

1-1-2006

# The effectiveness of an intrusive advising program on students on academic probation

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This research is a product of the graduate program in [Counseling and Student Development](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

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## Recommended Citation

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The Effectiveness of an Intrusive Advising  
Program on Students on Academic Probation

(TITLE)

BY

Christie Ann Cruise

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2006

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
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April 13, 2006  
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### Abstract

The effectiveness of an intrusive advising program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences – General Curriculum Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was investigated to determine whether students who chose to participate in such a program had higher grade point averages and cleared academic probation at higher rates than did students who chose not to participate. An independent-samples *t* test was used to assess the relationship between participation in an intrusive advising program and grade point averages. In addition, this statistical analysis was used to assess the relationship between participation in the program and clearance rates from academic probation. The results of the independent-samples *t* test showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the grade point averages of students who participated in an intrusive advising program and those who did not. Also, the results showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the rates of clearance from academic probation for students who participated in an intrusive advising program and those who did not.

## Acknowledgements

“I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.” – Ecclesiastes 9:11

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have been instrumental in my completion of this thesis and Master’s degree program. Dr. Eberly, you have been a wonderful professor, mentor and thesis chair. Thank you for the encouragement and inspiration you have given me over the past three years. The time and effort you put into making my thesis a printable document can never be repaid. Dr. Jenny L. Bloom, you have been such a great support to me since I met you in the summer of 2002. Your honesty, encouragement and unyielding support mean so much to me. Thank you for believing in me and helping me strive to reach my full potential. Dr. Wallace, I have learned a great deal about higher education and student affairs from you. Thank you for serving as my advisor during my time at Eastern Illinois University and for serving on my thesis committee. I would like to thank the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences-General Curriculum Center for assisting me in collecting data from the Probationary Student Assistance Program. I would especially like to thank my supervisor Dean Julian Parrott for encouraging me and for being so understanding while I completed this project. Also, Meghan Hazen, data specialist extraordinaire, thank you for working with me to retrieve the data needed to complete this thesis. To my co-workers and friends, LaTanya Cobb and Carrie Mulvaney, your friendships mean so much to me. Thank you for your words of encouragement and motivation. Your senses of humor made this so much easier for me.

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## *Chapter 1*

### INTRODUCTION

Academic difficulty can be attributed to a variety of factors including under preparedness for college, personal, family, and financial issues. When these situations turn academic difficulty into academic failure, there are policies in place that require students to meet certain standards if continued enrollment is planned. Students are placed on academic probation at the end of the semester if they fail to meet the minimum grade point average set by their college. Some students are placed on academic probation because their current semester grade point average does not meet these standards; others are on probation because their cumulative grade point average has fallen below those standards. Regardless of how students end up on academic probation, the dilemma for academic advisors and other college administrators is how to facilitate students' degree completion through future successful semesters. In order for academic advisors to effectively assist students on academic probation, they must first identify the issues that caused academic probation and work with students to resolve these underlying issues.

Garnett (1990) suggested the development of a program to aid students with developing structure and committing themselves to academics. The purpose of the present study was to determine if an intrusive advising program has a positive impact on grade point averages for students on academic probation. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences – General Curriculum Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a large mid-western university, was the site for the present study. The General Curriculum Center serves approximately 3,000 freshmen and sophomores. Each

year, about 9% of these students are on academic probation, and about 25% of those students will be on probation for a second time. The findings of this study should provide staff members of other colleges within the University of Illinois and similar institutions who work with students on academic probation with: 1) a model of an intrusive advising program, 2) an indication of the effectiveness of such a program on freshmen and sophomore grade point averages, and 3) an idea of how the program is perceived by the student participants.

#### Academic Progress, Probation and Drop Rules at the University of Illinois

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has established policies governing academic progress, probation and drop rules in its *Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students*. Codes 79 and 80 from the August 2004 *Code of Policies and Regulations* explain academic progress and levels of academic probation and drop status (Appendix A).

#### Academic Probation in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The policy on academic probation and drop status through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is based upon the policy stated in the University of Illinois' *Code of Policies and Regulations*. The information in the 2004-2005 student handbook is specific to all students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Appendix B).

#### Definition of Terms

Academic probation – failure to maintain a semester or cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C).

At-risk – students at risk for academic failure in college.

Drop status – status assigned to a student who has failed to meet the college requirements of work toward a degree program or who has failed to meet the terms of academic probation, and has, therefore, been dropped from the university.

GPA – grade point average determined by dividing quality points earned by credits attempted.

Intrusive advising – an invasive approach to advising that requires listening, referring and interpersonal skills; a more personal approach rather than professional. Intrusive advising is based on collaboration and not mandate, and effectively removes the advisor from an authoritarian position, thus making the advising relationship a partnership between the student and the advisor (Molina & Abelman, 2000; Creamer & Creamer, 1994). Intrusive advising is advisor initiated and requires regular meetings, usually bi-weekly to monitor academic progress.

Semester GPA – average calculated on the basis of all courses attempted during a semester for which grades and credits are assigned and that carry credit in accordance with the University courses catalog (LAS Student Handbook, p. 44).

Cumulative GPA – average calculated on the basis of all courses attempted at the University for which grades and credits are assigned and that carry credit in accordance with the University courses catalog (LAS Student Handbook, p. 44).

Probationary status – status assigned to a student who fails to receive a grade point average of 2.0 for the semester or whose cumulative grade point average falls below a 2.0. It serves as a warning to the student that unless his or her scholarship improves, the student is subject to the drop rules (Code of Policies and Regulations, p. 38).

Undecided students – students who have yet to declare a major.

### Research Questions

The present study was designed to answer the following questions: Are students who participate in an intrusive advising program more likely to have higher grade point averages than those who do not? Are students who participate more likely to clear academic probation than those who do not?

There is evidence that students who participate in intrusive advising programs clear academic probation at higher rates than those who do not. Coleman and Freedman (1996) found that when students on academic probation participated in a structured group intervention program they were removed from probation status at higher rates than those who did not participate in the intervention program. Molina and Abelman (2000) found similar results in their study that examined different levels of intrusiveness and its effects on grade point average. Their results showed that when any level of intrusive advising was used students had a greater increase in their mean GPA than those students not participating in an intrusive advising program. Garnett (1990) asserted that first year students have several factors that possibly contribute to academic difficulty, including too much freedom, difficulty transitioning from high school to college and a lack of structure and discipline. These studies have led to the following hypotheses for the present study:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant difference in the grade point averages of students who participate in an intrusive advising program and those who do not.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant difference in the number of students who clear academic probation who participate in an intrusive advising program and those who do not.

### Limitations of the Study

The present study of the impact of intrusive advising was limited to undecided freshmen and sophomores only within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Although many of the students had an idea of the major they would like to declare, all of them remained coded as undecided.

### Overview of the Study

Chapter II of the present study will be a review of the current literature on at-risk students, intrusive advising and students on academic probation. Chapter III will discuss the methods used for gathering information for the quantitative study. Chapter IV will discuss the results from the present study. Chapter V will contain limitations, implications and recommendations for further research.

## *Chapter 2*

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the literature on academic probation in college focused on students who were “at-risk” for academic failure, often due to their limited educational background. Heisserer and Parette (2002) listed five categories in which at-risk students generally fall: disabled, ethnic minority, academically disadvantaged, low socio-economic status and college probationary students.

The at-risk category described by Heisserer and Parette (2002) was a common theme in the literature to describe probationary students. Thus, this literature review will focus on at-risk students, who they are and why they are more likely to be on academic probation, and their retention rates in higher education. Intrusive advising strategies and the impact of this form of academic advising on at-risk students will also be reviewed. Students from the at-risk category are likely to be on academic probation when entering college; therefore, they are the focus of this literature review.

#### At-risk Students

Kelley (1996) divided the factors that contribute to academic probation into internal and external conditions that were considered to be temporary or continuing. In his model of academic probation, the “precursor stage” was divided into external-stable factors, external-unstable factors, internal-controllable factors and internal-uncontrollable factors (p. 29). External-stable factors, like family situations, were those that were not very likely to change rapidly. External-unstable factors included students’ lack of interest in a course. Internal-controllable factors were those that were inherent to the student, but that could be easily changed, such as choosing to study and increasing the

effort put into coursework. Internal-uncontrollable factors were difficult to change because they were individual characteristics, such as having health problems, being unaware of individual learning style, and being unprepared to do college-level work. Isonio (1995) showed that the inability to perform at the college level was due to being under prepared in K-12 education. One description of under preparedness was students lacking the necessary basic skills in math, language arts and science to be successful in a specific course or program. Other forms of under preparedness were lacking knowledge about study skills, academic standards, degree requirements, and occupational and personal goals.

#### *Disabled Students*

Students with disabilities were categorized as being at-risk for academic failure for several reasons. Tincani (2004) stated there was no Federal mandatory process in place for colleges and universities to identify and serve disabled students as in the K-12 educational system, and many students with disabilities did not subscribe to the disability support services offered on campuses. Tincani (2004) attributed their poor academic performance to the inability to properly take notes and their lack of class participation and class attendance. Abelman and Molina (2002) focused on students with learning disabilities and their difficulties in reasoning, reading, writing and listening. Without proper accommodations in the college classroom, these learning disabled students became increasingly at-risk to be placed on academic probation.

#### *Ethnic Students*

Among the ethnic groups studied at Golden West College in Huntington Beach, California (Isonio, 1995), Pacific Islanders and African-Americans had higher rates of



probation/disqualification compared to other groups. McBay (2003) believed one explanation for under preparedness in minority students was their lack of enrollment in challenging courses during their K-12 education. Students who were low income and minority were more likely to attend schools where the teachers did not major or minor in the subject area being taught, so they were not certified to teach those subjects. There were low-income minority students who were extremely bright, but gifted African-American students' abilities often went unrecognized and were not nurtured through intellectual stimulation at home or at school (Exum, 1979). Many low-income minority students attended schools that did not offer college preparatory courses. However, even in lower middle to upper income geographical areas where college preparatory and advanced placement (AP) courses were offered, there were still fewer minority students than Whites enrolled in the courses. Ndura, Robinson and Ochs (2003) found that minority students were disproportionately under represented in AP courses. These same authors found that encouragement from parents and teachers played the biggest role in whether or not students took AP courses. Students whose parents were in the upper income range were more likely to take AP courses. The authors did not discuss whether the students whose parents were in the higher income bracket had themselves gone to college. Parental educational background could explain why these students were encouraged to take AP courses, whereas students who were first generation college students would not necessarily receive the same encouragement because their parents did not attend college and were therefore not knowledgeable about AP courses and their benefits for students preparing to attend college. Billson and Terry (1982) stated that

minorities were more likely than non-minorities to come from families where parents have not gone to college.

### *First Generation in College Students*

First generation college students were defined as students whose parents have not attended college (Billson & Terry, 1982). Trotter (2001) summarized that when comparing first generation students to those whose parents have attended college, first generation students were at a definite disadvantage for being competitive for college admissions. As a result, many first generation students decided to attend a two-year institution as opposed to a four-year institution (Bui, 2002). Some first generation students did gain admission to four-year institutions, but these students were under prepared from high school and often lacked knowledge about costs, application processes, and degree programs. They were also less likely to complete their undergraduate degree (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak & Terenzini, 2004). Furthermore, first generation college students had a higher likelihood than other students to work while attending school and were more likely to have children (NCES, 1999). These findings were consistent with other findings that first generation students were most likely to be married with dependent children and have lower incomes than non-first generation students (NCES, 1998).

### *Low Income Students*

Allington and McGill-Franzen (2003) stated that low-income students were at-risk for academic failure because they have never had the opportunities to do as well as more economically advantaged students, hence the need for the federally funded programs through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1966

(ESEA). Borman (2003) suggested starting Title I programs at kindergarten in order to help lower income students have higher academic achievement. Still, there remains the problem of inadequate finances. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds, once admitted to college, typically must work to pay for tuition and fees. Working large numbers of hours per week can interfere with the amount of time devoted to studying, thus causing a drop in GPA. Students on academic probation were more likely to work full-time, have dependent children, and have more personal problems than students in good academic standing (Trombley, 2000). Lucas (1991) also found that some students on academic probation believed working too many hours contributed to their poor grades. With increasing college costs and decreasing financial aid grants, low income and ethnic minorities are finding it even more difficult to pay for college (Orfield, 1982). African-American and Latino students had a lower median per capita income when compared to White students. Increased tuition hampered access for these students (Nevarez, 2001). Enrollment and persistence in college was determined by the accessibility of financial aid for many minority and low-income students (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 2003). In addition, Forster, Swallow and Fodor (1999) found that academically at-risk freshmen took on heavier co-curricular and employment loads because they did not categorize themselves as at-risk for academic failure.

#### *Academically Advantaged Students*

Students who are academically advantaged, meaning those that have gone to high schools with strong college preparatory programs, may be in danger of being placed on academic probation as well. Garnett (1990) explained that often times these advanced students have lost the discipline it takes to study because they finished their high school

graduation requirements during their junior year, and therefore took less rigorous courses senior year. Also, the freedom experienced by first year college students was a new experience and often led to a misuse of time, resulting in academic probation. Furthermore, high school courses may have been intellectually unchallenging to them and these apparently successful students never really learned good study techniques.

#### Retention Rates for At-risk Students

All the factors discussed above play an important role in student persistence to graduation at a college or university. For ethnic minorities, Lucas (1993) found that only 28% of minority students who matriculated into predominantly White institutions graduated from college within five years after their initial enrollment. Bourne-Bowie (2000) found similar statistics with only one third to one half of African-American students having completed degrees on predominately White campuses. The 2002/2003 six year graduation rate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was at 61.5% for African-American students, but the gap between Black and White students was 21.7 percentage points (Carey, 2005).

Although there was an overall increase in enrollment for minority students between 1982 and 1992, graduation rates did not increase (Zea, Reisen, Beil, & Caplan, 1997). Retention rates dropped with each year in college. According to Smith (1999), after the first year of college, retention rates for African-Americans, Hispanics and American Indians were 74%, 71% and 63%, respectively. After the sophomore year, the rates were 60% for African-Americans, 59% for Hispanics and 49% for American Indians. The retention numbers continued to decrease through the fifth year.

### Intrusive Advising

Gordon and Habley (2000) defined academic advising as “an educational activity that depends on valid explanations of complex student behaviors and institutional conditions to assist college students in making and executing educational and life plans (p. 18).” There are several organizational models for academic advising: “faculty only”, where students were assigned to a member of the faculty; “supplementary”, which included faculty advisors and an advising office for more general information (King, 1993, p. 48); “split”, included advising by faculty members and advising office staff; “dual”, allowed students to have two advisors, an advisor to provide institutional information, and faculty for major related information; “total intake”, which was done by central office staff until specific requirements have been met; “satellite”, which involved advising offices within each academic subunit; and “self-contained”, which was mostly used at community colleges because the advising is more centralized and usually done by a dean or director (p. 49).

Student retention increased when structured intervention strategies were integrated into the institution’s advising system. When advising was delivered in such a way that it was both intrusive and developmental, the student-advisor relationship became more personalized (Garing, 1993). Jeschke, Johnson and Williams (2001) found that the combination of developmental advising techniques and contact initiated by the advisor made intrusive advising different from prescriptive advising. The literature reviewed above was consistent in agreeing that intrusive advising was the most effective way to work with probationary students. Earl (1988) defined intrusive advising as an intervention strategy that incorporated both prescriptive and developmental advising

techniques as a means to motivate students to take an active role in their academic performance by seeking out assistance. He recommended that intrusive advising be used at the first sign of academic difficulty. In contrast, Crookston (1994) suggested moving away from prescriptive, or authoritarian advising, and moving toward developmental, or relationship based, advising. Developmental academic advising incorporates interactive teaching, counseling and administrative strategies to help students reach their career, developmental, learning and life goals (Creamer & Creamer, 1994). Crookston defined prescriptive advising as a relationship that limits the student because the advisor is the authority in the relationship (Gordon & Habley, 2000). Heisserer and Parette (2002) defined intrusive advising as an “intensive advising intervention” (p. 75) to increase chances for academic success, increase student motivation and encourage decision-making on the part of the student. The consistent theme throughout was collaboration.

#### Approaches to Intrusive Advising

Intrusive advising may be done many different ways depending on the institution and the student population being served. Heerman and Maleki (1994) found the portfolio method to be successful in working with probationary students. They required students to attend special classes for three weeks where students would take study skills assessments that helped students discover the causes of their poor academic performance. Students were required to create a portfolio of their academic background, which included high school experiences, their academic progress, which used a self-assessment completed earlier in the program, and future plans for success, which required creation of a plan of action for future semesters. Heerman and Maleki began their intrusive advising course by assisting students in identifying the factors that contributed to their low grades.

Students also reflected on how they spent their time, their spending habits, the number of credit hours attempted and those actually completed, major and career goals, as well as their basic skills in reading, comprehension and writing. As students went through the class and learned more about themselves, they began to acknowledge their true preparation for college and their strengths and weaknesses. They were able to set realistic goals for themselves and to create an academic plan necessary to reach their goals. Santa Rita (1997) used a similar portfolio method with probationary students. He, however, placed more emphasis on behavior modification by asking students to concentrate on their actions and the consequences of those actions. The student and advisor assessed the student's behavior and then developed a strategy to change the behavior to produce the desired results. The portfolio method required reflection on the part of the student and allowed him or her to take responsibility for his or her own education. Santa Rita's course incorporated one-on-one and group intervention strategies.

Coleman and Freedman (1996) had academically at-risk students participate in a ten session voluntary seminar in which students developed long-term and short-term goals, strategized and planned ways to achieve these goals through discussions of case studies, learned how and when to seek help and how to have better peer relationships. The last meeting required students to reflect about the program and the aspects of the intrusive advising procedure that were most personally beneficial to them. These students' results were compared using a t-test of differences in means to a non-participating group of peers on the variables of gender, age, and ethnicity to determine differences in GPA and clearance from academic probation. Austin, Cherney, Crouner and Hill (1997) used the group advising approach in their intrusive advising in a similar

way as Coleman and Freeman (1996), but the demographics of the participant sample and the research design used in the study were not clear. Instead of ongoing seminars, Austin et al. (1997) had a forum where students were able to discuss the problems they believed led to them being placed on academic probation. As in prior seminars, students at the forum were asked to develop long-term and short-term goals. After the forum presentations, students were strongly encouraged to meet with their assigned academic advisor. Similar to the previous studies that supported the group advising approach to intrusive advising, Brocato (2000) had students discuss factors that contributed to poor performance, but he also focused on student awareness of campus policies and procedures. Time and stress management were two additional areas discussed during the workshops.

The underlying theme with group advising seemed to be involving students in their educational process and encouraging social interaction with peers and faculty. Earl (1988), who discussed developmental advising in terms of one-on-one or small group approaches, listed academic and social integration as one of the main indicators of student success. Tinto (1982) discussed the significance of interaction between students and faculty outside of class in relation to student retention. In cases where faculty members functioned as advisors, a one-on-one session would be the catalyst by which a student/faculty relationship began. Group sessions may have the feel of a lecture, thus decreasing the chances of academic and social integration.

The one-on-one advising sessions, like the group approach, included a self-assessment process and the development of a strategy to raise the grade point average. A one-on-one advising session was the format used in the study done by Molina and



Abelman (2000). A random sample of students on academic probation was initially contacted by letter, and then advisors followed up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. The initial appointment was used to discuss the causes of poor grades from the previous semester and to assist students in identifying harmful study habits and practices. Mean GPAs of students participating in the intrusive advising program were compared to a control group of non-participants using a t-test of the difference between means. Data were analyzed by gender, but not by ethnicity. The Molina and Abelman line of inquiry was consistent with the approach taken in group advising, which forced students to reflect and take responsibility for their own academic performance. In one-on-one advising, however, once the student and advisor agreed upon a strategy to work towards being removed from probation, a contract was drawn up and signed by both the advisor and the student. A contract, or agreement, was the main component of the retention program Garnett (1990) used in working with high-risk students. In his study, students were required to visit the Counseling Center, meet with each of their professors, meet with their academic advisor, participate in two hours of supervised study each week and submit a report each week discussing the activities engaged in for that week. Although the arrangement of the program was different, it incorporated all of the components used in the intrusive advising approaches mentioned previously. However, the statistical methods on which conclusions were drawn were not clearly stated, and the omission of the method of analysis weakened the credibility of the study.

Both group and one-on-one methods of intervention were discussed in the literature as viable means of intrusive advising. Treadwell (1977) favored group counseling and guidance in addition to one-on-one counseling. He found the

combination to have a significant effect on students' academic achievement. When considering special populations such as at-risk or probationary students, group advising methods were thought to be more effective. In situations where the same information must be given to each student, the group advising method saved advisors time and resources. In a group meeting, the advisor or counselor discussed self-esteem issues, common causes of academic probation, and success strategies. One-on-one sessions were recommended because they required shared communication. The advisor must be skilled in communicating, listening, questioning and referring. Each of these human interaction skills was important when working with all types of students, but especially with probationary students (Gordon & Habley, 2000, p. 221-223/233).

One technique used in a few studies was the focus on projected grade point average. Both Lipsky and Ender, and Lucas (as cited in Heerman & Maleki, 1994), taught students how to calculate grade point averages in addition to formulating self-improvement plans. Brocato (2000) found that students felt that including an explanation of the grade point average in the workshop was helpful in their pursuit of better grades. Understanding how to calculate grades seemed to be used as a motivational tool for students. By calculating the projected grade point average, students had a better idea of what they needed to work toward in each course in order to be removed from academic probation completely.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (1994) reported on several colleges and universities with programs specifically geared toward the retention of at-risk students. The purpose of the report was to provide institutions with model retention programs that could be used to work with probationary or at-risk students. The

programs all had a common thread: intrusive advising was used as a means to get students on the road to academic recovery.

In the literature, the goal of intrusive advising was to motivate students to take an active role in their academic performance. It was to teach them how to be responsible for their actions and help them build better relationships with their peers and with faculty in order to facilitate academic success.

#### Effects of Intrusive Advising

According to the literature, intrusive advising does have a positive impact on student performance. Coleman and Freedman (1996) found that students who completed the voluntary, group structured intervention were removed from academic probation at higher rates than their non-participatory counterparts. These results were consistent with those from Austin et al. (1997) where the group method was also utilized. The results from this study showed that when compared with students who attended the forum and met with their academic advisor, students who did neither had a lower rate of grade point average improvement. The studies that utilized one-on-one intervention strategies also had promising results. Garnett's (1990) retention program, which incorporated intrusive advising, saw a large percentage increase in the number of students who were cleared from academic probation. In reviewing the different styles of intrusive advising, ranging from non-intrusive, moderate-intrusion and full intrusion, Molina and Abelman (2002) found that, although students in the full intrusion intervention program had the greatest grade point average improvement rate, even those with minimal intrusion had higher grade point averages than those with no intrusion at all. This was somewhat consistent with Kirk-Kuwaye and Nishida's (2001) findings in three trials of low and high level of

academic advisor involvement, and mean semester GPA. Gender, ethnicity and credits by class standing were proportional in all three trials. They found that students at the highest level of intrusion had the greatest increase in GPA compared to students with middle to low intrusion. At the University of Arkansas, Fields (2002) incorporated a freshman retention program that included workshops on academic advising, financial aid and career counseling. The program boasted an 87% retention rate; however, the research design for this study was not clearly explained. Polansky, Horan, and Hanish (1993) conducted a study to see if students who received study skills alone, career counseling alone or a combination of both would result in an increased GPA for students at-risk for academic failure. They analyzed the resulting data using a 2X2 ANOVA with GPA as the dependent variable and placement in study skills and career counseling as the independent variables. The results showed higher GPA's for students who participated in the study skills only group. Although there was no significant difference in GPA for career counseling, students were able to find majors appropriate for them as a result of the career counseling sessions (Polanski, Horan, & Hanish, 1993).

#### Summary

Students at risk for academic failure in college include those that are disabled, ethnic minorities, first generation college students, low-income and academically advantaged. The majority of the literature focused on first-generation, low-income and ethnic minorities, though, because these students generally came from backgrounds where the K-12 education provided limited academic support. The school systems often lacked qualified teachers, adequate learning materials, and had low rate facilities. Upon entering college, students were faced with many difficulties. In addition to lagging

behind academically, they often worked to pay for school and lacked the familial support that their peers who were non first-generation college students enjoyed.

Intrusive advising combined developmental and prescriptive techniques to motivate students and provide them with a sense of ownership of their education. Several approaches to intrusive academic advising were discussed in the literature. The methods ranged from using portfolios to assist in academic reflection, to seminars that helped students develop and work toward short and long term goals. Although different approaches were used, the literature consistently stated that intrusive academic advising was an effective method for working with probationary students.

## *Chapter 3*

### METHODOLOGY

#### Subjects

For the purposes of the present study, students were selected to participate in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences academic assistance program based on their grade point average at the end of the previous semester. A list of the General Curriculum Center of students whose semester or cumulative grade point average had fallen below a C average (2.0) was generated by the data department. Students on the list were initially contacted by the Associate Dean of Students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences alerting them of their academic status, followed by an email from their assigned academic advisor. In the email students were once again informed of their probation status and were mandated to meet with their academic advisor by the tenth day of classes or risk an advising hold being placed on their schedules. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences did not require undecided freshman and sophomores to meet with their academic advisor prior to scheduling, but the advising holds prevented them from adding or dropping courses. In order to make schedule changes after an advising hold has been placed, the student needed to make an appointment with their assigned advisor. For this study a total of 314 students were evaluated over a two semester period. In fall 2003 there were a total of 101 students on academic probation. In spring 2004 there were a total of 213 students on academic probation.

#### Advisors

Eleven advisors participated in advising students on academic probation. All were full time professional advisors in the General Curriculum Center of the College of

Liberal Arts and Sciences. Generally, each advisor had a case-load of about 300 student advisees during the academic year. Probation students were assigned to advisors from their current case load. The advisors were trained on the forms used for the program and expectations of content to address with students in the meetings. Also, advisors were sent a tracking form as an Excel document that allowed them to keep track of several factors that would be used in collecting data. The tracking form required advisors to keep track of the number of meetings, the number of missed meetings or no shows, whether the student was in a special program, whether the student withdrew from the semester, and other related information (see Appendix C).

#### Procedure

In the initial meeting with their academic advisors, students completed two forms. The first form was the personal assessment of factors contributing to academic probation (see Appendix D). This form required students to check factors from four categories. The categories included course problems, personal problems, approach to studying, and areas where assistance was needed. Students were also required to list both long- and short-term goals. Next, students completed an advising agreement (see Appendix E). The advisor discussed with the student the expectations for the semester in three areas. The first area covered what the student needed to do in order to have a successful semester and keep the advisor and professors involved in their progress throughout the semester. The second area covered the student's level of probation. The grade point average needed to continue as a student was specified, important deadlines were listed, and college procedures outlined. The last part of the advising agreement discussed appointments. Students were required to meet with their assigned academic advisor

every two weeks through the eighth week of school (midterms). After the eighth week, the advisor was free to use their discretion as to how often they chose to meet with the student for the remaining eight weeks in the semester. The eighth week of school marked the last day a student was able to drop a course. By meeting with students every two weeks for the first eight weeks, advisors were able to keep track of students' progress in courses and, if necessary, have them drop a course based on their mid-term grade at the eighth week. The university offered options for courses that began in the second eight weeks of the semester, so students failing one course in the first eight weeks could drop that class, enroll for another course in the second eight weeks, and maintain their full-time student status. One of the restrictions of academic probation is that students were not allowed to drop below twelve hours, which is full time student status. The second eight-week courses were course options for students needing to drop full semester courses, but who did not meet the 12-hour minimum requirement without picking up an extra course. Another restriction of being on academic probation is that students cannot take courses for pass/fail grades.

The regular meetings with probationary students allowed advisors to determine the causes of probation and work with individual students to rectify their specific situation. As stated previously, in the initial meeting students completed a personal assessment form. In the second meeting the personal assessment results were discussed. Prior to meeting with the advisee, the advisor had time to go over the assessment and find on-campus resources available for the student based on the student's concerns and/or needs. Students may have been required to meet with a career counselor, personal counselor, or attend a skills-building workshop, depending on their trouble areas. For



example, if a student checked that an area of concern was time management, the advisor would find out information about time management workshops being offered on campus and assign the student to attend one or several of the sessions. In the following meeting, the advisor asked the student what was learned at the workshop and worked with the student to apply the tools/skills they acquired to their current academic schedule.

Advisors also discussed what campus involvement/activities were engaging students, and their academic progress in courses. An academic progress report form (see Appendix F) was available for advisors to send to professors requesting information on the students' academic standing in each course. These forms were generally distributed to faculty members in the sixth week of school. The forms themselves did not disclose that students were on academic probation. The two-fold purpose of the progress report was to acquire information about students' progress, and also to facilitate contact between the student and professor. The students were handed the forms by the advisor, and given the responsibility to give them to their professors. This method of personal distribution encouraged the use of faculty office hours and communication with the professor about the course. In the eighth week the advisors met with students to discuss where students were academically and inquire about other areas of concern. After eight weeks, students were no longer required to meet every two weeks unless the advisor deemed it necessary. Some reasons to continue to meet every two weeks were if students' grades were border line, if there were personal problems students were still working through that needed to be monitored by the advisor, and/or to continue to explore career/major options. Before registration began for the next semester, probation students had a class scheduling meeting to discuss courses for the following semester based on majors they wanted to

explore or had decided to enter. Two weeks before final exams, students were required to meet with advisors one last time to discuss the number of final exams, their preparation for exams and any continuing concerns going into the next semester. At that time, students were given web information about completing the program survey online at <https://webtools.uiuc.edu/survey/SecureSurvey?id=1045611>. The surveys were anonymous and students were given a little over a month to complete the on-line surveys evaluating the intrusive advising procedure.

#### Collection of Data

Data collected for the purposes of this study were organized using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. At the beginning of the semester each academic advisor was sent, via email, a spreadsheet that contained their students' names, grade point averages, probation level and grade point average needed to clear probation. Advisors were requested to provide information about the number of appointments, the number of missed appointments, and current student college status (did the student withdraw, declare a major, etc.) and return the completed Excel spreadsheet to the department data specialist in the General Curriculum Center at the close of the semester. The data were merged into one large spreadsheet and percentages and averages for each variable were computed through the Excel program. The following data collected for the purposes of the present study are defined below:

Name: The students' first, middle and last name.

Student Identification: The university identification number assigned to all

University of Illinois students upon entrance into the university.

**Current GPA:** The grade point average the student had at the beginning of the semester for which they were on academic probation.

**Advisor's Name:** The last name of the academic advisor to whom the student was assigned for the academic year.

**Probation Level:** Probation levels identify a specific grade point average which students are expected to earn in their next semester of enrollment on a minimum of 12 graded credit hours (LAS Student Handbook, 2004-2005, p.44).

**Class year in school:** Class based on the number of completed academic hours.

**Number of meetings with advisor:** The number of times the student met with their assigned academic advisor.

**Number of missed advisor appointments:** The number of times students did not show for scheduled appointments with their assigned academic advisor.

**Current student status:** The status of the student at the University (e.g. withdrawn, declared major).

### Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, two hypotheses were generated for the purposes of this study.

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be a significant difference in grade point averages between those students who participate in an intrusive advising program and those who do not.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be a significant difference in the number of students who clear academic probation who participate in an intrusive advising program and those who do not.

### Explanation of Statistical Analysis Used for this Study

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to compute the Independent-samples *t* test to compare the means of the two samples (students who participated in the program and those that did not) to determine if there was a significance difference in the means for grade point averages and number of meetings between those who participated in an intrusive advising program and those who elected not to do so.

According to Diekhoff (1996), the criteria for using an Independent-samples *t* test include the following:

1. The dependent variable is measured on an interval or ratio scale.
2. The samples should come from populations that are normally distributed.
3. The samples being compared should have approximately equal variances (p. 187).

Independent-samples *t* test was chosen for this study because it allows the comparison of “two samples to determine if those means differ significantly” (p. 187). The “independent samples” refers to the fact that the cases from one sample are independent from, unrelated to, and do not influence the cases from the other sample. The test is referred to as *t* because the measurements and evaluation of the statistical difference between the means of the independent samples is done with the *t* statistic. In addition, the independent-samples *t* tests the samples for equal variances through the Levene's Test for equality of variances. The independent-samples *t* test assumes that variances across samples are equal. The Levene's test is one test that can be used to confirm that assumption (<http://www.itl.nist.gov/div898/handbook/eda/section3/eda35a.htm>).

There are four elements of the Independent-samples  $t$  test as a test of the significance of difference.

1. Null and alternative hypotheses are formed to explain differences among sample means.
2. A test statistic is computed to reflect the size of the difference being tested for significance by measuring the deviation between the observed difference and the difference that would be most likely had the samples been treated identically.
3. The sampling distribution helps to determine the probability that any significant difference would be seen in two samples taken from a population of identically treated cases.
4. We choose between null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis once we know from the test statistic the probability that the significant difference would be seen in a pair of samples from a population of identically treated cases (Diekhoff, p. 191-195).

The null hypothesis, which states there is no real difference between the two samples, is that sampling errors explain any observed differences. The null hypothesis is rejected when the probability of its likelihood of occurrence (level of significance) is .05 or less (Pyrczak, 2003, p. 88).

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

The results of this study showed that of the 101 students in the fall 2003 sample, 85 students chose to participate in the intrusive advising program and 16 chose not to participate. In spring 2004, of the 213 students on academic probation, 176 chose to participate in the intrusive advising program and 37 chose not to participate.

#### Results of the Independent-samples *t* test

The results of the independent-samples *t* test showed that the grade point averages of students who participated in the intrusive advising program and those who did not was not statistically significant for both fall 2003 ( $t=-1.479$ ,  $df=99$ ,  $sig.=.142$ ) and spring 2004 ( $t=-1.770$ ,  $df=211$ ,  $sig.=.078$ ). It is, however, important to note that the mean grade point averages for participants were higher in fall 2003 and spring 2004 when compared to the mean grade point averages for non-participants (See Table 1).

The independent-samples *t* test also indicated that there was no statistically significant difference related to clearance of academic probation among students who participated in the intrusive academic advising program and those who did not for fall 2003 ( $t=1.291$ ,  $df=99$ ,  $sig.=.200$ ) and spring 2004 ( $t=.307$ ,  $df=211$ ,  $sig.=.759$ ). In the following tables, C.I.D. denotes Confidence Interval of the Difference.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation for Grade Point Averages among  
Participants and Non-Participants of the Intrusive Advising Program for fall 2003

Grade Point Average (GPA)		
	GPA Prior to Program	GPA Following Program
Participants	85	85
Mean	1.6111	2.0321
Median	1.6900	2.1600
Standard Deviation	.64726	.87570
Non-Participants	16	16
Mean	1.5338	1.6556
Median	1.7250	1.8450
Standard Deviation	.82698	1.21173
Total Number	101	101
Percent Total	100%	100%

TABLE 2

Independent-samples *t* test for Equality of Means for Grade Point Averages Prior to and Following the Intrusive Advising Program for Participants and Non-Participants for fall 2003

<i>t</i> test for Equality of Means				
	<i>t</i>	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff	
GPA Prior to Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	-.419	-.07731	.18465	
Equal Variances not Assumed	-.354	-.07731	.21834	
GPA Following Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	-1.479	-.37649	.25464	
Equal Variances not Assumed	-1.186	-.37649	.31747	
	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% C.I.D.	
			lower	upper
GPA Prior to Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	99	.676	-.44369	.28907
Equal Variances not Assumed	18.615	.727	-.53494	.38032
GPA Following Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	99	.142	-.88176	.12877
Equal Variances not Assumed	18.063	.251	-1.04332	.29033

## Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

	F	Sig.
GPA Prior to Program		
Equal Variances Assumed	1.283	.260
Equal Variances not Assumed		
GPA Following Program		
Equal Variances Assumed	6.601	.012
Equal Variances not Assumed		



TABLE 3

Comparison of Mean, Standard Deviation, and Standard Error Mean for Number of Advising Meetings Attended among Participants and Non-Participants of the Intrusive Advising Program for fall 2003

---

Advisor Meeting Attended

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean Error
Participants	85	3.12	1.643	.178
Non-Participants	16	1.13	1.258	.315

---

Total Number 101

Percent Total 100%

TABLE 4

Independent-samples *t* test for Equality of Means for Advising Meetings Attended for Participants and Non-Participants of an Intrusive Advising Program for fall 2003

<i>t</i> test for Equality of Means				
	<i>t</i>	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff	
Advisor Meetings Attended				
Equal Variances Assumed	-4.596	-1.993	.434	
Equal Variances not Assumed	-5.511	-1.993	.362	
	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% C.I.D. lower	upper
Advisor Meetings Attended				
Equal Variances Assumed	99	.000	-2.853	-1.132
Equal Variances not Assumed	25.704	.000	-2.736	-1.249

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		
	F	Sig.
Advisor Meetings Attended		
Equal Variances Assumed	4.716	.032
Equal Variances not Assumed		

TABLE 5

Comparison of Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation for Academic Status among  
Participants and Non-Participants of the Intrusive Advising Program for fall 2003

## Academic Status

	Prior to Program	Following Program
Participants	85	85
Mean	2.1647	2.3647
Standard Deviation	.50820	1.10029
Standard Error Mean	.05512	.11934
Non-Participants	16	16
Mean	2.3750	2.7500
Standard Deviation	.71880	1.06458
Standard Error Mean	.17970	.26615
Total Number	101	101
Percent Total	100%	100%

TABLE 6

Independent-samples *t* test for Equality of Means for Academic Status for Participants and Non-Participants of an Intrusive Advising Program for fall 2003

<i>t</i> test for Equality of Means				
	<i>t</i>	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff	
Academic Status Prior to Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	1.415	.21029	.14862	
Equal Variances not Assumed	1.119	.21029	.18796	
Academic Status After Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	1.291	.38529	.29839	
Equal Variances not Assumed	1.321	.38529	.29168	
	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% C.I.D.	
			lower	upper
Academic Status Prior to Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	99	.160	-.08460	.50519
Equal Variances not Assumed	17.927	.278	-.18472	.60530
Academic Status After Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	99	.200	-.20678	.97737
Equal Variances not Assumed	21.484	.200	-.22045	.99104

## Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

	F	Sig.
Academic Status Prior to Program		
Equal Variances Assumed	5.628	.020
Equal Variances not Assumed		
Academic Status After Program		
Equal Variances Assumed	1.657	.201
Equal Variances not Assumed		

TABLE 7

Comparison of Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation for Grade Point Averages among Participants and Non-Participants of the Intrusive Advising Program for spring 2004

## Grade Point Average (GPA)

	GPA Prior to Program	GPA Following Program
Participants	176	176
Mean	1.5251	2.0538
Median	1.5900	2.2800
Standard Deviation	.57116	.93692
Non-Participants	37	37
Mean	1.3505	1.7432
Median	1.5300	2.0400
Standard Deviation	.61253	1.11795
Total Number	213	213
Percent Total	100%	100%

TABLE 8

Independent-samples *t* test for Equality of Means for Grade Point Averages Prior to and Following the Intrusive Advising Program for Participants and Non-Participants for spring 2004

<i>t</i> test for Equality of Means				
	<i>t</i>	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff	
GPA Prior to Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	-1.669	-.17457	.10461	
Equal Variances not Assumed	-1.594	-.17457	.10952	
GPA Following Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	-1.770	-.31051	.17547	
Equal Variances not Assumed	-1.577	-.31051	.19689	
	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% C.I.D.	
			lower	upper
GPA Prior to Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	211	.097	-.38079	.03165
Equal Variances not Assumed	50.020	.117	-.39454	.04540
GPA Following Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	211	.078	-.65640	.03538
Equal Variances not Assumed	47.204	.121	-.70656	.08554

## Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

	F	Sig.
GPA Prior to Program		
Equal Variances Assumed	1.595	.208
Equal Variances not Assumed		
GPA Following Program		
Equal Variances Assumed	3.815	.052
Equal Variances not Assumed		

TABLE 9

Comparison of Mean, Standard Deviation, and Standard Error Mean for Number of Advising Meetings Attended among Participants and Non-Participants of the Intrusive Advising Program for spring 2003

---

Advisor Meeting Attended

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean Error
Participants	176	4.21	2.022	.152
Non-Participants	37	1.08	1.010	.166

---

Total Number 213

Percent Total 100%

TABLE 10

Independent-samples *t* test for Equality of Means for Advising Meetings Attended for Participants and Non-Participants of an Intrusive Advising Program for spring 2004

<i>t</i> test for Equality of Means				
	<i>t</i>	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff	
Advisor Meetings Attended				
Equal Variances Assumed	-9.165	-3.129	.341	
Equal Variances not Assumed	-13.881	-3.129	.225	
	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	lower	upper
Advisor Meetings Attended				
Equal Variances Assumed	211	.000	-3.802	-2.456
Equal Variances not Assumed	106.558	.000	-3.576	-2.682

## Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

	F	Sig.
Advisor Meetings Attended		
Equal Variances Assumed	19.234	.000
Equal Variances not Assumed		



TABLE 11

Comparison of Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation for Academic Status among  
Participants and Non-Participants of the Intrusive Advising Program for spring 2004

## Academic Status

	Prior to Program	Following Program
Participants	176	176
Mean	2.8636	1.1193
Median	3.0000	1.0000
Standard Deviation	.98772	.45666
Non-Participants	37	37
Mean	2.9189	1.2432
Median	3.0000	1.0000
Standard Deviation	1.03758	.49472
Total Number	213	213
Percent Total	100%	100%

TABLE 12

Independent-samples *t* test for Equality of Means for Academic Status for Participants and Non-Participants of an Intrusive Advising Program for spring 2004

<i>t</i> test for Equality of Means				
	<i>t</i>	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff	
Academic Status Prior to Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	1.479	.12393	.08380	
Equal Variances not Assumed	1.403	.12393	.08832	
Academic Status After Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	.307	.05528	.18021	
Equal Variances not Assumed	.297	.05528	.18612	
	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% C.I.D.	
			lower	upper
Academic Status Prior to Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	211	.141	-.04128	.28913
Equal Variances not Assumed	49.724	.167	-.05349	.30134
Academic Status After Program				
Equal Variances Assumed	211	.759	-.29995	.41052
Equal Variances not Assumed	50.645	.768	-.31843	.42899

## Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

	F	Sig.
Academic Status Prior to Program		
Equal Variances Assumed	5.290	.022
Equal Variances not Assumed		
Academic Status After Program		
Equal Variances Assumed	.069	.793
Equal Variances not Assumed		

## *Chapter 5*

### CONCLUSION

#### Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this study. The first limitation was that the study only included freshmen and sophomores. The General Curriculum Center houses undecided freshmen and sophomores only. As a result, the population sampled was limited. It is unknown whether the results would have been different if students with declared majors from all four classes were included in this study.

The second limitation was that the numbers for participants and non-participants were not equally distributed. Participation in the program was offered to all students in the General Curriculum Center on academic probation. Students had the option to participate or decline participation in the program. The number of students for fall 2003 and spring 2003 who did not participate was 15% and 17%, respectively, of the totals. This was a relatively small sample size in comparison to the 85% in fall 2003 and 83% in spring 2004 of the total number for participants for each semester.

The third limitation of this study was that this was only the second year the program was in existence. The first year, fall 2002 and spring 2003, required all students to participate in the intrusive advising program. The second year, fall 2003 and spring 2004, students were given the option of participation. The program was fairly new to students and advisors in the department, so working with students on academic probation was a fresh experience. Also, academic advisors were responsible for their academic probation students and meeting with them on a regular basis, as well as their regular case load of students.

The fourth limitation to this study was that not all students who were participants were full participants in the program. For example, a student may have come in for the initial advising meeting and signed the advising agreement to participate in the program, but only came in for one follow up meeting. In some instances, students agreed to participate, but never returned for follow up visits despite several attempts by their academic advisor to have them come in for additional meetings. It is difficult to know if students were full participants, and if so, whether their grade point average would have been higher.

The fifth limitation to this study was that students in the program were advised by different advisors. There were eleven advisors that participated in the intrusive advising program. Each advisor was trained on the forms to use, but advisors have a variety of advising styles. Students on academic probation were assigned to advisors based on their original case load. It is difficult to know if all participants of the intrusive advising program had been advised by the same advisor whether it would have influenced the results of the study, and if so, to what extent.

#### Suggestions for Future Studies

It is suggested that in a replication or an expansion of the present study, a mixed method research design be used to include not only quantitative data, but also include qualitative data from student evaluations to evaluate students' perceptions of the program. It is also suggested that the data be separated in a way that provides information specific to academic advisors, number of meetings by students per advisor, demographic information (race, gender, and year in school), and academic hours. In addition, a transcript analysis is suggested to determine which courses students on

academic probation are most likely to fail. Finally, it is suggested that students who do participate in the program are tracked for up to four years after leaving General Curriculum to monitor retention rates.

#### Discussion and Implications of the Findings

The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether an intrusive advising program would have a positive impact on the grade point averages and rates of clearance from academic probation of students that chose to participate in an intrusive advising program in comparison to those who chose not to participate. The following conclusions and implications of the findings are based on the results of this investigation. These conclusions and implications pertain to the intrusive advising program for students whose cumulative or semester grade point average fell below a 2.0/4.0 (C average) for the 2003-2004 academic year.

1. The results of the present study were in contrast to previous studies that found that students who participated in intrusive advising programs had higher grade point averages than did students who did not participate. When comparing means and percentages, students who participated in the intrusive advising program were more academically successful than those who did not, but statistically, there was no significant difference.
2. The intrusive advising program which was the focus of the present study was expected to have a statistically significant impact on the grade point averages of students who chose to participate in the program. Likewise, it was expected that students who participated in the program would clear academic probation at higher rates than those who did not. The results of

this investigation did not confirm that assumption. The rate of clearance for students on academic probation who participated in the intrusive advising program was found not to be statistically significant to the rate of clearance from academic probation for students who did not participate in the program.

3. This study has demonstrated that other variables must be considered when comparing the effectiveness of an intrusive advising program on students on academic probation status. For example, the number of academic hours a student completes directly affects their grade point average and should be a variable.

#### Restatement of the Problem and Summary

Academic advisors do not always know how to work with students on academic probation. Students on academic probation present with a variety of issues that contribute to poor grades. Advisors must assess students' needs and provide them with information on the proper resources available to assist them with ways to positively handle those issues so that academic success is in their future.

The results of the present study indicate that the intrusive advising program offered through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences General Curriculum Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has no statistically significant impact on the grade point averages of students who participate in such a program in comparison to those who chose not to participate. Although the means showed a difference in the grade point averages of participants, the results of the independent-samples *t* test found that the difference was not significant. Past studies have indicated that intrusive advising

programs were effective in working with students on academic probation and that there was a statistically significant difference between those who experienced the intrusive advising program and those who did not (Coleman & Freedman, 1996; Austin et al, 1997; Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001).

In light of the results of the present study, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences General Curriculum Center should complete a formative evaluation of its current intrusive advising program. The evaluation should include a larger number of participants and non-participants, and equal numbers of participants by class standing. Since the number of participants was so large in comparison to non-participants, the data should be consolidated; for example, combine the data for both semesters into one set. Also, individual advising techniques used when working with students in the program should be evaluated for consistency.

Intrusive advising programs, although not significantly different in this study, have proven in past studies to positively influence the grade point averages of students on academic probation (Coleman & Freedman, 1996; Austin et al, 1997; Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001). The General Curriculum Center may need to experiment with other methods of intrusive advising to determine which will produce the most successful students.

#### Recommendations for Researchers

Future researchers should specifically define participation in the intrusive advising program. For example, future researchers should determine what would constitute participation in the program in terms of actual meetings attended after signing the advising agreement. The recommended research would provide a more accurate

account with regards to the grade point averages of participants and non-participants in an *intrusive advising program*. In addition, it would help to balance the numbers of participants and non-participants for an even distribution of students, resulting in more accurate outcomes.

#### Recommendations for Practitioners

Although the results of this study showed no statistically significant differences in the grade point averages of students participating in the intrusive advising program and those who chose not to participate, the individual effects of such advising could prove differently, and therefore it is recommended that the General Curriculum Center continue with the intrusive advising program. Past studies have shown that students who did participate in intrusive advising programs had grade point averages that were significantly higher than students who did not participate in an intrusive advising program (Molina & Abelman, 2002; Fields, 2002; Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001; Coleman & Freedman, 1996; Polansky, Horan, & Hanish, 1993; Garnett, 1990). In addition, although in the present study the independent-samples *t* test found no significant difference, the mean grade point averages for students who participated in the intrusive advising program for fall 2003 were 0.4 grade points higher after the program, whereas those who did not participate only had a 0.1 increase.

It is recommended for the General Curriculum Center that an advisor or two be designated as probation specialist(s) and that the specialist(s) receive specific training for working with students on academic probation. One avenue for continued professional development for these specialists is through the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Some of those opportunities include regional and national conferences,



summer institutes, as well as certificate and graduate level programs. The majority of the skills required for working with students on academic probation, such as listening, referring, and questioning (Molina & Abelman, 2000; Creamer & Creamer, 1994) are also required for students on academic probation. In addition, there must be a passion by advisors to work with students on academic probation. It is for this reason that a probation specialist is recommended. Having a probation specialist would allow for consistency in advising techniques, as well as allow the specialist more time in individual meetings.

The first year the advising program was in existence, it required mandatory student participation. In the 2003-2004 academic school year students had the option to participate in the intrusive advising program. It is recommended that the intrusive advising program be mandatory for all students on academic probation. The program required each student who opted to participate in the program to sign an advising agreement that was the same for each student. The recommendation is that the advising agreement be expanded and individualized to include the minimum number of appointments required for the semester for the student, and the consequences for not following through with the conditions of the agreement. The literature supported using contracts or advising agreements when working with students on academic probation for accountability of both the student and the advisor (Garnett, 1990).

The purpose of working with students on academic probation is to determine what factors contributed to poor academic performance and work with students to resolve those issues so that future semesters are academically successful. The literature discussed the portfolio method as a viable option for working with students on academic

probation. This method required students to reflect on the causes of their poor academic performance (Santa Rita, 1997; Heerman & Maleki, 1994). It is suggested that instead of having students to reflect on the causes of their academic failure, that they reflect on courses in which they were successful, and strategies applied in those courses that contributed to their success. The idea of focusing on the positives as opposed to the negatives is called Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciate inquiry is usually applied to organizational development, but can be used when examining the field of academic advising. Bloom and Martin (2002) applied the concept of appreciate inquiry to academic advising; in particular, they applied the four phases of appreciate inquiry to the process of working with individual students. The Discovery phase requires students to reflect on their strengths and passions, and is the technique that should be used in the portfolio method.

Intrusive advising programs can be quite effective when working with probationary students. Practitioners must examine their institution and create a program that will work for their student population and institutional type. Regardless of the institution, there are some tools used in intrusive advising described above that must be incorporated in order for the program to be effective.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN'S POLICY ON  
ACADEMIC PROBATION AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS/DROP STATUS

Code 79 - Academic Progress:

(A) The progress of the student toward a degree is the concern of the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled.

(B) A student whose progress is unsatisfactory is subject to action by the dean of the college in which the student is registered under general provisions adopted by the faculty.

Code 80 – Probation and Drop Rules (Undergraduate Students):

(A) The following probation and drop rules apply in all undergraduate colleges on the Urbana-Champaign campus. They do not apply in the Institute of Aviation, the Graduate College, or the professional Colleges of Law and Veterinary Medicine. (See Rule 68.B on notification)

1. Probationary status serves as a warning to the student that unless his or her scholarship improves, the student is subject to the drop rules.
2. Probation and drop rules are based on the University of Illinois semester average or on one of the following averages that governs graduation: (1) University of Illinois cumulative average; (2) combined average of the University of Illinois grades and grades in transfer courses. (See Rule 71 on computation of scholastic averages.)

(B) Probation Rules: The following regulations shall be used to determine a student's probationary status, provided drop rules do not apply:

1. Beginning freshmen (less than twelve semester hours completed at the time of admission): A beginning freshman who does not earn at least a 2.0 (C) average in his or her first semester or during summer session I and/or summer session II is

placed on a 2.0 probation for the next semester or summer session I/summer session II in which the student is registered. (Code 1A)

2. Students other than beginning freshmen

a. A student whose cumulative average is 2/0 or better and who does not earn at least a 2.0 average in any semester or during summer session I and/or summer session II is placed on a 2.0 probation for the next semester or summer session I/summer session II in which he or she is registered. (Code: 1A)

b. A student whose cumulative average is 1.75 to 1.99 inclusive is placed on a 2.25 probation. (Code: 1B)

c. A student whose cumulative average is less than 1.75 is placed on a minimum 2.33 probation. (Code: 1C)

d. a student may be placed on a "probationary status" at any time when, in the judgment of the college, his or her scholastic record warrants such action. Likewise, the probation rules may be waived when, in the judgment of the college, a student's scholastic record indicates that the warning provided by the probationary status is unwarranted. (Code: 1G, 1H, 1P, 1T)

3. Scholastic probationary status at the University of Illinois may not be cleared by attendance at another institution except by special action of the dean of student's college.

4. Transfer work averages below C level may result in a student being placed on probation if the combined average does reflect a 2.0 standing.

5. Removal from probation. Students on academic probation for failure to maintain the minimum grade-point averages are returned to non-probationary standing upon obtaining a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 (C=2.0) or better.

(C) Drop Rules: The following regulations shall be used to determine if a student is to be dropped from the University.

1. A student is dropped if he or she fails to earn at least 1.0 (D) average in any academic semester (not including summer session). (Code: 17)
2. A student on probation who fails to meet his or her established probation level is dropped unless the student has achieved at least a 2.0 average or better for that semester and his or her cumulative average is at least 2.0. (Code: 17)
3. A student who fails to make satisfactory progress toward a degree is dropped. (Examples would be the repeated failure of a required course or failure to meet other conditions for continuation in the curriculum.) (Code: 18)
4. A non-degree or part-time student who fails to complete the conditions of admission or continuation. (Code: 18)

*Note:* The drop rules may be waived when, in the judgment of the student's college, his or her scholastic record warrants such action.

APPENDIX B  
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES POLICY ON ACADEMIC  
PROBATION

## Probation

Probationary status serves as a warning to you that poor academic performance may jeopardize your future enrollment status at and graduation from the University of Illinois. Probation levels identify a specific grade-point average which students are expected to earn in their next semester of enrollment. When met, the probation level set for you may not be sufficient to return you to "good standing" in one semester. However, it does signify the minimum performance standard for your academic progress, which is expected for you to continue enrolling in courses in LAS.

If you achieve a GPA level required by your probation, but your cumulative GPA remains below 2.00 and you are not deficient in meeting other academic eligibility and progress requirements, you will be approved to continue on probationary status, until such time as you have achieved clear standing.

All probation averages are based on a minimum course load of 12 academic hours. As long as you are on probationary status, you may not elect the credit/no credit grading option for any of your courses.

Academic probationary status at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign may not be cleared by attendance at another institution. Transfer work that averages below a C level may result in a student being placed on probation in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences if the combined (University and transfer) GPA does not reflect at least a 2.00 standing. The probation rules are listed below.

- Beginning Freshmen

Code P1: A beginning freshman that does not earn at least a 2.00 (C) University GPA in the first semester is placed on a 2.00 probation for the next term in which that student is registered.

- Students Other Than Beginning Freshmen

Code P2: A student whose cumulative University GPA is 2.00 or better and who does not earn at least a 2.00 average in any semester or summer session is placed on a 2.00 probation for the next term in which the student is registered.

Code P3: A student whose cumulative University GPA is 1.75-1.99, inclusive, is placed on a 2.25 probation.

Code P4: a student whose cumulative University GPA is less than 1.75 is placed on 2.33 probation.

Code P5: A student may be placed on (or similarly, removed from) a probationary status at any time that the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences judges that the student's scholastic record warrants such action.

#### Drop Status

Drop rules are based on University semester GPA, University cumulative GPA, or combined all-University cumulative GPA and transfer GPA (used only if the transfer average is below 2.00). The applicable GPA will depend on your current status and whether or not you have completed work elsewhere. These drop rules may be waived when the college of Liberal Arts and Sciences judges that your scholastic record warrants such action.

- Code D1: A student who fails to earn at least a 1.0 (D) University GPA in any academic semester (not including summer session) will be dropped.



- Code D2: A student on probation who fails to meet his or her established probation level will be dropped, unless he or she has achieved at least a 2.00 or better University GPA for that semester, and his or her cumulative GPA is at least a 2.00.
- Code D3: A student who fails to make satisfactory progress toward a degree or who fails to complete the conditions of admission or continuation will be dropped.

APPENDIX C  
TRACKING FORM



APPENDIX D  
PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
General Curriculum Center**

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ACADEMIC PROBATION

Think about what factors contributed to your being placed on academic probation. Check any that apply, and add any additional information you feel is relevant.

COURSE PROBLEMS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate background for a course</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too many hours/heavy course load</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate attendance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain about academic goals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unrealistic choice of course</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not obtain a syllabus</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Did not obtain textbooks</li> </ul> | Comments _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
|--|---|

PERSONAL PROBLEMS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Health issues</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Financial difficulty</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too many commitments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Job conflicts/excess hours</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family issues</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relationship issues</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Loneliness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Social distractions</li> </ul> | Comments _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
|--|---|

APPROACH TO STUDYING

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Good intentions but unable to follow through</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety about failure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unprepared for class</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate reading of textbooks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Material quickly forgotten</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unsure about how to study</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain about what is important</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not talking to instructor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prioritization issues</li> </ul> | Comments _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____ |
|--|---|

Additional comments:

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Please identify the areas in which you might need assistance.

- Study skills
- Math skills
- Writing skills
- Stress management
- Reading Skills
- Time management
- Dealing with personal issues
- Lifestyle changes
- Overcoming test anxiety
- Test taking skills
- Career exploration
- Choosing a major

Think about some goals you would like to work toward and list them below.

Long-term goals:

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Short-term goals:

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---

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Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX E  
ADVISING AGREEMENT

General Curriculum  
*Probation Student's Advising Agreement*

STUDENT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

UIN \_\_\_\_\_

TERM \_\_\_\_\_

**As a student on academic probation, I understand my responsibilities with regards to class participation are as follows:**

- 1) I agree to prepare for and attend all class meetings regardless of class policy.
- 2) I will provide a list of my instructors' email addresses to my advisor.
- 3) If illness or emergency situations necessitate my absence, I will notify the instructor prior to class. I will also contact the emergency dean.
- 4) I agree to meet with each instructor outside of class within the first two weeks. I will make an appointment or use office hours to discuss course expectations with each instructor.
- 5) If I encounter difficulty in any course, I will consult my instructor and meet with my academic advisor.

**As a student on academic probation, I understand the following conditions will need to be met in order to remain eligible for continued enrollment:**

**ACADEMIC CONDITIONS**

- 1) I am aware I must earn a minimum term G.P.A. of \_\_\_\_\_ (based on 12 hours) in order to raise my cumulative G.P.A. to a 2.00 or maintain a cumulative 2.00.
- 2) I am aware I am not allowed to elect to take a course Credit/No Credit while on probation.
- 3) I am aware I must be enrolled in at least 12 hours while on probation.
- 4) I am aware the deadline to drop a first half semester course is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) I am aware the deadline to drop a full semester course is \_\_\_\_\_.

**MEETINGS WITH ACADEMIC ADVISOR**

- 1) I understand it is my responsibility to call **333-4710** to make appointments with my advisor.
- 2) I agree to meet with my academic advisor on a biweekly basis prior to the drop date. After that date, I will meet with my advisor as frequently as we deem necessary.

**I acknowledge that I have read and understand the conditions of my probationary status and my responsibilities while on probation. I understand that failure to adhere to this agreement may jeopardize my continued enrollment as a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I realize that these terms are provided with the intent to help me become successful in my college career.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date



APPENDIX F  
ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT

**Academic Progress Report**

(Please Print)

Advisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

UIN: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Name and Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Faculty or Teaching Assistant responsible for evaluating the student in this course.)

Instructor's E-mail and Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

This student is participating in a program that monitors their academic progress throughout the semester. The College Office, therefore, requests your evaluation of the student's performance in your course. Any information, qualitative or quantitative, which you might provide will assist the College in making an assessment of the student's progress in your course.

PLEASE PROVIDE THE REQUESTED INFORMATION AND YOUR SIGNATURE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THANK YOU.

**PERFORMANCE**

Percentage of semester's work completed as of today's date ( / / ): \_\_\_\_\_

First substantial evaluation of student's work in class:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Current evaluation of student's place in class:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTENDANCE**

Regular \_\_\_\_\_

Irregular \_\_\_\_\_

Unable to Estimate \_\_\_\_\_

**PARTICIPATION**

Adequate \_\_\_\_\_

Inadequate \_\_\_\_\_

Does not apply \_\_\_\_\_

Has this student met with you to discuss his/her grade in class?

Has this student attended office hours?

Other Comments and Suggestions:

Instructor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX G

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN'S INSTITUTIONAL  
REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

Fourth Floor Swanlund Building  
601 East John Street  
Champaign, IL 61820-5711



IRB Office

(217) 333-2670 Voice  
(217) 244-3716 Fax  
[irb@uiuc.edu](mailto:irb@uiuc.edu) E-mail

December 14, 2004

Christie Cruise  
Department of Liberal Arts & Science  
912 S. Fourth St  
MC-492

RE: *The Effects of Intrusive Advising on Students on Academic Probation*  
IRB Protocol Number: 05193

Dear Christie:

Thank you for submitting the completed IRB-1 Form for your project entitled *The Effects of Intrusive Advising on Students on Academic Probation*. Your project was assigned Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol Number 05193 and reviewed. The research activities involving human subjects are exempt from Title 45 – Public Welfare, Part 46 – Protection of Human Subjects, Subpart A – Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects per the following category:

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2): This exemption applies since the research involves the study of existing data to examine the impact of the intrusive advising method on students who experience academic difficulty. The information is recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

This determination of exemption only applies to the research study as submitted. Please note that modifications to your project need to be submitted to the IRB for review and exemption determination or approval before the modifications are initiated. To submit modifications to your protocol, please complete the IRB Research Amendment Form (see <http://www.irb.uiuc.edu/forms/amendment.asp>). Unless modifications are made to this project, no further submittals are required to the IRB.

We appreciate your conscientious adherence to the requirements of human subject research. If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office.

Sincerely,

Howard R. Guenther, Ph.D., M.B.A.  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research  
Interim Executive Secretary, Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX H

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
APPROVAL LETTER

May 29, 2001

Page 1 of

**Christie Ann Cruise**

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**From:** EIU IRB [eiuirb@io.cts.eiu.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 14, 2005 11:00 AM  
**To:** cruise@uiuc.edu  
**Cc:** 'Charles Eberly'; Siddens, Cheryl A.  
**Subject:** IRB Review Results - Cruise, 05-088  
**Attachments:** 05-088 Comments.rtf

Please see e-mail attachment, also.

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September 14, 2005

Christie Ann Cruise  
Counseling and Student Development

Thank you for submitting the research protocol titled, "The Effectiveness of an Intrusive Advising Program on Students on Academic Probation", for review by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has reviewed this research protocol and effective 9/13/2005, has certified this protocol as Exempt from Further Review. The protocol has been given the IRB number 05-088.

The classification of this protocol as Exempt from Further Review is valid only for the research activities, timeline, and subjects described in the above named protocol. IRB policy requires that any proposed changes to this protocol that do not fall within the exemption categories must be reported to, and approved by, the IRB before being implemented. You are also required to inform the IRB immediately of any problems encountered that could adversely affect the health or welfare of the subjects in this study. Please contact Cheryl Siddens, Compliance Coordinator, at 581-8576 or myself in the event of an emergency. All correspondence should be sent to:

Institutional Review Board  
c/o Office of Grants and Research  
Telephone: 217-581-8576  
Fax: 217-581-7181  
Email: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

Thank you for your cooperation, and the best of success with your research.

John Best, Chairperson  
Institutional Review Board  
Telephone: 217-581-6412  
Email: cfjbb@eiu.edu

9/14/2005