ADVISING THE ADVISOR: MEASURING ADVISOR CONFIDENCE IN WORKING WITH FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS AND THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

With the demographics of the United States changing at a rapid rate, a greater percentage of the population identifies as first-generation college students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Much of the literature available around first generation college students focuses on deficits in this population, noting lower retention and graduate rates compared to their non-first generation peers. The literature notes not having exposure to pre-existing knowledge around the college experience, given they are the first in their families to pursue postsecondary education, is a strong contributor to these poor outcomes (Cataldi et al, 2018; Collier & Morgan, 2008; O'Shea, 2016; Stephens et al, 2012). Next steps, however, require university administrators to view this population from a lens of opportunity and strengths to focus on how institutions can empower this group (Macia, 2013). In spite of the challenges faced, first generation college students have persevered and are seeking additional opportunities for educational advancement, requiring administrators to rewrite the deficit narrative in the literature and focus on how to empower first generation college students to persist and ultimately graduate.

With more first generation college students seeking postsecondary education than ever before, universities need to adapt to the changing needs of the students enrolling in their programs and seek ways to build social capital in these students, which has been proven to promote self-efficacy, goal setting, and academic success, and ultimately higher retention rates (Fosnacht et al., 2017; Lotkowski et al., 2004; Tinto, 2007; Vander Schee, 2007; Young-Jones at al., 2013). Given the literature points to a strong connection between students building relationships with academic advisors and higher rates of

retention and graduation, universities should focus on the professional development opportunities provided to advisors (Bettinger & Baker, 2014; Fosnacht et al, 2017; Mau & Fosnacht, 2019; Molina & Abelman, 2000; Swecker et al, 2013).

This research focuses on a survey of 108 academic advisors across the mid-Atlantic region, including two-year and four-year institutions, both public and private as well those only granting bachelor degrees all the way up to those doctoral granting institutions. The 35 question survey was broken into three parts. Part one focused on utilizing the Mentoring Competency Survey, developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to understand the development of key competencies related to mentorship, including maintain effective communication, aligning expectations, assessing understanding, fostering independence, addressing diversity, and promoting professional development (Fleming et al., 2013; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018). Part two focused on demographic questions taken from the 2011 NACADA National Survey These questions focused specifically on the advisor's size of the home institution, understanding the advisor's role (department-level, school-level or university-level), highest degree attained, and types of professional development available to the advisor (National Academic Advising Association Clearinghouse, 2017). The third section asked for general confidence ratings in working with first generation college students versus non-first generation college students and years of service.

The survey results noted a general lack of professional development being provided to this population related to the needs of first-generation college students. Most reported minimal to no professional development opportunities in this area and those that did report noted limitation to the events, such as being one day workshops. Of those that

reported more professional development opportunities around first generation college student, significant positive correlations for higher levels of confidence in working with this group were associated with having regularly scheduled meetings and out of office staff retreats that focused on first generation college student issues. Respondents also noted that having a series of workshops about general topics also boosted their confidence in working with first generation college students, which highlights the importance of complementing a professional development portfolio with information based on key content related to specific groups as well as generalized professional development that speaks best practices in the profession.

Data from this survey promotes key ideas for future next steps, such as hiring and retention practices for academic advisors, setting professional development standards, utilizing competencies for professional growth and career advancement, and creating buy-in with students. Example and implementation ideas are also included for next-step planning.

DEDICATION

“Mom?”

“That’s what my friends call me.”

“Your friends call you that?”

To my daughters and friends, Alexandra and Corinne. Being your mom is the greatest privilege of my life.

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To my parents, for instilling in me a love of learning, and finally, to my husband and consummate supporter, Nick. It's over!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is no secret that attaining a college degree has numerous benefits. For example, college graduates enjoy higher employment rates and base salaries, as opposed to their counterparts who have not attended college (Kena et al, 2015; United States Department of Education, 2018). According to the United States Department of Education, college graduates are less likely to be unemployed, and in terms of earnings, it is estimated that college graduates will outpace high school graduates by earning approximately one million dollars more over the course of their lifetime. Additionally, as of 2020, a college degree or postsecondary training will serve as a pre-requisite for many job openings in the future (United States Department of Education, 2015). With the demand for college graduates increasing in the workforce, universities must seek ways to contribute to greater completion rates for those students who are the first in their families to attempt a college degree.

The literature notes that universities continue to fail first generation college students. Graduation and retention rates of first generation college students (FGCS) continually fall below their peers (Choy, 2001; Young-Jones et al, 2013; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Tinto, 2007). Choy (2001) notes that FGCS are twice as likely to drop out of college during their first year as their NFGC peers. Although this study dates back almost 20 years, the Center for First Generation Student Success indicates that universities have not effectively addressed these differences to date. The Center for First Generation Student Success notes the six year bachelor graduation rate for non-first generation college student (NFGCS) is 49%, compared to 20% for FGCS. While some

students do persist to earn a certificate or associate's degree, 56% leave college with no credential (Center for First Generation Student Success, 2020a).

Research indicates the complexity of the higher education environment hinders FGCS whereas non-first-generation college students (NFGCS) can rely on the knowledge of parents who have already navigated the system to their own benefit. These differences play a significant role in keeping retention and graduate rates of FGCS lower as opposed to their NFGCS peers (Cataldi et al, 2018; Collier & Morgan, 2008; O'Shea, 2016; Stephens et al, 2012). Research also indicates, however, that universities could bridge this gap by setting their sights on developing social capital in FGCS. As defined by Bourdieu (1986), social capital focuses on building a person's network to help them navigate such a complex environment. The value of that network can lead to developing strong social capital, with the support needed to navigate a task or a challenge given by the network. Building such social capital can be effectively done at the postsecondary level by utilizing an academic advisor to help mentor and support a student throughout their college experience.

As many studies have shown, academic advisement is positively linked to higher retention rates, greater levels of self-confidence and goal setting, and decreases in academic probation status amongst students (Fosnacht et al, 2017; Lotkowski et al, 2004; Schwebel at al., 2012; Tinto 2007; Vander Schee, 2007; Young-Jones at el, 2013;). Academic advisement, and working with advisors themselves, illustrates the power that comes along with building one's social capital, and the impact that power can have on the retention and graduation rates of FGCS.

Statement of the Problem

Although the benefits of higher education are well-documented, barriers to achieving a degree are plentiful, especially for students whose parents have not pursued postsecondary education. A report released by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 2018 highlights an alarming trend indicating a consistent decline in graduation rates between 1992 and 2008, from 31% down to 20%, for students categorized as first generation. The report highlights limited access to pre-existing knowledge as key factors in keeping FGCS from attaining a college degree (Cataldi et al, 2018; Collier & Morgan, 2008; O'Shea, 2016; Stephens et al, 2012). Although the number of FGCS attending domestic universities continues to rise, retention rates and ultimately graduation rates for these students are well below NFGCS. The literature points to a number of issues FGCS face that universities have yet to navigate successfully, chief among them is the student's ability to build social capital, which will increase a student's comfort with and knowledge of a highly complex world which most of these students are navigating on their own. For NFGCS, the benefit of their parent's college experience is influential in helping them navigate the complex environment of higher education. For FGCS, universities need to focus on who can provide these students with social capital; commonly, academic advisors can serve as key institutional agents in building one's social capital (Museus & Neville, 2012; Palmer & Gassman, 2008; Glaessgen et al, 2018).

Knowing that social capital can provide enormous benefits that contribute to increased retention rates for FGCS, it is then important to understand how universities can support advisors in serving in this capacity. To better understand how to support

academic advisors, Habley's advising framework identifies three key principles in academic advising: informational, conceptual and relational (Habley, 1994; NACADA, 2017). The literature to date has focused significantly on two of the three academic advising principles related to informational knowledge and basic advising concepts and theories. Training on the third advising principle, relational, is challenging and best practices in the literature are scant but this core advising principle embodies the purpose behind building social capital, including a network of support people (Hughey, 2011; Coll & Draves, 2009; Hale et al., 2009). As noted in Hughey (2011) and supported by other researchers, relational or interpersonal skills build a coalition between the student and the advisor. This coalition is perceived positively by students and is more likely to result in a student indicating a high level of satisfaction with the advising relationship, and utilizing the relationship more often than for just basic administrative functions such as picking courses (Coll & Draves, 2009; Hale et al, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is two-fold. First, the survey focuses on key competencies that are related to building interpersonal relationships based on the Mentoring Competency Assessment developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Fleming, 2013; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018). Advisors self-reflected on their abilities in each of the six competency areas that are being measured to better understand their self-perceived confidence in building relationships with FGCS and NFGCS. To understand potential correlations between the self-assessments and overall confidence ratings in working with FGCS and NFGCS, the second part of the study seeks to focus on types of training opportunities available to academic advisors around working

with FGCS and NFGCS. Additional professional identity questions were asked to understand any potential correlations with relational skills or overall confidence. The two pieces of this research work in tandem to provide an overview of the professional development landscape as well the role these trainings and other demographic information (years of service, educational attainment etc) may play in the attainment of key competencies associated with building relational skills within advisors to promote the idea of advisors as developers of social capital in FGCS.

When looking at both parts of this research, there is an opportunity for understanding how to build confidence in advisors as contributors to the social capital of FGCS. This requires, however, an assessment of types of trainings available as well as self-reflection on behalf of the advisors with an ultimate goal of aligning trainings and competencies according to best practices in the field, which includes development in three areas of advising: informational, conceptual and relational. The literature suggests, however, that little attention is being paid to the relational component of advising (Higginson, 2000; Hughey, 2011). The literature review links the building of social capital, through relational advising, to higher retention rates for first generation college students (Coll & Draves, 2009; Hale etc al., 2009; Knox et al., 2006; Mansson & Myers, 2013; Schlosser et al., 2003; Schlosser & Gelso, 2001; Snyder-Duch, 2018). This relationship requires that the field shift its focus on how to build relational skills in advisors and developing best practices for academic advisors.

This study adds to the conversation on understanding relational skills in advisors and illustrating potential correlations between professional identities (broken down by years of service and educational attainment) as well as training formats that are most

effective at building confidence working with FGCS. Understanding where advisors feel they need additional support and training can help both professional organizations and universities begin to build out training programs to focus on the idea of advisors as developers of social capital. This approach benefits the growing population of FGCS and promote success in retention and graduation outcomes.

Research Questions

Recognizing the significant impact academic advising has on students, advisors are uniquely positioned to help students develop social capital. This study seeks to understand the role academic advisors play in working with FGCS to build social capital with a focus on providing a self-reflective tool to measure their interpersonal skills as well as an understanding of the professional development landscape that is currently available to support this goal. Specific research questions include:

1. Among the six competency areas, which were identified as the areas advisors felt the least skilled? Most skilled?
2. What is the relationship between the six competencies measured in the Mentoring Competency Assessment survey and perceived confidence in working with first generation college students?
3. Is there a relationship between any of the six competency areas and key demographic questions including size of institution, years of service, type of degree-granting institution, public or private status, educational attainment or training opportunities?

Significance of the Study

As enrollment numbers for FGCS increase, universities need to re-think the support systems available to students who do not have pre-existing knowledge of the higher education system. FGCS have significantly lower graduation rate then NCGCS college students, but research focusing on academic advising indicates that it has the ability to contribute to a student's social capital and ultimately have a positive impact on a student's retention rates. To be able to sustain the needs of the workforce in the immediate future, it is important to study how support systems currently in place, especially academic advisors, can contribute to reversing these negative trends. Graduating more FGCS will play an important role in filling these workforce shortages and this study seeks to understand the role of advisor professional development can play in combating these trends.

Definition of Key Terms

First generation college student (FGCS) – a term used to describe a student who comes from a family where neither parent obtained a college degree

Retention – refers to a student not only enrolling in a university but progressing through a degree-granting program from year to year

NACADA – an acronym that stands for the National Academic Advising Association. Founded in 1979, NACADA is a professional advising organization that seeks to educate academic advisors from all types of higher education institutions on the foundations of academic advising and best practices in the field

Social Capital – The development of a social network that can provide someone who a support system for growth and development. Social capital is typically dictated by one's societal status, and the more social contacts and "credits" the person builds up, the more social capital they have achieved.

Advising – the practice of providing information and support to a student, typically related to coursework, degree requirements, professional support and other academic processes.

Conceptual Advising – part one of Habley's advising framework that focuses on advising through the lens of advising theory, history and best practices

Informational Advising – part two of Habley's advising framework that focuses on the importance of the exchange of information in an advising relationship, such as knowledge of institutional policies, program requirements, FERPA laws, and other legal requirements

Relational Advising – part three of Habley's advising framework that focuses on the delivery of academic advising by utilizing best practices for developing rapport with an advisee.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

With the demand for postsecondary education on the rise, university campuses are seeing a rise in students who identify as FGCS. Universities have to reassess their support services by evaluating current literature on how to support students that do not arrive on campus with previous knowledge on how to navigate what is a quite complex environment. Studies have shown that the building of social capital, which requires creating and utilizing a support network, can positively affect a student's retention rates in postsecondary education, and that academic advisors can serve as an important resource in building that bridge (Knox et al., 2006; Mansson & Myers, 2013; Schlosser et al., 2003; Schlosser & Gelso, 2001; Snyder-Duch, 2018). To help students build their social capital, however, universities need to refocus on training opportunities for advisors, especially related to relational advising and its role in creating positive interactions with students (McClellan, 2007; Higginson, 2000).

This literature review begins by focusing on enrollment demands in higher education, a lack of uniformity in defining first generation college students, and covering the strengths and opportunities for supporting FGCS populations. From there the literature review introduces the topic of social capital and connect the concept of social capital to higher education by examining the field of advising from its historical context through to the documented benefits of advising. A deeper dive into the concept of advising and the three components associated with it, covering informational, conceptual and relational advising, feeds into a look at current trends in advisor trainings and areas

of improvement that can impact an advisor's own knowledge of how to build social capital in FGCS students.

Changing Demographics of College Students

As the demographics of the nation continue to shift, those changes are becoming more apparent in the composition of the students on college campuses. To start, the sheer number of students seeking a college education has increased. Between 2005 and 2015, the total number of students on college campuses across the country increased from 17.5 to 20 million (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, roughly a third of students enrolled in postsecondary education identify as FGCS (Cataldi et al, 2018).

Defining First Generation College Students

Although collectively referred to as first generation college students (FGCS), the definition of FGCS is disputed among the literature. Common definitions include neither parent has earned a degree; no member of the immediate family has earned an associate's degree or higher; neither parent has ever attended college, among others. Such variety in definitions represents only a portion of the definitions that exist, which contributes to difficulty in creating continuity among the research currently available that focuses on FGCS (Choy, 2001; Ward et al, 2012; Peralta & Klonowski, 2017). The Center for First Generation Student Success even references an article on their website that used eight different definitions to define FGCS and in a sample of 7,300 participants, the number of students who fall into the available categories ranged from 22% or over 70% (Center for First Generation Student Success, 2020a; Sharpe, 2017). Additionally, Peralta & Klonowski (2017) completed a comprehensive review of 24 higher education articles

across multiple journals that discussed FGCS. Their findings indicated that half of the articles never defined the term, and thus the context of their findings is unknown. Of the remaining 12 articles, 9 offered various definitions of the term, creating further confusion (Peralta & Klonowski, 2017).

As noted by Choy (2001) and supported by Ward (2012), any exposure to college creates some level of knowledge and both researchers subscribe to the notion that first generation defines the group of students whose parents have never attended postsecondary education. This is the definition that guides this research moving forward.

Contributors to Negative Outcomes for FGCS

Focusing on FGCS as those whose parents never attended postsecondary school, students falling into this category typically encounter common hurtles including limited academic preparation, low standardized test scores, and less competitive grade point averages which results in limitations in their preparedness for college from a psychological perspective (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Giancola et al., 2008; Horn & Nunez, 2000; Hossler et al., 1999; O'Shea, 2016; Stephens et al., 2012). With less preparation and academic limitations, first generation students face an uphill battle from day one.

Additionally, FGCS have the added pressure of navigating the college environment without being able to rely on parental experiences, which can impact their grades and ability to adjust to college life and expectations. These gaps in understanding how to successfully navigate the higher education environment also results in lower rates of retention and successful completion of a degree (O'Shea, 2016; Simmons, 2011; Stephens, 2012; Ward et al., 2012). Literature also indicates that bridging that gap

between limited college preparedness and college graduation requires that students seek mentors or support persons who have extensive knowledge of college life, such as an academic advisor. Unfortunately, FGCS are less likely to feel comfortable in seeking out advisors, faculty instructors or even, at times, their non-first generation college peers. Researchers have noted that FGCS are less likely to ask questions or seek support from faculty instructors, more likely to be confused or not understand the expectations of course assignments, less likely to be involved in extracurricular activities, and often do not engage in activities that would promote their engagement such as joining a campus club or studying with peers (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Jenkins et al., 2009; Soria & Stebleton, 2012).

With a significant gap in degree completion between FGCS and NFGCS, most colleges have to rethink the support structure given to FGCS. Given the role of academic advisor already exists at most institutions, such a person could and should help bridge the disconnect between retention and ultimately, completion rates, for FGCS by providing them with much needed support and social capital to navigate the higher education environment.

Opportunities to Rethink the Literature on FGCS

For all of the literature that exists around FGCS, and those references noted above are a perfect example, the perspective taken is one that focuses on deficits of FGCS. While the data on lower retention and graduation rates is vital, there is an opportunity to reframe this conversation into one that focuses on opportunities to capitalize on the strengths of FGCS and harnessing those strengths, and the goals of higher education to educate them effectively, to turn these negative statistics into a positive statistic moving

forward. Macias (2013) writes passionately about this topic of reframing our language around FGCS into a more opportunity-based approach to educating these students:

> …a perpetual focus on deficits and gaps has caused us to expect deficiency. It is the norm, so much so that words like 'poor' or 'uneducated' come to mind before 'family-oriented' and 'determined' when we think of these students. Understood this way, it is logical to conclude that a deficit-oriented mind-set with respect to first-generation students will yield deficit-oriented solutions." (p.18)

Macias (2013) makes the case that solutions for turning around these outcomes are typically based on this deficit-perspective, boiling down limited academic preparation to increasing tutor services as a counter-measure without taking a more holistic approach to this topic. Macias champions Quinn's (1996) ideas of empowerment by focusing on meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. In terms of FGCS, Macias (2013) recommends focusing on the achievements that led FGCS to earn their place in these institutions and capitalize on their sense of perseverance. Additionally, research has shown that FGCS that do persist have no measurable difference in terms of written, critical thinking or comprehension skills compared to their NFGCS peers once they enter the labor market, which illustrates not only their perseverance but a dedication to professional growth and skill development (Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007).

Additional strengths include an important value-based perspective in viewing their pursuit of a degree, which is typically based on seeing firsthand the difficult circumstances their parents have labored under and wanting a different life for themselves (Dennis et al, 2005). This value placed on obtaining a bachelor's degree is also linked to intrinsic motivation, which is known to promote positive academic achievement (Trevino & DeFreitas, 2014). By reframing the conversation on FGCS and also acknowledging the roles universities play in the lack of progress these student

groups have seen in their degree attainment, the path forward is full of possibilities. This research specifically utilizes the concept of social capital as an opportunity to empower FGCS to utilize their perseverance to meet these challenges head on and with the support of university advising staff.

Understanding Social Capital

Citing of the concept of capital is often attributed to Bourdieu (1986). By definition, capital is the accumulation of both tangible and intangible items and information and is typically broken down into categories, including economic, cultural and social capital. For the purpose of this literature review and subsequent study, social capital is relevant for the study of understanding how to build a professional network.

Social capital focuses on the person's personal network. According to Bourdieu (1986), an individual's social capital is positively or negatively impacted by those that are a part of one's social network and the value of that network leads to a person developing strong social capital. The development of social capital requires time and an investment on both sides of the aisle, from the person building the social network to the individual people that make up the network, but also requires a focus on two key concepts: trustworthiness and obligation. Building on Bourdieu's definitions, Coleman (1988) focuses on the importance of trust as seen in the obligatory nature of social capital, where individuals provide a service to one another to build trust through obligation. Coleman (1988) does note that these relationships are not always even and do not have to be given those that have built up a number of "credits" in their social network establish themselves as being more powerful.

As noted above, social capital focuses on the concept of networking and building up a support system that can help someone achieve a goal. For those students coming from a background where they are not the first to attend college, family members who have already achieved a college degree can provide key information on past experiences. For FGCS, building social capital by increasing their network of college graduates becomes essential to their success. Museus and Neville (2012) highlight the importance of social capital as a way for universities to connect with students. They link institutional agents, regardless of race, as prime contributors to one's college experience. Social capital also provides students with an academic identity. As noted in Jensen and Jetten (2015), academic identity reflects a student's sense of belonging; the more the student feels a sense of belonging with the university or even in general with an academic community, the more likely they are to persist and have greater levels of academic attainment.

Social capital also affords students the opportunity to build out networking and professional development skills that will be useful beyond their time at a university. Building an academic identity, in addition to a professional identity, helps create a greater sense of self-awareness in students, putting them in-touch with their core values and beliefs and increasing a sense of responsibility that will serve them well into the future (Bruss & Kopala, 1993; Jensen & Jetten, 2015; Murphy et al., 2009).

Social capital can serve as an important bridge for FGCS to develop not only knowledge about higher education, but ultimately knowledge about themselves and their professional development that will lead to success on multiple levels. Researchers have noted, however, there may be social inequalities connected to attaining social capital. For

example, common findings among researchers indicate that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are not as connected to other students and contribute to feelings of seclusion and loneliness, which can impact academic achievement and success. This may result in a student's unwillingness to seek out additional support, from academic advisors or faculty, for example, and negatively impact their academic and/or professional identities (Jensen & Jetten, 2015; Jetten at al., 2007; Lawrence, 2001).

Connecting Social Capital and Higher Education

When looking at the concept of social capital and applying it to the higher education environment, social capital relies heavily on the creation of a social network that has the ability to help the student evolve and grow. FGCS need regular access to individuals that have previously navigated the higher education environment or their given career path to build their social capital (Knox et al., 2006; Mansson & Myers, 2013; Schlosser et al., 2003; Schlosser & Gelso, 2001; Snyder-Duch, 2018). Without this network in place, the student will then need to begin to create such a network, which can be done through utilizing advisors and the wealth of knowledge they have about the university and the student's career interests.

Social capital can be built, and built successfully, when students seek institutional agents for help and support to navigate their new environment. One such person who can help provide this support is an advisor. Similar to the goals behind social capital of building up an academic and professional identity, advisors are instrumental in compiling information on a student regarding all facets of his or her life, including academic, personal and future professional goals to help prepare them to reach those goals (Snyder-Duch, 2018). The literature indicates that students who took advantage of these

relationships reported not only building on general knowledge but focused on career planning, received networking support and introduction to other important support systems, and discussed professional identity and development (Knox et al., 2006; Mansson & Myers, 2013; Schlosser et al., 2003; Schlosser & Gelso, 2001; Snyder-Duch, 2018).

History of Advising

Advising has been at the root of higher education since its inception. Reaching back as far as 1636, Cook (2009) indicates that the concept of advising was embraced by the President of Harvard, who saw his role as a combination of academic, extracurricular and moral development. In time, however, that role was then divided out to the College's faculty.

It was not until 1841 when a more formal role for advising was created at Kenyon College in Ohio, with faculty members receiving individual students to mentor (Cook, 2009). Over time, however, increases in enrollment led to other advances in the advising system and following World War I there was a more significant shift in the higher education system as advising in a holistic sense was broken out into categories:

> As the breadth and complexity of curricula increased, the need for specialization and extended counseling became more critical. Specialization of advising became evident and was divided into at least three types: personal (psychological) from the mental hygiene movement; vocational (career) from the vocational guidance model, and academic advising (educational counseling). (Cook, 2009, p. 20)

At this time the inclusion of non-faculty advisors was born under the guise of "student personnel work" in the 1930s to cover many aspects of student mentorship, including academic work. Such positions would continue to flourish as soldiers returned home from

World War II in the late 1940s and enrolled in higher education utilizing the GI bill, which included the requirements of unique services to veterans that spanned psychological, vocational and academic needs (Cook, 2009; Gordon, 2004).

With the deluge of veterans enrolling in postsecondary education came studies on persistence and dropout rates, with key conclusions pointing to the lack of academic planning as a major issue for students, coupled with the "growing indifference of faculty towards advising" creating a need for more student personnel workers to be employed (Cook, 2009, p. 22).

In the late 1970s, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was established as the higher education world began to see more value in a centralized advisement system. The world of academic advising had morphed significantly from "…a routine, isolated, single-purpose, faculty activity to a comprehensive process of academic, career, and personal development performed by personnel from most elements of the campus community" (Cook, 2009, p. 23).

Conceptualizing Academic Advising

In 2017 the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) created its Academic Advising Core Competencies, based around Habley's conceptual framework of academic advising that focuses on three key areas of focus: Conceptual, Information and Relational (Habley, 1994; NACADA, 2017; McClellan, 2007).

The Conceptual Component focuses on providing a context for key academic advising theories and information, offering a clear understanding of the function of academic advising and the development of a common philosophy. According to the core breakdown of competencies for the conceptual component by NACADA, sample

competencies to measure this component include: 1) history and role of academic advising in higher education; 2) theory relevant to academic advising; 3) academic advising approaches and strategies; 4) expected outcomes of academic advising; and 5) how equitable and inclusive environments are created and maintained (Habley, 1994; Higginson, 2000; McClellan, 2007; NACADA, 2017).

The second component, known as the Informational Component, focuses on knowledge an advisor needs to be successful such a policies, procedures and resources. This allows an advisor to take a theory and apply it to a situation by providing concrete support, which Higginson (2000) divides into four categories "the internal environment, the external environment, student needs, and advisor self-knowledge" (p. 303). Examples of core competencies NACADA indicates for this component include: Institution specific history, mission, vision, values, and culture; curriculum, degree programs, and other academic requirements, and institution specific policies, procedures, rules and regulations (McClellan, 2007; NACADA, 2017).

The final component of Habley's framework is the Relational or Interpersonal Component. This component focuses on taking knowledge of academic advising theories and approaches, coupled with understanding of laws, institutional values and procedures, and effectively delivering that information to advisees in a way that builds a relationship with the advisee (Habley, 1994; Higginson, 2000). Broken down even further, this component attends to such topics as, "…building rapport, communication and listening, effective problem solving, advising vs. counseling, and interviewing" to name a few (NACADA, 2017). Habley's model provides the core competencies for NACADA because it has long been cited by researchers and practitioners and serves as an excellent

introduction to the field of advising and the many intricacies (Higginson, 2000; McClellan, 2007; Swecker et al, 2013; Young-Jones et al., 2013).

Effects of Academic Advising

Academic advising has been positively associated with increased retention and graduation rates, and the literature is full of examples of the value-added academic advising brings (Bettinger & Baker, 2014; Mau & Fosnacht, 2019; Molina & Abelman, 2000; Fosnacht et al, 2017; Swecker et al., 2013). For example, in the 1970s Glennen formulated what was known as intrusive advising as he sought to create an intervention tool that was part advising, part counseling, delivered prior to a student recognizing that they may need assistance from an advisor (Varney, 2013). Glennen required students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to meet with a faculty advisor for academic support (Varney, 2013). The results were incredibly promising with a 39% drop in attrition rates over a two-year period and an overall positive increase in student performance in the classroom, which resulted in less students being put on academic probation and net increases in course enrollments (Schwebel et al., 2012). Additional support for the findings in this study were replicated by Glennen at other schools and by other researchers to illustrate that intrusive advising increased academic performance, which had the additional benefits of increasing course enrollments due to the limited numbers of students who were on academic probation (Fosnacht et al., 2017; Schwebel at el., 2012; Vander Schee, 2007). Ultimately, the name of this advising model evolved to attempt to eliminate the punitive aspects and focus on the proactive communication model.

Other researchers have also directly connected meeting with an academic advisor with increased retention rates. Swecker et al. (2013) studied the impact of the number of

advising meetings on student retention and the results indicated a strong, positive correlation between the two, “The data suggest that for every meeting with an advisor the odds that student is retained increases by 13%” (p. 49). Additionally, researchers have connected academic advisement with creating an environment that affords students a clear and supportive path to completion, encourages self-confidence and goal setting, all of which point to the value of academic advising for students (Fosnacht et al., 2017; Lotkowski et al., 2004; Tinto 2007; Vander Schee, 2007; Young-Jones at al., 2013). For example, Young-Jones et al (2013), polled 611 undergraduate students to understand the influence interaction with an advisor had on multiple areas, such as student accountability, self-efficacy, study skills and their perception of support received at the university. The researchers looked at general contact from the advisor (phone calls, meeting requests emails, reminders), the frequency of meetings and the length of meetings, and found that meeting with an advisor was an important contributing factor to a student’s sense of responsibility, development of study skills, feelings of self-efficacy and feelings of perceived support by the institution. These findings directly complement Lotkowski et al (2004), who notes the powerful influence non-academic factors have on student retention. In her study, Lotkowski finds that some of the most important non-academic factors that influence a student’s retention are academic self-confidence, academic goals, and institutional commitment, which Young-Jones (2013).

Training Academic Advisors

After reviewing and understanding the barriers to success for the students and the impact academic advising can have on students, the next step for practitioners is how to train academic advisors on key competencies in academic advising and how to implement

them into their work. Academic advising literature, however, is lacking on best practices for training and professionally developing academic advisors using all three components of Habley's framework (Higginson, 2000; McClellan, 2007).

In 2000, NACADA created and distributed a survey to better understand the landscape of academic advising, but the questions highlighted what resources NACADA members had access to, rather than their ability to use and implement these trainings. Additionally, the organization itself indicates the results should not be generalizable to the larger higher education world, which is especially true when considering that it is logical that advisors paying to be a part of NACADA have access to resources through the organization itself (NACADA, 2017).

Given that academic advisors enter the profession with a variety of educational backgrounds and varied experience levels, comprehensive trainings are vital to fulfilling all three aspects of Habley's framework. Most training websites or programs, however, focus on the first two components of Habley's framework, the Conceptual and Informational aspects of the advising process, only. Purdue University, for example, has a website for advisors that includes links to resources, documents, policies, procedures, advising hierarchy at the university and even a database of important acronyms, covering many aspects of the first two parts of the framework. No information, however, could be located on ideas covered by the relational component such as building rapport, communication skills, or role playing. Nor does any of the information covered relate directly to working with FGCS, which could leave an advisor without any information needed to navigate the needs of this group (Purdue University, 2019).

The University of Alaska, Fairbanks, subscribes to a decentralized advising model and notes their training website provides extensive information on the policies, procedures and laws, as well as theoretical information on advising models, covering both the conceptual and informational aspects of the advising framework. There are two videos on the site labeled "Academic Advising Good Bad" showing a 'good' and 'bad' student interaction which can relate to the relational framework. The 'good' video, however, focuses on the missed laws and policies and not the interaction or environment of the first 'bad' advising video (University of Alaska, Fairbanks, n.d).

Training programs such as those available on the respective websites for Purdue University and University of Alaska, Fairbanks align with national findings on the failings of advisor training programs. The American College Testing's national surveys have highlighted the focus of trainings on information, specifically, relating directly back to the first two elements of the advising model: Informational and Conceptual (Habley & Morales, 1998; Higginson, 2000). As noted in Higginson (2000), little focus continues to be given to the concepts of building relationships, for example, an indicator that the Relational component of the framework continues to be overlooked. As Habley argues, all three components rely on each other and the failure to cover one has direct impacts on all three, "…without understanding (conceptual elements), there is no context for the delivery of services. Without information, there is no substance to advising. And without interpersonal skills (relational), the quality of the advisee/advisor interaction is left to chance" (Habley, 1995, p.76).

There are, however, some noteworthy models for public institutions that are focused around Habley's framework, including Conceptual, Informational and Relational

Components. For example, the NACADA website highlights Missouri State University and its Master Advisor Training Program. Based on the program's website, development for the program began in 1994, with the first class recruited two years late following a redesign of the university's core, a robust campaign by senior leadership to create buy-in and an institutional grant to create and fund the program. The program is a combination of workshops, with a few workshops offered each year, covering key topics such as developmental and prescriptive advising, advising as teaching, ethics in advising; using university-based systems; academic policies and protocols, and practicing and improving advising skills through discussions of case studies and the NACADA faculty advisor training video (Missouri State University, 2020).

The literature, however, does not identify public institutions with a focus on bachelor degrees, private institutions, or community colleges with similar training programs. While it is possible that this information is available internally, the lack of public data creates some concerns that either these trainings are not available or are not comprehensive enough to be showcased.

Summary

As illustrated in this literature review, the country's demographics are shifting in to include more students identifying as FGCS. Universities are faced with the task of assessing the barriers to success many FGCS experience, chief among them the limitations that come with being the first in your family to navigate the expectations of postsecondary education. While NFGCS have gained knowledge about postsecondary education through parental experiences that is attributed to their increased persistence, FGCS may not have the same unfettered access to information about pursuing a

postsecondary education (Cataldi et al, 2018; Collier & Morgan, 2008; O'Shea, 2016; Stephens et al, 2012). The literature suggests that building social capital, or a network of people who have the necessary background and information to support the student, can help FGCS persist and contribute positively towards a student's desire to obtain a college degree. Social capital builds a student's academic and professional identity and advising has been shown to incorporate key elements necessary to build these identities, such as academic and career planning. Advising also provides the necessary relationship-building as advisors can help put students in touch with more relevant stakeholders, both professional and academic, to build out a student's network, thus increasing their social capital (Bruss & Kopala, 1993; Jensen & Jetten, 2015; Murphy et al., 2009).

Research has shown that the effectiveness of advising, however, is influenced by an advisor's interpersonal or relational skills (Hester, 2008; Hughey, 2011; Lotkowski, 2004; Nadler & Simerly, 2006). Research on how to develop interpersonal skills is scant, however, and shows that many training programs focus on Informational or Conceptual advising techniques with little attention paid to interpersonal needs (Habley & Morales, 1998; Higginson, 2000). Given the importance of developing advisors according to the three key areas of Habley's academic advising framework, including Conceptual, Informational and Relational, evidence suggests that universities may be advantaged by re-evaluating their current training opportunities to ensure that opportunities exist for growth and development in all areas. It is possible for researchers to promote this goal by working with advisors to identify keys areas of underdevelopment related to relational and interpersonal growth, which can, in turn, afford universities with the knowledge needed to develop additional training opportunities for their staff. This focus on

appropriate professional development will serve FGCS as well as contribute towards making advisors more confident in doing their jobs, which promises to have a positive impact on all student populations.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

Utilizing best practices in the field, social capital can be built through focusing on the building of relationships with students. One of the three pillars of Habley's advising framework, Relational advising, highlights the importance of interpersonal skills as a way to increase retention rates (Hester, 2008; Hughey, 2011; Jensen & Jetten, 2015; Lotkowski, 2004; Murphy et al., 2009; Nadler & Simerly, 2006). Refocusing efforts on understanding and developing relational skills would thus lead to more positive outcomes for FGCS.

The purpose of the study was to allow advisors the opportunity to self-reflect on key competencies that are associated with building relational skills using the Mentoring Competency Assessment developed by the University of Wisconsin (Fleming et al., 2013; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018). This self-reflection will ultimately help advisors better understand areas of growth and development, which will further their abilities to build relationships with their advisees and contribute to the building of social capital among those students. The survey then seeks to correlate those responses with key demographic information related to their professional identities and training formats currently available to advisors to identify ways universities can develop and build on relational skills in advisors. Understanding where advisors feel they need additional support and training can help both professional organizations and universities begin to build out training programs to address relational skills in their advisors, which will benefit the growing population of FGCS.

This study provides a collective prospective on the types of training formats available at a variety of institutions, with feedback on which types of trainings are the most impactful on building confidence in working with FGCS. With an eye towards understanding what is currently working and not, future professional development can target key types of training formats to build out impact professional development opportunities.

Research Questions

This study sought to provide insight into self-reflected skills related to relational skills with the additional opportunity to evaluate any potential correlations between the responses and professional development currently available. Specific research questions included:

1. Among the six competency areas, which were identified as the areas advisors felt the least skilled? Most skilled?
2. What is the relationship between the six competencies measured in the Mentoring Competency Assessment survey and perceived comfort in working with first generation college students?
3. Is there a relationship between any of the six competency areas and key demographic questions including size of institution, years of service, type of degree-granting institution, public or private status, educational attainment or training opportunities?

This chapter will discuss the instrument used to survey the participants, the Mentoring Competency Assessment (MCA), and explore its creation by a team at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and applicability to this research. I will also provide information on

how I went about identifying potential participants, my communication strategy and a general overview of the data collection process. Additional information on basic data analysis process will also be provided.

Instrumentation

To aid in my research, I used the Mentoring Competency Assessment (MCA) scale, which was originally created by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to allow participants in a mentor training program the opportunity to self-assess based on the key areas of the training (Fleming et al., 2013; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018). The survey was administered for the first time in 2010 to 283 participants who were participating as a mentor or mentee in a curricular program focused on mentoring those actively engaged in various research projects (Fleming et al., 2013; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018). Although the context of the mentoring relationship for the original survey focused on research support in an academic setting, a review of the instrument illustrated its validity in any academic setting based on its focus on six key competencies that align with interpersonal aspects of the academic advising model that all contribute to building social capital: maintaining effective communication, aligning expectations, assessing understanding, addressing diversity, fostering independence, and promoting professional development (Fleming et al., 2013; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018).

The MCA survey instrument was created after an extensive literature review and assessment of other widely available instruments intended to measure interpersonal skills via a mentoring assessment. The six competency areas were derived from continual

discussion and member-checking techniques from those who participated in a research mentoring and training initiative (Fleming et al., 2013).

As noted in Fleming et al. (2013), reliability and validity testing support the instrument's effectiveness:

> To assess the reliability (internal consistency) of the instrument used by mentors and the instrument used by mentees, we calculated the coefficient alpha for each group. To measure the construct validity of the instruments, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis. In this analysis, we used maximum likelihood (ML) estimation to assess how well the 26 items measured the six domains (i.e., the six latent constructs). ML is desirable for its asymptotic properties and conduciveness to hypothesis testing, given its assumption that all eigenvalues are greater than zero…. This strategy enabled us to assess the validity of the factor structure for the MCA. (p.1004)

In addition to the confirmatory factor analysis and maximum likelihood estimation, additional tests were run to assess model fit, all indicating an appropriate goodness of fit as Fleming et al. (2013) explain:

> We used Mplus18 to calculate the final standardized model results… The four goodness-of-fit statistics that we used in the analysis: chi-square, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). We primarily relied on the RMSEA of < 0.08 as recommended by Browne and Cudeck22 to assess model fit. In addition, because chi-square is sensitive to sample size we used the relative chi-square test (chi-square divided by degrees of freedom [df]), with < 5 indicating an acceptable goodness of fit. (p. 1004)

Given the extent of the previous psychometric analysis competed on the survey, no further testing was completed for the use of the MCA survey instrument.

Final Survey Composition

The entire survey instrument was 35 questions in length, divided into three sections. Section one consisted of all 26 questions from the MCA survey. Section two

was comprised of six demographic questions, as previously used in the 2011 NACADA National Survey, and section three consisted of three specific questions created by myself to more fully understand potential relationships between years of experience and comfort levels with FGCS versus NFGCS. In addition to these three sections, an introductory, framing question was posed noting the varying definitions of FGCS asking advisors to define the term, with options including only one parent earned a bachelor's degree, either or both parents enrolled in post-secondary education but did not complete a degree and neither parent ever enrolled in post-secondary education.

Section one of the survey focused exclusively on using the MCA survey instrument, though the directions will ask advisors to focus their answers specifically on their experiences in working with FGCS. The word "mentee" was universally substituted with "first generation college student advisee" to elicit responds that directly impact the focus on FGCS. Additional changes are seen in questions 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18 and 19 to better address the audience receiving the survey. For example, a revision of a general concept of "setting goals" to more specific language such as "setting academic goals", as in seen in question 10 or the change of talking about working with the student's "mentors" to working with the student's "professors". Table 3.1 notes the edited questions where the word "mentee" is replaced by FGCS and Table 3.2 accounts for some additional changes based on the audience.

Table 3.1: Survey Questions Edited to Replace "Mentee" with FGCS

Question 1	Active Listening
Question 2	Provide constructive feedback
Question 3	Establishing a relationship based on trust
Question 4	Identifying and accommodating different communication styles
Question 5	Employing strategies to improve communication with mentees
Question 8	Aligning your expectations with your mentees
Question 9	Considering how personal and professional differences may impact expectations
Question 15	Motivating your mentees
Question 16	Building mentees' confidence
Question 17	Stimulating your mentees creativity
Question 20	Tasking in account the biases and prejudices you bring to the mentor/mentee relationship
Question 21	Working effectively with mentees whose backgrounds is different from your own (age, race, gender, class, region, culture, religion, family etc)
Question 22	Heling your mentees network effectively
Question 23	Helping your mentees set career goals
Question 24	Helping mentees balance work with their personal life
Question 25	Understanding your impact as a role model
Question 26	Helping your mentees acquire resources (academic support, tutoring etc)

Table 3.2: Additional Survey Questions Edited to Fit Audience

Original Question	Revised Question
Question 6 Coordinating effectively with your mentees' other mentors	Question 6 Coordinating effectively with your FGCS advisee's professors
Question 7 Working with mentees to set clear expectations of mentoring relationship	Question 7 Working with FGCS mentees to set clear expectations of the advising relationship
Question 10 Working with mentees to set research goals	Question 10 Working with your FGCS advisee to set academic/career goals
Question 11 Helping mentees develop strategies to meet goals	Question 11 Helping FGCS advisees develop strategies to meet academic/career goals
Question 12 Accurately estimating your mentees' level of scientific knowledge	Question 12 Accurately estimating your FGCS advisee's knowledge of the higher education environment
Question 13 Accurately estimating your mentees' ability to conduct research	Question 13 Accurately estimating your advisee's ability to complete degree requirements
Question 14 Employing strategies to enhance mentees knowledge and abilities	Question 14 Employing strategies to enhance your FGCS advisee's knowledge of university resources and abilities to build relationships with university staff/faculty
Question 18 Acknowledging your mentees' professional contributions	Question 18 Acknowledging your FGCS advisee's academic successes
Question 19 Negotiating a path to professional independence with your mentees	Question 19 Negotiating a path to career success with your mentees

All questions include a Likert-scale response of 0-7, with 0 indicating "not at all skilled", 4 indicating "moderately skilled' and 7 noting "extremely skilled". Each question also

comes with the option to select “not applicable”. No further validity tests were run on this survey given that my changes to the questions above are based on context and do not degrade the meaning of the questions and still align with the six competencies identified and validated.

In addition to using the MCA, demographic questions and key questions about resources available for academic advisors, both internally from the advisor’s home institution and externally, were included in the final instrument. I used parts of the 2011 NACADA National Survey to collect this information. These questions focused specifically on the advisor’s size of the home institution, understanding the advisor’s role (department-level, school-level or university-level), highest degree attained, and types of professional development available to the advisor (National Academic Advising Association Clearinghouse, 2017). The professional development question was altered to ask specifically if an advisor has received trainings specifically related to interpersonal development or working with FGCS.

In addition to these questions, three questions will be created. The first created question asked about the years of service in advising the participant had, with options of 0-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-8 years, 9+ years or chose not to reply. The second and third questions I created asked the participant to rate their level of confidence in working with a NFGCS and to provide that same confidence rating for working with FGCS. The options on these answers included excellent, good, neutral, fair and poor.

Participants and Data Collection

This research polled 108 advisors from two-year and four-year private and public non-profit college and universities. Survey participants were identified via a google search of institutions in the mid-Atlantic region, which included Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, New York and Virginia, followed by a search of individual university websites for potential participants..

This research utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to capture the current environment of advising support and training, as well as to investigate any potential links between the six competencies, as self-assessed by the participants, and their perceived confidence in working with FGCS versus NFGCS.

The survey, which was housed in a Qualtrics account owned by me, remained open for four full weeks, starting May 26, 2020 through July 5, 2020. Participants who agreed to take part in the research were sent an anonymous survey link and were never asked to identify themselves or their home institutions. No participants received any compensation or reward for completion, though the final screen of the survey did acknowledge their participation and thank them for taking the time to provide feedback.

Survey distribution began on May 26, 2020 and continued through July 1, 2020. Potential participants were identified via an institutional search for key titles or descriptors under a staff member's public profile page, including 'advisor', 'mentor' as well as through the office where the employee was located, such as 'Academic Advising Center' or 'Center for Student Success and Retention'. Survey recruitment was targeted in the mid-Atlantic region, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, New York and Virginia, though one university in Massachusetts was also contacted based on a

collegial connection with one member of their staff. Given this research is being completed in support of a doctoral degree requirement at a large, urban university in the Mid-Atlantic region, the focus of recruitment in the surrounding area was purposeful in hopes that respondents would resonate with a familiar university name associated with this study. Although a specific region of the country was targeted, some respondents did ask about sharing the link with their colleagues and were given permission to do so, representing the possibility of results outside of the specified recruitment region.

To diversify study participants, contact lists were created that also focused on the size of institutions and type of institution to ensure some representation from as many types of institutions as possible. For example, local community colleges were targeted within a 75 mile radius of the sponsoring university to attempt to obtain data representing 2-year public institutions. Similar targets were also located to ensure some representing of various public and private institutions that specialized in bachelor, master and/or doctoral degrees.

Once a potential participant was identified, an email was sent to the email address on the university's website with an introduction to the researcher and the topic of interest. Initially, these emails included a direct link to the study as well, but within the first week it was clear this passive approach was not creating any buy-in with participants with a less than 10% completion rate. A revised strategy was then instituted where the outreach email was broken into two sections; the first section provided a short background on myself and the topic of interest and asked if the participant would be interested in taking part in this study. Participants where then directed to respond to the email if they wanted to take part, and it was noted that their participation was anonymous.

Upon instituting a change in the delivery of the request, the completion rate jumped to roughly 27%, with approximately 92 survey responses coming in as the result of 348 emails sent out to participants. Most participants that responded expressed enthusiasm for the research, with some self-identifying as FGCS or noting the importance of studying advisor training and social capital. It was also common for those who responded with interest to ask about when the results of the survey would be made available to them for further distribution.

Reporting on Competencies

For this survey, the decision was made to focus on the MCA to measure self-reported competency attainment with the trainings question serving as an opportunity to see if there was any correlation between the types of trainings and competency rankings. Other schools of thought may have focused on reposing the training question to ask advisors if trainings were specifically responsible for their development in a particular competency. My approach, however, was purposefully for multiple reasons. First, advisors were not given a timeframe to reference when noting trainings that have been available to them with the understanding that development is an ongoing process and not best reflected by time limitations on available opportunities. Advisors who responded could have been referring to trainings that happened yesterday or a year ago, making it virtually impossible that an advisor could pinpoint a specific training as developing a competency. This is in addition to the notion that development in any competency area could be a result of trainings but also other factors including years of experience and/or educational attainment. Second, the training categories were based on NACADA 2011 survey categories and are broad in nature, featuring categories such as one day workshops

or series of workshops. Advisors would need to focus on a specific workshop, if multiple were made available to the advisor, and individual lines available for each training for feedback on the competency covered or specific content. Such work, while important, emphasizes the opportunities for real-time assessment of trainings upon delivery and not as a larger scope of the landscape of training opportunities available to advisors, which is the purpose of this research.

Demographic Questions

Demographic questions covered in the survey were entirely focused around professional identities, including information about degree attainment, years of service in the field, type and size of university where the advisor was employed, and within what context of university operations the advisor was working. The survey did not ask about gender identity, race or ask an advisor to identity as a FGCS or NFGCS. With the focus of this survey being to correlate any aspects of an advisor's professional development and professional identity with confidence in working with FGCS, the above demographics were chosen.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to distributing this survey, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program, which provides researchers with training in ethical research practices. The training I completed was centered around human subjects research given the focus of my research and survey design.

After completion of the CITI program, I submitted multiple documents to Temple University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which included my application for human subjects research and a proposal around my research, appropriate background

information on myself and my dissertation chair, a sample of the recruitment email, and a human subjects consent form. Appendices A through C include approval of Human Subjects research, informed consent documentation, and recruitment email for study participants. All of these were approved by Temple's Institutional Review Board prior to the start of my data collection.

Data Analysis

For the first research question, "Among the six competency areas, which were identified as the areas advisors felt the least skilled? Most skilled? I analyzed the responses using a repeated measured analysis of variance.

To answer the second research question, "What is the relationship between the six competencies measured in the MCA survey and perceived confidence in working with first generation college students?" Since the data from each of the items are Likert responses (0 to 7), I performed a Pearson correlation. I took the aggregate of each of the six competencies and correlated to the responses to question 35 and 36, which asks the advisor to rate their confidence in working with FGCS and NFGCS. Results will indicate whether there is a positive relationship in responses to the six competencies and the advisor's self-confidence in building relationships with students from either group.

For the third research question, "Is there a relationship between any of the six competency areas and key demographic questions including size of institution, years of service, type of degree-granting institution, public or private status, educational attainment or training opportunities?" the analysis involved either correlations or ANOVA depending on the variable was measured.

Table 3.3: Connecting Research Questions, Data and Analysis

Research Question	Data Used	Analysis Procedures
Among the six competency areas, which were identified as the areas advisors felt the least skilled? Most skilled?	Section 1: MCA Competency Questions	Means for each competency followed by a paired samples t-test
What is the relationship between the six competencies measured in the MCA survey and perceived confidence in working with first generation college students?"	Section 1: MCA Competency Questions Section 3: FGCS Confidence Question	Pearson correlation between MCA competencies and confidence questions
"Is there a relationship between any of the six competency areas and key demographic questions including size of institution, years of service, type of degree-granting institution, public or private status, educational attainment or training opportunities?"	Section 1: MCA Competency Questions Section 2: Professional Demographic and Training Questions	Pearson correlation between MCA competencies and each professional demographic or training question

Summary

Survey participants were identified via a google search of institutions in the mid-Atlantic region and a search of individual university websites using keywords. Survey recruitment proved challenging early on, with an initial approach of sending the information and the survey link in a passive email resulting in an approximately 10% response rate. After a poor response rate early on, I refined my approach of breaking the introductory information into two emails, one that included a high-level overview and asking if the advisor was interested in participating, and the second email with more

information and a survey link only sent to those who responded to the original invitation noting interest.

Overall, one hundred and eight advisors across various institutions in the Mid-Atlantic region participated in this study during the summer of 2020. Utilizing the MCA, an assessment tool to measure interpersonal competencies created by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, along with a combination of demographics questions pulled from the 2011 NACADA membership survey and three specific questions geared at understanding any potential differences in working NFGCS versus FGCS, the researcher was able to gather data and identify trends among the participants, which is outlined in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

Between May 26, 2020 and July 5, 2020, 108 participants, representing multiple institutions across the Mid-Atlantic region of the country, participated in a study to self-reflect on their interpersonal skills related to working with FGCS. Additional areas of focus on the survey including questions regarding educational attainment, type of institution, size of institution, the level of the participant's role in the institution, years of experience and training opportunities available to understand if any of these factors also had an influence on perceived relational skills and overall confidence in working with FGCS.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Among the six competency areas, which were identified as the areas advisors felt the least skilled? Most skilled?

2. What is the relationship between the six competencies measured in the Mentoring Competency Assessment survey and perceived confidence in working with first generation college students?

3. Is there a relationship between any of the six competency areas and key demographic questions including size of institution, years of service, type of degree-granting institution, public or private status, educational attainment or training opportunities?

Overview of Descriptive Data

The survey instrument consisted of 35 items. To provide context for this study and the participants involved, it is important to understand the descriptive statistics around key identifying questions. Survey question 1 asked for the participant to define what "first generation college" means, selecting one of three possible choices, including "Only one parent has earned a bachelor's degree"; "either or both parents enrolled in post-secondary education but did not complete a bachelor's degree"; or "Neither parent ever enrolled in post-secondary education". Given that the literature points to many potential definitions for the term, acknowledging a baseline for a definition allows for a broader understanding of the results and their implications for future questions. Results for this question are as noted in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Definition of First Generation

Definition of First Generation	Survey Responses
Only one parent has earned a bachelor's degree	1
Either or both parents enrolled in post-secondary education but did not complete a bachelor's degree	27
Neither parent ever enrolled in post-secondary education	72
	N= 100

The majority of advisors indicate that their definition of FGCS aligns with the literature, noting that they define the term as indicating students whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education. Roughly a quarter of the participants noted a difference of

opinion and labeled FGCS as coming from families where one or both parents had once been enrolled but never obtained a bachelor's degree.

Additional questions that provide a descriptive depiction of the sample include highest degree attainment, type of institution where they are employed and years of service in university advising.

Table 4.2: Educational Attainment

Highest Degree Attainment	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's Degree	4	3.7
Master's Degree	84	77.8
Doctoral Degree	20	18.5
Total	108	100.0

The question regarding the highest level of education attained notes a significant majority of respondents hold a master's degree, and less than 4% noted their highest level of education as a bachelor's degree. These results align with the Council for the Advance of Standards in Higher Education National Academic Advising Association's standards for advising, which includes the requirement of a graduate or professional degree in addition to the emphasis on work experience in the field (Taylor, 2011). Taylor also notes the potential significance of requiring a master's degree of advising positions:

> Often a reflection of a respected advising program and strong institutional support, the expectation for a master's degree for new hires and advanced degrees among current advisors may enhance the perception of advisors among key decision makers and increase the prestige of the institution's professional advising presence. (Taylor, 2011)

Here, the master's degree serves two purposes: an inward signal to the university and its administrators about the qualifications of an advisor as well as an outward signal to parents and prospective students about the value the university places on these employees who will work directly with the students to help them achieve their goals.

To diversify the sample, a strong effort was made to recruit participants from both two-year and four-year institutions, identifying as both private and public. When looking at two-year and community colleges, I found it was more likely, however, to find advising center contact information, which was typically a general university mailbox address or instructions for how to request an appointment with an advisor through a log-in portal for students. At most universities and small colleges, however, pictures, contact information and at times a professional biography could be found for advisors, which supports Taylor's (2011) notion that schools would use higher degree requirements to illustrate the human capital it has invested in.

What is not represented in this data or via the Council for the Advance of Standards in Higher Education's recommendation for an advanced degree is a consensus on the content of that degree. For example, is the advanced degree in a particular content field where the advisor is working such as having a Master of Arts in History degree to work with history students or holding a graduate degree related to advising, higher education or a similar topic. While the format of this research did not allow for a deeper dive into this question, it should be noted that a university's advising structure may directly dictate how this recommendation is implemented.

Moving on to the next question, Table 4.3 illustrates the results of the survey item around the type of institution the advisor was currently employed by. While a large

majority of the participants represent public institutions awarding bachelors, masters and doctoral (44%), participants in the study did span every type of educational institution in the non-profit sector.

Table 4.3: Size of Institution

Type of Institution	Frequency	Percent
Public two-year institution	7	6.5
Public institution specializing in the awarding of bachelor degrees	6	5.6
Private institution specializing in the awarding of bachelor degrees	6	5.6
Public institution awarding primarily bachelor and master degrees	4	3.7
Private institution awarding primarily bachelor and master degrees	8	7.4
Public institution awarding bachelor, master and doctoral degrees	48	44.4
Private institution awarding bachelor, master and doctoral degrees	29	26.9
Total	108	100.0

Participants were also asked about the type of advising they were involved in based on their level in the organization, such as from an institutional, school or department level. More than half of the participants indicated that they worked within a school. Table 4.4 illustrates the breakdown of responses.

Table 4.4: Advising Responsibility Level

Level of Advising Responsibility	Frequency	Percent
Institution (for the whole college or university)	19	17.6
College, school or division within a larger university	66	61.1
Department within a college or school	23	21.3
Total	108	100.0

The survey also requested information about the years of advising experience the participant had, with almost half of the participants noting nine or more years of experience, followed by 3-5 years of service at 23%, 6-8 years representing roughly 19% and the remaining percentage having 2 years or less.

Table 4.5: Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent
0-2 years	11	10.2
3-5 years	25	23.1
6-8 years	20	18.5
9+ years	52	48.1
Total	108	100.0

Competency of Advisors

With a general understanding of who the participants were, the next focus point of this research is to respond to the research questions by reviewing the competency areas and

the data derived from the survey responses. Table 4.6 notes the six competency areas, as noted in the MCA instrument, and the corresponding skills that highlight this competency.

Table 4.6: Competency Groups and Associated Skills

Competency Group Label	Skills within Competency
Addressing diversity (AD)	Accounting for biases and prejudices Accounting for different backgrounds of mentors and Mentees
Aligning expectations (AE)	Setting clear relationship expectations Aligning expectations Considering mentor–mentee differences Setting goals Developing strategies to meet goals
Assessing understanding (AU)	Assessing mentee knowledge Estimating mentee ability Enhancing mentee skills
Fostering independence (FI)	Motivating mentees Building confidence Stimulating creativity Acknowledging mentees' professional contributions Negotiating path to independence
Maintaining Effective Communication (MEC)	Active Listening Providing Constructive Feedback Developing a trusting relationship Accommodating communication styles Pursuing strategies to improve communication Coordinating with other mentors
Promoting professional development (PDP)	Helping network effectively Setting career goals Helping establish a work/life balance Understanding impact as role model Helping mentees acquire resources

Research question one asked, “Among the six competency areas, which were identified as the areas advisors felt the least skilled and the most skilled?” The responses are noted by means and standard deviations in Table 4.7. These means were compared through paired-samples t-tests. These results are presented in Table 4.8. Significant differences were found in addressing understanding as compared to all other competencies.

Table 4.7: Competency means and standard deviations

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation
AD	5.54	1.03
AE	5.63	.94
AU	5.10	1.12
FI	5.39	1.04
MEC	5.59	.78
PPD	5.45	1.06

Table 4.8: Relationships Among the Six Competencies

Scale	AD	AE	AU	FI	MEC	PPD
AD	-					
AE	NS	-				
AU	.000*	.000*	-			
FI	NS	.001*	.002*	-		
MEC	NS	NS	.000*	.020*	-	
PPD	NS	.013*	.000*	NS	NS	-

**p<.01; *p<.05

Overall, these results indicate that Addressing Understanding (AU) is significantly related to FI, MED and PPD. was the competency where participants felt they had the

least skills. Results indicate a fairly similar relationship of skill levels for all the remaining five competencies.

Focusing in on the second research question: "What is the relationship between the six competencies measured in the Mentoring Competency Assessment survey and perceived confidence in working with first generation college students?" Pearson correlations were computed, with the results in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Correlation between Competencies and Confidence

Competency	Confidence in building an advisor/advisee relationship with your FGCS that promotes their retention and ultimate graduation from your institution	Confidence in building an advisor/advisee relationship with your NFGCS in promotion of their retention and ultimate graduation from your institution
AD	-.235**	-.251**
AE	-.401**	-.327**
AU	-.407**	-.275**
FI	-.322**	-.324**
MEC	-.334**	-.274**
PPD	-.337**	-.245*
TOTAL	-.428**	-.388**

**p < .01 * p < .05

Each competency identified as significant in predicting confidence in working with FGCS and NFGCS; the lower the rating for each competency, the lower the advisor's confidence in working with both groups. This would then also mean that the advisors who rate these competencies highly will have higher levels of confidence in working with these groups.

Research question three focused on the potential relationship between demographic questions and attainment of any of the six competencies, “Is there a relationship between any of the six competency areas and key demographic questions including size of institution, years of service, type of degree-granting institution, public or private status, educational attainment or training opportunities?”. Pearson correlations were computed between the size of the institution and the six competencies. The results indicate that size of the institution had no statistical impact on the six competency areas, as noted in Table 4.10.

Table 4:10 Correlations between Competencies and Size of Institution

AD	Pearson Correlation	.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.292
	N	108
AE	Pearson Correlation	.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.632
	N	105
AU	Pearson Correlation	.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.432
	N	108
FI	Pearson Correlation	-.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.381
	N	107
MEC	Pearson Correlation	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.322
	N	107
PPD	Pearson Correlation	.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.626
	N	108
Total	Pearson Correlation	.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.719
	N	103

Years of service, however, was statistically significant in the case of Maintaining Effective Communication, as is noted in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Correlation between Years of Service and Competencies

AD	Pearson Correlation	.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.707
	N	108
AE	Pearson Correlation	.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.260
	N	105
AU	Pearson Correlation	.156
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.108
	N	108
FI	Pearson Correlation	.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.348
	N	107
MEC	Pearson Correlation	.203*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036
	N	107
PPD	Pearson Correlation	.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.342
	N	108
Total	Pearson Correlation	.116
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.243
	N	103

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

When looking at the impact of education attainment on each competency, the results indicate a negative correlation between Aligning Expectations (AE) and educational attainment. As shown in Table 4.12, there were only two significant correlations: advisors who had more years of service had higher MEC scores, while advisors who had higher levels of educational attainment had lower AE scores.

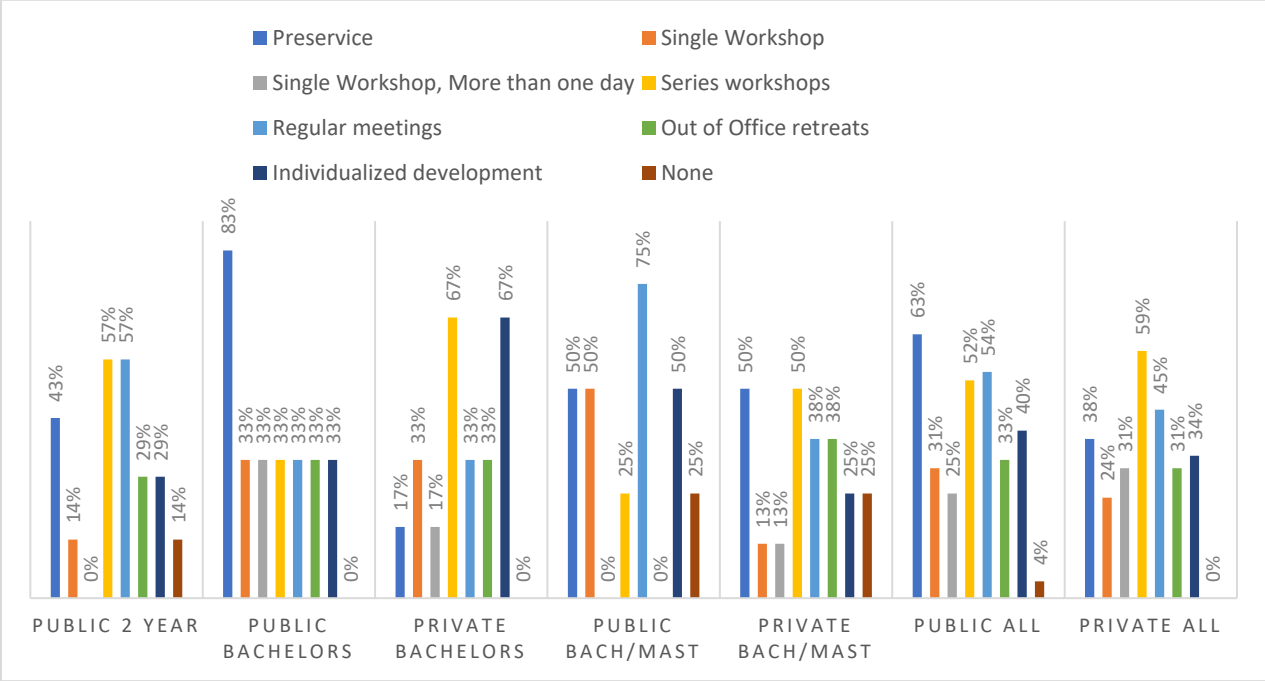
Table 4.12: Correlation between Educational Attainment and Competencies

AD	Pearson Correlation	-.131
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.177
	N	108
AE	Pearson Correlation	-.229*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019
	N	105
AU	Pearson Correlation	-.170
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.078
	N	108
FI	Pearson Correlation	-.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.483
	N	107
MEC	Pearson Correlation	-.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.313
	N	107
PPD	Pearson Correlation	-.150
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.122
	N	108
Total	Pearson Correlation	-.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.138
	N	103

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The survey also asked participants about the types of trainings that were available to them related to working with FGCS and NFGCS. Table 4.13 illustrates responses for general trainings for development in working with NFGCS and Table 4.16 for trainings specific to working with FGCS.

4.13: Trainings and Professional Development Opportunities for Advisors Related to Working with NFGCS



These findings indicate that over half of all respondents received preservice training prior to beginning their jobs, and a similar notation of opportunities to attend a series of workshops or regularly rescheduled meetings. Workshops covering more than one day of content, out of office retreats and individualized development were much less likely to be offered.

Drilling down into this data, however, we see differences based on the type of institution. For example, when comparing private and public institutions, roughly 60% of advisors at public institutions received preservice training, which is notable compared to the 35% of private institution advisors noting the same training. Fifty-five percent of advisors at public institutions also noted that they have regularly scheduled advising meetings, whereas those employed by private institutions reported that only 39% had regularly scheduled meetings. Advisors at private institutions, however, did note higher

rates of out of office retreats and a series of workshops. Full comparison of advisors working at public versus private institutions is noted in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Comparison of Public Institution versus Private Institution Trainings

Institution	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Advisors from public institutions (all)	65	60%	32%	15%	42%	55%	24%	38%	11%	0%
Advisors from private institutions (all)	43	35%	23%	20%	59%	39%	34%	42%	8%	6%

Key

Number	Type of Training
1	Preservice training
2	Single workshop, one day
3	Single workshop, more than one day
4	Series of workshops
5	Regularly scheduled meetings
6	Out of office staff retreats
7	Individualized development
8	None
9	Choose not to reply

This data can also be used to understand if the status of the university, based on degree granting capabilities, has any bearing on the types of trainings available. Table 4.15 combines both private and public institutions and instead breaks down the numbers based on whether the universities are two-year, grant mostly bachelor's degrees, a combination of bachelor's and master's or cover, bachelor's master's and doctoral degrees.

Table 4.15: Comparison of Trainings by Institution Based on Degree-granting Capabilities

Institution	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Two-year institutions	7	43%	14%	0%	57%	57%	29%	29%	14%	0%
Public/private specializing bachelor degrees	12	50%	33%	25%	50%	33%	33%	50%	0%	9%
Public/private primarily bachelor/master	12	50%	32%	7%	38%	57%	19%	38%	25%	0%
Public institution primarily bachelor/master/ doctoral	77	51%	28%	28%	56%	50%	32%	37%	2%	0%

Key

Number	Type of Training
1	Preservice training
2	Single workshop, one day
3	Single workshop, more than one day
4	Series of workshops
5	Regularly scheduled meetings
6	Out of office staff retreats
7	Individualized development
8	None
9	Choose not to reply

Based on the findings in 4.15, the largest gaps in training for two-year institutions is holding a single workshop of more than one day. For bachelor and master granting universities there was a sizeable gap, when compared to the other types of institutions, with the offering of single, one day workshops, workshop series and out of office retreats. When compared to two-year institutions, there was also a gap in individualized development. It should also be noted that 25% of the respondents indicated that they received no trainings of any type.

By far the largest portion of respondents in this research represented universities granting bachelor, master and doctoral degrees. In practically every category, advisors noted the highest averages or numbers within a few percentage points of the other two categories, which indicates a stronger commitment to professional development and in some cases, implies a stronger investment in the professional development of advisors.

In addition to general professional development, the survey also asked advisors to indicate any training or professional development opportunities that have been made available to them related specifically to working with FGCS. The results are noted in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Trainings and Professional Development Opportunities for Advisors Related to Working with FGCS

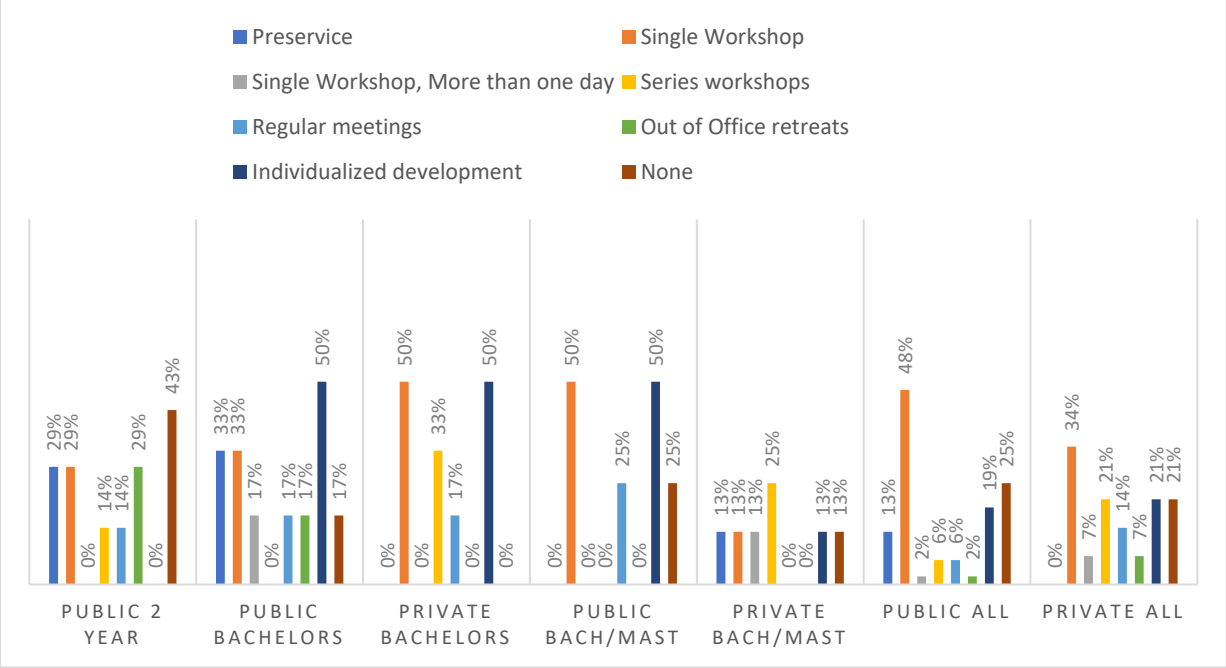


Table 4.16 highlights gaps in trainings available to advisors on working with FGCS. Key findings include the fact that 43% of advisors working at two-year institutions indicated that they received no training or professional development in working with FGCS. On the whole, 22% of all respondents indicated no trainings or development whatsoever in working with FGCS, compared to only 5% noting no training or development related to working with NFGCS. According to the data, the most popular form of development was a single, one day workshop or individualized development. Table 4.17 disaggregates this data by institution, comparing trainings available to advisors at public institutions versus private institutions. Advisors at public institutions more often reported receiving no training on working with FGCS, and with those that did received training and development, the most popular forms were via a single workshop or individualized trainings. Eleven percent of advisors from private institutions noted not receiving any training, and the most popular forms of development included single workshops, series of workshops and individualized development.

Table 4.17: Comparison of Public Institution versus Private Institution Trainings on FGCS

Institution	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Advisors from public institutions (all)	65	19%	40%	5%	5%	16%	12%	30%	28%	1%
Advisors from private institutions (all)	43	4%	32%	7%	26%	10%	2%	28%	11%	0%

Key

Number	Type of Training
1	Preservice training
2	Single workshop, one day
3	Single workshop, more than one day
4	Series of workshops
5	Regularly scheduled meetings
6	Out of office staff retreats
7	Individualized development
8	None
9	Choose not to reply

When breaking the data down according to the type of institution based on degree-granting capabilities, public and private institutions specializing in bachelor's degree provided the most opportunities for trainings and development. When looking at the data collectively, however, the differences between all three groups are minimal and highlight a collective failing in providing the majority of advisors with any type of training or development in their area.

Table 4.18: Comparison of FGCS Trainings by Institution Based on Degree-granting Capabilities

Institution	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Public two-year institutions	7	29%	29%	0	14%	14%	29%	0	43%	0
Public and private specializing in bachelor degrees	12	17%	42%	9%	17%	17%	9%	50%	9%	0%
Public and private primarily bachelor/master degrees	12	7%	32%	7%	13%	13%	0%	32%	19%	0%
Public institution primarily bachelor/master/ doctoral degrees	77	7%	41%	5%	14%	10%	5%	20%	23%	2%

Key

Number	Type of Training
1	Preservice training
2	Single workshop, one day
3	Single workshop, more than one day
4	Series of workshops
5	Regularly scheduled meetings
6	Out of office staff retreats
7	Individualized development
8	None
9	Choose not to reply

A final area of review for this research looked at whether trainings that center around FGCS topics or more generalized audiences had impact on confidence rates working with either group. According to Table 4.19, significant positive correlations for higher levels of confidence in working with FGCS were associated with having regularly scheduled meetings about FGCS-related topics and out of office staff retreats. Respondents also noted that having a series of workshops about general topics also boosted their confidence in working with FGCS, which highlights the importance of complementing a professional development portfolio with information based on key content related to specific groups as well as generalized professional development that speaks best practices in the profession.

Table 4.19: Correlations of Confidence Working with FGCS versus NFGCS based on Available Trainings

		Q35 FGCS	Q36 NFGCS
Q7_1	Pearson Correlation	.235*	.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.102
	N	107	107
Q7_2	Pearson Correlation	.009	-.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.923	.592
	N	107	107
Q7_3	Pearson Correlation	-.091	-.088
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.350	.369
	N	107	107
Q7_4	Pearson Correlation	-.160	-.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.100	.263
	N	107	107
Q7_5	Pearson Correlation	-.269**	-.229*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.018
	N	107	107
Q7_6	Pearson Correlation	-.286**	-.238*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.014
	N	107	107
Q7_7	Pearson Correlation	-.151	-.160
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.120	.100
	N	107	107
Q8_1	Pearson Correlation	.121	.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.215	.115
	N	107	107
Q8_2	Pearson Correlation	-.094	-.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.334	.318
	N	107	107
Q8_3	Pearson Correlation	-.037	.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.708	.510
	N	107	107
Q8_4	Pearson Correlation	-.258**	-.181
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.062
	N	107	107

Table 4.19: Correlations of Confidence Working with FGCS versus NFGCS based on Available Trainings

Q8_5	Pearson Correlation	-.227*	-.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.130
	N	107	107
Q8_6	Pearson Correlation	-.037	.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.708	.510
	N	107	107
Q8_7	Pearson Correlation	-.186	-.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.134
	N	107	107

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This table also highlights a negative correlation between pre-service training and confidence in working with FGCS. At the surface, a negative correlation between pre-service training and advisor confidence does not align with the rest of the data, but this negative correlation is explained by the fact that roughly 10% of those polled indicated that they received pre-service training related to working with FGCS. This means 90% of those surveyed never received any pre-service training. Viewing the lack of training as detrimental reframes this data to highlight the negative impact a lack of training can have on an advisor's confidence, which is ultimately also detrimental to the student populations.

Summary

Data from the survey underscores the pivotal role that the six competency areas defined in the Mentoring Competency Assessment (Maintaining Effective Communication, Aligning Expectations, Assessing Understanding, Fostering Independence, Addressing Diversity and Promoting Professional Development) have on influencing an advisor's confidence in working with their students. Especially given that

FGCS need advisors to help them build social capital, having an advisor with the confidence and skills to help them succeed is of paramount importance to their ultimate goal of achieving a college degree.

While advisors reported trainings related to the needs of their generalized populations, there is some feedback to support that one-day workshops or aspects of regularly scheduled meetings do touch on topics specific to FGCS issues. With some of these trainings already in place, the inclusion of information specific to the needs of the FGCS population would be feasible and could even shine a spotlight on the needs of various groups, including overlapping areas as well as areas that are more important for advisors of FGCS to focus on as opposed to NFGCS.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Key takeaways from the literature review notes that value academic advising can have on students. FGCS, specifically, are more likely to face an uphill battle in earning their degree as research indicates a lack of pre-existing knowledge to fall back on, making navigating the higher education environment all the more difficult (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Giancola et al., 2008; Horn & Nunez, 2000; Hossler et al., 1999; O'Shea, 2016; Simmons, 2011; Stephens et al., 2012, Ward et al., 2012). Knowing that FGCS have significant gaps in preparedness for college, bridging that gap between limited college preparedness and college graduation requires that students seek mentors or support persons who have extensive knowledge of college life, such as an academic advisor.

This survey of 108 academic advisors provides feedback on areas where universities and professional organizations can help their advisors grow and develop their interpersonal skills for the benefit of the students they serve. This chapter will highlight key findings from the study as they inform hiring and retaining advisors, setting professional development standards, utilizing competencies for professional growth and career advancement, how we create buy-in with our student populations and examples of how to engage FGCS. Considerations for how to navigate relationship building during the ongoing global pandemic are also discussed.

Hiring and Retaining Advisors

One key finding of the study points to a strong association between higher confidence levels in working with FGCS and years of service. This data, coupled with the recommendation from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education that advisors have a graduate or professional degree, underscores the importance of having key standards in place not only for advisor hiring but for growth, development and promotion (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2005). Universities seeking to create a stronger and more meaningful advising experience for its students need to first adopt a standard of requiring a graduate degree and provide those currently employed without an advanced degree the opportunity to pursue graduate studies to better inform their work. As previously noted, universities will need to define these expectations to cover whether this graduate degree should be focused on a key content area or around advising, higher education or a similar focus area.

Additionally, to retain advisors, especially as they progress in their educational and build on their experience, universities need to create a career ladder for advisors that acknowledge their skills and utilize it to build out a comprehensive advising network that benefits advisors from all levels (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2005; Taylor, 2011).

Building a career ladder is an important key step to developing and maintaining advising staff. Example models already exist throughout the country, such as the University of South Carolina's three-tier advising ladder. This system combines education and years of services with additional, tangible professional development opportunities, scaling from shadowing other top tier advisors and attending a professional

development series for advisors to presenting for other advisors on key topics and running various school-wide or university-wide advising events. Additionally, the model requires an application to move between each ladder, a certification to recognize completion of various professional development course, and the university's website even highlights these promotions on their website (University of South Carolina, 2020).

One area the University of South Carolina does not highlight is the compensation impacts of moving between the three tiers. Pennsylvania State University is an example of an institution that highlights the monetary benefits of advancing as an advisor, with its system noting five levels for academic advisors with increasing responsibilities and changes in salary bands across multiple levels. For a professional advisor in the field, such a scale promotes the idea of advising as a career, rather than a job one takes to gain experience and move on (Pennsylvania State University, 2020).

Universities seeking to create or modify their current career paths for advisors should seek to combine key elements of the University of South Carolina's system, which clearly values a comprehensive approach to professional development, with Pennsylvania State University's goal of creating a career trajectory that provides clear compensation incentive, to illustrate a commitment to academic advising as a profession, which will not only attract but retain key talent, which will help it achieve its goals of increasing retention and graduate rates, especially among at-risk populations.

Setting Professional Development Standards

Academic advising does not have a universally imposed model across all universities. There are three types of advising models recognized in the literature, including centralized, decentralized and shared. Centralized advising indicates one

central group overseeing all advising; decentralized indicates the responsibility of advising oversight falling to a specific unit, such as by college or by department; and shared advising involves both a central lead as well as collaboration with leads in respective departments or colleges (Miller & Irons, 2014; Habley, 1983). While some universities have centralized advising models other utilize department or school-specific models. Still others have joint advising models utilizing faculty and staff in a co-advising model. Ultimately, the general approach to advising is inherently fluid based on the needs of the organization and its structure (Miller & Irons, 2014).

It should be noted, however, that these variations create limitations in the setting of professional development standards for the profession of academic advising. As noted in the literature review and supported by data from this survey, training programs for advisors are not universal. For everything we know about the positive influence advising can have on student retention, self-efficacy and goal setting, which are all linked to positive academic outcomes, little investment continues to be made in creating a culture that respects and invests in academic advising and its role in student achievement (Lotkowski et al, 2004; Young-Jones et al, 2013; Fosnacht et al., 2017; Tinto 2007; Vander Schee, 2007). For this reason, regardless of approach, universities need to develop a method to ensure that all advisors are receiving the necessary training to be effective in their positions.

NACADA has taken an important step towards validating the role of the advisor by identifying the three components of advising: Informational, Conceptual and Relational and providing competencies associated with each component (NACADA, 2017). It is now up to universities to build trainings or events for their populations that

bring these competencies to light and require, as a part of the job, continuing education opportunities that build on these three areas. This includes creating training opportunities that center around how to build social capital in relation to advising for FGCS. As is noted in the literature, social capital plays a key role in the success of FGCS (Knox et al., 2006; Mansson & Myers, 2013; Schlosser et al., 2003; Schlosser & Gelso, 2001; Snyder-Duch, 2018). Building out a support network is no longer a choice but a responsibility academic advisors, faculty and senior leadership have given all of the evidence that supports the building of social capital as an integral part of getting these students to the finish line.

Part of the task here will be to mirror some of the work of other organizations, such as Missouri State's Master Advisor Training Program. Note that before the program even began the idea was under development for multiple years and was touted by the senior leadership, supported by faculty and initially underwritten by the university (Missouri State University, 2020). For this reason, universities should consider either a centralized or shared advising model with a reporting structure that includes senior leadership at the university to create the necessary buy-in to create a lucrative program that all advisors can benefit from.

Utilizing Competencies for Professional Growth and Career Advancement

Data from this survey reaffirms the value of the MCA as a tool to assess the growth and development of professional advisors. While it is common for any workplace to have an annual review process in place, universities should consider a more specialized process for academic advisors. Combining basic elements of a review process with a multi-level assessment based around the competencies noted in the MCA and directly in

line with Hably's (1984) advising framework to cover the Conceptual, Informational and Relational Components of advising would prove most beneficial. Such an approach can create a robust professional development experience for the advisor as well as his/her supervisor in charge of assessing their work.

One such example of an advisor assessment tool highlighted by NACADA comes from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Buyarski (2003) notes that the portfolio process at IUPUI contains multiple sections to cover professional growth as well as developmental opportunities. Although this portfolio sample was created before NACADA officially adopted the three components of advising, the sample clears links back to Hably (1994) and his framework by including information that cover both Conceptual, Informational and Relational Components. For example, the Informational component is covered in the portfolio when advisors are asked to discuss any literature they have read or written that focuses on policies or any professional development events attended that focus on advising issues. The Conceptual Component of advising is covered when advisors are asked to describe their advising philosophy and provide samples of any materials developed that promote their approach to advising. The final component, Relational, can be included in sections where the advisor is asked to acknowledge a challenging situation with a student, how they handled it in the moment and what they learned from the experience (Buyarski, 2003). Providing such examples can serve as tangible examples of how advisors are building social capital in their students, and be used as models for training and development.

According to Hutson, Bloom, & He (2009), keeping a professional portfolio and encouraging learning and development creates opportunities for self-reflection. For

example, the authors noted that encouraging learning development could translate to supporting advisors to publish articles on their ideas and experiences, creating learning spaces for advisors to share their experiences or professional knowledge attained from development opportunities, and creating an opportunity for group discussion and growth by having a monthly reading circle, for example. The authors also indicate the importance of supervisors modeling these behaviors in front of their employees and engaging in these activities alongside of them to illustrate the value for everyone (Hutson, Bloom, & He 2009).

Universities can institute a similar process to IUPUI, and include within the confines of these activities special attention to FGCS. Ideas include reading a book that centers around the experience of a FGCS or the struggles of DACA students, who face added concerns regarding their legal status in the country. Such experiences create opportunities for advisors to discuss these situations and how to best support students who may be facing similar situations.

Such targeted development opportunities can also be created based on completed reflections where advisors indicate either a lack of experience or any unconscious biases based on their own experience. For example, one important finding of this survey noted a negative correlation between the aligning expectations competency and educational level, so the more education a person had obtained, the less likely they were to rate themselves as being able to align expectation appropriately. Key skills this competency mapped to include: Setting clear relationship expectations, considering mentor–mentee differences, setting goals, developing strategies to meet goals (Fleming et al, 2013). From an advising standpoint, these skills are paramount to creating a successful advising relationship with a

student and laying the foundation for a student to having a strong start to their college careers. If educational levels are creating an unconscious bias in an advisor's abilities to help students set goals or acknowledging the differences in the needs of students based on their social capital, FGCS populations are at an even further risk of failing behind their peers or not building out a strong social network, which the advisor can help facilitate.

Creating Buy-In with Students

The literature is clear on the benefits of advising, and while training advisors and providing them with the resources they need to be successful is key, such exercises are futile if the students do not utilize these resources. The concept of intrusive advising, which ultimately adopted a less punitive form in proactive advising, only works if the students are active participants in the process, with benefits such as increased academic performance, increase course enrollments, and less students on academic probation (Fosnacht et al., 2017; Schwebel et al., 2012; Vander Schee, 2007; Varney, 2013). Swecker at al. (2013) even boiled down the number of times a student met with an advisor to the likelihood of the student being retained, "The data suggest that for every meeting with an advisor the odds that student is retained increases by 13%" (p. 49). With additional benefits to the student such as increased self-estimate and goal-setting just by meeting with an advisor, it comes as no surprise that universities are investing in these positions (Fosnacht et al., 2017; Lotkowski et al., 2004; Tinto 2007; Vander Schee, 2007; Young-Jones at al., 2013). The issue, however, is whether they have made this same case to the student.

With much attention being paid to FGCS, how much of this attention goes to educating FGCS on why these resources are important? Often times, attention is paid to

what advisors can do to help you but what about why advisors are a part of the model in the first place? FGCS should not only know who advisors are and what they do but why it is important. Giving students the tools to succeed is vital but not without showing them how to use those tools in the first place. Talk to students about the benefits of visiting an advisor and share data from peer-review literature that illustrates the positive impact on retention and graduation rates. Provide students with a role in assessing the resources available to them. For example, this survey asked advisors to self-reflect on their abilities, but an important next step would be to ask the students earmarked to that advisor to rate the advisor in each of these areas or provide examples the advisor's strengths or weaknesses in any of these areas.

Designing Specific Opportunities to Engage FGCS

While many of these recommendations represent positive steps forward for advisors that would positively impact all students, a key element of this research is understanding how to ensure advising services are meeting the needs of FGCS. For next steps, administrators should consider first and foremost how they identify FGCS. Does a student's profile include a FGCS indicator, which many universities may have in place for other specific groups such as international students or veteran students? Adding the indicator could serve as a way to help advisors identify these students for additional follow-up needs.

While adding an indicator might be helpful, universities should seek out ways to engage these students and their advisors holistically. For example, having a website page dedicated to providing knowledge and resources on key academic services in a one-stop-shop fashion that prominently features advisors, a profile of some FGCS advisors and

more information on engaging with an advisor would be beneficial for students and also remind them that they are just one of potentially many students identifying as FGCS. Specific First-Gen sample websites can be found at the University of San Diego and the University of Michigan (University of San Diego, 2020; University of Michigan, 2020). These websites, created specifically for FGCS, combine information on the needs of FGCS with added elements that celebrate this population and ensure them they are not alone. The University of San Diego site includes a link to staff and faculty who were once FGCS and spotlights a faculty or staff member by giving more information on their professional journal (University of San Diego, 2020). The University of Michigan has a First-Gen week highlighting FGCS alumni, students, faculty and staff, and providing trainings and support around networking and other areas of focus (University of Michigan, 2020). By providing campus-wide initiatives that recognize these students, and those who have come before them, advisors will have a greater chance of building a relationship with these students and empowering them to join the ranks of FGCS alumni at their institution.

Creating a dedicated space for FGCS within an advising center would be another approach to encouraging the organic interaction between FGCS and advisors. To take this a step further, in addition to having their own space, consider working with Student Affairs or a comparable office to start a FGCS club or organization, with advisors serving as the club's moderator. Such a club has the potential to serve multiple purposes, among them creating an opportunity for students to get to know some advisors as well as each other. In this manner, advisors can also use peers to help deliver the message of the value of advising.

Taking into account the current challenges faced by advisors as a global pandemic lingers over the nation, there is an opportunity to reassess how to engage FGCS in an online environment. While having on campus spaces and building relationships organically will hopefully be post-pandemic options, the reality of our current situation requires creativity as well as flexibility. In that spirit, advisors should consider hosting group advising sessions that include a mixture of FGCS and NFGCS to engage peer-to-peer information sharing, complementing websites or other electronic support materials with virtual meetings or informal "happy hours" to encourage continued communication. While the modalities in which the students can be engaged have changed, the goal of consistent engagement remains the same.

Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of this study is related to its scope. I identified universities and community colleges, mostly in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, though recruitment did occur, directly or indirectly, in various other parts of the country. Given the specific region limitations, these findings are limited in both scope and generalizability.

Additionally, depending on the size and advising model in place at any given university, advisors can refer to a non-teaching staff member of the university or teaching faculty member serving in multiple capacities. I found it was more likely for a staff member to have a title of "advisor" as opposed to a faculty member, although it is certainly feasible that a faculty member would be engaging in this work. Wherever possible, I did seek out faculty as well as staff that were identified as advisors. This, too, may be a limiting factor and may result in relevant parties not receiving the survey.

Regarding the type of study being created, a quantitative design does not allow for qualitative follow-up for the findings. The design sought to better understand the baselines of interpersonal skills, based on self-assessment, and to better understand how trainings and other professional development features may impact competency scores. Perhaps, this requires a more standardized approach in gaining information from study participants. Taking this information and adding a qualitative piece would be an excellent exercise for university administrators seeking to understand their own populations.

Additional limitations focus around the construction of the survey. It was noted that the survey did not include gender identity or race/ethnicity questions. Additional research might find value in expanding on the demographic aspects of this surveys beyond educational and institutionally-based demographics to highlight the potential impact of identity traits or even whether the advisor identifies as a first generation college student as potential factors that influence confidence rates and competency attainment.

Finally, it is important to note that this research attempted to collect data about social capital and try to understand how it may inform how FGCS navigate advising. To be clear, social capital is only one aspect to be considered in understanding FGCS. For instance, financial burdens still remain significant (Center for First Generation Student Success, 2020a). It is not the intention of this research to overlook any other contributing factors that may create obstacles for FGCS but to provide an in-depth understanding of one key area that, to date, has received minimal attention in terms of providing tangible data and direction for next steps.

Future Research

As noted in the introduction, the number of students that identify as first generation college students continues to grow and research that focuses on how to turn a deficit-filled narrative about this group into an opportunity to empower these students to succeed is the future of research in the field. This research serves to acknowledge key confidence levels advisors may already have and to provide information on the types of training and development opportunities that can correlate with increased confidence in advisors. Further research on linking specific content within a training to confidence levels would serve universities well in developing an overarching plan on how to address professional development and for reassessing their current offerings for not only format but content.

Additional research should also focus on the potential impact of identity and lived experiences on an advisor's confidence. While the crux of this research focused on connecting professional development, via trainings, education, or years of professional experience to confidence, the concept of building confidence is also tied to each advisor's personal experiences. For example, future research could include hypotheses around potential correlations associated with self-identifying as a FGCS, or focus on investigating any correlation between an advisor's gender, race or age and confidence.

Future research in this field should also focus on developing an understanding of multiple types of capital in students. While this study broadly approached the building of social capital through focusing on advising, many types of capital exist that aid student their progress, such as navigational capital, which focuses on developing skills to look past the complexities of the environment (Yasso, 2005; Wright et al, 2016). Universities

should seek out way to include various types of capital into their training to develop a well-rounded approach to working with diverse groups of students.

Final Thoughts

Although one of the fast-growing groups to hit college campus, FGCS are often treated the same as their NFGS peers, which is contributing to their low retention rates and even lower graduation rates (Center for First Generation Student Success, 2020a; Choy, 2001; Young-Jones et al, 2013; Collier & Morgan, 2008; Tinto, 2007). The data is clear and universities can even the playing field for these students by focusing on building their social capital (Fosnacht et al., 2017; Lotkowski et al., 2004; Tinto 2007; Vander Schee, 2007; Young-Jones at al., 2013). According to this survey, advisors are woefully unprepared to meet the needs of their FGCS advisees, with very few indicating any preparation to work with this population. Given the literature indicates advising is positively correlated with higher retention and graduate rates for FGCS it is time to turn our attention towards preparing our academic advisors to partner with FGCS to turn the tide. If not, our failings in providing adequate support for FGCS will result in a universal decrease in the number of college-prepared students entering the job market, creating significant holes in the workforce and contributing to shortages in key fields where a college degree is required.

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APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
Office of the Vice President for Research

Research Integrity & Compliance
Student Faculty Center
3340 N. Broad Street, Suite 304
Philadelphia PA 19140

Institutional Review Board
Phone: (215) 707-3390

Approval for a Project Involving Human Subjects Research that Does Not Require Continuing Review

Date: 12-Mar-2020

Protocol Number:	26493
PI:	DAVIS, JAMES
Review Type:	EXEMPT
Approved On:	12-MAR-2020
Committee:	A2
School/College:	EDUCATION (1900)
Department:	POLICY, ORGANIZATIONAL & LEAD STUD (19030)
Sponsor:	NO EXTERNAL SPONSOR
Project Title:	Building Social Capital Through Relational Advising: National Advising Training, Self-reflection and First Generation College Students.

The IRB approved the protocol 26493.

The study was approved under Exempt or Expedited review. The IRB determined that the research **does not require a continuing review**, consequently there is not an IRB approval period.

If applicable to your study, you can access your IRB-approved, stamped consent document or consent script through ERA. Open the Attachments tab and open the stamped documents by clicking the Latest link next to each document. The stamped documents are labeled as such. **Copies of the IRB approved stamped consent document or consent script must be used in obtaining consent.**

Note that all applicable Institutional approvals must also be secured before study implementation. These approvals include, but are not limited to, Medical Radiation Committee ("MRC"); Radiation Safety Committee ("RSC"); Institutional Biosafety Committee ("IBC"); and Temple University Survey Coordinating Committee ("TUSCC"). Please visit these Committees' websites for further information.

Finally, in conducting this research, you are obligated to submit the following:

- **Amendment requests - All changes to the research must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.** Changes requiring approval include, but are not limited to, changes in the design or focus of the research project, revisions to the information sheet for participants, addition of new measures or instruments, increasing the subject number, and changes to the research funding. Changes made to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects and implemented prior to IRB approval must be promptly reported to the IRB.
- **Reportable New Information -** using the Reportable New Information e-form, report new information items such as those described in HRP - 071 Policy - Prompt Reporting Requirements to the IRB **within 5 days**.
- **Closure report** - using a closure e-form, submit when the study is permanently closed to enrollment; all subjects have completed all protocol related interventions and interactions; collection of private identifiable information is complete; and analysis of private identifiable information is complete.

For the complete list of investigator responsibilities, please see the HRP – 070 Policy – Investigator Obligations, the Investigator Manual (HRP-910), and other Policies and Procedures found on the Temple University IRB website: https://research.temple.edu/irb-forms-standard-operating-procedures.

Please contact the IRB at (215) 707-3390 if you have any questions.

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

Temple IRB Approved

3/12/2020

RESEARCH SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

Title: Building Social Capital Through Relational Advising: National Advising Training, Self-reflection and First Generation College Students

Protocol No.: 26493

Sponsor: *NIA*

Investigator: James Davis

Ritter Hall

1301 Cecil B Moore Ave

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Country

DETAILED RESEARCH CONSENT

You are being invited to take part in a research study. A person who takes part in a research study is called a research subject, or research participant.

In this consent form "you" generally refers to the research subject. If you are being asked as the legally authorized representative, parent, or guardian to permit the subject to take part in the research, "you" in the rest of this form generally means the research subject.

What should I know about this research?

Someone will explain this research to you.
This form sums up that explanation.
Taking part in this research is voluntary. Whether you take part is up to you.
You can choose not to take part. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
You can agree to take part and later change your mind. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
If you don't understand, ask questions.
Ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this research is to understand the role academic advisors play in working with first generation college students to build social capital, which is defined as development of a social network that can provide someone who a support system for growth and development.

About 100 subjects will take part in this research.

How long will I be in this research?

We expect that your taking part in this research will last 10-15 minutes.

What happens to me if I agree to take part in this research?

Participants agreeing to be part of the research study will complete a one-time, online, anonymous survey. The survey will last approximately 10-15 minutes. The survey will remain open for approximately three weeks, starting May 25, 2020 and ending June 30, 2020. As the survey is anonymous there are no additional components or follow-up to this research.

What are my responsibilities if I take part in this research?

If you take part in this research, you will be responsible to honestly answer the survey questions by reflecting on your own strengths and weaknesses as an academic advisor related to working with first generation college students.

Could being in this research hurt me?

There are no physical risks to taking part in this research. Participants are at minimal risk for discomfort in taking the survey if they struggle with self-assessment and reflection.

In addition to these risks, taking part in this research may harm you in unknown ways.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

There is no cost to take part in this research.

Will being in this research benefit me?

There are no benefits to you from your taking part in this research. We cannot promise any benefits to others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits to others include using the data to inform the creation of training procedures at organizational or university levels.

Who can answer my questions about this research?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think this research has hurt you or made you sick, talk to the research team at the phone number listed above on the first page.

This research is being overseen by an Institutional Review Board ("IRB"). An IRB is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies. You may talk to them at (215) 707-3390 or irb@temple.edu if:

You have questions, concerns, or complaints that are not being answered by the research team.
You are not getting answers from theresearch team.
You cannot reach the research team.
You want to talk to someone else about the research.
You have questions about your rights as a research subject.

Can I be removed from this research without my approval?

The person in charge of this research can remove you from this research without your approval. Possible reasons for removal include:
If you submit an incomplete survey

What happens if I agree to be in this research, but I change my mind later?

Research participants can elect to not fill out the survey or stop after partial completion and not submit. Once submitted, the survey responses cannot be removed given the anonymous nature of the survey.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

Research subjects will not be compensated in any way for participating.

APPENDIX C
EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

June 1, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I first want to introduce myself as a doctoral candidate in Temple's EdD program in Higher Education. While my nights for the past 4 years have been spent on Temple's campus as a part-time doctoral student, my days are reserved for my full-time job at as a graduate academic advisor.

Over the past 8 years working in higher education (the last five of which I have been an academic advisor), I have developed an interest in understanding the link between building social capital in first generation students and relational advising training. I believe there is a significant hole in the literature that needs to be filled and have pursued this topic as the focus of my dissertation.

I am writing in hopes you will consider participating in a voluntary survey about your experiences advising first generation college students.

Below you will find a link to a survey around this topic. I estimate completion of the survey will take 10 minutes (at most). Your participation is completely voluntary. Please note that all information gathered will be presented as an aggregate to allow for complete anonymity for anyone choosing to participate. I hope to use this information to develop professional resources specifically for advisors who work with first generation college students.

Best Wishes,

Allison Keene, MS
Doctoral Candidate, Temple University

APPENDIX D
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The entire survey instrument will be 35 questions in length, divided into three sections. Section one will consist of all 26 questions from the MCA survey. Section two will be comprised of seven demographic questions, as previously used in the 2011 NACADA National Survey and section three will consist of 2 specific questions created by myself to more fully understand potential relationships between years of experience and comfort levels with first generation college students versus non-first generation college students.

Before beginning, please note this survey revolves around the concept of First Generation College Students (FGCS). The literature, however, varies in how to define this term. How do you define FGCS? Please review all of the definitions below and select the one that is the closest to your own understanding of the term:

A. Only one parent has earned a Bachelor's degree

B. Neither parent ever enrolled in post-secondary education

C. Either or both parents enrolled in post-secondary education, but did not complete a Bachelor's degree

Section 1: For each competency identified below, please self-reflect on your abilities as they directly relate with your working with First Generation College Students and rate how skilled you feel you are in each of the following areas. Please only choose 'not applicable' (NA) when a skill cannot be applied to any of your first generation college student advisees. The scale is 1 to 7 with 1 being "not at all skilled", 4 being "moderately skilled" and 7 being "extremely skilled"

Question 1	Active Listening
Question 2	Provide constructive feedback
Question 3	Establishing a relationship based on trust
Question 4	Identifying and accommodating different communication styles
Question 5	Employing strategies to improve communication with FGCS mentees
Question 6	Coordinating effectively with your FGCS advisee's professors
Question 7	Working with FGCS mentees to set clear expectations of the advising relationship
Question 8	Aligning your expectations with your mentees
Question 9	Considering how personal and professional differences may impact expectations
Question 10	Working with your FGCS advisee to set academic/career goals
Question 11	Helping FGCS advisees develop strategies to meet academic/career goals
Question 12	Accurately estimating your FGCS advisee's development of cultural capital
Question 13	Accurately estimating your advisee's ability to successful complete degree requirements

Question 14	Employing strategies to enhance your FGCS advisees knowledge of university resources and abilities to build relationships with university staff/faculty
Question 15	Motivating your FGCS mentees
Question 16	Building FGCS mentees' confidence
Question 17	Stimulating your FGCS mentees creativity
Question 18	Acknowledging your FGCS advisee's academic successes
Question 19	Negotiating a path to career success with your mentees
Question 20	Taking in account the biases and prejudices you bring to the mentor/mentee relationship
Question 21	Working effectively with FGCS mentees whose backgrounds is different from your own (age, race, gender, class, region, culture, religion, family composition etc)
Question 22	Heling your FGCS mentees network effectively
Question 23	Helping your FGCS mentees set career goals
Question 24	Helping FGCS mentees balance work with their personal life
Question 25	Understanding your impact as a role model
Question 26	Helping your FGCS mentees acquire resources (academic support, tutoring, counseling etc)

Section 2: Answer the following demographic questions by selecting your response among the options listed.

Question 27 Which of the following best describes your institution?	Public two-year institution Private two-year institution Proprietary two-year institution Public institution specializing in the awarding of bachelor degrees Private institution specializing in the awarding of bachelor degrees Proprietary institution specializing in the awarding of bachelor degrees Public institution awarding primarily bachelor's and masters degrees Private institution awarding primarily bachelor's and masters degrees Proprietary institution awarding primarily bachelor's and masters degrees Public institution awarding bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees Private institution awarding bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees Proprietary institution awarding bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees Don't know Choose not to reply

Question 28 What is your institution's undergraduate enrollments measured by HEAD COUNT?	Less than 500 500-999 1,000-2,999 3,000-5,999 6,000-8,999 9,000-11,999 12,000-17,999 18,000-23,999 24,000-29,999 30,000-35,999 36,000 + Don't know Choose not to reply
Question 29 What is the institutional level at which you a)have job responsibilities associated with academic advising, and b)that you are knowledgeable about the specifics of academic advising?	Institution (for the whole college or university) College, school, or division within a larger university Department within a college or school
Question 30 What is your highest level of education completed?	High school diploma 2-year degree Bachelor's degree Master's degree Doctorate Don't know Choose not to reply

Section 3: Answer the following training questions by selecting your response among the options listed.

Question 31 What types of internal (institutional or campus sponsored) structured advisor training and development activities are provided for your professional advisors in your advising situation related to building relationships with advisees and interpersonal skills?	Pre-service training before the advisor works with students Single workshop of one day or less per year Single workshop of more than one day per year A series of workshops throughout the year Regularly scheduled meetings (e.g. monthly) throughout the year Out of office staff retreats Individualized development based on advisors' needs None Don't know Choose not to reply
Question 32 What types of internal(institutional or campus	Pre-service training before the advisor works with students

association sponsored) structured advisor training and development activities are provided for your professional advisors in your advising situation related to working with first generation college students?	Single workshop of one day or less per year Single workshop of more than one day per year A series of workshops throughout the year Regularly scheduled meetings (e.g. monthly) throughout the year Out of office staff retreats Individualized development based on advisors' needs None Don't know Choose not to reply
Question 33 Estimate your total years of university advising experience	0-2 3-5 6-8 9+
Question 34 Rate your confidence in building an advisor/advisee relationship with your FGCS advisees that promotes their retention and ultimate graduation from your institution	Excellent Good Neutral Fair Poor
Question 35 Rate your confidence in building an advisor/advisee relationship with your non-FGCS advisees in promotion of their retention and ultimate graduation from your institution	Excellent Good Neutral Fair Poor