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Higher Education Leaders' Perceptions of the Function and Purpose of Faculty Academic Advising to Support Student Persistence and Retention

Kristin Domville
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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

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Kristin J. Domville

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Higher Education Leaders' Perceptions of the Function and Purpose of Faculty Academic
Advising to Support Student Persistence and Retention

by

Kristin J. Domville

DrOT, Nova Southeastern University, 2019

MOT, Nova Southeastern University, 2005

BA, Florida Atlantic University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Higher Education, Leadership, and Policy (Self-Design)

Walden University

May 2024

Abstract

Faculty academic advising provides students with academic support to enhance academic persistence and retention. Prior research on faculty academic advising has not included higher education leaders' (HELs') perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. The conceptual framework for this study was the appreciative inquiry (AI) model established by Cooperrider. Research questions involved how leaders in higher education perceive the purpose, function, and role of faculty academic advising to increase student persistence and retention. Semistructured interviews were completed to collect data from nine HELs with three or more years of experience as an academic dean, program director, or assistant program director. Data were analyzed using open and axial coding to identify four themes: (a) multifaceted contributions of faculty as academic advisors, (b) faculty academic advisors provide comprehensive academic support, (c) collaboration and communication, and (d) faculty involvement and engagement. Findings from this study have the potential to lead to positive social change by building on current strengths of faculty academic advising policies and procedures to develop more comprehensive faculty academic advising policies and procedures to enhance student persistence and retention.

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Dedication

With humble gratitude, I want to thank God for providing the strength, guidance, and unwavering faith that sustained me through my Ph.D. journey. This accomplishment is a testament to His grace and blessings.

To Mark Domville, my loving husband, thank you for your unwavering support and love that has been the core of my academic journey. Through late nights, early mornings, and every challenge in between, you have stood by me with patience, encouragement, and a belief in my capabilities. Above all else, you never ceased to pray for me and encourage me with God's word, love, and grace. This Ph.D. is as much yours as it is mine, and I dedicate it to you with immense gratitude and love.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Academic advising is the interactive process where students and their academic advisors collaborate to maximize students' academic endeavors (Chan et al., 2019).

Universities and colleges use academic advising as part of retention and success strategies. Various academic advising practices and policies can be implemented within higher education institutions. Use of faculty as academic advisors has grown as a popular form of academic advising (Rasmussen et al., 2022). Since faculty provide teaching and learning opportunities within classrooms, they can use their teaching abilities to mentor and advise students academically, emotionally, and professionally (Lahiri et al., 2021).

According to Rasmussen et al. (2022), student persistence and retention are greatly affected by interactions, advising, and mentoring that occurs during faculty academic advising. For faculty academic advisors to best support student persistence and retention, academic advising sessions should be holistic and collaborative as opposed to prescriptive (Rasmussen et al., 2022; Wei, 2022). Faculty academic advising adds more responsibilities that require more time and effort alongside teaching courses (Lahiri et al., 2021).

According to Wei (2022), higher education leaders (HELs) develop academic advising policies and procedures to support student graduation, persistence, and retention as part of strategic plans to evaluate continuous improvement in quality education. Minimal studies have been conducted that explore knowledge of HELs regarding the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. This basic qualitative research study involved exploring HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic

advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention.

This study was conducted to increase understanding of HELs' experiences and perceptions with faculty academic advising so that increased efforts can be focused on assuring faculty academic advising is holistic and collaborative. According to Zhang et al. (2019), when faculty academic advising is holistic and collaborative, students at risk of dropping out may be identified early and provided with support and resources to be successful. There are potential social implications for when students can attain college degrees, they can improve their socioeconomic status and family quality of life, and have more job opportunities (Cole & Zhou, 2014). Chapter 1 includes the background, problem statement, purpose of this study, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and a summary.

Background

Academic advising is used within higher education institutions to support student persistence and retention. Faculty academic advisors assist students in navigating complex demands of their educational journey and personal needs by providing them with support, resources, and a sense of belonging, which leads to degree completion (Chan et al., 2019; McGill, 2021). Since academic advising is positively linked to student persistence and retention, HELs include academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures to support student academic achievement (Alvarado & Olson, 2020; Mu & Fosnacht, 2019). Research has explored what is known about faculty

academic advisors' perceptions on roles, practices, and procedures involving academic advising. However, little is known about the function and purpose of faculty academic advisors as they develop institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention.

In addition to teaching requirements, research and scholarship agendas, and service performance, faculty are tasked with mentoring, monitoring, and building relationships with students as academic advisors (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2022). Although faculty academic advising is positively correlated with student persistence and retention, various challenges are faced by faculty advisors. These challenges include limited time to complete academic advising, limited professional development, limited training, and limited recognition of advising efforts (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2022; Yonker et al., 2019). It is unknown if HELs perceive the same challenges as faculty advisors in terms of academic advising.

Academic leadership within higher education involves developing institutional policies and procedures that provide opportunities for teaching, learning, scholarship, and service to carry out an institution's mission and vision (Miller, 2021). Developing policies and procedures to support student persistence, retention, and graduation rates is one of many goals for HELs (Andrade et al., 2022; Menke et al., 2020; Wei, 2022). HELs develop faculty academic advising practices to support student persistence and retention. However, there is a disconnection between HELs' experiences and perceptions of academic advising when developing policies that align with faculty's lived experiences in

terms of conducting holistic, collaborative, and quality academic advising (Chan et al., 2019; Hart-Baldrige, 2020).

Faculty advisors are tasked with addressing diverse needs of students to provide adequate support and resources they require for academic success and persistence while maintaining their day-to-day and professional development responsibilities (Hart-Baldrige, 2020). HELs are tasked with providing diverse and equitable education through developing academic policies to address student persistence, retention, and postgraduate employment (Menke et al., 2020; Wei, 2022). When HELs create policies that allow faculty advisors the time to incorporate holistic and collaborative academic advising, students who are at higher risk of not completing their degree could be identified earlier in their academic courses and provided with essential support for academic success (Holland et al., 2020; Museus & Ravello, 2021).

The goal of this study was to fill the gap between faculty academic advisors' perceptions of the function and purpose of academic advising and how HEL view the role of faculty academic advisors when creating policies and procedures that are intended to address student persistence and retention. With holistic and collaborative approaches to advising, students who are at risk of dropping out or struggling with meeting academic demands can be provided with resources to attain a college degree (Zhang et al., 2019). In return, individuals with college degrees may be able to change their socioeconomic status, improve their family quality of life, and have increased employment opportunities leading to more civic-minded graduates who are agents of change (Cole & Zhou, 2014).

This research is needed to initiate changes involving the faculty academic advising process to support quality and holistic faculty academic advising.

Problem Statement

The specific research problem was that little is known about HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; McGill, 2021; Menke et al., 2020; Wei, 2022). A large body of knowledge exists about how the academic advising process within higher education facilitates student persistence and retention. Although research was found that explored faculty academic advisors' knowledge of the function and purpose of academic advising, there is a gap in literature regarding HELs' knowledge of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention.

Faculty demands are not just focused on courses, service, scholarship, and research; faculty are more involved in student persistence and retention efforts, including academic advising (Rasmussen et al., 2022). Due to increased day-to-day demands, faculty academic advisors are challenged with increased responsibilities that affect how they provide academic advising that adequately supports students' academic needs (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2022). When HELs develop institutional goals, they emphasize the importance of new programs, retention, tuition, renovation, and securing funds rather than high-quality advising, leaving minimal incentives for faculty to approach academic advising holistically while balancing their primary job requirements,

professional development, and scholarship endeavors (Zhang et al., 2019). When students build a rapport with academic advisors, they feel connected to the institution and supported throughout their educational journey, which promotes student persistence and retention (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Menke et al., 2020; Sasso et al., 2021).

Academic advising in higher education is valued and a conduit to student academic success and degree completion (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; McGill, 2021; Menke et al., 2020). Faculty academic advisors acknowledge academic advising as conceptual, informational, and relational, whereas current literature identified HELs understanding academic advising as a service and prescriptive (Wei, 2022). The current study may contribute to this body of knowledge by providing information regarding HELs' understanding of the value, functions, and purpose of faculty academic advising so that misconceptions may be resolved.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that were intended to support student persistence and retention. Few studies have been completed involving HELs' knowledge of faculty academic advising functions and purpose (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; McGill, 2021; Menke et al., 2020). A basic qualitative design was used to investigate the phenomenon of this study. HELs may benefit from this study via improved development of faculty academic advising institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQs) guided this study:

RQ1: What are HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to increase student persistence and retention?

RQ2: How do HELs consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures that are intended to increase student persistence and retention?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the appreciative inquiry (AI) model, established in the late 1980s by David Cooperrider in collaboration with Suresh Srivastva (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The AI model is an organizational change model with a guiding philosophy that involves embracing transformative change. The AI model was designed using the social constructionist philosophy as an approach to organizational transformation by building on an organization's strengths rather than weaknesses (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Priest et al., 2013; Ye He & Oxendine, 2019). By studying an organization's positive core, which is the strengths of an organization, positive change processes can be developed based on desired strategic goals and future directions (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider et al., 2008). The AI model and its constructs will be referenced in more detail in chapter 2, the literature review.

For leaders to be agents of change, they must make connections between social and organizational knowledge (Priest et al., 2013). HELs are positioned to develop

sustainable faculty academic advising institutional policies and procedures that support student persistence and retention. In conceptualizing the AI model, the positive core in the phenomenon that grounds this study is an institution's faculty academic advising design intended to support student persistence and retention that HELs generate (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Priest et al., 2013). For positive and sustainable change to occur, it is essential to understand HELs' perceptions of faculty academic advising. By using the AI model to frame this research, I intended to address already existing strengths of faculty academic advising according to HELs in order to determine ways to build new opportunities to enhance functions and purpose of faculty academic advising.

The AI model involves using a 4-D process (discover, dream, design, and destiny/deliver) as the method for effective change (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Ye He & Oxendine, 2019). These four stages involve understanding how leaders create positive images for organizations to take affirmative actions that lead to positive changes in terms of organizational practices. For this study, RQ1 and RQ2 align with the AI model by focusing on HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising, which is an existing institutional positive core strength in developing policies to support student persistence and retention (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Interview questions were created using the 4-D process in the AI model to enable a change in thinking, not change what individuals or organizations do (Arundell, et al., 2021; Ye He & Oxendine, 2019). Data analysis was used to evaluate and describe HELs' lived experiences involving incorporating their knowledge of faculty academic advising into developing institutional policies to support student persistence and retention. By analyzing data using the AI

model, I determined what is known about HELs' perceptions of faculty academic advising so that new ways of thinking can be developed for faculty academic advising policies that are holistic and supportive of students' diverse needs.

Nature of the Study

I used a basic qualitative research design. Qualitative research involves gathering nonnumerical data in order to gain an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon within its natural environment. When using qualitative research, researchers investigate individual behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and motivations to generate knowledge or facts through lived experiences and interactions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Qualitative research involves generating knowledge and facts via humanism, interpretivism, and constructivism. Exploring lived experiences of HELs when developing faculty academic advising policies provides scholars with advanced knowledge of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising to support student persistence and retention within natural environments.

The phenomenon was HELs' knowledge of faculty academic advising. I examined HELs to explain how they constructed knowledge regarding faculty academic advising and development of institutional policies that are intended to address student persistence and retention. When the nature of HELs' faculty academic advising knowledge is known, collaborative approaches can be taken with faculty to enhance existing institutional policies for effective academic advising policies that are intended to support student persistence and retention.

After Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the study site, I recruited nine HELs from a Florida university to participate in one-on-one audio-recorded semistructured interviews. An interview protocol (see Appendix A) was developed to address the problem and purpose of this study. Participants included deans, academic program directors, and assistant program directors with at least 3 years of experience in higher education leadership who participated in developing institutional policies and procedures for academic advising and faculty job expectations.

I used Saldana's qualitative coding process and first and second-cycle coding. Open coding was used to assign labels to words and phrases in transcribed data from completed one-on-one semistructured interviews. First and second-cycle coding means that transcribed data were reviewed more than once using one or more types of coding. During first-cycle coding, transcribed data were analyzed and taken apart; during second-cycle coding, data were put together to generate meaning. Axial coding was used to categorize open codes, which involved synthesizing codes to consolidate meaning. Categories were converted into themes, phrases, and sentences involving commonalities that were derived from analyzed data to answer the research questions. When transcribing data, reflective journaling was used to provide contextual information from interviews.

Definitions

Academic Achievement: Student overall performance which indicates whether they have accomplished educational learning goals (Andrade et al., 2022).

Faculty Academic Advising: The process where faculty mentor, advise, guide, and support student educational needs in order to finish intended academic programs or attain

a college degree. Faculty academic advising also involves communicating institutional policies and procedures to students (Rasmussen et al., 2022).

HELs: Individuals in leadership positions who follow the mission and vision of a higher education institution and organize professional development training, develop academic policies and procedures, create, implement, and monitor strategic planning, hire faculty and staff, and monitor programmatic outcomes. Leadership positions include deans, program directors, heads of departments, chief academic officers, and campus presidents (Kasalak et al., 2022).

Holistic Academic Advising: Type of academic advising which involves focusing on the whole student and not being prescriptive (Zhang et al., 2019).

Persistence: Continual enrollment of students from their first year of classes until graduation (Andrade et al., 2022).

Prescriptive Academic Advising: Academic advising model where academic advisors inform students about what and how to accomplish their academic goals, placing responsibility on students. HELs who view academic advising as a prescriptive model regard academic advising as a service (Wei, 2022).

Retention: Continual enrollment of students from year to year. Student retention is tracked to determine the number of students who reenroll from one year to the next (Nieuwoudt & Pedler, 2021).

Retention Efforts: Academic and support services that are created and implemented within higher education institutions to support student academic success, sense of belonging, and graduation (Hoyt, 2021).

Student or Academic Advising: The process within institutions where university and college students receive insights and guidance regarding academic, social, and personal affairs (Zhang et al., 2019).

Assumptions

In this study, I assumed all participants answered interview questions honestly when reporting how they perceived the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. I also assumed participants understood faculty academic advising practices and their connection to student persistence and retention efforts. I also assumed that interview questions were reliable and valid. These assumptions were necessary for this study because they affect reliability and validity of data.

Scope and Delimitations

This study involved exploring HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that were intended to support student persistence and retention. A delimitation to this study included interviewing HELs from a Florida university with at least three years of leadership experience in developing institutional policies for faculty academic advising and job expectations. This study did not include campus presidents, academic advisors, or chief academic officers. A delimitation exists in the location of data collection. Data collection took place in Florida. The results of this study could potentially be transferable to HELs from institutions outside of Florida that utilize faculty academic advising as part of their student persistence and retention efforts. This research study may also be

transferable to faculty academic advising within specialized degree programs such as allied health professions.

A second delimitation is using the AI model as the conceptual framework. The AI model has been chosen to guide this study to facilitate HELs' self-determined change based on the strengths of their existing faculty academic advising policies and their knowledge of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising in supporting student persistence and retention. Using the AI model, I developed interview questions that align with the AI model 4-D stages that explored the perceptions and experiences of HELs in understanding their knowledge of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies for student persistence and retention. These questions identified existing strengths, advantages, and opportunities within the institution's faculty academic advising practices to determine the potential to develop and implement strategies for improvement.

Tinto's (1975) theory of student retention and model of student departure (1997) were conceptual frameworks related to academic advising and student persistence and retention that was not investigated. These conceptual frameworks focus on students' personal viewpoints and experiences that shape how students integrate into formal and informal academic and social systems (Tinto, 1975; Tinto, 1997). This current study focused on HELs' perceptions of faculty academic advising instead of exploring student characteristics and behaviors related to academic persistence and retention.

Limitations

The qualitative research method and semistructured interviews were used in this study to explore HELs' experiences and perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. To address limitations of this study, trustworthiness of study data was determined to assess dependability and transferability of research outcomes.

One of the primary limitations is the transferability of this study's results.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results from this study can be applied to other contexts or populations (Adler, 2022; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Typically, qualitative studies are conducted in specific settings or with particular populations, and the results may not be generalizable to other settings or populations (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Techniques that were used to address transferability include using rich detail of the participant's responses to interview questions by identifying participants' leadership roles, participants' locations, and participants' context throughout data collection. These techniques provided evidence that this study's outcomes can apply to other higher education institutions, academic programs, faculty, and leaders outside of Florida.

A second limitation that can occur within this study is related to dependability.

According to Ravitch & Carl (2021), dependability in qualitative research is when a study's outcomes are repeatable and consistent. To address dependability, a detailed explanation of the qualitative methodology was provided to allow the study to be repeated. Dependability was also addressed by making sure during data collection that the interviews were organized and consistent, and data collection is detailed (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Qualitative research is subjective, making it difficult for researchers to remain objective during data collection and analysis. Therefore, bias could occur during data collection and analysis that may alter study outcomes (Galdas, 2017). Potential biases during this study include interviewer bias and selection bias. Interviewer bias could occur during data collection, where the interviewer's opinions or expectations regarding the purpose and function of faculty academic advising may have interfered with the objectivity of participants. To overcome interviewer bias, an interview script and nonreactive body language were implemented to decrease bias (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010). Selection bias can occur when selecting participants in order to adequately represent the intended population. In this study, the participants should be HELs, including academic deans or program directors with at least three years of leadership experience. To avoid selection bias, HELs have been defined from the current literature that guided this study's inclusion criteria. HELs are individuals in leadership positions who follow the mission and vision of a higher education institution and organize professional development training, develop academic policies and procedures, create, implement, and monitor strategic planning, hire faculty and staff, and monitor programmatic outcomes (Kasalack et al., 2022). Participants could not participate in the semistructured interview if they did not meet the intended inclusion criteria.

The institution in Florida where this study took place had multiple campuses. Since there were multiple campuses throughout the state, face-to-face interviews were not feasible, and online interviews were conducted for practical reasons. Another limitation

was differences among campuses related to data findings. To address this, interview questions were open-ended to prevent participants from simply agreeing or disagreeing.

Significance

Faculty academic advisors take on various roles, including faculty member, mentor, student advocate, and campus leader (McGill et al., 2020). College students rely on faculty members as their subject matter experts and academic advisors to guide and mentor them throughout various learning and social challenges and opportunities to achieve college degrees (Mbindyo et al., 2021). Faculty academic advisors have unique roles in supporting students' academic success and providing mentorship that inspires them to attain degrees that support their future roles within society. Although faculty academic advising supports student persistence and retention, little is known about HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. This study is significant in that it will help to fill the gap in knowledge that explores HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures intended to support student persistence and retention.

Holland et al. (2020) acknowledged higher education environments are constantly changing in terms of tuition increases and institutions taking consumer approaches to education. Sociopolitical climate influences student admissions; racial and ethnic minority students are dropping out at higher rates, and with the increase in student mental health concerns, student populations require more than academic support during

academic advising sessions (de Moissac et al., 2020; Museus & Ravello, 2021; Wiest, 2019). Faculty advisors are tasked with addressing diverse needs of students to provide adequate support and resources students require for academic success and persistence. HELs are tasked with providing diverse and equitable education through developing academic policies to address student persistence, retention, and postgraduate employment.

Results of this research may lead to actions among HELs that lead to positive social change. Through this research, I intend to build on current strengths of faculty academic advising policies to potentially generate new ideas and strategies that are identified by leaders that could lead to new thinking regarding the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. Through this study, HELs may approach developing institutional policies through different perspectives that can lead to enhancing faculty academic advising processes that facilitate student persistence and retention.

Faculty play a critical role in terms of motivating students, influencing their future endeavors, providing intellectual stimulation, and showing compassion for their unique individual needs (Mbindyo et al., 2021). For faculty to dedicate the time that is needed to advise students with integrity and inclusivity, HELs should consider providing opportunities that encourage, support, and empower faculty in terms of academic advising. High-quality and holistic academic advising that aims to be more equitable across diverse populations can improve student persistence and retention. When institutional policies support faculty academic advisors to take holistic approaches to academic advising, students at risk of dropping out may be provided with support to

attain college degrees (Rasmussen et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2019). In return, individuals with college degrees may be able to change their socioeconomic status, improve their family quality of life, and have increased employment opportunities, leading to more civic-minded graduates who are agents of change (Cole & Zhou, 2014).

Summary

Academic advising is an essential component of student academic success in higher education. When students can connect with faculty, they feel supported throughout their educational journey and future endeavors (Hart-Baldrige, 2020). High-quality and holistic academic advising should be more equitable across diverse populations to improve student persistence and retention. Faculty academic advising can influence graduate attainment, leading to students' ability to thrive professionally and personally within society. HELs have vast opportunities to analyze their institutions' faculty academic advising policies to identify their strengths and potential for positive change. Current literature validates a gap in knowledge involving the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention.

HELs' existing knowledge of faculty academic advising shapes how they create and implement institutional policies. It is unknown how HELs understand and interpret functions and purpose of faculty academic advising and developing institutional goals that are intended to support student persistence and retention. I explored lived experiences of HELs to provide data regarding how they developed faculty academic advising processes.

In Chapter 2 I explain faculty academic advising, student persistence and retention, and HELs. I examine the existing gap regarding HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. Current research supports the importance of faculty academic advising in terms of mentoring and guiding students through their academic endeavors.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The specific research problem was that little is known about HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; McGill, 2021; Menke et al., 2020; Wei, 2022). The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures intended to support student persistence and retention. The literature has provided findings that identify the importance of faculty academic advising as an educational strategy to support student persistence and retention. Although research was found that explored faculty academic advisors' knowledge of the function and purpose of academic advising there is a gap in the literature that explores HELs' knowledge of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures intended to support student persistence and retention (McGill, 2021; Menke et al., 2020).

Menke et al. (2020) found academic leadership and chief academic officers (CAOs) misunderstand the role of faculty academic advising, underestimating the time and commitment that is invested by faculty academic advisors. Hart-Baldrige (2020) found quality faculty academic advising was essential for student academic success; however, academic leadership did not have clear expectations of faculty academic advising. Rasmussen et al. (2022) established faculty perceive their role as academic advisors as critical to student persistence and retention; however, they want HELs to

provide academic advising training, clear academic advising expectations, and time to balance their workloads.

The literature search strategy and AI model are discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 also includes a review of related topics from current literature, including student persistence and retention, sense of belonging and self-efficacy, academic advising, academic advising models, professionalization of academic advising, faculty academic advising, and HELs. This chapter ends with a summary of significant concepts and what is known and unknown about this topic.

Literature Search Strategy

The databases used to locate articles related to this research topic were CINAHL, Complementary Index, EBSCOHost, Education Source, Elsevier, ERIC, Medline, ProQuest, PsycInfo, SAGE Journals, ScienceDirect, Taylor and Francis, and Google Scholar. The following keywords were used to search the databases: *academic advising*, *academic advisor(s)*, *academic success in higher education*, *appreciative inquiry model*, *developmental academic advising model*, *faculty academic advisor(s)*, *HELs*, *holistic academic advising*, *institutional policies for academic advising*, *intrusive academic advising model*, *prescriptive academic advising model*, *persistence*, *persistence and retention*, *proactive academic advising model*, *professionalization of academic advising*, *quality academic advising*, *student sense of belonging*, *student self-efficacy*, *student retention*, *student academic success*, *Tinto's theory on student retention*, and *types of academic advising models*. Seminal and historic sources were included specifically

related to the AI model, history of academic advising, and conception of academic advising models.

Conceptual Framework

The phenomenon under study is the function and purpose of faculty academic advising as perceived by HELs when creating policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. The conceptual framework that was used to guide this study is the AI model, which was established in the late 1980s by David Cooperrider in collaboration with Suresh Srivastva. This model emphasizes generation of positive ideas and strategies based on an organization's current and past strengths, assets, weaknesses, and success to guide identification, development, and implementation of positive change (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Ye He & Oxendine, 2019).

For leaders to be agents of change, they must make connections between social and organizational knowledge (Priest et al., 2013). According to Cooperrider and Whitney (2005), all organizations are built around their achievements, innovations, high-point moments, stories, and opportunities. The positive core, or what gives life to an organization, involves valuing history and embracing innovation for change (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Cooperrider et al., 2008). The first step when using the AI model is picking an affirmative topic before proceeding to the 4-D stage process.

The concept of an organization's positive core is separate from but integrated into AI's 4-stage progression, known as the 4-D process that has four stages of progression: discover, dream, design, and destiny/deliver (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). This 4-D

process is a transformational process that engages individuals at all levels to design, lead, and implement positive change (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 19). The discovery phase involves examining an organization's strengths by analyzing the experiences and strategies that allow the organization to discover its positive core and appreciate what has enriched its status. During the dream phase, after an organization has identified its positive core or what it does well, it can begin to dream of its future by building on its strengths. According to Cooperrider and Whitney (2005), the dream phase involves envisioning a strategic focus that includes sustainability and purpose in order to proceed with intended steps to enhance the organization's current goals and processes.

Social architecture is planned and highlighted during the design phase. This is where organizations determine based on its positive core and future endeavors, how their new plans fit into the social world around them (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). During the final stage, destiny/deliver, the action plan is carried out with the intent of sustaining an appreciative learning culture (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

During the AI model's 4-D process, action dialoguing is a key strategy during all four phases to facilitate collaboration among all stakeholders of organizations. Through the collaborative approach, individuals focus on organizational strengths, not deficits, by telling stories and relaying experiences involving positive actions that have occurred over time within organizations (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Cooperrider et al., 2008). This is essential in creating change and discussions regarding social worlds around organizations. The AI model involves facilitating ideas and strategies that can lead to

positive change that connects social worlds and organizational core missions and visions (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Ye He and Oxendine (2019) explored applying the AI model to overcome challenges with strategic planning within one higher education institution. This study's findings demonstrated that using the AI model, a strength-based approach facilitated the collaboration of HELs, faculty, and students to focus on the assets of their institution leading to a transformative experience during strategic planning. By using the AI model and its 4-D process, the shift from focusing on the institution's deficits to strengths allowed the generation of new opportunities and a positive cultural shift that promoted engagement and empowerment at an individual level and an institutional level (Ye He & Oxendine, 2019, p. 229). Through the use of the AI model, HELs can identify the strengths of faculty academic advising and create the opportunity to embrace positive change that supports and empowers the function and purpose of faculty academic advising within the social demands of their institution.

According to Priest et al. (2013), HELs are uniquely positioned to facilitate positive change within academia through the use of theory and practice. The AI model applies a social constructivist approach that enables HELs to incorporate positive change by applying new ways of thinking by focusing on strengths versus being problem solvers. In a case study approach, Priest et al. (2013) utilized the AI model and its 4-D process with HELs as an ongoing strategic planning process within a Virginia institution. During one year with two different academic departments, the constructs of the 4-D process guided faculty and HELs to collaborate on program-level strategic planning. HELs used

the concepts within the 4-D process to generate questions to facilitate action planning and vision development. The AI model provided an opportunity to move away from problem-oriented thinking to strength-based thinking. Through the use of the AI model, HELs can explore current institutional practices through strength-based thinking to develop positive changes that align with the academic community in which they serve (Priest et al., 2013; Ye He & Oxendine, 2019).

The AI model has been used to guide and design qualitative research. Arundell et al. (2021) utilized the AI model and the 4-D process to plan and carry out interviews to explore the perceptions of postgraduate midwifery students in collaborating with midwives to develop best practices. Using the AI model to develop qualitative interview questions, the researchers were able to facilitate participants in recalling positive experiences and behaviors versus negative experiences and behaviors. The authors concluded that the AI model allows for researchers to develop interview questions that draw on positive experience, build relationships, and facilitate questions that empower future discoveries (Arundell et al., 2022).

The AI model examines how organizations are affirmative systems and positive changes occur through collaboration and positive thought (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Priest et al., 2013; Ye He & Oxendine, 2019). Using the AI model to explore HELs' experiences with past and current practices for faculty academic advising, a strength-based approach can be used to identify an institution's strengths. These strengths can then be used to create a positive change to support effective and successful faculty academic advising policies that are intended to support student persistence and retention.

Review of Related Concepts

Student Persistence and Retention

Higher education institutions (HEI) measure student academic success through persistence and retention. Retention is maintaining student enrollment from one year to the next, whereas student persistence is a student's determination to continually enroll until degree completion (Andrade et al., 2022; Nieuwoudt & Pedler, 2021). Student persistence and retention affect graduation rates, which is an indicator of how well HEIs are performing in relation to their academic supports that guide and facilitate a student to degree completion (Andrade et al., 2022; Hoyt, 2021). There are positive outcomes for HEIs when they maintain high retention and graduation rates. These outcomes include a positive reputation, governmental funding, and an indicator that students' academic and personal needs are being met (Davis et al., 2019; Nieuwoudt & Pedler, 2021).

As HEIs have invested in student persistence and retention efforts, national data has shown improvement in overall undergraduate retention and graduation rates. According to National Center for Education Statistics (2022), between 2019 and 2020 there was an 82% retention rate for students who entered a four-year college and a 61% retention rate for students who enrolled in a two-year college. In 2020, the student six-year graduation rate was 64% for students entering a four-year degree-seeking institution in 2014 (NCES, 2022). Compared to previous graduation statistics, McDaniel and Van Jura (2022) found that between 1997-2015, the average graduation rate of 53.8% for a student enrolled in a four-year college completed their degree within six years. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2022), the student persistence

rate in 2020 has improved by 1.1%. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, student persistence and retention are lower than pre-pandemic percentages (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2022).

Nationally small improvements exist in persistence, retention, and graduation rates, but there is still concern about the length it takes for students to complete a college degree (McDaniel & Van Jura, 2022). When students begin to extend their time completing a degree, they are at higher risk of dropping out, and their student loan debt increases. Governmental funding is influenced by the time it takes for a student to graduate and the amount of student loan debt accumulated (Rasmussen et al., 2022). Due to concerns with student loan debt, retention, and graduation rates, in 2014 performance-based funding (PBF) was developed and introduced. PBF is a data-driven model that allocates money to HEIs based on their graduation rates, transfer rates, postgraduate employment, and the number of degree completions (Rasmussen et al., 2022; Rosinger et al., 2022). According to Rasmussen et al. (2022) and Rosinger et al. (2022), PBF has pressured universities to develop strategic plans to include academic policies that support and increase student persistence and retention to increase graduation rates.

The focus on retention efforts also includes understanding the diverse student population in higher education. In the United States, student enrollment in higher education is estimated to be around 15.9 million (Rasmussen et al., 2022). Student demographics have changed with the increase in higher education enrollment. According to Ellis (2019), nontraditional students are those characterized as attending part-time, being older in age, participating in life and work responsibilities, and being more likely to

drop out of college when compared to traditional students. Access to education has increased for racial and ethnic minorities as well as first-generation students enrolling in degree-seeking programs (McDaniel & Van Jura, 2022; Museus & Ravello, 2021; Statista, 2021). However when comparing white students to racial and ethnic minorities, Museus and Ravello (2021) reported that one-half of black and Latino students matriculate from a four-year college within six years versus white students who matriculate within four years. As student demographics change, HEIs seek to determine how to create academic supports that accommodate diverse student needs to improve their persistence and retention (McDaniel & Van Jura, 2022; Museus & Ravello, 2021).

Although there are various reasons why students drop out of college, providing students with academic support, such as academic advising, helps give the students a sense of belonging and strategies for academic success (de Klerk, 2022). According to Niewoudt and Pedler (2021) and Davis et al. (2019), students leave college due to a lack of connectivity and sense of belonging, financial strain, unexpected academic workload, family reasons, mental health concerns, and the inability to incorporate time management strategies to balance work, life, and academics. When students have support from their instructors, administrators, peers, and academic advisors, they build positive experiences and relationships, resulting in improved persistence and retention. As the higher education environment and student demographics evolve, academic supports such as academic advising require more diverse and dynamic approaches to optimize student academic achievement (de Klerk, 2022; McDaniel & Van Jura, 2020; Niewoudt & Pedler, 2021).

Student Self-Efficacy and Sense of Belonging

The transition to college can be a challenging time for first-year college students. Various components affect how successfully a student transitions to college. Students must adapt to new and different environments, academic challenges, develop new relationships, and begin planning for their future career goals and paths (Apriceno et al., 2020). Students are at higher risk of dropping out of college when they feel isolated and do not develop self-efficacy and a sense of belonging (Apriceno et al., 2020; de Klerk, 2022).

According to Yenney (2020), a sense of belonging occurs when students in HEIs feel respected, valued, and accepted, which all contribute to their academic success. Developing a sense of belonging can be challenging for students identifying as racial and ethnic minorities, low socioeconomic status, or living in rural communities (Museus, 2021; Tippetts et al., 2020; Yenny, 2020). These factors put a student at higher risk of dropping out due to decreased academic preparedness, lack of engagement, poor time management, and anxiety about completing their intended degree (Boyd et al., 2022; Murphy et al., 2020; Yenny, 2020). Through quality academic advising, faculty academic advisors can facilitate students in developing self-efficacy and identifying factors inhibiting success leading to the development of a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging is imperative to students' academic persistence and retention as they transition into college life and the college environment (Apriceno et al., 2020; Tippetts et al., 2020; Yenney, 2020).

Tipetts et al. (2020) determined through analysis of the relationship between academic advising, sociodemographic, and academic performance that students who engaged in frequent academic advising were more likely to persist than those who did not meet with their academic advisor. Similarly, Museus (2021) synthesized research on culturally engaging academic advising and found HEIs should consider institutional policies and practices that foster humanizing, proactive, and culturally engaging academic advising to produce equitable outcomes among racially diverse students. The analysis of these findings indicates academic advising provides an opportunity for students of diverse populations to build their sense of belonging, leading to increased self-efficacy and persistence to graduation (Museus, 2021; Tipetts et al., 2020).

Since student persistence and retention is the responsibility of HEIs, according to Tight (2020), HEIs create, implement, and gather data on the success of HEIs' academic and student support services that are utilized to support student persistence, retention, and graduation. Creating a context where students develop a sense of belonging and connectivity to the institution is a key component for successful academic and student support services that are in place to increase student persistence and retention (Davis et al., 2019; Hoyt, 2021). In a quantitative study correlating the retention rate of a new freshmen cohort to the number of connections students made, Hoyt (2021) determined when students are participating in academic support services, such as academic advising, or extracurricular activities, they are more likely to build connections that create a sense of belonging, leading to degree completion. Davis et al. (2019) completed a quantitative analysis of students' sense of belonging compared to their overall grade point average

(GPA). The results indicated that students with a positive sense of belonging are more likely to achieve good academic standing. The analysis of these findings supports that when students develop a sense of belonging and self-efficacy, they feel supported and have academic strategies that lead to graduation.

Current research shows that students with opportunities to build self-efficacy and a sense of belonging lead to higher rates of persistence and retention in higher education (Davis et al., 2019; Hoyt, 2021; Museus, 2021; Tippetts et al., 2020). Student sense of belonging and self-efficacy leads to positive student engagement. Helping students develop a sense of interest, optimism, and passion for their academics encourages them to persist to graduation (Tight, 2020). Faculty academic advising allows students to make personal connections with their faculty advisors, who can provide students with support strategies to build self-efficacy and a sense of belonging as they develop academic success goals.

Academic Advising

Academic advising is one of the most influential student persistence and retention efforts used in HEIs (Martinez & Elue, 2020). The early recognition of academic advising dates back to 1899 at John Hopkins. As HEIs evolved, so has the distinctiveness of academic advising that supports the diverse needs of students (Gordon, 2009; McGill, 2019). With increased enrolment in HEIs came a greater demand by students for additional and improved academic advising that was more individualized, creating the need to define and understand the role of academic advising. In 1977, National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was founded to support the global and national

academic advising community in research, scholarly publications, professional development, and academic advising practices (Gordon, 2009; McGill, 2019). Over the years, NACADA has advocated for the responsibilities, expectations, and best practices of academic advising.

There is not one distinct definition of academic advising. To define academic advising NACADA (2014) does not just use one published meaning but references from available reports dating back to 1972 to provide knowledge of the concept of academic advising. Academic advising is an intentional process in which students and academic advisors exchange information about a student's personal progression, educational pursuits, and future endeavors (Chan et al., 2019; NACADA, 2014). Academic advising is a teaching and learning experience where the academic advisor is the mentor, coach, counselor, or teacher helping students maximize their academic journey (NACADA, 2014). NACADA developed the concepts of academic advising to promote high-quality academic advising that supports students as critical thinkers who invest in their education to become civic-minded national and global citizens (NACADA, 2006).

The NACADA core concepts of academic advising include curriculum (what advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising does what it does), and student learning outcomes (academic advising results) (NACADA, 2006, para 2; Troexel et al., 2021). These core concepts guide institutions in developing quality academic advising practices and procedures that support student persistence and retention. The academic advising core concepts integrate education, social sciences, and humanistic theories that define academic advising as a teaching and learning process that occurs through the interactions

of the student and academic advisor (NACADA, 2006; Troxel et al., 2021). HEIs utilize academic advising as a retention effort to improve institutional outcomes related to persistence, retention, and graduation rates.

HEIs are complex organizations that strive to provide diverse degree options with various learning platforms (Mu & Fossnacht, 2019; Troxel et al., 2021). Due to the complex nature of HEIs, academic advising is uniquely positioned to provide students with the necessary academic and personal support to graduate. According to McGill (2021) and Mu and Fossnacht (2019), academic advising is not clearly defined among administrators, faculty, students, academic advisors, and stakeholders in higher education. Although academic advising is valued as a tool for student persistence and retention, effective and quality academic advising requires labor and time to develop personal connections to provide students with a sense of belonging and positive academic outcomes (Davis et al., 2019; Troxel et al., 2021). Academic advising models have been developed and transformed to meet the diverse student population. Therefore HEIs develop specific academic advising expectations and practices unique to their institution's vision and mission, leading to academic advising roles and responsibilities varying across institutions (Elliot, 2020; Mu & Fossnacht, 2019; Troxel et al., 2021).

Academic Advising Models

The academic advising process originated as a prescriptive and authoritarian method where the academic advisor provided students with what they needed to know and do to be successful (Gutierrez et al., 2020; McGill, 2019). Over time student-faculty interactions proved to be an imperative part of the comprehensive academic advising

process affecting student persistence and retention. There are three common academic advising models: prescriptive, developmental, intrusive or proactive (Lowenstein, 2020; McDonald & Gordon, 2019; Mu & Fosnacht, 2019).

Prescriptive academic advising is where the academic advisor tells the student what to do and how to accomplish their academic goals (Lowenstein, 2020; Wei, 2022). According to Bolkan et al. (2021), prescriptive advising focuses on a student's grades, credits per class, credits for graduation, and academic institutional policies and procedures. Lowenstein (2020) and Bolkan et al. (2021) determined that prescriptive advising provides students with a pathway to graduating on time; however, prescriptive advising should not be the emulated academic advising model. If HEIs adopt a prescriptive academic model, any individual can guide a student on the path to graduation based on institutional policies and procedures. Fielstein (1994) may argue that prescriptive advising forms the foundation of academic advising. However, Lowenstein (2020) and Bolkan et al. (2021) concluded that prescriptive advising lacks a personal relationship with a student diminishing the interactive process of helping a student achieve their personal, professional, and academic goals.

Appreciative advising is an alternative to the prescriptive academic advising model (Burke, 2022; Hande et al., 2019). The premise of appreciative advising (AA) is that academic advisors guide students in identifying their talents and skills to achieve their academic goals. There are six AA phases in which the academic advisor empowers students; disarm (build rapport with the students), discover (provoke students' talents and abilities), dream (discussing students' aspirations), design (plan), deliver (encourage

achievement), and don't settle (challenge student growth) (Burks, 2022, p.65; Hande et al., 2019). AA promotes open communication and addresses a student's holistic needs to facilitate academic success.

Burks (2022) found that prenursing students' academic achievement and satisfaction improved after incorporating one semester of AA. Hande et al. (2019) found similar results within a Doctor of Nurse Practitioner program. When students participate in AA, academic advisors are able to identify specific student needs to support their academic success. Although the data from these studies identified AA as an effective way to help student's academic success, future exploration of this advising approach is still warranted.

The developmental advising model approaches academic advising as less prescriptive by incorporating a developmental process. In the early 1970s, a seminal article by Crookston (2009) included the constructs of the developmental theory into the academic advising process, leading to the creation of the developmental advising model (Gordon, 2019). A student-centered and interactive approach between the student and advisor occurs when academic advising is created and implemented through the developmental model. During academic advising sessions, the advisor is concerned with the student's personal, educational, and career needs and goals (Crookston, 2009; McDonald & Gordon, 2019).

Failing and Lombardozzi (2021) determined that using a developmental academic advising model, compared to the prescriptive academic advising model, provided students with a successful path to degree completion for graduation while reducing

institutional cost. Mu and Fosnacht (2019) determined a positive relationship exists between the number of academic advising sessions students attended and their self-reported academic gains. In contrast to Failing and Lombardozzi (2021), Mu and Fosnacht (2019) reported through descriptive data that although there is a strong relationship between an interactive academic advising approach and student academic success, various academic models are utilized across HEIs in the US, resulting in the necessity for more research on the different academic advising models.

The developmental academic advising model offers a learning and teaching opportunity between the academic advisor and student regarding the student's educational, career, and professional goals (Donaldson et al., 2020). In a qualitative study, Donaldson et al. (2020) expanded on the strength of academic advisors using a developmental model through enhanced advising (EAP) programs. When EAPs are incorporated as part of the academic advising process, student participation and engagement in academic advising improves, and students with their academic advisors develop a proactive educational plan (Donaldson et al., 2020). Current research supports the utilization of developmental academic advising as a positive experience where the academic advisor facilitates student growth through a holistic experience that allows students to establish educational, career, and professional goals (Donaldson et al., 2020; Failing & Lombardozzi, 2021; Mu & Fosnacht, 2019).

The intrusive or proactive academic advising model developed by Earl (1988) approaches academic advising as a proactive approach to motivating students at the first signs of academic difficulties. Intrusive academic advising uses prescriptive and

developmental advising to collaborate with students on solving problems and encouraging students to seek resolutions to educational issues (Kraft-Terry & Kau, 2019). When using an intrusive or proactive advising model, academic advisors meet with students often throughout the semester to discuss course selection, adjustment to the college experience or life, self-efficacy, GPA, career goals, choice of major, time management, study skills, and strategies for success (Kitchen et al., 2021, p. 32).

Van Jura and Prieto (2021) interviewed ten undergraduate students to determine their perception of using a proactive academic advising approach known as Monitoring Advising Analytics to Promote Success (MAAPs). The research concluded that proactive academic advising that includes a holistic approach and proactive communication contributes to student academic success. Academic advisors who utilize a proactive high-impact approach (HIP) can influence students' continuation of their education into graduate school (Richard et al., 2021). A student's GPA is a factor in acceptance into a graduate program. According to Richard et al. (2021), academic advisors who take both a proactive and HIP approach to academic advising facilitate appropriate means to academic success that supports the students aspiring for educational and career goals. The research concludes that when students are allowed to think about their educational and professional endeavors early, they can achieve beyond their original expectations (Richard et al., 2021; Van Jura & Prieto, 2021). Intrusive or proactive academic advising helps identify barriers that may jeopardize a student's educational and professional aspirations.

Kraft-Terry and Kau (2019) created an Academic Action Intervention (AcAc) program using backward chaining and the proactive advising model for at-risk students. One hundred eighty-seven students participated in the AcAc program and completed academic advising with pre- and postappointment evaluations. The results of this program determined the value of creating an academic advising curriculum using the proactive advising model to assess and support students identified as academically at risk of failing or dropping out. Through a qualitative research method, Kitchen et al. (2021) explored the enrollment of students with low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented minorities (URM) self-efficacy during grade check appointments with their academic advisors who used the proactive advising model. The researchers concluded that using a proactive advising model cultivated academic self-efficacy among students at risk of academic failure.

Academic advising provides students with the academic and personal support needed to achieve academic success. As persistence and retention remain a national concern in HEIs, academic advising provides ample opportunities for institutions to adjust to the diverse student population and provide all students with equal opportunities to attain a degree (Kitchen et al., 2022; Rosinger et al., 2021). There are various academic advising models and practices that HEIs can utilize to support student persistence and retention. However, effective academic advising occurs when the academic advising model used can equally support students academically, professionally, and personally (McDonald & Gordon, 2019).

Professionalization of Academic Advising

Scholars have identified misconceptions about academic advising that have created barriers to the professionalization of academic advising (Alvarado & Olson, 2020; Larson et al., 2018; McGill, 2019; McGill, 2021). Academic advising is practiced differently across HEIs. Due to the lack of unity of practice, there are misunderstandings regarding the role and responsibilities of a faculty academic advisor or academic advisor and the utilization of the most influential academic advising model. A common confusion among faculty, staff, HELs, and students includes the idea that academic advising is solely for the course and academic major selection (McGill, 2021).

McGill (2019) reviewed literature between 1980 to 2016 to determine how academic advising aligns with characteristics of professionalization. It was determined that continued research is needed to build on three elements, scholarship, expansion of graduate programs, and community, to professionalize the field of academic advising. To support the progression of the professionalization of academic advising, Alvarado and Olson (2020) analyzed 130 empirical studies published between 2004-2018 in the NACADA journal to identify the current knowledge of academic advising and its relationship to student outcomes. Although research identified a connection between academic advising and student persistence and retention, more substantial empirical evidence is needed to support this connection (Alvarado & Olson, 2020; Boyd et al., 2022; McGill, 2021). From these systematic reviews, it can be concluded that although academic advising is essential to HEIs policies and procedures for student academic success, faculty, staff, students, and HELs continue to hold a simplistic view and

misconceptions of the academic advising process, roles, and responsibilities of academic advisors (Alvarado & Oslon, 2020; McGill, 2019; McGill, 2021).

McGill (2021) completed a grounded theory study where NACADA leaders were interviewed, and document analysis was conducted within NACADA academic advising community listservs. The findings from McGill (2021) revealed students find their academic identity when the academic advising process follows a substantive theory of the academic advising process. In this theory, the academic advising process is made of 4 parts. First, the student connects to the academic advisor. Second, the student and academic advisor synthesize and grow together. Third, within the advising context, decision-making occurs, known as acting, and fourth, the process should lead to a student experiencing opportunities such as extracurricular activities (McGill, 2021).

As HEIs continue to utilize academic advising as a crucial component to student persistence and retention efforts, there is a need for faculty, staff, students, and HELs to have a unified understanding of academic advising (Alvarado & Olson, 2020; Larson et al., 2018; McGill et al., 2021). Lowenstein (2014) signified that the academic advising profession should ponder a unified advising theory. This led McGill et al. (2021) to revisit Lowenstein's thoughts and further support the importance of professionalizing academic advising with a unified theory. Lowenstein (2014) and McGill et al. (2021) recognized that academic advising is an integrative process where students collaborate with their advisors to learn about and construct their academic and career goals. For academic advising to become professionalized, continued research is warranted to clearly

define and provide conceptual unity of the academic advising process and the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors (McGill et al., 2021).

Faculty Academic Advisors

Academic advising has a unique role in supporting student persistence and retention in higher education. HEIs all have a form of academic advising intending to support students' academic success. According to Mu and Fosnacht (2019), HEIs vary in institutional practices and policies relating to academic advising models and who is tasked with the role of an academic advisor. An institution's academic advisor can be a faculty member, staff member, coach, or professional advisor (Grafnetterova et al., 2021; Yonker et al., 2019).

Traditionally faculty in higher education are responsible for providing students with learning opportunities in their professional expertise. As student enrollment increases, faculty utilization as academic advisors has become a popular form of academic advising to support student persistence and retention (Rasmussen et al., 2022). According to Yonker et al. (2019), 89% of public 4-year institutions and 93% of private 4-year institutions report using faculty as the student academic advisor. Since faculty provide teaching and learning opportunities within a classroom, they can use their teaching abilities to mentor and advise students academically, emotionally, and professionally (Lahiri et al., 2021).

Along with completing day-to-day educational tasks for courses taught, faculty also strive to achieve professional development, community engagement, and completion of personalized scholarship agendas (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2022).

Hart-Baldrige (2020) used a phenomenological method to provide insight to administrative leadership on the perceived institutional support needed by faculty advisors to provide quality academic advising that promotes student academic success. The findings of this study suggest that faculty view the most significant advising responsibility as ensuring students complete their program of study, graduate, teach students to navigate systems, empower students, and advise students on future endeavors. Faculty academic advisors reported that challenges to advising included faculty experience with navigating software, advising students as an isolated process, unclear advising expectations, and workload inequalities (Hart-Baldrige, 2020).

Rasmussen et al. (2022) completed a descriptive study among higher education faculty to determine their perceptions of their responsibilities as faculty academic advisors for retention efforts. The survey results determined that faculty have increased responsibilities as faculty academic advisors to ensure student academic success, mentoring, and building personal relationships. In their research Hart-Baldrige (2020) and Rasmussen et al. (2022) agreed that faculty academic advising is an essential part of student persistence and retention; however, faculty feel they need more training and time to balance between workload demands and providing quality academic advising.

It is thought that faculty are the experts in their teaching discipline and, therefore, have the knowledge to advise students in their academics and institutional policies and procedures (Rasmussen et al., 2022; Yonkers et al., 2019). Research supports student academic success within a university or college where students experience positive faculty interactions within academic advising (Hart-Baldrige, 2020). Faculty academic

advising improves a student's overall academic success when advising experiences are positive. According to Gordon (2019), academic advising is a complex process, and faculty often do not have adequate training in advising skills and techniques to create positive academic advising experiences. According to Dollinger et al.'s (2021) case study report, faculty academic advisors are not always clear about their roles and responsibilities and require appropriate training to serve diverse student needs better.

HELs

HELs are positioned to influence institutional operations and policies that directly affect student success. HELs are often viewed as individuals in an organization or institution who are highly intelligent and possess advanced communication, organization, and critical thinking skills (Toker, 2022). An authentic and effective leader utilizes various skills to build collaboration among those under their leadership direction to achieve institutional goals, improve student success, and build collaboration among faculty and staff (Roncevalles & Gaerlan, 2021). By being an authentic leader, HELs can build trust with faculty and create an environment where HELs and faculty work as a team to develop institutional goals that are in the best interest of the institution, faculty, and students. Being an authentic leader requires HELs to stay current with the economic and social changes affecting the higher education environment, which leads to sustainable leadership. As higher education evolves, for institutions to sustain changes and remain innovative, leaders must be agents of change while building trust and collaboration (Roncevalles & Gaerlan, 2021; Armani et al., 2020).

Liao (2022) determined that sustainable leadership integrates the environment, economics, and social responsibility to enhance an institutional culture, goals, and profit while considering individuals invested in the institution. A sustainable institution involves the commitment of HELs who possess sustainable leadership characteristics that include envisioning innovative institutional initiatives and goals. According to Armani et al. (2020) higher education institutions strive to remain sustainable by adapting to current sociopolitical trends and depend on their leadership to develop a corporate social responsibility committed to being agents of change. In a qualitative study, Armani et al. (2020) explored the attributes of sustainable leadership within four institutions. It was determined that when HELs incorporate sustainable leadership attributes, HELs can lead change within the institution that is not only sustainable but highlights the values, morals, and institutional culture to support student academic success. By incorporating a leader's perspective on leadership with the institution's vision and mission, leaders create a sustainable and change-oriented culture within an institution (Armani et al., 2020; Liao, 2022).

Higher education emphasizes sustainable leadership and a participatory approach. According to Iqbal and Piwowar-Sulej (2021), Sustainable Leadership (SL) entails guiding an organization toward sustainable development through socially responsible activities, promoting reflexive and participative leadership, and striving for sustainable organizational performance (SP). Similarly, Kinnunen et al. (2023) contended that distributed leadership, a participatory process, is analytically and practically relevant in higher education institutions. These perspectives point to a shift in leadership paradigms

in higher education, in which leaders are not only authoritative figures but also facilitators of sustainable and participatory practices (Iqbal & Piwovar-Sulej, 2022; Kinnunen et al., 2023). Both sources suggested that modern leadership in higher education should prioritize sustainability, inclusivity, and the active participation of all stakeholders.

Siswanto et al. (2023) emphasized leaders' needs to envision the institution's future, integrate social resources with reciprocity, model the way with morality and integrity, and fully support team members. Finatariani (2023) similarly characterized the leadership at one university as democratic, receptive to criticism, inclusive in decision-making, and personable. The analysis of these findings demonstrates that effective leadership in higher education is increasingly characterized by transparency, democratic decision-making, and ethical behavior, all of which foster an empowering and supportive environment for stakeholders. HELs should be visionary, integrative, moral, and empowering to promote a conducive academic environment that values faculty academic advising as imperative to support student persistence and retention (Finatariani, 2023; Siswanto et al., 2023).

HELs take on various roles and responsibilities while demonstrating flexibility and adaptability in their leadership styles when creating a successful and sustainable academic environment (Finatariani, 2023; Iqbal & Piwovar-Sulej, 2022; Siswanto et al., 2023). The literature focuses on the extensive responsibilities and roles of leaders in higher education and some variability at different HEI's. Finatariani (2023) determined that HELs are responsible for planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling

organizational activities. Their roles expand beyond those of leaders, including motivators, initiators, mentors, innovators, and creators. Equally, Siswanto et al. (2023) emphasized the need for HELs to create and implement institutional missions professionally and with compassion so that they may inspire students. The analysis of these findings highlights the multifaceted nature of leadership roles in higher education, where leaders are expected to perform various tasks and demonstrate multiple skills (Finatariani, 2023; Siswanto et al., 2023).

HELs are known for developing institutional goals and evaluating institutional outcomes. When creating institutional policies, procedures, and strategic goals, HELs emphasize the importance of new programs, retention, tuition, renovation, and securing funds rather than high-quality academic advising, leaving minimal incentive for faculty to approach academic advising holistically (Zhang et al., 2019). It is known that when students build a rapport with academic advisors, they feel connected to the institution and feel supported throughout their educational journey (Hart-Baldrige, 2020). However, Menke et al. (2020) found that academic leadership, including chief academic officers (CAOs), misunderstand the role of academic advising and underestimate the time, responsibility, and commitment invested by academic advisors. Wei (2022) established that educational leaders value academic advising as a support for student retention and completion but cannot define the role of an academic advisor.

Summary

Academic advising was created by HELs to improve and support student persistence and retention. Faculty academic advisors and students build a sense of

belonging and self-efficacy through quality and holistic academic advising that facilitates student persistence and retention.

Faculty academic advising is one approach to academic advising that has been increasing within HEIs. Faculty's lived experiences indicate the need for HELs to provide more academic advising training and time for workload balance. HELs create and implement academic advising policies and procedures to support student persistence and retention, but there is a gap in literature indicating their understanding of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising.

I expanded on HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the research design and rationale, my role as the researcher, methodology, and issues with trustworthiness.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

The specific research problem is that little is known about HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; McGill, 2021; Menke et al., 2020; Wei, 2022). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures intended to support student persistence and retention. Chapter 3 includes a description of the research design and rationale, my role as the researcher, and the methodology, as well as participant selection, data collection instruments, recruitment procedures, data collection, and data analysis. I also discuss issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The following RQs were addressed in this study:

RQ1: What are HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to improve student persistence and retention?

RQ2: How do HELs consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures that are intended to improve student persistence and retention?

This was a basic qualitative study focusing on perceptions of HELs in relation to development of policies and procedures for faculty academic advising that were intended to support student persistence and retention. Research has focused on faculty academic

advisors' perceptions of academic advising. However, little is known about HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention.

The qualitative research design involves gathering individual lived experiences, perceptions, and behaviors to determine understanding of a social phenomenon (Ayre & McCaffery, 2022; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Qualitative research is used to explore and provide a deeper understanding of problems occurring in the world. It is used to determine how or why a phenomenon occurs by gathering individual perceptions in natural environments (Tenny et al., 2022). Due to limited research regarding HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising, a qualitative design was used to provide in-depth knowledge of HELs' experiences on their understanding of how faculty academic advising supports student persistence and retention.

The basic qualitative research design enables use of open-ended questions to collect data in natural settings (Burkholder et al., 2020). For this study, I used semistructured interviews, which led to detailed information regarding HELs and their knowledge of the role of faculty academic advisors. In this study, data were collected on how HELs use their knowledge of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures for faculty academic advising intended to support student persistence and retention. Through open-ended questions, this study generated themes and patterns that explain HELs' thoughts, feelings, and experiences with faculty academic advising (Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Tenny et al., 2022).

Role of The Researcher

As the sole researcher, my primary responsibility was to identify and recruit participants, develop the data collection instrument, conduct one-on-one semistructured interviews, and analyze collected data for categories and themes. I have a professional and personal relationship with the study site and participants. I have been employed at one of the five campuses for 3 years as an occupational therapy doctoral capstone coordinator for the entry-level occupational therapy doctorate program in the South Florida location. Participants worked within the occupational therapy department, and I engaged with participants during interprofessional activities at some point during my career at the study site. However, I do not have power over participants, as they will be HELs, such as program directors, academic deans, and assistant program directors. I am not a program director, assistant program director, or academic dean.

There were potential biases that could have occurred during this study. The first bias is interviewer bias, where the interviewer's opinions or expectations regarding the purpose and function of faculty academic advising can interfere with the objectivity of the person being interviewed. My personal career experiences have allowed me to serve over ten years in academia. During those years, I have been a faculty academic advisor and program director. Even though my current position is as a doctoral capstone coordinator, part of those responsibilities includes faculty academic advising. As a researcher, I acknowledge having 9 years of experience as a program director and over 10 years of experience as a faculty academic advisor can lead to bias relating to preconceived data outcomes. To overcome this bias, I adhered to the interview script and

used nonreactive body language to the participants' responses to ensure objectivity (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010).

A second bias that can occur is participant selection bias, selecting participants who successfully represent HELs who are program directors, assistant program directors, and academic deans. HELs agreed to participate in interviews based on inclusion criteria to prevent selection bias. Participants were HELs who are currently or have held a program director or academic dean position with 3 years or more experience in a leadership role. Another strategy to avoid selection bias is to define HELs from the current literature when determining this study's inclusion criteria. HELs are individuals in leadership positions who follow the mission and vision of a higher education institution and organize professional development training, develop academic policies and procedures, create, implement, and monitor strategic planning, hire faculty and staff, and monitor programmatic outcomes (Kasalack et al., 2022). There were no plans for incentivizing participants to participate in this study.

Methodology

In this section, I discuss actions to investigate HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. I provide details regarding the participant selection process, instrumentation development, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

Participant Selection Logic

During qualitative interviews, researchers select participants who have direct experience and can add knowledge regarding study phenomena by providing information to answer RQs (Gill, 2020). The sample size in qualitative research is smaller than that in quantitative due to the purpose of qualitative research being to provide an in-depth examination of a phenomenon (Gill, 2020; Hagannan & Wutich, 2017). When choosing the number of individuals to interview, it is essential to select enough participants to reach data saturation. Guest et al. (2006) determined qualitative interview studies using purposeful sampling reach data saturation with 12 participants. In contrast, Hagannan and Wutich (2017) built upon the research completed by Guest et al. (2006) to determine that more in-depth qualitative research that seeks to determine metathemes in cross-cultural studies reaches data saturation after 20-40 interviews. Gill (2020) indicated clear and specific qualitative research topics require smaller sample sizes in order to attain data saturation. Based on the published research on the number of participants to reach data saturation, participants for this study were intended to include 10 to 12 HELs. However, due to reaching data saturation after the sixth participant, only nine participants were interviewed.

Participants for this study included nine HELs with at least three years of experience in HEL from a multicampus university in the U.S. Faculty academic advising is the academic advising model used at this multicampus University. This multicampus university provides only allied health graduate programs; therefore, recruiting from all

campuses provided a better opportunity to interview enough participants to reach data saturation.

Inclusion criteria for HELs included individuals currently in HEL as an academic dean, program director, or assistant program director, participating in developing institutional policies and procedures for academic advising and faculty job expectations. Participants were English speaking. HELs are defined as individuals in leadership positions who follow the mission and vision of a higher education institution and organize professional development training, develop academic policies and procedures, create, implement, and monitor strategic planning, hire faculty and staff, and monitor programmatic outcomes (Kasalack et al., 2022). The exclusion criteria included HELs with less than three years of experience, non-English speaking, and holding a role that is not an academic dean, program director, or assistant program director, such as campus president, board member, or chief academic officer (CAO).

Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the study site was obtained before recruitment. After IRB approval was granted, I sent a participant invitation email (Appendix B) to all academic deans, program directors, and assistant program directors. The participant invitation email provided participants an overview of this study's purpose and attachments to the email included the recruitment material and the letter of consent. The recruitment material has the study's purpose, participant inclusion criteria, and my contact information. Once potential participants emailed me expressing their willingness to participate in this study, I corresponded with them to verify through participant self-report that they meet the inclusion criteria. Once participants have been identified as

meeting the inclusion criteria, I set up a meeting time using a virtual platform preferred by the participant to complete the adult virtual consent process required by the study site IRB. Once the virtual adult consent process was completed, the interviews proceeded.

Purposive sampling was used as the sampling method for this study. Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research as a selection method to ensure the participants engaging in the data collection are knowledgeable about the study's phenomenon (Gill, 2020; Palinkas et al., 2015). For this study, purposive sampling facilitated the selection of a homogenous sample of HELs with the knowledge and lived experiences with developing policies and procedures for faculty academic advising to support student persistence and retention. There is a connection between data saturation and sample size. Data saturation for this study will occur when no new information is obtained from the interviews. Gill (2020) stated small sample sizes will reach data saturation when participants provide sufficient data.

Instrumentation

The interview protocol was the instrument used to collect data from participants to address the problem and purpose of this study. The self-developed interview protocol has eight open-ended interview questions (Appendix A). There are four open-ended interview questions to answer research question one and four open-ended questions to answer research question two. Each interview question has follow-up questions used as probes to gather more in-depth information related to the research questions.

Researcher Developed Instrument

The appreciative inquiry (AI) model's 4-D process, discover, dream, design, and destiny, was used to develop the interview protocol. Using the AI model and its 4-D process, interview questions for this study were created to acquire positive responses regarding HELs perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising (Arundel et al., 2021). In the discovery stage, interview questions were developed to identify the strengths of implementing faculty academic advising. For example, questions one and two of the interview protocol were designed to understand HELs' knowledge of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. In the dream stage, the interview questions allow HELs to recall past experiences, goals, or policies related to faculty academic advising. For example, interview questions three and four ask HELs to describe the value of faculty academic advising and its effects on student persistence and retention. In the design stage, interview questions encourage proactive propositions to determine what faculty academic advising should be like (Arundel et al., 202; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stravos, 2008). For example, interview question number seven asks HELs how they support their faculty with faculty academic advising. Finally, in the destiny stage, interview questions were developed to empower HELs to imagine positive changes within faculty academic advising. For example, question eight asks HELs how they envision best practices for faculty academic advising (Arundel et al., 202; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stravos, 2008).

Before the interviews began I asked the participants one question to draw on their leadership experience with faculty academic advising (Arundel et al., 2021). To ensure content validity, the interview questions aligned with the research questions to ensure that each research question was answered. Since this study has 8 interview questions, questions 1-4 specifically answered research question one, and questions 5-8 answered research question two. Content validity was determined when data saturation was achieved. As the interviews progressed and no new data was being collected to answer the interview questions, the data became more reliable, establishing content validity (Gill, 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Once IRB approval was attained from the study site, participant recruitment began. To recruit participants, I sent a participant invitation email (Appendix B) to all academic deans, program directors, and assistant program directors. The participant invitation email provided participants with an overview of this study's purpose and attachments to the email included the recruitment material and the letter of consent. In the email, I will include a recruitment message that overviews the research I am conducting, the purpose of the study, the time commitment required by the participants, and an explanation of how the participants can contact me.

As participants reached out to me indicating their interest in participating in a one-time 60-minute semistructured interview conducted on a virtual platform, I verified they met the inclusion criteria through participant self-reporting. Once participants were confirmed to meet the inclusion criteria, I emailed the participants to schedule a time to

complete the adult virtual consent form and semistructured interview. Participants were given a choice as to which virtual platform they prefer. Once the time, date, and virtual platform was confirmed, a meeting link was sent via email to the participant. On the day of the scheduled interview, before beginning the interview questions, I went over the virtual adult consent form and completed the study site virtual adult consent form process. After completing the virtual adult consent form, the interview began and was audio recorded.

Data collection occurred through virtual interviews. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and were audio recorded. I was the sole researcher completing all interviews and data collection. No identifying information was asked or recorded during the interview. I was in a private area within my house when conducting the interviews. All research records were kept confidential, and no information that could potentially identify the participants will be published or collected during the interview. There was a total of 9 interviews conducted. The recruitment and interviewing concluded when data saturation occurred, which was at Participant 6. However, nine interviews were scheduled and completed.

At the end of each interview, I concluded with a debriefing, providing the participants with the intent of this study's purpose. During that time, I allowed each participant to ask any questions regarding the study. After the debriefing and all questions were answered, I thanked the participant for their time and asked them if they wanted me to follow up regarding the final study results. If the participants want me to follow up

with the study results, I did so by email. There was no follow-up interview with this study.

Data Analysis Plan

To answer the research questions in this qualitative study, the specific research design included a basic qualitative design and analysis that follow Saldana's (2021) qualitative research coding process that used first and second cycle coding that lead to emerging themes. After each interview, I transcribed the participants' responses from the audio recorded interview into Microsoft Word. A data analysis worksheet was created in Microsoft Word to organize and analyze the data in a table with three columns. The columns were labeled open codes, axial codes, and emerging themes.

First-cycle coding began the data analysis process by analyzing the transcribed interviews using open codes. Open coding was completed to break the data into distinct parts by describing, naming, or classifying the data (Saldana, 2021). The open codes created from the transcribed interviews were inputted into the data analysis worksheet under the column labeled open codes. Next, second-cycle coding was completed using axial coding to determine how the open codes created can be grouped by drawing on connections between the codes (Saldana, 2021). Axial coding allowed for the data to be clustered into larger categories and these categories were inputted into the data analysis worksheet under the column labeled axial codes. The final step in data analysis included organizing and grouping the axial codes into emerging themes. The categories created were converted into themes, phrases, or sentences describing commonalities for the final thematic analysis to answer the research questions. The emerging themes were inputted

into the data analysis worksheet under the column labeled emerging themes. Reflective journaling during each interview helped provide contextual information for the transcribed data.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research collects non-numerical data from individuals to understand better individuals' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors focused on a social phenomenon (Tenny et al., 2022). Data analysis in qualitative research focuses on words, meaning, and interpretations transcribed from documents or recordings of individuals. This basic qualitative research used semistructured interviews to gather HELs' experiences, perceptions, and meaning regarding faculty academic advisors. To determine trustworthiness within this research, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were assessed in the generated data analysis and outcomes (Adler, 2022; Connelly, 2016).

Credibility

Credibility or internal validity in qualitative research determines the accuracy and trustworthiness of the collected data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Stahl & King, 2020). It protects the data collection and analysis within this research study from subjective perceptions, feelings, and experiences that could mislead the findings from participant responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2020; Stahl & King, 2020). Appropriate strategies to establish credibility within this study included member checking, assuring data saturation, and reflexivity (Gill, 2020; Stahl & King, 2020).

Developing a trustful relationship with the participants and reviewing the transcribed data increased trustworthiness. Through member checking, I shared with the participants the interpretations and conclusions of the collected data. Member checking provided an opportunity to enhance the depth of the data collection by allowing the participants to clarify and check for accuracy in the preliminary interpretation of the interview data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2020; Stahl & King, 2020).

As the primary researcher, I must be aware of my preconceived assumptions and biases in collecting and interpreting data. A reflective journal helped to overcome bias. In the reflective journal, I described the context of the interviews and the relationship to the participant (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I knew that data saturation occurred when no new information from the interviews was obtained. According to Gill (2020), data saturation will occur when participants provide in-depth and sufficient data.

Transferability

Transferability or external validity shows that this research study may be applied to various contexts, populations, or situations (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Strategies for facilitating transferability included thick descriptions and variation in the participants selected. Using thick description, I provided detailed information regarding the context of the interviews, provided a detailed description of the research method, and ensured that the interview protocol was followed the same for each participant. The variation of participants was from five campus sites and a mix of HELs, including academic deans, program directors, or assistant program directors from different academic programs.

Dependability

According to Stahl and King (2020) dependability is when another researcher can replicate a research study and produce the same results. To ensure dependability of this study, a detailed description of the research methods is provided, assuring alignment between research questions and interview questions. The same detailed descriptions will be provided after data analysis. A research log was maintained that recorded details of what occurred on the day of each interview, such as, who was interviewed, where the interview took place, and how long the interview took. An audit trail was maintained that kept detailed records of this study's data collection process, data analysis process, and interpretation of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2020; Stahl & King, 2020). A final strategy that was taken was reflective journaling, where I recorded what I had learned, seen, or heard during the completed interviews.

Confirmability

Confirmability, related to objectivity, refers to the data collected from a study adequately reflecting the participants' information and indicating the research findings are consistent and can be repeated (Connelly, 2016; Prosek & Gibson, 2021). A technique that was used to determine confirmability is reflexivity. Reflexivity is when I acknowledge my role as the researcher and self-reflect on my biases and preconceptions that could potentially influence the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Using reflexive journaling during all interviews and audio-recording the interviews are strategies that were used for confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical issues are more likely to arise in qualitative research since it focuses on participants' perceptions and interactions with the researcher. As a result, ethical considerations were given top priority in this study. The most significant risk to be considered was protecting participants' privacy. For this study, I considered and ensured the participants' confidentiality. When conducting semistructured interviews, the researcher and participant become more personal due to the one-on-one communication. In this study, there was the chance that I may know a participant or have worked with a participant; therefore, I was careful not to identify the person or expose the data collected to anyone outside of the research process. Another common ethical issue is compensating participants for participating in the research study. Yes, we want people to participate, but the IRB must approve any gifts or offerings that could influence the collected data (Burkholder, 2020). There was no compensation for participating in this study.

I received IRB approval from the study site. Once IRB approval had been given, the recruitment process and data collection began. I received approval from the IRB to recruit and collect data at the study site, which has five campuses. Recruitment occurred when I sent out an email with my recruitment flyer, virtual informed consent, and an email script to all campus academic deans, program directors, and assistant program directors. Interested participants were asked to contact me, the principal investigator of this study, to schedule a date, time, and virtual platform to complete the virtual consent process and interview. Any email communications between myself and the participants

were kept in a password protected file on my password protected computer. For a participant to proceed to the interview, I ensured all risks, discomforts, and benefits, as submitted and approved by the IRB, were explained during the virtual consent process to minimize ethical risks.

All participants' confidentiality was protected. Participant identities was protected by using participant numbers for collected demographics and responses to the interview questions. Since the participants' interviews were audio recorded, the study poses risks such as participants' voices could breach confidentiality. To ensure all participants' confidentiality was maintained, all data obtained during the interview process were stored in password protected folders on a password protected computer. No one but myself has access to the computer or research data, and no identifiable information will be published. There was no compensation or incentives provided for participation in this study. After completing this study, all information, audio recordings, and data stored will be kept for five years and then destroyed, as indicated by the data collection site IRB.

Summary

I aimed to gain insights regarding HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. I used a basic qualitative methodology with a semistructured interview protocol to gather in-depth experiences and thoughts on this topic. As the sole researcher of this study, I developed interview questions that were used to conduct one-on-one semistructured interviews and identified the data analysis plan. I addressed ethical considerations to build trust and protect

confidentiality of all participants. Chapter 4 includes a discussion of results from interviews and thematic analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to explore HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. Data were collected across multicampus institutions in the U.S. This included perceptions of nine HELs with 3 or more years of experience in higher education leadership. A basic qualitative design was chosen. I used one-on-one interactions with participants to explore this topic. Two RQs guided this study:

RQ1: What are HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to improve student persistence and retention?

RQ2: How do HELs consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures that are intended to improve student persistence and retention?

Chapter 4 includes reviews of the study setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis process, evidence of trustworthiness, and results. A detailed explanation of the analysis process and changes to this study's methodology is provided and compared to the plan that was outlined in Chapter 3. This chapter includes an in-depth explanation of research findings.

Setting

For this study, HELs were recruited from a HEI with multiple campuses in three U.S. states. Only allied health graduate programs are offered at this study site. The HEI

for this study currently uses faculty academic advising as their academic advising model. At the study site, during data collection, no significant changes occurred that could have influenced participants and their experiences, which could have influenced interpretation of study results.

Demographics

After a recruitment email was sent to 30 potential participants, nine responded and participated in this study. Participants were selected based on meeting this study's inclusion criteria, which were self-reported via email. Participants were HELs currently in higher education leadership as academic deans, program directors, or assistant program directors and participating in developing institutional policies and procedures for academic advising and faculty job expectations. Participants were English-speaking. For this study, HELs were defined as individuals in leadership positions who follow the mission and vision of a HEI and organize professional development training, develop academic policies and procedures, create, implement, and monitor strategic planning, hire faculty and staff, and monitor programmatic outcomes (Kasalack et al., 2022). I excluded HELs with less than 3 years of experience, those who did not speak English, and those who were not academic deans, program directors, or assistant program directors (see Table 1).

Table 1*Participant Information*

Participant	Leadership Role
P1	Program Director
P2	Program Director
P3	Assistant Academic Dean
P4	Program Director
P5	Assistant Program Director
P6	Program Director
P7	Program Director
P8	Program Director
P9	Assistant Program Director

Data Collection

Data were collected from nine participants through semistructured interviews using a self-developed interview protocol with eight open-ended questions (see Appendix A). The interview protocol included four open-ended questions to answer RQ1 and four open-ended questions to answer RQ2. Each interview question had followup questions to gather more in-depth information related to the RQs. Semistructured interviews were chosen to collect data to understand the perspectives of nine HELs' knowledge and thoughts on the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing academic advising policies and procedures to support student persistence and retention. The data collected from the interviews helped to expand my knowledge of how the nine participants, HELs, perceive the function and purpose of faculty as academic advisors and the barriers to developing effective faculty academic advising policies and procedures.

All nine interviews took place virtually through Microsoft Teams and lasted no more than 60 minutes. Each interview was recorded, and then the transcript was downloaded from Microsoft Teams via a Microsoft Word document. I transcribed each interview by listening to the interview recordings while reading the transcribed interview script produced by Microsoft Teams, and editing the transcriptions to align with each participant's responses. After I transcribed each interview, participants were emailed a copy to review the transcript and add additional clarification or adjust their responses. All interview transcripts and email communications between myself and the participants were saved in a password protected file on my password protected computer. I followed IRB-approved protocols to maintain each participant's confidentiality throughout data collection.

Only one variation occurred from my data collection plan, presented in Chapter 3. In Chapter 3, I had identified that I would interview 10-12 participants. I reached data saturation at P6; however, I continued interviewing up to nine participants who had agreed to complete the interviews. My committee agreed that nine participants were acceptable since saturation was reached at P6. No unusual circumstances were encountered during the data collection process.

Data Analysis

I used a basic qualitative design and analysis plan that followed Saldana's qualitative research coding process. During the data analysis stage, the data analysis plan did not change from the plan as outlined in Chapter 3. I used open coding for first cycle coding and axial coding for second cycle coding, which led to emerging themes. After

each interview, I transcribed participants' responses into Microsoft Word documents. Each document was labeled with a number. A data analysis worksheet was created in Microsoft Word to organize and analyze data in a table with three columns: open codes, axial codes, and emerging themes.

I approached data analysis using an inductive process of moving from coded units to categories and then themes. I moved inductively through open codes to axial codes, where data were grouped into similar categories. First, during open coding, I broke down participants' words and labeled them with descriptive codes to capture their meaning. Next, axial coding was used to cluster open codes into larger categories. I used color coding to organize categories and match participants' quotes with each category, facilitating identification of support for recognized categories. I organized axial codes into emerging themes during the final data analysis step. I identified themes, phrases, and sentences that described commonalities during the final thematic analysis.

Four themes emerged through data analysis, suggesting diverse perspectives and multifaceted roles of HELs regarding the function and purpose of faculty academic advisors. No discrepant cases were found during the data analysis process (see Appendix C).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

This study aimed to explore HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising to offer insightful information to HELs when establishing policies and procedures intended to support student persistence and retention. This basic qualitative research study used semistructured interviews to gather HELs' experiences,

perceptions, and meaning regarding faculty academic advisors. To determine trustworthiness within this research, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were assessed in the generated data analysis and outcomes (Adler, 2022; Connelly, 2016).

Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility determines the accuracy and trustworthiness of the collected data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Stahl & King, 2020). Appropriate strategies to establish credibility within this study were taken, including member checking, assuring data saturation, and reflexivity (Gill, 2020; Stahl & King, 2020). A trustful relationship was established with each participant. This relationship supported my commitment to recognizing participants' perceptions and thoughts when transcribing the interviews.

Each participant had the opportunity to participate in member checking to provide any clarification to the transcribed interviews. Data saturation occurred with P6, meaning no new information was being gathered. Even though data saturation was met at P6, I continued interviewing three more participants who had committed to participating and had scheduled interviews. My committee agreed that although I planned for 10-12 interviews, I stopped at nine due to data saturation being achieved. A reflective journal was kept to overcome my biases, where I documented the context of the interviews and my relationship with each participant.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability provides readers with proof that this study's conclusions might apply to different populations, circumstances, or contexts (Korstjens &

Moser, 2018). For this study, strategies to facilitate transferability included thick descriptions and variation in the participants. During each interview, I took detailed notes of the context of the interviews and followed the interview protocol the same way for each participant. Participant variation included six program directors, two assistant program directors, and one dean, all from various campus sites.

Dependability

To assure the dependability of this study, a detailed description of the research methods is provided, showing alignment between the research questions and interview questions. A thorough research log was kept indicating what occurred on each interview day, which included who was interviewed, where the interview took place, and how long each interview occurred. An audit trail was maintained that kept a detailed record of this study's data collection process, data analysis process, and interpretation of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Ravitch & Carl, 2020; Stahl & King, 2020). My final strategy to ensure dependability was reflective journaling, where I recorded what I had learned, seen, or heard during the nine completed interviews.

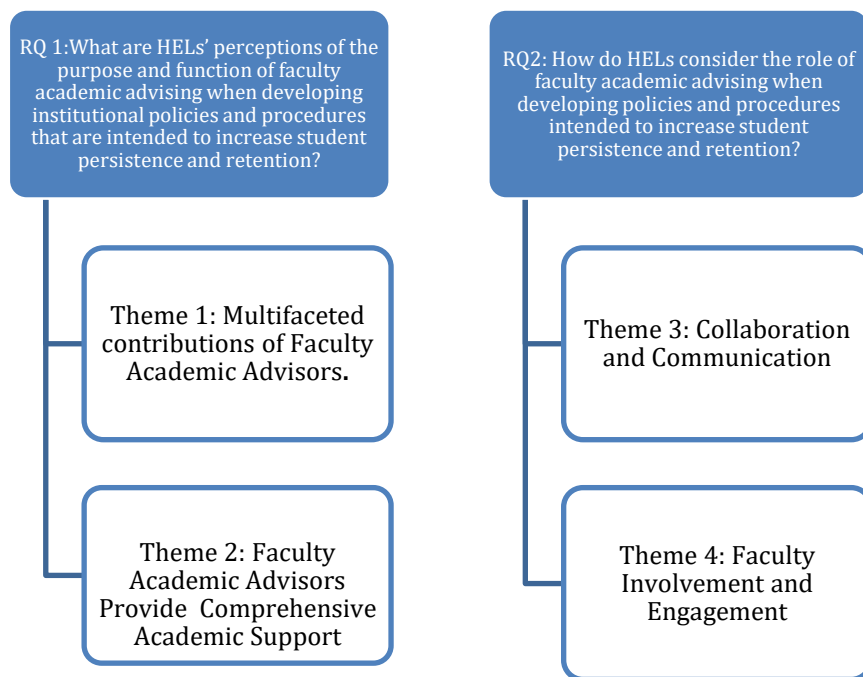
Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability is the degree to which the data gathered from participants accurately reflect their information and provide sufficient detail to demonstrate that the conclusions are reliable and repeatable (Connelly, 2016; Prosek & Gibson, 2021). I used reflexivity to establish confirmability for this study. During each interview, I kept notes in a journal to ensure the findings of this study were grounded in the data and not influenced by my biases and preconceptions.

Results

The appreciative inquiry (AI) model was used to develop the eight-question interview protocol (Appendix A) to answer this study's two research questions. Using the AI model to guide this study allowed HELs to provide positive responses on their perceptions, thoughts, and vision of best practices of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. By using the AI model in the interviews, I was able to capture HELs lived experiences on how they create faculty academic advising policies and procedures as academic support for student persistence and retention. I also learned how HELs define the function and purpose of faculty academic advising as intended to facilitate student persistence and retention. Through the semistructured interviews, I captured the value HELs place on faculty as academic advisors to support student academic success.

The objective of this section is to provide a comprehensive overview of the study's results. Data saturation was achieved after P6; however, nine interviews were completed. The results will be reported by research questions, and I will provide participant quotations to support the identified emerging themes. Four themes emerged from the data collected and analyzed from each interview. These themes were (a) multifaceted contributions of faculty as academic advisors, (b) faculty academic advisors providing comprehensive academic support, (c) collaboration and communication, and (d) faculty involvement and engagement (see Figure 1).

Figure 1*RQs and Themes***RQ1**

Two themes emerged to answer RQ1: What are HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to increase student persistence and retention? Theme one, multifaceted contributions of faculty as academic advisors, emerged, providing support for HELs' perceptions on the purpose of faculty academic advising. The second theme, faculty academic advisors provide comprehensive academic support, emerged providing support for HELs' perception of the function of faculty academic advising. Both themes provide HELs insight into how faculty academic advising can provide students with the academic support needed to succeed in their academics and degree completion.

Theme 1 Multifaceted Contributions Of Faculty As Academic Advisors

The first theme emphasizes the understanding that HELs have unique perspectives about the purpose of faculty academic advising. This theme highlights the multifaceted nature of faculty academic advising. It acknowledges the various perceptions viewed by HELs on the purpose of faculty academic advising and its intent to support student persistence and retention when developing institutional policies and procedures. P7 said:

I think the purpose of it is for students to have a person in the program that they know and is their go-to person for mentorship, for guidance, and for connecting them to resources within the program, the university, and the profession.

P5 expressed the diverse roles that faculty as academic advisors take on:

The purpose of faculty academic advising is, a faculty friend to guide and to coach our students through. For me as a program director, the purpose is to retain our student numbers and help them to achieve, to keep students in the program.

Theme 1 reflects how HELs' perceptions of the purpose of faculty academic advisors are incorporated into the development of institutional policies and procedures intended to increase student persistence and retention. HELs recognize how faculty advising fosters student academic success when strategically integrated into institutional policies and procedures. According to P3:

The students know with faculty as their advisors that somebody's out there, that they are not going through this journey alone, and by doing touch points with them on a regular basis, they know people care and they are in this with other people.

P4 highlighted how faculty as academic advisors facilitate and support student persistence and retention:

Faculty academic advising is discussed in strategic planning and accreditation meetings. I think it's so critical for students to know that they have somebody in the program that is assigned to them. That is, they are to help support them along their educational journey, even though we can say that all faculty are there. If a student knows that one person is dedicated to them, that's going to be there along their entire journey and help them through their success. I think that's important from a student perspective. I think it's incredibly important for them to know that they have a dedicated person in the program that is going to be there checking on them, you know, reaching out throughout the trimester, checking to see how they're doing, giving them study strategies.

P9 acknowledged that for students to be successful, they need a supportive environment where advisors can provide a safe place to not only mentor them academically but also provide them with guidance and resources during personal struggles:

There are little things that come up in everybody's life, and if they know a place they can go they're going to go to that supportive environment. That's what's gonna keep a student here. Faculty advisors provide a personal interprofessional mentoring relationship that keeps the student persisting.

Theme 2 Faculty Academic Advisors Provide Comprehensive Academic Support

The second theme reveals HELs' complex viewpoints that recognize the vital role faculty academic advising plays in creating policies and procedures intended to increase

student persistence and retention. Faculty academic advisors are acknowledged in their diverse roles while providing comprehensive academic support, career planning, mentorship, and personal support. P8 stated:

So the function of the faculty academic advisor is being a resource, being someone that the students can communicate with, someone that they can talk about their academic issues or even professionalism, things that are occurring in their program.

P5 emphasized the comprehensive support and assistance that faculty members offer during academic advising:

Faculty advisor since I first started in academia has certainly morphed into more of a support system and guiding and helping develop students personally, academically, and professionally.

Faculty academic advisors often provide support and resources beyond academic advising. Participants 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 emphasized how students look to their faculty advisors for personal support and professional development. P1, for example, described how students communicate with their faculty academic advisors regarding life circumstances, seeking guidance so they can perform academically. P1 emphasized, “Faculty academic advising is beyond the scope of just academia or didactics. Students need to talk about life events and how that affects their academic performance; it's all-encompassing.”

Participants Four and Five presented the concern that although faculty are trained to support student academic performance, course scheduling, and academic action plans

related to their course of study, there is a grey area regarding student personal counseling.

According to P4:

So I do not see the role of the faculty advisor as a counselor. I think that's outside of our scope of practice and we're not able to truly counsel students. The faculty have a much harder time with that coming from a Health Science profession. I think that there's a place for us to listen to them, but I think that we have to put up some boundaries, some healthy boundaries and then give them the appropriate resources.

Due to faculty academic advisors' multifaceted roles, HELs acknowledge the support and resources needed to provide holistic and quality academic advising. P8 emphasized the need for a better workload balance for faculty, stating, "It's managing the workload to ensure there is a good balance between doing their jobs and supporting the students." P3 indicated a need to enhance and offer academic advising training to new faculty members with minimal teaching experience. Among all the participants, HELs stressed the importance of clear communication and collaboration between faculty academic advisors and leadership and with other faculty and departments. P7 emphasized the need for more "transparency in communication" among faculty regarding student academic progress or potential action plans. Participants 4, 5, 6, and 7 indicated a need for a more centrally located documentation system available to all faculty academic advisors to help organize program faculty advising documentation.

RQ2

Two themes emerged to answer RQ2.: How do HELs consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures intended to increase student persistence and retention? The thematic analysis identified how HELs strategically collaborate with faculty on devising holistic and comprehensive faculty academic advising policies to support student persistence and retention. Throughout the interview process, participants were able to describe how they collaborated with faculty to develop academic advising policies and procedures. Participants also incorporated their opinions based on their current experiences into developing future best practices for faculty academic advising policies and procedures. Developing these best practices included considering faculty expertise and their involvement in strategic planning for policies and procedures that consider faculty engagement in academic advising.

Theme 3 Collaboration and Communication

HELs mentioned the importance of collaboration and communication with faculty as they strategically develop faculty academic advising policies and procedures to increase student persistence and retention. The participants spoke at length about the process that is taken to ensure they consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures. P9 spoke about how information gathered from faculty is communicated among leadership to express the need for role clarification and then shared back to faculty:

It's been a work in progress to define the role of faculty academic advising. So we've met as leaders to say, OK, what is really the role? What are the standards

that we have to meet? What do we see faculty academic advising as? And then having faculty meetings and saying OK, this is what we see it as. This is your role. These are the basic tenets, but then also on identifying the objectives like you are supposed to be a mentor, you are supposed to help guide them through the academic process, or it's not your role to be a counselor.

Open communication between leadership and faculty is essential when considering the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures intended to increase student persistence and retention. P4 discussed the importance of meeting with faculty to collaborate on defining their role and how it plays into developing departmental academic advising policies and procedures:

So I meet with faculty to talk about the role of the faculty advisor, what they have been doing at a program level, and discuss common student issues and suggestions on how to handle them. This information is used in strategic planning and accreditation.

As HELs consider the role of faculty academic advising when creating policies and procedures intended to support student persistence and retention, they are making opportunities to meet with faculty to understand their concerns, ideas, and suggestions for improvement. P6 spoke about the evolving process:

So we have a retreat at the end of every term for our team to discuss faculty academic advising. Some faculty think of advising as giving information to academic policy and process. Some believe it is having more nurturing support to coach and guide, which depends very much on personality type. When discussing

current policies and procedures, these varying conceptions are communicated in leadership meetings.

Theme 4 Faculty Involvement and Engagement

HELs agreed that collaboration with faculty on defining the purpose and function of faculty academic advising is essential to developing comprehensive and holistic faculty academic advising institutional policies and procedures. However, although participants shared their use of a collaborative process, they also discussed ways they envisioned faculty academic advising best practices. The participants agreed it is essential to consider faculty involvement and engagement within faculty academic advising and the development of faculty academic advising policies and procedures.

When considering faculty as academic advisors, all nine participants expressed that setting clear expectations on faculty engagement and outlining how often a faculty member should meet with their advisees is essential so that faculty can balance workload demands and student needs. P8 spoke about this importance:

So we have clear expectations of our academic advising here that the faculty are to meet with the students at least three times per trimester, and faculty have an option to meet individually or in group. I am very much a proponent of having the individual sessions, and because that's where the relationship building occurs when you're in a group, you feel like, oh, I'm just another person. I'm just within this group and there's one person just speaking to me versus having a one-on-one conversation and really being able to share your thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

Faculty workload, scholarship, and professional development are all considered when determining how faculty will function as student academic advisors. HELs acknowledge that academic advising can be time-consuming and impede their ability to participate in scholarly activities. So, when considering faculty as academic advisors, HELs understand the complexities of balancing the workload, scholarship, and advising sessions. P8 explained how they consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures intended to increase student persistence and retention:

So it's managing the workload of what, how many classes faculty are teaching, what scholarly activities that they are engaging in and making sure that there is a good balance between, what faculty are wanting to do, but also making sure that they are doing their job of supporting the students and making sure that is a high priority on their list of things that they need to do.

P7 described how, while creating policies and procedures for faculty academic advising that is meant to support student persistence and retention, they consider faculty workload and personal scholarship agendas:

So there are times when scholarship is tough to balance with keeping a productive workload and then folding in faculty advising, so knowing that the system is kind of against them. I try to game play the system so they can get some breathing room.

HELs discussed the concern that faculty engagement and involvement exceed institutional recommendations when completing their required academic advising sessions. All the participants addressed the ongoing concern that faculty spend more time

than expected with students' academic and personal concerns. Participants Three and Six highlighted how faculty personality could dictate how much time faculty members could dedicate to students in advising sessions. P6 discussed that if faculty members communicate well as a team and support each other through advising students, the advising sessions become more purposeful for students. P4 spoke about their experiences with their faculty advisors and the concerns regarding the amount of time spent advising students:

Faculty are checking in on students more often than we would likely think that for the percentage of faculty advising service would require. So then we're getting feedback that that's like a part-time job. Faculty always checking in with these students and worry, I worry about them if I don't hear from them. So I have sleepless nights because I'm worried about this student who has whatever is going on. So maybe I would say it's going beyond the empathetic listening ear and then really becoming intrinsically involved with the student on that deeper level.

Summary

Chapter 4 includes results of this study guided by the two RQs. I explored HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures that were intended to improve student persistence and retention. I collected data, organized codes and categories, used thematic analysis, and determined trustworthiness of evidence.

Data were collected via semistructured interviews and coded to determine thematic analysis. To answer RQ1: What are HELs' perceptions of the purpose and

function of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to increase student persistence and retention?, the two themes that emerged were multifaceted contributions of faculty as academic advisors and faculty academic advisors providing comprehensive academic support. To answer RQ2, How do HELs consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures intended to increase student persistence and retention?, the two themes that emerged were collaboration and communication and faculty involvement and engagement. Participant responses were used as evidence to support these themes.

Results revealed how HELs perceive the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures that are intended to improve student persistence and retention. HELs recognize the pivotal role that faculty advisors play in providing holistic support to students. Academic advisors offer comprehensive support to students, which includes guidance and mentoring, addressing career goals, professional development, and personal support. Faculty academic advisors have multifaceted roles in terms of increasing student persistence and retention. HELs acknowledge that faculty go beyond their traditional roles in teaching to serve as mentors in order to support and guide students through academic pursuits and personal situations.

This study revealed how HELs consider collaboration, communication, faculty engagement, and involvement when considering the role of faculty academic advising and developing policies and procedures that are intended to improve student persistence and retention. HELs consider various ways to foster cultures of faculty involvement and engagement within academic advising. When creating faculty academic advising policies

and procedures, HELs are aware of workload considerations, faculty scholarship, academic advising training, and professional development. I interpret findings, limitations, recommendations, implications, reflections, and a conclusion in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. By completing this study, I sought to fill the knowledge gap in the literature between what is known about faculty academic advisors' perceptions of the function and purpose of academic advising and how HELs view the role of faculty academic advisors when creating policies and procedures that are intended for student persistence and retention. My findings showed HELs' beliefs, priorities, and expectations of faculty as academic advisors as they contribute to student persistence and retention. HELs identified how they consider the multifaceted role of faculty academic advisors in creating policies and procedures for faculty academic advising to support student persistence and retention.

Data were collected from nine semistructured interviews. Interview questions were developed and crafted to prompt HELs to articulate their beliefs and share their experiences. After completion, recorded interviews were transcribed. Then, each transcribed interview underwent thorough analysis via open and axial coding to identify emergent themes.

Four thematic findings resulted: multifaceted contributions of faculty as academic advisors, faculty academic advisors provide comprehensive academic support, communication and collaboration, and faculty involvement and engagement. This study indicated that HELs view faculty academic advising as interactive and comprehensive. HELs value and consider the multifaceted role of faculty as academic advisors when

creating policies and procedures that are intended to support student persistence and retention. In Chapter 5, I interpret findings and study limitations. I then make recommendations for future research and highlight this study's contributions to positive social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

Prior research supports the use of faculty academic advising as an influential component of student persistence and retention (Rasmussen et al., 2022). Lahiri et al. (2021) determined faculty as academic advisors have the opportunity to use their teaching and learning skills to mentor and counsel students academically, emotionally, and professionally. Hart-Baldrige (2020) found faculty value their role as academic advisors; however, they report challenges involving unclear advising expectations, workload inequalities, and navigating advising software and documentation. According to Wei (2022), HELs develop academic advising policies and procedures to support student graduation, persistence, and retention as part of their strategic plan to evaluate continuous improvement. I sought to fill the gap in literature regarding faculty academic advisors' perceptions of the function and purpose of academic advising and how HELs view the role of faculty academic advising when creating policies and procedures that are intended for student persistence and retention.

The AI model, which was established in the late 1980s by David Cooperrider in collaboration with Suresh Srivastva, was used to guide this study's research methods (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The AI model involves using an organization's past and present assets, strengths, weaknesses, and success to guide identification, development,

and implementation of positive change. For positive and sustainable changes to occur involving faculty academic advising policies and procedures, it is critical to understand how HELs view its purpose and function. This study, which is framed by the AI model, sought to identify the strengths of faculty academic advising that are currently in place based on HELs' perspectives so that new opportunities to enhance the function and purpose of faculty academic advising can be explored (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Ye He & Oxendine, 2019).

By using the AI model to guide data collection and analysis, this study determined how HELs perceive the purpose and function of faculty academic advising. It was also established how HELs consider the role of faculty as academic advisors when creating faculty academic advising policies and procedures intended for student persistence and retention. Four distinctive themes emerged from the transcribed interviews which illustrated the experiences of the nine HELs with faculty academic advising. The relationship between the literature examined in Chapter 2 and how the themes disconfirm, confirm, or expand the knowledge of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising from the perceptions of HELs is the main emphasis of my interpretation of the findings.

Theme 1: Multifaceted Contributions of Faculty as Academic Advisors

According to McDonald and Gordon (2019), effective academic advising happens when a holistic approach occurs that includes supporting students academically, professionally, and personally. The nine Participants provided insights regarding their personal experiences with faculty as academic advisors in terms of how they provided

students with just academic advice and guidance. Participants highlighted how when faculty serve as students' academic advisors, they contribute to their academic success by supporting their educational courses, professional development, problem-solving through academic and personal situations, mentoring and coaching, and academic and personal resources.

Faculty academic advisors take a holistic approach to academic advising by providing students with professional, academic, and personal support that facilitates persistence and retention (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; McDonald & Gordon, 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). Faculty academic advisors offer students assistance to navigate complex demands of their educational journey by providing resources, support, and a sense of belonging (Chen et al., 2019; McGill, 2021). HELs acknowledge the importance of diverse roles faculty academic advisors take on when supporting students in their academic endeavors. Participants said faculty academic advisors had a vital role in assisting students with their academic, personal, and professional development. This helps students to actively and collaboratively work with faculty academic advisors in order to complete their academic degrees.

Theme 2: Faculty Academic Advisors Provide Comprehensive Academic Support

The findings of my study support and bring in some new insight into previous research that indicates faculty academic advisors provide students with comprehensive academic support that is intended to support student persistence and retention. HELs consider faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures to assist students' academic progress since it has a favorable correlation with persistence and

retention (Alvarado & Olson, 2020; Mu & Fosnacht, 2019). Participants concluded faculty academic advisors provide students with comprehensive academic support by providing active engagement, effective communication, and personalized guidance to students.

Theme 2, Faculty Academic Advisors Provide Comprehensive Academic Support, extends the current knowledge within the literature on the various academic resources and supports included in faculty academic advising. According to Rasmussen et al. (2022), in higher education student persistence and retention efforts include understanding the diverse needs of the student population. Therefore, faculty academic advisors incorporate various strategies to provide comprehensive approaches to academic support that meet needs of diverse student populations (McDaniel & Van Jura, 2022; Museus & Ravello, 2021). Participants shared their perspectives regarding how faculty academic advisors create comprehensive support to address diverse educational needs of their students while promoting academic success and wellbeing. They explained how faculty invest time in developing academic advising sessions that are individualized to reflect student academic needs. During advising sessions, faculty collaborate with students to develop academic and professional goals, agree on progress meetings, and problem solve through academic challenges. These findings support current research that indicates as educational environments and student demographics evolve, faculty academic advisors have to use comprehensive approaches to optimize student achievement (de Klerk, 2022; McDaniel & Van Jura, 2020; Niewoudt & Pedler, 2021).

Theme 3: Communication and Collaboration

Previous research highlighted the vital position HELs have in developing institutional policies and procedures that directly affect student success. Roncevalles and Gaerlan (2021) emphasized how HELs who utilize various skills to build collaboration among those under their leadership can achieve institutional goals, improve student success, and build cooperation between staff and faculty. My study's findings confirm that effective communication and collaboration between HELs and faculty is a crucial component to developing institutional policies and procedures for faculty academic advising intended to support student persistence and retention. The nine participants agreed that establishing open communication and opportunities to foster collaboration with faculty facilitates HELs' understanding of how faculty function as academic advisors in relation to their role as faculty.

Many of the participants explained how they valued continuous communication from faculty to understand the time commitment that is invested in providing a comprehensive approach to faculty academic advising. The literature supports HEL's responsibilities of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling organizational activities that provide opportunities to motivate and mentor collaboration and communication among faculty (Finatariani, 2023). Theme 3, Communication and Collaboration, expands on the importance of faculty and HELs striving to be flexible and adaptable, have clear communication, and participate in collaborative meetings to ensure institutional policies and procedures for faculty academic advising are clearly defined to improve student persistence and retention. The participants reported returning to higher

leadership, such as chief academic officer (CAO), with the insights they had received from faculty members during faculty meetings and faculty end-of-term retreats regarding their experiences with academic advising. Specifically, they discussed the significance of creating and putting into practice faculty academic policies and procedures that guaranteed faculty collaboration.

Previous findings in the literature examined the perceptions of faculty as faculty academic advisors. According to Hart-Baldrige (2020), faculty advisors are tasked with addressing the diverse needs of students to provide the adequate support and resources students require for academic success and persistence while maintaining their day-to-day and professional development responsibilities. Research has identified challenges faced by faculty academic advisors, such as limited training, limited time to complete academic advising, and limited recognition of their advising efforts (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2022; Yonker et al., 2019). In my study, participants envisioned best practices providing workload equity to balance the time spent in academic advising and providing adequate academic advising training. Recent research has shown a gap between the difficulties that faculty academic advisers observe and how HELs view the function and purpose of faculty academic advising (Chan et al., 2019; Hart-Baldrige, 2020). The results of my study demonstrate that HELs are aware of the challenges associated with faculty workload and the need for continuous academic advising training. HELs also established the need for clear and concise faculty academic advising policies that specify the purpose and function of faculty as academic advisors.

Theme 4: Faculty Involvement and Engagement

The literature indicates that faculty demands in the twenty-first century now include involvement in student persistence and retention initiatives such as academic advising, in addition to teaching courses and commitment to professional development that includes community service, scholarship, and research (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2022). The participants in the study agreed that taking faculty engagement and involvement in academic advising into account when developing policies and procedures for faculty academic advising is essential. This confirms that HELs consider the various roles and demands placed on faculty as academic advisors in relation to their day-to-day workload and commitment to professional development.

By considering faculty involvement and engagement, the participants agreed they could create clear guidelines for faculty participation in academic advising that include how often faculty meet with advisees so that there is a balance in faculty workload and commitment to meeting student educational needs. In addition, the nine participants shared their beliefs about the positive experiences students report when they have faculty as academic advisors mentoring and guiding them during academic advising sessions. These findings extend the current knowledge that student academic success is related to positive faculty interactions and collaboration within academic advising sessions (Hart-Baldrige, 2020; Yonkers et al., 2019).

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of qualitative research is generalizability. For this study, a small sample size that included nine HELs at one multicampus university is a limitation of the

generalizability of the findings. It is possible that the results of this study cannot be broadly generalized to other educational institutions. Despite every attempt to choose HELs with a variety of experiences with faculty academic advising, there may be limitations to the results' transferability in different contexts or settings. Another potential limitation of this study is my bias during interviews. As an employee at one of the study site's campuses, I have first-hand knowledge of the institution's faculty academic advising policies and procedures, as well as personal experience completing faculty academic advising. To limit interview bias, I did not stray from the interview script and maintained nonreactive body language.

This study involves HELs from one specific university that concentrates on graduate degrees in allied health professions. A limitation is that the participants may have responded based on their perspectives within allied health programs that may not fully represent the experiences of HELs within other graduate degree programs or undergraduate universities or colleges. In conclusion, my study was constrained by a single methodology. Subsequent researchers may choose to investigate HELs' perceptions on the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies and procedures intended for student persistence and retention using quantitative or mixed-method approaches.

Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to gain a deeper understanding of HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures intended to support

student persistence and retention. Future research recommendations include expanding on the diversification of participants and universities. My study participants were HELs (program directors, assistant program directors, or academic deans) within one university that concentrates on allied health degree programs. It is essential to include a more diverse variety of HELs, such as campus presidents or CAOs, within various academic programs, undergraduate programs, community colleges, and other graduate degree specializations.

Future researchers may choose to use a mixed-method or quantitative method to study the function and purpose of faculty academic advising and its relation to student persistence and retention to enhance the dependability and generalizability of the findings over a variety of educational settings. Future research could survey HELs across the United States to determine the effectiveness of faculty academic advising as an institutional strategy to improve student persistence and retention. Future research could also include exploring best practices for faculty academic advising that contribute to positive student persistence and retention outcomes.

Implications

The findings from this study have the potential to lead to a positive social change by building on the current strengths of faculty academic advising policies to enhance student support systems in higher education institutions. The insights gained by HELs in this study can be instrumental in optimizing academic advising policies and procedures. Higher education institutions can utilize this study's information to improve their current faculty academic advising policies and procedures that meet the needs of their students

while balancing the day-to-day tasks of faculty. By understanding the purpose and function of faculty academic advising in relation to student persistence and retention, HELs can transform the academic advising experience into a more holistic and personalized approach that creates a more supportive environment throughout a student's educational journey.

As HELs become more aware of the critical role that faculty academic advising has on student persistence and retention, HELs can strive to emphasize more collaboration and communication between HELs and faculty in the creation of faculty academic advising policies and procedures. When higher education institutional policies enable faculty academic advisors to adopt a comprehensive approach to academic advising, students at risk of not completing their degree may receive the necessary support to obtain a college degree. In return, students who graduate with a college degree have the potential to improve their socioeconomic status, improve the quality of life of their families, and expand employment opportunities, creating a positive social change.

Conclusion

Faculty academic advising is an effective component in fostering student persistence and retention in higher education. Incorporating comprehensive and holistic faculty academic advising policies and procedures creates a supportive and interactive environment for students during their educational endeavors. Faculty can provide individualized attention and support to students during academic advising sessions that foster a student sense of belonging while mentoring and guiding them through their educational goals. Faculty academic advising is a proactive approach that can address

students' personal, academic, and professional issues before they lead to student dropout or failure.

As HELs develop institutional policies and procedures for faculty academic advising intended to support student persistence and retention, they should strive to collaborate and communicate with faculty. To strengthen faculty academic advising policies and procedures, faculty need to have the opportunity to express their engagement and involvement in academic advising so that HELs can begin to envision and develop best practices. Higher education institutions may enhance their overall student persistence and retention by investing in strengthening faculty academic advising, which influences students beyond graduation by contributing to their overall personal and professional growth within their surrounding community.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Introductory Statement: Thank you very much for participating in this interview to help me collect data on the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore HELs' perceptions of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures intended to support student persistence and retention. The unique perspectives gained from this study may help to understand how HELs interpret and define the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies.

This is a voluntary interview that should take about 60 minutes to complete. I appreciate you taking the time to participate in this interview to talk about faculty academic advising and contributing to this research. I would like to review a few items before we begin, if that is ok. At any point during the interview, please let me know if I ask a question you do not wish to answer or need to stop the interview. With your permission, I would like to record the interview for my records. During the interview, I will be taking some notes. After the interview, I will be examining your answers for data analysis, and this study may be published; however, I will not identify you in my documents, and no one will be able to identify you from your answers. Do you have any questions or concerns regarding this research study? If not, let us get started.

Interview Questions

Before we begin, I want you to take a moment to reflect on your experience as a higher education leader (Academic Dean or Program Director) in developing policies and procedures for faculty academic advising intended for student persistence and retention.

The following questions will focus on your experiences with faculty academic advising.

RQ1: What are HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to increase student persistence and retention?

1. How would you describe the purpose of faculty academic advising?
 - a. Probing Question- How does your description of the purpose of faculty academic advising compare to your current institution's faculty academic advising policies and procedures?
2. How would you describe the function of a faculty academic advisor?
 - a. Probing Question- How does your description of the function of faculty academic advisors compare to your current institution's faculty academic advising policies and procedures?
3. What do you value most about faculty academic advising?
 - a. Probing Question- How did these values affect your decision to support faculty academic advising policies and procedures?
4. How does faculty academic advising support student persistence and retention?

- a. Probing Question- Can you provide an example of a time a faculty academic advisor supported students academic goals for graduation?

RQ2: How do HELs consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures intended to increase student persistence and retention?

5. As a higher education leader (Academic Dean or Program Director), Please describe how you collaborate with faculty to determine the role of faculty academic advising?
 - a. Probing Questions- Please explain any similarities and differences you and your faculty have had in defining the role of faculty academic advising.
6. Please explain your current faculty academic advising policy and procedures?
 - a. Probing Questions- When developing your current faculty academic advising policies, what part of the process were you involved in?
7. Please describe how you support faculty as they complete academic advising and their daily teaching assignments, scholarship agenda, and community involvement.
 - a. Probing Question- Do you provide specific tools, such as computer software or documents, to help guide faculty in their academic advising sessions?
8. Please describe how you envision best practices when you participate in faculty academic advising meetings for developing policies and procedures?
 - a. Probing Questions- Can you describe a time when you shared this vision?

9. Are there any other thoughts or comments you would like to add that I may not have covered?

Concluding Statement- Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. I appreciate all you have shared regarding your perceptions and experiences with the function and purpose of faculty academic advising. Do you have any questions for me? I will provide you with a copy of the interview within ten days for you to review and submit any changes you feel are necessary or add to your responses. Thank you

Additional Questions Should Time Allow

1. What are the skills, strengths, and qualities of faculty that brought you to support the role of faculty academic advisors as a strategy to support student persistence and retention?
 - a. Probing question- Can you describe a previous experience you have had with faculty academic advisors?
2. Please describe a specific time that your behavior or actions as a higher education leader (Academic Dean or Program Director) positively affected creating faculty academic advising policies and procedures related to student persistence and retention.
 - a. Probe Question- Can you describe what was happening, how you felt, and what made the situation possible?

Appendix B: Participation Invitation Email

Dear Invitee or Sir/Madam,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University's Ph.D. in Higher Education, Leadership, and Policy program. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled: HELs' Perceptions of The Function and Purpose of Faculty Academic Advising To Support Student Persistence and Retention. The literature has provided findings that identify the importance of faculty academic advising as an educational strategy to support student persistence and retention. Although research was found that explored faculty academic advisors' knowledge of the function and purpose of academic advising, there is a gap in the literature that explores HELs' knowledge of the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures intended to support student persistence and retention. This study intends to gain the unique perspectives of HELs to understand how HELs interpret and define the function and purpose of faculty academic advising when creating institutional policies.

The study involves participating in a 60-minute one-on-one interview virtually with me using a virtual platform of your choice. The research questions for this study are:

RQ1: What are HELs' perceptions of the purpose and function of faculty academic advising when developing institutional policies and procedures that are intended to increase student persistence and retention?

RQ2: How do HELs consider the role of faculty academic advising when developing policies and procedures intended to increase student persistence and retention?

This study is confidential, your information will not be shared with other participants. Participation in this study is voluntary, you may withdraw from this study at any time, and there will be no compensation for your participation. If you meet the inclusion criteria and wish to participate in this study, please email me.

Your participation in this study will be of great importance to assist in social change by initiating change within the faculty academic advising process so that institutional policies can begin to change and support quality and holistic faculty academic advising intended to support student persistence and retention.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

IRB#: 23-0817-738

Appendix C: Codes, Categories, and Themes

Table C1*Codes, Categories, and Themes*

Open Codes	Axial Codes	Themes
Faculty academic advisors mentor students for success	Academic, professional, and personal support	Theme 1- Multifaceted Contributions of Faculty as Academic Advisors
Student communication, appointment scheduling, and check-ins	Academic program retention and persistence	
Empowering, supporting, and encouraging students	Student empowerment and support	
Support student growth and goals		
Monitor academic action plans		
Familiar with courses and program requirements	Academic support and knowledge	Theme 2- Faculty Academic Advisors Provide Comprehensive Academic Support
Development of educational goals and professional plans	Student success strategies	
Provide academic and personal resources	Relationship building	
Documentation and information sharing		

Relationship building and connections		
Recommendations for best practices	Faculty provide comprehensive guidance	Theme 3- Collaboration and Communication
Faculty academic advisors increase student retention and persistence	Collaborative approach	
Faculty knowledge of students' personal and academic needs	Workload Consideration	Theme 4: Faculty Involvement and Engagement
Communication between faculty and leadership	Time Management	
Faculty and leaders Communicate on the resources, support, and training needed for academic advising.	Faculty Expertise	
Consideration of faculty workload, scholarship, and community engagement		
Faculty input and suggestions to current faculty advising policies and procedures		