Fall 2017

Higher Education Distance Advising in the 21st Century: Distance Learning Students' and Advisors' Perceptions

Brooke Lambert Brown
Old Dominion University, brookelambertbrown@gmail.com

HIGHER EDUCATION DISTANCE ADVISING IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS' AND ADVISORS' PERCEPTIONS

by

Brooke Lambert Brown
B.A. May 2006, Randolph-Macon College
M.S. December 2008, Old Dominion University

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

OCCUPATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STUDIES

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
December 2017

Approved by:

Tisha Paredes (Co-Director)

Philip A. Reed (Co-Director)

Jill Stefaniak (Member)

ABSTRACT

HIGHER EDUCATION DISTANCE ADVISING IN THE 21$^{\text{ST}}$ CENTURY
DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS' AND ADVISORS' PERCEPTIONS

Brooke Lambert Brown
Old Dominion University, 2017
Co-Directors: Dr. Tisha Paredes and Dr. Philip A. Reed

The intent of this study was to focus on distance learning students' and advisors' perceptions of distance advising at a large, public university. Specifically, this study addressed four questions: what were the perceived performance gaps between distance learning students and distance learning advisors practice, how distance learning students' needs were being satisfied, what tools and technology resources were being incorporated, and how advising needs differed based on college. The Winston and Sandor Academic Advising Inventory (AAI) served as the foundation for this quantitative research. The survey was modified accordingly and sent to two populations: distance learning advisors and distance learning students. The goal was to collect advisors and students current distance learning advising experiences and perceptions so a comparative analysis of the two populations could be analyzed.

Results indicated that distance learning advisors and students perceived their current advising experiences as more of a developmental style of advising. Also found, were that students' advising needs were being satisfied through course selection, class scheduling, and academic/major requirement discussions. Based on students' responses, email, Degree Works (an online, academic advising tool for course selection and degree planning), and Leo Online (the university's online student information system) were the top three tools and technology resources being utilized in advising. No notable differences were found across the university's

colleges in terms of students' top advising needs which consisted of course selection, graduation planning, and assistance with forms and paperwork. Findings were consistent that all students experienced a more developmental style of advising except for the College of Arts and Letters where 58% of students experienced a more prescriptive style of advising with course selection.

Overall findings concluded that students and advisors both experienced a developmental style of advising in their advising sessions and that students needs were being satisfied through course selection, class scheduling, and graduation planning. However, notable gaps were identified among advisors and students when it came to discussing other-than-academic interests and plans, vocational opportunities, outside-of-class activities, and time management tips. In these four areas, students' experienced a more prescriptive style of advising and advisors identified as delivering a more developmental style of advising.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Colin.
Thank you for your continuous support, unconditional love,
and going through this journey by my side.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOMENCLATURE

ODU Online (Old Dominion University Online) – A large, mid-Atlantic, accredited, public, four-year institution which offers full, four-year degree and degree completion programs online at the undergraduate and graduate level.

Online – Any means of interacting or being connected to or served by a computer, tablet, phone or other internet software system.

Distant Advising – Students and advisors who engage in an advising session not in person, therefore at different locations of each other.

Academic Advisor – A full-time university, faculty administrator whose primary role is to provide advising to students ensuring student retention and success. Academic advisors must have a minimum of a master's degree or higher.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Higher education has evolved tremendously over the years in all facets. Having always been influenced and shaped by numerous variables, change in higher education should come as no surprise and will only continue to grow with society. With the progression and improvement of technology, higher education has become accessible to millions of individuals (Pope, 2013). This availability and flexibility, of online learning, has been one of the biggest influences recently shaping higher education (Kentor, 2015).

Allen and Seaman (2014) reported that the proportion of higher education students enrolled in at least one online course is at an all-time high of 33.5% and that 90% of academic leaders believe that the majority of all higher education students will be enrolled in at least one online course in five years' time. Statistics show that online learning for 2014 had the slowest rate of increase in over a decade; however, it still supersedes that of total higher education enrollment (Babson Survey Research Group, 2014), suggesting that higher education students are increasingly enrolling in online learning over traditional, face to face classroom learning. Now, for the first time in history, more institutions are viewing online education as a key ingredient to the strategy of their institution (Allen & Seaman, 2013).

Curry and Barham (2007) found that "while some knowledge of academic advising in distance education has been gained…the review of research demonstrates that voids in the literature exist" (p.189). With the growing trend of online learning, more attention, focus, and research needs to be conducted to fully understand online students' perceptions and expectations outside of the classroom. Past research has focused on online learners' preferences in the classroom; however, this study strives to focus on online advising. Knowing what students' prefer when seeking and selecting online learning is essential and critical for institutions' growth.

As McCafferty (2014) states:

> In an increasingly competitive higher education market,
> particularly for online students, and where the rewards of a college
> education are questioned, institutions that are able to unlock value,
> articulate it clearly, and align it to their mission and their areas of
> programmatic strength and differentiation will create distinction to
> separate themselves from other institutions thereby improving their
> competitive position. (p. 30)

Therefore, this research study seeks to understand undergraduate students' perceptions of distant advising. From the results gathered, suggestions and recommendations will be provided to increase and enhance the distance advising experience. These findings will ultimately benefit not only student success, but the university as a whole.

Statement of Problem

Research has been conducted for advising traditional, main campus students, as Stevenson (2013) highlights, "There are numerous models for understanding the persistence of the traditional student. Online students, however, vary substantially their needs are different" (p. 21). Reports and statistics show that online enrollment in at least one online course is increasing among higher education institutions and that academic leadership views online learning as part of their institution's plan (Allen & Seaman, 2014; Babson Survey Research Group, 2014). When online learning first emerged it attracted non-traditional students, who would otherwise be unable to complete their educational goals; however, a more diverse student body is becoming prevalent in the field of online learning and the diversity of online students is increasing (Crawley, 2012).

Higher education institutions must recognize the significant role the advisor has in terms of student support and how they are oftentimes the connecting piece for the student to the university (Stevenson, 2013). King (1993) highlighted that academic advising is "the only structured service on campus that guarantees students some kind of interaction with a concerned representative of the institution…" (p. 21). Whether at a distance or face to face, one cannot undermine the important role the advisor encompasses. "The student advisor often has numerous roles in the planning stages of adult education, such as assistance with course selection, identifying services available to students and servicing as the social support system to acclimate new students into the academic environment" (Stevenson, 2013, p. 22). Therefore, this research aims to understand students' perceptions of distance advising. From the results collected, a proposal will be submitted suggesting initiatives for the improvement of distance advising for online undergraduate students.

Research Questions

This research seeks to understand online, undergraduate students' perceptions of online advising through assessing students at a large, non-profit institution. The following research questions addressed in this study include:

RQ$_1$: What are the perceived performance gaps between online

students' and online advisors' practice?

RQ$_2$: Are students' needs being satisfied through distance

advising?

RQ$_3$: What current tools and technology resources are being

incorporated to assist advisors in supporting students through

distance advising?

RQ4: Do student advising needs and advisor practices differ based

on college?

The results of this research will provide insight for higher education online administrators and staff. "Training programs for advisors are limited, and many organizations have not developed ways of coordinating advising across departments, divisions, and schools" (McClellan, 2010, p. 33). By understanding students' perceptions and expectations of distance advising, additional resources, support, and training can be developed to enhance the online advising experience.

Background and Significance

Online learning is becoming an increasingly popular adoption among higher education institutions, as it has many advantages for both the student and the institution (McCafferty, 2014). From 2002 to 2009 online degree enrollments showed a growth rate increase of 335% (Allen & Seaman, 2010). While this increase in online enrollment has since plateaued, many higher education institutions are faced in a competitive market and searching for ways to market, recruit, and retain online students (McCafferty, 2014). Institutions need to understand online students' advising preferences to ensure the institution is meeting students' needs. One large component of student success is through advising, ". . . good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience" (Light, 2001, p. 81). Knowing what services online students seek through advising will help with retention, student development, and the overall success and mission of the university.

Limitations and Assumptions

It is assumed that the higher education institution selected for this study, adopted distance advising due to students' preference in delivery mode of their academic courses. Data show that students attending courses at this institution's various site locations significantly decreased by

55%, suggesting that student preferences in course delivery was changing (Old Dominion University Distance Learning Annual Report, 2013, p. 22). Since a majority of students preferred to participate in their courses online (rather than at a site location), it is assumed that distance or online advising would be preferred by students as well.

A limitation of this study is concerning the background of participants. The university selected for this research study is not a traditional, online institution as it does not offer full, 4-year degree programs online at the undergraduate level. Therefore, the university selected, markets their online, undergraduate programs as degree completion. Thus, students enrolled in online coursework, complete lower division coursework (100 and 200 level) either on the university's main campus (in person) or transfer coursework from another institution. A majority of students, who are online, are at the junior and senior level completing their upper division, major course requirements online. Therefore, students' background and experience with advising may vary drastically, as they were not solely advised by the university's distance learning advisors.

This research study specifically focuses on undergraduate, online students enrolled in a large, mid-Atlantic North American university. The university launched its new advising model during the spring of 2015. Previously, advising was conducted face to face by students' geographic location (as advisors were located throughout the United States at various site locations). With the re-structure of advising, students were reassigned advisors based on students' major and last name. This was a major transition for both distance advisors and online students, as both had to adapt to the new advising model.

Another limitation was the survey methodology. For this research, a survey was created and sent electronically in a method most likely to provide the best data returns. A convenience

sample of students were surveyed, which consisted of students who were enrolled and coded as degree-seeking in an online undergraduate program. This limited the research by using only one institution's database in collecting students' email addresses for those who were coded as 100% online students.

Summary and Overview of Chapters

Chapter I highlights and provides the reasoning for this research project. As online student enrollment is continuously increasing among higher education institutions it is necessary that universities are prepared. This research will focus on distance advising for online students to present student preferences of distance advising.

Current literature encourages further research and the need for increased training, awareness, and understanding of distance advising, which is presented in Chapter II. The process and methodology used for this research is detailed in Chapter III. Findings from the process and methodology are reported in Chapter IV and conclusions are presented in Chapter V. Chapter V also provides recommendations for future research which have been drawn from the conclusions and findings from this research study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Distance learning is not a new concept and has been a means of delivering education to large audiences as history demonstrates. Knowing the development, progression, and challenges of distance learning's evolvement is essential in understanding how it has shaped distance advising. This chapter will explore distance learning's origination and influence on distance advising and how it has shaped today's distance learning advising practices.

Higher education institutions realize the significance of distance advising and the integral role it has on student success in online learning. However, many higher education institutions still struggle with the best way to provide effective student-support services for online students (Gravel, 2012). Even though there is a strong presence of academic advising in higher education, little research regarding student preference has been conducted on distance advising (Christian & Sprinkle, 2013). Majority of distance advising research has been based on faculty and staff responses, and has not included student perceptions (Gravel, 2012). Curry and Barham (2007) note that "while some knowledge of academic advising in distance education has been gained…the review of research demonstrates that voids in the literature exist" (p. 189). This literature review will define distance advising, explore the historical literature on distance education and the evolution of distance advising, discuss the significance of advising, detail the concepts of academic advising, highlight current trends and challenges facing distance advising in higher education, and present previous studies that helped shape and construct this research study.

Concept of Academic Advising

In higher education there are a multitude of individuals who provide academic advising and no two institutions have the same advising mission, objectives, and goals. One institution may employ graduate students to advise and another institution may have a full-time, professional, faculty administrator providing academic advising. While this diversity of advising has its benefits across institutions, one cannot undermine the fact that there are not concrete advising theories or a one size fits all approach (Creamer, 2000). The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA, 2006) Board of Directors acknowledges this diversity among institutions and explains, "Regardless of the diversity of our institutions, our students, our advisors, and our organizational structures, academic advising has three components: curriculum (what advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising does what it does), and student learning outcomes (the result of academic advising) (p. 2). Therefore, NACADA encourages institutions to develop advising practices based off these three principles (components) while keeping in line with the goals and mission of the institution. Robbins (2012) compares advising to psychology, in which one theory cannot define nor explain all human behavior and highlights that different students have different circumstances and needs. Robbins provides a profound example:

> A first generation student, first semester 1st year student from a
>
> large urban public high school with no honors or Advanced
>
> Placement (AP) programs will come to college with different
>
> needs compared to a second-generation 1st year student from a
>
> private preparatory school coming to the same college with several
>
> AP credits and a strong familial support system. Both students are
>
> members of the 1st-year cohort, but with different needs. (p. 220).

Therefore, for purposes of this research, it is recognized that advising practices drastically differ from institution to institution, based on several determining factors, and thus will focus on the two advising models, which advising practices and theories largely stem from: Prescriptive and Developmental.

Prescriptive Advising

Prescriptive advising is seen as the traditional relationship between the academic advisor and the student (Crookston, 2009). In prescriptive advising the advisor is viewed as the expert and "prescribes" the student to complete task(s) during the advising session. This advising model has been largely favored and utilized by advisors for its convenience; as from the advisor's standpoint once advice has been given their responsibility is largely fulfilled (Crookston, 2009). This relationship is built similar to that of a doctor and patient. The only concern with this advising practice, is that responsibility is placed largely on both the student and the advisor and misconceptions can occur. "Obviously, differing perceptions concerning not only the relationship but the degree of responsibility to be taken by the parties involved can lead to misunderstandings that put a strain on the advisor-student relationship" (Crookston, 2009, p. 79). For example: the student is expected to follow the advisor's task(s) and trusts that the prescribed task(s) are correct. In the event the prescribed advising was incorrect, the student may feel that it is not their responsibility and blame is directed to the advisor. However, prescriptive advising should not be viewed negatively; one must recognize the nature and expectations of this advising relationship and understand that it does have benefits. Creamer (2000) notes that prescriptive advising may be used on 1st year, incoming students where advising is seen as more informational. Students may view the advisor as the expert, as they are unfamiliar with higher education and prefer more of prescriptive advising session. "Who advises, how academic advising is delivered, what occurs

during the advising interaction, and where it falls on the prescriptive versus developmental continuum are all dependent on the student being advised" (Robbins, 2012, p. 220). Therefore, prescriptive advising should not be viewed as neither good nor bad in the advising field, but as an advising strategy based largely on the advisor assuming authority.

Developmental Advising

Developmental advising entered the higher education advising practice in the 1970s by the works of Hardee, Crookston, and O'Banion; however, was not widely adopted until the mids-1980s by higher education institutions (Grites, 2013). It was not until these theorists that it was suggested that advising should go beyond course selection and registration (Robbins, 2012). Developmental advising focuses on exploring students' rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills (Crookston, 2009). Grites (2013) describes developmental advising as a holistic approach, founded on developmental theories and perspectives and should be viewed as a strategy, not a theory, which is centered on student success. Developmental advising encompasses both the student and advisor and views both as participants and central in the advising relationship. Today, developmental based theories have gained popularity among institutions, and advisors have adopted practices from those theorists such as Chickering and Reisser, Erikson, Kohlberg, Perry, and Piaget. However, research shows that advisors typically select a developmental theory based on the specific advising situation, suggesting that not one developmental theory is applicable to all students (Robbins, 2012).

Crookston (2012) noted that the greatest difficulty in advising is the differing meanings faculty and students attach to advising and admits that expectations around the functions of an advisor are confusing. "Too often both parties launch into a relationship assuming both have the

same idea of what the role of each is to be in the advisor-student relationship. The result is often

counterproductive, if not total disaster" (Crookston, 2012, p. 82). To help differentiate

prescriptive and developmental advising, Table 1 (adapted from Crookston, 2012) illustrates the

10 central components of academic advising and how they differ based on prescriptive and

developmental advising.

Table 1

Contrasting Dimensions of Prescriptive and Developmental Approaches to Advising

In terms of	Prescriptive	Developmental
Abilities	Focus on limitations	Focus on potentialities
Motivation	Students are lazy, need prodding*	Students are active, striving*
Rewards	Grades, credit, income	Achievement, mastery, status acceptance, recognition, fulfillment
Maturity	Immature, irresponsible; must be closely supervised and carefully checked*	Growing, maturing, responsible, capable of self-direction*
Initiative	Advisor takes initiative on fulfilling requirements; rest up to student	Either or both may take initiative
Control	By advisor	Negotiated
Responsibility	By advisor to advise by student to act	Negotiated
Learning Output	Primarily in Student	Shared
Evaluation	By advisor to student	Collaborative
Relationship	Based on status, strategies, games, low trust	Based on nature of task, competencies, situation, high high trust

*After McGregor's (1960) x and y theories

       There are a multitude of advising theories and models, all of which differ based on the

institution in which the advising is occurring. Therefore, for purposes of this research, it is

acknowledged that advising is a diverse practice and this research seeks to only emphasize the two advising strategies that institutions typically base their advising practices and standards from: Prescriptive and Developmental.

Definition of Distance Advising

To fully comprehend and understand distance advising, explanation of terminology is critical. Definitions and terminology, regarding online learning, vary in the field of education. It is not uncommon for online learning terminology to have different meanings and definitions from institution to institution. As Picciano describes blended learning,

> Blended learning has a nebulous quality because it defied any
>
> simple definition and comes in so many different forms and styles.
>
> The name 'blended' is not universally accepted and we see the
>
> terms 'hybrid,' 'mixed-mode,' 'web-enhanced,' 'mini-MOOC,'
>
> and 'flipped' to mean the same thing or some variation thereof
>
> (2015, p. 148)

Literature suggests that this is due to the rapid growth of online learning and the failure to properly clarify and define terms. Todhunter (2013) explains much of the ambiguity is due to higher education institutions creating their own terminology, which causes much confusion for students, faculty, and staff. While the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Task Force does not define distance advising, it compiled several definitions on academic advising. One of the definitions states that advising is a process in which advisor and advisee enter a dynamic relationship respectful of the student's concerns; ideally, the advisor serves as a teacher and guide in an interactive partnership aimed at enhancing the student's self-awareness and fulfillment (O'Banion, 1972). In regard to distance advising, NACADA does not define

distance advising. Instead, NACADA quotes The United States Distance Learning Association's (USDLA) definition of distance learning as "the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance" (p.1).

For purposes of this research, distance advising is viewed as an advisor who offers academic, career, and personal support to engage students in the planning for college and beyond not in person. Distance advising can be supported by electronic means (such as the computer), mail, and even telephone. For purposes of this research, the terms "distance" and "online" need to be clarified. Online advising is a subset of distance advising. Therefore, a student receiving distance advising may experience online advising throughout his/her time of advising. In addition, both are recognized and characterized as advising students not in person and therefore, at a distance. The current definition of advising defines it as encompassing a self-directed and holistic learning approach to educate students on life skills for preparation of their future. In both face to face and distance advising, advisors' core beliefs and practices should stem from one goal: student success. "Most online services are the same as those provided on campus but delivered through the Internet rather than in person" (Crawley, 2012, p. 64).

History of Distance Advising

To fully understand distance advising, it is essential to highlight the history of online education. Distance education was common in the late 1800s, but its rapid growth began in the late 1990s with the online technical revolution (Kentor, 2015). Kentor (2015) mentions documents as early as 1728, in an advertisement in the *Boston Gazette*, marketing shorthand lessons through correspondence (Phillips, 1728). Lessons and assignments would be sent through the postal service to the student, where the student would complete and re-send to the instructor

for grading. Records also show that summer institutes were first formed in the late 1800s, where readings and assignments were sent through correspondence for individuals to complete "at home," with the expectation to be discussed during the summer institute (Kentor, 2015). Education, through correspondence, continued to grow dramatically in the late 1800s and early 1900s as it afforded education to those who were not able to attend a traditional university (Verduin & Clark, 1991).

In 1894 the first radio device was introduced which also contributed to the field of distance education. Many educational institutions obtained broadcasting licenses to broadcast college lectures and lessons. However, with the great depression, in 1929, educational broadcasting struggled to keep functioning; as out of the total 176 educational radio stations, only thirty-five remained (Kentor, 2015). Radio was a popular source for education in The United States, however its popularity was found to be in nations with higher literacy rates and less reliable postal services (which did not include The United States). However, soon the television was introduced, which many higher education institutions tried to incorporate and adapt into their learning practices.

When the television was first incorporated in education it faced many barriers and challenges. There was a sudden urge, and thus a large influx, for education institutions to adopt the television as a means of instruction. From this large surge, licensing and interference issues became prominent, as well as lack of training and assistance guiding faculty/instructors on how to incorporate television in the classroom all became reasons for poor quality and therefore lack of viewership (Kentor, 2015). Guidance was largely needed in The United States television industry, and in the late 1970s, standards and guidelines were provided by The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) for American course developers to follow (Verduin & Clark,

1991). However, as television use was improving in distance education, the emergence of the computer and the internet was just on the horizon.

The use of computers, as a means of educating, first emerged in the form of training new employees in the 1980s, where employers were using computer-based training programs (Rudestam & Schoenholtz-Read, 2002). In 1991, when the World Wide Web was introduced, the University of Phoenix became one of the first higher education institutions to offer online education through the Internet (Kentor, 2015). However, not until the mid-1990s did higher education institutions begin exploring the world of online as a means of delivering education and the adoption of online courses began. During this time of online learning expansion, institutions adopted what is known as blended learning, which is a combination of face to face and distance learning. This method of learning has been widely adopted and approved by institutions as Selingo (2014) stated that 75% of private institutions and 80% of public institutions' presidents felt that this type of learning had a positive impact on higher education. In 2008, higher education saw the launch of Massive, Open, Online Course (MOOC). MOOC's caught the attention of everyone, as this permitted a large enrollment of students to attend higher education at cost-effective prices and in a very accessible way. However, one of the contributing factors for MOOCs not being as successful, as projected when it initially launched, was linked to one of the founders, Sebastian Thrun commenting in an interview that MOOCs was a lousy product. Yet MOOCs have opened the doors and eyes of online education where many advancements have been made in the field of online education. "In addition, social media, big data/learning analytics, adaptive learning, mobile computing, competency-based learning, and gaming are also being integrated into online education" (Picciano, 2015, p. 147). With technology ever-changing,

online education will have to adopt and continually grow with the technology trends and advancements.

Kentor (2015) notes that online education was not easily adopted, nor accepted, as a viable means of education by higher education institutions. Failure has been linked to poor faculty buy in and lack of readiness and commitment of staff and faculty (Picciano, 2015). Many institutions adoption of online learning led to failure due to lack of knowledge on how to integrate online learning in their already existing institutions. In 2005, the president of the University of Illinois presented the Illinois Global Campus (IGC). The IGC was to design and develop online learning programs with the goal of 70,000 students enrolled by 2018. However, in 2009 the University of Illinois Board Of Trustees voted to cease IGC due to only 200 students being enrolled and an investment loss of $18 million (Picciano, 2015). Lack of planning and implementation proved to be the downfall of IGC. Picciano (2015) notes that institutions typically spend a majority of time planning for academics and underestimate the significance of online student support services; and for online programs to be successful, both academic and student support services need to be developed.

Over time, institutions have learned how to successfully adopt and embrace online learning. Research suggests that higher education institutions who have successfully adopted or integrated online learning established goals that aligned with the institution's mission and culture (Picciano, 2015). "Online education is the fastest growing form of distance education and is valued at both traditional and non-traditional colleges and universities . . . Online education is no longer simply a trend" (Kentor, 2015, p. 30). Therefore, with the expansion of online education it is essential that institutions are adequately prepared to service this population of online students successfully. Sener (2012) makes a significant point that the first era of online education was

dedicated to providing access, where the second era will be to improve the quality of online education.

Institutions are still formulating the best methods of delivering online education to students, as they should be. With the nature of technology and online learning it is ever changing and thus research and evaluation of online programs should be seen as an on-going process. "It is now time to focus on the quality of education we provide, both in the classroom and online, and use the technology and innovations available today to motivate, inspire, and educate the students of the 21st century" (Kentor, 2015, p. 31). Now that access to online education has been achieved, institutions need to shift the focus on student success to ensure that they are meeting students' needs, expectations, and goals.

History of Distance Academic Advising

To fully understand higher education's distance academic advising history, it is essential to highlight advising in general as distance advising grew out of the demand of online education and servicing students at a distance. Academic advising's evolvement and past history within The United States higher education system has never been adequately recorded (Gordon, 2004). Even Gillispie (2003) notes that academic advising has only been truly defined in the past few decades. Very little research and literature has been conducted on distance advising. Therefore, for purposes of this research, it is recognized that higher education distance advising stemmed from in-person academic advising, and thus the history and evolution of academic advising in higher education is explored.

Early beginnings of academic advising were thought to have occurred in the late eighteenth century, where faculty members were providing vocational development to young men; these early traces of advising were thought to have occurred naturally, as faculty were

showing genuine interest and support of students (Gillispie, 2003). The relationship during this time was viewed as very authoritative, where faculty members provided strict guidance and had much control of students. It was not until the American Revolutionary War that American college models grew wider and faculty became more involved in the growing needs of the school and less involved with the student (Gillispie, 2003). This was a pivotal movement in academic advising as students were seen as being responsible for their own decision-making process. Rudolph (1962) discovered early advising activities in higher education by Johns Hopkins University in 1877 and Harvard in 1889, where faculty advisors were assigned, to students, to provide guidance and assistance. Gordon (2004) found that Ohio State's president in 1873, met with freshmen after chapel each week to orient them to college and even early traces of Ohio State's Department of Engineering inviting students to consult with their professor on changes of coursework or adjustment to schedules. While advising was occurring during the 1800s, it was focused more on course registration and enrollment. During this time advising was largely based on what higher education institutions today call prescriptive advising, where the advisor largely leads and shapes the advising relationship.

In the nineteenth century, the United States discovers the emergence of academic guidance and advising in groups (Gordan, 1992); and for the first time, advising is organized by assigning faculty, according to their specialized curricula, to guide students to the classes they need (Gillispie, 2003). Higher education institutions even adopted practices from World War I and World War II. During both wars, assessments and tests were given to measure individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities for placement purposes. These practices during the war largely contributed to the counseling and advising field (Gallagher & Demos, 1983) as higher education institutions began incorporating in their everyday, advising practices. "Seeing the utility of the

methods employed by the army, universities adopted the study of psychometrics in personnel placement and established vocational guidance centers that utilized occupational aptitude assessments as a tool for advising students in their academic pursuits" (Gillispie, 2003, p. 2). During this time Frank Parsons, known as the Father of Vocational Guidance, stressed three items for personal development: (a) Understanding of oneself, (b) Knowledgeability of the requirements and environments of multiple professions, and (c) Advantages of each field (Zunker, 2001). Higher education institutions became interested in this philosophy and began incorporating vocational guidance in advising. This is another pivotal time in advising, as advising went beyond providing assistance on course selection to focusing on students beyond registration.

During the 1960s and 1970s college campuses saw an influx of students as 'baby boomers' were entering colleges and during this time academic advising entered a new advising approach and perspective - advising students in a holistic manner, thus the emergence of developmental advising. Hardee, Crookston, and O'Banion all contributed in developing literature and research suggesting the significant role of developmental advising in the academic advising practice. Any important note to make, is that while developmental advising is a widely used practice today, it did not gain popularity as an advising strategy in higher education until the 1980s (Grites, 2013); however, it was during this time that the concept of developmental advising emerged. Not only were advising practices and strategies theorized and analyzed during this time, but advisors themselves began emerging and taking ownership and leadership roles in the advising field.

A monumental moment in advising history was during October of 1977 in Burlington, Vermont where 275 educators gathered to share their advising practices. In recruiting

participants, for the conference, it was advertised that the purpose was to provide an opportunity

to learn from others, present common concerns, as well as share best practices (Beatty, 1999).

This meeting led to development of The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA),

which has led to the development of . . .

> A national association, a refereed journal on academic advising,
>
> a newsletter, a consultant bureau, commissions and task forces
>
> on current issues in the profession, a set of standards, an ERIC
>
> descriptor, a resume bank and placement service, an awards
>
> program, and the establishment of a national executive adminis-
>
> trative office. In addition, the Burlington conference laid the
>
> foundation for a succession of annual national and regional
>
> conferences. (Beatty, 1999, p. 69)

This conference took advising to a new level; one in which recognized the significance and

importance of advising in higher education.

During the 1980s academic advising was emerging as a significant part of higher

education and while it held "great promise," there were barriers throughout this decade. As

Beatty (1999) describes threats of low enrollment, ownership of advising among faculty and

professional advisors, and who should be advising students were some concerns higher education

institutions were facing. With these challenges NACADA, and through the help of those in the

field of advising, began increasingly exploring and assessing advising to develop best practices

and standards. Advising started earning the recognition it deserved and its significant role in

student retention and attrition started becoming acknowledged by higher education

administrators. Today, advising continues to gain momentum and become increasingly prevalent in higher education institutions.

While advising has gained the recognition and appreciation in higher education institutions, it is still an evolving and an ever-changing field adopting and embracing cultural changes that inevitably impact higher education. One of the most significant changes (and challenges) in recent advising is distance advising. With the advancements of technology over the past two decades, more institutions are finding students enrolling in online coursework. The arrival of online learning gave many individuals the opportunity to enroll in higher education and thus institutions discovered a heterogeneous group of new students enrolling (Steele, 2005). With the development of online learning, higher education institutions naturally developed ways of providing distance advising. "Yet, an overview of the academic advising field suggests many institutions have a long road to travel before they can offer successful distance advising programs" (Steele, 2005, p. 5). Therefore, at present, institutions are still researching and developing best online advising practices to serve its population of online learners. One of the challenges for institutions is not just the use of technology in advising, but the population of online students, as their needs widely differ due to the diverse nature of online learners. In a 2004 research study by Habley (which measured students' satisfaction with distance advising at their institution) technology, implementing training for advisors, and evaluating advisors' effectiveness were all items that respondents (students) thought needed attention. Steele (2005) points out that these are all three key, critical items that must be resolved in order for distance advising to be effective. Grites (2009) acknowledges that advising is still a growing field and will continue to change as "NACADA still has much to achieve . . ." (p. 54), however advising will continue to grow and be shaped by those who sustain it - advisors and students. Reviewing

the history and evolution of advising is critical, as it explains where advising is today and lays the foundation for the road ahead. Regardless, one truth remains of advising delivery mode and that is advisors need to ensure that students' needs and expectations, of advising, are being achieved.

Trends and Challenges in Distance Advising

It is important to note that not all students view advising as beneficial. While one can see the importance and benefits of advising, Christian and Sprinkle (2012) suggest some students may feel that advising is a "waste of time" or that they "already know what they need to take to meet degree requirements" (p. 271). For the independent online learner, they may feel that they know how to navigate to degree completion without the aid of an advisor. However, Christian and Sprinkle (2012) note that there are some students who want the "added security meeting" to ensure a timely exit and positive college experience. It is important to reiterate that higher education institutions differ on advising practices and beliefs; therefore, for purposes of this research, it is important to acknowledge the contrasting advising structures among higher education institutions. Some higher education institutions have dedicated advising teams and staff that their main purpose is to advise students. However, other higher education institutions have faculty advisors who are handling advising on top of researching, teaching, and other administrative duties (Christian and Sprinkle, 2012). While this research is not going to focus on advising structures, it is important to note that advising encompasses many variables, which are interdependent of each other, as Robbins explains:

> Advising varies based on many factors: who on campus provides
> the academic advising; from what theoretical perspective students
> are advised; the training and development advisors receive; how

academic advising is delivered; the type of advising students

experience at any given point in their academic careers; whether

advising on a campus is accepted as a form of teaching; whether

advising is valued (as reflected by evaluation, reward, and

recognition of individual advisors); and the mission, goals and

desired outcomes for academic advising. (2012, p. 224)

While this diversity in advising practices can be seen in a positive light, it can present

challenges as each institution's advising structure is distinctive and therefore presents unique

barriers to overcome. Thus, successful advising practices and standards from one institution may

not be as successful with another institution, therefore analysis of each institution's advising

structures should be reviewed and assessed on a case by case basis.

A critical aspect to highlight with distance advising is the use of technology. Many

institutions, in efforts to stay connected with students, are incorporating technology in the

advising session. However, it is important that institutions should avoid technology that does not

assist or support distance advising. Gaines (2014) suggests that higher education institutions

understand how, when, and why students utilize technology to generate better advising outcomes

for both advisors and students when incorporating technology into advising. Integrating

technology just for the sake of its universal and widespread use could have negative

repercussions; therefore, it is important to understand what students' preferences and needs are in

online advising. Technology will only continue to advance and be incorporated throughout

higher education institutions ". . . the use of technology not only for academic advising but in

other areas of higher education will only increase (Robbins, 2012, p. 219). Therefore, by higher

education understanding and embracing technology and its benefits, it will assist a great deal in

servicing not only students, but the institution as a whole. Knowing online students' preferences will identify technology that can support online advising in a meaningful and desired way.

Online enrollment has not had significant increases since 2009, however many higher education institutions are adopting online course delivery. As McCafferty explains:

> Despite a slowing growth rate, online learning continues to
>
> gain traction, reflecting a shift in perception about the quality
>
> of online education as well as a realization by many institutions,
>
> large and small, public and private, that online learning represents
>
> an opportunity to enhance the quality of education, meet the
>
> expectations of digital natives, lower the cost of education and
>
> stem the rising tide of student debt, while providing an avenue to
>
> expand access and increase revenues in a time of lowered
>
> government fiscal support. (2014, pg. 23)

Institutions have several reasons for developing and expanding their online coursework and degrees, however McCafferty (2014) suggests three primary reasons for higher education institutions embracing online education: providing more course-delivery (flexible) options for students, increasing institutional size - but not the physical campus, and enhancing the institution's brand for more awareness and prestige, which leads to increase enrollment, research, and fund-raising benefits. Regardless of the reason, universities need to ensure they are equipped to attract and retain their online learners. With the increase of online options, colleges and universities have begun to compete with one another in online learning, and thus differentiating themselves is essential. "The current online learning market is in a transformational period. Against the backdrop of increasing innovation in content design, delivery, and support has

emerged a diverse array of traditional and non-traditional educational institutions and companies seeking to meet demand" (McCafferty, 2014, p. 21). Not only do online institutions need to differentiate themselves from a marketing and business stance, but they need to ensure that the development of these online sectors are providing quality learning and online student support services.

Online learning and distance advising are two key essential components in ensuring a successful online higher education experience. Higher education institutions anticipated the increase in online learning, with the technology tsunami, however failed to foresee the full extent of its technological advances (Gaines, 2014). While there has been a growth in online higher education offerings, research still lacks what technology is preferred to support the advising of online students. Kretovics (2015) notes that online services have been developed for online students, however institutions focused more on making it convenient for students to complete service encounters/requirements and not to build a sense of community engagement with the institution, therefore value and quality needs to be added. "Online services are no longer the exception, but rather now they are the expectation" (Kretovics, 2015, p.70). Therefore, institutions need to ensure they are successfully delivering quality online services and support for their students.

Curry and Barham (2007) note that voids in the literature exist, with distance advising, which suggests that more research is needed. Assumptions cannot be made towards the online learner, as the diversity of this student population is massive. Drawing conclusions that younger online learners are more technologically savvy can prove false. "Nevertheless, the technology readiness of online students should not be overestimated. Students may be competent in online games or social networking tools, but not equipped in online learning to do well in online class

obviously requires more than savviness in online technology" (Suciati, 2011, p. 217). Building

the necessary tools and support for the online students will aid immensely in the advising process

and can ensure that distance advising is targeting the needs of the student. Thus, knowing online

student preferences is critical, as the diversity of this population can be quite unwieldly in

developing and identifying support. ". . . those in the younger demographic will likely have more

experience with technology and be more facile with it than their old counterparts. However,

those with mature judgment may better utilize electronic or virtual modes of information

delivery and communication with an advisor" (Gaines, 2014, p. 44). Studies show that online

learning (academic courses) have seen the influx in blogs, collaborative project tools, and

learning management systems to support the delivery and experience of online learning (Sims,

2013). Yet, as technology continues to advance and evolve, institutions should not rest, assuming

that they are providing the necessary resources to its online learners. It is essential to also

highlight the use of technology with advisors. Picciano (2015) noted the importance of staff

development and training in online education, "A fundamental characteristic of technology is

that it changes, sometimes rapidly, and those using it will need on-going development if they are

to be successful in its applications" (p. 150). Institutions should view distance advising as a

continuous university endeavor that requires consistent and on-going research due to the nature

of technology.

> As developments in educational technology continue to advance,
>
> the ways in which we deliver and receive knowledge in both the
>
> traditional and online classrooms will further evolve. It is
>
> necessary to investigate and understand the progression and
>
> advancements in educational technology and the variety of

methods used to deliver knowledge to improve the quality of

education we provide today and motivate, inspire, and educate the

students of the 21st century. (Kentor, 2015, p. 21)

Significance of Online Advising

For the interest of universities and their communities it is important that time is dedicated

towards researching online students' retention and attrition. This requires not only focusing on

classroom and faculty support, but out of the classroom, advising support. Majority of research

has been focused towards face to face, classroom learning in relation to students' preferences,

success, and retention; however additional research is needed for online student preferences

outside the classroom. Stevenson noted, "There are numerous models for understanding the

persistence of the traditional student. Online students, however, vary substantially and their

needs are different" (2013, p. 21).

It is important that online institutions offer meaningful and engaging distance advising.

Stevenson (2013) noted the significant role the advisor has in terms of student support and how

they are oftentimes the connecting piece for the student to the university. King (1993)

highlighted that academic advising is "the only structured service on campus that guarantees

students some kind of interaction with a concerned representative of the institution…" (p. 21).

Whether at a distance or face to face, one cannot undermine the important role the advisor

encompasses. "The student advisor often has numerous roles in the planning stages of adult

education, such as assistance with course selection, identifying services available to students and

servicing as the social support system to acclimate new students into the academic environment"

(Stevenson, 2013, p. 22). Thus, one can easily see the important role advisors play in students'

college experience.

One of the biggest factors ensuring student success in online learning is staying connected with the student. "Without the guidance provided by advising, students may take longer to graduate, enroll in unneeded courses, encounter greater financial expense, and/or even become frustrated enough to change majors or withdraw from the university" (Christian & Sprinkle, 2013, p. 280). Tinto (1987) suggests that feelings of isolation, unmet personal needs, and unattended interests significantly contribute to students' dropping out. Staying in contact with the student and offering support is imperative. As Nolan (2013) states:

> As more colleges add online courses and fully online programs, the
>
> need to offer online support to students becomes more apparent.
>
> The connection to an adviser is critical for all students, but for
>
> online students it can serve as their primary connection to the
>
> institution….Good academic advising must be part of the online
>
> support package. (p. 47)

It is apparent that online students' pursue the support and guidance of an advisor; when surveyed 94% of respondents stated they have a strong desire to have an advisor (Nolan, 2013). Advising is central in promoting student success and retention initiatives, therefore higher education institutions cannot undermine the significance of online advising.

McClellan (2010) noted this is typically the norm among institutions, "Training programs for advisors are limited, and many organizations have not developed ways of coordinating advising across departments, divisions, and schools" (p. 33). Knowing the desired student learning outcomes will highlight what needs to be involved in the advising process for the outcomes to be achieved (Robbins, 2012). Therefore, findings from this study will provide

support for online students and advisors as data will determine online students' preferences and needs for advising for the campus studied.

Moving Forward

Research studies have been analyzed to create an understanding of and foundation for distance advising. A trend discovered is that majority of studies typically focused on assessing student perceptions of online advising compared to face-to-face advising, very little research was found focusing solely on distance advising. While these studies are insightful, more attention needs to be focused solely on distance advising. Several research studies were reviewed and analyzed to determine the best way of measuring online students' perceptions of distance advising moving forward with this research.

Therefore, numerous research studies were reviewed and analyzed to ensure this study was moving in an effective approach of conducting research. Understanding previous studies set the standards for moving forward on researching distance advising.

One study focused on face-to-face advising practices and discovered that lack of alignment, or both student and advisor expectations, of advising can lead to student dissatisfaction with advising. ". . . universities should carefully tailor advising to meet student needs rather than defaulting to a developmental approach . . . the results of this study indicate meeting student expectations, whether developmental or prescriptive, contributes to student satisfaction" (Anderson, Motto, & Bourdeaux, 2014, p. 36). This aligns with previous literature and NACADA suggesting that advising practices should be diverse not only among institutions, but to the individual student. Therefore, institutions should critically examine one's mission and university culture when developing advising expectations. However, data suggests that developmental advising strategies have been widely adopted over prescriptive advising

throughout today's higher education institutions. "While developmental advising yields a wide variety of benefits for universities, privileging the developmental approach overlooks the diverse needs of today's student" (Anderson, Motto, & Bourdeaux, 2014, p. 37). Anderson et al. (2014) suggested, from their findings, understanding student expectations of advising will assist in developing and maintaining an effective advising program. After a review of their study, it assisted a great deal in developing and framing the foundation for this research study. Directions for future research, based from this study, suggested measuring advisors' perceptions and expectations of advising as well as reviewing students advising perceptions from different generations. For purposes of this research, both advisors and students will be assessed for purposes of formulating and assessing a performance gap analysis. "With data from both advisees and advisors, congruence and incongruence between the expectations and behaviors of both parties could be studied" (Anderson, Motto, & Bourdeaux, 2014, p. 40). While this study only focused on face-to-face advising, it is believed that this study can be altered to measure distance advising and advisors who conduct distance advising. By performing a comparative analysis this will assist in determining what qualities are lacking in the performance of advisors. This will only increase the depth of this research study by going a step further and collecting distance advisors' responses. Therefore, suggestions and implications for future research, based from Anderson, Motto, and Bourdeaux's (2014) study, will be incorporated.

A research study that assisted in shaping this study measured higher education students' level of needs based on Abraham Maslow. However, researchers were not able to ascertain the findings from the research and therefore suggested further research through qualitative methods (Gobin, Teeroovengadum, Becceea, & Teeroovengadum, 2012). Therefore, for purposes of this

research study, an appropriate instrument that would yield results and not necessitate further research is essential.

Christian and Sprinkle (2012), researched higher education students' perceptions and ideals of advising by conducting an exploratory analysis using a modified instrument based on Crookston's (1972) exploration of developmental advising. While this research had validity and reliability, it only focused on developmental advising and Crookston's instrument has the possibility of yielding both prescriptive and descriptive results (Winston and Sandor, 1984). Previous literature suggests that not all students' may be academically prepared or even desire developmental advising. Therefore, this research study wanted to not only focus on developmental advising, but prescriptive advising as well, as Teasley and Buchanan (2013) note.

> Although a significant amount of literature on advising has been
>
> devoted to determining whether prescriptive advising or
>
> developmental advising is superior, both methods of advising
>
> should be utilized at certain times throughout a student's college
>
> career in a comprehensive approach. (p. 5)

Therefore, excluding prescriptive advising did not seem credible, nor beneficial in moving forward in this research.

In selecting the most appropriate research instrument, reliability and validity were two main priorities of this research study. Assurance that the results and conclusions, based on the findings, are accurate are of high concern. Therefore, Winston and Sandor's Academic Advising Inventory (AAI, 1984) was selected based on the fact that reliability and validity of the inventory were tested and proved the inventory to be a sound instrument. There have been a multitude of research studies conducted utilizing the AAI. Based on this high number of uses, this was

interpreted that these studies had success implementing the AAI. The AAI was also selected for is accessibility, as the copyright holder (Student Development Associates, Inc.) does not require specific permission for use in dissertation studies. However, the AAI has guidelines for proper usage. Parts I and II questions may not be altered or removed, but researchers do have permission to alter Parts III and IV at their discretion.

The AAI measures three aspects of academic advising (Parts I-III) and student demographic-type information (Part IV). Parts of the inventory are divided as follows: (Part I) the nature of advising relationships (developmental or prescriptive), (Part II) the frequency of activities taking place during advising sessions, (Part III) satisfaction with advising, and (Part IV) demographic-type information about the student. The instrument went through multiple trials and extensive reviews, to ensure questions were accurately labeling and defining advising. To ensure internal consistency reliability, Part I (Developmental-Prescriptive Advising) was estimated through use of Cronbach Alpha procedure where it was concluded that Part I was relatively homogeneous and strong enough to measure groups of students (Winston & Sandor, 1984). Also, the subscales found in Part I were reasonably independent measures as well. Validity was measured in two ways: contrasting groups and correlating categories of activities in Part II. For contrasting groups, the inventory was administered to two groups of students where it was assumed one group received prescriptive advising and the second group received developmental advising. The two groups were statistically significantly different ($p < .001$), which provides strong support for the validity of the instrument. Establishing validity through correlation of categories was found to be plausible as well, suggesting that conclusions could be made based from correlations assessing different parts of the instrument.

The purpose of this study is to examine distance advising for online undergraduate students. Specifically, this research study seeks to understand undergraduate students' perceptions of distant advising where, from the results gathered, suggestions and recommendations will be provided to increase and enhance the distance advising experience, which will ultimately benefit not only student success, but the university as a whole. As suggested by previous research studies measuring online/distance advising for students, this study also measured distance advisors' preferences and satisfaction with distance advising. By issuing two complimentary surveys this would permit for identification of any gaps existing among online students and the distance advisors. Results from this comparative study would be provided to the university to enhance and ensure quality distance advising is being achieved. In addition, recommendations for future trainings would be included for the distance advisors to participate in for professional development opportunities.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This research study seeks to understand undergraduate students' perceptions of distant advising where, from the results gathered, suggestions and recommendations will be provided to increase and enhance the distance advising experience. Specifically, this study will investigate online students' needs, preferences, and satisfaction in distance advising as well as measured the advisors who conduct distance advising for this population of students. This chapter includes a description of the institutional setting and provides the criteria used for choosing subjects to be researched for this study. Demographics of the institution are also included and procedures for collecting and analyzing the data gathered.

Research Design

This research utilized only quantitative methods of research to identify associations, trends, and relationships from the data collected by selecting a comparative study; both descriptive quantitative analysis and comparative analysis were used. By having two groups of participants – distance learning students and distance advisors - a comparative study was deemed most beneficial in determining gaps in the practice of distance advising. Once the Academic Advising Inventory online surveys were completed, the quantifiable data were analyzed to address the research questions using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) using frequencies and descriptive statistics. The AAI manual for purposes of coding responses, as well as descriptive statistics and Chi-square were utilized throughout this research to ensure participants' answers were accurately depicted and collected.

Sample Collection

The participants for this study included a sample selected from a large, public, mid-Atlantic university. All participants were undergraduate online students, over the age of 18, who

had completed at least one distance advising session with the institution. This study specifically wanted to focus on undergraduate online students who had received distance advising; therefore, participants were pulled from the fall 2016 enrollment report and were contacted in that same semester to participate in the study. This ensured that students had received distance advising from the institution and would be able to respond. A total of 3,242 students were given the opportunity to participate. Permission to contact students for participation in this study, through their university student email address, was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), where this study was exempted from IRB review (Appendix A). However, all advisors, who provide distance advising, were notified of the request for their advisees to participate in the study. The advisors who advise at a distance were also contacted by their university email to participate in the study and their supervisors were also aware of the study and served as advocates for advisors to participate. Participants were informed that participation was optional, and anonymity would be guaranteed throughout the entire research study. The email sent shared that results from this study would be presented and made available to all participants in the study and that the overall goal was to enhance and improve distance advising for both students and advisors.

Institutional Setting

The university researched for this study was Old Dominion University which was founded in 1930 as a distance campus site location for The College of William and Mary. In 1962 the university became independent and gained university status in 1969 and started offering distance learning in the mid-1980s. The university is located within the Hampton Roads region of Virginia and is accredited by the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS). As of fall 2016, the university had a total enrollment of 24,322 undergraduate and graduate students.

Of those 24,322 students, 5,195 were enrolled exclusively online. It is important to note that this university's online division offers all required courses online for some programs, while other programs are degree completion. Therefore, majority of online students attending this university have previous coursework or degrees from other higher education institutions, typically a community college.

Until fall 2014, distance learning courses were delivered in a variety of modes, including internet and video stream (both online) and televised (students attend a live class on one of the university's distance site locations). An analysis was conducted using data from 2009 to 2013, which showed registrations by delivery mode. Data revealed that internet learning (online) increased nearly 50% and televised learning decreased by 55% (Annual Report Old Dominion University, 2013, p. 22). Therefore, to meet student needs, summer 2014 the university closed its satellite delivery and began offering all coursework fully online utilizing Cisco's WebEx Conferencing.

In offering courses 100% online, the university restructured its distance advising model during this time as well. Online students who were previously advised by geographic location are now assigned to a distance advisor according by major and last name; in fall 2016, there were a total of 16 distance advisors who advise online undergraduate students at a distance. The university has six academic colleges: Arts and Letters, Business, Education, Engineering and Technology, Health Sciences, and Sciences. In this new model, it is assumed that distance advisors are specialists in their assigned college. Previously, distance advisors had to focus on all six academic colleges and with the new advising model they are only responsible for their one assigned college. It is important to note that the university makes no differentiation of its main campus and online learning programs, therefore the curriculum, rigor, and academic

requirements are the parallel. Thus, the only difference between main campus and online students are how students are receiving academic advising and the delivery of their courses.

As of fall 2016 the university offered 25 undergraduate and 28 graduate degree programs and a multitude of certificate and licensure/endorsement courses online. Of those 5,195 online enrollments 3,348 were undergraduate students who received advising and courses 100% online, meaning students did not attend campus for advising or class. Of those 3,348 undergraduate students, 68% were female and 32% were male with the largest age group being between 25-34 years of age (40%) and the next too largest age group being between 18-24 (33%). The student population consisted of 58% White, 22% African-American, 7% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 9% identifying as two or more races or Unknown.

Procedures

From a list of available undergraduate, online students, the researcher reached out by email to a total of 3,348 during the fall 2016 semester. Of those 3,348 emails sent, 3,242 were successfully delivered to students. In order to obtain student emails, permission to contact was approved by the Assistant Vice President for Support and Academic Partnerships for Distance Learning. The first email (see Appendix B) was sent by the researcher on October 24, 2016 (to the students) explaining the survey and requesting participation. Exactly three days later, on October 27, 2016, a second email (see Appendix C) was sent reminding students to participate in the survey. A third email reminder was sent on November 17, 2016 (see Appendix D) and a fourth, and final email, on December 6, 2016 (see Appendix E) reminding students that the survey would close on December 12, 2016. All four emails included a link to the survey, explained participation was voluntary and anonymous, and included an "opt out" link if students preferred not to continue receiving emails regarding this research study.

Previous research studies suggested analyzing both students and advisors. Therefore, during the fall 2016 semester, distance learning advisors were also contacted by email to participate in the study. It is important to note that distance learning advisors, for the institution being researched, are considered academic advisors which requires a minimum of a master's degree or higher. Advisors serving in this role, are tasked with the primary purpose of advising undergraduate, distance learning students and assisting students throughout their degree experience. It is important to note that the institution being researched does have faculty advisors whose primary role is teaching and conducting research, but do support advising to some capacity. However, faculty advisors, at the institution being researched, do not currently advise undergraduate, distance learning students and were therefore excluded from the research. The first email, sent to distance learning advisors, was sent on October 24, 2016 (see Appendix F) explaining the research study and requesting participation by completing the survey. The second and final email (see Appendix G) sent to the distance advisors was on October 31, 2016, reminding them to complete the survey by November 4, 2016. Both emails included a link to the survey, explained participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Personal information, for both students and distance learning advisors, were not collected during any time to ensure anonymity of the study; however, respondents were required to be 18 or older to participate in the study. Throughout the research, the researcher did not keep track of respondents, nor knew who had and who had not completed the survey.

Survey Instrument

The Winston and Sandor's Academic Advising Inventory (AAI) was selected for this study as it provides quantifiable data that can be examined and analyzed through statistical tests. The inventory also provides both a formative and summative evaluation of advising. The

formative evaluation component of this instrument evaluates the practice and progression of advising, where the summative evaluation component measures the proficiency, effectiveness, and overall satisfaction of advising. The AAI measures three aspects of academic advising: Part I - Nature of the advising relationship (developmental or prescriptive), Part II - Frequency of activities taking place during the advising sessions, and Part III - Satisfaction with advising.

The AAI has a total of 57 multiple choice questions and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. The AAI was slightly modified for purposes of this study, to include appropriate questions for distance learning advising students (see Appendix H) and for distance learning advisors (see Appendix I). Administration and scoring of the AAI were guided by the *Evaluating Academic Advising: Manual for the Academic Advising Inventory* developed by Winston and Sandor (1984) to ensure the AAI was correctly implemented. Instructions on coding and assessing the data were also included in this manual, which aided the researcher in interpreting the results. Findings from this survey will provide insight to students' and distance advisors' preferences and experiences with distance advising.

Data Collection

The modified Academic Advising Inventory (AAI) was emailed to distance learning advisors and students during the fall 2016 semester to complete. Both groups of participants were asked if they had been advised by one of the university's distance advisors or delivered distance advising to students, to ensure participants had distance advising experience by the particular university being studied. The survey was developed using Qualtrics and was reviewed by a group of individuals to ensure questions were clear and easy for respondents to answer.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This research study seeks to understand undergraduate students' perceptions of distant advising. The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of the data analysis. This chapter is organized into two sections. This first section provides a description of the sample. The second section of this chapter describes the analysis of the data by focusing on each research question asked in this study.

Sample

The distance learning student sample for this study accurately depicted the population in which this research intended to measure. Of the 3,348 students emailed, 3,242 students were successfully contacted, with a response of 498 who completed the survey. Meade and Craig (2011) highlighted spurious within-group variability and lower reliability that can lead to attenuate correlations from "careless participants." Meade and Craig (2011) defined careless participants as respondents who are inattentive and not focused when completing the survey. Therefore, to ensure accurate results, the researcher wanted to ensure a clean data set and therefore eliminated participants who missed 3 or more questions. Therefore, 378 survey respondents were used for this research and data interpretation. By eliminating these factors, this ensured a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. A comparison of the ODU Online student demographics and those that responded to the survey are outlined in Table 2.

Research Findings

Table 2

Comparison of ODU Online Student Demographics and Student Survey Respondents

_____

Variable	Demographics[a]	Total Survey Respondents
Population	3,348	378
Male	32%	27%
Female	68%	73%
Full-Time	31%	42%
Part-Time	69%	58%
African American/Black	22%	19%
Hispanic American/Latino	7%	2%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	4%	3%
White/Caucasian	58%	65%
Biracial/Multiracial	5%	4%
Other/Unknown/Decline to Respond	4%	7%

[a]Based on fall 2016 semester

RQ1: What are the perceived performance gaps between online students and online advisors' practice?

The first research question addressed perceived performance gaps between distance learning students and advisors' practice. To answer this research question the researcher focused on Part I of the survey which addressed developmental and prescriptive advising. By administering this survey to two populations the researcher focused on what advisors perceived they were delivering (in terms of advising style) and what students perceived they were

receiving in advising sessions. In this comparative analysis, the researcher identified performance gaps, where advisors and students did not perceive the same style of advising. Due to the large choice of responses that participants could select, responses were re-coded to increase the efficiency of interpretation and findings. For example, Part I choice options for students' responses were "A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H." Question responses varied throughout Part I of the survey, therefore the researcher had to interpret each statement for questions 1-14 and code as either representing a developmental or prescriptive advising style. The response scale for Part I questions identified "level to which" certain types of advising were being performed. This study was not examining the level of advising but the type of advising. Therefore, the response scale was recoded to a dichotomous variable to support the research question examining advising type (developmental vs. prescriptive). To better clarify the re-coding process, question one responses "A, B, C, D" represented developmental advising therefore were re-coded as "1" and responses "E, F, G, H" represented prescriptive advising and were re-coded as "2." This condensed the responses considerably for a more efficient analysis and comparison of the two groups. By running frequencies for each group (advisors and students) the researcher compared and identified performance gaps based on advising perceptions. In comparing all 14 questions, 4 questions demonstrated gaps between advisors' and distance learning students' advising perceptions.

Discrepancies were evident when discussing vocational opportunities. Data findings suggested that students perceived to experience more prescriptive advising and that 60% of student respondents did not discuss vocational opportunities. Interestingly, advisors responded employing a developmental approach and that 90% of advisor respondents did discuss vocational opportunities. Table 3 shows the data findings for vocational opportunities.

Table 3

Vocational Opportunities (Part I, Question 3)

_____

Developmental Statement	Advisor Response	Student Response
My advisor and I talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.	n/a	40%
My advisee and I talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.	90%	n/a
Prescriptive Statement	Advisor Response	Student Response
My advisor and I do not talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.	n/a	60%
My advisee and I do not talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.	10%	n/a

Another gap appeared in question 4: Outside of class activities as shown in Table 4. Students perceived to experience more prescriptive advising as 63% responded that their advisor did not know what they do outside of class, however advisors responded towards more of a developmental approach with 63% responding that they showed an interest in students' outside-of-class activities.

Table 4

Outside-of-Class Activities (Part I, Question 4)

_____

Developmental Statement	Advisor Response	Student Response
My advisor shows an interest in my outside-of-class activities and sometimes suggests activities.	n/a	37%
I show an interest in my advisees outside-of-class activities and sometimes suggests activities.	63%	n/a
Prescriptive Statement	Advisor Response	Student Response
My advisor does not know what I do outside of class.	n/a	63%
I do not know what my advisees do outside of class.	37%	n/a

Discrepancies were also evident in regard to time management as shown in Table 5. Students appeared to experience more prescriptive advising as 54% responded that they do not discuss time management tips with their advisors, however advisors responded towards more of a developmental approach with 82% responding that time management suggestions were given when students appear to need them.

Table 5

Time Management (Part I, Question 9)

_____

Descriptive Statement	Advisor Response	Student Response
My advisor gives me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively when I seem to need them.	n/a	46%
I give my advisees tips on managing their time better or on studying more effectively when they seem to need them.	82%	n/a
Prescriptive Statement	Advisor Response	Student Response
My advisor does not spend time giving me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively.	n/a	54%
I do not spend time giving my advisees tips on managing their time better or on studying more effectively.	18%	n/a

Lastly, gaps were evident in discussing other-than-academic interests and plans. As shown in Table 6, students appeared to experience more prescriptive advising as 53% responded that they do not discuss other-than-academic interests and plans with their advisors and advisors responded towards more of a developmental approach with 91% responded that these discussions occur.

Table 6

Other-Than-Academic Interests and Plans (Part I, Question 13)

_____

Statement	Advisor Response	Student Response
My advisor talks with me about my other-than-academic interests and plans.	n/a	47%
I talk with my advisees about other-than-academic interests and plans.	91%	n/a
Prescriptive Statement	Advisor Response	Student Response
My advisor does not talk with me about interests and plans other than academic ones.	n/a	53%
I do not talk with my advisees about interests and plans other than academic ones.	9%	n/a

Overall, throughout this comparative analysis, students' and advisors' advising perceptions were in alignment, which favored that of a developmental advising style. However, discussing vocational opportunities (Part I - Question #3), outside-of-class activities (Part I - Question #4), time management (Part I - Question #9), and other-than academic interests and plans (Part I - Question #13) students' and advisors' perceptions differed. Results identified gaps among students and advisors in these four advising areas as students selected the prescriptive statement and advisors selected the developmental statement as being more representative of their advising experience.

This study also found that advisors and students top five advising needs were not in complete alignment; therefore, what advisors may think is essential for advising is not necessarily what students are seeking or needing. In Table 7 you will see the top five needs, organized by student and advisor responses in rank order.

Table 7

Advising Needs that are Essential for Distance Advising (Part IV, Question 23)

_____

Rank	Student Response	Advisor Response
1	Course selection	Course selection
2	Graduation planning	Learning about ODU Online resources
3	Online registration	Online registration
4	Career planning	Building a relationship With my advisee
5	Building a relationship with my advisor	Graduation planning

RQ2: Are students' needs being satisfied through distance advising?

The second research question addressed how students' needs were being satisfied through distance advising. Data showed that advisors were meeting students' advising needs and understood students' advising preferences; 86% of students selected agreed (37.1%) or strongly agreed (49.3%) that their advisor met their advising needs (question #16) and 86% of students agreed (41.2%) or strongly agreed (44.4%) that their advisor understood their advising preferences. Part II of the survey focused on frequency of advising topics and was analyzed to ensure accuracy of students' responses. The researcher sought validation that students' responses were truthful, therefore both advisor and student data were compared. Table 8 and Table 9 shows, the top three most and least, respectively, frequently discussed advising topics were in alignment; inferring that advisors' and students' frequencies were a factual representation of advising discussions.

Table 8

Top Three Most Frequently Discussed Topics in Advising (Part II)

Most Frequently Discussed Item	Student Response
Selecting courses for next term[b]	94%
Planning a class schedule for next term[b]	89%
Discussing degree or major/academic concentration requirements[b]	88%

	Advisor Response
Planning a class schedule for next term[c]	91%
Discussing financial aid[c]	91%
Discussing degree or major/academic concentration requirements[c]	82%

[b]Based on respondents that selected 1 time or more
[c]Based on respondents that selected 3 times or more

Table 9

Top Three Least Frequently Discussed Topics in Advising (Part II)

_____

Least Frequently Discussed Item	Student Response
Discussing important social or political issues[d]	85%
Discussing study abroad or other special academic programs[d]	77%
Discussing job placement opportunities[d]	75%
	Advisor Response
Discussing important social or political issues[d]	91%
Signing registration forms[d]	46%
Discussing study abroad or other special academic programs[d]	27%

[d]Responded as "None" and interpreted as never discussed

Table 10 shows a comparison of most frequently discussed and top three advising needs by

students and what students perceived as essential for distance advising.

Table 10

A Comparison of Most Frequently Discussed and Top Advising Needs by Student Response

_____

Most Frequently Discussed Item	Student Response	Top Advising Need	Student Response
Selecting courses for next term	94%	Course Selection	84%
Planning a class schedule for next term	89%	Graduation Planning	60%
Discussing degree or major/ academic concentration requirements	88%	Assistance with forms and paperwork	52%

From students' responses on selecting their top three advising needs (Part III - Question 23) and most frequently discussed items (Part II), the data showed that students' needs were being met through discussing academic requirements, course selection, and graduation planning.

RQ3: What current tools and technology resources are being incorporated to assist advisors in supporting students through distance advising?

The third research question focused on tools and technology resources, specifically what types of technology were being used to assist advisors in supporting students through distance advising. Students' responses listed email, DegreeWorks (an online, academic advising tool for course selection and degree planning), and Leo Online (ODU's online student information system) were the top three responses selected. Table 11 shows (in descending order) the tools and technologies that students selected as being incorporated during the distance advising session. Students were able to select multiple tools.

Table 11

Tools and Technology (Part III, Question 20)

_____

Tools/Technology	Student Response
Email	327
Degree Works	280
Leo Online	238
WebEx Video Conferencing	180
Telephone	164
Blackboard	134
Internet	106
Facebook	3
Twitter	2

N = 378

RQ₄: Do advising needs and advisor practices differ based on college?

The study's fourth research question addressed how advising needs differed based on the student's academic college. Question #23, from Part III of the student survey, was used to identify the top three advising needs. Those top three advising needs were: 1) course selection, 2) graduation planning, and 3) assistance with forms and paperwork. From these top advising needs, the researcher identified statements in Part I that captured these needs. Table 12 displays students' advising needs and the corresponding statement (from Part I) that represents students' advising needs.

Table 12

Students' Advising Needs (Part I and III)

_____

Advising Need	Part I, Question #	Part I Statements
Course selection	1	My advisor is interested in helping me learn how to find out about courses and programs for myself. **OR** My advisor tells me what I need to know about my academic courses and programs.
	12	My advisor and I use information, such as test scores, grades, interests, and abilities, to determine what courses are most appropriate for me to take. **OR** My advisor uses test scores and grades to let him or her know what courses are most appropriate for me to take.
Graduation planning	5	My advisor assists me in identifying realistic academic goals based on what I know about myself, as well as about my test scores and grades. **OR** My advisor identifies realistic academic goals for me based on my test scores.

Advising Need	Part I, Question #	Part I Statements
Assistance with forms	14	My advisor keeps informed of my academic progress by examining my files and grades and by talking to me about my classes. **OR** My advisor keeps me informed of my academic progress by examining my files and grades *only*.

Part I of the survey questions were identified that represented students' advising needs and a chi-square was performed to assess the six academic colleges and students' responses for questions #1 and #12 (course selection), question #5 (graduation planning), and question #14 (assistance with forms and paperwork). A chi-square was selected to determine if a relationship was evident between students' academic college and their advising needs since the variables were categorical. Findings showed that students experienced a more developmental style of advising for these top three advising needs and that this style of advising was consistent across all six colleges. One notable difference was for the College of Arts and Letters, where students identified as having more of a prescriptive advising experience in regard to course selection. Table 13 shows that 58% of respondents identified and selected the statement "My advisor tells me what I need to know about my academic courses and programs." Overall, students identified that their advising needs were met with a developmental style of advising which was largely represented among all six academic colleges.

Table 13

Advising need: Course Selection (Part I, Question 1)

_____

College	Developmental	Prescriptive
Arts & Letters	42%	58%
Business	51%	49%
Education	53%	47%
Engineering	59%	41%
Health Sciences	56%	44%
Sciences	64%	36%

Table 14 further illustrates how a majority of students in all six, academic colleges identified with the developmental statement, "My advisor and I use information, such as test scores, grades, interests, and abilities, to determine what courses are most appropriate for me to take."

Table 14

Advising Need: Course Selection (Part I, Question 12)

_____

College	Developmental	Prescriptive
Arts & Letters	80%	20%
Business	69%	31%
Education	77%	23%
Engineering	73%	27%
Health Sciences	72%	28%
Sciences	73%	27%

Table 15 illustrates students' advising need of graduation planning. A majority of students in all six, academic colleges identified with the developmental statement, "My advisor assists me in identifying realistic academic goals based on what I know about myself as well as about my test scores and grades."

Table 15

Advising Need: Graduation Planning (Part I, Question 5)

_____

College	Developmental	Prescriptive
Arts & Letters	55%	45%
Business	60%	40%
Education	69%	31%
Engineering	85%	15%
Health Sciences	63%	37%
Sciences	60%	40%

The last student advising need "Assistance with Forms and Paperwork," as illustrated in Table 16, further supports students developmental experience as majority chose the "My advisor keeps informed of my academic progress by examining my files and grades and by talking to me about my classes" statement as a reflection of their advising experience.

Table 16

Advising Need: Assistance with Forms and Paperwork (Part I Question 14)

_____

College	Developmental	Prescriptive
Arts & Letters	62%	38%
Business	59%	41%
Education	65%	35%
Engineering	59%	41%
Health Sciences	70%	30%
Sciences	53%	47%

Overall findings show that students and advisors both experienced a developmental style of advising in their advising sessions and that students needs were being satisfied through course selection, class scheduling, and graduation planning. However, notable gaps were identified among advisors and students when it came to discussing other-than-academic interests and plans, vocational opportunities, outside-of-class activities, and time management tips. In these four areas, students experienced a more prescriptive style of advising and advisors identified as delivering a more developmental style of advising. The overall implications of these findings are discussed in Chapter 5 as well as research implications and contributions to the field of distance advising.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Distance learning advising research shows that significant time and exploration has been conducted for advising traditional, main campus students (Stevenson, 2013). Reports and statistics show that online enrollment in at least one online course is increasing among higher education institutions and that academic leadership views online learning as part of their institution's plan (Allen & Seaman, 2014; Babson Survey Research Group, 2014). Higher education institutions must recognize the significant role the advisor has in terms of student support and how they are oftentimes the connecting piece for the student to the university (Stevenson, 2013).

The intent of this study was to focus on distance learning students' and advisors' perceptions of distance advising at a large, public university. Specifically, this study addressed the perceived performance gaps between distance learning students and distance learning advisors practice, how distance learning students' needs were being satisfied, what tools and technology resources were being incorporated, and how advising needs differed based on college. The Winston and Sandor Academic Advising Inventory (AAI) served as the foundation for this quantitative research. The survey was modified accordingly and sent to two populations: distance learning advisors and distance learning students. The goal was to collect advisors and students current distance learning advising experiences and perceptions so a comparative analysis of the two populations could be analyzed.

Developmental Advising Revealed

Crookston (2009) noted that the greatest difficulty in advising is the differing meanings advisors and students attach to advising and admits that expectations around the functions of an advisor are confusing. "Too often both parties launch into a relationship assuming both have the

56

same idea of what the role of each is to be in the advisor-student relationship. The result is often counterproductive, if not total disaster" (Crookston, 2009, p. 82). In this competitive online market, there are a plethora of distance learning institutions and students are oftentimes viewed as "shoppers." It is essential that the online student experience is positive and meets the needs of the online learner. Results from this study confirmed that distance learning advisors and students perceived their current advising experiences as more of a developmental style of advising, however notable gaps were evident in what they perceived as top advising needs.

This study found that, overall, students were satisfied with their distance advising experience and felt that their advisor understood their distance advising preferences. This study was able to conclude that students' advising needs were being satisfied through course selection, class scheduling, and academic/major requirement discussions. Nolan (2013) addresses the criticality of the advisor and student relationship, specifically for distance learning students, as it serves as students' primary connection to the institution. While students were overall satisfied with the distance advising experience, this research discovered gaps and inconsistences between students' and advisors' top advising needs. One notable gap was discussing graduation. Graduation planning was the second most important advising need for students, where this ranked as the fifth most important advising need among advisors. Another discrepancy was evident in regards to learning about ODU Online resources as it ranked as the second most important advising need among advisors, however wasn't within the top five advising needs among students. These discrepancies confirm Anderson, Motto, and Bourdeaux belief that ". . . universities should carefully tailor advising to meet student needs rather than defaulting to a developmental approach . . ." (2014, p. 36). Higher education institutions need to understand that advising is not a one size fits all approach. Distance advising needs to go beyond selecting an

advising model (Prescriptive or Developmental) and should establish practices that focus on individualizing the student advising experience. Adopting this framework aligns with previous literature and NACADA, which suggests that advising practices should be diverse and tailored to the individual student. Previous research suggests that developmental advising strategies have been widely adopted over prescriptive advising throughout today's higher education institutions, which is consistent with this research's findings; however, only practicing a developmental approach of advising can overlook the diverse needs of today's student. Anderson et al. (2014) suggested that understanding student expectations of advising will assist in developing and maintaining an effective advising program. This research was able to not only confirm the advising model used by distance learning advising (developmental), but students' preferences and needs for advising. This will permit distance advisors to develop advising practices that align to students' expectations overall resulting in an effective and more streamlined advising experience.

Gaines (2014) suggests that higher education institutions need to understand how, when, and why students utilize technology to generate better advising outcomes for both advisors and students when incorporating technology into advising. Integrating technology just for the sake of its universal and widespread use could have negative repercussions. Based on students' responses, email, Degree Works (an online, academic advising tool for course selection and degree planning), and Leo Online (the university's online student information system) were the top three technology resources being utilized in advising. Technology will continue to develop and be incorporated throughout distance learning ". . . the use of technology not only for academic advising but in other areas of higher education will only increase" (Robbins, 2012, p. 219). Knowing distance learning students' preferences for tools and technology will immensely

contribute to the delivery and quality of advising as well as provide institutions' insight on how it is being applied in distance learning advising for strategic planning efforts.

Findings showed no notable differences across the university's six academic colleges in terms of advisors' delivery method of students' top advising needs (which were course selection, graduation planning, and assistance with forms and paperwork). This finding counters McClellan's (2010) claim that advising practices typically differ across an institutional setting as training and education is often times limited for advisors. McClellan states, "Training programs for advisors are limited, and many organizations have not developed ways of coordinating advising across departments, divisions, and schools" (p. 33). Findings were consistent in that all students experienced a more developmental style of advising except for the College of Arts and Letters where slightly over half (58%) of students experienced a more prescriptive style of advising in terms of course selection. This consistency of advising practices across all six colleges could be attributed to the university's investment of a distance learning training and student success team. This team was initially formed and tasked with the purpose of educating and informing the distance learning team on best practices; it is evident that this widespread training across all six academic colleges has streamlined the advising practice within the distance learning division.

Overall findings showed that students and advisors both experienced a developmental style of advising in their distance advising sessions and students' needs were being satisfied through course selection, class scheduling, and graduation planning. Notable gaps were identified among advisors and students in discussing topics other than academic interests and plans, vocational opportunities, outside of class activities, and time management tips. In these four areas, students experienced a more prescriptive style of advising and advisors identified as

delivering a more developmental style of advising. It was also evident through comparison that students' distance advising needs and advisors' distance advising needs were not in alignment; which supports the findings of Anderson, Motto, and Bourdeaux (2014) that practicing a developmental style of advising is not enough. It is vital, for advising to be successful, that distance advisors proactively seek to understand their students' advising needs and expectations of the advising experience. In understanding students' needs, the advising experience can be customized to address the individual student.

One significant finding that should be further addressed were students' least frequently discussed advising topics, which were 1) Discussing important social or political issues, 2) Discussing study abroad or other special academic programs, and 3) Discussing job placement opportunities. All three of these "least frequently discussed topics in advising" largely represent developmental concepts of academic advising. Theorist supporting developmental advising encourage advisors to take advising beyond course selection and registration (Robbins, 2012). One notable item to mention was the 2016 United States Presidential election was occurring during the time this survey was distributed; whether this had any influence on students' responses, it was clear that discussions on social and political issues were not occurring in advising, which is a surprising find given the timeline.

Developmental advising should focus on exploring students' rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills (Crookston, 2009). If ODU Online wants to foster and encourage a developmental advising model, it is critical that they align their advising goals to ensure advisors are practicing an all-encompassing developmental style of advising. While a majority of distance learning advising is exemplifying a developmental advising approach, data shows that gaps are evident and

suggesting prescriptive like advising behaviors. Grites (2013) describes developmental advising as a holistic approach, founded on developmental theories and perspectives and should be viewed as a strategy, not a theory, which is centered on student success. Advising requires a balance between providing students what they want to know and what they need to know. This research identified a gap between advisors' approach and students' expectations; however, the institution should explore the needs of students more through surveys, student development research to provide advisors with continuous professional development as student needs shift. This institution should also communicate to students, faculty, and staff its advising philosophy and outline expectations for advisors and students.

Research Implications

Based on this study's findings, recommendations are suggested that will enhance and increase Old Dominion University's Distance Learning advising practices. This research study identified students' top advising needs and advising style preference, which distance learning can incorporate in advising. It is important to note that this study also identified what students do not want incorporated in the advising session. By knowing what students seek and do not necessarily expect from advising should increase advising efficiency and services. By customizing advising to students' needs and preferences, the advising experience will better align with advisor and student expectations and should result in a positive advising experience. In knowing what students are seeking from advising, unwarranted time and discussions that are deemed unnecessary or unimportant to students can be eliminated. Additionally, other student services and resources can be leveraged that students feel should not be included in the advising session, however are still significant for their educational experience, offices such as Career Development Services and Student Financial Aid.

As distance learning continues to expand for Old Dominion University, this study can assist in identifying what services should and should not be included during the advising session. It is important to note that this research showed that, overall, distance learning students were satisfied with their advising experience as 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their advisor met their advising needs and understood their advising preferences. This research supported the notion that ODU Distance Learning advising is successfully meeting the needs of their distance learning population and should continue with the developmental advising style approach. However, modifications for advising enhancement and improvement can be further refined to enhance the advising experience.

Analysis of distance advising should be viewed as an on-going, continuous discussion to ensure distance students are adequately supported in the advising realm, as distance advising serves as one of the main connecting links between students and the university (King, 1993). Distance advising is viewed as the connecting piece between the student and the university that addresses and attends to students' individual needs. Stevenson (2013) noted these differentiating needs (in comparison to traditional, main campus students) highlighting that "online students vary substantially" and that "their needs are different" (p. 21).

Advisors who understand students' advising needs are able to customize the advising experience. Online education is an integral part of higher education and research indicates that online students want an educational experience that is personalized; where they (students) are addressed by name, can network, and receive information as traditional, main campus students (Betts & Lanza-Gladney, 2009). Results from this study found that students are satisfied with a developmental style of distance advising. Characteristics of this advising style suggest that advising should be seen as a holistic relationship between the advisor and student, and that

decisions are reached mutually. The student has the autonomy, however developmental advising supports the idea that the advisor provides guidance and direction. It is apparent that online students pursue the support and guidance of an advisor. Nolan (2013) found that 94% of respondents stated a strong desire to have an advisor. This study went a step further to reveal the specific needs and preferences of advising. Knowing the desired student expectations and preferences will highlight what needs to be involved in the advising process for the outcomes to be achieved (Robbins, 2012). Advising is central in promoting student success and retention initiatives, therefore higher education institutions cannot undermine the significance of online advising.

This study revealed that individual advising was preferred, as 94% of respondents selected individual advising as their preferred advising format, with only 6% preferring combination of both group and individual advising. Majority of respondents selected email (47%) as the preferred delivery mode of distance advising, with video conferencing (30%) as the second preferred delivery mode. While individual appointments are needed, these appointments can be time consuming and burdensome, especially during high volume advising times, such as registration. To increase advising functionality and efficiency it is recommended that distance learning advising leverage additional support systems that do not require the attention and demand of an advisor. This study's findings support the distance learning students' use of technology and resources, with Email, DegreeWorks, and LeoOnline being the top three. Since students are already experiencing a developmental style of advising and are satisfied with the advising they are receiving it is recommended that performance support be created for advising information beyond the individual, advising session.

Performance support bridges the gap between formal learning and the moment of need. In incorporating performance support within distance advising, the advising session represents the "formal learning event" and the "moment of need" would be anything beyond the advising session. As Gottfredson and Mosher (2011) explain:

> If organizations want to maximize their return on their formal learning investment, they will achieve it only via Performance Support. PS bridges the time gap between what is learned during formal learning and the moment when people are called to act upon what they learned (p.5).

By implementing performance support, advising information for students can be accessible at the moment of need and can reinforce what was discussed during the advising session. To further reinforce performance support the forgetting curve should be addressed; as research shows that within one hour, individuals will forget an average of 50% of what they learned, 70% within 24 hours, and within one week 90% of the information (Kohn, 2014).

This study revealed that students prefer individual advising appointments. To maximize this advising delivery mode, it is recommended when students schedule or request an individual advising appointment students are prompted to complete a brief questionnaire as to need for the advising appointment. By understanding the appointment need, advisors can either, 1) prepare for the advising appointment, 2) discover the advising request does not necessitate an individual advising appointment, or 3) refer the student to a more appropriate university office or resource that can better service the student's request. By rationalization the need for individual advising appointment sessions, this will ensure that the advising sessions are maximized, yet still meeting students' advising needs and preferences of having individual advising sessions.

This study found that advisors and students top five advising needs were not in complete alignment; therefore, what advisors may think is essential for advising is not necessarily what students are seeking or needing. By understanding what distance students are seeking as well as not seeking from advising, distance advisors can focus on meeting students' expectations and only address topics in which students' feel are essential during the advising session. From this finding, ODU Online' distance learning advising can leverage other student support offices, services, and programs that students do need, but do not need the advisors' complete involvement. As with any university campus, advisors are over tasked with many additional responsibilities beyond advising and are oftentimes regarded as the "know all" of student information. By knowing what distance students are seeking in the advising experience, advising can become more manageable and streamlined for advisors through leveraging other support offices, services, and resources for support that extend beyond the advising session. McCafferty (2014) highlights the increasingly competitive higher education market for online students; suggesting that institutions that are able to articulate and align their student services to their mission and programmatic strength will be able to separate themselves from other institutions which will improve their competitive position.

Research Limitations

Lessons learned and realizations occurred throughout this study. The most significant observation and notes throughout this study involved the survey. The AAI was designed to measure and assess advisors' advising practices. However, this research sought to conduct a comparative study, on both advisors' and students' advising practices, the survey was re-purposed to capture students' advising experiences. While the questions asked were relevant and contributed to the overall research, the length of the student survey was long, with 62 questions.

It is significant to note the intensity of questions in Part I of the survey. Respondents were expected, for each question, to read both statements, make a selection, and then rank, based on the statement they selected to represent their advising experience. In reviewing the survey, it was discovered that many students started the survey, however did not complete. The low response rate could be associated to the length and intensity of the survey questions, specifically Part I.

Anonymity was an important concern throughout this study, as the researcher wanted respondents to feel confident that they would remain anonymous. However, due to the small population of advisors and the specific demographic questions asked, advisors expressed concern regarding anonymity and opted not to complete the survey. In hindsight, elimination of advisors' demographic questions, in Part IV, should have been removed to ensure complete anonymity.

Another realization from this research study regarded survey respondents. While the survey respondents largely aligned to the population of ODU's Distance Learning (see Table 2), it is important to note that 48% of respondents had been advised only 1-2 times and 37% were enrolled in their first semester with ODU Online. This is important to mention as this population is new to ODU Online and lacks the longevity of being advised by an ODU Online advisor and therefore may not be able to capture the true essence of ODU Online's standard advising practices and procedures.

Future Research

One recommendations for future research would be to focus on distance advising from a more traditional institution. Old Dominion University Online is largely made up of transfer students as it has very few 4-year degree programs online. Therefore, students are expected to complete lower division courses either on main campus (in-person) or with another institution. A majority of students are not located within the Hampton Roads area and therefore complete

courses with another institution (mainly the Virginia Community College System (VCCS)) and then transfer to ODU Online. Therefore, students are transferring in with sophomore, junior, or even senior level status. This is important to note as students are coming in with previous advising exposure and experiences, unlike a freshman. While this survey did ask respondents to answer based on their ODU Online advising experience, it is possible that students' previous advising experiences and preconceptions overlapped and guided their responses.

By researching a more traditional institution, research may reveal that results differ from a non-traditional institution. ODU Online largely aligns and represents a more non-traditional population in terms of student body, as those who completed the survey were largely over the traditional student age range of 18-23 years old, worked full-time (59%), and enrolled in courses part-time (58%). Researching an online population that represents a more traditional student, as Kennesaw State University's Center for Institutional Effectivenes (2004) defines, in the 18-23 year old age range, enrolled full-time, not working (or working part-time), and enrolled immediately after high school may present different findings.

Stevenson (2013) noted that traditional, main campus students and distance learning students have differentiating needs and differ demographically. While this particular study confirmed Stevenson's variety and diversity of distance learning students (largely non-traditional), this study could not conclude that distance student advising needs were any different than traditional, face-to-face student advising needs. A study focused on developmental vs. prescriptive advising focusing on distance learning and main campus students advising needs could further confirm or dismiss students' preferred advising style based on student type (online or face-to-face). This study could be further narrowed by comparatively analyzing traditional and non-traditional students' advising style preferences and perceptions.

The survey instrument for this research study focused on current advising practices, while questions could be altered, it was intended to measure students' current advising experiences. While this information is relevant and contributes to the field, incorporating questions that focus on potential students' future needs as online advising continues to change and evolve is recommended. By focusing questions that align with predicted future trends, this can expand the field of distance advising practices. In addition to asking questions, regarding the future direction of distance advising, formulating questions as to what students feel are not needed in distance advising should also occur. A majority of the questions in this survey were prefaced as "select your preferred" or "select your top three." By framing the question to directly ask what advising information is not deemed necessary in the advising session would reveal what can be excluded from the advising session and leveraged by another student service office to maximize the advising session.

Conclusions

This study found discrepancies among advisors and students distance advising needs. What advisors may perceive as significant and necessary for the distance student, may not be deemed as applicable or needed by the student. While the advising information may be highly significant to the advisor, it may not equate of high value to the student. Therefore, to meet the advising needs and demands of both the students and advisors, multiple ways of distributing advising information should be explored. Traditionally, advising has been conducted between the advisor and the student in private individual appointments, which are oftentimes required and needed; however, findings from the research show that distance students are utilizing tools and technology for support beyond the advising session and prefer a developmental style of advising. Therefore, distance advising should explore other avenues to distribute distance advising

information that does not necessitate individual advising sessions where students can seek information at the time of need.

This research provides contributions to the field of distance advising through the confirmation of what distance students are seeking in advising. Findings show that distance students are seeking assistance with course selection, graduation planning, and online registration. Therefore, distance advisors should not go beyond their standard advising obligations and requirements of advising distance students, but be more strategic in delivering information to distance learning students. This study revealed that a majority (94%) of respondents expressed their preference for individual advising. As advisors are overwhelmed with advisee loads, the actuality of meeting individually with students each time they have an advising need is not realistic. While individual advising should occur, distance advising needs to be strategic in devising ways to support advising information and resources to its distance learning students. Recommendations include identifying performance support solutions and other student support offices and resources to assist students would be the first step and then streamlining advising appointments to ensure the advising appointment necessitates a private advising appointment.

REFERENCES

Allen, I. E. & Seaman, J. (2010) *Class differences: Online education in the United States, 2010.* Retrieved from http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports /class-differences.pdf

Allen, I. E. & Seaman, J. (2014). *Grade change: Tracking online education in the United States*. Retrieved from Babson Survey Research Group website: http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/gradechange.pdf

Anderson, W., Motto, J. S., & Bourdeaux, R., (2014). Getting what they want: Aligning student expectations of advising with perceived advisor behaviors. *Mid-Westerner Educational Researcher*, *26*(1), 27-51.

Annual Report (2013). *Old Dominion University distance learning*.

Babson Survey Research Group & Online Learning Consortium (2014). *Report of the 2014 survey of online learning grade level: Tracking online education in the United States, 2014*. Retrieved from http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/read/survey-reports-2014/

Beatty, J. D. (1999). The national academic advising association: A brief narrative history. *NACADA Journal*, *11*(1), 5-25.

Betts, K. & Lanza-Gladney, M. (2009). Academic advising: Strategies to increase student engagement and retention by personalizing the online education experience. *Academic Advising Today, 33*(1), 1-3.

Center for Institutional Effectiveness (2004). *A fresh look at traditional and nontraditional undergraduates at KSU*. Retrieved from Kennesaw State University website: http://eimirvic.kennesaw.edu/AnalyticStudies/Students_2004_Traditional_Nontraditional_Undergraduates.pdf

Christian, T. Y. & Sprinkle, J. E. (2012). College student perceptions and ideals of

      advising: An exploratory analysis. *College Student* Journal, 46(3), 271-291.

Crawley, A. (2012). Supporting online students: A guide to planning, implementing,

      and evaluating services. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Creamer, D. G. (2000). Use of theory in academic advising. *Academic Advising: A*

      Comprehensive Handbook. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Crookston, B. B. (2009). A developmental view of academic advising as teaching.

      NACADA Journal, *29*(1), 78-82.

Curry, R. F., & Barham, P. D. (2007). Academic advising in degree programs.

      Handbook of Distance Education. New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.

Gaines, T. (2014). Technology and academic advising: Student usage and

      preferences. *NACADA Journal*, *34*(1), 43-49.

Gallagher, P.J. & Demos, G.D. (1983). *Handbook of counseling in higher education*. New York,

      NY: Praeger.

Gillispie, B. (2003). History of academic advising. *NACADA Clearinghouse of*

      Academic Advising Resources. Retrieved from http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/ Resources/

      Clearinghouse/View-Articles/History-of-academic-advising.aspx

Gobin, B. A., Teeroovengadum, V., Becceea, N.B., Teeroovengadum, V. (2012).

      Investigating into the relationship between the present level of tertiary students' needs

      relative to maslow's hierarchy: A case study at the university of Mauritius. *The*

      International Journal of Learning, *18*(11), 203-218.

Gordon, V. N. (1992). *Handbook of academic advising*. Westport, Connecticut:

      Greenwood Press.

Gordon, V. N. (2004). The evolution of academic advising: One institution's

    historical path. *NACADA Journal*, *24*(1&2), 17-23.

Gottfredson, C., & Mosher, B. (2011). *Innovative performance support: Strategies and*

    practices for learning in the workflow. Chicago, Illinois: McGraw Hill Companies.

Gravel, C. A. (2012). Student-advisor interaction in undergraduate online degree

    programs: A factor in student retention. *NACADA Journal*, *32*(2), 56-64.

Grites T. J. (2013). Developmental academic advising: A 40-year context. *NACADA*

    Journal, *33*(1), 5-15.

Habley, W. R. (2004). *The status of academic advising: Findings from the ACT sixth*

    national survey. Manhattan, KS: National Academic Advising Association.

Kentor, H. E. (2015). Distance education and the evolution of online learning in the

    United States. *Curriculum & Teaching Dialogue*, *17*(1&2), 21-34.

King, M. C. (1993). Academic advising, retention, and transfer. *Academic advising:*

    Organizing and delivering services for student success, *82*, 21–31.

Kohn, A. (2014, March). Brain science: The forgetting curve – the dirty secret of corporate

    training. *Learning Solutions Magazine*. Retrieved from https://www.learning

    solutionsmag.com/articles/1379/brain-science-the-forgetting-curvethe-

    dirty-secret-of-corporate-training

Kretovics, M. (2015). Commuter students, online services, and online

    communities. *New Directions for Student Services*, *150*, 69-78.

Light, R. J. (2001). Making the most of college: Students speak their minds.

    Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

McCafferty, J. (2014). Positioning for success in the higher education online learning

environment. *Internet Learning*, *3*(2), 21-38.

McClellan, J. L. (2010). Leadership and complexity: Implications for practice within

    the advisement leadership bodies at colleges and universities. *Complicity: An*

    International Journal of Complexity and Education, *7*(2), 32-51.

Meade, A. W. & Craig, S. B. (2011, April). *Identifying careless responses in survey data.* Paper

    presented at the 26th Annual Meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational

    Psychology, Chicago, IL.

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (2006). Retrieved from

    NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources Web Site: http://

    www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Concept-of-Academic-

    Advising.aspx

Nolan, K. (2013). Online advising pilot at the community college of Vermont.

    Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, *17*(1), 47-51.

O'Banion, T. (1972). An academic advising model. *Junior College Journal*, *42*, 62-

    69.

Stevenson, T. (2013). Online student persistence: What matters is outside the classroom. *Journal*

    of Applied Learning Technology, *3*(1), 21-25.

Phillips, C. (1728, March 25 – April 1). Caleb Phillips teacher of the new method of

    short hand. *The Boston Gazette*, *436*, p.2.

Picciano, A. G. (2015). Planning for online education: A systems model. *Online*

    Learning, *19*(5), 142-158.

Pope, J. (2013, June 24). Four ways higher education has changed in wake of great

recession. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. Retrieved from

http://diverseeducation.com/article/54148/

Rudestam, K.E. & Schoenholtz-Read, J. (2002). *Handbook of online learning innovations in higher education and corporate training*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Robbins, R. (2012). Everything you have always wanted to know about academic advising (well, almost). *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, *26*(3), 216-226.

Rudolph, F. (1962). *The American college and university*. New York: Vintage Books.

Selingo, J. J. (2014). The innovative university: What college presidents think about change in American higher education. Retrieved from The Chronicle of Higher Education website: http://results.chronicle.com/PresSurvey2014_B

Sener, J. (2012). *The seven futures of American education: Improving learning and teaching in a screen captured world*. Charleston, South Carolina: Create Space.

Sims, E. (2013). *The modern language classroom: Individuality, technology, and context.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest.

Steele, G. (2005). Advising distance leaners. *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources*. Retrieved from http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/ Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advising-Distance-Learners.aspx

Stevenson, T. (2013). Online student persistence: What matters is outside the classroom. *Journal of APPLIED LEARNING TECHNOLOGY*, *3*(1), 21-25.

Suciati, M. S. (2011). Student preferences and experiences in online thesis advising: A case study of Universitas Terbuka. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, *12*(3), 215-228.

Teasley, M. L. & Buchanan, E.M. (2013). Capturing the student perspective: A new

      instrument for measuring advising satisfaction. *NACADA Journal*, *32*(2), 4-14.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Increasing student retention*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Todhunter, B. (2013). LOL – limitations of online learning – are we selling the open and

      distance education message short? *Distance Education, 34(*2*),* 232-252.

Verduin, J. R. & Clark, T. A. (1991). Distance Education. Oxford, United Kingdom: Jossey-Bass

      Publishers.

Winston, R. B. & Sandor J. A. (2002). Evaluating academic advising: Manual for the Academic

      Advising Inventory. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia

Zunker, V. G. (2001). Career counseling: Applied concepts of life planning. (6th ed.). Pacific

      Grove, California: Brooks/Cole.

APPENDICES

A. EXEMPT STATUS

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

Physical Address
4111 Monarch Way, Suite 203
Norfolk, Virginia 23508

Mailing Address
Office of Research
1 Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia 23529
Phone(757) 683-3460
Fax(757) 683-5902

DATE: September 14, 2016

TO: Brooke Brown

FROM: Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee

PROJECT TITLE: [952650-1] Distance Advising in the 21st Century - Online Students and Advisors
                        Preferences

REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: September 14, 2016

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # *[6.1]*

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee has determined this project IS EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations. We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records. If you have any questions, please contact Petros Katsioloudis at (757) 683-5323 or pkatsiol@odu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee's records.

B. FIRST EMAIL TO STUDENTS

(Sent on October 24, 2016)

Hello ODU Online Students!

Below you will find a secure link directing you to complete an online, anonymous survey based on your ODU Online advising experience and preferences. The survey you are being asked to participate is part of a dissertation study for my doctoral program with Old Dominion University's Darden College of Education. My dissertation seeks to understand online undergraduate students' and advisors perceptions of distance advising through assessing both students and advisors. From the results gathered, suggestions and recommendations will be provided to ODU Online to enhance the distance advising experience.

The survey you are completing is evaluating the practice and progression of distance advising by measuring the proficiency, effectiveness, and overall satisfaction of your ODU Online advising experience. Please know this survey is anonymous and completely voluntary. You have until Friday, November 4 to complete this survey and please know your participation is greatly encouraged as this is an opportunity to provide feedback to enhance ODU Online's distance advising practices.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me, Brooke Brown (blbrown@odu.edu) or Deri Draper, my dissertation chair (ddraper@odu.edu).

Follow this link to the Survey:
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Brooke Brown
Old Dominion University Online
Darden College of Education
Occupational and Technical Studies PhD Candidate

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

C. SECOND EMAIL TO STUDENTS

(Sent on October 27, 2016)

Hello ODU Online Students!

Below you will find a secure link directing you to complete an online, anonymous survey based on your ODU Online advising experience and preferences. The survey you are being asked to participate is part of a dissertation study for my doctoral program with Old Dominion University's Darden College of Education. My dissertation seeks to understand online undergraduate students' and advisors perceptions of distance advising through assessing both students and advisors. From the results gathered, suggestions and recommendations will be provided to ODU Online to enhance the distance advising experience.

The survey you are completing is evaluating the practice and progression of distance advising by measuring the proficiency, effectiveness, and overall satisfaction of your ODU Online advising experience. Please know this survey is anonymous and completely voluntary. You have until Friday, November 4 to complete this survey and please know your participation is greatly encouraged as this is an opportunity to provide feedback to enhance ODU Online's distance advising practices.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me, Brooke Brown (blbrown@odu.edu) or Deri Draper, my dissertation chair (ddraper@odu.edu).

Follow this link to the Survey:
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Brooke Brown
Old Dominion University Online
Darden College of Education
Occupational and Technical Studies PhD Candidate

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

<center>**D. THIRD EMAIL TO STUDENTS**</center>

<center>(Sent on November 17, 2016)</center>

Hello ODU Online Students!

   This is a reminder, if you have not already completed, to complete the ODU Online Survey. Below you will find a secure link directing you to complete an online, anonymous survey based on your ODU Online advising experience and preferences. You have until Monday, December 12 to complete this survey and please know your participation is greatly encouraged as this is an opportunity to provide feedback to enhance ODU Online's distance advising practices.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me, Brooke Brown (blbrown@odu.edu) or Deri Draper, my dissertation chair (ddraper@odu.edu).

Follow this link to the Survey:
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Brooke Brown
Old Dominion University Online
Darden College of Education
Occupational and Technical Studies PhD Candidate

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

E. FOURTH EMAIL TO STUDENTS

(Sent on December 6, 2016)

Hello ODU Students!

This is a **final reminder** to complete the ODU Online survey if you have not already completed. This is a great opportunity to provide feedback on your advising experience and the services provided. Please know your feedback is anonymous and will be used to improve ODU Online's advising practices and student services.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me, Brooke Brown (blbrown@odu.edu) or Deri Draper (ddraper@odu.edu).

The survey will close on Monday, December 12.

Follow this link to the Survey:
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Brooke Brown
Old Dominion University Online
Darden College of Education
Occupational and Technical Studies PhD Candidate

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

F. FIRST EMAIL TO ADVISORS

(Sent on October 24, 2016)

Hello ODU Online Advisors!

Below you will find a secure link directing you to complete an online, anonymous survey based on your online advising experience, preferences, and advising style. The survey you are being asked to participate in is part of my dissertation study for my doctoral program with Old Dominion University's Darden College of Education. My dissertation seeks to understand online undergraduate students and advisors perceptions of distance advising through assessing both students and advisors. From the results gathered, suggestions and recommendations will be provided to ODU Online to enhance the distance advising experience for both you and the student.

The survey you are completing is evaluating the practice and progression of distance advising by measuring the proficiency and effectiveness of your online advising. Please know this survey is anonymous and completely voluntary. You have until Friday, November 4 to complete this survey and please know your participation is greatly encouraged as this is an opportunity to provide feedback to enhance ODU Online's distance advising practices. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me, Brooke Brown (blbrown@odu.edu) or Deri Draper, my dissertation chair (ddraper@odu.edu).

Click or copy and paste this link into your internet browser take to the Survey: https://odu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_emq8lXh0FMTTi17

Thank you for your willingness to participate, please know it is greatly appreciated!

Brooke

G. SECOND EMAIL TO ADVISORS

(Sent on October 31, 2016)

Hello ODU Online Advisors!

      This is an email reminder encouraging you to complete the ODU Online Advising Survey if you have not already completed. Below you will find the secure link directing you to the online, anonymous survey. Please know this survey is completely voluntary.

      You have until Friday, November 4 to complete. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me, Brooke Brown (blbrown@odu.edu) or Deri Draper, my dissertation chair (ddraper@odu.edu).

Click or copy and paste this link into your internet browser take to the Survey:
https://odu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_emq8lXh0FMTTi17

Thank you for your willingness to participate, please know it is greatly appreciated!

Brooke

H. STUDENT SURVEY

Part I.

Part I of this Inventory concerns how you and your advisor approach academic advising. Even if you have had more than one advisor or have been in more than one type of advising situation this year, please respond to the statements in terms of your current situation.

There are 14 pairs of statements in Part I. You must make two decisions about each pair in order to respond: (1) decide which one of the two statements most accurately describes the academic advising you exemplify, and then (2) decide how accurate or true that statement is (from *very true* to *slightly true*).

My advisor plans my schedule.　　　　OR　　　My advisor and I plan my schedule.

A	B	C	D		E	**F**	G	H
Very True		Slightly True			Slightly True			Very True

Explanation: In this example, the student has chosen the statement on the right as more descriptive of his or her advising, and determined that the statement is toward the slightly true end (response **F**).

1. My advisor is interested in helping me learn how to find out about courses and programs for myself.　　OR　　My advisor tells me what I need to know about my academic courses and programs.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True	Slightly True			Very True

2. My advisor tells me what would be the best schedule for me.　　OR　　My advisor suggests important considerations in planning a schedule and then gives me the responsibility for the final decision.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True	Slightly True			Very True

3.   My advisor and I talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.

       OR   My advisor and I do not talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

4.   My advisor shows an interest in my outside-of-class activities and sometimes suggests activities.

       OR   My advisor does not know what I do outside of class.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

5.   My advisor assists me in identifying realistic academic goals based on what I know about myself as well as about my test scores and grades.

       OR   My advisor identifies realistic academic goals for me based on my test scores.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

6.   My advisor registers me for my classes.

       OR   My advisor teaches me how to register myself for classes.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

7.   When I'm faced with difficult decisions my advisor tells me my alternatives and which one is the best choice.

       OR   When I'm faced with difficult decisions, my advisor assists me in identifying alternatives and in considering the consequences of choosing each alternative.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

8.   My advisor does not know who to contact other-than-academic problems.

       OR   My advisor knows who to contact about other-than-academic problems.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

9. My advisor gives me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively when I seem to need them.

OR My advisor does not spend time giving me tips on managing my time better or on studying more effectively.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

10. My advisor tells me what I must do in order to be advised.

OR My advisor and I discuss our expectations of advising and of each other.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

11. My advisor suggests what I should major in.

OR My advisor suggest steps I can take to help in deciding on a major.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

12. My advisor suggests users test scores and grades to let him or her know what courses are most appropriate for me to take.

OR My advisor and I use information, such as test scores, grades, interests, and abilities, to determine what courses are most appropriate for me to take.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

13. My advisor talks with my about my other-than-academic interests and plans.

OR My advisor does not talk with me about interests and plans other than academic ones.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

14. My advisor keeps me informed of my academic progress by examining my files and grades *only*.

OR My advisor keeps informed of my academic progress by examining my files and grades and by talking to me about my classes.

	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
	Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

Part II.

Directions - Consider the following activities that often take place during academic advising. During this academic year (spring 2016, summer 2016, and fall 2016 semester), how many times have you been involved in each activity?

How frequently have you and your advisor spent time . . .

15.

	None	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 or more times
Discussing college policies	○	○	○	○	○	○
Signing registration forms	○	○	○	○	○	○
Dropping and/or adding course(s)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing personal values	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing possible majors/academic concentrations	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing important social or political issues	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing content of courses	○	○	○	○	○	○
Selecting courses for the next term	○	○	○	○	○	○
Planning a class schedule for the next term	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing transfer credit and policies	○	○	○	○	○	○

Discussing advanced placement or exempting courses	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing career alternatives	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing probation and dismissal policies	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing financial aid	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Identifying other campus offices that can provide assistance	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing study skills or study tips	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing degree or major/academic concentration requirements	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing personal concerns or problems	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing studies abroad or other special academic programs	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing internship or cooperative education opportunities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Talking about or setting personal goals	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Evaluating academic progress	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Getting to know each other	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing extracurricular activities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing job placement opportunities	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing the purpose of a college education	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Declaring or changing major/academic concentration	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discussing time management	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Talking about experiences in different classes	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Talking about what you are doing besides taking classes	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Part III.

For questions 16-20, please answer based on your current ODU Online advising experience.

16. My advisor meet my advising needs.

- o Strongly disagree
- o Disagree
- o Agree
- o Strongly Agree

17. My advisor incorporates tools and technology into our advising sessions.

- o Strongly disagree
- o Disagree
- o Agree
- o Strongly Agree

18. My advisor understands my advising preferences.

- o Strongly disagree
- o Disagree
- o Agree
- o Strongly Agree

19. On average, how much time is spent in your advising session?

- o 15 minutes or less
- o 30 minutes
- o 45 minutes
- o 1 hour or more

20. Select the advising tools and technologies that have been used by your advisor during your ODU Online advising experience (please check all that apply).

- o Blackboard
- o Degree Works
- o Email
- o Facebook
- o Internet
- o Leo Online
- o Telephone
- o Twitter
- o WebEx Video Conferencing
- o Other: [   ]

Part IV.

Please respond the following questions.

21. Select your preferred distance advising delivery mode.

- o Email
- o Phone
- o Video conferencing (such as WebEx)
- o Other: [＿＿＿]

22. Which of the following online advising formats do you prefer?

- o Individual advising
- o Group advising
- o A mixture of both individual and group advising

23. Select your top three advising needs that you feel are essential in your online advising experience (please select only three).

- o Assistance with forms and paperwork
- o Building a relationship with my advisor
- o Career planning
- o ODU Online community involvement
- o Course selection
- o Graduation planning
- o Learning about ODU Online student resources
- o Meeting other ODU Online students
- o Online registration
- o Other: [＿＿＿]

24. What college does your major fall under?

- o College of Arts and Letters
- o College of Business
- o College of Education
- o College of Engineering
- o College of Health Sciences
- o College of Sciences

25. How many semesters have you attended ODU Online?

- o I am currently enrolled in my first semester
- o 1-3 semesters
- o 4-6 semesters
- o 7 or more semesters

26. How many online academic advising sessions have you had since attending ODU Online?

- o Zero. I have not been advised by an ODU Online advisor.
- o 1-2 sessions
- o 3-4 sessions
- o 5-6 sessions
- o 7 or more sessions

27. What is your sex?

- o Male
- o Female

28. What is your cultural/race background?

- o African American/Black
- o Hispanic American/Latino/a
- o Native American
- o White/Caucasian
- o Biracial/multiracial
- o Other
- o Decline to respond

29. What is your current age?

- o 18-23
- o 24-29
- o 30-39
- o 40-49
- o 50-59
- o 60 or older

30. What is your academic class standing?

- o Freshman
- o Sophomore
- o Junior
- o Senior
- o I do not know

31. What is your ODU Online enrollment status?

- o Full time (12 credits or more)
- o Part time (11 credits or less)

32. What is your employment status?

- o Full time (40 hours a week or more)
- o Part time (39 hours a week or less)
- o I am not employed

33. What is your geographic location?

   - o I live within the Hampton Roads area
   - o I do not live within the Hampton Roads area, but live in the state of Virginia
   - o I live outside the state of Virginia

I. ADVISOR SURVEY

Part I.

Part I of this inventory concerns how you approach academic advising.

There are 14 pairs of statements in Part I. You must make two decisions about each pair in order to respond: (1) decide which one of the two statements most accurately describes the academic advising you exemplify, and then (2) decide how accurate or true that statement is (from *very true* to *slightly true*).

	I plan my advisees schedule.	OR	My advisees and I plan their schedule together.

A	B	C	D		E	**F**	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

Explanation: In this example, the advisor has chosen the statement on the right as more descriptive of his or her advising, and determined that the statement is toward the slightly true end (response **F**).

1. I am interested in helping my advisees learn how to find out about courses and programs for her/himself.　OR　I tell my advisees what they need to know about academic courses and programs.

A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

2. I tell my advisees what would be the best schedule for them.　OR　I suggest important considerations in planning a schedule and then give the advisee responsibility for the final decision.

A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

3. My advisee and I talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.

OR My advisee and I do not talk about vocational opportunities in conjunction with advising.

    A   B   C   D   E   F   G   H

Very True   Slightly True   Slightly True   Very True

4. I show an interest in my advisees outside-of-class activities and sometimes suggests activities.

OR I do not know what my advisees do outside of class.

    A   B   C   D   E   F   G   H

Very True   Slightly True   Slightly True   Very True

5. I assist my advisees in identifying realistic academic goals based on what they know about themselves, as well as their test scores and grades.

OR I assist my advisees in identifying realistic academic goals for me based on their test scores and grades.

    A   B   C   D   E   F   G   H

Very True   Slightly True   Slightly True   Very True

6. I register my advisees for their classes.

OR I teach my advisees how to register themselves for classes.

    A   B   C   D   E   F   G   H

Very True   Slightly True   Slightly True   Very True

7. When my advisees are faced with difficult decisions I tell them their alternatives and which one is the best choice.

OR When my advisees are faced with difficult decisions, I assist them in identifying alternatives and in considering the consequences of choosing each alternative.

    A   B   C   D   E   F   G   H

Very True   Slightly True   Slightly True   Very True

8. I do not know who to contact about other-than-academic problems.

OR I do know who to contact about other-than-academic problems.

A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

9. I give my advisees tips on managing their time better or on studying more effectively when they seem to need them.

   OR

   I do not spend time giving my advisees tips on managing their time better or on studying more effectively.

A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

10. I tell my advisees what they must do in order to be advised.

    OR

    My advisees and I discuss our expectations of advising and of each other.

A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

11. I suggest what my advisees should major in.

    OR

    I suggest steps my advisees can take to help them decide on a major.

A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

12. I use my advisees test scores and grades to let him or her know what courses are most appropriate for them to take.

    OR

    My advisees and I use information, such as test scores, grades, interests, and abilities, to determine what courses are most appropriate for them to take.

A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

13. I talk with my advisees about m other-than-academic interests and plans.

    OR

    I do not talk with my advisees about interests and plans other than academic ones.

A	B	C	D		E	F	G	H
Very True			Slightly True		Slightly True			Very True

14. I keep my advisees informed of their academic progress by examining their files and grades *only*.

    OR

    I keep my advisees informed of their academic progress by examining their files and grades and by talking about their classes.

Part II.

Directions - Consider the following activities that often take place during academic advising. For the past 3 semesters (spring 2016, summer 2016, and fall 2016 semester), on average, how many times have you been involved in each activity with your advisees?

To help answer this question, base your responses on the average or typical academic advising session you have had with students over the past 3 academic semesters (spring 2016, summer 2016, and fall 2016).

During the last 3 semesters, how frequently have you and your advisee spent time . . .

15.

	None	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 or more times
Discussing college policies	○	○	○	○	○	○
Signing registration forms	○	○	○	○	○	○
Dropping and/or adding course(s)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing personal values	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing possible majors/academic concentrations	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing important social or political issues	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing content of courses	○	○	○	○	○	○
Selecting courses for the next term	○	○	○	○	○	○
Planning a class schedule for the next term	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing transfer credit and policies	○	○	○	○	○	○

Discussing advanced placement or exempting courses	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing career alternatives	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing probation and dismissal policies	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing financial aid	○	○	○	○	○	○
Identifying other campus offices that can provide assistance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing study skills or study tips	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing degree or major/academic concentration requirements	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing personal concerns or problems	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing studies abroad or other special academic programs	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing internship or cooperative education opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Talking about or setting personal goals	○	○	○	○	○	○
Evaluating academic progress	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting to know each other	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing extracurricular activities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing job placement opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing the purpose of a college education	○	○	○	○	○	○
Declaring or changing major/academic concentration	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussing time management	○	○	○	○	○	○
Talking about experiences in different classes	○	○	○	○	○	○
Talking about what you are doing besides taking classes	○	○	○	○	○	○

Part III.

For questions 16-20, please answer based on your ODU Online advising experience.

16. I meet my students advising needs.

- o   Strongly disagree
- o   Disagree
- o   Agree
- o   Strongly Agree

17. I incorporate tools and technology into my advising sessions.

  - o Strongly disagree
  - o Disagree
  - o Agree
  - o Strongly Agree

18. I understand my students advising preferences.

  - o Strongly disagree
  - o Disagree
  - o Agree
  - o Strongly Agree

19. On average, how much time is spent in your advising session?

  - o 15 minutes or less
  - o 30 minutes
  - o 45 minutes
  - o 1 hour or more

20. Select the advising tools and technologies that you use to advise your students (please check all that apply).

  - o Blackboard
  - o Degree Works
  - o Email
  - o Facebook
  - o Internet
  - o Leo Online
  - o Telephone
  - o Twitter
  - o WebEx Video Conferencing
  - o Other: [   ]

Part IV.

Please respond the following questions.

21. Select your preferred distance advising delivery mode.

  - o Email
  - o Phone
  - o Video conferencing (such as WebEx)
  - o Other: [   ]

22. Which of the following online advising formats do you prefer?

- o Individual advising
- o Group advising
- o A mixture of both individual and group advising

23. Select your top three advising needs that you feel are essential for students in the online advising experience (please select only three).

- o Assistance with forms and paperwork
- o Building a relationship with my advisor
- o Career planning
- o ODU Online community involvement
- o Course selection
- o Graduation planning
- o Learning about ODU Online student resources
- o Meeting other ODU Online students
- o Online registration
- o Other: [   ]

24. What college do you advise for?

- o College of Arts and Letters
- o College of Business
- o College of Education
- o College of Engineering
- o College of Health Sciences
- o College of Sciences

25. How many semesters have you been employed with Old Dominion University?

- o I am currently enrolled in my first semester
- o 1-3 semesters
- o 4-6 semesters
- o 7 or more semesters

26. How many years of experience do you have as an academic advisor?

- o Less than 1 year
- o 1-5 years
- o 6-10 years
- o 11-15 years
- o 16 or more years

27. What is your sex?

- o Male
- o Female

28. What is your cultural/race background?

- o African American/Black
- o Hispanic American/Latino/a
- o Native American
- o White/Caucasian
- o Biracial/multiracial
- o Other
- o Decline to respond

VITA

EDUCATION
Master of Science in Education – Counseling   2008
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

Bachelor of Arts - Sociology   2006
Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA

WORK EXPERIENCE
Learning Development Lead, Lead Associate   February 2016 - Current
Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH), National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) Springfield, VA
- Serve as a senior instructional systems designer creating, reviewing, and managing courses for the NGA College
- Support BAH in business development by leading the Human Capital and Learning (HC&L) team to identify HC&L needs and opportunities across the National Agencies Account (NAA)
- Assisted the National Reconnaissance Office University (NROU) in developing and delivering face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses

Training Coordinator for ODU Online   2014-2016
Old Dominion University, Alexandria, VA
- Supported the re-structuring of Old Dominion University Online
- Developed and assessed training needs for distance learning staff

Instructor
Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, VA   2012-2013
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA   2010-2012
Tidewater Community College Virginia Beach, VA   2008-2010
- Instructed College Success Skills course

Assistant Director of Transfer Advising and Articulations   2010-2014
Old Dominion University, Alexandria, VA
- Developed and maintained articulation agreements among the Virginia Community College System's (VCCS) and ODU, working closely with Old Dominion University (ODU) faculty and VCCS administration in negotiating, developing, and designing partnerships through 2+2 agreements

Career Counselor, Office of Counseling   2008-2010
Tidewater Community College Virginia Beach, VA
- Managed the Career and Transfer Resource Center
- Provided personal, academic, and career counseling
- Administered the DISCOVER, KUDER, Self-Directed Search (SDS), STRONG Interest Inventory, Myers Briggs and VA EDUCATION WIZARD to students