

2020

## Online Faculty and Administrators Perspectives of Online Advising Challenges and Resources

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Kandace Betts

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Online Faculty and Administrators Perspectives of Online Advising Challenges and

Resources

by

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MS, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, 2010

BS, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, 2006

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2020

## Abstract

The problem examined at the local site was that online faculty members were resistant to their new role of online advising and program administrators felt faculty may be underprepared for the task. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising overall. The conceptual framework was based on Betts' online human touch concepts. The research questions focused on gathering perceptions about the challenges associated with online advising and ways to improve the online advising component. A purposeful sampling method was used to select 7 online faculty advisors and 7 program administrators who worked with the online degree program. A basic qualitative design was used to capture the insights of participants through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Four emergent themes were identified through axial coding: effective advising impacts student success, accountability in advising ensures student success, guided change communicates cohesion, and academic advising requires understanding. A few key results included that participants perceived their challenges as the lack of preparation for online student advising and inability to effectively impact student success. The resulting project from these results were a professional development training workshop developed to prepare online faculty advisors for effective online advising practices. The implementation of this professional development workshop could bring about positive social change by improving the online advising program's effectiveness and the quality of online faculty advisors, ultimately assisting in retention and support.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to the loving memory of my father, the greatest hero of them all. Also, I dedicate this to my Grandmother who is 96 years young, for the wisdom and inspiration bestowed upon me. Thank you both for the encouragement and motivation to persevere through it all.

## Acknowledgments

To God, from whom all of my blessings flow, I thank you for the strength you've given me through every obstacle. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." To my family: my husband, Edwan O'Neal, and my Mom, Evaline Betts-Collier for being my constant support system. And to my son Karson Aidyn O'Neal, thanks for cheering me up on those rainy days. I love you all dearly. Your complete and unconditional love carries me through always.

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It's finally my time, Lord! It's time to walk according to your plan.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

A public 4-year institution in the southeastern United States, with an enrollment of approximately 6,000 students, strived to advance their strategic plan by increasing their online enrollment numbers through the enhancement of the institution's technological infrastructure to increase distance learning opportunities. According to the university's Office of Institutional Research and Planning, the objective was to increase accessibility by offering an online degree program to a diverse student population. The online degree program was launched with a new online advising component and assigned to faculty who had not previously served in this capacity.

The problem was that online faculty members were resistant to the new role of online advising and program administrators felt faculty may be underprepared for the task. On campus, according to the associate vice president of academic affairs, several faculty members voiced their resistance to program administrators regarding their newly assigned role as online faculty advisors. At various administrative meetings, department chairpersons shared the feedback of their faculty members suggesting that the faculty members were concerned that their resistance to the assignment could be viewed as insubordination. At the institution's Academic Governance Committee (AGC) meeting, a committee of administrators that ensures the institution is fulfilling its potential, faculty resistance in adapting the online advising role was a topic of discussion. At a faculty engagement meeting, it was discussed that various online faculty challenges were occurring with the new student online advising process. According to the associate vice president for academic affairs, program administrators felt online faculty members may have been unprepared to advise the increased amount of online degree seekers initiated from the

university's strategic plan. The gap in practice was that these new roles were created for online faculty advisors but without a plan to prepare faculty for their online roles.

Online faculty advisors play a powerful role in higher education today because they stand at the nexus between the students, who are often uninformed and unprepared for being online students, and the online program (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Academic advising has a strong connection to the academic, career, and personal success of students (Roth & Keintz, 2014). According to the Online Learning Consortium (Seaman, Allen, & Seaman, 2018), growth in online student populations has continued to increase over the years. As institutions have expanded their program offerings to provide more online course delivery, they have faced a variety of challenges, including making advising accessible and convenient for online learners (Loucif, Gassoumi, & Negreiros, 2020).

### **Rationale**

The AGC would like the institution to benefit from online advising as a student-centered approach to reaching the goals in the strategic plan involving retention. According to the associate vice president of academic affairs, when the institution did not provide training, the faculty advisors and administrators experienced ambiguity in the face of change. Although the institution did not provide online advising training, ensuring that the online faculty advisors are well prepared is necessary to control retention. The associate vice president of academic affairs indicated that the role of an online faculty advisor was imperative to the success of the online program.

The introduction of an online degree program at the site resulted in the need for faculty to utilize online advisement methods with students since a face-to-face advising setting was no longer accessible; however, there was no training manual nor outside resources given to faculty

to assist with a formal or informal method to advise. The university had various seminar training and professional development awareness workshops that were geared toward becoming a student-centered college, but none of the training was associated with online faculty advising, according to the associate vice president of academic affairs.

It is the responsibility of online advisors to guide students to make academic and life plans consistent with their interests and abilities without face-to-face interaction (Wenham, Valencia-Forrester, & Backhaus, 2020). Yet, online students need to feel a connection to the university, and this connection impacts retention (Gravel, 2012). Past research (Blumenstyk, 2018a; Roth & Keintz, 2014) indicated that online students drop out at a considerably higher rate than traditional on-campus. As A. Bailey, Vaduganathan, Henry, Laverdiere, and Pugliese (2018) explained, “higher education leaders lack a clear understanding of the strategic choices they must make and the practices they must adopt at an institutional level if they are to ensure that digital learning initiatives flourish and produce meaningful results” (p.11). Universities have begun offering courses in the digital realm without solutions to engage and support their faculty as they transition to the digital world (A. Bailey et al., 2018). When utilized correctly, online advising services provided by faculty, support students with feeling more connected to the university, according to Hagen (2018).

Creating online structures is one of the challenges facing colleges and universities with the growth in online degree programs (Miller et al., 2019). Institutions are implementing online advising structures to improve relationships between online advisors and students (Figlio, Rush, & Yin, 2013; Green & Wagner, 2011). According to the *2018 Grade Level: Tracking Online Education in the United States* report, both private and public universities had growth in the number of students taking an online course (Seaman et al., 2018). An annual report by the

National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2019) revealed increasing rates of students enrolled exclusively in online education enrollment to one in six students in the United States, approximately 16.7% of enrolled students. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Asynchronous communication:* the enabling of communication and collaboration over a period of time through a different time, different place mode. This allows people to connect together at each person's own convenience and style and preferred mode of communication such as discussion boards, streaming audio and video, and document libraries (Nolan, 2013).

*Online advising:* an opportunity to exchange information online, designed to help students reach their educational and career goals. Online advising is a shared responsibility between an advisor and the student. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the student to make decisions about his/her life goals by creating a plan to reach those goals. Online faculty advising can be described as the systematic deployment of online instructional tools in a faculty advising capacity (Waldner, McDaniel, & Widener, 2011).

*Online faculty advisor:* a faculty member at the university that is the primary academic advisor in the online advising process by helping the student understand options, determine resources, and, when necessary, identify alternatives. An online faculty adviser may provide assistance in helping a student learn how to make practical academic plans and decisions, how to discover a range of options available to the student, based on the student's stated goals, and how to think through the consequences of the student's own choices (Waldner et al., 2011).

*Synchronous communication:* the enabling of real-time communication and collaboration at the same time, different place mode. This method allows people to connect at a single point in time, at the same time. Examples include audio, web and video conferencing, chatting, instant messaging, and application sharing (Nolan, 2013).

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is useful to the local site in that leadership can use the results to help guide their strategies for effective online advising. In order to provide quality support for online advising, the present study aimed to explore the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising. The intent of the online advising program at the site was to provide a one-stop-shop concept for relevant links and information to assist students in their advising needs (Gaeraths, 2017). The importance of keeping human contact is central to the online academic advising experience, which could be reinforced by organizing student advisees into group advising sessions, as well as providing one-on-one advising electronically via the internet with 24-hour access (Gaines, 2014). The issue of online advising has been identified as an impediment for online programs, resulting in the dissatisfaction of students, resulting in retention rates (Ellis, 2014). Although there are many references to advising best practices, a cohesive strategy for online students is needed (Betts & Lanza-Gladney, 2010). To maintain retention and overall satisfaction at the institution, advising should be purposeful, direct, and frequent (Dahl, 2004).

Increased enrollment trends have caused higher education institutions to prepare for challenges with online advising communication. Due to the use of electronic communication, online students' expectations are accelerated (Noonan & Stapley, 2015; Protopsaltis & Baum,



2019). Therefore, considerations as to what platform works best for each institution may differ due to demographics and technology affordability. The demand for virtual resources is essential for continued growth by spending millions of dollars a year to provide responsive virtual learning platforms such as Blackboard or WebCT, to aid in the communication between online students and their instructors (Gaeraths, 2017). With the increasing demand for online higher education program offerings and competition for students, having an effective connection between faculty and students could also contribute to students being successful.

### **Research Questions**

In qualitative studies such as this, researchers use research questions to shape and focus on the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2015). I sought to explore the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising.

The following research questions (RQs) were constructed for this study:

RQ1: How do online faculty advisors and program administrators describe the challenges associated with online advising?

RQ2: What do online faculty advisors and program administrators identify as ways to improve the online advising component?

The data findings involving the faculties' and administrators' perspectives with online advising will aid in understanding what the needs and concerns are of the participants and how to better support them as online education continues to grow at this study site.

### **Review of the Literature**

This section contains background related specifically to the history of online education, challenges facing online education, the intent of online advising and trends in online advising,

and literature related to the conceptual framework. I obtained information for this literature review through Walden University's research databases, including ProQuest Central, ERIC, Education Research Complete, SAGE, Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, and Thoreau. I also consulted reference lists from the articles I found, which directed me to other articles and books within the scope of this research study. After an extensive search of the literature related to online faculty advising, from the literature review, trends and repeated themes emerged. When no additional sources could be located without repetition of repeated terms, saturation was assumed. Locating research within the past five years was a primary focus. As online education has become more prevalent, it has become particularly significant to be able to research it (Bates, 2018).

### **Conceptual Framework**

As online course offerings have increased, the impact of remote access on student satisfaction and retention has been explored through the online human touch (OHT) framework, a framework that is used to increase online student engagement (Betts, 2008). The framework places emphasis on advisors finding a way to learn the unspoken about students; those sensory descriptors of students that cannot be found in commonly used technologically mediated communication (Betts, 2008). Some examples of the communication include email and text messaging, although personal streaming video may allow for increased and visually enhanced determinations of informal messages (Betts, 2008). Using a theoretical framework when researching online advising can help determine outcomes with the intent to collect evidence to support improvement and change (Zarges, Adams, Higgins, & Muhovich, 2018).

The OHT concept builds upon five areas: (a) student engagement, (b) community development, (c) personalized communication, (d) work-integrated learning, and (e) data-driven

decision-making. The OHT concept emphasizes that students are more likely to persist in an online program if they are engaged in and outside of their courses and receive a personalized educational experience (Betts, 2008). This study was filtered through the conceptual framework because I anticipated that the data gathered from the online faculty advisors and program administrators perspectives would provide useful information for the study site, resulting in having a more holistic educational experience. Distance learning advisors often have impediments in making connections with their students and creating added value for students' educational endeavors (Betts, 2008). I anticipated that the basic tenets of the OHT approach as related to this study could ultimately result in enhanced student satisfaction with online, distant-learning programs.

The OHT concept, as aligned with this research, is used to support personalized communication as an effort to engage in online advising. Moreover, the OHT concept stresses that all faculty who teach online and staff who interact with online students must be trained on how to effectively communicate online. By basing policy or training on the framework, the institution could provide a foundation that supports the quality of personalized feedback using multiple modes of online communication.

### **Review of the Broader Problem**

Online education can be defined as a learning environment that is electronically supported, but more specifically McPherson and Bacow (2015) defined online learning as using Internet technology to gain knowledge and skills through the use of synchronous and asynchronous learning tools. Some of the applications and processes that have been used within online learning would be web-based learning, virtual classroom opportunities, computer-based learning, digital collaboration, and online advising (Bell & Federman, 2013; Simonson, Zvacek,

& Smaldino, 2019). The vision that consistently emerged from the literature review is that online education provides a learning opportunity to a diverse group of citizens (e.g., working professionals) otherwise unable to obtain needed training (Siemens, Gašević, & Dawson, 2015). Nortvig, Petersen, and Balle (2018) indicated that this type of vision plays an important role in building online learning programs that foster positive learning experiences. Over the years, methods and approaches have increasingly been developed to enhance the whole online learning experience, which has resulted in a significant increase in students preferring to get their degrees online (Moloney & Oakley, 2019). Online education has migrated from a minor unconventional role of “learning by correspondence” to being recognized as a generally accepted education model at many universities (Johnson, 2015). As technology has advanced, so have the capabilities of the Internet, and with these advances, instructors are becoming more effective in their online pedagogy (Burke & Larmar, 2020). Colleges and universities have included themselves in the online market as an attempt to increase revenues, expand educational research, and improve investments made in technology (Cook & Grant-Davis, 2020; Johnson, 2015).

### **Online Advisors**

Online advisors are partners in ensuring student academic success, outlining the steps for achievement of the student’s personal, academic, and career goals (Noaman & Ahmed, 2015). With the assistance of online advisors, students can demonstrate the ability to make effective decisions concerning their degree and career goals (Stevenson, 2013). Due to the students’ being distance learners, online advisors play a key role in aiding the student with an educational plan for successfully achieving their goals each semester that they are enrolled (Stewart, Lim, & Kim, 2015). The online advising profession is often occupied by a nonfaculty member, but there are a great number of faculty members who serve as academic advisors as part of their role as a

professor (Hines & Schulenberg, 2016). Often, online advisors are faculty members who focus on ensuring student success through instruction and direction of a student's curriculum, which is essential in the distant learning environment (Marshall & Flutey, 2018). Effective online advisors must have inclusive knowledge about the institution; including policies and procedures as it relates to the degree programs because primary responsibilities include more than registering students for courses (Bloom, 2016). The primary responsibilities of an online advisor include advising on curriculum requirements, serving as a liaison between academic units, and maintaining academic records (Waldner et al., 2011). In the process of doing these duties, online advisors listen, monitor, advocate, provide essential information, and assist students as they adjust to the distance learning environment (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013; Ohrablo, 2016). Students need access to advisors (Hayes, Lindeman, & Lukszo, 2020). Online advisors are intended to act as a guide, according to any population group through online interaction and communication (Schroeder & Terras, 2015). The development of distance learning has influenced online advisors to use modern communications such as the Internet and smart devices to assist in advising relationships (Noaman & Ahmed, 2015).

### **Significance of Advising Relationships**

Advising relationships are an important factor in student success and persistence (Vianden & Barlow, 2016); the most important responsibility of faculty advisors is to enhance the learning experience (Felton et al., 2016). Academic advisors and counselors are important to student success because they help students identify academic and career goals, provide information about academic programs of study and advise students on how to sequence their courses, which is increasingly important as more students attend multiple institutions (Çapa-Aydın, Yerin-Güneri, Eret, & Barutçu-Yıldırım, 2019). Effective advising relationships assist

with fostering growth and responsibility (McGill, 2016) and are essential in enhancing core values in students such as strengths, skills, and aspirations (Swecker, Fifolt, & Searby, 2014).

Advising relationships help students to build interpersonal skills within their communication, one of the five competencies that advisors should possess suggested by the Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA, 2017). NACADA was founded in 1979 as the national professional association for academic advisors and counselors; it was originally named the National Conference on Academic Advising (NACADA, 2017). NACADA (2017) described five competencies all academic advisors should hold, which included knowledge of (a) conceptual theoretical foundations, (b) characteristics of college students, (c) career knowledge and advising, (d) communication and interpersonal skills, and (e) application of advising at the local institution.

Universities and community colleges employ different positions for academic advisors and different organizations for their academic advising or counseling centers' departments or divisions (Boggs & McPhail, 2016). Some universities, both public and private, employ academic advisors who are often classified as staff positions or are staffed by graduate student interns who work part-time (Teasley & Buchanan, 2013). University academic advisors are frequently staff positions that require a bachelor's degree in any field and earn a significantly low salary amount. In contrast, community colleges usually require academic counselors to have a master's degree in educational psychology or student development and salaries for a full-time community college academic counselor are usually significantly higher. Academic advisors in community colleges are often classified as faculty members and many are active members in the academic senates and/or their faculty unions. Both community colleges and universities often employ academic advisors with varying functions, including those who serve specific student

communities, such as disabled students, or who provide advising about specific topics, such as financial aid (Shaffer, 2015).

### **Intent of Online Advising**

Online advising is essential because it impacts online student's success, satisfaction, and retention (Braun & Zolfagharian, 2016; Zhang, Gossett, Simpson, & Davis, 2019). Some of the goals of online advising are to provide online students timely answers about courses, prerequisite information, act on early alerts, discuss time management, and provide details regarding the roadmap of degree plans (Bradfield, 2017; Folsom, Yoder, & Joslin, 2015). In addition to this type of practical information, online faculty advising helps build relationships with students, which impacts student retention (Shaffer, 2015). Online advising is an asynchronous and synchronous information exchange because the student is in continuous communication with someone who supports his progress (Cross, 2018; Pellegrin, 2015). Often online faculty advisors provide an innovative solution to student questions that is personalized communication that can effectively respond to details of degree programs and scheduling (Klempin, Kalamkarian, Pellegrino, & Barnett, 2019; Pellegrin, 2015). Although the advisor provides guidance to the student, the student and the advisor must both engage in the relationship for it to become effective (Higgins, 2017). Establishing a positive relationship in which the student feels supported by the mentor is crucial to encourage meaningful dialogue and intrinsic motivation throughout the process (Jameson & Torres, 2019).

Online advising holds the potential to improve overall advising quality for student support. The literature suggests that the basic principles of quality advising include accessibility, timeliness, flexibility, and creativity (Betts, 2008; Betts & Lanza-Gladney, 2010; Colgan, 2017; Dahl, 2004; Green & Wagner, 2011; Klempin et al., 2019; Schroeder & Terras, 2015; Seaman et

al., 2018). The principle of accessibility necessitates that an advisor has a high degree of availability to accommodate to student schedules. Timeliness includes the importance of providing very prompt feedback. Online advising improves two factors within the advising quality standard, specifically accessibility and timeliness (Underwood & Anderson, 2018).

Establishing a sense of community is essential for online advisors (Skelcher, Yang, Trespalacios, & Snelson, 2020). Some advising best practices are difficult to develop with online students, particularly the utilization of communities to foster a confidential relationship between the student and the advisor. Rubin, Fernandes, and Avgerinou (2013) expressed the significance of trust and familiarity in establishing virtual communities that are essential to student success. Building upon the importance of the student-advisor relationship is the overall intent of online advising (Vianden, 2016).

As technology consistently changes and academic advisors strive to provide online advising support, it's recommended that strong connections and structured accessibility are essential characteristics within advising (Kot, 2014; Lock & Johnson, 2017; Nolan, 2013). The quality of student support is a key element when discussing any online education engagement method (Brown & Strigle, 2020). Online students desire a personalized, high touch academic advising experience (McGill, Ali, & Barton, 2020). Betts and Lanza-Gladney, (2010) ultimately identified the importance of structure within the online advising aspect of online educational programming. They also expressed the importance of dissemination of accurate and current information in the online advising system to avoid any challenges and concerns related to online advising.

Online learning has been one of the biggest influences that recently shaped higher education (Kentor, 2015). To further the success of online learning, it is essential to be strategic



in programming to support students (Archibeque-Engle & Gloeckner, 2016). Higher education institutions are addressing the online trend by rapidly increasing course availability and flexibility, and as the online course offerings and degree programs increase, obstacles will consistently occur (Kentor, 2015).

### **Implications**

The literature background information indicates the relevance of the study as it provides resources to build meaningful relationships and opportunities to connect with students, challenge their abilities, and support their learning regardless of where they live (T. L. Bailey & Brown, 2016). The literature provides a paradigm to several challenges in online advising (Green & Wagner, 2011). Findings from this study provided a greater understanding of the online advising process. Through the interviews, it was anticipated that the faculty would reflect more on the importance of their roles. The online faculty advisors represent the University since many of the online students may never come to the physical campus. So, the role of the online faculty advisors in a sense is “the face of the University” and thus, very important. This study also identified ways that the institution can assist faculty members in learning online advising values, expected behaviors, and social knowledge. The outcomes may have implications on the quality of instruction, retention, and continued success at the institution. The data collection and analysis identified ideas that might include innovative advisor/student relationships and improved retention rates. This knowledge may lead to a recommended faculty development program for faculty who teach online so they are prepared to be faculty online advisors and better understand their role and its importance for the students and the University. It is anticipated that subsequent professional development will be a valuable resource for the University in seeking to better

understand the views of the online faculty advisors and how to best support them in their important roles as online faculty advisors.

### **Summary**

The focus of this study was for the findings to contribute data to the local problem of the challenges associated with the online advising component of the school's online program by understanding the participants' perspectives and recommendations for improvement. Faculty members were resistant to the new role and administrators felt faculty may be underprepared for online advising. Gaining participants' information based on their experiences and viewpoints within the online environment, provided data that could be helpful to the institution study site. This project study will aid in the challenges associated with online advising at the institution to create a better advising experience. Research questions examined how online faculty advisors and program administrators describe the challenges associated with online advising and ways to improve the online advising component.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

I chose a qualitative research method for this study because my focus was to understand how participants made meaning of the issue described in the problem statement. Quantitative approaches enumerate problems with numerical data explaining what is observed, whereas qualitative approaches primarily focus on exploratory research to gain a better understanding of verbal narratives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The objective when choosing a design was not to be predictive with statistical data, but descriptive by presenting the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants.

#### **Basic Qualitative**

A basic qualitative design, also referred to as generic qualitative inquiry using interpretative description, was the applied methodological approach in the current study (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam (2009) described a basic qualitative research study as having been derived philosophically from constructionism, phenomenology, and symbolic interaction and as being used by researchers who are interested in "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (p. 23). Moreover, in basic qualitative studies, researchers collect data from peoples' experiences to understand the interpretation of those experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam suggested that in the education field, "the most common type of qualitative research is a basic, interpretive study" (p. 24). Based upon related literature (Creswell, 2015; Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), the basic qualitative design was suitable for gathering an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants in the current study due to the

exploratory nature of the research. Furthermore, this methodology was appropriate for developing an understanding of the challenges administrators and faculty faced, because it provided the flexibility required to interpret the responses of participants whose perspectives were influenced by their experiences with the online advising module (Yin, 2016). This approach not only provided insight but also aided in a solution to the gap in practice.

The basic qualitative study's approach provided the basis for this study and involved an inductive strategy collecting data from participants' interviews. The outcome of the interviews, which involved collective themes, is considered to be a rich descriptive explanation that references the literature that assisted in framing this study (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam (2009), research designs should always involve a framework. The framework of a study exemplifies the system of concepts, assumptions, beliefs, and theories (Robson, 2011). This particular study utilized the OHT conceptual framework, a concept used for faculty training and support in online education (Betts, 2008). In this case, the study site implemented a new online program that calls for new strategies involving the online faculty advisors that could perhaps lead to outcome changes.

According to Merriam (2009), all qualitative research addresses how meaning is constructed and how individuals make sense of their lives, but the basic qualitative study design was chosen because its primary goal is "to uncover and interpret those meanings" (p. 24). Initially, I considered the phenomenological design before choosing the basic qualitative design. Phenomenology requires in-depth interviewing to glean deeper meanings regarding the underlying structure of a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although the purpose of basic qualitative inquiry is to uncover strategies and best practices, phenomenology does not involve

examining such techniques. Phenomenology involves participants' perceptions of a phenomenon to uncover their ways of meaning-making (Patton, 2015).

I also considered case studies. Case studies can be explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive of an event (Patton, 2015). Case studies involve multiple data points to allow researchers the opportunity to describe activities that a specific group engages in (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because this study was planned to collect online faculty advisors' and administrators' perceptions regarding online advising to understand their experiences, I determined that a collection of multiple data points, which is used in a case study, was not necessary to address the research questions of my study.

The basic qualitative study design assisted with deeply exploring and investigating this contemporary phenomenon within this institution. If a program is highly innovative, such as online advising, then it may be extremely difficult to predict the program's positive and negative impacts. However, it is necessary to document those impacts systematically and to consider whether those impacts resulted from the program.

### **Participants**

The population for this study was higher education administrators and faculty at the institution study site, a university set in the southeast region of the United States. From that population, this basic qualitative study consisted of purposely-selected participants to aid in understanding the problem and answering the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Purposive samples are utilized when the researcher is studying a specific phenomenon and wants to ensure examples would be presented in the data collection (Merriam, 2009). According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), purposive sampling involves selecting members of the population based on the specific needs of the study, surmising that those members can provide important

information that other members may not be able to provide. Purposeful sampling is appropriate when the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight. Therefore, the researcher selects a sample from which most can be learned (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

At the time of data collection, the study site had approximately 16 online faculty advisors and nine program administrators who worked indirectly or directly with online advising. I used purposive sampling on this population dependent on the number of participants that agreed to participate in this basic qualitative study. I selected participants from the population who met the specified criteria until the sample size quotient of 14 was full (Robinson, 2014). Each individual had a background working indirectly or directly with online advising at the study site, which also met the sample criteria based on geographical homogeneity (Robinson, 2014). Fourteen participants out of the 25 listed as individuals with roles associated indirectly or directly with online advising at the study site were chosen to assist in understanding the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The participants' sample met specific characteristics that were of interest at this institution; the needs of the institution were examined so that the results would address the problem and purpose of this study. To accomplish this objective, I selected participants who met one of the following criteria:

- online faculty members who formerly advised traditional students, with a new task that involves advising the online degree students or
- program administrators who had responsibility for implementing the online degree program and were instrumental in the decision making to task the online faculty with the new advising role for the online degree program

Utilizing these criteria ensured that participants in the study had in-depth knowledge and perspectives of the phenomenon. Two groups were chosen. The first group were online faculty advisors who were assigned a new role of advising the online degree student population. The second group consisted of program administrators who were responsible for the implementation of the online degree program. This particular group was the deciding party who tasked the online faculty advisors with the new advising role for the online degree program. Both groups were needed to understand the challenges of online advising. The online faculty advisors were tasked with virtually advising students, whereas the program administrators were involved in the implementation of the online advising demand.

Approval from Walden University and the institutional review board (IRB) (Approval #12-17-15-263681) was received before initial contact with anyone, along with IRB approval from the institution's site as well for approval of the research. An email was sent to the secretary of the distant learning division, requesting the names and email addresses of current faculty and administrators working with the online program from the institutions' online-faculty faculty/administration directory database. After receiving the names and email addresses of approximately 150 online-faculty members and administrators, I determined that only 25 individuals had roles indirectly or directly associated with the online degree program. I then sent an email to only that selected population explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their participation. The email included my contact information, in the event that potential candidates had any questions about what participation in the study would include.

A number of issues can affect sample size in qualitative research; however, the guiding principle should be the concept of saturation. Researchers suggested paying careful attention to the selection of participants (Creswell, 2015). Mason (2010) suggested a sample of 12 in a

qualitative study; however, a participant pool of 14 willingly responded. Fourteen participants responded within 2-4 days after the email was sent, agreeing to participate. All participants were employees at the institution. Seven were online faculty advisors and seven were program administrators. There were eight women and six men interviewed. Table 1 shows the participants' alias, gender, and position at the study site.

Table 1

*Demographic Information for the Study Participants*

Participant pseudonym	Gender	Position at the study site
Faculty A	Male	Faculty
Faculty B	Female	Faculty
Faculty C	Female	Faculty
Faculty D	Male	Faculty
Faculty E	Female	Faculty
Faculty F	Female	Faculty
Faculty G	Female	Faculty
Administrator H	Female	Administrator
Administrator I	Male	Administrator
Administrator J	Female	Administrator
Administrator K	Male	Administrator
Administrator L	Female	Administrator
Administrator M	Male	Administrator
Administrator N	Male	Administrator

The 14 participants were chosen based on their designation as an online faculty advisor or an administrator who assisted with implementing the online degree program and the decision to task the online faculty with the new advising role. Findings from later research indicated that it may be best to think of data in terms of rich and thick rather than the size of the sample (Burmeister, & Aitken, 2012). As it relates to the richness and thickness of the data, I considered that 14 out of 25 participants would be a small enough participant pool to achieve saturation.



The researcher-participant relationship in this study was a researcher colleague relationship. My background needs to be noted, as participants do not just see the researcher (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Participants also saw me as a colleague. I am the assistant registrar at the study site. I am responsible for the administrative and operational functionality of the student information system, where I primarily provide service, leadership, coordination, assessment, system maintenance, and evaluation for the enrollment services area. Although I work at the research institution, I was only in contact with participants as they visited our office to process academic forms. I only had a professional relationship with the participants. Moreover, I did not have deep knowledge about anything involving the advising challenges before the interview process. Indication of my professional role and responsibilities to the study was discussed with the participants to ensure that the data were only for the research. Weiss (1994) defined an interview as a research partnership where the interviewer and the participant are working together to answer the research question. Before the interviews began, the information was reiterated from the introductory email, which outlined my role as the researcher, and the role of the participant. I explained to the participants that pseudonyms would be assigned to protect their identities, to assure them confidentiality within the study. I also assured them that once the data were collected, all interview paper notes would be safeguarded at my home. Electronic information regarding the study would be kept on my home computer and that no one would have access to the documents.

Establishing rapport is significant to the data collection process, therefore, it was important that I built a rapport with the participants (Creswell, 2015). I established this relationship with the expectation that the participants would be truthful in their responses. I ensured them that I wanted them to be comfortable and feel trustworthy of me as a researcher.

Creswell (2015) states that when one builds rapport, it allows greater perspectives for reliable data. Participants were encouraged to be candid in their responses.

### **Ethical Protection of Participants**

Written approval was obtained from the IRB of the study site, which served as the institution's formal approval to conduct the study. The process was implemented according to the guidelines established by Walden University's IRB. The participants were emailed an informed consent form, per Walden's guidelines, to enlighten them on the nature of the study and its potential risks. It was electronically signed by all participants before the start of the interview. In relation to the data collected, the university required that the data collected from the study be kept and stored for 5 years and preserved in a secure place only available to the researcher.

During this study, it was imperative to avoid all participants from being connected to the data they provided. I took precautions to protect participants' rights and confidentiality. Participants were advised of their rights as members of the study through the initial email invitation and through the formal consent form. Further, participants were reminded of those rights during the introduction phase of the interview to ensure confidentiality. Expressing my deepest concern regarding confidentiality was a primary ethical objective to relay to the participants. I verbally expressed the fact that I understood that the subject matter of my research, affected their livelihoods. Being employed at a study site and participating in sensitive matters as such, sometimes become risk factors that may concern potential participants. Permission was requested to audio record the interview so that their experiences and perceptions could be accurately documented. The participants were advised that they had the option to

withdraw from the study at any time. Further, they could refuse audio-recording, or refuse to answer any or all of the interview questions. None of the participants declined.

### **Data Collection**

The problem examined at the local site was that faculty members were resistant to the new role of online advising and program administrators felt faculty may be underprepared for the task. The purpose of this qualitative basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising. Interviews from online faculty advisors and program administrators were the primary data collected. It was determined that collecting the data face-to-face would be the appropriate method for this study. The instrument, a semi-structured interview, was used to gather information from the participants about their perspectives on the online advising component.

Participant interviews were appropriate for this study because they were the most effective method for collecting the personal experiences and perspectives on online advising in a confidential one-on-one setting at the study site. Whereas questionnaires and surveys could have been used to gather one-on-one data, those formats did not provide the opportunity to clarify certain issues during the process if the need arose within the personal interviews. The intent of the interview was to collect sufficient data material to satisfy the inquiry, while at the same time posing pleasant and non-threatening questions to the participants.

### **Instrument**

For this basic qualitative study, the instrument used for data collection was an interview protocol. Interview data came from discussions with 14 participants. The interview protocol consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions about internal practices, overall knowledge,

skills, challenges, and recommendations involving online advising. The interview questions were created by me, and all the questions aligned with the research questions that guided the study. The interview questions were based on the two research questions and the conceptual framework of the study. The research questions were (a) How do online faculty advisors and program administrators describe the challenges associated with online advising; and (b) What do online faculty advisors and program administrators identify as ways to improve the online advising component? The two questions guided the development of the interview questions by focusing on the perspectives and experiences of the online faculty advisors and program administrators at the local site. The importance of asking good questions during interviews cannot be overemphasized; therefore, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that the interview questions involve the following characteristics: experience and behavior, opinion and values, feelings, knowledge, sensory and demographic questions.

To establish the sufficiency of the data collection instrument, I crafted the interview questions to encourage participants to give data-rich responses to assist with answering the research questions. The interview questions offered me the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to get a deeper understanding of the online advising challenges and recommendations for improving training associated with online advising. Creswell (2015) recommended using probes to both clarify and elaborate participant answers. When the participants were asked directly about the challenges they faced, some answers were less detailed. I used probing questions asking participants to provide examples of the challenges to elicit further information. I also used probes to encourage participants to remain on topic and to rephrase my questions until I had sufficient data.

## **Interviews**

I accessed the participants, by email, to set up a time for the interview. They confirmed the meeting a day prior to the actual one-on-one setting. The interview questions were emailed to the interviewee following the confirmation of the meeting day to ensure clarity. This allowed the participants time to review the questions in preparation for the interviews. To ensure confidentiality, the participants' interviews were held in a secluded meeting room in the learning resource center. A plan for the interview sessions was established to ensure that the interviews were conducted consistently. Rabionet (2011) indicated that creating an interview protocol or guide is an essential phase of the interviewing procedure because it assists researchers in establishing an opening communication with the participants and describe the questions that will be asked. A protocol also establishes a consistent approach to gathering responses. A greeting was established for all participants included within the interview protocol for the session. During the interviews, I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the study. I explained that they would be asked a series of questions to gain their perspectives on the online advising challenges and recommendations for improvement of the online advising component. I also told them that the study summary would be made available at the end of the study and gave them a chance to ask any questions before we began.

To keep track of data and emerging understandings, I kept a personal reflective journal. It was important to identify consistent conceptions and perceptions during the interview questions in order to gain knowledge about the online advising component. The journal consisted of what I thought I was periodically finding, possible relationships, areas I found interesting, and things that did not make sense to me. This journal was used to assist in writing the project.

The one-on-one interviews lasted approximately 36 to 58 minutes. The participants were recorded using a digital audio recording after permission was granted. This method ensured that the dialogue during the interview was preserved for data analysis. As a follow-up to the face-to-face interview, each participant was sent a summary of his or her interview responses via email. Each participant was given the opportunity to review the summary of the data collected.

Participants were advised that should they find a reason to correct, clarify, or make additions to the summary, they were invited to do so. Three participants requested changes to their summaries. After modifying the data of those that requested corrections, I sent a second summary to those three individuals. None of the participants sent responses with additional data. Phone calls were then made to ensure that no one wanted to include further data. Since none of the participants responded with errors at that point, participants were asked again during the phone call if the data on the summary was misinterpreted. All participants acknowledged the receipt of their summaries and indicated that the data was displayed correctly based on their responses.

It is essential for researchers to clarify their roles when utilizing qualitative methodology to make the research credible. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative case studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since the study site is my work area, I collected the data as an inside researcher. Although there are key advantages of being an inside researcher such as: having a greater understanding of the culture being studied; nevertheless, greater familiarity can sometimes lead to a loss of objectivity. Sometimes, the researcher's perspectives, biases, or experiences can inadvertently influence a study. I attempted to control all bias conditions, being aware that unconsciously making wrong assumptions about the research process based on any prior knowledge can be considered bias.

Indication of my professional role and responsibilities to the study was discussed with the participants to ensure that the data were only for the research. During the interview, I emphasized that involvement was voluntary, while also indicating at any time of discomfort to please refuse participation. Furthermore, I did not have an administration role nor any supervisory role with respect to the subject matter nor participants; therefore, I did not have any responsibility or authority over this process which could potentially have affected the data collection process (Smyth & Holian, 2008). Being on the staff did enhance my awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to the problem addressed in the study as it related to assisting the participants in the interviews. I recognized the need to be open to the viewpoints and perceptions of participants to understand their perspectives.

Because of my role as an administrator, I had to ensure that my position did not interfere with my role as the researcher. As the researcher, I wanted to ensure the online advising faculty and administrative participants' confidentiality was protected. A significant initial phase of my study was to take cautious concern of the researcher's role in the study (Schreier, 2012). Therefore, I utilized a method of assigning letters from the alphabet and numbers to identify the participants. Alphabet letters A-N were chosen to identify each online faculty advisor and program administrator. The alphabet configuration was done randomly and had no specific order related to the participant's interview times. This procedure aimed to specifically provide confidentiality. I did not want any data to give away their identity.

Moreover, participants' confidentiality was maintained by not including the name of the institution in the study, by not using participants' names, by collecting the data using a privately owned digital recorder, and by completing the transcription of all interviews on a personal, password-protected computer. Also, the interview data were not shared or discussed with people

outside of the study, or between participants. Finally, participants were ethically protected by the authentic and accurate representation of the data.

### **Data Analysis**

Analyzing qualitative data includes understanding how to make sense of the data in order to answer the research question, according to Creswell and Creswell (2017). In qualitative analysis, the researcher uses an inductive process that involves reviewing and interpreting data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Creswell (2015) distinguished a six-step process to analyze qualitative research and these steps were used in the analysis of this research. The steps include: organizing the data to prepare for analysis, reading through all the data, coding the data by hand or computer, determining themes and descriptions, interrelating themes and descriptions, and interpreting the meaning of themes and descriptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this section, I summarize how the first four steps were incorporated within my study.

Step 1 consists of organizing and preparing the data for analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). I demonstrated that first step by transcribing the data after each interview. Using Microsoft Word, I converted data collected from the online faculty advisors and administrators' interviews to a typed document. This process was done within 3 days after the interview to ensure a fresh memory of events. Recordings and transcriptions were labeled for each participant and placed in an individual file. Creswell (2015) recommended duplicate transcriptions, therefore, I kept duplicates of the transcribed interviews on a hard drive and a USB flash drive.

I sent a summary to each participant individually via e-mail. This process was followed to provide an opportunity to verify that the interpretation of the information was accurate, modify initial responses, or add any new information. Creswell (2015) recommended the verification of accurate data. Participants were advised that should they find a reason to correct,



clarify, or make additions to the summary, they were invited to do so. Three participants requested changes to their summaries. Those participants highlighted issues of concerns on the summary that displayed their contributed interview data. After modifying the data of those that requested corrections, I sent a follow-up of the modified summary to only those individuals that requested a revision to ensure accuracy of the data before proceeding to the next step. The data analysis is not a static process, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that the data analysis process requires going back and forth between the pieces of collected information.

Step 2 suggested reading or looking at all the data such as the general ideas of the participants or their tone of ideas (Creswell, 2015). Following this step, I read the data to provide a general sense of the information. This step allowed me to reflect on the overall meaning of the project (Creswell, 2015). I also kept observational field notes in a personal reflection journal. It was important to identify consistent conceptions and perceptions during the interview questions in order to gain knowledge about the online advising component. The journal consisted of what I thought I was periodically finding, possible relationships, areas I found interesting, and things that did not make sense to me. This journal was used to assist in writing the project.

In step 3, Creswell (2015) recommended to start coding the data. For all the data, I incorporated the approach for the coding through an iterative process of initially reading text data, developing segments, labeling codes, reducing redundant codes, and collapsing codes into themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Coding the data was a method of segmenting and categorizing all the different texts by groups or topics. I categorized each interview summary file by interview questions and labeled it with the participant identifier. Subsequently, I arranged the typed data into categories. Utilizing Microsoft Word's find feature, I was able to analyze the data collected from the online faculty advisors and administrators' interviews for relevant words or

phrases that recurred. This process ensured a systematic method of analyzing textual data. I hand analyzed the data and utilized Microsoft Word, rather than using a computer software-coding system. Creswell (2015) stated that many researchers hand analyzed data when there were fewer than 500 pages of data.

Identifying distinct concepts and categories was the focus of the open coding process. Open coding can be defined as breaking down and labeling the data into first-level concepts, or master headings, and subheadings (Saldana, 2013). During this stage, I was able to label pertinent words and phrases of the participant's actions, experiences, processes, and opinions. Microsoft Word's highlighting function also assisted to distinguish the various concepts for ease of reference. Saldana (2013) defines relevant information, as data that are repeated throughout the summaries, concepts the participants noted as important, and any information that resembles previously published literature.

Next, I began to use axial coding, defined as utilizing your concepts and categories while re-reading the text to either confirm that your concepts and categories accurately represent interview responses or explore how your concepts and categories are related to breaking down the core themes (Saldana, 2013). Axial coding helped to identify relationships between the open codes. I created categories by grouping several codes together. Both coding mechanisms were chosen because their process implies that there is an actual truth out there awaiting discovery and that by coding and recoding I should be able to find this truth (Glesne, 2015). I followed the guidelines from Glesne (2015), who recommended creating a codebook that lists the codes, their values, and their definitions when processing voluminous amounts of text-based data. An additional purpose of the coding process was to understand the data by looking for reoccurring concepts (Creswell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained that the process of coding is

like a conversation between the researcher and the data and consists of asking questions, making comments, and regrouping. Consequently, coding can get lengthy at times but the purpose is to create themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Creswell (2015) stated that step four utilizes the coding process to generate themes for analysis. Determining whether common themes emerged early on, indicating data saturation, required the focus of reoccurring comments and explanations from the participants, specifically their experiences and perspectives. Identifying how the broader categories connected to each other provided a rich description of the central phenomenon (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). Subsequently, broader categories and themes emerged according to how frequently they appeared in the data. The data were inductively coded to identify recurring patterns. A descriptive account of the findings will be presented and discussed in the findings section (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During data analysis, when no new information emerged in the online faculty advisors or administrators' perspectives, the saturation of the data had occurred, and no additional interviews were needed.

Themes or categories reflect the purpose of the research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In qualitative research, these themes are captured from the experiences of participants (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The analysis was guided by the research questions of the study so the resulting themes were relevant data. The problem and related research questions that were the focus of this study allowed the findings to contribute data to the local problem by understanding perspectives from these individuals employed at the institution who participated directly or indirectly with the online advising programs. The purpose was to explore the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising.

Nevertheless, Creswell (2015) affirmed that codes should be reduced to five to seven themes to answer the questions guiding the study. Fewer themes with detailed and richer information are more essential than general information with more themes. Creswell mentioned interrelating themes to add more rigor and insight to the study, also known as layering. The goal was to present the themes that characterized the findings in an organized and structured way to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the topic of this study.

A concluding step of the data analysis was to include making an interpretation, which drew meaning from the data. Following this process enabled me to be aware of any discrepant cases that could have emerged from the interviews. I also rigorously examined the discrepant data to determine if the themes or categories support (Yin, 2015). Therefore, I sorted through disconfirming data in addition to the confirming data to support the credibility of the data within the study.

### **Evidence of Quality**

This section will cover the trustworthiness of this study as it relates to the evidence of quality as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Trustworthiness includes elements of both validity and reliability. Creswell (2015) explained that validity in a qualitative study does not come from the study itself but from the researcher who conducts the research. Validity is generated when there is information richness of the case studies and the observational and analytical data capabilities of the researcher (Creswell, 2015). Reliability occurs when an assessment tool produces constant and consistent results (Creswell, 2015). Throughout the data collection and analysis stages, it was important the accuracy of any findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2015). For this study, I used four methods to ensure the trustworthiness of the study: triangulation, reflexivity, member checking, and discrepant cases.

Creswell (2015) describes triangulation as drawing different sources of data to gain perspectives of the phenomena from various points of view. Hamilton and Corbette-Whittier (2013) suggested that at least two sources of data be used in triangulation through interviews from primary sources. To conduct triangulation, I compared data from the interviews and my personal reflection journal.

Reflexivity is another strategy related to the integrity of the researcher that examines potential research bias (Merriam, 2009). To minimize any potential bias, I attempted to control these internal validity issues by conducting the study for each participant in the same location on campus that anyone could frequent, purposely selecting individuals that met the criteria for interviews, and not disclosing the identity of individuals in the study. My personal reflection journal was also helpful to maintain awareness of my own biases. By notating my thoughts, feelings, questions, and assumptions during each stage of the study, I remained aware of my influence on the study.

I also addressed validity by member checking the data. In this study, I sought feedback from the participants in response to the raw data that was originally collected from them. Each participant was given the opportunity to review their responses for truthfulness and credibility (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). I emailed each of the participants a summary of their interview responses to verify that I had accurately captured their statements. I allowed participants the option to add, change, or delete their input as described by Birt et al (2016). I used member checking to garner participants' feedback to corroborate my potential findings. Member checking assisted with the interpretation of data, thus increasing the likelihood of internal validity. This particular initiative helped to curtail discrepant cases (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

A final strategy that I used to strengthen validity of the study was to include an account of the discrepant cases. Among studies, it is recommended to examine and observe data cautiously for discrepant cases, stating that one should be aware of the comments that could possibly contradict the hypothesis (Lodico, et al., 2010). I searched the data for mechanisms that did not support the patterns that were emerging from the data analysis and uncovered some discrepant data, later discussed in the data analysis results section of my study.

### **Data Analysis Results**

The problem that prompted this study was that online faculty members were resistant to the new role of online advising and program administrators felt faculty may be underprepared for the task. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising.

During one on one interviews, participants shared their perceptions and recommendations associated with online advising challenges. I begin this section with an analysis of the data results aligning with the research questions with describing evidence from the emergent codes and themes. The analysis phase included converting the data from the participants interviews and categorizing the data by type and participant identifier, and then identifying common trends within the data. By exploring the online faculty advisors and program administrators' perspectives, I was able to build findings supported by the literature review that aligned with the research questions. In conclusion, I will also provide a summary of how the outcomes of the study align with the conceptual framework for the project study.

## **Findings**

Four themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) effective advising impacts student success, (b) accountability in advising ensures student success, (c) guided change communicates cohesion, and (d) academic advising requires understanding. The themes are aligned with the research questions and provided supporting evidence with an explanation of case discrepancies. The concepts from the conceptual framework are applied to each theme. In the following subsections, I will discuss how the themes address the problem that prompted the overall need for online advising training.

### **Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 asked how do online faculty advisors and program administrators describe the challenges associated with online advising? Challenges associated with online advising are the barriers that may/may not present the online faculty advisors and program administrators from achieving success in their role. The interview protocol included questions to prompt discussion on what constituted effective online advising. The questions focused on the challenges, internal processes, student advisor relationships, and skills associated with online advising.

#### **Theme 1: Effective advising impacts student success.**

The participants were asked to share the challenges that they encountered with the online advising component. The data reflected that regardless of the participants' role, they often spoke about four key findings: the lack of preparation for online student advising, the impact of student success, the commitment to the online advising role, and the resistance to change. Challenges that online faculty advisors expressed were related to feeling underprepared in their new roles. Five out of seven online faculty advisors mentioned challenges associated with the impact of

student success. As declared by Faculty C, “The biggest challenge I’ve faced with the online advising role, is knowing that I was not prepared to help students succeed. Student success should be a sustainable goal.” All of the program administrators expressed student success as being a challenge as well. Administrator K stated, “The challenges that we face right now is not being able to achieve student success because we failed to make proper preparations for the online faculty advisors.” It is important to note that majority of the participants mentioned challenges associated with the absence of skills needed to support students for online advising. Program administrators felt that most challenges involved the inability to support the student in becoming successful. Administrator H stated, “Online advising has challenged everyone involved. We can’t develop a successful student, when our online faculty advisors feel unprepared to serve.” Online faculty advisors also expressed challenges involving commitment to their roles, due to the lack of preparation for the new assignment. Participants followed up and expressed that for the online advising component to overcome challenges, student success must be considered in the problem-solving process.

Participants were asked to share their perceptions of what constitutes an effective online advising program. All but two participants mentioned student success in collaboration with being effective in an online academic advising program. Administrator J expressed, “to create an effective program, student success should set the tone of the program. We need to proactively anticipate the student’s needs and provide comprehensive information within this online advising component.” Three faculty participants agreed that online academic advising is a criterion for maintaining student success at the institution.

Participants also referenced student success when asked to identify elements of a student-advisor relationship. Faculty D articulated, “we can assist with student success by helping



students understand options, determine resources, and when necessary identify alternatives. Incorporating these key elements will result in an effective online advising program and an introduction to new roles.” Four of the online faculty advisors described effective advising as the absence of constraints when providing support to online students. There was quite a consistency among participants regarding the notion that effective advising constituted the commitment to support students. Student success was a common topic of internal practices needed to become effective as well. Administrator H indicated that “Retention and graduation are terms that begin our day. Ownership and accountability should be on our desk as we arrive, as well. The institution has an obligation to use effective tools in their arsenal to warrant that students enroll and complete. Accountability for our roles in online advising can ensure student success!” All participants were able to describe and conceptualize their role in providing student support to online students and generally acknowledged that they were responsible for providing these services to aid in effective advising and student success. This is important because although the participants were faced with challenges, they were still able to identify key components to support the online students.

Participants elaborated on the feeling of support, describing it as a key component needed to contribute to an effective online advising component. Faculty C expressed, “Feeling supported is a long-term outcome for our graduates. We have to keep them engaged and encourage them along the way because they are not physically here. And it won’t hurt for us (faculty) to feel supported as well.” Participants discussed the lack of communication skills as a challenge they faced, along with being a key component in effective advising. Specifically, Faculty C and Administrator N mentioned online advising challenges and effectiveness when describing skills needed within a virtual setting. Participants described the lack of having a communication path

designed for online students, and also considered it an essential constituent in effective advising. Faculty C suggested that utilizing effective written and oral communication skills that replicate those used in face-to-face advisement, can assist in developing a sense of connectedness with online students. Administrator N indicated that advising is most effective when online faculty advisors possess interpersonal, analytical, and operational skills for student success to remain effective.

Five out of seven faculty participants indicated in their responses that they were effective online advisors, while also emphasizing that professional development should be identified as a component of effective advising. “There is a remarkable amount of literature in the field of academic advising that most faculty ignore. We should have a mandated training so that they can understand the support structure associated with online advising,” Administrator K stated. Building relationships was communicated by Faculty D as well. The participant stressed that “without relationships with the students, effectiveness doesn’t exist in online advising.” Faculty G and Faculty C both expressed that a clarification of institution requirements is needed for effectiveness. Interpreting requirements for student success was communicated by both participants as an effective element needed in an online advising program.

### **Theme 2: Accountability in advising can ensure student success.**

Institutions have invested profoundly in administrative software and technologies that bring increased capabilities. That is important to know because there is some promising, though not rigorous, evidence suggesting that online resources are essential elements of a college advising system and may improve student outcomes (Klempin et al., 2019). All programs require resources. Participants mentioned that the institution’s administrators should provide comprehensive data tools for online academic advising units as a solution to address student

success. When asked about the challenges, online faculty advisors expressed their concern for technology resources to assist with online advising. Student success was a common subject when participants referenced technology resources. Faculty G expressed: “Technology resources are needed if we are to succeed with virtual advising. We have a common goal of student success that must be achieved with all of our student types.”

Participants were asked to answer questions identifying internal practices or processes that should be put in place to assist with the challenges associated with online advising. Participants responded with the challenge of not having an online advising program that permits online student support. Faculty G further expressed the need for an internal advising tool that allows online faculty advisors the capability of sharing academic policies and procedures with online advisees. Administrator I described accountability as a recommended internal practice. Program administrators unanimously believed that online faculty advisor duties and responsibilities should be outlined in an internal process. Participants described how the lack of an established protocol resulted in underprepared roles and decreased support for student success. Faculty G expressed, “We have to be able to support nontraditional students in the same manner as our traditional ones. Hopefully, the program administration will deem it necessary to provide us with an advising tool to assist in communicating requirements and day to day functionality with this population of students.”

Although the interviews were one on one, the data proposed that most of the program administrators seemed aware of the internal processes that online faculty advisors described as essential elements. When asked about a suggestion for an internal practice or process, program administrators mentioned Degree Works in most of their responses. Administrator J stated, “Degree Works is a powerful resource that we already possess. Now whether or not everyone

uses it in advising sessions is a different topic.” Some program administrators suggested the importance of utilizing the current resources before purchasing more. This was shared in the responses of five program administrators. Participants described Degree Works as a computerized advising tool for both students and faculty advisors. Another similarity was that both online faculty advisors and program administrators mentioned Degree Works an online advising tool that could assist with accountability and student success. Administrator J stated that Degree Works will assist with the connection between accountability and student success, simply because it’s a roadmap that will guide students down a path of successful completion. Student success is a part of the mission to overcome their challenges associated with online advising.

Data reflected that an advising tool, Degree Works, was described by participants as an internal process to assist in online advising challenges associated with accountability and student success. Also, participants expressed the importance of online advising relationship practices. The importance of being held accountable for administering and providing a positive advising experience was mentioned by several participants. Administrator J expressed, “We want to positively impact the student’s experience by meeting their needs.” Participants described Degree Works as a current internal process that assists students by meeting their needs in a virtual environment. Administrator J shared: “If I’m able to explain to an advisee how to maneuver through Degree Works, then I’ve done most of my job. I have great relationships with my advisees.”

As some participants reflected on Degree Works as an essential technological element, others discussed the online advising tool as they revealed challenges experienced with online advising. Although participants did not consider the tool as being an essential element, it is important to note that three participants associated their challenges with being

unfamiliar with the functionality of the resource. Online institutions and academic advising offices are augmenting their platforms with emerging technologies, mobile technology, and cloud technology. It is thereby important for the administration to be held accountable for training online academic advisors on these valuable resources so that they understand the needs, and apply the skills to their advising process to assist the students (Lema & Agrusa, 2019).

### **Theme 3: Guided change communicates cohesion.**

The participants were asked to share their perceptions of the current advising tools. Many online faculty advisors' initial responses indicated that they were not involved in the decision making with the current advising tools. Faculty B mentioned feeling disconnected when the Degree Works software was implemented. This led to a sense that some of the online faculty advisors felt like outsiders. Online technologies are moving advising out of some academic offices onto an integrated part of the university student information system, where students gain virtual access anytime to advisers and tools to help them succeed (Noaman & Ahmed, 2015). When it comes to choosing tools and programs targeting student success, institutional leaders have a strong say when it comes to purchasing decisions (Johnson, 2017). Academic changes cause resistance, which in some cases creates barriers. The more profound the changes, the greater the resistance to change will be in academic settings (Chandler, 2013). Administrator M indicated that faculty criticize resources when they are forced to utilize it. The majority of the online faculty advisors expressed that Degree Works was forced on them. Participants expressed that information in Degree Works to be inaccurate because they only involved program administrators in the implementation phase. Faculty B referenced Degree Works as a former barrier that has the potential to assist with online advising.

Data indicated that online faculty advisors want to be more informed about changes at the institution. Faculty B indicated that "The first thing that I remember that hurt me most here, was

the approach that our administration takes in delivering new ideas. Several online faculty advisors indicated that they were initially resistant after being mandated to use Degree Works. Some participants believed that resistance should be expected when you don't communicate well. Change is inevitable. Several online faculty advisors demonstrated some resistance toward the new online advising tool, while others validated compliance and persistence. Two of the seven online faculty advisors indicated that a better approach should be taken when initiating change.

Faculty A felt that a better leadership team could have influenced different decisions for the current online advising tool. Other participants did not complain about leadership. Five out of seven faculty members expressed positive opinions and perspectives as it related to leadership (support system) when speaking about the current advising tool. Although perspectives differentiated in every participant, the ability to take advantage of the current advising tool was a common concern, possibly resulting in additional challenges for the institution. Faculty B stated, "Although I admit that I'm open to change and of course I want the best for the student, what I'm hopeful for is the fact that no one is monitoring my advising constantly waiting on mistakes." Online faculty advisors indicated that they were apprehensive with the current online advising tool, expressing concerns of uncertainty with expectations associated with their new roles.

Administrator N proposed that Degree Works may become a future challenge. The participant described witnessing various initiatives for student success but indicated few have lasted just in the pilot phase. "No one likes change, no matter which way you initiate it," stated Administrator N. Participants from this study expressed that the change involving the current advising tool, Degree Works, did not involve them as it related to decision making. The major findings were the importance of user involvement in the change process. Overall, online faculty

advisors reported a low level of involvement in the change process at the institution. Influencing faculty to make changes in core practices is challenging because most have invested extensive time and effort into their professions. In this study, the qualitative data presented some doubt in participants as to whether this was an online faculty advisor driven change. Others were critical to the outcome of this change initiative, not knowing the intent behind decisions. The lack of trust among the participants undermined the idea of collaboration with the online advising mechanism and created resistance.

With a new software implemented and a mandate from administration to utilize it during advising, online advising faculty members became noncompliant and stressed that there was no accuracy of the system. Degree Works was implemented to facilitate as an advising tool, but all of these actions had no merit to build a sound foundation of advising support. A year ago, this is the same faculty that voiced their concerns with being resistant to take on online advising roles. Online faculty advisors did not accept the institutional change very well. The application had multiple system fronts. Participants were asked about their perspectives on the integration of the technological advising resource. The qualitative data suggested that Degree Works is not as impactful as the administration considers and is an inefficient software purchased by uninvolved administrators that are incompetent of their needs.

## **Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 addressed how online faculty advisors and program administrators identified ways to improve online advising. To address ways to improve, the interview protocol included questions to prompt discussion on suggestions and recommendations to assist with an orientation for online advising. The questions focused on the essential elements and skills needed for an online advising component.

**Theme 4: Academic advising requires understanding.**

Theme 4 reflected one key finding that revealed support for professional development training. All of the participants expressed a desire for continual support and additional training initiatives to assist when asked to identify improvements for online advising at the study site. Administrator M communicated, "Online advising requires training." Some participants mentioned that change was needed for an online advisor training. Online faculty advisors shared the suggestion to provide some type of comprehensive training when implementing new resources. Participants described internal training as an element that can assist their institution with procedures designed specifically for online advising. Faculty D emphasized the need to be trained in a face to face setting to show online advising concepts through ideas and theories. Other participants suggested hands on training as an opportunity to allow self evaluation. Both Faculty D and Faculty C recommended that access to training can become a motivation for continuing faculty dealing with online challenges.

The participants in the study were proactive in ensuring that the challenges associated with advising will diminish with professional help. Administrator H seemed practical when suggesting the need for change. "We need change and involvement, or engagement in lack of a more suitable term. We have to build greater confidence and academic direction in the students through our online advisors." Another topic that permeated the findings was the administrators' expectations of online faculty advisors. Every higher education institution needs to have effective online faculty advisors to increase student development. Student development can also benefit enrollment, retention, and graduation rates which indicate that an institution has done its job by giving students an education they desired.



Administrator K advocated “if our online advisors are not aware of how systems work or why student development is structured the way it is, a substantial opportunity for controlling retention and student success has been missed; and that will be an institutional failure.” An approach to providing effective online advisors would be to provide training so the institution can sustain momentum through student success. Many participants expressed their willingness to apply new knowledge utilizing Degree Works in a training session. Faculty A suggested that training could “possibly develop trusting relationships.” Participants recommended institution-specific knowledge as being an essential component of professional development. Administrator M described a training development process that is based on institution-specific knowledge is what our institution is missing. A key area of growth in the informational component is understanding institutional structures and functions.

Online faculty advisors and program administrators seemed confident in their answers to questions that involved providing additional suggestions and recommendations for online advising, indicating a need for training. “A mandated training providing more data about online advising will help us become more cognizant of the online student, and allow us to cease some of the resistance,” suggested Faculty B. Most of the participants suggested that training was needed to identify aspects of the online advisor role.

Online faculty advisors felt the advising transformation should have involved them more if program administrators wanted to present a positive bearing on the online advising component. Although online faculty advisors in my research were resistant to change, they all acknowledged their commitment to serve and were advocates to student success. Most considered online advising to be more relevant than ever before because of diminishing resources, competitive tuition costs, student retention, and graduation rates.

## **Discrepant Cases**

Discrepant case analysis is the process of reviewing data for any cases that may disprove your initial findings (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). I searched the data for mechanisms that did not support the patterns that were emerging from the data analysis and uncovered some discrepant data. One discrepant point uncovered during the collection and analysis of the data emerged in participants' responses to the question: "What challenges have online faculty advisors and program administrators experienced with online advising?" Two faculty members mentioned leadership. Other participants did not complain about leadership. Five out of seven faculty members expressed positive opinions and perspectives as it related to leadership (support system). Because this discrepancy was found during data collection and analysis it was further investigated by asking participants to further explain if the leadership comments were relayed due to the uneasiness of the new role in advising. Clarifying and resolving this difference was essential, as both faculty members discussed their anger with leadership as ultimately being results of encountering the new online advising roles. In addition to that, I did not find any unusual or unrelated ideas in the data. Other data did not present anomalies that needed further investigation by the researcher. The remaining data that was collected appeared consistent with the emerging patterns and themes.

## **Conclusion**

In this study I used a basic qualitative design to explore the perspectives and recommendations of online faculty advisors and program administrators using purposeful sampling to select and interview fourteen participants. In section 2, I justified and described the research methodology that would be applied in this project study, the criteria for selecting participants, the procedures for gaining approval to collect data through interviews, as well as a

description of the analysis strategies. I then used the obtained data to create a rich, detailed description of the perspectives and recommendations of faculty advisors and program administrators of the challenges associated with the online advising component and related it back to the available research. I then used those findings to answer two research questions.

RQ1: How do online faculty advisors and program administrators describe the challenges associated with online advising? Finding 1 indicated that online faculty advisors and program administrators' challenges include the lack of preparation for online student advising, the impact of student success, the commitment to the online advising role, and the resistance to change. Other challenges that are also associated with online advising include the lack of a communication plan to assist with online students and the undefined roles established with the component.

RQ2: What do online faculty advisors and program administrators identify as ways to improve the online advising component? Finding 2 revealed that online faculty advisors and program administrators feel that online advising training is an identifiable approach to improving online advising. Although resistance to change was identified as a finding, faculty online advisors and program administrators both referenced training as an essential element to improve their online advising component.

Based on my findings, it is apparent that online faculty advisors and program administrators are willing to, and want to, participate in a professional development training in order to decrease the challenges associated with online advising. Training was discussed by all participants as an essential concern. Participants expressed a high level of concern about the lack of formal training for online faculty advising. All participants referenced student success and the goal to create a better online experience at the institution. While more than half of the

administrators indicated that student success was a top priority, failure to focus on the importance of formally training the online faculty advisors internally, created a possible loophole for student success. Nevertheless, there were high expectations that extensive training designated to online faculty advisors would be beneficial to both student success and the institution's strategic mission. Several participants had mixed reviews on change, as many indicated that it became a barrier within the newfound assignment. The institutions' ability to implement the Degree Works system as a resource caused many to address change for the better, although some reported that they felt little impact on their daily work practices so far. Within the barrier discussions, participants communicated concerns about the accuracy of course and program information contained in the Degree Works system and if the administrators were forcing it as a collective preference for online resources. Overall, the shared expectations for formal training was overwhelming. Many participants felt that the training alone could provide assistance in daily work practices associated with online advising. In the following section, I use these findings to create a project that will train and equip online faculty advisors to be prepared in their new roles.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

Based on the research findings, a professional development program for faculty online advising was determined to be the most appropriate project for this study. According to Lozada Negrón (2016), professional development allows for an itinerary of evolution, while taking into account work experience, acquired knowledge, and vocation. This section consists of a narrative of the project, including the project objectives, rationale, and a review of the literature. An outline of the project's objectives, rationale, recommendations, potential timeline, and evaluation method is suggested. The section concludes with a discussion on the project's potential to create progressive social change.

### **Rationale**

This pragmatic study focuses on the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising. This study was needed due to the continuing growth of online program offerings and concerns for student academic success and persistence. The academic success and persistence of online students are lower than the rate for students taking courses using the face-to-face format; therefore, according to the associate vice president of academic affairs, colleges recognize the need to provide quality advising to improve success and retention to those students. Chief academic officers reported that student retention was a greater problem for online courses than for face-to-face courses and that online students are more likely to drop out than are campus-based students (Allen & Seaman, 2016). This study fills a gap in existing literature because it expands on the current research regarding online advising. It will

assist in providing more insight into the challenges associated with the lack of training online faculty advisors as well.

I selected an advising training development seminar was selected as the project because it seemed to be the most proficient and operational way to engage the faculty to become effective as online faculty advisors with the challenges associated with online advising at the institution so to create a better advising experience. The connection to an advisor is critical for all students, but for online students, it can serve as their primary connection to the institution (Nolan, 2013). Research findings show that meeting with an advisor and receiving the needed support and assistance creates a level of accountability leading to student empowerment (Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013). Studies have shown that advisors provide primary services to students and help them understand the requirements to persist (Britto & Rush, 2013). Research has also shown that advisors have the responsibility to discuss the students' goals and enroll them in appropriate courses as well as provide encouragement through the enrollment process (Gravel, 2012). Student success evolves through training. Advising training will promote quality advising services and professional growth (Zemsky, 2013). The advising training development seminar will provide the institution with an emphasis on online advising content knowledge through innovative training. Training will help mitigate the challenges associated with this change at the research study site, as it will grant the faculty a more experimental and collaborative avenue derived from working hands on with the resources. Further, faculty development is a common and highly supported practice that evolves from training seminars. Another rationale for further online advising training is its potential impact on the study site. Information from this online advising training can help administrators understand the faculty's individual skills and subject knowledge of advising and determine just how important the

process of professional learning is to faculty development. It is anticipated that training can fill gaps in the online advising faculty's knowledge and practice so that they may provide more consistent and effective support to students in distance learning programs. Research findings show that meeting with an advisor and receiving the needed support and assistance creates a level of accountability leading to student empowerment (Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013). Studies have shown that advisors provide primary services to students and help them understand the requirements to persist (Britto & Rush, 2013). Research has also shown that advisors have the responsibility to discuss the students' goals and enroll them in appropriate courses as well as provide encouragement through the enrollment process (Gravel, 2012). Student success evolves through training. Advising training will promote quality advising services and professional growth (Zemsky, 2013). The advising training development seminar will provide the institution with an emphasis on online advising content knowledge through innovative training. Training will help mitigate the challenges associated with this change at the research study site, as it will grant the faculty a more experimental and collaborative avenue derived from working hands on with the resources. Further, faculty development is a common and highly supported practice that evolves from training seminars. Another rationale for further online advising training is its potential impact on the study site. Information from this online advising training can help administrators understand the faculty's individual skills and subject knowledge of advising and determine just how important the process of professional learning is to faculty development. It is anticipated that training can fill gaps in the online advising faculty's knowledge and practice so that they may provide more consistent and effective support to students in distance learning programs. Additionally, it is projected that the online advising faculty professional development program will provide the most all-encompassing and extensive impact on the study site. learning

programs. Additionally, it is projected that the online advising faculty professional development program will provide the most all-encompassing and extensive impact on the study site.

### **Review of the Literature**

The review of the literature provided the framework for the project, which is an online advising faculty training program designed to develop an effective online advisor with analytical, operational, and interpersonal skills. The key search terms I used were *online advising*, *organizational change*, *advising skills*, *student success*, *faculty development*, and *effective advising and communication*. Some words were also combined with *academic and higher education* to generate the most relevant data. Boolean searches were conducted through ERIC, EBSCOhost, and Academic Search Complete databases. Also, articles and scholarly content were identified through Google Scholar. The following is a review of the importance of online advising and research on the techniques that online advising faculty may use to improve the online advising component, with a prediction of creating an effective outcome. The literature review concludes with a discussion of five essential training components, based on the themes of change that will be incorporated into the project. The research in this section provides the background and framework to develop rich, relevant content, and the most effective presentation for the advising faculty development training.

### **The Online Advising Role**

The role of academic advising is coming to the forefront of discussions around student success including student engagement and satisfaction, persistence, time to degree, and retention (T. L. Bailey & Brown, 2016). The same factors that are impacting the importance of academic advising are also being used as a rationale for the increased call for higher levels of accountability and effectiveness in higher education (Darling, 2015; Kultawanich, Koraneekij, &



Na-Songkhla, 2015). With higher levels of accountability, advisors should be accepting of their role in advising and be confident in their abilities to advise. Academic advisors have many roles and responsibilities when it comes to advising students. The advising role lends itself to being the space to help students connect to the institution and feel that they belong (Eaton, 2020). The role also encompasses the possession of core values that include virtues of respect, professionalism, integrity, empowerment, and commitment (Lochtie, McIntosh, Stork, & Walker, 2018). Therefore, there must be a commitment as significant as an educational mission. Student satisfaction is growing in importance in higher education as institutions look for ways to meet the demands of stakeholders, such as distance learning. Online advisors must serve as liaisons in distance learning (Bloom, 2016). Since the students do not have face-to-face contact, an advisor is to aid the students in updates on new policies and procedures, assist in career choices, and best fit their needs to complete their program while staying current on dates, deadlines, and course selections (Stermer, 2018).

Researchers have identified student success as having a significant impact on retention (Betts & Lanza-Gladney, 2010; Fosnacht, McCormick, Nailos, & Ribera, 2017; Kimbark, Peters, & Richardson, 2017; Krumrei-Mancuso, Newton, Kim, & Wilcox, 2013; Thompson, 2016). An academic advisor's role is to influence student success and completion by assisting students in providing positive support, accurate information, and enhancing student achievement. In a study on the perceptions of first-year students and their experiences and perspectives involving advising, Ellis (2014) found that participants who established a relationship with their advisors early in their matriculation had good advising experiences. Ellis also noted that students depend on their advisors to understand postgraduation career paths and that advisors need to establish a system for communicating with the students they advise.

As the central point of contact for online students, advisors play an important role in the success and persistence of students since they are not the traditional on-campus student. In a study conducted by Young-Jones et al. (2013), findings indicated that advisors' success depends on the advisors' ability to keep students satisfied. Student satisfaction is defined by Lowenstein (2015) as the bias appraisals of the numerous consequences and practices associated with education. Students remain satisfied as they grow academically and personally because of their professional relationships with their advisors. The academic advisor for any student presumably holds the key to progress by coaching new and continuing students through general education choices, major selections, minors, and possibly certificate options. According to Kumi Yeboah, Dogbey, Yuan, and Smith (2020), institutions provide services to a diverse group of learners, resulting in the importance of student support. Based on this perspective, online learners need support. Students in the virtual world should have advisors within the support services that are comfortable within their role of advising due to the untraditional circumstances that the distance learner faces. Online integrated academic advising systems represent a second-order transformative change on campuses with the potential to fundamentally change the way students are guided and supported throughout their college education (Karp & Fletcher, 2014).

### **Resistance and Change**

Colleges and universities across the United States are increasingly turning to new web-based education technologies to provide online student support services that before were traditionally only available in person in face-to-face interactions with students (Aljawarneh, 2020; Borray & Millichap, 2017). In most cases, these institutions and faculty are not prepared to handle such complex issues as resistance occurs to the organizational structure (Stickney, Bento, Aggarwal, & Adlakha, 2019). According to Karp and Fletcher (2014), making headway in

improving colleges and universities requires understanding and addressing the antecedents of faculty resistance. Successful implementation of change is challenging in any organization, but especially so in institutions, where faculty rather than administrators control the core practices of the institution; however, engaging colleagues in the change process is essential in new initiatives. (Perry, Zambo, & Abruzzo, 2020).

In higher education settings, change is oftentimes resisted for reasons beyond internal fear of the unknown (Booth & Schwartz, 2012). Yilmaz and Kilicoglu (2013) maintained that to manage resistance effectively, higher education administrators must first understand the causes and nature of resistance to change. In an examination of faculty reaction to change, Qian and Daniels (2008) investigated cynicism toward change in higher education institutions. The qualitative cross-sectional study involved a survey that was administered to 949 tenure track faculty, with a total of 186 responses. A substantial finding pertinent to this study was that trust in leadership is one of the antecedents of change-related cynicism. To gain faculty trust, administrators can benefit from a better understanding of the culture and change the history of the university to help create a sense of community before implementing change (p. 329). The study's qualitative data suggested that although the online advising component required a change in their practice, faculty sometimes are complacent with tradition, resulting in resistance. Klempin and Karp (2015) contended that resistant faculty, unwilling to let go of tradition to make much needed changes, can undermine the institution's efforts to grow and to meet new challenges. Such resistance can spring from distrust or cynicism after faculty have experienced a history of poorly managed change (p. 41).

Literature based upon organizational change specific to faculty resistance to change is limited. Most were informative but did not reveal findings that provided evidence in the form of

data. An extensive review stemmed from finding no research specific to virtual faculty and resistance to change. Also, there was little or no research found concerning faculty and any relationships between resistance to change and the contextual factors of trust in leadership, frequency of change, and history of change. This study will help to fill the gap concerning virtual faculty, resistance to change in a virtual higher education setting, and how context affects faculty resistance to change.

### **Advising and Retention**

Student engagement must be a high priority in an online student environment if persistence and retention are to be refined (Bender, Marzano, & Toth, 2017; Coder, 2016), therefore, it is one of many indicators of student success. It is focused on increasing achievements, positive behaviors, and a sense of belonging to retain them in school. To foster student engagement within the virtual environment, academic advising should not be presented as an optional event (Spight, 2016). Research suggests that the nature, timing, and intensity of advising matters (Surr, 2019). Online advising is compelling when considered an intrinsic part of the educational experience (Mann, 2020). Keeping the student engaged will assist them in terms of their educational journey. Colleges have recognized the need to provide quality advising to improve the success and retention of students (Looyestyn et al., 2017; Shelton & Pedersen, 2016), Kot, 2014). Past studies on retention have focused on student success (Beck & Davidson, 2015; Betts & Lanza-Gladney, 2010; Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2013). Ellis (2014) conducted a study to examine the perceptions of first year students and their experiences with advising. The results showed participants who developed a relationship with the advisor early in the advising process had good advising experiences. Ellis also noted students depend on their advisors to understand post-graduation career paths. Advisors need to establish a system for communicating

with the students they advise to control retention (Garrod, 2017). Allen, Smith, and Muehleck (2014) conducted a study to examine the link between advising and student retention. The researchers found that students who have consistent contact with an advisor were more likely to achieve academic success. Frequent interactions with an advisor allow the student to comprehend a better understanding of their requirements for their program, as well as policies and procedures for registration. Through regular contact with the advisor, the students know whom to contact when they have problems, how to develop a plan for achieving goals, and they have a better relationship with the advisor.

Advisors are committed to engaging with their advisees and providing services to support them through the completion of their degree (Lemoine, Sheeks, Waller, & Richardson, 2019). Advisors with knowledge of career paths can better assist students with creating a degree plan to reach their career goals. As the central point of contact for online students, advisors play an important role in the success and persistence of students (Russo-Gleicher, 2013). Advising has evolved from information providing service to a service that is charged with proving for students as well as meeting the needs of the college. Meeting the needs of students is important to the overall health of the institution (Anderson Mueller & Meyer, 2017). Research studies show that advisors provide primary services to students and help them understand the requirements to persist (Roby, Ashe, Singh, & Clark, 2013). The findings from these studies have indicated that advisors have the responsibility to discuss the students' goals and enroll them in appropriate courses as well as provide encouragement through the enrollment process (Allen et al., 2014; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Advising services have evolved through the creation of an advising organization that focuses on promoting quality advising services and professional growth (Chang & Hannafin, 2015).

## **Technological Advising**

The technological developments have shifted advising functions and roles as many of the classic information-giving responsibilities of advising are now automated (articulation, degree checks, pre-populated academic planners, etc.) Technology mediated advising systems have the potential to strengthen traditional advising services and improve student outcomes (Wilcox, 2016). According to Klempin and Karp (2015), adaptive leadership at multiple levels of the institution is required to fully and effectively impact advising reform. The aforementioned researchers conducted a study in six institutions in which leadership styles were measured in the early stages of implementing a technological advising tool. Klempin and Karp (2015) suggest that institutions must have strong adaptive leaders at both the executive and project-management levels in order to lead effective change. Klempin and Karp (2015) also found that leaders must be ready to implement change at the structural level (business practices), the process level (personal interactions with business practices), and at the attitudinal level (core values and beliefs). As institutions enter unprecedented changes in technology, the nature of these changes calls for leadership that can develop an effective environment (Hickman, 2015). Research regarding distance education technologies indicates that environments involving interaction are most effective (Simonson et al., 2019).

An effective interactive advising reform that suggestively improves student services should follow the SSIP method (Sustained, Strategic, Integrated, Proactive, and Personalized), according to Kalamkarian, Boynton, and Lopez (2018). Effective advising is associated with autonomy-supportive technology strategies that enable students to satisfy their need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Leach & Patall, 2016). Degree Works is considered a technological strategy that can facilitate sustained assistance via online degree planning and early

alerts. Electronic advising systems must be strategically integrated with face-to-face services and present information clearly and in easy-to understand formats (Pasquini & Steele, 2016). The skill level that's required of faculty with the changes in technology is expanding (Bawa, 2016). Most educators possess the digital skills such as managing emails and uploading assignments; nevertheless, there lies a gap between existing skills and what's needed (Bawa, 2016; Lema & Agrusa, 2019; Schmidt, Hodge, & Tschida, 2013).

Degree Works does require more than face-to-face advising skills. It has an advising audit that should be explored by both the advisor and the student. Degree audit systems form the foundation of technology mediated advising by applying the coursework that a student has completed to the requirements of their assigned degree plan. The audit allows both the student and advisor to easily determine which classes still need to be completed in order for the student to graduate (Feghali, Zbib, & Hallal, 2011). Technology advising systems, such as Degree Works, may not always deliver the assistance that was initially projected (Blumenstyk, 2018b). Transitioning from face to face settings to a technological approach is complex and multi-faceted, and requires training and time (Lock & Johnson, 2017). Degree Works is an external software that faculty should be well trained in. With training, faculties' knowledge and expertise combined makes a significant contribution to advising success (Harrison & Rodriguez-Dehmer, 2013). According to Russo-Gleicher (2013), the use of technology is the newest and most promising form of advising delivery; it is now widely used and recommended for institutions to better serve their constituents.

### **Commitment to Serve**

Advisors must commit to meeting the expectations of students, parents, faculty members, administrators, and outside agencies (Grites, Miller, & Voler, 2016). Many institutions have

recognized the importance of academic advising and educational pathway planning in order to help students persist and ultimately graduate from college (Siekpe & Barksdale, 2013). In 2014, higher education institutions in the United States turned their focus towards the completion agenda due to public concern over the low number of students completing college degrees (T. Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). Students of higher education should not proceed through their educations unassisted (White, 2015). Academic advisors can play an integral role in promoting student success by assisting students in the online environment (Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015). As the profession of online advising makes its rightful case for a commitment to serve, faculty must commit to assisting these students in alignment with the already revered role of teaching faculty (Rose, 2020). Advising as teaching places the advisor in a committed role that facilitates student engagement and potentially controls retention (Rose, 2020.)

### **Faculty Development**

While faculty members are considered experts in their field of studies, they typically receive little training or preparation with advising students (Coder, Glover, & Musser, 2019). The growing number of distance education courses, programs, and degrees offered by institutions of higher education offers challenging new opportunities to re-examine former practices (Sutton, 2014). Distance learning and greater use of educational technologies offer more responsibilities for faculty in higher education. In order to use these technologies well, such as Degree Works, one must be trained. In many cases, faculty development has been defined as a wide range of activities that institutions apply to support faculty members' roles (Klein, Lester, Rangwala, & Johri, 2019). This requires support from the academic units and the administration at the institution (Gerick, Eickelmann, & Bos, 2017). A pathway to creating this collaboration is



to encourage the participation of full-time faculty in professional development sessions that include the adjunct faculty, perhaps encouraging the full-time faculty to facilitate professional development sessions that focus on industry trends in the specialist's discipline (Serdyukov, 2017).

Institutions should move professional development practices beyond awareness and familiarity to incorporating a supportive training approach to assist with a new experience as Poe and Almanzar (2019) suggest. Effective advising core competencies are mirrored when developing advisors when core competencies focus on conceptual, informational, and relational components (NACADA, 2017). These functions are essential to advising in the virtual environment. Faculty must understand the pedagogy of the online environment and understand the motivations of online learners (Alpert, Couch, & Harmon, 2016; Gurley, 2018) to be effective in an online mechanism. As with any profession, online advising requires training, but institutions often struggle to identify a centralized resource or approach for implementing advisor training (Wuebker & Cook, 2017). Since online distance education is becoming an increasingly popular option, not only with students, there is a need for institutions to examine ways in which faculty are trained and developed throughout their careers. In building advising training and development programs, institutions should attempt to add relational competencies to learning opportunities to practice skills and techniques (McGill, Heikkila, & Lazarowicz, 2020). Thoroughly planned faculty development strategies as such can assist in designing an effective and efficient online advising component. An effective online advising component will require effective strategies to overcome the Administrators and Faculty challenges at the institution study site. Research shows that building on the necessities and apprehensions of participants means that faculty must see congruence among their individual requests, as well as their

objectives for students, institutional goals, and the goals of the professional development (Allen & Penuel, 2015; Bayar, 2014; Buckley, 2016; Herman, 2012; Hickman, 2015). Faculty must also accept some forms of change. There is no single best approach to professional development for faculty without involving change or openness for innovative ideas (Felton et al., 2016).

Consequently, multiple approaches can attempt to address all of their professional development needs and wants. Institutions must acknowledge the needs and wants of the faculty and make a conscious effort to respond to those needs and wants through the design and development of a professional development program that employs the use of synchronous, asynchronous, and written methods (Bernhardt, 2015).

### **Project Description**

Constructed by the findings from the interviews, the project contains all of the themes that emerged from the data analysis to create a professional development training workshop for online advising faculty and staff members. The workshop is designed utilizing the OHT conceptual framework strategies, which includes a supportive, nurturing, and respectful learning environment built upon personalized communication between both online faculty advisors and online students (Betts, 2008). The development training workshop will provide solution-orientated approaches to ensure that the online faculty advisors are formally trained in the virtual environment, as well as create an online advising model for the institution.

The project for this study is a training seminar that involves activities proven to expand specific knowledge, skills, and behaviors that meet the criteria of a master online advisor (Grites et al., 2016). The three-day professional development training seminar provides a forum for discussion regarding online advising guidelines, standards, missions, and policies to increase their knowledge of interventions that create an ideal online learning environment. It is designed

to accomplish learning outcomes for those attending to recognize analytical, operational, and interpersonal skills. An additional objective will be to understand the meaning and value of an online advisor role as an attempt to articulate the characteristics needed to bridge the gap in practice.

Prior to the start of the professional development, I will meet with the President's Special Assistant for Strategic Planning to share the results of my study, agenda, and timeline for the three 8-hour sessions. Resources needed for this training seminar are as follows: large classroom with round table seating for 35 (5 tables, 7 seats per table), overhead projector, projector screen, computer with PowerPoint capability, internet access, whiteboards with dry erase markers, 1-inch binders, notepads, and notecards.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

Evaluations will be conducted at the conclusion of each training module. Evaluation is the systematic collection of information about a program that enables stakeholders to better understand the program, improve its effectiveness, and/or make decisions about future programming (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Formative and summative are two types of tools frequently used to assess student learning (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). A formative approach involves gathering data at specific intervals to assess how much the participant has learned up until that point, whereas a summative approach utilizes the data to assess how much the participant knows at the completion of the activity. Bernhardt (2015) emphasized the importance of allowing faculty the opportunity to evaluate development programs to ensure that they are invested in the content and find it useful.

Consequently, the online faculty advisors will be asked to evaluate each training by way of answering open ended questions to allow them the opportunity to reflect on their

perspectives and experiences involved in the training seminar in a formative assessment on Day 1 and Day 2. At the conclusion of the third Friday, the attendees will be asked to complete a questionnaire evaluation form that will include feedback on the workshop and to determine if the learning objectives were achieved. Participants should be able to: recognize the challenges that forced the innovation to change, understand the strategic mission as it relates to advising and student success, understand the meaning and value of a virtual advisor role, identify effective communication strategies, and articulate characteristics needed to bridge the gap in practice (Goodwin, 2019). This method will utilize the summative assessment approach. Where appropriate, evaluation questions will be based on the Likert scale, while others will be open-ended. The questions for both the summative and formative evaluations (Appendix A) will be framed by the faculty development research that was discussed in the literature review. Specifically, the questions will investigate whether or not the participants' needs and concerns were met (Bayar, 2014; Bernhardt, 2015). The evaluation feedback, along with comparative student success and retention data (provided by the Institutional Research department), will help determine if the training should be extended, enhanced, revamped, or discontinued. This will be discussed again in a meeting including the Associate Provost and Special Assistant to the President.

## **Project Implications**

### **Local Community**

This three-day professional development training seminar addressed the gap in practice as online advising was considered being a missing component at the institution. The study findings in Section 2, revealed the rationale and basis for the professional development training seminar since participants indicated the need for change. In each module, I will

recommend changes to assist the institution in incorporating practices to facilitate policies. It is anticipated that by equipping the online faculty advisors with strategies to provide more positive and consistent impact on institutional change, it will lead to improved strategic outcomes. As discussed in Section 1 of this project study, the study site has just implemented an online degree for virtual learning; therefore, it is imperative to incorporate an online advising structure geared toward student success. If the institution can meet the student success goals, then it will improve the circumstances for a significant portion of the strategic plan, thus fulfilling the institution's mission. Educating online faculty advisors about the importance of their role in student success in the virtual environment will prepare them to be the backbone of their institutions as a shaping force of the communication structure providing implications for the local community.

### **Distance Learning Community**

The distance learning community is growing globally. Upon implementation at the local level, the professional development training seminar can be shared with other institutions to promote an effective online advising structure. Student success is not just isolated to online advising; it transcends to all levels of higher education. Creating an effective online academic advising environment through professional development allows an institution to set clear goals, effective work processes, accountability. If this project is successful, then it may serve as a model for other institutions that inspire to improve their online advising structures.

### **Conclusion**

This section presented the project goals and rationale of a 24- hour online faculty advisor professional development program. A professional development format was developed to

address the participants' perceptions and experiences, as noted in Section 2. The review of literature focused on accepting the advising role, faculty resistance, technological advising skills, and the commitment to serve within the online advising structure. The implementation plan, potential barriers, necessary support, and project evaluation were also presented. Both formative and summative evaluation methods will be implemented to evaluate and improve the implementation of the professional development training seminar. Implications on how to influence social change in the local community and beyond concluded this section. The next section of the study presents my personal reflections and conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

The problem I addressed in this study was that online faculty members were resistant to the new role of online advising and program administrators felt faculty may be underprepared for the task. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to the perspectives of online faculty advisors and program administrators regarding the challenges associated with online advising and suggestions to improve training and online advising. This doctoral study research led to a project that is built upon the findings. One finding revealed that academic advising requires understanding. One of the strengths of this project is the potential to help prepare faculty members in their new role as an online advisor and gain understanding.

Although the project has strengths, some limitations exist as well. One limitation of the project is the potential for faculty resistance. Professional development used to address challenges or improve overall outcomes is not always perceived by faculty well; sometimes it leads to defensiveness and resentment. As the facilitator, I will be sure to impress upon the faculty the importance of their role as it relates to vision, skills, and knowledge, as a way to mitigate these risks. My goal is to engage early on with the online faculty advisors and other influential stakeholders to garner their support for the training program and help ensure that it is embraced. Another limitation of the project is the amount of time and resources required for the professional development training. Training can be time consuming and expensive, especially if it involves a large number of faculty members. Faculty may be reluctant to volunteer their time in a training session. In anticipation of those concerns, I will schedule a meeting with administrators to see if the faculty will be eligible to receive professional development credits for participating in training that incorporates research-based best practices.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

For this project study, I chose interviews with faculty and administrators as the means to address the research problem. In those interviews, I chose to address administrators and faculty perspectives concerning their experiences with online advising and their recommendations to improve the online advising environment. An alternate approach would be to seek the perspectives of online students in an attempt to gather their recommendations to address online advising. Such an approach could lead to the desired outcome of a structured online advising component.

Other recommendations could have included forming an advisory committee comprised of administrators, faculty, and student leaders within the acute online advising setting to discuss common challenges with the missing component. This committee could strategically identify solutions that would benefit the online advising environment. With the committee involving such a diverse membership, the different perspectives could have a significant impact on this campus, and potentially beyond, as all would be essential voices for the problem with a common vision.

An alternative format could have been a white paper. The content could have focused on recommendations to promote a structured online advising component based on the input from the administrators, faculty participants, and the current literature. However, after reviewing the qualitative data, I determined that a professional development approach addressing faculty training rather than addressing policy was a better fit to the needs of the site. According to Creswell (2015), there are a variety of ways to disseminate research, including oral presentations, journal articles, and conference presentations, which may apply to the educational setting. All of the aforementioned methods could positively impact the online advising component.



### **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

This journey at Walden University has been one of overcoming challenges. The most important things that this project study taught me are discipline and patience. From surgeries to juggling a demanding job and responsibilities of family, major challenges presented themselves. I have learned very quickly to follow the advice of my chairperson to move “ever onward.” This path has forced me to establish routines by getting organized, developing plans, and executing them. These strategies have become the ultimate survival kit for becoming a scholarly practitioner.

Identifying the topic was easy, as I was interested in the online advising structure after attending various meetings on campus. The literature review was time consuming because at times there were limited resources related to some of the themes that were emerging. Nevertheless, it proved to be beneficial because I learned that resistance in the online advising environment was a much more significant problem than I knew. This missing component of online advising is one that I was motivated to help solve. I was determined to find out the issues that the administrators and faculty were facing in an attempt to improve and structuralize the online advising component.

The process of interviewing participants taught me various skills such as becoming a better communicator and listener. During the initial interview, I was a little nervous at first. I did not want to seem biased in any way with my facial expressions toward their responses. I disciplined myself to become more confident in my approach and to avoid nervousness. I recorded field notes. It was truly helpful because communication is more than verbal exchanges. Facial expressions and posture were observed as it made me aware of communication habits. The interview process taught me to give my full attention to the people with whom I am speaking and

not allow their communication habits to affect my attention span. Hearing the sensitivity in their voices motivated me that much more to establish a professional development training seminar.

The data analysis process was another exercise in discipline. In order to provide an accurate analysis of the data, I had to suspend my biases and expectations of what the data would reveal due to attending those previous meetings on the online advising component. Closely following the direction of notable researchers helped immensely with this effort. My goal was to ensure credibility for future research; therefore, I am confident that my analysis is an authentic and accurate representation of the data. The IRB at the study site were very helpful and did not present any major roadblocks. Upon their approval, securing the participants flowed easily. Establishing mutually agreeable times and dates presented a challenge due to our time availability.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

Developing a thorough research project takes essential time, assurance, and a willingness to accept change. One of the obstacles I faced was identifying what data to collect to gain a better insight and understanding of the online advising component challenges. Heifetz and Linsky (2017) suggested that change initiatives should be in line with the organization's strategic plan. As mentioned in section 1, the associate vice president of academic affairs suggested that the online advising component follow the institutions' strategic goals. As I reviewed the strategic plan and goals, student success continued to remain as the focus for the institution. Enhancing students was the outcome of the strategic initiatives and goals.

The professional development training seminar developed directly out of my research findings, providing data-driven solutions. It made practical sense to establish a project that reviewed the online academic advising structure because this had been a missing component at

the institution. The qualitative data incorporated to assist in creating an online advising structure that meets the necessities and expectations of the strategic plan granted me the opportunity to broaden my horizon on the component. With limited previous research, this project study provided me the chance to construct recommendations and decisions through my own research.

As I implement this professional development project, I will also evaluate the overall effect on the participants. At the end of each module, a summative evaluation form will be given to each attendee. It will serve as an assessment to determine whether their learning goals were met in terms of online advising. The summative information can shape the organization of future training as it can provide suggestions of what should be offered to attendees. I am confident that this approach will assist with future recommendations in online advising to increase student success at the institution.

### **Analysis of Self as a Scholar**

This doctoral journey has transformed me into a scholar practitioner who can consciously function with autonomy and authenticity. This has been a challenging journey, obstacle after obstacle. During those moments I began to see that the intellectual life of a scholar was connected with the pragmatic world of education. I am so thankful for the guidance of my Chairpersons, for they have improved my writing and critical thinking skills. This Higher Education Leadership program made me face some critical self-reflection moments. I have learned to form a more solid identity as a leader, and also have become more secure in many values and commitment to higher education. Communication in the Educational Leadership classroom has grounded me with a foundation that will prepare me to be a more successful leader in higher education. Also, I have developed friendships and mentoring relationships with classmates that will hopefully extend well beyond this program. Those connections have

enriched my educational, professional, and personal life. Implementing a project of this type and magnitude is a demonstration of my new-found leadership skills.

### **Analysis of Self as a Practitioner**

As a practitioner in higher education, I have learned to be open-minded to other concerns but be mindful that student success is the ultimate goal. The potential challenges that were discussed, such as faculty resistance, have taught me not to draw upon my emotional intelligence or focus on administrations' inability to lead change efforts. As a practitioner, I learned to gain a better appreciation for understanding others' perspectives and experiences on sensitive issues as it related to student success. In addition, I learned to listen to their complex concerns. Focusing on the perspectives of others can be a very humbling experience. This project study has assisted me in becoming a better leader. It has opened up my views on student success in places of the unknown. I am positive that this project study will have an impact on the online advising structure across the higher education community.

### **Analysis of Self as a Project Developer**

Implementing this project will be a demonstration of my leadership skills. Although creating training documents is not new for me, the extent and impact of this project is one of magnitude. I've re-read the interview summaries over and over again. Outlining the concerns and experiences, has provided me with key concepts that should be covered in the material presented in the training seminar. I have gained confidence read the works of other researchers' projects for guidance on formation, style, and layout. As I formulated my first draft, I started to think outside of the box and focus on capturing their attention. With each subsequent draft, I have begun to envision the operationalization of the training seminar.

The training program was designed to be informative and useful, but also enlightening and engaging. It will also focus on motivational and encouraging deliveries. Also, recognizing that faculty have very unique needs, the training program content and methodology is grounded in faculty professional development research. The goal is for the online faculty advisors to participate in this training to gain practical tools, strategies, and have their training notes as resources to help them apply positive mindset strategies in their classrooms. Also, since participant feedback is important, faculty will have the opportunity to provide both formative and summative feedback throughout the training process. I look forward to reviewing their comments, learning from them, and adjusting the training delivery as appropriate. If this project is successful, the impact will be significant. It is anticipated that the project will impact faculty perspectives about the importance of faculty online advising on students' abilities to learn and grow in their own academic experiences.

### **Reflection on the Importance of the Work**

The data collection, analysis, and project implications have substantial prominence for the online advising structure in higher education. My abilities as a scholar and researcher increased through the development and preparation of this study. If successful, this project could potentially be implemented at other institutions that offer professional development training to enhance their online advising structures. I am committed and devoted to this ongoing research. I hope that my devotion will help to improve analyzing online advising methods for student success both at my institution and at others. The qualitative data obtained from the one-on-one interviews provided a guide for what was needed to develop the project. The findings had an essential impact on section 2, providing significant data as to why a change was needed to create an effective advising structure based on their strategic plan.

As a result of this information, I learned to place emphasis on the institution's strategic plan and remain open minded during the interviews as they discussed their perspectives and experiences. I am optimistic that the results of this study will inspire and motivate all advisors at my institution and potentially throughout higher education to review and evaluate current academic advising practices. Consequential studies can be expanded based upon the qualitative data results in the findings. The subsequent project provides leaders at the institution a method to evaluate current online academic advising practices and open discussions for developing policies, modifications, and overall improvement. The research findings may also have broader implications for the higher education virtual online environment, providing a methodology to evaluate current policies and practices at other institutions and recommendations that may assist in increasing student success. The research provides a starting point for broader reviews of online academic advising.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

Academic institutions can use this information to facilitate the careful development and design of professional development programs that meet the needs of an effective online advising component. With the increase in online education courses being offered in higher education, it is important for institutions to support this growing student population. One of the ways institutions can support students is providing comprehensive advising through faculty advising (Marshall & Flutey, 2018).

Professional development is also key. The participants identified limited opportunities designed primarily for online advising. The initiative of a professional development program that is tailored to online advising faculty based on their perspectives and experiences has the potential to influence their effectiveness in the online advising component. The result of a

professional development program developed specifically for online advising faculty has far reaching implications not only for student success but for administrators and faculty growth in the changing world of higher education. A carefully thought-out and well-developed professional development program has a potential impact to increase faculty loyalty and satisfaction (McGill, 2016).

Further research should be conducted on the effects of online advising and if it influences student success. Ambiguity plays a factor because of the limited amount of studies that have been researched in this area. Both qualitative and quantitative research should be conducted to measure student satisfaction and expectations of success. A larger population with a survey focused on online advising and its role at a college or university could measure retention and attrition as it relates to student success in a virtual setting. Another recommendation would be to perform a qualitative study with online students being interviewed about their online advising experiences. Because research is limited in this area, this could perhaps involve a more thorough picture of online advising and student success.

### **Conclusion**

This final section of the project study outlined project strengths and provided suggestions for addressing the project's limitations. This section also discussed the ways in which this project study supported my growth as a scholar-practitioner and leader. An explanation was provided in terms of the project's potential impact on social change and its' application in other contexts. Also included were recommendations for future studies. The project study's intended value is to provide the online faculty advisors with strategies geared toward their strategic plan to create an effective learning environment. Placing a positive impact on student success will allow the potential of this project to contribute to the overall online advising field.

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## Appendix A: The Project

### **Online Faculty Advisor Professional Development Workshop Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.E. Workshop: Module I (8 hrs.) Facilitator: Kandace Betts**

#### **Learner Objectives**

At the conclusion of Module 1, faculty will:

- Recognize the challenges that forced the innovation to change
- Understand the strategic mission as it relates to advising and student success
- Understand the meaning and value of a virtual advisor role
- Identify effective communication strategies
- Articulate characteristics needed to bridge the gap in practice

#### **Resources**

- Large classroom with round table seating for 35 (5 tables, 7 seats per table)
- Overhead projector, projector screen, Computer with PowerPoint Capability
- Access to internet
- White board with dry erase markers
- 35 1-inch binders with 3 tabs (One tab for each training session)
- 35 copies of agenda (3-hole punched for insertion)
- 35 handouts of the PowerPoint slides (3-hole punched for insertion)
- 35 notepads (3-hole punched for insertion)
- 35 evaluation forms
- 500 notecards (100 per table)

#### **Agenda**

- Welcome, Introductions, and Training Overview
- Presentation on Perspectives on Online Advising
- Keynote Speaker
- Break
- Table Discussion
- Lunch
- Service is Sovereignty
- Table Discussion
- Break
- Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.E.
- Brief Review/Reflections
- Evaluation

<b>ONLINE FACULTY ADVISOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP BRIDGING THE GAP IN M.E.E.E.E. WORKSHOP: MODULE I (8 HRS.)</b>	
8:00 -8:30 am	<p>Welcome, Introductions, and Training Overview</p> <p>Review housekeeping items (agenda, breaks, ground rules, etc.)</p> <p>Attendees will introduce themselves by providing the following:</p> <p>Name Department Years as a faculty member</p> <p>Polling Activity: Sentence stems will be posted on chart paper at the front of the room:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Online advising makes me...” “Changes made at this institution...” “Degree Works...”</p> <p>After introductions, I will ask participants to complete a response on the notecards provided to any of the stems that seem relevant to them. These responses will be used in the conversation starter after the keynote speaker concludes. The purpose of the sentence stems is to gauge the participants’ feelings before the speaker.</p> <p>A welcoming environment with refreshments will be present as well. The goal is to allow the participants to transition for an early morning training session to focus on building new knowledge.</p>
8:30 - 9:00 am	Presentation – Hmm...WHY ARE WE HERE? (PowerPoint Slides 4-6)
9:00 – 10:00 am	Keynote Speaker: Malinda Gilmore, PhD Presentation: Into the Future – Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025
10:00 – 10:15 am	Question and Answer Session
10:15 - 10:30 am	BREAK
10:30 – 11:00 am	<p>Table Discussion</p> <p>Each table will be asked to identify one spokesperson that will be the reporter and a scribe that will act as a recorder. Participants will be asked to share their responses to the sentence stems collaboratively. The identified scribe will record three responses collaboratively on notecards. The idea here is to get participants talking about their online advising experiences and change in a non-threatening way</p>



	and to gracefully reveal the varying participants' overall perspectives in the room.
10:35 – 11:30 am	<p>Report Out</p> <p>Upon completion of the table discussion activity, each recorder will place the completed responses to the sentence stems on the whiteboard. The spokesperson will reference their responses.</p>
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	LUNCH
12:30 – 1:00 pm	<p>Recognizing CHANGE</p> <p>After the lunch break, participants will be asked to stand up and cross their arms. After their arms are crossed, they will be asked if they're comfortable. After everyone answers, they will be told to cross them the other way. (A more uncomfortable approach, but the same action.)</p> <p>A brief discussion of specific changes with online advising will take place.</p>
1:00 – 2:00 pm	SERVICE is Sovereignty (PowerPoint Slides 7-11 )

2:00 – 2:45 pm	<p>Table Discussion</p> <p>After the PowerPoint, participants will be given the following scenario:</p> <p>Kimberly, a second-semester online student, is doing poorly in two courses. She appears to be committed to going to medical school and has a cumulative GPA of 4.0. She considers withdrawing from the course and repeating it in the upcoming semester. Kimberly has emailed you several times, but the emails went to your spam account unfortunately. Today is the last day that Kimberly can withdraw from the institution.</p> <p>Each group will be asked to collaborate and create an email response to Kimberly utilizing the roles and responsibilities discussed in the PowerPoint presentation “Service is Sovereignty.”</p> <p>The spokesperson will share their email response with the group.</p> <p>A discussion of the advisors role will take place collaboratively.</p>
2:45 – 3:00 pm	BREAK
3:00- 4:00 pm	Bridging the Gap involves M.E.E.E.E. (PowerPoint Slides 12-13)
4:00– 4:30 pm	Closing Review
4:30 – 4:45 pm	Reflections/Questions/Concerns
4:45 – 5:00 pm	Module I Review

## Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.E. Training Evaluation (Module I)

	Strongly Agree – 5		Strongly Disagree -1		
<b>The content was as described in publicity materials</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The workshop was practical to my needs and interests</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>I will recommend this workshop to other online advisors</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The workshop was well paced within the allotted time</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The facilitator was a good communicator</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The material was presented in an organized manner</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The facilitator was knowledgeable on the topic</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>I would be interested in attending a follow-up, workshop on this same subject</b>	5	4	3	2	1

Given the topic, was this workshop  Too short     Right length     Too long

In your opinion, was this workshop:  Introductory     Intermediate     Advanced

Please rate the following:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the module? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have any suggestions for improvement? \_\_\_\_\_

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Workshop Day 1 – Slides 1-2

# STIMULATING THE VIRTUAL MIND FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

ONLINE ACADEMIC ADVISING: MODULE I

Facilitator: Kandace Betts

## SESSION RULES

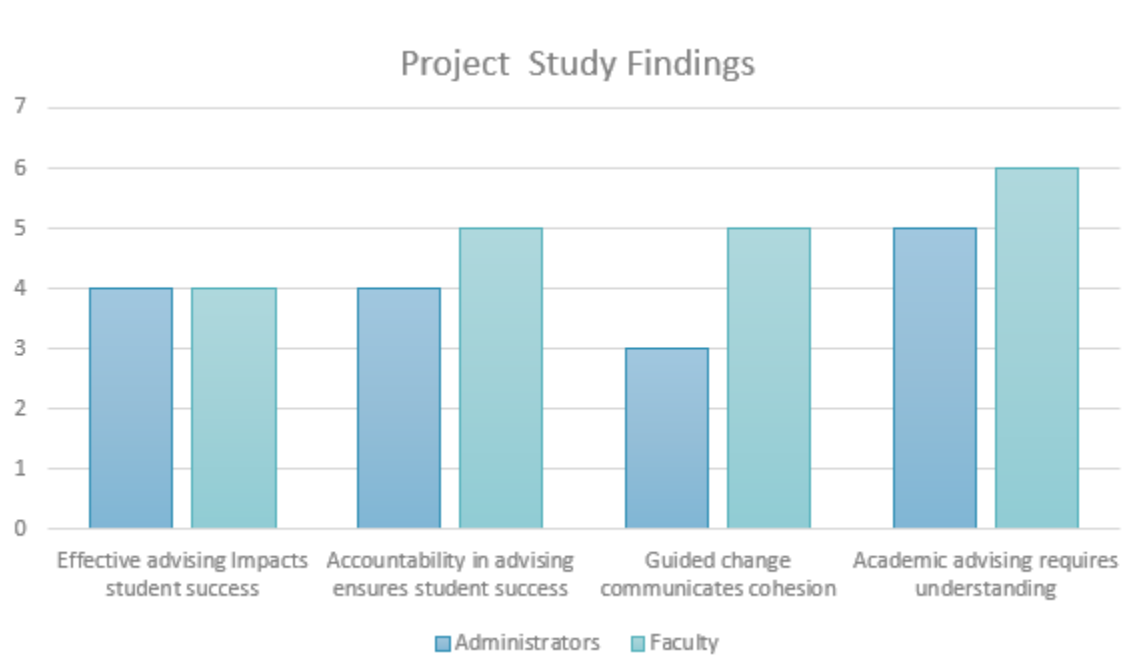
- Engage and be fully present
  - ✓ Please turn your cell phone on Silent/Vibrate
  - ✓ Please AVOID side conversation during the session
  - ✓ If you must leave the session early, please do so as discreetly as possible
- Assume best intentions
- Share ideas and listen attentively to others
- Cultivate professional relationships

## Workshop Day 1 – Slides 3-4



## OBJECTIVES

- Recognition of the need for institutional change in online academic advising
- Recognition of barriers to change
- Identification of advising roles/responsibilities and improvement of proactive
- Understanding a compelling future state of online academic advising



## ADVISING PERSPECTIVES

❖ “Online advising is time consuming and, at times, confusing. No one was in on the implementation of Degree Works. That product isn’t working. It has many issues.”

~ Faculty E\_3

❖ “There should be a standard online advising procedure to follow. There aren’t any guidelines for what should and should not be done.”

~ Faculty C\_5



### HOW WILL THIS TRULY HELP ME ?

- Provide more personalized advising
- Review Academic Requirements of students’ programs
- Track students’ Degree Progress by identifying courses needed
- Plan for Registration in future terms
- Review Academic Requirements of students’ programs
- View Students’ Grades, GPA, Transfer Credits & Registration History
- Create What-If Audits for students considering a Major/Minor/Concentration change
- And much, much more...

## Advising Matters



### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

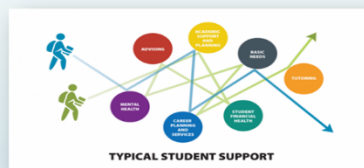
- **PROVIDE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN A VIRTUAL SETTING**
- **PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH ACADEMIC PROGRESS**
  - **PROVIDE A ROADMAP ~ ACADEMIC RESOURCES**

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- TIME SENSIBILITY**
  - QUALITY**
  - AVAILABILITY**
  - PATIENCE**
- VIRTUAL ETIQUETTE**
  - COURTEOUS**
  - PROFESSIONALISM**
- ACCURACY OF INFORMATION**
  - CORRESPONDENCE**
  - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

# INVESTMENT IN STUDENT SUCCESS

- PLANS
  - EDUCATION
  - ASPIRATIONS
  - CAREER GOALS
  
- PATHWAYS
  - STUDENT DESIGN
  - CONCEPTUAL





## Workshop Day 1 – Slides 11-12

# BRIDGING THE GAP

## ON

## ME

EFFECTIVE  
EMERGENT  
EVOLVE  
EFFICIENT

### Online Human Touch (OHT) Conceptual Framework... Bringing the campus to the Student

	Important	Very important	Total
Quality of instruction	22%	78%	100%
Academic rigor of courses	42%	58%	100%
Academic support from faculty and adjuncts	26%	73%	99%
Accessibility to faculty and adjuncts	38%	56%	94%
Technical Support	34%	59%	93%
Quality of academic advising	44%	45%	89%
Accessibility to academic advisor	49%	40%	89%
Opportunities to connect with faculty and adjunct	43%	44%	87%



Workshop Day 1 – Slides 13-14



**BRINGING THE CAMPUS TO  
THE STUDENTS**

- Virtual Ways
- Imperative Decision Making
  - Student Initiatives



**ENGAGEMENT**

**Online Faculty Advisor Professional Development Workshop  
Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.E.  
Workshop: Module II (8 hrs.)**

Facilitator: Kandace Betts

**Learner Objectives**

At the conclusion of Module II, faculty will:

- Recognize the elements that drove change
- Understand the influence that technology has on advising
- Understand the benefits of Degree Works

**Resources**

- Computer Training Lab (35 computer stations)
- Overhead projector, projector screen, Computer with PowerPoint Capability
- Access to internet
- White board with dry erase markers
- 35 Pre-generated Self-Assessment Notecards
- 35 Advising Scenario Worksheets
- 35 Module II evaluation forms

**Agenda**

- Welcome and Recap
- Accepting Change
- Video and Open Discussion
- Break
- Degree Works Self-Assessment
- Degree Works 101
- Lunch
- Hands On Training
- Break
- Group Activity
- Brief Review/Reflections
- Module II Summative Evaluation

<b>Online Faculty Advisor Professional Development Workshop</b> <b>Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.E.</b> Workshop: Module II (8 hrs.)	
8:00 -8:30 am	<b>Welcome and Recap of Module I</b>
8:30-9:00 am	<b>Presentation – Accepting Change</b> (PowerPoint Slides 15-16)
9:00 – 9:45 am	<b>Introducing Degree Works – VIDEO and Open Discussion</b> (PowerPoint with Video Slide 17)  How does Degree Works help students reach goals? How does Degree Works provide support? How does Degree Works increase graduation? How does Degree Works increase enrollment?
9:45 – 10:00 am	<b>Break</b>
10:00 - 10:15 am	<b>Polling: Self-Assessment Activity</b>  Attendees will be asked to self-assess their current understanding of Degree Works by answering one of the following pre-generated notecards. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I need training in Degree Works. What functionality do I need assistance with in Degree Works?</li> <li>2. I am comfortable with my knowledge of Degree Works.</li> </ol> After completion, participants that need additional training in Degree Works will be allowed to share their responses, which will be recorded for additional coverage of training topics.
10:15 – 11:30am	<b>Degree Works 101</b> PowerPoint Slides 18-29
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	<b>LUNCH</b>
12:30 – 2:45 pm	<b>HANDS ON TRAINING</b>

	<p>After the lunch break, participants will be asked to utilize the testing environment to complete the advising scenarios worksheets. Each attendee will perform the necessary actions in Degree Works.</p> <p>The facilitator will walk around and assist as needed.</p> <p>PowerPoint Slide 30</p>
3:00 – 4:00 pm	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Group Activity</b></p> <p>After the Break, participants will be asked to group in 7 groups of 5 (the same groups from Module I preferably.)</p> <p>Each group will be asked to create and role play a 3 - 5 minute advising session between an online student and advisor involving Degree Works.</p> <p>A discussion of the advisors role will take place collaboratively.</p>
4:00– 4:30 pm	<b>Closing Review</b>
4:30 – 4:45 pm	<b>Reflections/Questions/Concerns</b>
4:45 – 5:00 pm	<b>Module II Summative Evaluation</b>

## Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.E. *Training Evaluation (Module II)*

	Strongly Agree – 5		Strongly Disagree -1		
<b>The content was as described in publicity materials</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The workshop was practical to my needs and interests</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>I will recommend this workshop to other online advisors</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The workshop was well paced within the allotted time</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The facilitator was a good communicator</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The material was presented in an organized manner</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The facilitator was knowledgeable on the topic</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>I would be interested in attending a follow-up, workshop on this same subject</b>	5	4	3	2	1

Given the topic, was this workshop  Too short     Right length     Too long

In your opinion, was this workshop:  Introductory     Intermediate     Advanced

Please rate the following:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the module? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have any suggestions for improvement? \_\_\_\_\_

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## PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION

- Caring – Those with the POWER to LISTEN
- Control – Faculty Input
- Choice – Giving/Granting Options
- Competence – Skills/Training

# EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Don't be afraid to  
**CHANGE.**  
You may lose  
something good  
but you may gain  
something better.

“Electronic advising is an advising capacity to improve student success.”

~ Jimmy Solis

**E-Advisement and Technology-Supported Services**

Workshop Day 2 – Slides 17-18

## Introducing...DEGREE WORKS

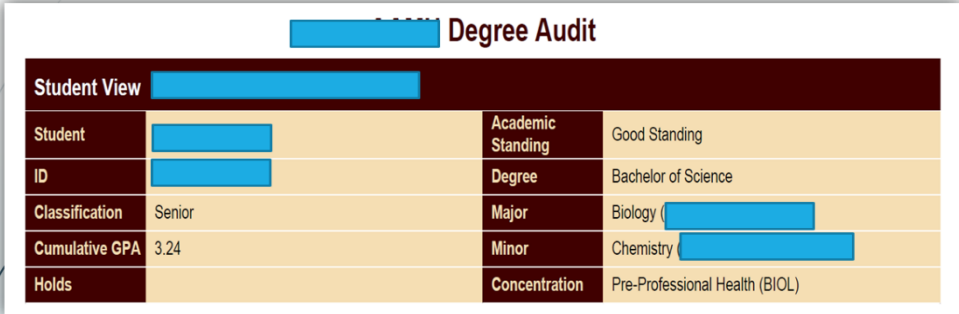


## GETTING STARTED: ACCESS TO DEGREE WORKS





Workshop Day 2 – Slides 19-20



**Student View**

Student	[Redacted]	Academic Standing	Good Standing
ID	[Redacted]	Degree	Bachelor of Science
Classification	Senior	Major	Biology ([Redacted])
Cumulative GPA	3.24	Minor	Chemistry ([Redacted])
Holds		Concentration	Pre-Professional Health (BIOL)

**Legend**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete except for classes in-progress	(T) Transfer Class	REG Registered Course
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Complete	<input type="checkbox"/> Nearly complete - see advisor	@ Any course number	* Prerequisites

<b>Degree in Bachelor of Science</b>	Catalog Year: 2015-2016	Credits Required: 123
	GPA: 3.13	Credits Applied: 130.67

- You meet the minimum GPA requirement
- General Education required Still Needed: See [GenEd Requirements - BIOL](#) section
- Major required Still Needed: See [Major in Biology](#) section
- Core required Still Needed: See [Core Requirements - BIOL](#) section
- Program Elcs required

## Workshop Day 2 – Slides 21-22

GenEd Requirements - BIOL					
				GPA	3.00
				Credits Required:	54
				Credits Applied:	40
<b>Unmet conditions for this set of requirements:</b>				54 credits are required. You currently have 40, you still need 14 more credits.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AREA I: WRITTEN COMPOSITION				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Composition I	ENG 101	Composition I	TB	3 Summer 2013
	Satisfied by	ENG119 - English I - W [REDACTED]			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Composition II	ENG 102	Composition II	TB	3 Summer 2014
	Satisfied by	ENG120 - English II - Wayne County Cmty College			
<input type="checkbox"/>	AREA II: HUMANITIES & FINE ARTS				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Art or Music Appreciation	ART 110	Fundamentals of Drawing	TA	3 Spring 2014
	Satisfied by	ART101 - Drawing I [REDACTED]			
Exception By:	[REDACTED]	Substitution : <b>Replace ART 101 with ART 110</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	World Literature I	ENG 203	World Literature I	C	3 Fall 2015
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elem French I or Spanish I <b>Still Needed: 1 Class in FRE 101 or SPA 101</b>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elem French II or Spanish II or Intro to Philosophy	PHL 201	Introduction to Philosophy	TA	3 Spring 2014
	Satisfied by	PHL201 - Intro to Phil - [REDACTED]			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AREA III: NATURAL/PHYSICAL SCI & MATH				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Principles of Biology I & Lab	BIO 103	Principles of Biology	TC	3 Fall 2012
	Satisfied by	BIO131 - Intro Bi [REDACTED]			
		BIO 103L	Principles of Biology Lab	TC	1 Fall 2012
	Satisfied by	BIO131L - Intro Biok [REDACTED]			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural/Physical Science Electives				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Botany I & Lab	BIO 203	General Botany I	B	3 Fall 2015
		BIO 203L	General Botany Lab	B	1 Fall 2015
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AREA III: NATURAL/PHYSICAL SCI & MATH				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-Calculus Algebra	MTH 112	Pre-Calculus Algebra	C	3 Fall 2015

## WORKSHEETS – TOOLBAR OPTIONS

Format:	
Student View	View Save as PDF Process New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include in-progress classes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include preregistered classes <a href="#">Class History</a>
<b>Format</b>	<b>This format drop-down box lists the different types of audits that are available to view. Format section describes different types (Graduation Checklist)</b>
View	If you want to view a different type of audit select the option from the drop-down and then click the View button
Save as PDF	This button will allow you to either save or print the audit while retaining the formatting
Process New	This button will run a new audit and apply the information that was recently refreshed
In-progress/ Preregistered Classes	These options are checked by default. Degree Works will include any courses in which the student is currently enrolled in as well as those for which they are pre-registered
Class History	Provides a listing of all of the courses taken by the student, with grades and credits, grouped by the term taken.

Workshop Day 2 – Slides 23-24

The screenshot shows a course catalog for 'Physical Science II & Lab'. A pop-up window displays details for 'ART 111: Two Dimensional Des & Color'. The table below lists sections for this course.

Term	Crs	Section	Seats	Course Title	Meeting Times
Fall 2015	72930	15 out of 15	15	Two Dimensional Des & Color	M W F 10:00 - 11:50
Fall 2015	71811	12 out of 15	12	Two Dimensional Des & Color	M W F 10:00 - 11:50


The interface includes several sections for planning a degree:

- What-If:** Degree: Bachelor of Science, Bulletin Year: 2017-2018. A warning states: "These requirements are not official until you declare your major."
- Look Ahead:** "Choose Your Different Areas of Study" with dropdowns for Major, Minor, and Concentration.
- Choose Your Future Classes:** A search area with fields for Subject and Number, and buttons for "Add Course" and "Remove Course".

## WHAT IF DEGREE AUDIT

Workshop Day 2 – Slides 25-26

## What Do You Know ?



**FORMAT: Registration Checklist – Shows unfulfilled requirements from the Student view, courses the student still need to graduate**

Format: Registration Checklist [X] View Save as PDF

**Degree in Bachelor of Science**

Std Needed: See GenEd Requirements - GAR section  
 Std Needed: See Major in General Art section  
 Std Needed: See Concentration in Graphic Design section  
 Std Needed: **PREREQ block was not found but is required**

**General Requirements - GAR**

Std Needed: 1 Class in CMP 101 or CS 101

**Major in General Art**

Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 111  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 121  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 211  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 220  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 300

**Core Requirements - GAR**

**Concentration in Graphic Design**

Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 258  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 290  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 312  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 320 or 321  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 331  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 332  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 408  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 412  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 420  
 Std Needed: 1 Class in ART 430

## FACT or FICTION?


Advising Notes are placed at the bottom of the worksheet:

Mes	Entry	Date
Student was advised to register for ART 298		04/20/25


Student was advised to...register for ART 298

ADVISING NOTES


Workshop Day 2 – Slides 27-28



**HANDS ON**



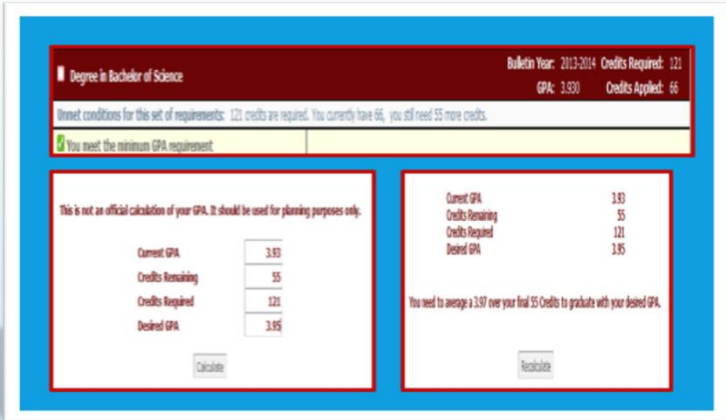
**NOW**  
**LATER**



**GPA CALCULATOR – GRADUATION CALCULATOR**



**RETENTION**



Workshop Day 2 – Slides 29-30

**This is not an official calculation of your GPA. It should be used for planning purposes only.**

Current GPA   
 Credits Earned So Far

	Credits	Grade
ART 209	3	A [4.00] v
ART 221	3	A [4.00] v
ENG 204	3	A [4.00] v
HIS 102	3	A [4.00] v
NHM 410	3	A [4.00] v
Class 6		A [4.00] v
Class 7		A [4.00] v
Class 8		A [4.00] v
Class 9		A [4.00] v
Class 10		A [4.00] v

Current GPA   
 Credits Earned So Far

Class	Credits	Grade	Grade
ART 209	3	A	4.00
ART 221	3	A	4.00
ENG 204	3	A	4.00
HIS 102	3	A	4.00
NHM 410	3	A	4.00

Calculated GPA   
 By achieving the grades listed here, your GPA at the end of the term will be 3.95



## HANDS ON TRAINING

*Advising Transfer Worksheet*

**Scenario A**  
 Anita is starting her senior year! She is excited and is eager to get her classes NOW! She requires exactly 12 credits to graduate this semester, but this semester, only 10 credits are available. She needs to know what courses she needs to graduate this semester. Will she meet all the requirements? If not, what's wrong? How do you help her select her coursework for the next semester?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario B**  
 Sharna, A\*\*\*\*\*, is dealing with a great deal of pressure. She has realized that she's had to drop one and is undergoing a county battle for her kids. She cannot afford to withdraw, but she can't meet the course offerings for prerequisites that she needs. She's desperately waiting on a reply back from you. What is your response?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Scenario C**  
 Thomas, A\*\*\*\*\*, has just transferred to the university. He left a voicemail indicating that he's received an email stating that he's on academic probation and can only register for 12 hrs. He said that he only needs a few more hours to graduate and that his transfer credits aren't appearing on articulated courses. How do you respond? What are Thomas's options? What notes do you place on his audit worksheet?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Online Faculty Advisor Professional Development Workshop  
Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.E.  
Workshop: Module III (8 hrs.)**

Facilitator: Kandace Betts

**Learner Objectives**

At the conclusion of Module II, faculty will:

- Recognize the elements that make an online advisor effective
- Understand the evolution of an online advisor
- Understand the functionality of Degree Works
- Identify characteristics and strategies for an effective online advising plan
- Articulate the strategic mission relevant to online advising

**Resources**

- Large classroom with round table seating for 35 (5 tables, 7 seats per table)
- Overhead projector, projector screen, Computer with PowerPoint Capability
- Access to internet
- White board with dry erase markers
- 35 copies of agenda (3-hole punched for insertion)

**Agenda**

- Welcome and Recap
- Evolving in Online Advising
- Self-Reflection Activity
- Break
- Group Activity: College Online Advising Plan
- Lunch
- Report Out
- An Effective Online Advisor: M.E.E.E.E.
- Break
- Video – Review
- Brief Review/Reflections
- Module III Summative Evaluation

<b>Online Faculty Advisor Professional Development Workshop</b> <b>Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.</b> Workshop: Module III (8 hrs.)	
8:00 -8:30 am	<b>Welcome and Recap of Module II</b>
8:30-9:00 am	<b>Evolving in Online Advising</b> (PowerPoint Slides 31-32)
9:00 – 9:45 am	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-Reflection Activity – Are you a Survival Kit</b> (PowerPoint Slide 33)</p> <p>Attendees will be asked to take 5 minutes to evaluate themselves and determine:            What is currently in your advising kit? (Discussion is voluntary only.)</p> <p>After the self-reflections, participants will be asked to collaborate ideas and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is needed in an advising survival kit?</li> <li>• What should not be included?</li> </ul> <p>Collaborate answers will be recorded on the whiteboard.</p>
9:45 – 10:00 am	<b>Break</b>
10:00 – 11:30 am	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Group Work by Division – College Online Advising Plan</b></p> <p>There are five college divisions at the intuition. Participants will assemble at tables by divisions (i.e. College of Engineering, Business, Agriculture, etc.) Groups will designate one person to be the scribe, and another person to be the reporter.</p> <p>Groups will respond to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What advising strategies can I use in my division to promote student success? (minimum 5)</li> <li>• Connect each advising strategy to a specific strategic objective discussed in Module I.</li> <li>• What additional online advising resources are needed for our college?</li> <li>• How would you utilize those resources?</li> <li>• How do resources assist in meeting your strategic mission?</li> </ul>
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	<b>LUNCH</b>
12:30 – 1:30 pm	<b>REPORT OUT – College Online Advising Plan</b>



	After the lunch break, each group will present their College Advising Plan. The reporter will act as their spokesperson during the discussion.
1:30 – 2:45 pm	An Effective Online Advisor: M.E.E.E.E. PowerPoint Slides 34-37
2:45- 3:00 pm	<b>BREAK</b>
3:00 – 3:45 pm	Closing Review: VIDEO – Degree Works PowerPoint Slide 38  Participants will be allowed to ask additional questions/concerns about the advising tool.
3:45 – 4:45 pm	Reflections/Questions/Concerns
4:45 – 5:00 pm	Module III Summative Evaluation

## Bridging the Gap in M.E.E.E.E.

### *Training Evaluation (Module III)*

	Strongly Agree – 5		Strongly Disagree -1		
The content was as described in publicity materials	5	4	3	2	1
The workshop was practical to my needs and interests	5	4	3	2	1
I will recommend this workshop to other online advisors	5	4	3	2	1
The workshop was well paced within the allotted time	5	4	3	2	1
The facilitator was a good communicator	5	4	3	2	1
The material was presented in an organized manner	5	4	3	2	1
The facilitator was knowledgeable on the topic	5	4	3	2	1
I would be interested in attending a follow-up, workshop on this same subject	5	4	3	2	1

Given the topic, was this workshop  Too short     Right length     Too long

In your opinion, was this workshop:  Introductory     Intermediate     Advanced

Please rate the following:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the module? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have any suggestions for improvement? \_\_\_\_\_

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## EVOLVING IN ONLINE ADVISING

### WHY?

**VALUE - ADVISORS EXTEND STUDENTS' ABILITIES, ENABLING THEM TO ACHIEVE REQUIREMENTS MORE EASILY.**

## EVOLVING as ADVISORS

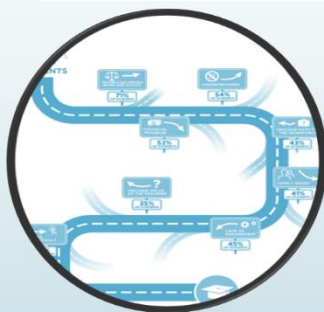
### HOW SHOULD I EVOLVE?

1. Remain or Become Student-oriented with an interest in and concern for students as individuals
2. Obtain a quest for Knowledge about the requirements and policies
3. Attend professional development to better Skills in counseling and interpersonal relationships
4. Strive to remain Positive about and committed to advisement.

## ROADMAP RESOURCES

### ARE YOU A SURVIVAL KIT?

- LAISON
- NAVIGATION





### An Effective Online Advisor: M.E.E.E.E.

- ✓ COMMITTED to advising
- ✓ POSSESSES a concerned and caring attitude
- ✓ EXHIBITS interpersonal and communication skills




communication skills

✓ EXHIBITS interpersonal and




An Effective Online Advisor: M.E.E.E.E.

- ✓ KNOWLEDGEABLE of institutional policies, procedures, regulations and offerings
- ✓ MONITORS student progress



An Effective Online Advisor: M.E.E.E.E.

- ✓ UTILIZES DEGREE WORKS for Academic Audits



Workshop Day 3: Slides 37-38



WHO WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE?  
..... ME.E.E.E.



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

NEXT STOP: THE VIRTUAL WORLD