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Professionalization of Academic Advising

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THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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by

Craig Michael McGill

2017

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
    College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This dissertation, written by Craig Michael McGill and titled The Professionalization of Academic Advising, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this collected papers dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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Norma M. Goonen

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Tonette S. Rocco, Major Professor

Date of Defense: November 8, 2017

The dissertation of Craig Michael McGill is approved.

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Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

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Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2017

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to countless academic advisors, who are not valued,

recognized, or paid what they are due for their tremendously important work in shaping

the lives of millions of college students every year. The work you do changes the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Seven years ago, I read an article—"The Professionalization of Academic Advising: Where Are We in 2010?"—that changed my academic course. I became obsessed with professionalization, and the responsibility occupational groups had to continue to become the best they could be. In the intervening years, the first author of this article became not only an important academic mentor to me, but also a cheerleader and friend. He reminded me of my dad. On a few occasions, we enjoyed 3-hour phone calls talking about life and research. My dissertation study is based on his work and I couldn't wait to ultimately share the findings with him and perhaps write with him one day. This man has done so much for the field of academic advising and for me, personally. We lost Leigh Shaffer to cancer a few months ago. I will never forget the indelible impact he has had on my life and the field of academic advising.

To my cousins, aunts, and uncles—to many to mention! To my sweet nieces—Addie, my Northstar; EllaBear, my mini-me; and Izzy, my ultimate entertainment!—you are my life. And to my siblings—Elizabeth, Joey, and Matt. Love you long time!

But most of all, to the two of you. For the last ten years, I have been trying to find my way through life without you. At times, it has felt damn near impossible. In the last few weeks, people have said really nice and supportive things about you watching down on me. But finishing this journey without you has been far from easy. I am forever grateful that my first 24 years of life were spent under your gentle care. I hope that I am making you proud and living out your legacy in a way that will be of credit to you.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

by

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Florida International University, 2017

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Professor Tonette S. Rocco, Major Professor

The purpose of this collected papers dissertation was to better understand the professionalization of academic advising. Advising can claim several features of widely-agreed upon professional components, but the question of whether academic advising constitutes a "profession" has caused much debate. Three primary obstacles stand in its way: advising is misunderstood and lacks a consistent unifying definition; there has not been a substantial literature to define the content and methodologies of the field; and there is insufficient empirical research demonstrating its effectiveness. Two studies were conducted.

Study #1 was a structured literature review of higher education, student affairs, and academic advising to understand how these fields have conceptualized their professional status, especially with respect to clearly defining disciplinary boundaries given significant overlap with one another, and having insufficient knowledge bases. Findings were organized by field and revealed three themes in each. Obstacles for higher education concerned the diversity and rigor of its scholarship, the (mis)conception of being a singular field, and confounding the field with the industry of higher education. Themes that emerged from the student affairs literature were scholarship, professional

preparation and development, and community. For academic advising, obstacles were scholarship, expansion of graduate programs, and community. Implications for the professionalization for these three fields are: loose boundaries separating the fields, interconnectedness between educational programs, practitioner's credential lacks currency, inconsistent language used in fields, autonomy, and demonstrating effectiveness.

Study #2, a phenomenological ethnography, sought to further clarify defining functions of academic advising and to elucidate how further definition of the scope of academic advising will help professionalize the field. To acquire a description of the essence of academic advising, approaches from phenomenological and ethnographic methodologies were used. The analysis revealed that through academic advising, students learn and develop, make meaning, and connect with a caring institutional representative.

The findings from this dissertation will help inform NACADA: the Global Community for Academic Advising, to help move academic advising toward professionalization, further develop academic advisors and position them to be better scholars, to educate our constituents, and to add to the body of literature on professionalization in any field.

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CHAPTER I

COLLECTED PAPERS INTRODUCTION

This collected papers dissertation examined the status of academic advising as a profession and a field. The background to the problem, problem statement, overarching purpose, conceptual framework, previous research on professionalization in academic advising, description of collected papers, potential implications, and the structure of the collected papers dissertation are presented in Chapter I.

Background to the Problem

Professionalization, "the process by which a nonprofessional occupation is transformed into a vocation with the attributes of a profession" (Shaffer, Zalewsi, & Leveille, 2010, p. 68), is a major opportunity for many occupations in contemporary American society (Pavalko, 1988). Although fields such as medicine, theology, and law have held the status of profession for hundreds of years, newer emerging fields have sought to gain a societal seal of approval during the 20th and 21st centuries to gain respect and influence (Abbott & Meerabeau, 1998). A great deal is at stake for people working in areas that have not yet been *deemed* a profession because "professionals wield great power in determining what goes on in our society" (Merriam & Brockett, 2007, p. 218). Marginalized and/or misunderstood fields face obstacles in vying for resources to which established fields have access. Professionalizing occupations is one means of improving reputation and public understanding of their work (Cervero, 1992).

Academic advising is one field that currently strives for professionalization (Shaffer, Zalewsi, & Leveille, 2010; Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer,

2015; Johnson, Larson & Barkemeyer, 2015). Situated within higher education, academic advising involves:

> a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes. Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students' educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes. (NACADA, 2006)

Although the practice of academic advising has existed in some form since the colonial era, it is only within the last century that an organized movement to shape the field has taken root (Shaffer, et al., 2010).

To show how academic advising has advanced to the point of seeking professionalization as a distinct independent field, it is necessary to outline briefly its evolution in American higher education. Some scholars trace the roots of academic advising to the beginning of higher education in America, dividing it into four different eras (Cate & Miller, 2015; Cook, 2009). The four-era categorization is somewhat problematic because it presupposes that faculty and students were aware of academic advising as an independent function in the early years of colonial America. However, this framework does give some context as to how the field has conceptualized its history within the broader context of American higher education and thus, is worth outlining briefly.

During the first era (1636-1870), academic advising was not examined or defined as something distinct from other educational practices that occurred in higher education (Gillispie, 2003; Kuhn, 2008). Academic advising was conducted as one of many duties of faculty members who were also charged with research, teaching, and administrative responsibilities. Faculty began to specialize in certain subjects and took students studying

those areas under their wing. Students were encouraged to grow into independent

thinkers and to take charge of their educational destinies: "The mind was viewed as a tool

to be sharpened, and (required) subjects like Latin, Greek, and mathematics were the

favored sharpening stones" (Kuhn, 2008, p. 4). Thus, academic advising was critically

unexamined because it was not viewed as an independent, educative function (Cook,

2001).

The modern conception of advising began to take place in the later 19th century,

as institutions grew more diverse, with more fields of study and career options available

for students. In the second era (1870-1970), new institutions were developed and existing

institutions expanded their missions to accommodate the growing number and diversity

of students. Additionally, in the increasingly industrialized nation, the number of majors

and career options for students increased. Thus, "as institutions grew in size and

complexity, and as more was demanded of faculty members in the way of research and

service, traditional faculty responsibilities gradually unbundled, spawning new roles and

positions, one of which was the academic advisor" (Kuhn, 2008, p. 5). Because of the

increase in number and diversity of students and the continually expansive opportunities

available, students required more guidance from trained professionals. The role of

advisor was expanded and more pronounced as schools began offering students the

opportunity to choose electives (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). A prime example is

Johns Hopkins University, which in the 1870s offered seven areas of study analogous to a

"major" in higher education today (Hawkins, 1960). Although the advisor role was

increasing in its importance and required people who had advanced skills, these roles

were often viewed as clerical, and university officials had little interest in examining their

importance and role of influence in the student college experience (Schulenberg &

Lindhorst, 2008).

Organized attempts to professionalize the field of academic advising began during

the third era of academic advising (1970-2002) (Cate & Miller, 2015). Seminal articles

by Crookston (1972) and O'Banion (1972) helped situate the formation of the emerging

discipline by offering some theoretical and philosophical groundwork, exploring what it

meant to "advise." However, student affairs professionals and faculty doing work in

advising during this time had no forum where they could present their work and have

conversations specifically about advising. That changed at a chance meeting in an

elevator at the American College Personnel Association conference in Denver in April

1977 between two colleagues looking for a forum to speak about issues related

specifically to academic advising (T. Grites, Personal Communication, March 23, 2013).

Together, they planned the first conference on academic advising. The number of

attendees at this conference (250) exceeded all expectations. With such a high attendance,

plans were underway for a second conference, which led to the formation of the National

Academic Advising Association (NACADA) (NACADA, 2004).

From its humble beginnings, NACADA helped guide the field through the third

era of advising, known as the "Developmental Era." The third era was a time when the

practice "moved beyond the advisor prescribing students with a course of action; advisors

were expected to recognize the root cause of student concerns and help students identify

and develop the skills needed to address their issues" (Cate & Miller, 2015, p. 39).

College administrators began to see the need for dedicated individuals trained to work

with students with skill sets to "address a wide range of academic, environmental, and

interpersonal issues" (Cate & Miller, 2015, p. 40). Over the third era of advising, the number of campuses utilizing primary-role advisors (those in roles dedicated specifically to advising students) expanded from 2% in 1979 (Carstensen & Silberhorn, 1979) to 72% in 1997 (Habley & Morales, 1998). These factors significantly shaped the status of academic advising during the third era (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008).

In the fourth era (2002-present), academic advising practitioners and scholars are charged with grappling with clarifying the definition of the activity to professionalize the field. Beginning in 1981, NACADA began publishing a bi-annual refereed (ERIC-indexed) journal. In 1990, the executive office was established at Kansas State University (KSU). In 2003, to help the field in crafting a definition to clarify its identity, president Virginia Gordon commanded a task force to recommend "specific categories of advising competencies that all effective advisors should be able to demonstrate" (Gordon, 2003, para. 2). Seven competencies for academic advisors were recommended: foundations knowledge; knowledge of college student characteristics; knowledge of higher education; career advising knowledge and skills; communication and interpersonal skills; knowledge and application of advising skills at local institutions; and technological knowledge and skills (Gordon, 2003). As the result of the report developed from this task force, Kansas State University developed a fully online graduate certificate in 2003, which expanded to a master's degree in 2008. In 2005, another task force was formulated to develop an operating definition of academic advising (Grites & Gordon, 2009). Because the task force felt that academic advising was so expansive and impossible to distill down to an operational definition, the group instead proposed a *concept* of academic advising "based in the teaching and learning mission of higher education" with "a curriculum (what

advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising does what it does), and student learning

outcomes (the result of academic advising)" (NACADA, 2006, para 7).

Throughout the years, NACADA has been steadily growing and now has over

13,000 members in 32 countries (L. Cunningham, personal communication, November

16, 2016). To reflect the international reach of its members, the association changed its

name to "the Global Community for Academic Advising" (but retaining the acronym

NACADA). In some form, there are academic advisors on every college campus. In some

places, academic advisors hold non-tenure or even tenure-earning faculty positions

specifically for advising. It would appear to some that university provosts and

presidents—as well as institutional retention and graduation initiatives—support those

working in advising roles.

Statement of the Problem

With one recent exception (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015), there has been no

empirical work examining academic advising as a profession. Scholars have analyzed

academic advising through the lens of sociological literature of how occupations become

accepted professions (Shaffer, et al., 2010) and offered perspectives on its status as an

academic discipline (Kuhn & Padak, 2008) and a field of inquiry (Aiken-Wisniewski et

al., 2015; Habley, 2009; Johnson, Larson & Barkemeyer, 2015; Schulenberg &

Lindhorst, 2008).

Academic advising can claim several features of widely-agreed upon professional

components. However, the question of whether or not academic advising constitutes a

"profession" has caused much debate (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015; Habley, 2009;

Kuhn & Padak, 2008; McGill, 2013; McGill & Nutt, 2016; Shaffer, et al., 2010). Three

primary obstacles stand in the way of the professionalization of academic advising. First, academic advising is misunderstood and lacks a consistent unifying definition (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). Even those in national leadership roles focused on discerning the history, theory and philosophy of academic advising disagree about its definition and purpose and practitioners often have difficulty describing it or are not happy about the ways in which it is sometimes discussed (Robbins, Shaffer, & Burton, 2016). In 2005, NACADA president Jo Anne Huber charged a task force to create a definition for academic advising. Unable to design such a statement, the group drafted a "concept" of academic advising, describing a curriculum, pedagogy, and learning outcomes (NACADA, 2005).

Additionally, attempts to define the field often center on convenient analogues, the most popular of which has become "advising is teaching." However, the excessive dependency on these analogues "obscures the uniqueness of academic advising and masks the importance of the scholarship that underlies its practice" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 43). In asserting that advising is *advising*, the authors argued that advisors lacked the language needed to describe both the practice of academic advising and its scholarly identity independent of other fields and professions" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 44). Another recent study revealed that advisors were frustrated by the inconsistency of job titles and responsibilities and practitioner backgrounds even within their own campuses (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015). "For advising to enjoy self-jurisdiction, the field of advising must create a clear definition of the occupation, to include the responsibilities, procedures, scope of practice, and professional practices all advisers would follow" (Adams et al., 2013, para 10). Thus, although academic advising

in some form has been a part of higher education since the seventeenth century, its role is misunderstood by stakeholders including administrators, faculty and staff, students, and, advisors themselves. Indeed, there is little consensus on what advising is or ought to be (Habley, 2009; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008; Shaffer, et al., 2010).

Second, since the seminal articles by O'Banion (1972) and Crookston (1972), there has not been a substantial knowledge base to define the content and methodologies of the field (Habley, 2009; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; Shaffer, et al., 2010). The field

> is not widely recognized as an important area of scholarship by those who study higher education…Those who advise—either as teaching faculty members or as professional advisors—are often keenly aware of the ambiguous status and purpose of academic advising and advisors' efforts to contribute to scholarship are often unsupported by their institutions. (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 17)

The field literature has been described as a "constellation of student services in higher education" (Huggett, 2000, p. 48). McGillin (2000) named critical areas for academic advising research: generating theory to elucidate what tasks constitute academic advising and which do not; the need to study advisors, what they do, and who they are; substantiate the claim that advising impacts retention and persistence; and engage with collaborative projects within traditional academic disciplines. Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) offered recommendations on the ways the knowledge base could be expanded to help refine the purpose and function of academic advising. Indeed, although the *NACADA Journal* has disseminated research twice a year since 1981 and three other scholarly newsletters regularly offer practitioner insights on their professional work, an insufficient scholarly foundation has been identified as a major barrier to

professionalization (Habley, 2009; Hagen, Kuhn, & Padak, 2010; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008; Shaffer, et al., 2010).

Finally, there is insufficient empirical research demonstrating the effectiveness of academic advising. One recent landmark empirical study from the Center for Public Education found that students at two-year or four-year institutions who met with an academic advisor "either 'sometimes' or 'often'" improved their odds of persisting by 53% (Klepfer & Hull, 2012, p. 8). Additionally, although scholars have analyzed academic advising through the lens of sociological literature of how occupations become accepted professions (Shaffer, et al., 2010) and as an academic discipline (Kuhn & Padak, 2008) or field of inquiry (Habley, 2009), until recently (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015), there were no empirical studies that have gauged the attitudes of practitioners, advising administrators, and scholars in the field of academic advising. Additionally, of the empirical scholarship related to advising as a profession, most studies are quantitative (Tokarczyk, 2012). Empirically demonstrating the effectiveness of academic advising is directly tied to professionalizing the field (Kerr, 2000; Padak & Kuhn, 2009; Trombley & Homes, 1981).

Despite much scholarly deliberation and discourse, academic advising and its role in higher education remains misunderstood by university stakeholders, including faculty and staff, students, and advisors themselves. In the last 25 years, the field has striven for *professionalization*, a process whereby an occupation seeks to gain professional status (Bullock & Trombley, 1999; Pavalko, 1988; Wilensky, 1964).

Purpose of the Collected Papers

The purpose of this collected papers dissertation is to explore the professionalization of academic advising and the ways its leaders and practitioners view professionalization. Understanding the state of the professionalization of academic advising will help to determine what needs are still unmet and what gaps need to be filled. Two studies using different methods (structured literature review, phenomenological ethnography) were conducted as a part of this research.

Conceptual Background for the Collected Papers

The conceptual framework for this dissertation revolves around what constitutes the process of "professionalization." The study of vocations, occupations, and professions is well over a century old. Early in the twentieth century, Flexner (1915/2001) questioned if social work had met the criteria to be considered a "profession" and outlined the ways in which several occupations were or were not professions. Since the 1960s, the sociological literature has moved beyond discussing what constitutes a profession to matters of how occupations become professions and the process by which fields are professionalized.

Professionalization occurs when an "occupation transforms itself through the development of formal qualifications based upon education, apprenticeship, and examinations, the emergence of regulatory bodies with powers to admit and discipline members, and some degree of monopoly rights" (Bullock & Trombley, 1999, p. 689). Because professionals have much to gain in both economic and social benefits, professionalization is major concern for working groups in contemporary American

society (Larson, 2013). Indeed, many occupational groups believe there is much to be gained through the designation of a profession (Freidson, 1994).

Until society views an occupational group as a profession, they may experience professional marginality (Pavalko, 1988). Borrowed from the field of sociology (first described by Park [1928] and expanded by Stonequist [1937]), marginality described "the immigrant who sought to disaffiliate from the immigrant group and become a member of the dominant culture" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 42). Professional marginality, then, describes semi-professions, quasi-professions, professions in progress, and mimic professions seeking to professionalize. They might encounter "contradictions and inconsistencies in the extent to which [they] exhibit the characteristics of a profession" (p. 42), but continue to seek the societal recognition and status of being a bona fide profession.

The terms "profession," "professional," and "professionalization" have many uses—colloquially and in more technical terms—and people have varied understandings of what they mean. These variations are confusing and convolute the discussions surrounding the professionalization of fields. Colloquially, a "professional" has been defined as someone who earns money for a task, does excellent work, and is contrasted with someone who is an amateur (Pavalko, 1988). On the other hand, "unprofessional" is sometimes used as an insult. "Professional" is often used as an adjective that defines behavior ("professional behavior") or authority (one's "professional judgment") (Abbott & Meerabeau, 1998). Profession itself has been conceptualized as a full-time activity that carries some level of prestige with practitioners who are experts in some specialized field (Pavalko, 1988). Although a profession is generally agreed to be an occupation with "high status [and] high financial rewards," (Abbot & Meerabeau, 1998, p.2), those

occupations that constitute professions and those that do not have been subject to much

dispute among sociologists of occupations (Shaffer, et al., 2010).

The reductive exercise of determining whether an occupation is or is not a

"profession" is not productive in and of itself (Hughes, 1963). However, focusing on the

process of professionalizing and considering an occupational group's strengths and

weaknesses in terms of professional characteristics can only improve the work life of its

practitioners and by extension, the clients they serve. Despite a century of studying these

processes, there has been little consensus regarding the sociological features of the

professionalization process (Shaffer, et al., 2010). Although many models of

professionalization exist (Abbott, 1988; Goode, 1957; Moore, 1970; Pavalko, 1988;

Wilensky, 1964), the studies in this dissertation will be guided by two models: Pavlako

(1988) and Houle (1980). Both models were developed after several years of studying a

variety of occupations and teasing out the consistent aspects that characterize professions.

Pavalko (1988)

Pavalko's (1988) model was developed from the study of occupations from the

1930s-1970s (Cogan, 1955; Goode, 1957; Greenwood, 1957; Moore, 1970; Parsons,

1939; Wilensky, 1964). In exploring the social phenomenon of work, he noted the

various roles work plays in our lives—as a social role, a link to the social structure, and

as source of identity—as well as an occupation's ability to yield power in society through

social stratification. His model is concerned with "understanding the sources of

occupational differentiation, the motivations and strategies used by occupational groups

in the quest for power and prestige in the workplace, and the consequences of

achievement or failing to achieve collective power and prestige" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 11-

12). From his study of the sociological literature of professions, he developed eight dimensions of ideal professions: (a) theory and intellectual technique; (b) relevance to social values; (c) training period; (d) motivation; (e) autonomy; (f) commitment; (g) sense of community; and (h) codes of ethics.

Each dimension had a non-professional-professional continuum, allowing an occupation to be considered for its professional assets in each of these different dimensions. The classic professions of law and medicine are at the root of many of these discussions, but through his study, Pavalko (1988) determined that not all professions fit well into these models. Questions that guided these studies included "What is distinctive and different about the professions?" and "What do the professions have that other occupations don't have?" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 19). Pavalko (1988) placed each of these dimensions on a nonprofessional-professional continuum (see Table 1). Thus, the consideration for an occupational group was the degree to which an occupation exhibits qualities of a profession in each of these dimensions, rather than merely being a checklist of whether it meets the criteria or not.

Table 1

Eight Dimensions of Pavalko's (1998) Nonprofession-Profession Continuum.

Dimensions	Nonprofessional		Profession
1. Theory, intellectual technique	Absent	⇔	Present
2. Relevance to social values	Non-relevant	⇔	Relevant
3. Training Period			
Length:	Short	⇔	Long
Knowledge:	Nonspecialized	⇔	Specialized
Guiding Ideas:	Involves *things*	⇔	Involves *symbols*
Acculturation:	Subculture unimportant	⇔	Subculture important
4. Motivation	Self-interest	⇔	Service
5. Autonomy	Absent	⇔	Present
6. Commitment	Short term	⇔	Long term
7. Sense of community	Weak	⇔	Strong
8. Codes of ethics	Undeveloped	⇔	Developed

The first attribute considers the degree to which the occupation has established a literature base of specialized and/or esoteric knowledge needed to practice. A professional is expected to master the methods and literature of the discipline to practice. This knowledge base may be highly scientific or not. For instance, Pavalko (1988) contrasts medicine—which requires a high degree of specialized knowledge in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.—with the knowledge of law, which is a "highly elaborate and certainly esoteric body of knowledge" (p. 20), but not scientific.

Second, a profession is distinguished from other occupations on the basis of how relevant it is to society. Members of society reach out to professionals during crisis because they have expert knowledge and skills that laypeople do not. Pavalko (1988) maintains that nonprofessions are perceived as nonessential in times of societal crises whereas professionals are called upon to solve the greatest social issues of the day.

Although all occupations require training of some kind, professional training differs from non-professions in four ways. First, the more extensive training required, the further it is on the professional end of the continuum: long tertiary periods of training characterize the classic professions of law and medicine, for example. The second difference is the degree of required specialized knowledge, which is contested because of the specialized work of most industrial occupations. But the important difference is how much the work can be tied to a body of specialized knowledge. Third, professions tend to have more conceptual aspects of training than other occupations: "There is an emphasis on the importance of mastering the ability to manipulate ideas, symbols, concepts and principles rather than things and physical objects" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 23). Finally,

training for professional work consists not only of job functions, but also of norms, values, socialization, and learning the culture. In short, the content is more elaborate than that of other occupations.

In Pavalko's (1988) model, the focus "is not on identifying what really motivates people to work" but "the degree to which work groups emphasize the ideal of service to clients and the public as their primary objective and as one of the values of the occupational subculture" (p. 23). In the ideal conception of the model, professionals are most interested in serving the needs of their clients and are not motivated by monetary gain. Pavalko acknowledges that an analysis of the professionalization of an occupation cannot generalize the motives for all of its practitioners. But, the ideal of motivation remains important to the growth of the profession. Other important features of the motivation characteristic are service to a vulnerable client, and that some professionals experience a "calling" to a service profession (such as the clergy).

Autonomy is associated with self-regulation and self-control, which allow a profession "the freedom and power…to regulate their own work behavior and working conditions" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 25). Of all the characteristics distinguishing professions from non-professions, autonomy is the most important (Pavalko, 1988). There are two levels of autonomy: of the occupational group and of the individual. On the group level, autonomy denotes that only those with sufficient knowledge, expertise, and training can perform the work, creating an exclusion criterion for individual workers: only those with some form of credential (whatever is required by the occupational group) can practice. Individual autonomy is also a feature of professionalism: a professional is expected to be self-driven and motivated, and able to perform work without constant supervision. S/he is

expected to have the necessary credibility to make professional judgments independently, whether with clients or with other workers.

Sixth, the decision to enter a profession is one weighed very carefully by a practitioner. As such, because of the training and specialized knowledge required, it is expected that members of a profession have entered this profession for the long-term, if not for the remainder of working life.

Seventh, members of a profession are part of a community of practitioners in which there is a "common identity and common destiny" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 27). Cultural norms and connections between people often extend past the professional boundaries into non-work life/social activities. The sharing of values is important, as is the commitment each has to the profession. The community socializes new professionals and extends past geographical boundaries.

Finally, written or unwritten, codes of ethics are systems "of norms that are part of the occupational subculture" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 28). These guide the ethical behavior of the professional. Although more elaborate codes of ethics suggest that occupations have become more professionalized, it should not imply that members of occupational groups without such explicit codes are unethical, less honest or trustworthy. Likewise, the existence of codes of ethical conduct does not imply that all practitioners belonging to a profession are ethical. But, codes of ethics—written to encompass the various aspects, outlining idealistic behaviors, values, levels of knowledge, skills, etc.—can strengthen other features of the attribute model.

Although it is the ideal for a work group to score high on the professional end for all eight dimensions, these professions do not exist. Similarly, there is no occupation in

which all dimensions are entirely absent. Thus, the model is "a heuristic device rather than a description of actual work groups" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 29). All work groups, therefore, enjoy aspects of professional dimensions and might strive to improve along the nonprofessional-professional continuum in other areas. For instance, the need for a specialized body of knowledge for a profession is not meant to imply that workers at the non-professional end are not working from knowledge. But scrutinizing the degree of specialized and sophisticated knowledge base needed to practice in the occupation can inform an occupation group. Reflecting on these dimensions can guide occupational groups in thinking about professionalizing elements of their practice.

Houle (1980)

The second model informing this dissertation was described by Houle (1980*).* Though 20 years of research on 17 different professions, Houle distilled 14 characteristics that make up a profession. Table 2 shows these characteristics within one of three larger categories: conceptual, performance, and collective identity.

Table 2

Houle's 14 Aspects of Professionalization

The Conceptual Characteristic
Clarifying Defining Function(s)
The Performance Characteristics
Mastery of Theoretical Knowledge
Capacity to Solve Problems
Use of Practical Knowledge
Self Enhancement
The Collective Identity Characteristics
Formal Training
Credentialing
Creation of a Subculture
Legal Reinforcement
Public Acceptance
Ethical Practice
Penalties
Relations to Other Vocations
Relations to Users of Service

The *conceptual* characteristic is primarily concerned with a professional group "clarifying its defining function(s)" (Houle, 1980, p. 35). A defining function is essential for a profession to guide those who are working in the field. A profession has a clear mission and purpose so that non-professionals understand what those professions do. Practitioners in long-standing professions may be able to get by without thinking too deeply about the mission and function of their work, but this can lead to misguided, subpar, or even unethical practice (Houle, 1980). Non-professions or emerging professions may lack a central mission that is agreed upon by its body of practitioners. There may be alternative or even conflicting ideas about the nature of the work. But defining a mission with widespread agreement is critical to advancing a field.

The *performance* characteristics—mastery of theoretical knowledge, capacity to solve problems, use of practical knowledge, self-enhancement—are so interconnected that they "often overlap in both theory and practice" (Houle, 1980, p. 40). Members of a profession are expected to apply practical and theoretical knowledge to creatively solve the problems of the discipline. Whereas theoretical knowledge is developed in pursuit of truth, practical knowledge evolves from the application of theoretical knowledge within the discipline. The two types of knowledge cannot be fully separated, and a professional must be able to use and contribute to both types. Self-enhancement refers to an individual's "self-guided development" (p. 47) by gaining knowledge in both work (i.e., professional) and non-work domains. The quest for learning provides "an indispensable basis for occupational excellence" (p. 47). In other words, a professional learns not only the knowledge needed to perform the job at hand, but also broadens his or her own knowledge to apply it—in collaboration with others—to solve occupational problems.

The last set of characteristics focus on establishing a *collective identity* that builds upon the "systems and structures that foster and maintain conceptual and competency characteristics" (Houle, 1980, p. 49). In this regard, Houle contrasted occupations seeking to professionalize "from other advanced fields of work" (e.g., artists) who claim conceptual and performance characteristics but are not looking to unite a profession based on occupational identity. Houle (1980) argued that most professionals required formal training as a necessary pre-requisite to practice in the field. The formal training might be a degree or a certificate and in some cases, might be monitored or accredited by an agency or professional association. Professional associations can also serve as a cultural center for an occupational group or a community of practice for the practitioner. Although all worker groups must follow certain laws (e.g., minimum wage, child labor, etc.), members of professions often feel entitled to special legal reinforcement, allowing them, for example, to have exclusive rights to practice, or power to make legally-binding decisions. They might also act to influence public policy on issues related to their professional work.

One of the ways a profession's collective identity can be shaped is to consider how it is viewed by those outside of the field. In some ways, public acceptance is at the heart of a working group's desire to professionalize because as a collective symbol (Becker, 1956), it signals that their work has value to society. Houle (1980) acknowledged that public understanding—let alone acceptance—is very difficult for occupations to ever achieve. Professions often construct codes of ethics that guide practice, as well as determine the consequences for those who do not behave in a professional, ethical, or competent manner. Through the process of professionalization,

occupational groups articulate their distinctive functions, specifically, in relation to other vocations. This process come through articulating role differentiation from other professionals, paraprofessionals, or support staff. Finally, the role of the occupation to the users of that service must be considered. The classical model that follows medicine and law puts the professional-client dyad—whereby the professional gives a service and the client pays—in the center. The model does not work with several occupational roles where the services are not directly paid by the beneficiaries of that service: clergy, police office, school teacher, etc. (Bidwell, 1970; Houle, 1980). Thus, guidelines or rules about the nature of the relationship between professional service provider and the user of that service are important.

In contrast to the early work of Flexner (1915) who classified types of work as either occupations or professions, Houle emphasized "the extent to which the criteria [for professionalization] are met" (Merriam & Brockett, 2007, p. 219). Instead of focusing on whether or not an occupation is a profession, the framework is useful in assessing where a given field is in the process of professionalization and where the occupation can aspire to go. This process is critical because "an awareness of how professions are defined and how society views them can give us an understanding of what it means to professionalize" (Merriam & Brockett, 2007, p. 220). It is by considering various elements of professionalization that a field can begin to determine what they have and what they need to improve their professional status (Hughes, 1963). For instance, in their assessment of the professionalization of the field of adult education, Knox and Fleming (2010) built on Houle (1980), posing the following areas for professionalization of the field: (a) the essence of the field, (b) its distinctive nature, (c) the various roles performed

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by the practitioners, (d) the career stages, (e) the influences on professionalization, (f) the contributions of professional associations, (g) disciplinary parameters of the field, and (h) future directions.

Both models emphasize that these are dimensions (Pavalko, 1988) or characteristics (Houle, 1980) of professions and that occupations do not exist in a binary of either "profession" or "non-profession." A focus on the *process*, therefore, provides a framework for working groups to consider their assets in these areas and consider where they might seek to develop or professionalize.

Research on the Professionalization of Academic Advising

In exploring the status of academic advising, Shaffer, et al. (2010) applied the lens of sociological literature that examines how various occupations became professions. They concluded that advising had not yet achieved various benchmarks to be considered a profession. Shaffer, et al. (2010) build from the framework of Wilensky (1964) who delineates four stages of professionalization: creating occupations (which itself, consists of four trajectories), establishing schools, forming associations, and ratifying codes. Although the authors chart academic advising through all four stages of professionalization, they note an important anomaly: The chartering of NACADA (stage three) predated the establishment of schools/body of scholarly knowledge (stage two). Although non-sequential order was not unprecedented in Wilensky's study, when professionalization runs rampant before a clear establishment of a scholarly base, the results are not always favorable. Thus, Shaffer, et al. (2010) urged scholars and practitioners to note this disparity between an active professional association guiding practice on every college campus in the nation and the lack of a sufficient scholarship to

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deem academic advising as an academic discipline, field of inquiry, and profession. The

authors suggested that a standard knowledge base for the field is its primary concern for

future professionalization.

Habley (2009) examined academic advising as "a field of inquiry" (p. 76).

Through a content analysis of the *NACADA Journal*, *The Clearinghouse of Academic

Advising Resources*, abstracts from conference presentations, and other journals, articles

and dissertations (using ERIC hits on "academic advising"), Habley concluded that the

field had not made substantial progress since the early 1980s in laying claim to a

sufficient knowledge base. Without research substantiating the effectiveness of advising,

> …the case for the importance of academic advising can be neither built nor
> sustained…Without the implementation of a plan to substantiate the claim that it
> makes a difference in the lives of students and thereby enhances institutional
> effectiveness, advising will most certainly remain a peripheral and clerical
> activity on many campuses. (Habley, 2009, p. 82)

Several recommendations were made. First, focusing on the development of core

graduate curricula distinct from higher education and student affairs so that future

scholars could be trained in a variety of research methodologies. Relatedly, the number of

graduate programs focusing on academic advising needed to be expanded: if having a

graduate credential was an important marker of professionalization for the field, a single

master's program at Kansas State University could not sustain an entire field. Finally, the

field should be more intentional with fostering research collaborations between advising

practitioners and faculty members.

Kuhn and Padak (2008) explored the potential for academic advising as a

discipline. Noting the traditional views of advising as a faculty responsibility and service,

they scrutinized the definition of a field. Although the definitions of field that they give

allow for advising to be called a field, they argue that this definition says very little about its essence: all disciplines are fields, but not all fields can be said to be academic disciplines. They conclude that the literature of academic advising is not substantial, unique and far-reaching enough to be a discipline and that more graduate programs must be developed to produce researchers.

To examine the issues of professionalization of academic advising identified in the literature, Aiken-Wisniewski et al. (2015) designed a study of academic advisors' perception of the field. Their research was guided by two questions: "How do advisors describe the occupation of academic advising?" and "How do advisors describe a profession?" (p. 61). To conduct their study, Aiken-Wisniewski et al. (2015) traveled to six geographic regions across the US and conducted focus groups at NACADA regional conferences. Forty-seven participants agreed to participate in their focus groups. Their demographics are as follows:

- •57% had been working in academic advising for 5 or more years with an average of 4.73 years in the current position;
- •80% had completed a graduate degree;
- •70% identified as a staff advisor and the rest of the sample identified as faculty members, peers, interns, or graduate assistants;
- •The average amount of time spent on academic advising responsibilities was reported at 80%;
- •78% of respondents were female;
- •70% identified as White;
- •40% specifically chose a career in academic advising;
- (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015, p. 63)

The findings indicate that academic advising is inconsistently defined and practiced through varying different HR titles, practitioners with differing academic and work backgrounds, differing work responsibilities, and vastly differing reward structures. The authors suggested that institutions need to review position descriptions for more

consistency with respect to job duties, functions and titles, and to define standard

caseload sizes. The field should continue to focus on professionalization so that advising

will become a "more universally recognized and intentional career choice" (p. 68). The

authors also underscored the importance of continuing to research issues of

professionalization of the field: "By continuing the research on the advisor position and

the concept of a professional from multiple perspectives, the field of advising will

continue to evolve" (p. 69).

<div align="center">**Description of Collected Papers**</div>

The fulfillment of this collected papers dissertation took place across two studies

related to the professionalization of academic advising. Table 3 presents the running title,

method, and publication outlet for each of the studies in this collected papers dissertation.

These studies are further described in the sections that follow.

Table 3. *Collected Papers Studies 1-3.*

Title	Professions on the Periphery? Examining the Professionalization of Higher Education, Student Affairs and Academic Advising	Towards Articulating the defining functions of academic advising: Clarifying the conceptual characteristic
Research Questions	What characteristics of professionalization have been discussed in the literature of these fields since 1980? How has this impacted their development as distinctive and independent professions?	What are the essential features of academic advising?
Method	Structured literature review (Rocco, Stein, & Lee, 2003)	Phenomenological ethnography (Maggs-Rapport, 2000)
Conceptual Framework	Sociology of Occupations and Professions	Continuing Learning in the Professions (Houle, 1980)
Journal	*Review of Higher Education* (APA 6th)	*Research in Higher Education* (APA 6th)

Study #1: Structured Literature Review

As academic advising only ever occurs within the higher education setting, it is tied directly to that context. In some places, academic advising is situated in academic affairs. At other campuses, it falls under student affairs. However, both student affairs and, to a lesser degree, higher education are sometimes discussed as fields and independent professions. However, each is intricately connected to each other. All three fields face professional marginality (Pavalko, 1988) and each has its own history and barriers to professionalization. Examining the literature of these three fields will help to elucidate how they have professionalized, especially with respect to clearly defining disciplinary boundaries (sharing significant overlap with one another) and having insufficient literature.

Purpose and research question. The purpose of this structured literature review (Rocco, Stein, & Lee, 2003) is to systematically examine the literature in higher education, student affairs, and academic advising since 1980 to understand how these fields have conceptualized their professional status. This literature review will be guided by the research questions: What characteristics of professionalization have been discussed in the literature of these fields since 1980? How has this impacted their development as distinctive and independent professions?

Method. The data collection involved four inter-related phases: database selection and search (Phase I), scanning reference lists articles found in Phase I (Phase II), Google Scholar "Cited by" search (Phase III), and further database search (Phase IV). A university librarian was consulted to determine the most appropriate search terms and databases. "Professionalization" was selected as the primary search term and combined in

three separate searches with "higher education," "student affairs," and "academic advising." All document titles were read looking for relevance to the research question. Special attention was paid to keywords: "profession," "professionalism," "professionalization," "fields," "occupation," along with "higher education," "student affairs," and "academic advising." After eliminations, a total of 13 articles were selected to be analyzed from the databases. In phase II, the reference sections of all 13 articles were scanned for relevant articles that would meet the criteria for inclusion. Reference to "profession," "discipline," "field," "professionalizing," and "professionalization" or any similar term was considered. When a new article was added to the accepted list, the same process of scanning the references was performed. All accepted articles from phases I and II were put into Google Scholar and lists of who cited the articles were produced. For each article, the researcher performed a similar scanning process, as described in Phase II, to find any potentially relevant articles. To ensure that the scope of the search was sufficient, the search as described in Phase I was repeated on additional databases. Although no additional articles were added from this phase, it increased confidence that all relevant literature on professionalization in three fields had been gathered.

Analysis and findings. The final sample of 49 articles was separated by field and read and coded separately to uncover themes regarding the professionalization process in each field. The articles were coded thematically (Boyatzis, 1998), inspected for both manifest-content (directly observable) and latent content (underlying the phenomenon). The findings were organized by field and the analysis revealed three themes in each field. Obstacles for the professionalization of higher education concerned the diversity and rigor of its scholarship, the (mis)conception of it being a singular field, and confounding

the *field* of higher education with the *industry* of higher education. Themes that emerged from the student affairs literature were issues with scholarship, professional preparation and development, and community. For academic advising, the obstacles were issues with scholarship, the expansion of graduate programs, and community. The implications for the professionalization for these three fields are: (a) loose boundaries separating the fields, (b) interconnectedness between educational programs, (c) practitioner's credential lacks currency, (d) inconsistent language used in fields, (e) autonomy, and (f) demonstrating effectiveness.

Publication submission and formatting. This first study of the collected papers was submitted to *Research in Higher Education* on September, 24, 2017, which requires that the paper be formatted to APA (6th ed.).

Study #2: Phenomenological Ethnography

The question of whether or not academic advising constitutes a "profession" has caused much debate (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015; Habley, 2009; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; McGill, 2013; McGill & Nutt, 2016; Shaffer et al., 2010). One of the primary obstacles is that academic advising is misunderstood and lacks a consistent unifying definition (Himes, 2014; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). A second concern is that attempts to define the field often center on convenient analogues, the most popular of which has become "advising is teaching." However, the excessive dependency on these analogues, "obscures the uniqueness of academic advising and masks the importance of the scholarship that underlies its practice" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 43). In asserting that advising is *advising*, Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) argued that advisors "lacked the language needed to describe both the practice of academic advising

and its scholarly identity independent of other fields and professions" (p. 44). Despite much scholarly deliberation and discourse, academic advising and its role in higher education remains misunderstood by university stakeholders, including faculty and staff, students, and advisors themselves. Indeed, there is little consensus on what academic advising is or ought to be (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015; Habley, 2009; Himes, 2014; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; McGill, 2013; McGill & Nutt, 2016; Shaffer et al., 2010), and how academic advising is valued at institutions plays a role in its status as a profession (Kerr, 2000). Despite how much work is being done to define academic advising, "many advisors might still see their roles as course recommenders rather than teachers who are fundamental constituents of a college or university's teaching mission" (McGill, 2016, p. 50). Several writers have articulated the need for a normative theory of academic advising (Himes, 2014; Lowenstein, 2014), which would describe an ideal for which academic advising should strive. However, there has been a dearth of empirical work that has investigated how practitioners view the essence of the field.

Purpose and research question. The purpose of the phenomenological ethnography (Katz & Csordas, 2003; Maggs-Rapport, 2000) is to further clarify defining functions of academic advising and to elucidate how further definition of the scope of academic advising will help professionalize the field. This paper will be guided by the following research question, "What are the essential features of academic advising?"

Method. This study uses qualitative plurality (Frost, 2011): engaging in more than one qualitative approach. As such, the method is neither fully phenomenological nor fully ethnographic, but rather it combined elements of both. Providing a description of the essence of the phenomenon using data gathered is the "culminating aspect of a

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phenomenological study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). Ethnographic studies focus on the views people give to their worlds and thus, concentrate on shared views of a group aiming "to describe the cultural knowledge of the participants" (Maggs-Rapport, 2000, p. 219). Whereas the phenomenologist is interpreter, the ethnographer servers as an observer, looking for patterns in the group's ideas and beliefs (Fetterman, 2010). The product of an ethnography is a "cultural portrait" (Creswell, 2013, p. 96). The phenomenological aspect of this study was the attempt to get to the essence of academic advising, as described by 17 of its leaders who have served as academic advisors in various capacities. The ethnographic aspect of this study is the focus on NACADA as a shared culture and the observation-participant experience of the researcher over eight years. To acquire a description of the essence of academic advising from several leaders in the field, I sought approaches from both methodological schools.

There were two sources of data for this study: interviews and documents. Unlike a pure phenomenology, a homogenous sample was not sought for this study. Through purposeful sampling, I interviewed 17 NACADA leaders (seven men and ten women). To qualify for the interview portion of this study, participants had to be involved in NACADA in one of the following leadership roles: a commission chair, a subject matter expert publishing about the professionalization of academic advising, or those who have held high office (e.g., presidents, board members, etc.). The semi-structured interviews were conducted from Fall 2013-Fall 2015 and ranged from 74-147 minutes. The data were transcribed and sent to the participants to verify accuracy.

The second source of data was five email chains from the Theory, Philosophy, & History of Advising Commission listserv. As a participant-observer of these

correspondences over the course of several years, I gathered insight into the qualitatively different ways (Marton, 1981) the people in this group have thought about the professionalization of academic advising.

Analysis and findings. Analysis took place in two phases. First, the interview transcripts were coded using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) at both the manifest-content (directly observable) and latent content (underlying the phenomenon) levels. When the phenomenon under investigation lacks research, "researchers avoid using preconceived categories" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279) and allow "the categories and names for categories to flow from the data" (p. 1279). The codes and sub-codes were described, noting the distinctive nature of each (Boyatzis, 1998). When all the interview data had been analyzed, a preliminary thematic description of the phenomenon of academic advising had been articulated. However, because a second analytical phase was planned, this remained tentative. For the second phase of data analysis, I coded the five selected chains of email threads. Although I had already begun to articulate a description of academic advising from the interview analysis, the email threads were approached openly and coded inductively using *conventional* qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Tesch, 1990). The analysis of the email chains added nuance to the existing themes, but did not add any new themes. Upon completing the analysis of the email threads, the interview data were re-visited to ensure that the whole scope of the phenomenon had been represented by the emerging categories and codes. Through both analytical processes, three themes emerged: through academic advising, students learn and develop, make meaning, and connect with a caring institutional representative.

Publication submission and formatting. The second study of the collected papers was submitted to the *Journal of Higher Education* on September 24, 2017. The journal requires APA formatting (6th ed.).

Structure of Collected Papers Dissertation

This doctoral dissertation follows the FIU College of Arts, Sciences, and Education's guidelines for the "Collected Papers" dissertation format. It consists of an introductory chapter and a closing chapter written solely for the dissertation, as well as the two related studies outlined above submitted to peer-reviewed journals. Dissertation chapters are as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction, related literature review, research rationale

Chapter II: Paper I: "Professions on the periphery? Examining the professionalization of higher education, student affairs and academic advising"

Chapter III: Paper II: "Towards articulating the defining functions of academic advising: Clarifying the conceptual characteristic"

Chapter IV: Conclusions, cross-cutting implications, directions for future research.

Potential Implications of the Collected Papers Research

Findings from this collected papers dissertation may reasonably be expected to help inform NACADA, to help move academic advising toward professionalization, and to add to the body of literature on professionalization in any field. For instance, one of the main hurdles that has faced practitioners in the field of academic advising is a lack of public understanding (both within academia and outside) as well as a lack of professional role-modeling for its practitioners. These issues will be explored in the collected papers.

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CHAPTER II

STUDY #1, STRUCUTRED LITERATURE REVIEW—

PROFESSIONS ON THE PERIPHERY? EXAMINING THE

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION,

STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ACADEMIC ADVISING

Professionalization—the process whereby an "occupation transforms itself through the development of formal qualifications based upon education, apprenticeship, and examinations, the emergence of regulatory bodies with powers to admit and discipline members, and some degree of monopoly rights" (Bullock & Trombley, 1999, p. 689)—is a major concern for many occupations in contemporary American society (Larson, 2013). For decades, the literature has discussed the status of professions in society, the financial and social benefits professionals belonging to a profession reap, and the roles professions play to the function and advancement of society (Moore, 1970). The foregone conclusion is that occupational groups and their practitioners have much to gain from the designation of profession (Freidson, 1994).

Professional marginality (Pavalko, 1988) refers to occupations that might be described as semi-professions, quasi-professions, professions in progress, and mimic professions that are at a crossroads of professionalization. They encounter "contradictions and inconsistencies in the extent to which [they] exhibit the characteristics of a profession" (p. 42). These occupations are working to professionalize, but encounter various obstacles. These obstacles create a sense of marginality in the community that the group seeks to work through for the societal recognition and status of being a bona fide profession.

Three inter-related fields facing professional marginality are higher education, student affairs, and academic advising, each with its own history and barriers to professionalization. American higher education dates to 1636 (Geiger, 2005). The first colleges were small, ill-funded, and dominated by religious denominations and the faculty consisted of recent graduates or tutors who awaited positions in the ministry. A college president, along with three or four tutors, taught all subjects (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Faculty were not experts in a field, and by necessity, taught the entire curriculum. They had little autonomy or administrative interaction with the institution. The colonial colleges in America were governed by outside boards and the only faculty member a part of this board was the president. Students ate in dining halls and lived in dormitories, and faculty exercised *in loco parentis*, supervising and disciplining students (Nuss, 2003). Today, higher education is recognized as a field of study with academic journals (e.g., *The Review of Higher Education*) and professional associations (Association for the Study of Higher Education [ASHE] and the American Association for Higher Education and Accreditation [AAHEA]).

The field of student affairs evolved from academic affairs when in 1870, the president of Harvard University appointed a dean for higher education whose main responsibilities were teaching and disciplining students (Nuss, 2003). In 1891, the role was expanded to include counseling students. As access to higher education increased in the twentieth century, more practitioners were needed for a variety of responsibilities, serving an increasing number of students. Despite the clear need for professional staff in American universities, the field of student affairs faced many critiques and obstacles toward professionalization. In the mid-twentieth century, the professionalization of

student affairs was measured against the following eight criteria: application of standards of selection/training, definition of job titles and functions, specialized knowledge and skills, professional consciousness and professional groups, standards of admission and performance, legal recognition, code of ethics, and a socially needed function. Having only made progress in four of these realms, it was decided that student affairs was not a profession (Wrenn & Darley, 1949). Penney (1969) wrote an often-cited critique, referring to student affairs as "a professional stillborn" (p. 958) and Shoben (1967) alleged that the field had been obsessed with "housekeeping" tasks. Commenting in the late 1980s, Rickard (1988) suggested, "unless alternative perspectives on the profession are explored, the field will be damned to push a boulder up the slope of professional legitimacy only to fail again and again" (p. 389). Today, the field of student affairs has academic journals (*Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* and *Journal of College Student Development*) and professional associations (NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and ACPA: College Student Educators International).

Although some scholars trace the roots of academic advising to the beginning of higher education in America (Cate & Miller, 2015; Cook, 2009), the modern conception of advising began to take place in the later 19th century, as institutions grew more diverse, with more fields of study and career options available for students. In the 1870s, Johns Hopkins University began allowing students to choose electives to supplement their major studies. The growing number of choices allotted to students during the 20th century made the advisor role more pronounced, although until the 1970s, the work itself was very prescriptive and authoritarian: students were told what to do and what to take (Cook,

2009). In the 1970s, seminal articles (Crookston, 1972; O'Banion, 1972) spurred a movement to begin thinking about academic advising as a developmental process. In 1977, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was established, and the field has been striving for professionalization since. NACADA, renamed "the Global Community for Academic Advising" in 2012 is the premiere professional association for the field and *The NACADA Journal,* the most important outlet for scholarly research.

This brief historical overview situates the fields of student affairs and academic advising within American higher education. As academic advising only ever occurs within the higher education setting, it is tied directly to that context. In some places, academic advising is situated within academic affairs. At other campuses, it falls under student affairs. However, both student affairs and, to a lesser degree, higher education are sometimes discussed as fields and independent professions. Nevertheless, despite their long-shared history, all three fields face barriers to professionalization as a consequence of clearly defining disciplinary boundaries (sharing significant overlap with one another) and having insufficient knowledge bases. Simply debating whether an occupation is a profession is a futile exercise (Hughes, 1963). However, a focus on the process of professionalization and how a field can improve its professional status can only better serve the members of an occupation, and by extension, their clients.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this structured literature review (Rocco, Stein, & Lee, 2003) is to systematically examine the literature in higher education, student affairs, and academic advising since 1980 to understand how these fields have conceptualized their professional status. The year 1980 was selected for three reasons: (a) the U.S. Census report re-

conceptualized the Standard Occupational Classification system (Pavalko, 1988) into six broad clusters, the first major reorganization since 1950; (b) the *NACADA Journal* was established in 1981; and (c) a seminal article (Carpenter, Miller, & Winston, 1980) spurred a decade-long debate about the professionalization of student affairs. This literature review will be guided by the research questions: What characteristics of professionalization have been discussed in the literature of these fields since 1980? How has this impacted their development as distinctive and independent professions? This paper proceeds in three sections: methods, findings, and discussion and implications.

Method

A structured literature review (Rocco et al., 2003) is a method of gathering relevant literature on a topic in a systematic way. An increased attention to the methods used to gather the literature can reduce researcher bias and gain reader confidence that all literature meeting specified criteria and study parameters are included in the sample and reported in the findings. This section describes the data collection, data organization, and data analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection involved four inter-related phases: database selection and search (Phase I), scanning reference lists articles found in Phase I (Phase II), Google Scholar "Cited by" search (Phase III), and further database search (Phase IV).

Phase I: Database Selection and Search. A university librarian was consulted to determine the most appropriate search terms and databases. Two databases were selected: *ERIC (ProQuest)* and *Education Source.* The following delimitations were added: full text; scholarly journals; published between 1980-2016; English; and PDF full text

available. "Professionalization" was selected as the primary search term and combined in three separate searches with "higher education," "student affairs," and "academic advising." The related terms "profession," "professionalism," and "profession*" (which collects every permutation of these) were tested, but produced irrelevant results. The search term combinations yielded 234 hits in Educational Resource and 300 in ERIC ProQuest, totaling 534 (See Table 1 for distribution among fields).

All document titles were read (and when there was doubt, abstracts were read) looking for relevance to the research questions. Special attention was paid to keywords: "profession," "professionalism," "professionalization," "fields," "occupation," along with "higher education," "student affairs," and "academic advising." From the 534 initial hits, 521 documents were eliminated for two reasons. First, the search attempted to focus on articles published in peer reviewed journals, and so several non-peer reviewed publications (e.g., book reviews, magazines, and business reports) were excluded. However, two exceptions—one book chapter and one practitioner article—were included because they were relevant to the research topic. With the inclusion of these two non-peer reviewed publications, the decision was made to include other non-peer reviewed types of publications that were germane to the research.

The second reason documents were eliminated was because of the content rather than publication type. For example, although "professionalization" proved to yield some productive results, it also had results that focused on issues of professional development and the continued professional learning of its practitioners. In such cases, these were excluded because they are not directly related to the discussion of professionalization of *fields*.

After the eliminations, a total of 13 publications were selected for analysis: one book chapter, one practitioner piece, nine conceptual pieces, and two empirical studies (one qualitative, one quantitative). Table 1 outlines the number of hits for each combination of search terms per database, as well as the number ultimately accepted.

Table 1

Search Results by Field and Database

	Total Hits	Eliminated	Accepted
Educational Resource			
Higher Education	73	72	1
Student Affairs	113	109	4
Academic Advising	48	44	4
ERIC ProQuest			
Higher Education	292	291	1
Student Affairs	5	4	1
Academic Advising	3	1	2
TOTALS	534	521	13

Phase II: Scanning of Reference Lists. Given the low number of results produced in phase I, the search was expanded, adding three additional phases. In phase II, the reference sections of all 13 publications were scanned for other relevant publications that would meet the criteria for inclusion. Reference to "profession," "discipline," "field," "professionalizing," and "professionalization" or anything of the like was considered. Publications were included if they were relevant to the research topic. When a new publication was added to the accepted list, the same process of scanning the references was performed. Through this method, 12 conceptual papers, one interview, five book chapters, two journal editorials, six position papers and one empirical (qualitative) study—a total of 27 more publications—were added to the sample for a subtotal of 40.

Phase III: Google Scholar. Google Scholar has a "Cited By" function that allows researchers to see who has cited publications. All accepted publications from phases I and II were put into Google Scholar and lists of who cited the publications were produced. For each publication, the first author performed a similar scanning process, as described in Phase II, to find any potentially relevant publications. A total of nine more publications—one empirical (quantitative) study, two practitioner pieces, two conceptual articles, one literature review, and three book chapters—were accepted through this process.

Phase IV: Further Database Search. To ensure that the scope of the search was sufficient, the search as described in Phase I was repeated in seven other social science databases outside of education (See Table 2). Although no additional articles were added from this phase, it gave the authors confidence that they had gathered all the relevant literature.

Table 2

Additional Search Results

	Higher Education		Student Affairs		Academic Advising	
	Hits	Accepted	Hits	Accepted	Hits	Accepted
America: History & Life	15	0	0	0	0	0
Historical Abstracts	11	0	0	0	0	0
Humanities Source	13	0	0	0	0	0
Sociology Database	3	0	0	0	0	0
Sociological Abstracts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social Science Premium Collection	3	0	0	0	0	0
Social Science Database	0	0	0	0	0	0

The Sample. The final sample consisted of 49 publications. Below are the types of publications by field (Table 3) and the top journals (Table 4).

Table 3

Types of Publications by Field

	Higher Education	Student Affairs	Academic Advising	Total
Conceptual Articles	6	12	5	23
Book Chapters	2	3	4	9
Position Papers	0	6	0	6
Qualitative Empirical Studies	0	0	2	2
Quantitative Empirical Studies	0	0	2	2
Literature Reviews	1	0	0	1
Practitioner Pieces	0	1	2	3
Journal Editorials	0	1	2	3
Interviews				
	9	23	17	49

Table 4

Top Journals

Journal	Field	Number of Publications
NACADA Journal	Academic Advising	9
Journal of College Student Development	Student Affairs	8
NASPA Journal	Student Affairs	4
Journal of College & Character	Student Affairs	4
Journal of College Student Personnel	Student Affairs	3

Data Organization

Records including citation information (article title, author, year, journal); the field (higher education, student affairs, or academic advising); the type of article (e.g., empirical, practitioner piece); and the way the article became part of the sample (Phase I, II, or III) were kept in an Excel document. Additionally, separate Word documents were kept for each field with notes, observations, commentary, and possible categories. Each

publication was printed, separated by field, organized in chronological order, and
assigned a reference number.

Data Analysis

The articles in each field comprised one of three samples. Articles were read and
coded separately to uncover categories of the professionalization process in each field.
Publications were read twice. During the first round, copious notes were taken in the
margins of the printed document and in a codebook, but no formal coding was done until
round two. The first author recorded ongoing thoughts, possible relationships to ideas
presented among different articles, ways of presenting materials, discussion points,
implications, areas for future research, questions about what might come next in the
scholarly discussion, how ideas might relate to what other fields had experienced, etc.

After all publications were read, notes were typed up and transferred into a
Microsoft Word document with evidence from the publications. Thus, the data could
easily be moved and manipulated to form clusters of meaning (Patton, 2002) into a
hierarchical order of categories and subcategories (Morse & Field, 1995). The
publications were coded inductively, inspected for both manifest-content (directly
observable) and latent content (underlying the phenomenon). Approaching the raw data
in this manner allowed the researcher "a way of seeing" and "making sense" (p. 4) of the
phenomenon of professionalization across three fields. Once categories began to emerge,
the codes were defined and descriptions and distinctive features of each were added
(Boyatzis, 1998). Points illustrating concepts and/or exemplary quotations were added to
each set of codes or sub-codes. During this process, the data were re-visited periodically

to ensure that the full view and nuance of the emergent categories and sub-categories was captured.

Findings

Before presenting the findings by field, it is important to look at the trends in the sample itself and what this suggests about the discussions in each field. Table 5 outlines the selected publications by decade by field. In Table 6, the top two years in each field— as well as the number of selected publications in those years—are presented. The first publications in higher education were in 2007, which indicates that professionalization has only recently become a topic of discussion in the field. Both student affairs and academic advising were having scholarly discussions about professionalization in the early 1980s. Of particular interest here is the low number yielded from the 1990s, revealing a relative absence of discussion about the professionalization process of these fields. In the 2010s, there was a revival of discussion about the professionalization of student affairs. Academic advising had a steady stream of publications from 2000-2016. These are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

Table 5

Sample by Decade

	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
Higher Education	0	0	2	7
Student Affairs	13	2	4	4
Academic Advising	2	0	8	7
	15	2	14	18

Table 6

Top Years for Publications in the Sample

Field	Top Years	Number of Publications	Publication Citations
Higher Education	2012	2	(Clegg, 2012; Harland, 2012)
	2014	2	(Altbach, 2014; Tight, 2014)
Student Affairs	1988	8	(Knock, 1988; Kuk, 1988; Moore, 1988; Remley, 1988; Rickard, 1988a; 1988b; Williams, 1988; Young, 1988)
	2011	4	(Dalton & Crosby, 2011; Porterfield, Roper, & Whitt, 2011; Roper, 2011; Sandeen, 2011)
Academic Advising	2000	4	(Frost, 2000; Huggett, 2000; Kerr, 2000; Tuttle, 2000)
	2015	4	(Aiken-Wisniewski, S.A., Johnson, A., Larson, J. & Barkemeyer, 2015; Cate & Miller, 2015; Cunningham, 2015; Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015)

The categories and subcategories discussed in the literature for the three fields is displayed in Table 7 and discussed next.

Table 7

Categories and Sub-categories by Field

Higher Education	Student Affairs	Academic Advising
Diversity and rigor of scholarship	Issues with scholarship *a. Non-specialized body of knowledge* *b. Demonstrating effectiveness*	Issues with scholarship *a. Defining the field* *b. Seeking specialized body of knowledge* *c. Demonstrating effectiveness*
A singular field	Professional preparation and development *a. Graduate preparation* *b. Credentialing* *c. Professional development*	Expanding graduate programs
An industry	Community *a. Divided professional community* *b. Lack of professional autonomy*	Community *a. Establishment of NACADA* *b. Administrative home*

Higher Education

Nine higher education publications were selected for analysis, published from 2007-2016, an average of approximately one publication a year. This indicates that not only is professionalization a recent topic, but also that it is not a very pressing issue. The sample included two book chapters and seven publications from five scholarly journals.

The first two articles (chronologically) discussed aspects of the professionalization of higher education were from the late 2000s. Both articles were published in *Teaching in Higher Education*, a journal focused on theorizing higher education pedagogy. One article discussed the professionalization of higher education pedagogy (Canning, 2007) and the other, a reflection on scholars conducting higher education research who are trained in other disciplines (Harland, 2009). These articles set the tone for the challenges to the professionalization of higher education found in the

literature during the next decade: diversity and rigor of scholarship in higher education; higher education as a singular field; and higher education as an industry.

Diversity and rigor of higher education scholarship. An extensive review of the literature found that higher education is mostly athematic, somewhat limited in terms of its theoretical and methodological breadth (Haggis, 2009), and therefore, not an academic discipline (Tight, 2004). The field relies chiefly on four methods: document analysis, surveys, multivariate analyses and interviews (Green, 2015). Research on higher education published outside of higher education journals tends to be more inclusive of different methodological approaches (Haggis, 2009).

Although some scholars publishing research in higher education have terminal degrees in education, the field is also challenged by the various backgrounds of the people who publish its research. As higher education research can be conducted by virtually anyone at an academic institution—with little or no training in the loosely defined field of higher education—the potential to be recognized as a discipline or field is weakened (Harland, 2012). The field, therefore, lacks "epistemological precision" because "those who study higher education tend to work in higher education and effectively study their own social situations" (Harland, 2009, p. 579).

Higher education as a singular field. Even though there are several peer reviewed journals, professional associations, and graduate programs dedicated to the study of higher education, some literature debated if higher education could be thought of as a field or singular body of literature. Rather, most of the literature discussed higher education as a loosely defined field of research—slowly developing since the 1960s (Green, 2015)—that lacks an epistemological nucleus (Harland, 2009). There are five

main characteristics of an academic discipline: community of scholars, a tradition of inquiry, a mode of inquiry and accompanying methods of analysis, definitions of new knowledge, and a communications network (Davies, Davies, & Devlin, 2010). Judging by these criteria, higher education falls short (Tight, 2014), causing it to be viewed as "a set of multiple but related fields rather than a single cohesive field," (Hancock, Clegg, Crossouard, Kahn, & Weller, 2016, p. 284) "highly dispersed within and beyond the academy" (Tight, 2014, p. 93). In fact,

> higher education is not a scholarly or scientific discipline; it has no central and accepted methodology nor does it have a set of concerns for research and study. Rather, it is a field that uses the disciplinary insights of other fields, mainly in the social sciences, to inform research themes that often require interdisciplinary insights. Higher education, as a field, is significantly unbalanced… without a clear intellectual, methodological, or disciplinary center. (Altbach, 2014, p. 1319)

Although a growing number of scholars are invested in a wide range of topics in higher education research, the gamut is too wide, too unfocused to be considered an academic discipline or profession (Altbach, 2014; Tight, 2012).

Higher education as an industry. Part of the difficulty in conceptualizing higher education as a profession is that it can also be thought of as industry that employs around four million people in the United States in 2016 (Steinberg, 2017). As an industry, institutions of higher education employ people from all walks of life: from academics and researchers, to lawyers and medical doctors, to custodians and groundskeepers. As a complex industry, "higher education has become a major economic player in markets around the world" (Koprowski, 2016, para. 1).

Student Affairs

The issue of professionalization has been a concern almost since the field began. Even prior to 1980, several scholars (Penney, 1969; Shoben, 1967; Wrenn & Darley, 1949) considered the professional status of student affairs. But professionalization became a hotly contested discussion among student affairs scholars during the 1980s. The controversy around the professionalization of student affairs came to the fore with a special issue of *Journal of College Student Affairs* dedicated to discerning professionalization in 1988. Although scholars have largely abandoned the concern of whether or not student affairs constitutes a profession, some have consistently written on important related topics in the years since (Carpenter, 1991; 2003; Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007). Twenty-three student affairs publications were selected for analysis, published from 1980-2011. The sample included three book chapters and 20 publications from five scholarly journals. Three categories emerged: issues with scholarship; professional preparation and development; and community.

Issues with scholarship. A key characteristic of professions is a specialized body of knowledge (Pavalko, 1988). A professional is expected to master the methods and literature of the discipline to practice in the profession. Issues with scholarship included student affairs as a non-specialized body of knowledge and research demonstrating effectiveness is limited/lacking/needed.

Non-specialized body of knowledge. A specialized body of knowledge has been a much-contested area for student affairs scholars because of the quantity, lack of distinct field boundaries, and meaningfulness (Canon, 1982; Stamatakos, 1981a). Up to the early 1980s, the literature was "superficial, eclectic, inconsistent, and lacking in professional

distinction," a small minority of literature was the "result of a deliberate and systematic research-based attempt to respond to the need for basic constructs, specific knowledge and its application in the work setting" (Stamatakos, 1981a, p. 110). Later in 2011, the "lack of consensus about the core functions and purposes that define student affairs as a profession and the knowledge and expertise required for effective practice" (Dalton & Crosby, 2011, p. 3) remained an issue. Other issues and questions such as the field's origin and breadth have surfaced (Carpenter, Miller, & Winston, 1980).

Scant literature demonstrating field's effectiveness. In the early 1980s, scholars questioned if the purpose of student affairs was merely to serve the immediate needs of students and the institutions, or if there truly was a widely-recognized responsibility to develop and educate students (Stamatakos, 1981b). If the latter, there is more responsibility to assess the outcomes of student affairs work. As such, scholars called for the field to develop research plans to substantiate student affairs' existence, fearing that technology may overtake if the field did not show its worth (Kuk, 1988). Clear data demonstrating the work of student affairs were necessary to support student affairs programs (Carpenter, Miller, & Winston, 1980). More recently, scholars have noted a lack of systematic and empirical literature available in the field (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007; Porterfield, Roper, & Whitt, 2011).

Professional preparation and development. Training of professionals differs from that of non-professionals in four ways: long tertiary periods of training; higher degree of required specialized knowledge; heavier focus on conceptual aspects rather than technical skills; and training beyond job functions, including norms, values,

socialization, and learning the culture (Pavalko, 1988). The student affairs literature discussed graduate preparation, credentialing, and professional development.

Graduate preparation. A review of graduate programs in the early 1980s (Stamatakos, 1981a) revealed that some were focused on counseling-focused skills while others were largely defined by administrative functions. With variety in graduate program content and inconsistent admissions criteria, student affairs faced challenges in having a unified field of study (Rickard, 1985; Stamatakos, 1981a). Other scholars questioned whether student affairs was specialized enough to require unique graduate-level training (Carpenter, Miller, & Winston, 1980).

Credentialing. The concern for the proper academic preparation of student affairs practitioners led to the formation of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) in 1986. The CAS standards detailed skills, education, and knowledge that student affairs practitioners ought to have to be effective, providing a framework to evaluate the quality of the various functional areas within student affairs. Although it enhanced the field's professional mission (Paterson & Carpenter, 1989), the standards were merely recommendations and did not create a consistent approach to the hiring of student affairs practitioners.

Licensure for all student affairs practitioners has been a discussion point in the field for years (Stamatakos, 1981b; Carpenter, 2003). Opponents of licensure say that given the varied number of roles within student affairs, it is inappropriate and a bad substitution for the implementations of standards and procedures (Stamatakos, 1981a). Although licensure is at the bedrock of more established professions, by itself, "is not enough to assure professional status" (Carpenter, 2003, p. 577). Although licensure was

widely discussed in the 1980s, by the early 2000s, scholars noted that licensure was neither practical, nor desirable at any time in the future (Carpenter, 2003). Rather, professional associations should guide members on appropriate knowledge, skills, and best practices.

Professional development. Without a consistent standard body of knowledge on which all practitioners are trained, the field lacks the criteria to be considered a profession (Carpenter, 2003). An alternative solution is to develop a robust professional development program for those with no student affairs background (Canon, 1982; Carpenter, 2003). Professional development programs are important to help practitioners stay abreast of the most recent field literature (Paterson & Carpenter, 1989). In addition to knowledge about higher education environments, student characteristics and behaviors, human development and relational skills (Canon, 1982), those working in student affairs should also be trained in research and evaluation (Paterson & Carpenter, 1989).

Community. Members of a profession are part of a community of practitioners in which there is a "common identity and common destiny" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 27). Cultural norms and connections between people often extend past the professional boundaries into non-work life/social activities. Student affairs faces two issues related to community: divided professional community; and its lack of professional autonomy.

Divided professional community. With so many different functional areas, some scholars questioned whether there was enough commonality in terms of core beliefs to justify having one field. The "unity" view assumes "that all professionals in student affairs are members of one profession" (Rickard, 1988a, p. 388). Although it is clear that student affairs shares one united purpose and mission—"Concern for the holistic

development and general welfare of students" (Dalton & Crosby, 2011, p. 3)—the

disparate roles in student affairs "share only cursory connections" (p. 2) and function

mostly independently. As such, some scholars posited that student affairs could never be

one profession. With "tremendous eclecticism, inconsistency and wide variance of

philosophies and practices" (Stamatakos, 1981a, p. 107) the field is far too loosely

defined "for it to qualify as a whole" (Bloland, 1992, para 6). Although a profession

should have a set of shared goals, the many roles under student affairs make it difficult to

formulate one overarching purpose (Bloland, 1992; Rickard, 1988a; Sandeen, 2011).

Blimling (2001) argued that student affairs has outgrown one common purpose and that

instead, there are four communities of practice (COP). Those oriented in *student*

administration, "focus heavily on procedures, policies, and processes" (p. 388). In the

student services COP, the focus is on providing "high-quality student services that are

cost-efficient and result in student satisfaction" (p. 389). Arguing that "their work is

equal to that of the classroom," *student development*-oriented COP "facilitate the

psychosocial and cognitive growth and development of students" (p. 389). The fourth

COP—*student learning*—is chiefly concerned with "engaging students in various forms

of active learning…that result in skills and knowledge consistent with the learning

mission of higher education" (p. 390). Although these are four disparate COPs, certain

student affairs units on a campus may encompass more than one. This may not result in

organizational dissonance, but it does question the unifying mission of the field. These

communities "are separated by differing contextual assumptions about the nature and

purpose of student affairs work" (p. 388).

One study (Rickard, 1985) found 86 different titles of chief academic officers (down from almost 300 in the 1940s), but the "lack of agreement on a single name to encompass over 20 diverse functional areas is neither surprising nor troubling" (Rickard, 1988a, p. 389). Still, the standardization of titles can bring some cohesion to the field. Although it is expected for there to be many different specialties within student affairs, combining similar roles and standardizing job titles within and across institutions will help the field unify the field of student affairs (Porterfield, Roper, & Whitt, 2011).

One of the most obvious markers of a professional community is having at least one professional association. The two biggest student affairs associations—NASPA: Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA)—trace their roots to the early 20th century. Some scholars felt having two major associations—with different structures and organizations—weakened the field (Dalton & Crosby, 2011; Knock, 1988). In recent years, members of NASPA and ACPA have voted not to combine as one (Grasgreen, 2011).

Lack of professional autonomy. Autonomy is one of the most important elements of the sociology of professionalization (Pavalko, 1988). In the student affairs literature, autonomy was discussed in relation to its independence from higher education. Because the very existence of student affairs is to serve the students and the institution, it:

> has no independent existence in American higher education; it is always a part of an institution and, more importantly, is always established to serve that institution's educational mission. Thus, any attempt to define a unifying purpose for "student affairs" is made very difficult by the wide variation in institutional purposes. (Sandeen, 2011, p. 4)

Academic Advising

Although there are some early concerns regarding the professionalization of advising (Trombley & Holmes, 1981), most of the discourse occurred after the turn of the century. From the potential for academic advising as an academic discipline (Kuhn & Padak, 2008) or field of inquiry (Habley, 2009) to a consideration of its problematic comparisons to other professional endeavors (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008), the issue of the field's professional status came to a fore with the publication of "The professionalization of academic advising: Where are we in 2010?" (Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010). Analyzing the status of academic advising through the lens of sociology of occupations and professions, the authors deemed that academic advising was not a profession. This controversial article spurred a field-wide debate about the future of the field and prompted discussions the field might wish to develop. In total, 17 academic advising publications were selected for analysis, published from 1981-2016. The sample included four book chapters, two practitioner pieces, one interview, and 10 publications from two scholarly journals. Three categories emerged: issues with scholarship; expanding graduate programs; and community.

Issues with scholarship. The academic advising literature identified issues with scholarship as a barrier to professionalization including: defining the field of academic advising; articulating the knowledge base; and necessary research to demonstrate effectiveness.

Defining the field. Statements articulating advising as an educative venture helping students to discover their passions, talents, and capabilities abound (Danis & Wall, 1987/2009; Huggett, 2000; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008; Trombley & Holmes,

1981), but ultimately, "the definitions of academic advising equal the numbers of postsecondary institutions" (Cate & Miller, 2015, p. 41). One central, succinct yet comprehensive definition has proven to be very difficult for the field. In 2005, NACADA charged a task force to create a definition for academic advising. Unable to design such a statement, the group developed a "concept," which described an advising curriculum, pedagogy, and learning outcomes (NACADA, 2005).

Soon after, the analogue "advising is teaching" became popular among the advising community. Other analogues were also offered in relation to advising, comparing it to counseling, learning, mentoring, encouraging, advocating, educating, and friendship (e.g., Hemwall & Trachte, 2005; Lowenstein, 2005; Melander, 2005; Rawlins & Rawlins, 2005). Some previous NACADA presidents encouraged the field to move away from analogues as a means of defining itself (Padak & Kuhn, 2009). The outpouring of comparisons and analogues led to the publication of a seminal article in the field: "Advising is *Advising*: Toward Defining the Practice and Scholarship of Academic Advising" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008; emphasis added). The authors critiqued the "advising is teaching" paradigm because it only captured one aspect of academic advising.

Field seeking specialized body of knowledge. There have been many attempts to define a specialized body of work in academic advising. Two seminal works in the early 1970s (Crookston, 1972; O'Banion,1972) helped move the field beyond its prescriptive role into a developmental phase. However, reflecting on the state of the field in the mid 1990s, O'Banion (1994) said that not enough had changed in the 20 years since he had written the article (Frost, 2000). At the turn of the century, scholars questioned if the

developmental paradigm was the only way of approaching academic advising (Hemwall & Trachte, 2005). The quest for seeking a more established body of specialized literature continued. With borrowed literature from a "constellation of student services in higher education" (p. 48), advisors are required to be generalists, "responsible for specialized knowledge in an academic discipline and occupational field, or they may be expected to know campus regulations, counseling skills, career and life planning, multicultural issues, technological delivery systems, and other areas that represent student needs" (Huggett, 2000, p. 47). Two other studies (Habley, 2009; Kuhn & Padak, 2008) concluded that academic advising had not produced enough specialized knowledge to be considered an academic field of study or discipline.

Demonstrating effectiveness. Empirically demonstrating the effectiveness of academic advising is directly tied to professionalizing the field (Kerr, 2000; Padak & Kuhn, 2009; Trombley & Holmes, 1981). How advising is valued at institutions also plays a role in its status as a profession (Kerr, 2000). In the 1980s, there was a dearth of research on the effectiveness of advising and throughout the 1980s and 1990s, not much had improved (Habley, 2009). A landmark empirical study from the Center for Public Education found that students at two-year or four-year institutions who met with an academic advisor "either 'sometimes' or 'often'" improved their odds of persisting by 53% (Klepfer & Hull, 2012, p. 8). Additionally, the study found that meeting with college advisors prior to college enrollment was one of three indicators of future student success (math placement and AP credits were the other two predictors of success). These findings are important in demonstrating to institutional stakeholders the fiscal value of advising. NACADA continues to make research and defining the knowledge base a

priority through its scholarly forums, publications advisory board and research committee, which awards research grants annually.

Expanding graduate programs. The literature suggested the need for graduate training (Kerr, 2000), to require a graduate degree as a point of entry for academic advisors (Danis & Wall, 1987/2009; Padak & Kuhn, 2009), and to create more graduate programs in academic advising (Habley, 2009; Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010). Currently, there is one graduate degree in the field. Kansas State University (KSU) began offering a graduate certificate in 2003 consisting of five courses. In 2008, KSU began offering a master of science in academic advising completely online, consisting of 30 credits and a capstone project. Although a few graduate certificates have cropped up in academic advising across the United States (e.g., Sam Houston State University and Florida International University), "the dearth of other advising education programs illustrates that advising as a branch of learning is not yet acknowledged as a field of study, a discipline, or as a profession equivalent to others that characterize higher education" (Habley, 2009, p. 81).

Community. A professional community socializes new professionals and extends past geographical boundaries. The sharing of values is important, as is the commitment each professional has to the profession. Two sub-categories for the academic advising community are the establishment of NACADA and the lack of a uniform administrative home for academic advising across colleges and universities.

Establishment of NACADA. The professionalization process for academic advising commenced with the establishment of NACADA in 1977 (Cook, 2009; Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010). Over time, the association has grown to represent the

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international academic advising community and has around 13,000 members (NACADA Executive Office, personal communication, November 16th, 2016). Since then, individuals in the association have worked hard to advance advising as a profession (Tuttle, 2000). The association is so strongly tied to the field that for many, they are inseparable. Although critical in his assessment of calling advising an academic disciple, Habley (2009) prefaced his article with this note, which tellingly comments on the connection:

> To avoid potential boredom with the repetitive use of *NACADA*, I have used it synonymously with the terms *academic advising* and *field of advising* throughout this article. Because no professional association so thoroughly represents a field of endeavor, *NACADA* cannot be adequately separated from either *academic advising* or *field of advising.* (Habley, 2009, p. 76; emphasis in original)

Administrative home for academic advising. Until the 1970s, academic advising was done exclusively by faculty members, so academic affairs had long been its natural home (Cook, 2009). Beginning in the 1970s, advisors dedicated full time to advising were being hired and the number is growing exponentially still (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). However, even when full time advisors are hired, advising is still often housed in academic affairs (Cate & Miller, 2015; Kuhn & Padak, 2008). In a 2011 national survey, 57% of advisors reported to academic affairs, 21% to student affairs., 11% report to both, 7% to enrollment management, 2% to the registrar (Carlstrom & Miller, 2013). Until the field establishes clear professional boundaries and articulates field-wide vision statements, advising will also be tethered to higher education and the larger goals of its particular institution.

Discussion: Obstacles to Professionalization

Working toward professionalization, occupational groups encounter many

obstacles from internal and external entities, which might include:

- Other organizations and bureaucracies that limit an occupational group's autonomy;
- A knowledge base borrowed or shared with similar fields;
- A knowledge base that favors technical knowledge that can be learned by employees on
the job rather than theoretical or conceptual knowledge;
- Occupational duties or purpose that is difficult to explain to laypeople and thus, mask the public's ability to utilize the professional service;
- Lack of internal agreement between the people working in the occupation;
- Insufficient resources to move the field forward. (Cooper 2012)

Some of the obstacles come from within the occupational group: the nature of the

knowledge base (technical versus esoteric/theoretical/conceptual); and the level of

agreement about occupational purpose/function within the group. But many of the

obstacles are external: bureaucracies that control the fates of occupational groups,

knowledge bases that are reliant upon other fields, occupational purposes/functions that

are difficult to convey to the public, and having enough support (e.g., financial resources

and personnel) to move an occupational group beyond the periphery. Occupational

groups need to navigate and negotiate these obstacles within their groups and outside of

them to professionalize.

Even once an occupational group has achieved some professional stature,

obstacles can still be encountered to becoming a fully bona fide profession (Pavalko,

1988). Professionalization of a field is a dynamic and fluid process and as such, obstacles

occur at any stage of professionalization. A knowledge base of a field that becomes so

standard, routine or procedural threatens a profession's claim to esoteric, abstract or

conceptual knowledge (Pavalko, 1988). Therefore, professionals may be less relied upon as the public can more easily access information once considered to be elusive. Additionally, with *erosion of the professional community* comes the splintering of newer, more nuanced specialized areas. These "internal divisions based on specialization represent a potential threat to the integrity and cohesion of the professional community" (p. 40).

This section outlines shared obstacles to professionalization among all three fields and obstacles for each individual field.

Shared obstacles to professionalization of all three fields

There are six interrelated obstacles to professionalization for these three fields: (a) loose boundaries separating the fields, (b) interconnectedness between educational programs, (c) practitioner's credential lacks currency, (d) inconsistent language used in fields, (e) autonomy, and (f) demonstrating effectiveness.

First, there are loose boundaries separating the three fields and each has been tasked with outlining clearer boundaries from the others. Higher education—an umbrella term for everything at an institution of higher learning—is an industry of over 5,300 universities and colleges in the U.S. (Selingo, 2015). Higher education is also a field studying the industry and preparing students to be administrators in the industry (Knock, 1988). Academic advising is an umbrella term for advising on degree and life planning in colleges and universities regardless of whether the advisor is faculty, a trained practitioner in the art of academic advising, or someone hired to perform the job task of advising (NACADA, 2006). Student affairs is a term for the division in a university encompassing a variety of roles concerned with student growth and development outside

of the classroom. Student affairs practitioners can be faculty who hold joint administrative positions, practitioners trained in the art of student affairs, or someone hired to perform the tasks involved with a degree in any field (NASPA, 2017). The divisions between these three fields and who at a college or university belongs to which field is often blurred. For instance, a recent email bulletin addressed "Faculty of student affairs and higher education graduate preparation programs" (NASPA, personal communication, August 21, 2017) as though they were the same group of people; indeed, they often are.

The second obstacle is interconnectedness between programs in higher education, student affairs, academic advising, and other related fields such as adult education, counseling and educational administration. Many higher education programs offer tracks in student affairs, or those interested in student affairs can earn a degree in higher education. Academic advising is generally a track or course under higher education. When doing a web search for academic programs to study advising the most notable results are to the advising centers at various universities. Aside from the master's degree and graduate certificate offered by Kansas State University (the only program endorsed by NACADA and found on their website), a web search for graduate programs for academic advising retrieved eight other graduate certificates in the U.S. but no other masters programs. NASPA (2017) lists 220 student affairs programs divided into seven areas of focus: administration (N=112), counseling (N=21), international education (N=4), leadership (N=57), policy (N=6), student learning and development (N=95), and other (N=63). Some of the programs have more than one foci and few focus only on student affairs. Many programs are combined with another field or student affairs is a

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track of the program. The Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE, 2017) published a higher education program directory that contains a listing of masters and doctoral programs at 233 colleges and universities in the U.S. The breakdown of degree type is: M.A. (N=81), M.Ed. (N=97), M.S. (N=61), M.S.Ed. (N=3), Ed.D. (N=94), Ph.D. (N=83), and Ed.S. (N=1). Ten different program titles (or similar variants) were used: administration (N=113), student affairs/administration (N=128), leadership & policy studies (N=83), teaching (N=74), community college (N=30), athletics (N=3), counseling (N=1), first-year studies (N=1), adult education (N=1), and comparative higher education (N=1). A comparison between the topics listed by NASPA and ASHE suggests that there is either major overlap between the fields (especially regarding the areas of specialization) or that the creators of these respective lists feel the boundaries are so blurred that these areas belong on the same lists.

Third, the credential of the person working in these fields lacks currency. In true professions, only those with sufficient, knowledge, expertise, and training can perform the work (Pavalko, 1988), creating an exclusion criterion for individual workers: only those with some form of credential (sanctioned by the occupational group and sometimes, the government; see van Loo & Rocco, 2006) can practice. A study exploring the perceptions of advisors regarding the professionalization of academic advising found that despite most of the group (59%) having at least a master's degree, most did not find a graduate degree necessary to advise well (Adams, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2013). If these are the perceptions of advisors themselves, the field surely faces obstacles in terms of the way it is perceived by outside stakeholders: "Unless the current educational demands and standards for advisors can be clearly differentiated from such programs, the image of

advisors as paraprofessionals will remain indelible" (Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010, p. 74). In student affairs, scholars discussed the problem with job postings being intentionally vague about requirements. For example, stating a master's degree in student affairs, higher education, counseling *or related field* would suffice: The "well-established professions would *never* violate their professional status and insult their programs of professional education by considering applicants with degrees from *related* [emphasis added] fields" (Knock, 1988, p. 396). It is problematic when even the highest level of chief student affairs officers can acquire positions without the commiserate experience or education (Young, 1998).

The fourth is language. Terms are used interchangeably; the same term can mean very different things in different fields and contexts. For example, the use of "program" in higher education or student affairs might refer to an extracurricular program for student involvement/service whereas "program" used in academic advising is used to refer to an academic program of study. The terms higher education, student affairs, and academic advising can refer to fields of study and divisions of institutions for higher learning/education.

Fifth, student affairs and academic advising will always be situated within higher education, and therefore, never enjoy true professional autonomy. Autonomy is associated with self-regulation and self-control, which allow a profession "the freedom and power…to regulate their own work behavior and working conditions" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 25). Although professions certainly exist within organizations, those organizations do not determine the language the profession uses to define or describe itself. Higher education institutions as individual organizations define and describe roles

and responsibilities within the institution according to the administrative hierarchy's vision and organizational chart—an organizational chart that frequently changes with each new administration.

The relationship of student affairs and academic advising to higher education "calls into play the concept of professionals in bureaucracies… student affairs workers never operate in an atmosphere of unbounded autonomy, regardless of their status as professionals" (Carpenter, 1991, p. 258). The relationship to clients—in both cases, students—is different than traditional professions. To serve the best the interests of students, student affairs practitioners and advisors may, in some instances, have to go against what is best for the institution (Carpenter, 2003). This presents an ethical dilemma because as employees working for an institution, they are not fully autonomous. This lack of autonomy impacts the professional status of the fields. For "academic advising to become recognized as a profession…it has to stand on its own and not be a part of bundled or shared responsibilities of faculty or even those in student personnel who have a host of other responsibilities" (NACADA co-founder and former president Toni Trombley in Padak & Kuhn, 2009, p. 64-65). This is true of all three fields. If advising, or student affairs, or higher education administration is "professional work," members of these fields must also have individual autonomy: "members of a profession have a high degree of control over their work, are actively involved in creating policy, and are equipped to evaluate the quality of work within a profession" (Huggett, 2000, p. 47). A professional is expected to be self-driven and motivated, able to perform work without constant supervision, and to have the necessary credibility to make professional judgments independently (Houle, 1980).

Finally, all three fields have been charged with demonstrating effectiveness. Because neither advising academic and student affairs has autonomy from higher education, each must vie for resource allocation, which comes from the institution internally. Although higher education as an industry has come under public scrutiny to demonstrate effectiveness in the post-recession market, this does not affect the professional status of higher education as a field.

Individual field obstacles

In addition to the shared obstacles, each field faces its own unique barriers to professionalization.

Higher Education. There were three interrelated obstacles unique to higher education: the question of who constitutes a higher education professional, the wide range of academic credentials for those working in upper level administrative appointments, and the issue of anyone being able to conduct research in higher education.

This review found little to support that higher education is an academic discipline, an emerging discipline, or that professionalization is much of a topic of interest to its scholars and practitioners. Perhaps this occurs because higher education has long been considered a profession (Shaffer, Zalewsi, & Leveille, 2010) with the professoriate being the professionals working within. However, this view says nothing for everyone else working in higher education. When thinking about roles on the "professional" end of the spectrum, there remains the question of who identifies as a higher education professional. For example, there are many professional positions in a university. Each one of these professions has a professional home such as student affairs, human resources, and

instructional designers for online programs. There are even associations for university presidents and other high-level administrators.

Each of these professionals can also consider themselves higher education professionals, which raises a second issue. High-level administrators in universities and colleges have a wide range of academic credentials. These credentials may have been sought to become faculty in a discipline such as biology, political science, or finance. Once faculty are promoted to an administrative role, they retain an allegiance to their academic discipline and become a higher education professional without any academic preparation in the discipline or practice of higher education.

Third, any faculty member or practitioner working for a higher education institution can do research on issues and problems situated in higher education related to their academic discipline. Examples might include a chemist publishing about pedagogy in a chemistry education journal rather than a higher education journal or a sociologist publishing about the higher education environment in a sociology journal. Because of the number of different types of people doing research in the field and their identity as part of their discipline or origin, higher education as a field of research "lacks a strong or disciplinary identity" (Tight, 2014, p. 93). Thus, despite the large number of people working in higher education, very few are likely to identify higher education as home base. Such a large and complex industry presents challenges to professionalization.

Student Affairs. There were two interrelated obstacles unique to student affairs: the varied functional roles under the student affairs umbrella; and professional affinity to the functional area.

First, there are a variety of roles under the student affairs umbrella, which

exacerbates the field's inability to agree on a central mission uniting all practitioners

(Paterson & Carpenter, 1989; Porterfield, Roper, & Whitt, 2011; Stamatakos, 1981b).

NASPA (2017) includes almost 40 functional areas, ranging from disability support

services and GLBT student services to commuter student services and recreational sports.

The concern for defining functions was noted in the early literature—student affairs

"cannot afford to wait for 'outsiders' to develop and force upon it unacceptable models

for evaluation and assessment" (Stamatakos, 1981b, p. 200)—up until the last few years:

> If student affairs is viewed by presidents and other senior administrators as
> primarily a collection of offices and departments, how is it any different from
> some other administrative or academic section of the campus? There is nothing
> permanent about the current arrangement of how student affairs is organized on a
> campus; any of the offices and departments in student affairs could be assigned to
> another division of the institution…Who will articulate the 'reason' for a student
> affairs division in a way that makes it essential to the institution? (Sandeen, 2011,
> p. 5)

Without an explicit overarching purpose for its existence encompassing all

functional areas—shared by those working within the field and outside of it—student

affairs will not be able to gain public acceptance (Houle, 1980) and therefore continue to

face obstacles towards professionalization.

Second, because of the growing number of specialty areas in student affairs, there

has been a proliferation of professional associations (e.g., NODA - The Association for

Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education [NODA] or the National

Association of College and University Residence Halls [NACURH]) (Dalton & Crosby,

2011). Scholars noted the issue of *allied professionals* (Creamer et al., 1992),

practitioners identifying more with their functional area than with student affairs at large

(Dalton & Crosby, 2011; Rickard, 1988; Williams, 1988). Included in this identity are specialized professional associations with attributes of individual professions (e.g., disciplinary journals, codes of ethics, etc.) (Carpenter, 2003). If student affairs is to advance as a profession, practitioners need to identify unequivocally as student affairs practitioners (Knock, 1988). Practitioners participating more with their specialized association rather than the two prominent associations in the field, NASPA or ACPA presents a problem of unity to the professionalization of student affairs. When a profession's cohesion is splintered, "the ability of the group to exercise control over its members is also lessened" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 41).

Academic Advising. There are four barriers to professionalization for academic advising: the need to further define the field; the role of the professional association; the issue of graduate programs, and the lack of a consistent home for advising.

First, like student affairs, academic advising has had great difficulty defining itself: "The field struggles to articulate its unique role in higher education because advisors lack the language needed to describe both the practice of academic advising and its scholarly identity independent of other fields and professions" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 44). In a recent study, participants expressed their frustrations with inconsistently defined practice with respect to titles, practitioner backgrounds, practice, recognition and affirmation (Aiken-Wisniewski, et al., 2015). Without defining functions that all academic advisors understand and practice—which can be conveyed to the various stakeholders—the field will have difficulty becoming a unified, profession.

Second, several complications with its première professional association, NACADA, prolong the professionalizing of academic advising. Because of its status as a

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501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, NACADA has limitations in how much it can lobby politically for the professionalization of academic advising (Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010). Still, NACADA could play a bigger role in self-regulation and the setting of professional standards for the field of academic advising (Adams, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2013). Despite having the Core Values, the Concept of Academic Advising and the CAS Standards, the lack of clarity with role boundaries and responsibilities are troubling and holding the field back in its quest for professionalization (Aiken-Wisniewski, et al., 2015). NACADA is also housed at Kansas State University (KSU). This connection is important and has served the field and the association well. However, because of the enormous support it receives, NACADA lacks autonomy from the interests of KSU. Despite their important role in the professionalization of fields (Palea, 2012), too much reliance on a single professional association—especially one that is tied to the interests of a sponsoring university—prevents academic advising from outward expansion.

Third, if graduate education is a criterion for professionalization, one program is not enough to professionalize a field. The curriculum and specialized body of knowledge needs to be examined and established so that more programs can follow (Habley, 2009). Scholars recommend that the field of study be further developed before more programs are established (Cate & Miller, 2015; Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010). Until then, "*advisor* is no more than a job title and advising may never lay claim to being a discipline or a profession" (Habley, 2009, p.82). Although there remain questions about how it will look, plans are already underway at KSU to begin offering a doctorate in academic advising in 2018 (C. Nutt, personal communication, May 24th, 2016). Although this has

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certainly piqued the interest of many in the field, until there are more graduate programs undergirded by a substantive body of knowledge, the field will have a tough claim to a profession.

The last obstacle is the lack of consistency for the administrative home for academic advising on different campuses: advising can be housed under academic affairs, student affairs, or on some campuses, both. The issue of administrative home has implications for who does the advising, consistency of advising, and a host of other challenges. Because some academic advisors are full time advisors and some are faculty, there can be difficulty in uniting the community. This division is palpable on many campuses and to professionalize, the field must unite all advisors toward a common defining purpose (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008).

Implications: Does Professionalization Matter?

The exponential growth of higher education in the past few decades has increased the amount of research being done (Altbach, 2014; Tight, 2012). But there are many areas where future research could clarify some of the challenges each field faces to professionalization. First, to address the concern of the overlap between higher education and student affairs, a future study could sample articles from journals in both fields and through content analysis, indicate how much overlap exists between the two bodies of literature and suggest if student affairs constitutes a substantially different body of literature independent from higher education. Similarly, future research should examine if graduate programs in higher education are unique from those in student affairs, if the two fields differ substantially from each other, and if they are preparing practitioners for similar work roles. Studies might also look at job postings by different functional areas in

student affairs to find trends in terms of preferred and required qualifications, degrees, etc. Other research might explore if non-faculty higher education professionals think of their professional identity as a higher education professional. Or does their professional identity stem from their specialization/job assignment from within the academy? Future research might be more intentional in gauging the perspectives of people in the field. Such analyses might reveal issues and obstacles of the field's professionalization that have not been discussed in the literature.

Second, studies in other fields have used instruments built on Hall's (1968) attitudinal attributes of professionalization to gauge how practitioners in a field view their work. These attributes are: (a) the use of professional organization as a major reference; (b) belief in service to the public; (c) belief in self-regulation; (d) sense of calling to the field; and (e) autonomy. For instance, questions about why practitioners chose to enter their respective fields and why they choose to stay could help to elucidate the meaning these professionals give to their work. Such a study might seek a wide swath of practitioners working in a variety of settings to determine how they view the professionalization of their field. Studies using mixed methods to determine if positive perspectives on the work of the profession improved the retention of practitioners in the field would also be welcome.

Finally, more scholarship needs to set field parameters if advising is to become a bona fide profession. Without a knowledge base substantiating the effectiveness, a claim for the importance of academic advising is unsubstantiated, and advising continue to be viewed as clerical (Habley, 2009). Research is needed to generate theory to elucidate what tasks constitute academic advising and which do not; to study advisors, what they

do, and who they are; to substantiate the claim that advising impacts retention and persistence; and for advisors to collaborate with faculty on research topics within the field of advising (McGillin, 2000). In considering the important role professional associations play in the professionalization of fields, future research should explore how NACADA's association with Kansas State impacts the professionalization of advising. As resource allocation is critical for the advancement of student affairs and academic advising, research conducted in these fields needs to continue to demonstrate impact and effectiveness to stakeholders.

Throughout the literature in student affairs, there were debates about why the topic of professionalization mattered. Sparked by a debate in an issue of *Journal of College Student Development*, Kuk (1988) proclaimed, "The issue is not whether or not we are a profession. We are a profession. The real issues are how we see ourselves as a profession, how others see us as a profession, and how we organize our efforts and set priorities as a profession" (p. 398). This debate frustrated some (Kuk, 1988; Moore, 1988) but for others was "a sign of vigorous health" (Sandeen, 2011, p. 5). Scholars have made the point that models of traditional professions—characterized by elitism and exclusivity—do not fit these fields well (Moore, 1988), and that perhaps these values are at odds with the missions of student affairs, academic advising and higher education (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007). Is student affairs—and by same token, academic advising and higher education—a "new kind of profession?" (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007, p. 270). Old paradigm or new, the discussion of professionalization ultimately "matters because policy, practice, and rewards are at stake" (Huggett, 2000, p. 50). For these reasons, these fields should persist to move past the periphery.

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CHAPTER III

STUDY #2, PHENOMENOLOGICAL ETHNOGRAPHY—

TOWARDS ARTICULATING THE DEFINING FUNCTIONS OF ACADEMIC

ADVISING: CLARIFYING THE CONCEPTUAL CHARACTERISTIC

Academic advising in American higher education has been traced back to the colonial era (Cate & Miller, 2015). Initially considered one of the activities of faculty members, there became a need to have a designated role to assist students as institutions became much more diverse, with an expanding array of subjects to study and careers to consider. In the 1870s, Johns Hopkins University began allowing students to choose electives to supplement the major studies. The growing number of choices allotted to students during the twentieth century made the advisor role more pronounced, but until the 1970s, the work itself was very prescriptive and authoritarian: students were told what to do and what classes to take (Cook, 2009). In the 1970s, seminal articles (Crookston, 1972; O'Banion, 1972) spurred a movement to begin thinking about academic advising as a developmental process.

In 1977, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was established for advisors to discuss issues in the field. Throughout the years, the association grew steadily and now boasts over 13,000 members in 32 countries (L. Cunningham, personal communication, November 16th, 2016). To reflect its international reach, NACADA changed its name to "the Global Community for Academic Advising" (but retained the acronym NACADA). Beginning in 1981, NACADA began publishing a bi-annual refereed (ERIC-indexed) journal. In association with NACADA, Kansas State University began offering a graduate certificate in academic advising in 2003 and a

master's degree in 2008. NACADA has grown and the field has expanded in the last 25 years: In some form, there are advisors on every college campus. In certain places, advisors hold non-tenure or even tenure-earning faculty positions specifically for advising (see, for example, The University of Hawai'i Manoa).

However, the question of whether or not academic advising constitutes a "profession" has caused much debate (Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015; Habley, 2009; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; McGill & Nutt, 2016; Shaffer, Zalewski & Leveille, 2010). One of the primary obstacles is that academic advising is misunderstood and lacks a consistent unifying definition (Himes, 2014; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). In 2005, NACADA president Jo Anne Huber charged a taskforce to create a definition for advising. Unable to design such a statement, the group drafted a "concept" of academic advising, describing a curriculum, pedagogy, and learning outcomes (NACADA, 2006). However, it "does not attempt to dictate the manner in or process through which academic advising takes place, nor does it advocate one particular advising philosophy or model over another" (NACADA, 2006, para. 7). Because it aims to be as inclusive as possible, some might argue the 'concept' is inept in describing the essence of academic advising. A related document, the *Core Values of Academic Advising* (NACADA, 2006) described responsibilities advisors have in guiding students and what external stakeholders can expect from advisors. Although both documents attempted to articulate a framework for academic advising, neither achieves a description of its essence and it is not clear whether advisors could or would articulate advising in this manner.

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A second concern is that attempts to define advising often centered on convenient analogues, the most popular of which is "advising is teaching." However, the excessive dependency on these analogues "obscures the uniqueness of academic advising and masks the importance of the scholarship that underlies its practice" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 43). In asserting that advising is *advising*, Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) argued that advisors "lack the language needed to describe both the practice of academic advising and its scholarly identity independent of other fields and professions" (p. 44). Another recent study revealed that advisors were frustrated by the inconsistency of job titles and responsibilities and practitioner backgrounds even within their own campuses (Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015). To achieve self-jurisdiction, "the field of advising must create a clear definition of the occupation, to include the responsibilities, procedures, scope of practice, and professional practices all advisers would follow" (Adams, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2013, para 10).

Despite much scholarly deliberation and discourse, academic advising and its role in higher education remains misunderstood by university stakeholders, including faculty and staff, students, and advisors themselves. Indeed, there is little consensus on what advising is or ought to be (Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015; Habley, 2009; Himes, 2014; Himes & Schulenberg, 2016; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; McGill, 2013; McGill & Nutt, 2016; Shaffer, Zalewski & Leveille, 2010), and how advising is valued at institutions plays a role in its status as a profession (Kerr, 2000). In the last 25 years, advisng has striven for *professionalization*, a process whereby an occupation seeks to gain professional status (Pavalko, 1988; Wilensky, 1964). Despite how much work is being done to define and professionalize academic advising, "many advisors might still

see their roles as course recommenders rather than teachers who are fundamental constituents of a college or university's teaching mission" (McGill, 2016, p. 50).

Purpose and Research Question

Several scholars have articulated the need for a normative theory of academic advising (Himes, 2014; Himes & Schulenberg, 2016; Lowenstein, 2014), which would describe an ideal state for academic advising. However, scant empirical work has investigated how practitioners view the essence of advising. As clarifying the defining functions (Houle, 1980) is the bedrock of an occupational group's claim to professionalization, the purpose of this phenomenological ethnography (Katz & Csordas, 2003; Maggs-Rapport, 2000) is to further clarify the functions of academic advising and to elucidate how further definition of the scope of advising will help professionalize the field. Guided by the following research question, "What are the essential functions of academic advising?," this paper will proceed in five sections: conceptual framework, method, findings, discussion, and implications.

Conceptual Framework

Professionalization has been a subject of scholarship since at least the beginning of the 20th century. Despite an assortment of professionalization models (Abbott, 1988; Pavalko, 1988; Wilensky, 1964), Houle's (1980) is the most appropriate because of its focus on the conceptual characteristic of professionalization. This section overviews Houle's conceptual characteristic: clarifying defining function(s); and the ways academic advising has been characterized since the 1950s.

Clarifying Defining Function(s) of a Profession

Through twenty years of writing and research, Houle (1980) distilled the common elements of 17 professions (e.g., accountants, lawyers, social workers). The purpose was "to advance the process by which greater conceptual coherence may be brought to the educational endeavors of practicing professionals" (p. xi). Houle (1980) outlined characteristics of professions in three broad categories: conceptual, performance, and collective identity. All are important to understand the status of an occupational group's professionalization, but this paper focuses on the conceptual characteristic, which is principally concerned with a professional group "clarifying its defining function(s)" (p. 35). Defining functions—"the structural tenets of a practitioner's work" that "give it focus and form" (p. 35)—are essential for a profession to guide those working in the field. A clear mission and purpose communicates to non-professionals what the profession does. Practitioners in long-standing professions may be able to manage without thinking too deeply about the mission and function of their work, but this can lead to misguided, subpar, or even unethical practice. Non-professions or emerging professions may lack a central mission agreed upon by its body of practitioners. There may be alternative or even conflicting ideas about the nature of the work. The absence of a central mission may lead to further role conflict and job ambiguity (Kahn, 1964). Clarifying the conceptual purpose forces the field to determine the defining functions falling under their purview and those falling outside. As fields develop, however, their central missions often expand:

> A new intellectual abstraction of the vocation's central mission may be stated by an established leader or by some person whose unorthodoxy initially gives rise to indifference, anger, or ridicule. If the idea appears to have sufficient promise or

threat, it will be subjected to elaboration, refinement, and adjustment to the realities of practice through a process of discussion, argumentation, debate, and other activities customary to the mode of inquiry. The outcome may be reaffirmation of the old idea, acceptance of the new one, compromise, or the perception of deeper unities originally hidden by surface disagreements. Thus, the new sense of mission develops out of a process of collective self-education among established or emergent leaders of the profession. (Houle, 1980, p. 39)

Therefore, the conceptual grounding of a field is often a discursive, evolving, and iterative process. In the last half century, academic advising has been through several phases of defining its conceptual characteristic.

Characterization of Academic Advising

Although it is impossible to give a complete history of how advising has been described, a few key definitions through the years will help situate its development. There are three general models in which academic advising has been characterized: as prescriptive, developmental, and teaching and learning.

Until the early 1970s, advising was viewed as prescriptive, described in the 1950s as: "tedious clerical work combined with hit and run conferences with students on curricula. It is a *most cordially hated activity* [emphasis added] by the majority of college teachers" (Maclean, 1953, p. 357). Advising was authoritarian and transmissive, making the student a passive recipient of information. Crookston (1972/1994/2009) contrasted prescriptive advising with developmental, which was "concerned with not only the specific personal or vocational decision but with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness, and problem-solving, decision-making and evaluation skills" (p. 78). In the 1980s, *developmental academic advising* was explicitly named and defined as: "…a systematic process based on a close student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in

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achieving educational, career, and personal goals through the utilization of the full range of institutional and community resources" (Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1984, p. 18-19). Although useful in elevating the status and practice of advising, critics of the developmental paradigm (e.g., Hemwall & Trache, 1999; Lowenstein, 2005; White & Schulenberg, 2012) argued that it had too long dominated the field's identity. Some suggested that the term was used in too many ways to aptly describe advising and in focusing too much on the growth of the student, neglected "the central mission of higher education" (Hemwall & Trache, 1999, p. 5): the learning processes that occurred in advising. Beginning with higher education's central mission of learning, a theory of advising that focused on student learning was needed (Hemwall & Trache, 1999; Lowenstein, 2005).

As there has been little consensus (and no empirical work) on the conceptual characteristic of advising, it is not clear that these paradigms are widely held or if they are practiced as described. Articulating the central mission of a field is important because it affects "how people understand their work and how they do it" (Lowenstein, 2005, p. 73). As such, continued investigation is necessary.

Method

This study is conducted at the crossroads of two qualitative approaches: phenomenology and ethnography. Before discussing the specific methods of data collection, this section reviews significant features of each and what the application of both offers.

Phenomenology

At its core, a phenomenological study attempts to describe the essence of a phenomenon through the experiences of the participants. The researcher is the interpreter, and the meaning of the essence comes from what the researcher understands the phenomenon to be based on the synthesis from the participants. Providing a description of the essence rooted in data is the "culminating aspect of a phenomenological study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). The phenomenological aspect of this study was the attempt to describe the essence of the phenomenon of academic advising, as described by 17 of its leaders who have served as advisors and leaders in NACADA in various capacities.

Ethnography

Ethnographic studies focus on shared views of a group aiming "to describe the cultural knowledge of the participants" (Maggs-Rapport, 2000, p. 219). Whereas the phenomenologist is interpreter, the ethnographer is an observer, looking for patterns in the group's ideas and beliefs (Fetterman, 2010). The research approach can be either *emic*, in which little theory is brought to the observation of the group, or *etic*, in which a theory is brought in from the literature and applied to the group. The product of an ethnography is a "cultural portrait" (Creswell, 2013, p. 96). The ethnographic aspect of this study is the focus on NACADA as a shared culture.

Qualitative Pluralism

A range of qualitative methods exist to answer different kinds of research questions. The research question of a study should dictate the appropriate method. Sometimes, the research question(s) can be best explored using more than one method. Qualitative plurality (Frost, 2011)—using more than one approach—allows the

researcher to "access as much as possible within the data" (Frost, 2011, p. 10). Bricolage

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) is one form of qualitative plurality. It describes a process that

"promotes interdisciplinarity as a way of drawing on many methods of inquiry" to "avoid

the limitations imposed by employing a single method" (Frost, 2011, p. 5).

The method for this study is neither fully phenomenological nor fully

ethnographic, but rather, combined elements of each. To acquire a description of the

essence of academic advising from several leaders in the field, approaches from both

methodological schools were used. When these approaches are appropriately combined:

> the phenomenological perspective enables the researcher to concentrate on the
> phenomenon under review whilst the ethnographic perspective allows for the
> phenomenon to be considered in terms of the participant group and its cultural
> background. The researcher concentrates on how members of the participant
> group differ in their knowledge of their 'community,' whilst attempting to
> emphasize the individuality of participant experience. (Maggs-Rapport, 2000, p.
> 222)

The growing number of disparate ethnographic schools have made ethnography

especially available to pluralistic studies (Creswell, 2013). Using phenomenological

approaches within ethnographic studies is particularly well-suited because they probe

"beneath the locally warranted definitions of a local culture to grasp the active

foundations of its everyday reconstruction" (Katz & Csordas, 2003, p. 284-285).

Sample

Unlike a pure phenomenology, a homogenous sample was not sought after for this

study. Seventeen NACADA leaders who offer "information-rich" (Patton, 2002, p. 46)

descriptions of the phenomenon were recruited for the study. Criterion sampling, in

which "cases that meet some criterion" (Patton, 2002, p. 243) was used to investigate the

phenomenon. The leaders have served in a variety of advising positions and in a variety

of roles in the association. All of them are professionals working in the field and have graduate degrees (many had doctorates). To qualify for the interview portion of this study, participants had to be involved in one of the following leadership roles: a commission chair, a subject matter expert publishing about the professionalization of academic advising, or those who have held high office (e.g., presidents, board members, etc.).

First, NACADA has 42 commission and interest groups (CIG) organized around topics of advising administration, advising specific populations, differing institutional types, and the theory, practice, and delivery of academic advising. Each CIG has a chair (two-year appointment) who guides members in achieving the goals of the CIG. Five commission chairs participated. Second, because of their important scholarly contributions and knowledge of the professionalization of academic advising, nine subject matter experts were interviewed. They have published about the obstacles the field faces and potential solutions toward professionalization. The third group—ten NACADA leaders who have held high offices—were selected because their leadership and service to the field offered a wide perspective of professionalization. This included members who: served on the board of directors (a three-year term); served as a president or vice-president; or administrators in NACADA's executive office. Although there are three different ways/groups in which participants were eligible, some participants fell into more than one group.

Table 1 displays the profiles of the participants.

Table 1

Participant Profiles

Participant	Current Job Position Type	Years in NACADA	Years in Higher Education	Highest Degree Earned	Number of Years as Advisor	Types of Advising Roles	Commission Chair	Subject-Matter Expert	Held High Office
1	Primary-role Advisor	12	15	Ph.D.	15	Faculty Advisor; Primary-Role Advisor; Advising Administrator	X	X	
2	University Administrator	15	18	Ph.D.	14	Primary-role Advisor	X	X	X
3	Advising Administrator	13	17	M.A., M.Ed.	15	Primary-role Advisor; Advising Administrator	X	X	
4	University Administrator/ Faculty	25	45	Ph.D.	15	Faculty Advisor		X	
5	Advising Administrator	23	40	Ph.D.	40	Primary-role Advisor; Advising Administrator	X	X	
6	Faculty Advisor	15	19	Ph.D.	19	Faculty Advisor; Primary-Role Advisor; Advising Administrator	X	X	
7	Advising Administrator	25	31	Ed.D.	31	Faculty Advisor; Advising Administrator		X	X
8	Faculty Advisor	11	36	Ph.D.	30	Faculty Advisor		X	
9	Advising Administrator	17	22	Ph.D.	18	Primary-role Advisor; Advising Administrator			X
10	Faculty Advisor	12	17	Ph.D.	15	Primary-role Advisor; Faculty Advisor			X
11	University Administrator	21	24	Ph.D.	24	Faculty Advisor; Advising Administrator		X	
12	Advising Administrator	18	18	M.S.	18	Advising Administrator			X
13	University Administrator	22	26	Ph.D.	26	Primary-role Advisor; Advising Administrator			X
14	Advising Administrator	21	32	M.S.	23	Primary-role Advisor; Advising Administrator			X
15	Advising Administrator	27	27	Ed.D.	27	Primary-role Advisor; Faculty Advisor; Advising Administrator			X
16	Advising Administrator	32	40	Ph.D.	30	Advising Administrator			X
17	University Administrator	19	42	Ph.D.	42	Faculty Advisor; Advising Administrator			X
						TOTAL:	5	9	10

Data Collection

An interview protocol was designed based on Knox and Fleming's (2010) analysis of the field of adult education (vis-à-vis Houle, 1980), examining the essence and distinctive nature of the field, the various roles performed by its practitioners, the

career stages of advisors, the role of scholarly literature and graduate curricula, the perceptions of the field by other stakeholders, and future directions. The semi-structured interviews, conducted from Fall 2013-Fall 2015, ranged from 74-147 minutes. The data were transcribed and sent to participants to verify accuracy.

One of NACADA's commissions—Theory, Philosophy, & History of Advising Commission—is dedicated to examining "the theoretical, philosophical and historical foundations of academic advising, in addition to supporting theory building initiatives and their applications" (NACADA, 2013). Since the group's formation in 2000, there has been an active listserv, a forum in which participants can debate and engage in the meaning of academic advising. Internet listservs have been used in qualitative research projects ranging from the concerns of physical education teachers (Pennington, Wilkinson, & Vance, 2004) to health-related support groups (Kennedy, 2008). Internet data is widely available and therefore, fodder for analysis. However, there is a longstanding debate about whether this type of research constitutes human subjects research or simply text analysis (Herron, Sinclair, Kernohan, & Stockdale, 2011). Because internet data is public domain, some scholars (Walther, 2002; Bassett & O'Riordan, 2002) deem it to be "non-reactive data collection which can be gathered without the knowledge or consent of the subjects through non-disruptive observation" (Herron et al., 2011, para. 14). It is considered "fair use" by law and researchers are entitled to "access and quote such material if it is for non-commercial or academic purposes" (para. 16).

Upon reviewing the literature and consulting with the director of the NACADA Center for Research, the decision was made to treat the archival email threads as textual

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analysis and not human subjects research. However, like any form of data, care must be taken to ensure that the research protects confidentiality and "benefits the lives of listserv members" (Kennedy, 2008, p. 4). Five email chains were selected for analysis, detailed below in Table 2.

Table 2

Email Chains Analyzed

Title of Email Thread	Date of Original Post	Number of Responses	Number of Participants
"The Value of Academic Advising"	October 15, 2012	45	29
"After the Corporate University…Now What?"	December 5, 2012	6	6
"A Theory on the Purpose of Academic Advising"	December 6, 2010	16	10
"Conferences ours and others"	September 21, 2013	29	15
"Customer Service—A Dissenting Opinion"	March 18, 2014	24	18

Data Analysis

There were two types of data analysis: interviews and documents. Document analysis is a way of corroborating the evidence found in other methods, to verify findings from other sources of data, and to reduce potential bias (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000). However, if the evidence from documents contradicts other findings, the researcher is responsible for further investigating the problem. When the data can be corroborated, there is more trustworthiness for the study (Bowen, 2009).

Interviews. The interview transcripts were uploaded into NVivo to assist with tracking the codes. To arrive at a thick description of the phenomenon, the data were "inductively analyzed to identify the recurring patterns or common themes that cut across

the data" (Merriam, 2002, p. 7). The data were analyzed for "codable moments" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 9) at both the manifest-content (directly observable) and latent content (underlying the phenomenon) levels. Data was first approached with open coding, looking for important words and phrases while making notes of initial impressions (Huberman & Miles, 2002). When the phenomenon under investigation lacks research, "researchers avoid using preconceived categories" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). This allowed the emerging codes to be "reflective of more than one key thought. These often come directly from the text and then become the initial coding scheme" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). The codes and sub-codes were described, noting the distinctive nature of each (Boyatzis, 1998). Finally, representative quotations adding nuanced meanings to the codes were selected. "The researcher then analyzes the data by reducing the information to significant statements or quotes and combines the statements into themes" (Creswell, 2013, p. 80), thus developing a textual description. When all the interview data had been analyzed, a preliminary thematic description of the phenomenon of academic advising had been articulated. However, because a second analytical phase was planned, this remained tentative.

Documents. For the second phase of data analysis, the selected chains of email threads were input into NVivo and coded. Although I had already begun to articulate a description of academic advising from the interview analysis, the email threads were approached openly and coded inductively using c*onventional* qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The analysis of the email chains added nuance to the existing themes, but did not add new themes. After this process, the interview data were re-visited

to ensure that the whole scope of the phenomenon had been represented by the emerging categories and codes.

Integrity Measures

Three integrity measures undergird this study: data triangulation; researcher identity and prolonged engagement in the field; and member checking.

First, data triangulation (Denzin, 2012) is achieved with multiple forms of data, giving the findings a broader basis for support, deepening the rigor of the design. In this study, the analysis of the email threads added additional evidence to all three of the original themes and no new themes emerged. This suggests that data saturation had been reached (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Second, one important duty for a qualitative researcher is to locate themselves in the research (Merriam, 2002). In ethnographic research, this participant-observation role affords opportunities, but demands attending to the potential bias of the researcher (Yin, 2009). As an academic advisor for eight years and active member of NACADA leadership, it is impossible to remove myself from this professional context. Thus, many of the participants whom I interviewed I knew well, and conversations about this topic have extended beyond the interviews themselves. My prolonged engagement in the field of advising generally—as well as my participation within NACADA in particular—gives me several advantages: direct insight into the field and a thorough understanding of the association, easy access to leaders in the field, and the ability to obtain necessary documents for research purposes. However, as the primary instrument (Merriam, 2002), the researcher takes themselves out of study as much as possible, setting aside pre-conceived ideas about the phenomenon "to take a fresh perspective toward the

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phenomenon under examination" (Creswell, 2013, p. 80). As a phenomenological ethnographer, this was only possible to a certain degree, but remaining cautious of this helped me to manage my own subjectivities (Peshkin, 1988) and be alert for the potential for bias (Yin, 2009). For instance, one email chain contained a vigorous debate about whether advising was inherently more of a service or more a of an educational endeavor. As a researcher, I had to bracket my strong personal beliefs about the matter to properly analyze both sides of the issue.

Finally, once these data were organized by themes, participants were given the opportunity to confirm meaningfulness of the themes. Some simply agreed with the themes while others reflected on them. One participant had trouble distinguishing themes I and II, noting their interconnectedness. However, for others, theme II was the most original contribution of the research: "It is still relatively rare that scholarly articles deal with such things as making meaning. That's the one that is most surprising" (Interviewee 5). Upon receiving feedback from the participants, themes were revisited and refined.

Findings

As a phenomenological ethnography, this section presents a description of the essence of academic advising through the lens of its leaders: Through academic advising, students learn and develop, make meaning, and connect with a caring institutional representative. (Note regarding quotations: Interviewed participants are referred to as "interviewee" and are numbered 1-17. Quotes used from emails refer to the specific chain [1-5] and either the originator [labeled as Responder 1] or any subsequent responder.)

Students Learn and Develop. First, advising was primarily characterized as a "cognitive and intellectual" (Interviewee 3) endeavor in which students learn and

develop. Therefore, the duty of advisors is to discuss intellectual goals with students and to facilitate student learning and development: "It is work that enhances learning and is a locus of learning. It is the place where people learn, not just a service, not even a service that tells you where to go learn" (Interviewee 3). To fulfill this function, advisors should help students to understand, "how to improve their intellectual development (which might…involve considerations of emotional and other aspects of development)" (Chain 1, Responder 10). This might complicate understandings that people hold about advising and participants took issue with the over-simplification of advising. Although advising serves the needs of students, participants posited that it went beyond transactional activities such as disseminating information and making referrals. They emphasized the word *academic* over *advising*: advising consists of teaching students and facilitating their growth "as opposed to telling students what to do" (Interviewee 11). In fact, it is this emphasis on learning where advising differs from other fields because it is concerned with the academic needs for people in higher education, thus making it unique to the college setting. Whereas every person might benefit from some guidance dealing with the transition to adulthood, "Not everybody needs help interrelating academic disciplines to each other, planning an education and making sense out of the relationship between courses and why we take things in a certain order and how to choose intellectual directions" (Interviewee 3). Additionally, as professionals with advanced education, advisors should model higher ways of thinking and provide scaffolding for student learning. In helping students to understand their curricular decisions, advisors help students to craft their education.

Advisors facilitate personal development for students. For example, through advising, students articulate, develop, and accomplish goals. Advisors help students think about their actions and behaviors and future plans and "are the only ones with an institutional role for doing that" (Interviewee 6). Advisors help students learn to appreciate ambiguity and develop critical thinking. Participants noted that this goes far beyond instructing students about their graduation requirements. In a nod to the emphasis on retention in higher education, one interviewee said that although graduation is "an okay thing to measure" it should not necessarily be a *goal* of academic advising. In thinking about advising as an endeavor through which students learn and develop,

> …what good is it going to do a person to understand what the graduation requirements are later in life? That learning outcome has a short half-life. We know there is more, that it's not all that simple. And to hear a colleague say, 'well it's just about graduating people,'…we know it's not. (Interviewee 5).

In fact, participants argued that although graduation might be an important aspect of advising, it could not be the primary goal. Several brought up the example of an advisor who sees that a student would be better served by leaving the institution and recommends that they leave. Thus, there are times when advisors must go against institutional imperatives to best meet the needs of students.

To take seriously the role of facilitating personal growth and development, advisors must meet the different needs of each student. This involves meeting the students where they are and providing what they need in that moment: "Some will need to be educated on policy, some on requirements; some will require assistance in learning to manage their time, and some will need assistance developing decision making skills" (Chain 5, Responder 8). Two interviewees mentioned that in treating students as

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individuals, it is important not to unintentionally foster co-dependency in them. One refers to this in terms of the nature of the advising relationship whereas another talks about challenging the students properly to develop the skills they need to be successful. Through a balance of challenge and support, advisors have a responsibility to help students become their best selves. An extension of encouraging student's growth is helping them become engaged citizens: both on campus and in planning for their futures.

Although it was widely agreed that advising should be primarily about the learning and development of students, some questioned if advisors had the time or the expertise to teach students in a manner comparable to faculty. This is challenging because often advisors do not have graduate training in the field for which they advise: "We're only academic advisors, not academics" (Chain 1, Responder 10). Participants suggested that to claim to be an educative function, advising needed to have clear learning outcomes that could be assessed. Thus, the question of what we want students to learn through advising was posed. One email responder suggested four types of knowledge and/or skills students should acquire through advising: facts/information, technical/discipline-based skills, transferrable skills, and habits of mind. When pondering issues of assessing these areas of skills or knowledge, one suggested that the measure of good advising is what students learn: "One knows 'good' advising by the types and depth of learning that occur in students" (Chain 1, Responder 11).

Students Make Meaning. The second theme was that advising is a place where students make meaning. In a judgment-free space, advisors help students determine their values and take stock of their situation. Interviewee 3 noted, "an advisors' job is to train you as a human being, and to figure out what is important to you, and to help you create

the education that's meaningful to you and important to your life… to guide and shape the student's academic experience in the institution" (Interviewee 3). Participant 1 offered this example: "I often talk to students about the difference between their own intrinsic motivations and their motivations to meet extrinsic expectations, particularly from their parents. Who else is going to ask them those questions?" (Interviewee 1). The one-to-one setting of advising allows the student an opportunity to think more deeply about experiences and attempt to make connections.

Participants described advising as an opportunity for students to intentionally synthesize their learning experiences and make meaning of them. Beyond learning skills such as goal setting, "the learning that advising brings about is integrative and synthetic learning and its job is to help students make meaning out of their education taken as a whole" (Interviewee 3). Many felt this was unique to academic advising. For example, one felt that although there are opportunities in classes and in extracurricular activities for students to make meaning of their experiences, it is within the advising setting "where that synthesis can happen…" (Interviewee 1).

From synthesizing learning experiences within the classroom and through engagement on campus, students begin to form an academic identity. Advisors facilitate conversations about the connections between academic programs, careers, and values. For example, with an engineering student, it is the advisor—rather than the calculus instructor—who is likely helping the student to understand the importance of the course in relation to the rest of the curriculum. Advisors help

> …students to ask some of those same questions about themselves and to reflect on their education as it grows and to see how things fit together. Compare the different courses that they are taking and see how the different disciplines that

they are studying inform each other. That's what I think is the most exciting work that advisors can do. (Interviewee 3)

Not only does advising help students to understand the connections between parts of their coursework (the *logic of the curriculum*, Lowenstein, 2005), they help students to make connections to their life's larger purpose. For instance, advising is a setting where students are challenged to think about the bigger picture: "it's one of the few places in higher education that students are asked to think about *why* they're there. Why they want to study some type of major? Where is their passion?" (Interviewee 7). Participants spoke about the need for advising to be a transformative experience. In their view, this distinguished advising from other units on campus: "When students go to financial aid or the registrar, that student is going to get a service. But when advisors work with students, our ultimate goal is to *transform* that student's beliefs, practices, behaviors, in a way that benefits the educational goals of the institution and the student" (Interviewee 3). As Interviewee 5 noted, "We help them attain, for themselves, an education worth having for a lifetime. That's not something any idiot with a college bulletin can do. That's not about graduating on time. It's not about retention either." Advisors are primed "to help today's students make sense of what, how, and why they are studying" (Chain 1, Responder 10). They have a responsibility to "help students understand the reasons that higher education exists (not merely, what a degree can do for the student)" (Chain 3, Responder 5). Therefore, advisors help students make sense not just of their chosen major path, but also about how different parts of their college experiences relate to the entirety of their lives.

Students Connect with a Caring Institutional Representative. Finally,

advisors support students by providing them resources and serving as a point of

institutional connection.

Participants described the role of advisors as guiding students' academic pursuits,

helping them see opportunities they might otherwise miss, and getting them engaged on

campus. One interviewee likened advisors to case managers—they may be the only

consistent university representative with whom students develop a long-standing

significant relationship. Participants agreed that one of the primary missions of academic

advising is to support students, sometimes advocating on their behalf. One referred to the

Greek term, Paraclete ("one who is called alongside to help") to describe the actions of

advisors:

> When my students are not in good academic standing or violating university
> policy, they need somebody who can help them stand up for themselves and
> sometimes they've done wrong and they need to take their medicine, but
> somebody needs to stand for them. (Interviewee 8)

In the current climate of retention and focus on graduation, advocating may be the most

important responsibility of the advisor.

Advising was described as a unique place of *connection* for advisors and students.

Participants highlighted advising as an interactive endeavor and not one in which the

student is the passive recipient of information.

> The essence of academic advising is meeting a student and connecting in a place
> where they are making significant life decisions. And academic pathways reflect
> these decisions, which tie into their identity, and academic advising is connecting
> that place of honesty and truth where the student allows the advisor to provide
> whatever is needed in that moment to help things become clearer for that student.
> And that can take on a lot of different dimensions. It can be different expressions
> of that same thing, or different student needs being met in that moment of
> connection. The strength of our profession lies is the heart of what happens in that

interaction. A student can go on a computer, look up information and think about where they're going or what matters to them or what class might be interesting or might not interesting. It's when that exchange happens between this knowledgeable person who's truly invested in that student's success—if that's the case or even variations of that level of investment—that's what academic advising is. And yet, we haven't quite grasped that process. (Interviewee 13)

The one-on-one nature makes advising unique from other settings on the university campus. It is the dialectical connection with the institutional representative that fosters the learning occurring in advising. Participants argued that some information students need could be found online and advisors should be more than "living and breathing FAQ documents" (Interviewee 3). Some even mentioned that if it were simply about conveying such information, well-trained peer (student) advisors could be hired to work with students. However, even if students come in for simple matters, if the student is meeting with a concerned representative, it is likely that deeper issues will come up. Interviewee 3 suggested that

> the real heart of advising rests in these discussions about substantive issues. I don't want to suggest that the 'details' are not part of the work of advising, but they are fairly easily recognizable as part of the work of advising and at the same time don't seem to tell us exhaustively what advising should really involve. (Interviewee 3)

This same advisor described the difficulty in relating to students who were simply there to absorb information. For her, the office desk represented a barrier and form of power. To circumvent this, she often meets students outside the office for coffee. Students sometimes have the expectation that they are there to get their course schedule form signed. "That's great, but that's not advising" (Interviewee 3). Instead, advising is an opportunity for informal learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2015). If advising is perceived by students to be a place to receive information, this is what they will come to expect.

To serve students in these ways, advisors must wear many hats, to be able to read and interpret students and be able to integrate many skills on the spot. This process is an artform of integration:

> The ability to integrate the theoretical understanding of what is happening, the conceptual and cognitive understanding of your job with the human interaction. It's simultaneously seeing the student in front of you, meeting them where they are, integrating your responsibility as a professional, and your institutional mission, to marshal these intangible intangibles. I operationalize that very practically, even though 'artform' sounds like something that you can't define. Those are measurable competencies that are built over time. (Interviewee 9)

Advisors must have a broad and in-depth understanding of the campus and the curriculum of the university and have the skills to read individual students including the issues they are presenting *and* those that are beneath the surface. One frustrated interviewee likened the advising interaction as a close reading of text: "It's more complicated than just graduation rates, and retention rates. It's being able to interpret a text well; to understand the student before us. To honor them, revere them, and respect them" (Interviewee 5). At many institutions, lip-service is given to caring about student's graduation in terms of how it was going to help them carry out their lives. But participants stressed that if graduation was the goal, advisors would be missing what was really going on with that student in that moment of connection.

Discussion

Through academic advising, students learn and develop, make meaning, and connect with a caring institutional representative. This helps to articulate an essence, a central mission, and the conceptual characteristic for the field.

Advancing the profession involves not only problematizing simplistic views and practices of advising, but also thinking more intentionally about its distinctive purpose

and essence: "When no existing researching or theory is applicable to the phenomenon or idea at hand, the scholar must develop a theory on which to base inquiry" (Robbins, 2010, p. 38). Although emerging professions may have alternative or competing ideas about the nature of the work, a primary concern should be "clarifying its defining function(s)" (Houle, 1980, p. 35). Participants sometimes disagreed about a universal purpose underlying academic advising, but most agreed it was critical to work toward a professional consensus. As advising has been positioned as counseling, learning, mentoring, encouraging, advocating, educating, and friendship (e.g., Hemwall & Trachte, 2005; Lowenstein, 2005; Melander, 2005; Rawlins & Rawlins, 2005), there has been some heated discussions about what advising is.

Advising as *teaching*, first advocated by Crookston (1972), has continued to be a popular slogan in the community. Although originally meant to clarify the function of academic advising, it was contested by interviewees and email commentators. Advising as *teaching* and other popular analogues obscure the *essence* of advising (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). Such simplistic views of a profession are not "useful in dealing with the priorities and ethical decisions encountered" (Houle, 1980, p. 35) in professional practice. Particularly in the email threads, there was significant clashing between themes one and three: whether academic advising was inherently a teaching endeavor or some sort of service. One person suggested advising as *service* is a more apt descriptive than advising as *teaching*. The responder posited that although the comparison with teaching might raise the professional stature of advising, there is

> …more opportunity to support, encourage, advocate for, and help our students
> find their way (literally and metaphorically) than…teach[ing] them how to make
> connections between various parts of their curriculum. Students come to us for

help (choosing classes, navigating university bureaucracy, graduating, applying for scholarships, etc.) and they deserve our consideration and attention. (Chain 5, Responder 9)

Another agreed with this sentiment, adding: "we are offering support, guidance and information to students. There may be some teachable moments in our interactions, but we are providing a service" (Chain 5, Responder 12). These responses corroborate some evidence found in the interviews: that initially the "advising as teaching" slogan was used to elevate the professional stature of advising and help to clarify for advisors and other university stakeholders that it was more than a transmission of information to students and assisting them to maneuver a college setting. Some interviewees noted that as a field, advisors have an inferiority complex. One insisted that part of an advisor's job *is* to help students choose their classes. Another suggested that "advising as teaching" was a way of overlaying the work we do to others in a way that they will understand. She equated this practice with the early Christians converting Pagans.

Others saw the over-emphasis on service aspects of advising to be problematic. One commentator indicated what advising as *service* might communicate to the student:

> Service…can readily be construed by students as doing what they would like not to bother doing or are afraid of doing or need to be taught how to do. Indeed, as with parenting, it is often far easier for us to do-for than it is to teach and explore-with and scaffold skills and development…is this the best way to offer service and help in the fullest sense of those words? If we use the vocabulary of service and help…we mislead students about what we and they need to and should be doing. (Chain 5, Responder 4)

Are teaching opportunities in advising neglected because advisors see their role as a transmitter of information? If advising requires such expertise, do advisors have the training/knowledge/qualifications to have complex conversations (Lowenstein, 2014)?

Has the utility of "advising as teaching" passed its prime? Can we look at advising as having an educative function/responsibility, but not equating it to college teaching?

To clarify these purposes, scholars (e.g., Hagen 2005; Himes, 2014; Himes & Schulenberg, 2016; Lowenstein, 2014; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008) have advocated for a theory (or theories) unique to advising. This is critical because "the continued use of theoretical bases solely borrowed from other disciplines will jeopardize the recognition of advising as a distinct field of practice and scholarship" (Himes, 2014, p. 5). The approaches to these issues have been different, but each agrees that advising is at a critical juncture in defining itself, both to guide our practice and to help stakeholders better understand, value, and appreciate the work of advisors (Himes, 2014). Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2010) posited three purposes for advising: "engaging student in reflective conversations about educational goals, teaching students about the nature of higher education, and provoking student change toward greater levels of self-awareness and responsibility" (Himes, 2014, p. 6). Lowenstein's (2014) advising theory of integrative learning advocated for six core concepts:

- Advising is an academic endeavor.
- Advising enhances learning and at its core is a locus of learning and not merely a signpost to learning.
- The learning that happens in advising is integrative, and helps students make meaning out of their education.
- The student must be an active rather than a passive participant in this process.
- Advising is transformative, not transactional.
- Advising is central to achieving the learning goals of any college or university.

(Lowenstein, 2014, paras. 50-56)

In its focus on learning, this normative theory helps to clarify an ideal to which advising should strive. However, in thinking about the essence of advising, this theory says little

about the connection between student and advisor. Therefore, an advising approach such as appreciative advising (Bloom, Hutson, & Ye, 2008) focusing on relational aspects of advising and meaning-making might be coupled with theory of integrative learning. On writing about features of a theory of advising, Lowenstein (2014) describes two key elements: a description of features unique to advising (a similar aim of this study); and a normative theory, which, by its very nature, is not empirically testable. Such a theory would "be a statement of the ultimate purpose of advising, of what advising *ideally* should be, not necessarily what advising actually is" (emphasis in original; Lowenstein, 2014, para. 17). The current study was an attempt at empirically exploring what a theory of advising—as viewed by leaders in NACADA—might look like.

Part of the difficulty is placing advising *theory* in advising *context*. Academic advising will always be situated within higher education, will not be charging clients for services, and therefore, never have full autonomy from the broader structures of the institution. Some professional groups have difficulty when "establishing its central mission because of circumstances beyond its control" (Houle, 1980, p. 36). This study revealed that advisors experience role conflict: at times, the interests of the student may not be in the interests of the institution. This poses an ethical dilemma that must be negotiated by the advisor. Because the central mission of academic advising will always be situated in a specific institutional context, it may always have to be compromised according to the mission of the academic institution and those who run it.

Implications

There are three implications for this research: the meaning advisors have for their work; the ramifications for institutional graduation efforts; and the academic preparedness and professional development of advisors.

First, how are frontline advisors thinking about their work? Are they thinking in terms of providing students with accurate and timely information to help them graduate on time? How are they communicating the value of their work to students and to other stakeholders? When advisors meet with students at freshman orientation and talk about advising, then sit down with them and tell them what classes to take, what message does that convey? By assisting students in learning the language of higher education, advisors are "cultural navigators," striving "to help students move successfully through education and life" (Strayhorn, 2015, p. 59). Advisors also model behaviors and attitudes for students. Given such a great responsivity, participants indicated that advisors need to think more deeply about their role in student success. What are the implications for professional socialization of advisors? How are advising administrators communicating the value of academic advising to advisors? Besides their work with students, what other kinds of work are advisors given? Is it mostly clerical? How is advising evaluated? How is good advising rewarded? If advising is discussed in terms of helping students graduate and if the work is evaluated as such, advisors will continue to see their roles are course schedulers and not as professionals who are integrally part of the teaching and learning mission of the institution (McGill, 2016).

Second, if the essence of academic advising involves teaching, facilitation of development, meaning-making, and connection, what does this mean for graduation and

retention efforts? Although there is certainly evidence to suggest that advising is helpful in retention efforts, is this how the field wants to be defined? Does this box advising into one specific institutional goal and allow others to define our work for us? Retention is the *byproduct* of an engaging college experience, not the goal itself (Tinto, 1993). Advising is often linked directly to retention and graduation because people see advisors as monitoring student's graduation. Viewed as course scheduling, the role of advising in student engagement and campus involvement is severely diminished (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005). If advising is about learning, development, meaning-making and fostering a connection with a concerned institutional representative, why is so much emphasis placed upon course selection and graduating students on time? What are the implications for advising caseload sizes? When caseloads remain higher than 300:1, the ability to connect with individual students and help them to co-construct their academic identity becomes less possible (Robbins, 2013). How can advising administrators better communicate the value of advising up the chain of command? Advising administrators and other campus stakeholders will need to grapple with these questions if they wish to see advisors doing more than simply raising their graduation rates. A theory of advising could help clarify the role and to convey the value of academic advising to stakeholders (Himes, 2014; Himes & Schulenberg, 2016).

Third, if good advising requires more than providing accurate information and facilitating a timely graduation, do advisors have the academic background, training, expertise or time to have complex conversations with students? What criteria exist for the selection of advisors during hiring? When asked about the appropriate academic background and level of education required to be an academic advising, participants gave

a wide array of responses. Could a theory of advising clarify this? (Himes, 2014). What are the implications for training/development of good advisors? Of Habley's (1986) three components of advisor's training and development (informational, relational, conceptual), the informational component is over-stressed in advisor job training and that the other two are often neglected entirely. If advisors come away from an initial training feeling fully equipped to disseminate the procedures and policies of the institution but are lacking an understanding of academic advising beyond a transmission of information, how are they going to conduct their practice? If advising is a place where students grow and learn, why are advisors not trained on a variety of learning theories? If good advising is about meaning making and interpreting a student as one would interpret a text (Champlin-Scharff, 2010), how might advisors be trained in hermeneutics to guide students through meaning making processes? If advising is about an institutional connection for the student, why are advisors not studying relational skills? Are relational competencies learned on the job? The difference between a paraprofessional and professional with respect to necessary job knowledge to practice is what is learned on the job verses what is learned as part of one's prior professional education (Pavalko, 1988). Thus, to properly carry out their work and be called professionals, advisors must keep abreast of the professional literature.

Limitations and Future Research

There are two limitations to this study. First, in terms of sample, interviewees were all leaders in the field and email responders represented members of the Theory, Philosophy, & History of Advising Commission. Because of their roles in the association, the participants think intentionally about overarching issues of the meaning of their work.

The possibility exists that they are outliers, and that others might not describe their work in terms of learning, meaning-making and being a resource and connection for students. For instance, with respect to the debate surrounding "advising as teaching" versus "advising as service," it is not clear if frontline advisors would describe their role in that manner or if they would feel equipped to carry out complex conversations with students. Future research should be conducted to gauge how advisors view their work. For example, studies might build from McGill's (2016) application of the developmental teaching perspective (Pratt, 1998) to consider if and how the other perspectives (transmission, apprenticeship, nurturing, and social reform) might be applicable to advising work. Future research might be more intentional in gauging the perspectives of people in the field. Such analyses might reveal issues and obstacles of the field's professionalization that have not been discussed in the literature.

Second, like most qualitative research, the findings represent a small group—in this case, of NACADA leadership—and therefore, are not representative of the feelings of the entire field. Future research might engage in similar questions with a larger pool and with participants who do not necessarily represent NACADA leadership. For example, studies in other fields have used instruments built on Hall's (1968) attitudinal attributes of professionalization to gauge how practitioners in a field view their work. These attributes are: (a) the use of professional organization as a major reference; (b) belief in service to the public; (c) belief in self-regulation; (d) sense of calling to the field; and (e) autonomy. Interview questions about why advisors chose to enter the field and why they choose to stay could help to elucidate the meaning advisors give to their work. Such a study might seek a wide swath of advisors working in a variety of settings to

determine how they view the professionalization of the field. Studies using mixed methods to determine if positive perspectives on advising improved the retention of advisors in the field would also be welcome. Additionally, although professional socialization and professional identity are studied in many fields, little work has been done on advisors.

In terms of how academic advising is perceived from outside the field, large-scale studies of high level college and university officials could be conducted. How do these stakeholders of advising view the occupation? According to them, which activities fall under the purview of academic advising? When thinking about the teaching and learning missions of their institutions, do they think of academic advisors as being a critical piece of that goal? With the recent lease of NACADA's new core competencies of academic advising in informational, relational and conceptual realms (Farr & Cunningham, 2017), it would be telling to see how closely this aligns with high level administrators who—at least to some degree—shape the work that academic advisors do. How does this impact how advisors are viewed on their campuses? How does it impact resource allocation? Does such a top-down view of advising shape how students and other stakeholders view it?

How can theories of informal and incidental learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2015) inform the theory and practice of academic advising? Informal learning, "may occur in institutions, but is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in hand of the learner… Informal learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization or it can take place despite an environment not highly conducive to learning" (Marsick & Watkins, 2015, p. 12). Because advisees are not held

responsible (i.e. evaluated) for the learning gained in an advising setting, this could be a helpful lens in which to study the learning that takes place in academic advising. Future research should continue to investigate what is learned in academic advising.

Finally, as the first empirical study to investigate this phenomenon, this study sets the stage for other theorists and researchers to continue to develop and refine a theory of academic advising. The conceptual characteristic was investigated as part of a larger project looking at many different facets of professionalization. To further refine a theory of advising, studies could use different methodologies (e.g., Delphi and/or grounded theory) geared specifically toward further theory development. Future studies could seek to learn if and to what extent the themes found in this study are found in other populations or through different methodologies. Studying the essence of academic advising with many different pools of participants using multiple methods might facilitate a widely accepted common theory of advising (Lowenstein, 2014).

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this collected papers dissertation was to better understand the professionalization of academic advising and the ways its leaders and practitioners view professionalization. Understanding more about the status of academic advising in terms of its professionalization will help to determine what needs are still unmet and what gaps need to be filled. Two studies using different methods (structured literature review, phenomenological ethnography) were conducted as a part of this research. This concluding chapter consists of four sections: (a) summary of study #1, the structured literature review; (b) summary of study #2, the phenomenological ethnography; (c) an overview of findings of the collected papers dissertation; and (d) the overarching implications of this collected papers dissertation for theory, research, and practice.

Summary of Study #1: "Professions on the Periphery? Examining the Professionalization of Higher Education, Student Affairs and Academic Advising"

This structured literature review (Rocco, Stein, & Lee, 2003) explored the professional status of three inter-related fields facing professional marginality: higher education, student affairs, and academic advising, each with its own history and barriers to professionalization. Despite their long-shared history, all three fields face barriers to professionalization due to clearly defining disciplinary boundaries (sharing significant overlap with one another) and having insufficient knowledge bases. The purpose of this structured literature review was to systematically examine the literature in higher education, student affairs, and academic advising since 1980 to understand how these fields have conceptualized their professional status. The review was guided by the

research questions: "What characteristics of professionalization have been discussed in the literature of these fields since 1980? How has this impacted their development as distinctive and independent professions?"

The final sample of 49 articles was separated by field and read and coded separately to uncover themes regarding the professionalization process in each field. The articles were coded thematically (Boyatzis, 1998), inspected for both manifest-content (directly observable) and latent content (underlying the phenomenon). The findings were organized by field and the analysis revealed three themes in each field. Obstacles for the professionalization of higher education concerned the diversity and rigor of its scholarship, the (mis)conception of it being a singular field, and confounding the *field* of higher education with the *industry* of higher education. Themes that emerged from the student affairs literature were issues with scholarship, professional preparation and development, and community. For academic advising, the obstacles were issues with scholarship, the expansion of graduate programs, and community. The implications for the professionalization for these three fields are: loose boundaries separating the fields, interconnectedness between educational programs, practitioner's credential lacks currency, inconsistent language used in fields, autonomy, and demonstrating effectiveness.

Summary of Study #2: "Towards Articulating the Defining Functions of Academic Advising: Clarifying the Conceptual Characteristic"

The purpose of this phenomenological ethnography (Katz & Csordas, 2003; Maggs-Rapport, 2000) was to further clarify defining functions of academic advising and to elucidate how further definition of the scope of academic advising will help

professionalize the field. The study was guided by the research question, "What are the essential features of academic advising?" Several scholars have articulated the need for a normative theory of academic advising (Himes, 2014; Lowenstein, 2014), which would describe an ideal for which academic advising should strive. However, scant empirical work has investigated how practitioners view the essence of the field.

To acquire a description of the essence of academic advising from several leaders in the field, I sought approaches from both phenomenological and ethnographic methodological schools, thus engaging in qualitative plurality (Frost, 2011). The phenomenological aspect of this study was a description of the essence of academic advising, as described by leaders who have served as academic advisors in various capacities. The ethnographic aspect of this study was the focus on NACADA as a shared culture and the observation-participant experience of the researcher over eight years.

Three themes emerged. First, advising was primarily characterized as an endeavor in which students learn and develop. The duty of academic advisors, therefore, is to discuss intellectual goals with students. Through advising, students learn to articulate, develop, and accomplish goals, to appreciative ambiguity, and develop critical thinking skills. Advisors also facilitate personal development for students and help them think about their actions and behaviors. Through a balance of challenge and support, advisors have a responsibility to help students become their best selves and to make the most of college.

Second, advising is an interaction in which students make meaning and synthesize their learning experiences. Advisors help students determine their values and take stock of their situation. Through this synthesis, students form an academic identity. Advising is

a setting where students are challenged to think about the bigger picture. Advisors facilitate conversations about the connections between academic programs, careers, and values. Advisors help students make sense not just of their chosen major path, but also about how different parts of their college experiences relate to the entirety of their lives. Advising can, therefore, be a transformative experience.

Finally, advisors support students by providing them resources and serving as a point of institutional connection. Advisors may be the only consistent university representative with whom students develop a long-standing significant relationship. Advising is an interactive endeavor and not one in which the student is the passive recipient of information. It is the connection with the institutional representative that fosters the learning occurring in advising. Advisors must have a broad and in-depth understanding of the campus and the curriculum of the university and have the skills to read individual students, including the issues they are presenting *and* those that are beneath the surface.

As the first empirical study to investigate this phenomenon, this study sets the stage for other theorists and researchers to continue to develop and refine a theory of academic advising.

Overview of the Findings of the Collected Papers

The field of academic advising has made significant strides toward professionalization: the establishment of a professional association, a refereed journal and other field literature, and graduate programs. However, the field still faces obstacles. Most pressing is the issue of a clearly agreed upon purpose. Despite much scholarly deliberation and discourse, academic advising and its role in higher education remains

misunderstood by university stakeholders, including faculty and staff, students, and advisors themselves. Indeed, there is little consensus on what advising is or ought to be (Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015; Habley, 2009; Himes, 2014; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; McGill, 2013; McGill & Nutt, 2016; Shaffer, Zalewski & Leveille, 2010), and how advising is valued at institutions plays a role in its status as a profession (Kerr, 2000). There are two overarching findings that will be discussed here: (a) autonomy and (b) professional community.

First, autonomy is associated with self-regulation and self-control, allowing a profession "the freedom and power…to regulate their own work behavior and working conditions" (Pavalko, 1988, p. 25). Of all the characteristics distinguishing professions from non-professions, it is the most important (Pavalko, 1988). Autonomy denotes that only those with sufficient knowledge, expertise, and training can perform the work. This creates an exclusion criterion for individual workers: only those with some form of credential (whatever is required by the occupational group) can practice. The literature of review from study #1 suggested that academic advising is not a profession independent from student affairs and higher education (Habley, 2009; Huggett, 2000; Kuhn & Padak, 2008; Shaffer el al., 2010). Similarly, the consensus is that student affairs has not met the sociological standards to be considered a profession due to its context within higher education (Carpenter, 2003). This review found little in the way of professionalization being a concern for the field of higher education. Because student affairs and academic advising are always situated in higher education, they can never be fully autonomous.

Second, the two guiding frameworks for this collected papers dissertation discuss the professional community (*community of practitioners* [Pavalko, 1988] and *collective*

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identity characteristics [Houle, 1980]). In a community of practitioners, members share important values and commitment to the profession. A unique issue for academic advising is the issue of its administrative home within higher education. Academic advisors are both full time, primary-role advisors and full time faculty who advise as part of their load (and this is considered under service or under teaching, depending on the institution). Thus, there can be difficulty in uniting the community. This division is palpable on many campuses, but scholars have suggested that this is counter-productive because all advisors need to be working together toward their shared goals and values (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). Additionally, there is an underrepresentation of faculty advisors within NACADA (C. Nutt, Personal Communication, May 24th, 2016). Without empirical investigation or targeted surveys, it is impossible to know the reasons why faculty are not more involved with NACADA, but it could be that they feel less community there than they do at conferences in their respective fields. Or, perhaps, that that academic advising has no journals published by reputable publishers. All the journals are association or institution published therefore no impact factors are likely. Thus, when considering what "counts" towards tenure and promotion, faculty may opt to be less involved in NACADA. Regardless of where advising is housed or who is doing the advising, advisors ought to work to form a stronger community of collaboration and to articulate a shared vision for practice (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008).

Overarching Implications of the Collected Papers

Findings from this collected papers dissertation are expected to inform NACADA, to help move academic advising toward professionalization, and to add to the body of literature on professionalization in any field. These findings have important

implications for building a research base and advancing the field through theory-building, to bring in other disciplinary perspectives into the field (especially from the humanities), to better educate academic advisors and position them to be better scholars, and to educate advising constituents. These implications are divided into two broad categories: research and practice.

Research

Advancing the profession involves not only problematizing simplistic views and practices of advising, but also thinking more intentionally about its distinctive purpose and essence. Emerging professions may have alternative or competing ideas about the nature of the work (Houle, 1980). As clarifying the conceptual defining functions is at the bedrock of an occupational group's claim to professionalization, it is critical that future research continue to explore and articulate the core functions of academic advising. As advising has been positioned as counseling, learning, mentoring, encouraging, advocating, educating, and even friendship (e.g., Hemwall & Trachte, 2005; Lowenstein, 2005; Melander, 2005; Rawlins & Rawlins, 2005), there has been divisive discussions about what advising is. "Advising is teaching," first advocated by Crookston (1972), has continued to be a popular slogan in the advising community. Although originally meant to clarify the function of academic advising, it has recently been resisted by many and was contested by interviewees and email commentators in study #2. "Advising as teaching" and other popular analogues obscure the essence of advising (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008) and thus, the conceptual characteristic (Houle, 1980) must continue to be explored in future research. Because of their roles in the association, the interviewees for study #2 think very intentionally about overarching issues of the meaning of their

work. With respect to the debate surrounding "advising as teaching" versus "advising as service," it is not clear if frontline advisors would describe their role in that manner or if they would feel equipped to carry out complex conversations with students. Future research should be conducted to gauge how advisors themselves view their work. For example, studies might build from McGill's (2016) application of the developmental teaching perspective (Pratt, 1998) to consider if and how the other four perspectives (transmission, apprenticeship, nurturing, and social reform) might be applicable to advising work. This might facilitate the development of a widely accepted common theory of advising (Lowenstein, 2014).

At the heart of a profession is its intellectual, esoteric body of literature (Pavalko, 1988). The theory and intellectual techniques of the field involve articulating the problems defining the parameters of the field and shaping its body of specialized knowledge. With their positions in NACADA, it comes as no surprise that the most important aspect of growing toward professionalization for participants was the need to build a research base in the field, to advance the field using theory, and to increase opportunities for advisors to produce scholarship. One participant noted:

> The scholarship and research may be one of the most essential pieces of professionalizing academic advising. We need to continue to support and promote research in the field from all sorts of disciplines: the social sciences and the humanities. There is a lot of research happening in the social sciences. It's understandable, the history of the field promotes psychology and counseling…But being a humanist, I would be interested in seeing more from the humanities. I don't think it means to the exclusion of the social science, because social science research is really important, but in some ways having the two paired can be a really interesting conversation and can add something to the field. It's important that the question of the nature of academic advising and consideration of what some of the essential characteristics are is an important conversation to start and to have. I think we need to continue to write and to publish and connect with each other. (Participant 3)

For a field that draws upon practitioners from every academic discipline, producing new work drawing upon innovative methodologies will be critical. Because there is not a firm disciplinary foundation, researchers in the field need to work especially hard at connecting to others doing research. To further refine a theory of advising, studies could use different methodologies (e.g., Delphi and/or grounded theory) geared specifically toward further development for a theory of advising. Future studies could seek to learn if and to what extent the themes found in study #2 are found in other populations of academic advisors or through different research methods.

Research should also examine journals publishing research on academic advising outside of academic advising journals. This will help to better gage the current shape and scope of the knowledge base. Currently, academic advising does not have a journal published by an academic publisher. This poses a significant challenge to its professionalization.

Another stream of research could examine the content of graduate programs in academic advising. In addition to the master's program at Kansas State University (and its corresponding graduate certificate), a Google search retrieved eight other graduate certificates in academic advising from the following U.S. institutions: Angelo State University, Arkansas Tech University, Eastern Michigan University, Florida International University, Kent State University, Sam Houston University, University of Central Missouri, University of South Florida. A quick review of the titles of courses required for these certificates indicated that courses focus on theory of academic advising, working with diverse students, student development theory, and administration of academic advising. Further content analysis of these programs could elucidate the current state of

graduate study in academic advising and what is missing for it to be an academic

discipline (Kuhn & Padak, 2008). Although the development of a master's program was a

milestone for the field of academic advising, it is not enough to sustain an entire field of

practitioners. The curriculum and specialized body of knowledge needs to be examined

and established so that more programs can follow (Habley, 2009). There remain

questions about how it will look, but plans are already underway at Kansas State

University to begin offering a doctorate in academic advising in 2018 (C. Nutt, personal

communication, May 24th, 2016). NACADA is housed at Kansas State University; this

connection is important and has served the field and the association well. Although it is

beyond the scope of this dissertation, one important question for future research will be

"How does NACADA's association with Kansas State impact the professionalization of

the field?" Professional associations play a significant role in the professionalization of

fields.

Perhaps the most important avenue of investigation is to generate empirical

research that demonstrates the impact that advising has on student success. The literature

reviewed in study #1 described the academic advising as a field on the margins. In an

article published in one of the first issues of the *NACADA Journal*, Trombley and Holmes

(1981) asked: "What will be the consequences of marginality?" (p. 48). The

conversations in student affairs centered on defining the field lest some other entity seeks

to define it (Paterson & Carpenter, 1989; Porterfield, Roper, & Whitt, 2011; Stamatakos,

1981). Many interviewees in study #2 expressed this concern for the field, especially with

increasing budget cuts and resource allocation in higher education. If academic advising

is going to prove its worth in tangible ways that will speak to administrators, it needs to demonstrate impact and effectiveness to stakeholders (McFarlane & Thomas, 2016).

Practice

How are frontline advisors thinking about their work? Are they thinking about advising in terms of providing students with accurate and timely information to help them graduate on time? How are they communicating the value of their work to students and to other stakeholders? (Davis Jones, 2016). When advisors meet with students at freshman orientation and talk about advising, then sit down with them and tell them what classes to take, what message does that convey to students? Advisors also model behaviors and attitudes for students. Given such a great responsibility, participants in study #2 indicated that advisors need to think more deeply about their role in student success. What are the implications for professional socialization of advisors? If advisors study Freitag's (2011) four advisor classifications—advising practitioner, emerging professional, professional, scholar—and think more intentionally about advising theory, how it relates to their practice and their career/professional identity, will this help elevate the status of academic advising? How are advising administrators communicating the value of academic advising to advisors? (McFarlane & Thomas, 2016). Besides their work with students, what other kinds of work are advisors given? Is it mostly clerical? How is advising evaluated? How is good advising rewarded? If advising is discussed in terms of helping students graduate and if the work is evaluated as such, advisors will continue to see their roles as course schedulers and not as professionals who are an integral part of the teaching and learning mission of the institution.

What does this research suggest for institutions in terms of graduation and retention efforts? Little is known, empirically, about the public acceptance of academic advising. Anecdotally, it might be said that most people who know academic advising exists probably think of it in terms of course registration. Although there is certainly evidence to suggest that advising is helpful in retention efforts, is this how the field wants to be defined? Does this box advising into one specific institutional goal and allow others to define our work for us? Tinto (1993) argued that retention is the byproduct of an engaging college experience, not the goal itself. Advising is often linked directly to retention and graduation because people see advisors as monitoring student's progress toward graduation. Viewed as course scheduling, the role of advising in student engagement and campus involvement is severely diminished (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Tinto, 1993).

If advising is about learning, development, meaning-making and fostering a connection with a concerned institutional representative, why is so much emphasis put on course selection and graduating students on time? How does the goal of retention differ from school to school? Is a private, elite school such as Harvard as concerned about retention as a state school vying for state funding based on performance? What role does advising play in this equation? In noting how academic advising should strive for professionalism, one participant noted the importance of communicating the value of advising to constituents: "So much of what we do is informed by impressions of what others have of this field. Educating them in terms of how we view what we do. Those would be the pieces of how we should move forward" (Participant 2). If people are going to learn what it is that academic advisors do, it is incumbent on those in the field to

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inform them. What does a description of advising—in which students learn and develop, make meaning, and connect with a caring institutional representative—imply for advising caseload sizes? When caseloads remain higher than 300:1, the ability to connect with individual students and help them to co-construct their academic identity becomes less possible (Robbins, 2013). Continued work on a theory of advising could help clarify the role and to convey the importance and value of academic advising to stakeholders (Himes, 2014).

There are also implications for hiring and formal training. How are academic advisors trained? How do they learn to be academic advisors? (Tokarczyk, 2012). Is there a required specialization? If good advising requires more than providing accurate information and helping facilitate a timely graduation, do advisors have the academic background, training, expertise or time to have complex conversations with students? What criteria exist for the selection of advisors during hiring? There remains a huge gap in the academic advising literature on the education and hiring of advisors (Himes, 2014). Could a theory of advising help to clarify this? What are the implications for training/development of good advisors? Tokarczyk (2012) interviewed six professional advisors at three research universities in the Midwest about their training and workplace learning through the lens of the adult education literature. The study is the first of its kind in the field of academic advising, as very little literature has studied academic advisors themselves (Habley, 2009). The little research that exists about advisors is by-and-large, quantitative (Tokarczyk, 2012). Of Habley's (1986) three components of advisor's training and development (informational, relational, conceptual), the informational component is over-stressed in advisor job training and that the other two are often

neglected entirely. If advisors come away from an initial training feeling fully equipped of the procedures and policies of the institution, but are lacking an understanding of the role of academic advising beyond a transmission of information, how are they going to conduct their practice? If advising is a place where students grow and learn, why are advisors not trained on learning theory? If good advising is about meaning making and interpreting a student as one would interpret a text (Champlin-Scharff, 2010), how might advisors be trained in hermeneutics to guide students through meaning making processes? If advising is about an institutional connection for the student, why are advisors not studying relational skills? Are relational competencies trained on the job? One difference between a paraprofessional and professional with respect to necessary knowledge to practice is what is learned on the job versus what is learned as part of one's professional education prior to getting a job (Pavalko, 1988). Professional knowledge is more conceptual, requiring the professional to apply conceptual knowledge to several different practical contexts. Is the knowledge required to be an advisor specialized and conceptual? Or is it specific and applied knowledge?

If the field is going to advance in terms of its scholarship, it needs to be producing researchers and new voices need to be joining the scholarly conversation. One participant noted that the main graduate program in advising (offered through Kansas State University) is mostly concerned with producing practitioners rather than scholars. Although a research methods course is required, the degree does not culminate with a research experience. She said:

> We need to ensure that there is a scholar track within the field. I think opportunities to do research, sharing what we learn and having a bit of transparency in what we learn in that research. We are not only creating well-

rounded and solid professionals, but also scholars that examine academic advising. And we also need to start building our research base related to that, examine ourselves as a profession. (Participant 2)

In their co-editorial, "Is Academic Advising a Discipline?" then *NACADA Journal* co-editors Kuhn and Padak (2008) briefly outline how the field of academic advising functioned as a faculty responsibility, as a service and whether it could be called a field or an academic discipline. While noting that academic advising could be considered a "field," they argue, "not every field could be called a 'discipline'" (p. 3). However, "the term 'field' is so generic that calling academic advising "a field" says little about its essence" (p. 2). But to call the field an academic discipline would require "a body of credible organized knowledge that is unique" and can only happen once

> …it has a clear delineation of the modes of inquiry by which it validates itself, creates new knowledge, and advances as a discipline; and when its intellectual content is offered as a coherent grouping of courses in degree-granting majors at several institutions of higher education. (p. 3)

The issue of graduate training and graduate programs is of chief concern for the professionalization of fields (Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010). A prior study exploring the perceptions of advisors regarding the professionalization of academic advising found that despite the majority of the group (59%) having at least a master's degree, the majority of the group did not find a graduate degree necessary to advise well (Adams, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2013). If these are the perceptions of advisors themselves, the field surely faces obstacles in terms of the way it is perceived by outside stakeholders: "Unless the current educational demands and standards for advisors can be clearly differentiated from such programs, the image of advisors as paraprofessionals will remain indelible" (Shaffer et al., 2010, p. 74).

This issue of academic home for academic advising is a significant obstacle to its professionalization. In some places, it is housed under student affairs; in other places, it is under academic affairs. Charlie Nutt, NACADA executive director, commented on the main issue he sees as he visits campuses around the country and the world; he suggested the need for more consistency of standards across the nation with help from human resources departments on individual campuses (Adams, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2013). Consistent standards—led by a theory of advising—would impact students positively, help clarify the purpose of academic advising, guide the field's scholarly identity and retain advisors in the field.

Conclusion

If academic advising is not recognized as a profession—or at least as professional activity—advisors will not be rewarded accordingly (Kerr, 2000). This is tied to a lot of issues including the retention of practitioners to the field. Although Pavalko's (1988) motivation dimension suggests that professionals are motivated by the welfare of their clients instead of monetary gain, if pay is not commiserate with level of education, experience, and hours worked, academic advisors will look for other opportunities. Recognition and reward was an important form of motivation in the academic advising literature (Kerr, 2000; Padak & Kuhn, 2009). Due to the low number of institutions who value academic advising enough to consider recognition and reward, "academic advising is definitely at the crossroads of not being recognized as a profession in the near future unless we make a dramatic about-face" (Kerr, 2000, p. 352). In one study, past presidents of NACADA indicated the great need to increase the visibility of advising awards and the winners thereof (Padak & Kuhn, 2009).

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In the first issue of the *NACADA Journal*, Borgard (1981) stated, "we need something more if academic advising is to become a truly educative function rather than an adjunct to teaching, research, and service" (p. 1). Participants in Study #2 said that after more than 35 years, the field is still searching for its identity. If the field of academic advising wishes to move beyond of the periphery of professional marginality, it must consider how to address these various implications.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1.) What is a profession? What constitutes a profession?

2.) How does theory add to the discussion of professionalism in advising? What role should theory play in the professional development of academic advisors? Is there a common core of theoretical knowledge that should be mastered by those practicing academic advising?

3.) What is the essence of academic advising? What is the distinctive nature of academic advising?

4.) What specific roles do academic advisors play that people outside of the field do not?

5.) To what fields is advising related? How does this relationship influence its advancement as an independent, distinctive field?

6.) What sort of specialization is required for academic advisors?

7.) What are the career stages for academic advisors? What is important for career progression in the field of advising? What are the criteria for advancement in the field?

8.) Should there be a distinct program of study for academic advisors? What would a formalized field of study for academic advising look like? Should there be coursework distinct from that of higher education, student affairs or educational leadership graduate programs?

9.) What role should credentialing play in academic advising?

10.) What are important considerations for professionalization for the future of academic advising?

11.) Where does the field stand in terms of public understanding and public acceptance?
   a.) What perceptions do university provosts have of the field of academic advising?
   b.) What perceptions do university presidents have of the field of academic advising?
   c.) What perceptions do faculty have of the field of academic advising?
   d.) What perceptions do administrative staff have of the field of academic advising?
   e.) What perceptions do support staff have of the field of academic advising?
   f.) What perceptions do students have of the field of academic advising?
What impact does this have on the field?

12.) How should academic advising strive for professionalization?

13.) Is there anything I should have asked you about the professionalization of advising that I didn't?

14.) Is there anything you'd like to add?

CONSENT FORM EXAMPLE

ADULT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
Leaders' Perception of the Professionalization of Academic Advising

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
You are being asked to be in a research study. The purpose of the phenomenology is to investigate what subject matter experts who are members of NACADA understand as the state of the professionalization of academic advising.

NUMBER OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of twelve people in this research study.

DURATION OF THE STUDY
Your participation will require three hours of your time; participation will require approximately 1.5 hours for the interview and approximately 1.5 hours to review the transcripts and themes.

PROCEDURES
If you agree to be in the study, we will ask you to do the following things:
1. Share your thoughts and perspectives about the field of Academic Advising;
2. You will agree to be audio recorded;
3. As part of the member checking process, you will be asked to review the transcripts for accuracy and increased clarification.

RISKS AND/OR DISCOMFORTS
There are no known risks associated with the participation of this study.

BENEFITS
This study will provide the participants with an opportunity to reflect on their occupation and professional identity. After the study is completed, the participants can relate their feelings to those of their peers.

ALTERNATIVES
There are no known alternatives available to you other than not taking part in this study. However, any significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation will be provided to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Once the transcription has been completed, the recordings will be erased. During the study, the recordings will be kept on the investigator's computer. The participants will be given participant codes in the transcription and will be referred to as such in the written manuscript. A master key will be locked up in investigator's office. The transcription of the interviews will be presented to the participants for approval before coding begins. Anything with which they are uncomfortable will be erased from the transcripts and not included in the published paper.

COMPENSATION & COSTS
There is no monetary compensation available for the participation of this study.

RIGHT TO DECLINE OR WITHDRAW
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to participate in the study or withdraw your consent at any time during the study. Your withdrawal or lack of participation will not affect any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The investigator reserves the right to remove you without your consent at such time that they feel it is in the best interest.

RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions about the purpose, procedures, or any other issues relating to this research study you may contact Craig M. McGill at Florida International University, 305-348-3372, cmmcgill@fiu.edu.

IRB CONTACT INFORMATION
If you would like to talk with someone about your rights of being a subject in this research study or about ethical issues with this research study, you may contact the FIU Office of Research Integrity by phone at 305-348-2494 or by email at ori@fiu.edu.

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT
I have read the information in this consent form and agree to participate in this study. I have had a chance to ask any questions I have about this study, and they have been answered for me. I understand that I am entitled to a copy of this form after it has been read and signed.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

VITA

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2001-2005	Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Music, English, Communication Studies, Film Studies University of Nebraska-Lincoln Lincoln, Nebraska
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PUBLICATIONS (Selected)

McGill, C. M. (under review). 'This burning desire is turning me to sin': The intrapersonal sexual struggles of two Disney singing villains. Under review for *Queer Studies in Media & Popular Culture*.

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