing the majority of faculty participants identified other functions as important, including: helping students navigate the institution and other societal systems beyond campus departments that directly relate to academics, such as student life, financial aid, and counseling. This study's findings also expand upon Wiseman and Messitt's (2010) work on the nature of advising meetings, which found establishing goals and allowing students to make choices as common characteristics of advising sessions. Over three-fourths of participants considered future advising and empowering students as primary responsibilities of faculty advisors. In addition, these findings support Grites' (2013) view that academic advisors must consider developing the whole person when advising, showing that the majority of participants did incorporate holistic or developmental advising into their academic advising approach.

This study's findings support the use of an organized learning paradigm in academic advising, which situates advising as a place for teaching and learning (Hemwall & Trachte, 2005). The majority of faculty participants pointed to advising as an outside-the-classroom teaching process. Through advising, they help students make connections between academic learning and their larger career and personal goals along with helping students in navigating college systems and empowering students to make meaning of their education. Teaching and learning should be an empowering process and, for the faculty participants, the responsibility of advising is often about empowering students to become autonomous individuals that are able to find the help they need, ask their own questions, and make their own decisions about their educational and future goals.

Challenges Faced by Faculty Advisors

This study's findings suggest that faculty advisors most frequently experience challenges related to navigating advising software, deciphering administrative expectations for academic advising, experiencing academic advising as an isolated process, and addressing workload inequity. Many of the participants in the study likened advising experiences to similar experiences they face when teaching students. One challenge derived from the comparison between academic advising and teaching is that advising a student is an isolated task. A faculty member is on their own while advising a student much like when they teach and work with a class on their own. However, academic advising, like teaching, could better support students if faculty worked together by sharing information about advising approaches or information about students to prepare for advising meetings.

This study's findings build on Dillon and Fischer's (2000) work, which found that faculty were motivated to advise students when academic advising was considered in the promotion and tenure process. Unclear expectations for academic advising are challenging for faculty, leading faculty advisors to feel their department or institution undervalues the work they do. Many participants were unsure of how their academic advising responsibilities were weighted and tracked in comparison to their other work, and whether academic advising is considered a teaching or service responsibility. In addition, academic departments often assume that advising is occurring, whether or not that is actually the case. Regardless of academic advising consideration in promotion and tenure, if the academic department is unclear about how advising should be administered or how it is measured, then academic advising is not perceived as an espoused value.

In addition, Dillon and Fischer (2000) found advising workload inequity might detract from successful academic advising. The current study extended this research, showing workload inequity was also a challenge for the majority of faculty advisor participants. It is important to note that the majority of faculty participants were not concerned with the number of students they advised or the amount of time they were spending with students. However, faculty participants were concerned that the institution does not recognize advising as a valuable part of their work. The current study's findings expand on Dillon and Fisher (2000), showing that faculty that see academic advising as an important part of being a faculty member and in aiding student success would increase their number of advisees if that meant a redistribution of their service requirements. A barrier to good academic advising is not necessarily advising workload, but a misunderstanding of how to support faculty who advise well and want to continue that work.

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Implications and Recommendations for Supporting Faculty Advisors

This study has implications for faculty members who advise students, academic advising administrators, academic department administrators, and academic deans. The primary suggestions derived from the research most often contained departmental or institutional policy implications.

The current study revealed that ten of eleven participants (90%) perceived little to no support from their institution or academic department regarding advising responsibilities. The participants also suggested how they would feel best supported in academic advising. A solution to increase collaboration in advising is to create a central place on a departmental website for advising materials that faculty could reference, including frequently asked questions, topics often addressed in advising meetings, and preparation and planning documents to share with students.

To better support faculty in academic advising, academic departments must clarify expectations for faculty advisors. Explaining how advising is considered in relationship to promotion and tenure would value advising work. It may also be beneficial to standardize advising caseloads, the number of correspondences with advisees per academic year, and/or the time to spend in advising meetings. By doing so, departments can measure advising like other service responsibilities. Implementing faculty guidelines for questions and conversation starters during academic advising meetings may also help make meetings more meaningful by helping students to explore topics they had not yet considered. These standards would help new advisors understand academic advising culture within the department. New advisors would also benefit from a standard academic advising training process in which they work with a department colleague mentor and shadow advising meetings before having assigned advisees.

In addition, service responsibilities should be made equitable across an academic department. This would not necessarily mean fewer advisees for faculty advisors, but those who enjoy advising students should be allowed to increase their advising workload and substitute academic advising for another service responsibility. Conversely, faculty members who do not enjoy advising should be allowed to reduce their advising workload and replace it with other duties. This is a viable solution as relevant literature suggests faculty members' service responsibilities include activities that relate to institutional, professional, and public service (Paulson, 2002). This by-law change would shift the culture of academic advising in academic departments along with altering how the institution views equitable distribution of faculty work. This change would aid student success because faculty who do not wish to spend time advising would be able to do other service work that is more meaningful to them and employs their strengths.

Finally, with a shift to a more equitable distribution of faculty service work where faculty members engage in advising if they enjoy it and the increased advising work substitutes for another type of service, it would be appropriate for departments to require annual advising professional development for faculty advisors. This professional development could be centered around different topics each year, ranging from updates to changes within the electronic enrollment system to exploring new or popular approaches in academic advising. To engage more faculty and ensure professional development is completed annually as part of a faculty member's service, it could be administered through online modules or a learning support office on campus that visits departments.

Limitations and Further Research

The current study had two definite limitations. First, the sample included faculty advisor participants from two humanities departments at one mid-sized, Midwestern, public teaching-focused institution. Suggesting that faculty across various types of higher education institutions perceive academic advising support in this way would overstate the findings. Replicating this qualitative study at a variety of institution types may reveal different perceptions of responsibilities and challenges for faculty advisors.

The study is further limited in that the sample primarily consists of faculty members already engaged in conversations about advising within their academic departments. The sample includes faculty advisors who voluntarily participated in the study and care about changing the culture of academic advising. Including faculty who are not concerned with furthering academic advising initiatives may have provided varied perceptions of what is or should be the responsibilities of faculty advisors. Indifferent participants may have

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provided varied perceptions of systematic support for those advising responsibilities.

Conclusion

This study revealed how faculty members experience academic advising. It also suggests important ways that institutions and academic departments may better support faculty in academic advising responsibilities. This study challenges institutions to consider how they value academic advising done by faculty. It calls for a culture shift within academic departments by creating conversations about advising, defining advising work, creating clear expectations, redistributing service workloads, and providing support to faculty in academic advising.

This study should motivate those concerned with academic advising and student success to continue studying how faculty experience advising to better understand how institutional and departmental support can improve and increase student success in higher education.

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