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THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISING IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

by

Kimberly R. Poolos

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education

at

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Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the wonderful people who work in higher education.

Acknowledgments

A lot of people have made this thesis possible for me to complete. First, I want to thank my Rowan University family whom I am lucky enough to call my mentors and friends. Christine Larsen-Britt, Dr. Cindy Vitto, Michael Schillo, Dr. Marci Carrasquillo, Dr. Kristen diNovi, Dr. Lee Talley and Robert Bullard. Without their continued support, help and advice this thesis would not have been possible.

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Abstract

Kimberly Poolos
THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISING IN THE LIBERAL ARTS
2015-2016

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.
Master of Arts in Higher Education

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. This study focused on the impact of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. This study also focused on the extent to which professional administrators are involved in supporting the professional academic advisors. This was a Total Population Study since all five College of Humanities and Social Sciences embedded advisors participated in this study and the four administrators participated in this study. Qualitative research, through the use of 30 minute individual interviews, was used to collect data. Interview questions focused on demographic information, advising role, advising skills and education, post-graduation options, degree value, and any suggested changes. The research questions presented in Chapter I of this study were used to inform and develop the interview questions. Qualitative content analysis techniques, per Sisco (1981), were used in order to classify and categorize themes. Themes were presented through tables and illustrative quotes. The major finding of this study is just how critical experiential learning is to the success of Liberal Arts students. Additionally, professional academic advisors are critical in linking Liberal Arts students to these opportunities.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Across institutions of higher education in America, students are choosing professional colleges over colleges housing majors within the liberal arts (Woodhouse, 2015). Traditional liberal arts majors like English and history have undergone a significant decrease in enrollment (Woodhouse, 2015). According to Vitto (2015), the foundation of the increasing aversion to any liberal arts major may be that many students are unaware of career options available to them after graduation. This concern for the disconnect regarding the practicality of a liberal arts education, is reflected in the advising structure of Rowan University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS). This study compares professional academic advisors who specialize in different majors within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and administrators in valuing and showing the value of a liberal arts degree. This study investigates how invested these professional academic advisors and administrators are in working with humanity and social science students and using available resources at Rowan University to guide students both academically and professionally.

Statement of the Problem

Narrow research is available involving how professional academic advisors impact students within the liberal arts. Also, limited research is available on the role professional college administrators play in valuing the liberal arts. Additionally, even less research is available regarding if academic advisors within the liberal arts are able to extend advising beyond academics and show the value of the liberal arts by connecting students with post-graduation options and career resources. Rowan University has a staff

of five professional academic advisors working exclusively with students from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and a study of the influence of these professional advisors on CHSS students has yet to be completed. In addition, four administrators are directly involved with students in CHSS, professional advising services, or both. After considering the limited research available on the impact professional academic advisors and administrators have on students studying the liberal arts and that no research has been conducted on the professional academic advisors within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Rowan University, a gap in the knowledge base materializes. If the impact of the professional academic advisors and invested administrators on students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Rowan University is studied, the gap in the knowledge base could lessen significantly.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Specifically, this study focused on the impact of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Moreover, this study focused on the extent to which professional administrators are involved in supporting the professional academic advisors. These points were assessed through qualitative research methods and analysis.

Significance of the Study

This study investigated the impact professional academic advisors and administrators may have on students with majors in the liberal arts. The popularity and enrollment of students in the liberal arts continues to decrease (Woodhouse, 2015). One reason for the decrease, per Woodhouse (2015), is economic. Students are not always aware of career options for liberal arts majors post-graduation since career paths for

students with liberal arts majors are not as clearly defined as they are for students in other disciplines (Woodhouse, 2015). The findings of this study could support that if professional academic advisors, with the support from administrators, can connect students with career resources and thus encourage enrollment and retention in liberal arts majors.

Assumptions and Limitations

The range of this study was limited to the five professional academic advisors at Rowan University working with students from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and four professional administrators directly invested in the College of Humanities of Social Sciences, Advising Services, or both. My position as the Graduate Coordinator of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) Match Internship Program requires me to work closely with these professional academic advisors and administrators. Therefore, my sample is a convenience sample. Due to my close work with these professional academic advisors, my work with these administrators and my work with students from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in general, the chance of researcher bias is present. Finally, there is the assumption that all participants responded truthfully to interview questions.

Operational Definitions

1. Academic Advising: Act of providing guidance, information, and counseling to students primarily regarding academics but occasionally concerning personal and social matters (Kuhn, 2008).
2. Career Counseling: Professional counselor aids a client with career paths and career concerns (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013).

3. Experiential Learning: Process of learning from hands-on experiences (Kolb, 2015).
4. Liberal Arts major: Liberal arts majors generally fall under two categories: humanities and social sciences. According to the *National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965*, the humanities include but are not limited to “language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; the history, criticism, theory, and practice of the arts; and those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods” (p. 845). According to the *American Academy on Arts & Sciences: Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences* (2015), the social sciences include but are not limited to the study of humans and social relations, studied through economics, sociology, psychology, political science, and anthropology.
5. Professional Academic Advisor: Institutional representative performing academic advising. The Academic Advisor is tasked with helping students identify their goals and setting an educational path that will help realize those goals (NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2006).
6. Rowan University College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS): Formed in July 2012 when the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences split into the College of Science and Math and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (About the College, 2015). Largest academic college within Rowan University, which includes the following majors: English, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Geography and Environment, History, Law and Justice Studies, Philosophy and

Religion Studies, Political Science and Economics, and Sociology and Anthropology (About the College, 2015). The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) provides the bulk of General Education requirements for all Rowan University students (About the College, 2015).

Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions:

1. What skills and knowledge are required to be an advisor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?
2. What are the benefits of earning a degree from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?
3. What is the perceived role of professional academic advisors in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?
4. What is the perceived impact professional advisor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences feel they have on students?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II presents a literature review of literature critical to the study. The literature review begins broadly explaining professional academic advising and the current state of liberal arts majors. Then, the liberal arts are presented in terms of foundation, colleges, and studies. Next, the history of academic advising is discussed including the definition of academic advising, the eras of academic advising, academic advising models, and the future of academic advising. Then, a theoretical framework surrounding academic advising and the liberal arts is presented, specifically student development and involvement theory, experiential learning theory, and academic

advising theories. Next, the role of academic advisors in guiding students is explained. Finally, showing value in the liberal arts in terms of connecting the liberal arts to career paths is discussed.

Chapter III presents the context of the study. Then, the population and sample are described along with how the sample was selected and the size of the sample. Data collection is described regarding the collection instruments and how the instruments are valid and reliable, and how the data were collected is explained. And finally, how data were analyzed is described.

Chapter IV presents the results of the research study based upon research questions. Results are presented through summary, key term identification, and presentation of parallels and contrasting themes.

Chapter V summarizes the study and discusses major findings. And interpretations of the qualitative findings are discussed. Conclusions based on the findings are presented. And Chapter V concludes with recommendations for practice and for further research.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

As institutions of higher education in America grow and change, the field of professional academic advising is experiencing a rapid expansion. NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA), chartered in 1979, asserts that the role of the academic advisor is to help students realize their goals by directing them down the proper educational path (NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2006). Simply put, the professional academic advisor acts as the guiding force to help students focus their passions in an appropriate academic direction. Additionally, the academic advisor helps students integrate into the campus community at large by engaging students throughout their time at the institution (NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2006).

While academic advisors face challenges and obstacles, like navigating campus resources, no matter what subject matter they advise, academic advisors in the liberal arts face an especially difficult task. According to Vitto (2015), the value of a liberal arts degree is often scrutinized in terms of pragmatism. Evaluating the value of pursuing a liberal arts degree often leads to the question, “what place, then, do the liberal arts hold in our educational system?” (Vitto, 2015). Academic advisors need the knowledge and tools to help students realize that a degree in the liberal arts can be both fulfilling and practical.

Currently, research focused exclusively on professional academic advising within the liberal arts is extremely limited. With such a large gap in the knowledge base, further research into the impact of professional academic advisors in the liberal arts is both timely and critical. As the field of professional academic advising continues to grow, the

demand for knowledge grows as well. Additionally, as enrollment in liberal arts majors continues to decline, understanding the importance of professional academic advisors in liberal arts student retention is especially timely.

This Review of the Literature attempts to present the literature available regarding professional academic advising in the liberal arts. First, the liberal arts are explored in terms of the foundations, colleges, and studies. Second, the history of academic advising is presented along with different academic advising models. Third, applicable theoretical frameworks are discussed. Fourth, the role of professional academic advisors in guiding students is explored. And, fifth, showing value in the liberal arts through connecting the liberal arts to career paths is discussed.

The Liberal Arts: Foundations, Colleges, and Studies

The meaning of a liberal arts education has evolved over time. Having a firm understanding of the concept of the liberal arts and understanding how the idea of a liberal arts education has changed since the third century BC helps guide and inform research into the liberal arts. From an idea, to an institution type, to a course of study, the liberal arts are anything but static.

Foundations of a liberal arts education. The liberal arts formed during the Hellenistic era (323BC—31BC) and was originally for the free man (L., 2010). Under Christianity, a liberal arts education lost the legal exclusiveness of free men, and the liberal arts were viewed simply as “liberating” (L., 2010). The liberal arts may have been lost during the dark ages—due to low educational standards—if not for the work and dedication of five distinct scholars: Martianus Capella, Cassiodorus, Boethius, Isidore, Bishop of Seville, and Saint Augustine of Hippo (L., 2010). During the Middle Ages

(500AD—1500AD), the meaning of liberal arts transformed to apply to both “theoretical knowledge” as well as the school’s curriculum (L., 2010). In the 12th century, new disciplines outside the liberal arts were established and the liberal arts became a required course of study to complete before a student could move on to a different discipline, like medicine (L., 2010). However, by the late Middle Ages the liberal arts no longer held the importance and prestige they once did (L., 2010). Even with this loss of status, the liberal arts canon persisted in colleges and universities in the United States and France until the 19th and 20th centuries (L., 2010).

From liberal arts institutions to liberal arts studies. The title liberal arts can apply to both a type of institution of higher education as well as a major course of study. According to Astin (1999a), there are three distinct subgroups of private liberal arts colleges: independent, Protestant, and Roman Catholic. The characteristics of small liberal arts colleges generally include a small size, a program in place requiring students to live on campus, faculty dedicated to student development, mutual trust among students and administrators, and a lot of funding dedicated to student services (Astin, 1999a). Through his research into liberal arts institutions, Astin found an extremely high emphasis on the student; in contrast, public research institutions showed an extremely low emphasis on the student. Astin notes that since small liberal arts institutions provide a rich undergraduate education, one could easily anticipate that liberal arts institutions would be the model for new institutions post World War II. However, during the massive growth of the American higher education system in the 1950s and 1960s, institutions grew larger and larger (Astin, 1999a). Astin argues that the most apparent reason for the trend to grow larger is “money and prestige” (p. 95). With increased size and money,

institutions were able to attract the brightest students and thus increase funding and research (Astin, 1999a). Additionally, per Astin, another critical reason for the trend to grow larger is the idea that a liberal arts education could be achieved simply by completing a credit requirement. Thus, institutions no longer needed to be small to grant students a liberal arts education (Astin, 1999a).

American institutions of higher education that do not fall under the category of small liberal arts colleges, like research institutions and community colleges, still offer majors and coursework in the liberal arts. Astin (1999a) argues, however, that an “undergraduate liberal arts education” should not call students “liberally educated” simply because they have earned the credits and took a multitude of courses within the liberal arts. Astin raises another concern that in research universities, students do not receive the undergraduate advising during their freshman and sophomore years that is critical in a liberal arts education. Understandably, not all institutions are small liberal arts colleges, but Astin finds no viable reason why different institutions of higher education would not consider modeling some practices off of small liberal arts colleges to increase student involvement and interaction.

History of Academic Advising

Every American institution of higher education, regardless of institution type, has a system of academic advising in place. Throughout higher education, the definition of academic advising remains consistent even though different institutions may use different models of academic advising. A vast history informs the role of the academic advisor today.

Defining academic advising. Before delving into the history of academic advising, it is appropriate to provide a solid working definition of academic advising. According to Kuhn (2008), academic advising “refer[s] to situations in which an institutional representative gives insight or direction to a college student about an academic, social, or personal matter” (p. 3). Additionally, the nature of academic advising is to “inform, suggest, counsel, discipline, coach, mentor, or even teach” (Kuhn, 2008, p. 3). Crookston (1994) reinforces the idea that the academic advisor is still a teacher, an authority figure, and the student is the learner. Historically, per Crookston, the academic advisor was primarily focused and concerned with directing a student toward a major and/or career path. Then, the chosen major or career path directed the course of the student’s educational pursuits (Crookston, 1994).

Three academic advising eras. To understand the present state of professional academic advising is to understand the historical framework. Kuhn (2008) separates the history of academic advising into the first advising era, the second advising era, and the third advising era. The title of first advising era is a bit of a misnomer since academic advising was not part of higher education in America at the inception of Harvard College in 1636 (Kuhn, 2008). From 1636 through 1870, all students took identical classes with no additional electives or choices; thus, there was no need for academic advising (Kuhn, 2008). Students maintained a close relationship with faculty and tutors and no student personnel employees were available to students (Kuhn, 2008). However, 1870 marked a turning point for higher education and the demand for additional student resources.

During the 1870s, a strained relationship developed between faculty and tutors and students (Kuhn, 2008). According to Kuhn (2008), rigid rules and strict punishments

created a widening gulf between students and faculty and staff, which persisted until the introduction of the elective system provided students with choices and promoted less hostile faculty interaction. Thus, the elective system in the 1870s created a need for a guide for students, and began the second advising era starting in 1870 and lasting through 1970 (Kuhn, 2008). The academic advising system was developed in response to critics who feared the quality of education was being comprised by students who used the elective system incorrectly (Kuhn, 2008). President Daniel Coit Gilman, from Johns Hopkins University, defined the word “advisor” to mean “someone who gave direction to a student concerning an academic, social, or personal matter” (Kuhn, 2008, p. 5). Additionally, President Gilman defined responsibilities required of an academic advisor (Kuhn, 2008). Between the 1930s-1940s, student support systems became prevalent, bringing a student-centered philosophy in the American Higher Education system (Kuhn, 2008).

The second advising era, spanning approximately 100 years of the American higher education system, was a critical time that informed the current, third advising era, which began in the 1970s. With a rich history of academic advising until up until the 1970s, academic advising became an “examined activity” (Kuhn, 2008). Since academic advising became a prevalent practice by the 1970s, academic advising during the third advising era began to focus on refinement and improvement (Kuhn, 2008). Institutions of higher education began comparing their methods of academic advising with that of other, comparable institutions (Kuhn, 2008). The first formalized example of comparing academic advising standards and techniques came in October 1977 in Burlington, Vermont where a meeting on academic advising, called the National Conference on

Academic Advising, attracted over 300 people (Kuhn, 2008; Thurmond & Miller, 2006). By 1979, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA) was chartered. NACADA currently has national and international memberships of over 10,000 (Thurmond & Miller, 2006).

Types of academic advising models. According to Swanson (2006), seven distinct types of academic advising models exist. These seven models are: Faculty-Only, Satellite, Self-Contained, Shared-Supplementary, Shared-Split, Shared-Dual, and Total-Intake (Swanson, 2006). In the Faculty-Only model, the students are only advised by faculty members (Swanson, 2006). Tuttle (2000) indicates that the Faculty-Only model dominates across all institutional types; however, the Faculty-Only model has declined in popularity amongst public, four-year institutions with only 15% using the Faculty-Only model of academic advising. The Satellite model is structured around separate advising offices and different academic subject entities leads each advising office (Swanson, 2006; Tuttle, 2000). The Self-Contained model does not include direct contact with faculty (Swanson, 2006). In the Self-Contained model, all academic advising is centralized in one location with a Dean or administrator in charge (Swanson, 2006). In the Shared-Supplementary model, faculty members are the main providers of academic advising, but professional academic advisors work as supplements to the faculty (Swanson, 2006; Tuttle, 2000). The Shared-Split model offers similarities to the Shared-Supplementary model; however, in the Shared-Split model students are separated in groups specific to academic focus and progression (Swanson, 2006; Tuttle, 2000). According to Tuttle, more than 50% of public, four year institutions use the Shared-Split model. In the Shared-Dual model, students are assigned two different advisors, which usually consist of a

professional academic advisor and a faculty member (Swanson, 2006). The primary focus of the faculty advisor in the Shared-Dual model is curriculum, while the primary focus of the professional academic advisor is registration and academic progress (Swanson, 2006). Finally, in the Total-Intake model, begins with professional academic advisors as the initial advisors for freshman students, then after a student meets a predetermined set of requirements, the student moves to a faculty advisor (Swanson, 2006; Tuttle, 2000). The Total-Intake model is most common in community colleges (Tuttle, 2000).

Looking toward the future. Currently, the field of academic advising is growing. According to Kuhn (2008), professional academic advising has distinguishing itself as a separate field. Thurmond and Miller (2006) predict the continued growth and development of academic advising as the profession continues to integrate academic and student affairs. Additionally, Kuhn explains that combining advising theory, practice, and research, will help to continue the improvement of academic advising. Finally, Kuhn anticipates that collaborative efforts between academic advisors, faculty, and researchers will help identify concerns and improve the effectiveness of academic advising.

Theoretical Framework

Academic advising falls into a unique category within the American higher education system. The distinctiveness of the American academic advising system is that academic advising is not grounded in one overarching theory. Unlike andragogy, which the American higher education system can ground in Knowles or Tinto's model of student retention, academic advising is built upon the foundation of multiple theoretical perspectives. Additionally, a theoretical framework specific to academic advising in the liberal arts is especially unique. The different voices in multiple theoretical frameworks

relevant to academic advising and academic advising within the liberal arts work in conjunction to fill different theoretical gaps and answer different questions.

Student development and involvement. Astin's (1999b) extensive research into student involvement defines student involvement as the "amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 518). Astin's involvement theory can be broken down into five principles: The amount of energy, both physical and psychological, that the student invests in a given task; involvement exists for all students along a continuum, meaning different amounts of involvement exist at different times; different aspects of involvement are evaluated either qualitatively or quantitatively depending on the type of involvement; level of learning and development is directly proportional to the level of student involvement; and, last, an educational policy or program is not effective unless it directly increases student involvement. An involved student, per Astin, spends time studying, participating in campus activities, spends a lot of time physically on campus, and is involved in class and with faculty members. Additionally, behavior, not motivation, is the key component of student involvement (Astin, 1999b).

According to Astin (1999b), there are three implicit pedagogical theories through which student involvement helps link to student outcomes. According to the first theory, subject-matter or content theory, student learning and development occurs when a student is presented with the correct subject matter (Astin, 1999b). Thus, according to Astin, "a 'liberal education' consists of an assortment of 'worthwhile' courses" (p. 520). However, the problem with subject-matter theory is the student is placed in a passive-learner role (Astin, 1999b). According to the second theory, resource theory, student learning and

development will occur if enough resources are available in one place (Astin, 1999b). In resource theory, successful and high achieving students are resources (Astin, 1999b). Per Astin, resource theory has two limitations: first, the supply of bright/high achieving students are limited and second, the focus is on accumulating resources, not on how to properly use the resources. According to the third theory, individualized (eclectic) theory, no single approach works well for all students (Astin, 1999b). Individualized (eclectic) theory emphasizes student advising and counseling and self-paced instruction (Astin, 1999b). The biggest limitation concerning individualized (eclectic) theory is the expense.

Astin (1999b) argues that student time is the most valuable resource in an academic environment and all campus activities and events are competing for student time. The more involved a student becomes academically, the more isolated the student becomes from their peer group (Astin, 1999b). Additionally, the greater the student is involved with faculty, student involvement increases (Astin, 1999b). For administrators, Astin recommends actually focusing on what the student is doing. For student personnel workers (i.e. academic advisors), Astin indicates that since student personnel workers tend to have a one-on-one relationship with students, student personnel workers are in the best position to keep track of student involvement and actively work with students to increase involvement. However, Astin points out the major challenge of personnel workers, which is trying to find a “hook” to get students involved. By capturing students’ attention, student personnel workers can encourage students to increase involvement (Astin, 1999b). Finally, Astin presents a directly proportional relationship between student involvement and development: as student involvement increases, student development increases.

Experiential learning. The practice of experiential learning, first studied and identified by David Kolb, is currently on the rise in the American higher education system (Kolb, 2015). Experiential learning is a process of learning directly from hands-on life experiences, which occurs outside the classroom (Cantor 1995; Kolb, 2015). Kuh, Schuh, and Whitt (1991) argue that when “out-of-class experiences complement the institution’s educational purposes, they contribute significantly to student learning and personal development” (p. 6). Also, an experiential learning experience helps students find a place and skills related to success in the workplace after college graduation (Cantor, 1995; Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991).

Linking back to Astin’s (1999b) theory on student involvement and development, Kolb (2015) asserts that learning, fostered by an experiential learning experience, is where development occurs. Additionally, to get students involved in an experiential learning experience requires a clear mission and philosophy that offer reasonable challenges of involvement to students (Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991). The promotion and increase of student involvement in experiential learning also requires a combination of student effort and institutional effort (Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991). Finally, a campus culture encouraging involvement is a critical component to get students involved in an experiential learning experience (Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991).

Per Kolb (2015), experiential learning is both a comprehensive process and theoretical perspective where different areas of the learning process apply. Cantor (1995) explains that “when learners understand the value of a certain knowledge or skill and are correspondingly excited about it, learning can take place” (p. 8). Also, each instance of

experiential learning is unique to the individual student (Cantor, 1995). And through the unique experience, students can clarify and define their learning (Cantor, 1995).

Academic advising. In order to fully understand academic advising, theory is a necessary guide. Traditionally, academic advising has borrowed from a multitude of different theories like developmental theories and theories within the social sciences (Hagen & Jordan, 2008; McClintock Brenner, 2010). Academic advising is a process that includes five dimensions: “exploration of life goals;” “exploration of vocational goals;” “program choice;” “course choice;” and “scheduling choices” (O’Banion, 1994, p. 83). Hagen and Jordan (2008) explain that there are two theoretical approaches to academic advising: analogic and normative. Analogic theories are best defined as metaphorical as in a way of viewing things differently (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). Simply, analogic theories borrow from other theories. Normative theories encourage advisors to practice advising using a specific method (Hagen & Jordan, 2008).

Prescriptive and developmental academic advising. Generally, two types of academic advising exist: prescriptive and developmental (Easterday, 2013). In a prescriptive relationship, “as implied by the term itself, the relationship is obviously based on authority; the advisor is the doctor and the student the patient” (Crookston, 1994, p. 78). According to Easterday (2013), the prescriptive relationship can be seen as a traditional one. In prescriptive advising, the student assumes a passive role (Easterday, 2013). Standing in juxtaposition to rigid and formal prescriptive advising, developmental advising is informal (Easterday, 2013). In developmental advising, “the relationship itself is one in which the academic advisor and the student differentially engage in a series of

developmental tasks, the successful completion of which results in varying degrees of learning by both parties” (Crookston, 1994, p. 79).

Components of advising include: abilities, motivation, rewards, maturity, initiative, control, responsibility, learning output, evaluation, and the relationship itself; however, prescriptive and developmental advising view these components differently (Crookston, 1994). For example, regarding abilities, prescriptive advising focuses on “limitations,” while developmental advising focuses on “potentials” (Crookston, 1994, p. 80). Also, in prescriptive advising the control is held by the advisor, whereas in developmental advising control is negotiated (Crookston, 1994). Finally, the nature of a prescriptive relationship is “based on status, strategies, games,” and “low trust,” while the nature of a developmental relationship is “based on nature of task, competencies, situation,” and “high, high trust” (Crookston, 1994, p. 80). As seen by the comparison of key advising components, prescriptive and developmental advising are fundamentally different.

Advising theory in practice. Through research, McClintock Brenner (2010) found that while advisors utilized theory in their advising practices, they rarely tied the theory to a formal name or overarching perspective. McClintock Brenner’s study findings suggested developmental theory “remained pertinent to work with college students because every advisor in this study identified developmental advising as an influence on their practice either by name or through the use of associated language” (p. 144). However, the most significant finding in McClintock Brenner’s study is that most often, academic advisors do not use formal theory to inform their advising practices and

techniques. Advisors most frequently use experience to inform their practice (McClintock Brenner, 2010).

Role of Academic Advisors in Guiding Students

Often, the academic advisor is the person a student looks to for guidance in forming and reaching educational goals. Traditionally, the role of advisors was drastically different than the professional academic advisors of today. Traditional academic advising was done only by faculty and was simply clerical (Hoffman, 1974). However, as institutions grew, faculty members were not knowledgeable about other disciplines and curriculum changes (Hoffman, 1974). Faculty viewed the responsibility as an extremely time consuming obligation and students viewed the advisor as someone who gives a signature (Hoffman, 1974).

What students really want, according to Hoffman (1974) is a professional academic advisor who is more than a requirement to visit; students want an advisor to help build an educational plan and program. Additionally, Hoffman suggests that an advisor should be a resource for students for both personal and academic concerns. The role of the academic advisor is not to recruit students in different disciplines, but to remain objective and give the facts about each course of study (Hoffman, 1974). Finally, Hoffman states that professional advising should not be extremely clerical by nature so the focus can be primarily on guiding students.

According to Hemwall and Trachte (2005), academic advising should be seen as learning. Hemwall and Trachte present 10 organizing principles to guide the role of the academic advisor as the teacher. First, the academic advisor should enable students to align their learning with the mission of the college (Hemwall & Trachte, 2005). In most

institutions, learning is embedded in the mission and helping students align learning with the mission helps students realize the purpose of college (Hemwell & Trachte). Second, the academic advisor should aid students in learning lower and higher order thinking skills (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005). Third, the academic advisor should assist the student with acquiring the tools needed to achieve goals (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005). Fourth, the academic advisor should “view students as actively constructing their understanding of the mission of the institution, including concepts like becoming responsible citizens, liberally educated persons, and critical thinkers” (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005, p. 77). Fifth, the academic advisor should facilitate students’ own understanding of how they learn (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005). Sixth, the academic advisor should “consider how the social context affects the learner’s understanding of the meaning of education” (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005, p. 78). Seventh, the academic advisor must recognize that students’ backgrounds influence their learning (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005). Eighth, the academic advisor must involve the student in a dialogue where the student has a chance to “express, justify, and discuss individual goals and ideas” (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005, p. 80). Ninth, the academic advisor should work as a guide for the student’s learning (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005). Tenth, the academic advisor should guide students to “recognize and benefit from anomalies, disturbances, errors, and contradictions” (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005, p. 81). Academic advisors, Hemwell and Trachte, argue, should use these 10 guiding principles to inform the advising process. Above anything else, the academic advisor is a guide for the student (Hemwell & Trachte, 2005; Rosenfeld, Shakespeare, & Imbriale, 2014).

Showing Value in the Liberal Arts: Connecting the Liberal Arts to Career Paths

It is not unusual for an academic advisor in the liberal arts to encounter liberal arts majors panicked about options post-graduation. This challenge, which academic advisors in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) may not regularly face, is helping students within the liberal arts realize a viable career path. According to Woodhouse (2015), liberal arts colleges must do a better job of outlining the myriad opportunities and career paths for non-STEM students post-graduation. Academic advisors are a great resource to help liberal arts majors realize their potential.

Valuing a liberal arts degree. Today, the liberal arts degree has lost prestige (Roche, 2013). During the early 20th century, 70% of undergraduate students in the United States majored in the liberal arts (Roche, 2013). Since the 1980s undergraduate students majoring in the liberal arts has been on the decline, with fewer than 40% of undergraduate students in the United States majoring in the liberal arts (Dougherty, 2008; Roche, 2013). According to Vitto (2015), undergraduate students are not hard-pressed to find a list of majors to avoid, which almost always considers degrees in the liberal arts as most avoidable. Science, technology, math and business degrees are glorified, while the liberal arts are deemed inferior (Vitto, 2015). At Indiana University's Bloomington Campus, students are fleeing majors like English and anthropology in exchange for "professional colleges" out of fear for employability (Woodhouse, 2015). This trend is not limited to Indiana University's Bloomington Campus, but is occurring across the nation (Woodhouse, 2015). One reason for the loss of prestige, as suggested by Roche (2013), is that American society today reduces the worth of the American higher education system to the fiscal impact. However, Rosenfeld, Shakespeare, and Imbriale

(2014) argue that a degree in the liberal arts should be increasing, not decreasing. The liberal arts degree is valuable because the liberal arts student is instilled with “transcendent values” that encourages students to “turn a critical and questioning eye on social forces, technologies, and institutions that have the capacity to dwarf individualism and choice” (Rosenfeld, Shakespeare, & Imbriale, 2014, para. 3). Students who are educated in the liberal arts tradition are valuable because they graduate with the expectation of the ability “to achieve and demonstrate critical thinking, to research issues and provide solutions, to process an ever-growing amount of information, to learn advanced technological mediums, to work in a diverse and global population, and to graduate as responsible citizens serving as tomorrow’s leaders” (Shatzer, 2008, p. 101).

Today, employers are looking for graduates with transferable soft skills including: communication skills, emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills, teamwork, and creativity (Vitto, 2015). Employers value these soft skills over technical skills (Vitto, 2015). Liberal arts students are versatile and can quickly adapt to a changing world with defined and refined oral and written communication skills (Roche, 2013). According to Roche (2013), an education in the liberal arts is pertinent to a successful career. Additionally, Roche suggests a liberal arts degree is valuable for the intrinsic value of delving deep into studies exploring the meaning of life. Finally, Roche argues the liberal arts are valuable because they build character and helps connect students to a given vocation.

Career paths in the liberal arts. Academic advisors are critical in helping students explore viable career options. According to O’Banion (1994), academic advisors should have: “knowledge of vocational fields,” “skill in interpretation of tests,”

“understanding of changing nature of work in society,” and “acceptance of all fields of work as worthy and dignified” (O’Banion, 1994, p. 84). The academic advisor should not begin simply with a “program choice,” which assumes that the student already has cemented life and vocational goals (O’Banion, 1994). However, students should not be advised only as future employees, but advising practices should be cultivated to narrate a “multiple educational payoffs” for advisees, “including, but not limited to, employability” (Smith III, 2013, para. 8).

Career-focused advising. Helping students connect study to career goals is difficult and tends to frustrate educators in higher education (O’Banion, 1994). However, O’Banion (1994) points out that although the task of assisting students to make such connections is difficult, it should not be avoided. Commonly, academic advisors are met with the belief that a liberal arts degree will not lead to a strong career path (Herndon, 2015). Therefore, when advising students in the liberal arts with a career focus, the advisor can really emphasize the benefits of working in a variety of fields like education, social services, and governmental organizations (Herndon, 2015). The chief duty of the academic advisor is to help students make that connection between their acquired knowledge and skills to available employment opportunities (Herndon, 2015). The academic advisor should advise a student looking toward the future with the mindset of and/or (Smith III, 2013). Smith III (2013) suggests reinterpreting the liberal arts curriculum to conceptualize post-graduation possibilities. Additionally, academic advisors working with students in the liberal arts need to become well-versed in alternative career routes and choices (Smith III, 2013). Though career opportunities for

students post-graduation are not always well defined, a guaranteed waste of time is simply entering into a course of study just for a guaranteed career path (Vitto, 2015).

Experiential learning opportunities. In the history of the liberal arts education, experiential learning through internships has provided philosophical and practical importance (Schatzer, 2008). Experiential learning experiences can help students determine what career to pursue post-graduation and what careers they might consider avoiding. Since not all students who study the liberal arts can become scholars, experiences outside the classroom are critical for showing students how to apply their liberal arts skills in the real world (Breslin, 1980). A liberal arts student participating in an experiential learning opportunity becomes exponentially more valuable to a prospective employer (Breslin, 1980). Through participation in an internship as an experiential learning experience, students gain self-confidence and self-esteem (Breslin, 1980). Additionally, student participants noted internship experiences are mutually beneficial because an internship experience allows a student to apply their academic or classroom skills to the internship and vice versa, for example, writing and proofreading skills learned during the internship brought back into the classroom (Dougherty, 2008). Moreover, student participants noted internship experiences increased their interpersonal communication skills (Dougherty, 2008).

Summary of the Literature Review

Professional academic advising is a growing field within the context of American higher education. As institutions grow, the need for well-versed professional advisors is growing. Yet, while the field of academic advising is growing, the number of students pursuing a degree in the liberal arts is declining. The literature indicates that the

definition of the liberal arts and what it means to be liberally educated have shifted over time. The literature also indicates that while the liberal arts can be traced back to the Hellenistic era, formal academic advising does not occur until the 1870s. Academic advisors play a key role in guiding students through their educational journey and academic advisors within the liberal arts have the additional challenge of linking a defined career path with the field of study.

Research into the value of professional academic advising in the liberal arts is critical and timely for a variety of reasons. Professional academic advising has seen a recent explosion in use and popularity. Institutions like Rowan University recently introduced a Master's degree in "Higher Education Administration: Advising Track" to accommodate the demand. Also, there is a large gap in the knowledge base regarding the role of professional academic advisors in helping liberal arts students find value in their degrees. Additionally, a gap exists regarding what theoretical frameworks and perspectives frame professional academic advising.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University on the main campus located in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University is a medium-sized, selective, state research institution offering bachelors programs through doctoral programs (Media and Public Relations, 2014). Rowan University has an enrollment of 14,778 students consisting of: 12,022 undergraduate students, 1,927 graduate students, and 829 professionals (Media and Public Relations, 2014). Rowan University has 12 academic colleges and schools: Business, Biomedical Science & Health Professions, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Communication and Creative Arts, Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, Education, Engineering, Global Learning and Partnerships, Humanities and Social Sciences, Performing Arts, Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, and Science and Mathematics (Media and Public Relations, 2014).

Rowan University has branch campuses in Camden, Mullica Hill, and Stratford, New Jersey (Rowan University Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2016, 2015). Additionally, Rowan University has partnerships with two local community colleges forming Rowan College at Gloucester County and Rowan College at Burlington County (Rowan University Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2016, 2015). These partnerships allow students the opportunity for an affordable education as students can complete two years at either community college and easily transfer to Rowan University to complete a bachelor's degree (Rowan University Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2016, 2015).

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) formed in July 2012 when the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences split into the College of Science and Mathematics and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (About the College, 2015). The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is the largest academic college within Rowan University, which includes 15 majors (About the College, 2015). These majors include: English, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Geography and Environment, History, Law and Justice Studies, Philosophy and Religion Studies, Political Science and Economics, and Sociology and Anthropology (About the College, 2015). Housing the majority of the general education requirements, almost every undergraduate student takes a course housed in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (About the College, 2015). The mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences begins by emphasizing that the foundation of a liberal arts education and professional preparation lies in the humanities and social sciences (About the College, 2015). Additionally, the mission concludes that the College of Humanities and Social Sciences “plays an essential role in Rowan's mission: to educate students who remain lifelong learners and ethically responsible citizens, sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and engaged in advancing our global society” (About the College, 2015, para 5).

The Division of Strategic Enrollment Management at Rowan University encompasses University Advising Services (Rowan University Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2016, 2015). The University Advising Center, which houses University Advising Services is “a collaborative, learning-centered environment committed to engaging students in the development and implementation of meaningful educational goals, informed academic planning, and major selection consistent with their personal values,

interests, and abilities” (Rowan University Undergraduate Catalog 2015-2015, 2015, p. 30).

Rowan University has responded to the need for professional academic advisors through establishing a network of professional academic advisors in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Formerly on an only faculty-advising model, every student within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences now has access to a professional academic advisor at some point in their Rowan career. According to R. Bullard, the Associate Director of University Advising Services, the Rowan University College of Humanities and Social Sciences has one Associate Director of University Advising Services and five professional academic advisors specializing in different majors within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (personal communication, September 23, 2015). The Associate Director works as a professional advisor for College of Humanities and Social Science students in addition to administrative responsibilities (R. Bullard, personal communication, September 23, 2015). The five professional academic advisors and Associate Director help students schedule coursework and connect students to available resources on campus (R. Bullard, personal communication, September 23, 2015). While these professional advisors advise at different levels, freshman through senior College of Humanities and Social Science students are seen by the professional advising staff (R. Bullard, personal communication, September 23, 2015). Faculty still works in the role of mentor or advisor to some students with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Additionally, four professional administrators who are involved with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, University Advising Services, or both are important to the success of the five professional

academic advisors. These professional administrators are invested, in an administrative capacity, with the progress of the professional academic advisors. While all of these administrators may not have daily contact with students from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the administrators are interested in student outcomes and advancement.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population for this study was professional academic advisors advising students in the liberal arts at American institutions of higher education and all professional administrators involved with the advisors, the liberal arts, or both. The available population was the professional academic advisors advising students within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) and administrators at Rowan University. My focus was on the professional academic advisors within CHSS because this population of professional academic advisors works with students completing coursework within the liberal arts and provides these students with academic and post-graduation advice and guidance. Furthermore, my other focus was on the professional administrators involved with the CHSS advisors because they are deeply invested in the success of this advising program. First, I compiled a list of the five professional academic advisors within CHSS and the four professional administrators affiliated with the program. Then, I emailed each professional academic advisor and administrator on the list requesting interview participation (Appendix C). The sample size consisted of all five professional advisors and the four professional administrators. Total Population sampling was used to form the sample.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used to collect data regarding the role professional academic advisors and professional administrators play in showing students the value of a liberal arts degree was qualitative interviewing. The interview protocol consisted of one interview scheduled at the convenience of the participant (Appendix E). The interview questions focused on demographic information, advising role, advising skills and education, post-graduation options, degree value, and any suggested changes. The interview questions were developed from the research questions presented in Chapter I of this study. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Data Collection

Before any data were collected, Rowan University's Institutional Review Board approved my study (Appendix A). Permission to conduct this research was granted by the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (Appendix B) as well as the Associate Director of University Advising Services (Appendix B). Before any interviews were conducted, all participants completed and returned a participant consent form and an Audio/Videotape Consent Form (Appendix D). The consent form provided information about participation, risk, interview questions, and interview procedure. The only personally identifiable information on specific individuals was the compiled list of the five professional academic advisors within CHSS and the list of the four professional administrators with vested interest with the professional academic advisors within CHSS.

After this necessary initial process required for identifying a target population, no additional personally identifiable information was used. The recruitment emails were sent on 7 January 2016. The recruitment email clearly stated the purpose of the study as well

as the anticipated length of the interview. Additionally, the recruitment email stated that each participant would remain confidential. The academic advisors who agreed to come in for an interview, were identified through “AA#” to indicate the interview order. The professional administrators who agreed to come in for an interview, were identified through “AD#” to indicate the interview order.

These interviews took place in my office located in the Office of Career Advancement. The Office of Career Advancement is located on the second floor of Savitz Hall on Rowan University’s main campus. The interviews began on 11 January 2016 and concluded on 8 February 2016. The interviews were audiotape recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis techniques, per Sisco (1981), were used to analyze the data. Sisco’s content analysis focuses on the analysis of written data. Each interview was transcribed before the content analysis could begin. The data were organized according to each question. Each question was analyzed in terms of summary, key term identification, and themes. Then, the data were analyzed in terms of parallel and contrasting themes.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Study Participants

Since all five College of Humanities and Social Sciences embedded advisors participated in this study and the four administrators participated in this study, this was a Total Population Study. Emails were sent out to the five professional embedded advisors in CHSS and four administrators responsible for or interested in the success of the embedded advisors. To maintain confidentiality, the administrators who participated in the study are presented as AD#1 through AD#4 and the professional academic advisors who participated in the study are presented as AA#1 through AA#5. Due to the importance of upholding confidentiality, in-depth biographical information specific to each participant will not be provided. Please see Table 1 and the information below for study participant information.

All four, or 100%, of the professional administrators had advanced degrees. Three of the administrators, or 75%, have Doctoral degrees and one of the administrators, or 25%, has a Master's degree. All five (100%) of the professional advisors have Master's degrees. Undergraduate and graduate degrees and interests of the nine participants ranged; however, eight out of the nine participants (88.89%) earned undergraduate degrees in liberal arts fields. Additionally, four, or 44.44% of the participants, earned at least one of their degrees from Rowan University.

Out of the nine participants, two, or 22.22%, were male, while seven, or 77.78%, were female. Also, of the nine participants, seven (77.78%) self-identified their race or ethnicity as White or Caucasian and two (22.22%) self-identified their race or ethnicity as

Hispanic or Puerto Rican. Time spent working at Rowan University ranged from 2.5 years to 27 years with 11.06 years as the average.

All five CHSS academic advisors advise at least one major within CHSS. Additionally, all five CHSS academic advisors work at Rowan University full time. Three of the CHSS academic advisors (60%) indicated their career path toward academic advising began with a great experience with an academic advisor and/or an experiential learning experience in advising. Two of the CHSS academic advisors (40%) explained their career path into academic advising was due to experiencing components of academic advising in other jobs and realizing their passion. The case load of the CHSS academic advisors ranges from 300 to 500 students.

Of the four administrators interviewed, two are administrators responsible for supporting the CHSS academic advisors and are in a direct reporting line. The other two administrators are not in a direct reporting line from the CHSS academic advisors; however, they are extremely interested in the success of the embedded CHSS advisors. Three (75%) of the administrators have a background in professional advising. All four (100%) of the administrators indicated their career path toward administration as accidental.

Table 4.1

Study Participants Profile

Identifier	Years at Rowan
Administrators	
AD#1	Less Than 11
AD#2	More Than 11
AD#3	Less Than 11
AD#4	More Than 11
Academic Advisors	
AA#1	Less Than 11
AA#2	Less Than 11
AA#3	More Than 11
AA#4	More Than 11
AA#5	More Than 11

Note. These results are from a Total Population Sample of 9

Analysis of the Data

Research question 1. What skills and knowledge are required to be an advisor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?

Content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to skills and knowledge required to be an advisor in CHSS. Data presented in Table 4.2 and demonstrative quotes are used in order to illustrate themes. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“What skill and knowledge set is necessary in order to be a College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) Advisor?”

Both the academic advisors and administrators framed their answers around discussions and meaningful interactions with students. Advising, to the nine participants, goes well beyond a brief meeting where an advisor simply tells a student what courses to take and when. From an academic advisor’s point of view, Participant AA#2 stated:

I hear from a lot of students who have come from faculty advising or even other schools with other advisors that they never spent much time with their advisors they just sat down real quickly and they handed them five classes and said “this is what you need.” So, when I sit down with students because I feel it is such a complicated population, I just want to make sure I ask how things are going. I try to remember things they have told me from the last time whether it is personal or about their classes. I do not want it to be all about classes.

And, from an administrator’s point of view, Participant AD#4 explained:

CHSS advisors must have the love of knowledge and understanding of how the skills and knowledge that the students are getting through a Liberal Arts education, which every student at Rowan University gets, will benefit students in their long-term life both as a person, a citizen, and as a professional.

Discussions outside a conversation of major requirements is encouraged by both those doing the academic advising (academic advisors) and those invested in the success of the CHSS embedded advisors (administrators).

Along with creating a comprehensive advising experience for students, the theme of empathy and understanding marked the discussion of all four (100%) of the administrators and four of the professional academic advisors (80%). Regarding communication, Participant AD#1 described:

I think communication is key. Understanding the various modes of communication. Whether that’s being sound on emails, social media, in person, large-group presentation, communication and getting that information out to

students is really paramount. Other skills really you have to be empathetic to students' needs and wants and what their track is.

Table 4.2

Content Analysis Results for Skills/Knowledge Required to be a CHSS Academic Advisor

Category	Frequency Administrators	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Student-centered	4	5	1
Empathy and Understanding	4	4	2
Career knowledge	4	4	2
Knowledge of degree programs	3	2	3
Locate “gaps” in service	2	0	4
Value the Liberal Arts	1	1	4

Note. These results are from a Total Population Sample of 9

A fascinating disparity between the skill set needed to be a CHSS academic advisor as viewed by administrators and academic advisors involves how the importance of integrating a discussion of careers and professional transition into the advising experience is approached. A total of 100%, or all four, administrators mentioned the criticalness of incorporating a formal discussion of careers into the liberal arts advising.

Participant AD#2 emphasized:

Advisors do all the things from nuts and bolts to personal counseling to work counseling. Career counseling is another part because advisors are not just helping students select courses they are also helping them work toward a career path.

Participant AD#3 echoed an almost exact sentiment through the following statement:

It is really that you need to know where to direct a student so that they can figure out what those career paths are, they can figure out how to get hands-on work experience, like doing an internship is a great idea. Going to one of our events so advisors can learn what our past graduates have done. Advisors really need to be connected and they need to be flexible in thinking beyond the program guide.

A total of 80%, or four, of the academic advisors mentioned careers as a skill of advising; however, the answers were framed more in terms of experiential experiences as opposed to a more standard career advising. Participant AA#3 discussed “networking” during internship experiences to help in forging a career path and Participant AA#5 was concerned with linking students to “resources in the community.” And, Participant AA#1 describes a career interaction that goes even deeper:

You have to have a real understanding of the liberal arts and where the liberal arts can take you. For many of our majors, there is not a natural progression to a career. It is not like “I am going to major in accounting and become an accountant.” It is definitely deeper than that, it needs more exploration.

In an interesting contrast, three out of the four administrators (75%) focused on knowledge of degree and program requirements as a critical knowledge set for CHSS advisors to have while only two out of the five administrators (40%) mentioned the knowledge of CHSS academic requirements and advising policies. One administrator, Participant AD#4, in addition to formalized program knowledge, took the technical definition of knowledge in further by stating:

All of our Advisor’s do have a Master’s degree. Most of them are in Higher Education or Counseling in Educational Settings but not all of them. So you can

have a diverse background, but a Master's degree are required for everyone.

Everyone needs to have relevant experience, at least 2 years of relevant experience working with college students.

The academic advisors did not focus as much on technical knowledge as they did on patience and understanding student motivations. For example, Participant AA#3 articulated:

I think really just encouraging and motivating students. Students see that. I think a student will recognize that you have sincere interest and care in the job as well as them. So those are key.

Another technical component of advising only touched upon by administrators, is ability of an academic advisor to locate “gaps” in service to students. A total of 50%, or two, administrators focused on the idea of bridge-building as a skill critical for advisors, while no academic advisors mentioned the ability to bridge gaps in service as a requirement to be an academic advisor.

Finally, only one administrator out of the four (25%) and one academic advisor (20%) highlighted valuing the Liberal Arts as a skill or knowledge set for CHSS Advisors. From an administrative point of view, participant AD#4 explained:

Specifically, of course, for CHSS advisors, they need to understand the benefit of the Liberal Arts and why we even have the Liberal Arts—because it is not obvious.

From an academic advising point of view, participant AA#1 stated:

You have to have a real understanding of the Liberal Arts and where the Liberal Arts can take you.

Research question 2. What are the benefits of earning a degree from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?

Content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to the value or payoff of a CHSS Degree. Data presented in Table 4.3 and demonstrative quotes are used in order to illustrate themes. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“What is the payoff/value of a CHSS degree over a degree with a better-defined career path upon graduation?”

The payoff or value of a CHSS degree over a degree with a better-defined career path upon graduation varies widely not only amongst administrators as compared to academic advisors but also between administrators and between advisors. The only category in which all administrators were in agreement with was career readiness, options, and long-term benefits of a CHSS degree. With Participant AD#3 explaining:

Hands-down our students can transition to new careers, [our students] are able to move in and out of different career changes more readily, and even change their education focus because they have a broad level of preparation.

Two, or 40%, academic advisors stressed the value of career malleability, with

Participant AA#1 stated:

I have had discussions with students many times that were in one major and a career option came out or they told me something they were passionate about on a personal level and we were able to connect the dots [with a career option] and they are so surprised.

Transferable skills as a value from a CHSS education were mentioned by 75%, or three, administrators, and 40%, or two, academic advisors. According to Participant AD#4,

[CHSS Degrees] Enable students to pull out their transferable skills. That I what CHSS students have tons and tons of—transferable skills and mental agility to be able to adapt to changing environments.

The sentiments of Participants AD#4 is echoed through the words of Participant AA#4 who stated that “it is the transferable skills that a student or person has that gives them value.”

Table 4.3

Content Analysis Results for the Payoff/Value of a CHSS degree

Category	Frequency Administrators	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Career Readiness, Options, and Long-Term Benefit	4	2	1
Transferable Skills	3	2	2
Flexibility/Adaptability	2	1	3
Critical Thinking and Communication	1	2	3
Well-Rounded	1	1	4
Broad Worldview/ Knowledge	1	1	4
Moral Responsibility/Good Citizenship	0	2	4
Courses in Multiple Disciplines	0	2	4
Find Passion and Student Motivation	0	2	4

Note. These results are from a Total Population Sample of 9

Flexibility and adaptability was mentioned as a significant benefit from a CHSS degree by two administrators (50%) and one academic advisor (20%). The response of Critical Thinking and Understanding as a noteworthy benefit was limited to one administrator (25%) and two academic advisors (40%). Resonating the least as an advantage of a CHSS degree were as follows: Well-Rounded (one administrator (25%) and one academic advisor (20%)); Broad Knowledge and Worldview (one administrator (25%) and one academic advisor (20%)); Moral Responsibility and Good Citizenship (no administrators and two academic advisors (40%)); Courses in Multiple Disciplines (no administrators and two academic advisors (40%)); and, Passion and Motivation (no administrators and two academic advisors (40%)).

Continuing with Research Question 2, content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to what types of employment are available to students with CHSS degrees. Data presented in Table 4.4 and demonstrative quotes are used in order to illustrate themes. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“What kind of employment can graduates with CHSS degrees secure?”

Regarding employment opportunities for CHSS graduates the response was overwhelmingly positive, but decidedly split. On one side, 100%, or four, of the administrators and 20%, or one, academic advisor, responded that CHSS students can secure almost any type of employment. Participant AD#1 stated:

Those skills that are gained in the Liberal Arts make our students candidates for almost any job.

Participant AD#3 exclaimed “Anything they want!” Participant AD#4 echoed, “They can secure any kind of employment what so ever!” And, AA#1 interjected, “Any kind of employment!”

Table 4.4

Content Analysis Results for Employment Opportunities for CHSS Students

Category	Frequency Administrators	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Almost Any Type of Employment Opportunities	4	1	1
Depend on Experiential Learning Experiences and Coursework	0	4	2

Note. These results are from a Total Population Sample of 9

On the other side, 80%, or four, of the academic advisors reported that employment opportunities depend on coursework and experiential learning experiences.

Participant AA#5 explains:

It [career opportunities] is very broad because students in CHSS take courses from different disciplines.

Additionally, Participant AA#4 stated:

You have to be proactive in your job search. That is why internships are extremely important. And that is how students can find out and test the field regarding what is available to them.

Also related to analysis of Research Question 2, content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to present ways to combat the devaluing of majors and decline of enrollment in the Liberal Arts. Data presented in Table 4.5 and demonstrative quotes are used in order to illustrate themes. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“In your opinion, what can be done to combat the devaluing of majors in the liberal arts and the decline of enrollment in the liberal arts?”

When asked for ways to fight the decline and devaluating of the Liberal arts, all four (100%) of administrators emphasized two of the same categories while there was no more than a 60% response rate in any given category between the academic advisors.

Highlighting employability of Liberal Arts students was reported by 100% of administrators and 40%, or two, academic advisors as a way to help increase the enrollment and perception of the Liberal Arts. Participant AD#2 stated:

Employers can teach students a lot on the job but they cannot teach them thinking, empathy, how to synthesize information. These are all the things CHSS students must learn in the classroom. These are the things that our students must learn to sell themselves with.

Looking past the short view and into the long view of success is another great way to emphasize the value of a Liberal Arts degree according to 100% of the administrators and 40%, or two, of the academic advisors. Participant AD#3 explained:

I know there are studies out there about salary ranges. There are studies out there about the salaries of Accounting Majors versus the salaries of Classics Majors 10 years out. Those studies show that our [Liberal Arts] majors, our graduates,

equalize if not exceed in certain areas when you compare. But, you do not usually hear that side of the argument.

Additionally, Participant AA#1 stated:

You have to look at the data at different data points for our graduates. So yes, you look at them [Liberal Arts students] out of the gate and what they are doing. But, I think you need to also look at them in 5 years, 10 years, and 20 years down the line and how the progression and how they have come from that liberal arts background to where they are as an adult and a fully formed individual and a professional.

Table 4.5

Content Analysis Results for Ways to Combat the Decline and Devaluing of Liberal Arts

Category	Frequency Administrators	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Highlight Employability	4	2	1
Long View Instead of Short View	4	2	1
Increased Public Awareness and Public Relations	3	2	2
Strengthened Alumni Relations	1	3	3
Career Readiness Programs and Experiences	1	1	4
Highlight Flexibility	0	2	4

Note. These results are from a Total Population Sample of 9

The next most emphasized way to combat the devaluating and decline in enrollment in the Liberal Arts is to gain public buy-in by increasing public awareness and

public relations surrounding the Liberal Arts as per three of the administrators (75%) and two academic advisors (40%). According to Participant AD#2,

There are articles that are always coming out, often very well placed articles in the New York Times and Washington Post about why English majors outdo science majors. Why employers are looking to hire English majors. I think that recognition is just that initial step.

Also, Participant AA#5 discussed the importance of “promoting the benefits of the Liberal Arts.”

Utilizing alumni as ways to bring value and increasing enrollment in the Liberal Arts was cited by only one administrators (25%) and three academic advisors (60%).

Participant AA#1 stated:

You have to highlight your alumni. You have to embrace them. You have to get them involved with our current students and I think that it is something that we have to work on more. We have wonderful alumni that have Liberal Arts backgrounds that currently work in the field that they have their degree in and do not currently work in the field even close to what they have their degree in.

Similarly, Participant AD#4 emphasized:

So, I think highlighting our alumni who have been successful, spotlighting them somehow and what they are doing now. Creating a better connection with our alum within our departments.

Likewise, Participant AD#5 explained:

Bring role models. Going back to alumni. Brining alumni that have been very successful in their careers and having students hear from the experts.

Career readiness programs with experiential learning opportunities and course flexibility came in as the least frequent themes when discussing how to help stop the declining enrollment and devaluing of the liberal arts. One administrator (25%) and one academic advisor (20%) cited career readiness and experiential learning and no administrators and two academic advisors (40%) emphasized course flexibility within the Liberal Arts as ways to combat the devaluing and lessening enrollment.

Concluding an analysis of Research Question 2, content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to changes that should be implemented to help CHSS students secure careers post graduation. Data presented in Table 4.6 and demonstrative quotes are used in order to illustrate themes. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“What changes do you think should be implemented to help CHSS students secure careers post graduation?”

A total of 100% of administrators and 60% of academic advisors felt that making a career development course mandatory or embedding careers in the CHSS curriculum would help CHSS students secure employment after graduation. Participant AD#4 explained:

One thing that I would really like to see over the next couple of years is every Rowan seminar having some kind of career development aspect to it and they are all over the curriculum: Intro to Sociology, Geography, Engineering Clinic, Business, Writing—there are Rowan seminars everywhere. What do they have in common? An underlying transition to college and academic adjustment piece. I would like to see a signature career development piece that goes along with that.

Table 4.6

Content Analysis Results for Changes to Help CHSS Students Secure Employment

Category	Frequency Administrators	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Mandatory Career Course/ Careers Embedded in Curriculum	4	3	1
Expand Experiential Learning Opportunities and Increase Access	2	4	2
CHSS Match Internship Program	2	3	
Require Internships for All CHSS Majors	0	3	
Increase OCA Staffing and Form Stronger OCA Partnership	3	0	3
Advisory Boards and Panels	2	1	3
Emphasis on Career Preparation	1	1	4
Increased Career Events	0	1	5

Note. These results are from a Total Population Sample of 9

Expanding and increasing access to experiential learning opportunities for CHSS students was the second most discussed theme regarding how CHSS students could secure careers post graduation as responded by two administrators (50%) and four academic advisor (80%). This specific theme had two subthemes: the CHSS Match Internship Program mentioned by two administrators (50%) and three academic advisors (60%), and requiring internships for all CHSS majors by three academic advisors (60%). Regarding the CHSS Match Internship Program Participant AA#1 stated:

The CHSS Match Internship Program should be supported. It has shown great promise. It has shown growth with minimal investment. I think that with even a little more investment it would be phenomenal. I think the idea that academics can be blended with some career education would be really great. It has been successful in other colleges.

In relation to requiring internships for all CHSS majors, Participant AA#3 excitedly exclaimed,

I will be honest with you, I think every major should require an internship. Every major should require an internship. I think that internships are beneficial to our students so that they can get that field experience as to what they are walking into.

In a similar sentiment, Participant AA#4 simple stated “make an internship mandatory.”

Interestingly, increased staffing in the Office of Career Advancement (OCA) and forming a stronger partnership between CHSS and the OCA was discussed by three administrators (75%) and zero academic advisors. Participant AD#2 stated:

We need to beef up our Office of Career Advancement as the office is severely understaffed. And ideally, I would want to have either someone in the Office of Career Advancement or someone within our office, whose job is to prepare students, to reach out to employers, to do the networking.

Forming advisory boards and panels to help CHSS students identify and secure employment opportunities after graduation was mentioned by two administrators (50%) and only one academic advisor (20%). Participant AA#5 discussed forming CHSS alumni advisory panels in order to answer the questions of current CHSS students.

Placing an emphasis on career preparation was only answered by one administrator (25%) and one academic advisor (20%). And, finally, increasing CHSS Career Events was only mentioned by one academic advisor (20%).

Research question 3. What is the perceived role of professional academic advisors in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?

Content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to the perceived role of professional academic advisors in CHSS. Data presented in Table 4.7 and demonstrative quotes are used in order to illustrate themes of the five academic advisors only. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“What do you understand your role to be?”

Fascinatingly, this question failed to yield a 100% response rate for a given theme from the academic advisors. Four out of the five academic advisors (80%) highlighted graduation preparation as a major part of their role as an advisor. When asked about the role of academic advisors, Participant AA#4 stated:

Assisting students and guiding students effectively and efficiently to graduate and earn a degree.

The idea of being a navigator or guide as an academic advisor was expressed by four (80%) academic advisors. Participant AA#4 simply stated, “I am a navigator.” And, Participant AA#5 described, “I provide guidance and direction and help students.”

Offering some career counseling and offering guidance was listed by 60%, or three, of the academic advisors. Participant AA#5 explained that academic advisors “empower students to take control over their career path.”

Knowledge of Rowan University policies and procedures was mentioned by two (40%) academic advisors. Additionally, specific CHSS program knowledge regarding required courses was expressed by two (40%) academic advisors.

Table 4.7

Content Analysis Results for Perceived Role of Professional Academic Advisors

Category	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Graduation Preparation	4	1
Navigator/Guide	4	1
Career Guidance	3	2
Knowledge of Policies/Procedures	2	3
Program Knowledge	2	3
Holistic	2	3
Counseling and Social/Emotional Support	2	3

Note. These results are from a sample of 5 CHSS embedded academic advisors

Two academic advisors (40%) viewed their role as an academic advisor as holistic. Participant AA#1 explained, “I try to make it [academic advising] as holistic as possible.” Similarly, Participant AA#4 emphasized, “the holistic approach to making their [students] college experience a positive experience.”

Finally, providing counseling and social and emotional support was discussed by two (40%) academic advisors. Participant AA#1 stated,

I think that there is a real undercurrent of providing real social and emotional support to students and really just being a constant for them while they are in their program and they are completing their degrees.

Continuing with analysis of Research Question 3, content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to ways in which CHSS students identify and seek employment opportunities. Data presented in Table 4.8 and demonstrative quotes are used in order to illustrate themes. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“How do you suggest CHSS students identify and seek employment opportunities (career fairs, online, campus resources, etc.)?”

When asked how CHSS students can identify and seek employment opportunities, 100% of the participants highlighted experiential learning. Participant AA#1 stated:

Regardless of your major, the idea of experiential learning, whether that is service learning, internships, volunteering—whatever it may be is paramount. Especially for students in the Liberal Arts.

With a similar sentiment, Participant AA#5 explained:

Some of those connections can be done through internships. A student might graduate with no post-graduation experience and apply for a job that requires experience but they do not have it. But, if you have done an internship or field experience that is hands-on experience from what you studied but you also made connections and met individuals that can serve as a reference.

Two administrators (50%) and four academic advisors (80%) answered that a great place for CHSS students to identify employment opportunities is by speaking with academic advisors and/or faculty. Participant AA#4 said, “Talk to faculty about career paths and opportunities that might be available.” Additionally, Participant AA#1,

answered that “the advisors as well as faculty are great for that [identifying employment opportunities] as well.”

Ranking number three, two administrators (50%) and three academic advisors (60%) offered Rowan University’s Office of Career Advancement as a viable place for CHSS students to help secure employment opportunities. Participant AD#3 stated:

They should work with our Office of Career Advancement. Our Office of Career Advancement has recently been renamed and I am guess will be rebranded, and they are moving in a direction more focused on helping students to make those connections with employers.

Participants AA#1, AA#2, and AA#3 all indicated they encourage their students to visit the Office of Career Advancement and utilize the services offered.

An interesting disparity in response and depth between administrators and academic advisors came in the form of research. Researching potential career paths was brought up by only one (25%) administrators and three (60%) academic advisors. All three academic advisors framed research in terms of how they help their students with research; conversely, the administrator (AD#2) simply stated, “students need to do some research.”

Incongruence in response also emerged between administrators and academic advisors relating to attending career-related events. Three administrators (75%) emphasized the importance of attending career-related events in order to secure employment, while only one academic advisor (20%) emphasized events with a career focus.

The CHSS Match Internship Program, ranked fifth in response, was marked as important in helping CHSS students identify career opportunities by one administrator (25%) and two academic advisors (40%). Participant AD#3 stated,

The CHSS Match Internship Program is amazing and has grown so incredibly over the past few years. Really, the CHSS Match Internship Program is like a mini placement agency for internships for any of our majors.

Table 4.8

Content Analysis Results for Identifying and Seeking CHSS Employment Opportunities

Category	Frequency Administrators	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Experiential Learning	4	5	1
Speak with Advisors and Faculty	2	4	2
Work with Office of Career Advancement	2	3	3
Research	1	3	4
Attend Career-Related Events	3	1	4
CHSS Match Internship Program	1	2	5
Informational Interviewing	1	1	6
Career Course	1	1	6
Showcasing Transferable Skills	2	0	6
Campus Involvement	1	0	7
Networking	0	1	7

Note. These results are from a Total Population Sample of 9

When considering how CHSS students could identify and pursue employment opportunities, Participant AA#1 indicated:

You obviously need people who are going to help you with your resume, your cover letter, and your interviewing skills and our CHSS Match Internship Program is wonderful for that.

One administrator (25%) and one academic advisor (20%) highlighted informational interviewing as a great technique for CHSS students to use to identify jobs. Additionally, one administrator (25%) and one academic advisor (20%) pinpointed Rowan's career course as a strong option to help CHSS students with the job search.

Fascinatingly, 50%, or two, administrators and no academic advisors discussed showcasing transferable skills as helpful to CHSS students when seeking employment. Participant AD#1 explained:

The skills that you are learning from the Liberal Arts really are paramount. I tell students all the time do not just ask what you can do with your degree. Ask what you can do with the skills you have gained from your degree. And, if you have a Liberal Arts degree then usually the sky is the limit.

Finally, only one administrator (25%) and no academic advisors discussed campus involvement in relating to recognizing career opportunities. And, no administrators and only one academic advisor (20%) stressed the importance of networking.

Also presented for analysis of Research Question 3, content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to graduate options available for CHSS students with a focus on options perceived as unconventional. One academic advisor asked to skip this question; therefore, the responses are from all four administrators and four out of the five advisors. Data presented in Table 4.9 and demonstrative quotes are

used in order to illustrate themes. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“What graduate options are available for CHSS students? Specifically, programs that may seem unconventional for students with CHSS degrees?”

All of the administrators and four out of the five academic advisors agreed that part of the job of an academic advisor is to provide information about graduate school options; therefore, the responses of four academic advisors are reported in this section.

When asked what graduate options are available to CHSS students, with a special focus on options that may seem unconventional, 75%, or three, administrators and 100%, or four, academic advisors indicated Law School. Participant AD#1 simply stating, “Law School, obviously, you can major in anything.”

Ranking second highest, Business was expressed as an option by three administrators (75%) and two academic advisors (50%). Participant AD#3 explained:

Most “unconventional” is a Master’s in Business administration. Our students can build in a couple of prerequisites if their courses have not already fulfilled them, they very well have depending on what their major was. You can take a couple prerequisites and go for a Master’s of Business Administration. I think there is a misconception that our majors cannot lead to business. But, they absolutely can.

Coming in at third highest was Medical School with two administrators (50%) and two academic advisors (50%) highlighting Medical School as a graduate program path for CHSS students.

Next, ranking fourth, two administrators (50%) and one academic advisor (25%) made a blanket statement that CHSS students were unrestricted and could explore almost

any graduate options; however, the student must be prepared to enter the program. For example, Participant AD#1 explained:

If a student wants to get into medicine they will have to take necessary courses to get into medicine but that does not mean they cannot major in history. That does not mean they cannot major in philosophy and we see that more and more.

Also coming in as fourth in the rankings, two administrators (50%) and one academic advisor (25%) indicated that students with CHSS degrees could pursue graduate school options in either their discipline or a discipline closely related to their disciplines. Participant AD#2 emphasized, “Obviously, any student can go on to graduate school in their discipline.”

Table 4.9

Content Analysis Results for Graduate Opportunities for CHSS Students

Category	Frequency Administrators	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Law	3	4	1
Business	3	2	2
Medical	2	2	3
Any	2	1	4
In Undergraduate or Closely Related Discipline	2	1	4
Education or Higher Education	1	2	4
Health Profession	1	2	4
Social Work	0	2	5
Counseling	0	2	5
Interdisciplinary	0	1	6
Engineering	0	1	6

Note. These results are from 4 administrators and 4 academic advisors

Graduate options in Education or Higher Education and Health Professions each had a response rate of one administrator (25%) and two academic advisors (50%). Additionally, graduate school for Social Work and graduate school for Counseling each had a response rate of no administrators and two academic advisors (50%). And, finally, both Interdisciplinary and Engineering graduate school options each received support from no administrators and one academic advisor (25%).

Research question 4. What is the perceived impact professional advisor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences feel they have on students.

Content analysis was used in order to classify and categorize the themes related to the perceived impact of CHSS embedded advising on students. Data presented in Table 4.10 and demonstrative quotes are used in order to illustrate themes. The relevant question posed will be given first followed by the findings.

“What do you perceive the impact of CHSS embedded advising has on CHSS students?”

Establishing a mutually beneficial partnership between the Faculty and Academic Advisors was a perceived impact by four administrators (100%) and three academic advisors (60%). Participant AD#1 stated:

So I can tell you, for lack of a better word, the marriage between embedded advising and faculty advising and faculty members and the support that student get at CHSS is unmatched.

Similarly, Participant AA#1 emphasized, “You see a growth of the relationship between advising and faculty in order to benefit students in the best possible ways.”

While 100% of administrators answered in terms of strong relationships between Faculty and Academic Advisors, 100% of academic advisors, or five, expressed increased student support as a result of embedded academic advising on CHSS students. A total of 50% of administrators, or two, mentioned student support. Participant AA#4 explained:

I take ownership of my students So, knowing that students know I am there for support and they can email me, show up at my door, make an appointment and know that their academic issue, no matter what it might be, will be taken care of. Impact is tremendous.

Ranking at number two, increased access to advising services was answered as a consequence of CHSS embedded advising by three administrators (75%) and two academic advisors (60%). Participant AD#2 stated:

One problem we had when faculty were advising is that with a few exceptions, faculty members are gone over the summer and breaks. So, to have someone in the department year-round all-day long and you do not have to work around office hours and class schedules has been really good.

Answering with very similar sentiments, Participant AA#3 explained:

Before, they [students] did not have an embedded advisor. Students were only meeting with faculty who had maybe three hours a week for their office hours. We [embedded advisors] are easily accessible. We are there every day. We have the ability to give students time to discuss their concerns, talk about opportunities, careers, and their grades.

Also ranking in at number two is in-depth program knowledge, which was provided as an answer by two administrators (50%) and three academic advisors (60%).

Additionally, ranking number two, career development was mentioned as a positive impact on CHSS students from the embedded advisors by two administrators (50%) and three academic advisors (60%). Participant AD#3 stated:

So many questions students have in advising relates to what careers students can get. We really need that interplay. For now, I see growth that has been allowed to happen through the professional advising and we will see what else can develop regarding the career piece.

Moreover, Participant AA#1 mentioned “career exploration.”

Table 4.10

Content Analysis Results for Impact of CHSS Embedded Advising on CHSS Students

Category	Frequency Administrators	Frequency Academic Advisors	Rank
Partnership between Faculty and Academic Advisors	4	3	1
Increased Student Support	2	5	1
Increased Accessibility to Advising Services	3	2	2
In-Depth Program Knowledge	2	3	2
Career Development	2	3	2
Increased Student Retention	2	3	2
Help Bridge “Service Gap”	2	1	3
Link between Inside and Outside the Classroom	2	0	4
Consistency	1	1	4
Increased Likelihood For Students to Seek Advising	1	0	5
Strengthened Departments	0	1	5

Note. These results are from a Total Population Sample of 9

Next, increased student retention as a benefit of CHSS embedded advising was expressed by two administrators (50%) and three academic advisors (60%). Participant AA#4 said, “I think the ultimate impact and the data is already showing the retention rates and the graduation rates.” Participant AA#1 expressed similar sentiments through the following statement:

One obvious things that you see through statistics is retention. Since we started with embedded advising, retention has gone up between first and second year students. We are now currently working on longer-range, second to third, third to fourth, and we are working on our four-year graduation rate.

Following with a rank of third, helping bridge a “service gap” for students was noted by two administrators (50%) and one advisor (20%). Participant AD#1 explained:

The one thing I can say for CHSS as a whole with engaged faculty and engaged advisors really spans the gap of where we are seeing students having issues.

Interestingly, academic advisors providing a link between inside and outside the classroom was mentioned by two (50%) administrators and zero academic advisors.

Participant AD#3 stated:

[The academic advisors] by nature are going to hear more about what is going on outside the classroom, different exciting opportunities, information about what students are doing, lectures that are coming up, new course offerings—it improves an advisors ability to advise outside of the program guide.

Consistency, was discussed as a benefit of CHSS embedded advising by one administrators (25%) and one academic advisor (20%). Participant AD#2 explained:

There has been more consistency because the advisors are overseen by other advisors up the chain. The messages that students are getting are more consistent and up to date.

Also, Participant AA#2 pointed out a “standardized way of providing information” to CHSS students.

Increased likeliness for students to seek advising thanks to CHSS embedded advising was answered by only one administrator (25%) and no advisors. And, finally, strengthened departments was mentioned by only one academic advisor (20%) and no administrators.

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the impact that professional academic advisors and administrators may have on students with majors in the liberal arts from two points of view: administrators and academic advisors. According to Woodhouse (2015), enrollment in the liberal arts continues to decrease and this study aimed to determine how the professional advising model helps to value the liberal arts. Specifically, this study focused on the impact of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Additionally, this study focused on the extent to which professional administrators are involved in supporting the professional academic advisors at Rowan University. The purpose of this study was to answer four research questions: (1) What skills and knowledge are required to be an advisor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?; (2) What are the benefits of earning a degree from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?; (3) What is the perceived role of professional academic advisors in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?; and (4) What is the perceived impact professional advisor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences feel they have on students?

This was a total population study with participation from all five CHSS embedded professional advisors and all four administrators invested in the success of the CHSS embedded advising model. Academic advisors were given the participant identifiers AA#1 through AA#5 while administrators were given the participant identifiers AD#1 through AD#4. All of the nine participants are full time employees at Rowan University.

Participants each completed one 30 minute interview, which was transcribed and coded for content analysis per Sisco (1981). Data were presented through the use of Tables and illustrative quotes. Each interview was recorded and transcribed before the content analysis. The data were organized according to each interview question and then placed under the corresponding research questions. Then, each question was analyzed in terms of summary, key term identification, and themes.

Discussion of the Findings

Research question 1. What skills and knowledge are required to be an advisor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?

Skills and knowledge required to be an advisor in CHSS was contextualized by all participants around meaningful and mindful CHSS student contact. While a total of five different themes emerged in relation to skills required to be an advisor in CHSS, 100% of the participants agreed that the ability to be student-centered is a critical skill. This finding supports Kuhn's (2008) framework of the second-advising era. A student-centered philosophy and approach to academic advising, per Kuhn, developed during the 1930s-1940s and continues to inform advising practice.

Empathy and understanding was another major theme regarding skills and knowledge for professional academic advisors as responded by eight (88.89%) of the participants. The ability to show empathy and understanding is a technique often associated with counseling. This finding supports Kuhn's (2008) argument that the core of academic advising is to "inform, suggest, counsel, discipline, coach, mentor, or even teach" (p. 3).

Eight participants (88.89%) responded that career knowledge is required in order to be a CHSS academic advisor. This finding supports O'Banion's (1994) research, which points out that the skill-set for professional academic advisors should include: "knowledge of vocational fields" (p. 84). Additionally, this finding supports the argument by Herndon (2015) that explains that advisors in the liberal arts often encounter students who believe that their liberal arts degree will not lead to a career path. It is up to the academic advisor, per Herndon, to have the career knowledge and ability to share that knowledge with students. Moreover, Crookston (1994) found that, historically, a main goal of academic advising was to help students determine career paths.

More technically speaking, knowledge of degree programs was presented as important knowledge for CHSS advisors by five (62.5%) participants. Three out of the four administrators responded with the importance of program knowledge, which offers an interesting comparison as only two academic advisors were interested in this technical piece. "Program choice," according to O'Banion (1994) is one of the five critical dimensions of academic advising (p. 83). Additionally, having a deep program knowledge supports the role of the academic advisor as helping students to realize their goals through directing them along the correct educational route (NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2006).

Exclusively administrators, a total of two, isolated the ability to locate gaps in service as a required skill in order to be a CHSS academic advisor. This findings supports the shift of academic advising from exclusive student-centered to an "examined activity" (Kuhn, 2008). Today, American colleges and universities are continually looking at peer and aspirant programs in order to improve their advising practices and offer better

advising services for students (Kuhn, 2008). Also, this finding supports the increasing connection professional academic advising is making between academic and student affairs as per Thurmond and Miller (2006).

Research question 2. What are the benefits of earning a degree from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?

First, the benefits of earning a degree from CHSS was framed in terms of the payoff or value of a CHSS degree over other degrees with better-defined career paths upon graduation. Six participants (66.67%) responded within a technical and data-driven framework that career readiness, options, and overall long-term benefit is a benefit of earning a degree from CHSS. Of the six participants, four of the respondents were administrators, which is a 100% response-rate. This finding supports research by Roche (2013), which suggests that an education in the liberal arts is integral to career success. Also, this finding parallels Vitto's (2015) argument that career opportunities for liberal art students are not always easily apparent but the paths definitely exist. Conversely, entering into a major exclusively for an assured career can be detrimental for students (Vitto, 2015).

Transferable skills as a benefit of a CHSS degree, another technical component, was answered by five participants (55.56%) with three participants being administrators. This response supports research by Vitto (2015) which explains that employers today are seeking graduates with transferable skills. Transferable "soft" skills, per Vitto, are increasingly valued over technical "hard" skills, which are developed in STEM-focused majors.

Three participants (33.33%) responded that flexibility and adaptability are advantages of a CHSS degree. Additionally, the ability to be well-rounded upon graduation with a CHSS degree was answered by two participants (22.22%). These findings support Roche's (2013) conclusion that liberal arts students are both adaptable and extremely versatile. Additionally, Roche's finding that liberal arts students have distinct communication skills, both written and oral, was supported by this study. Three participants (33.33%) answered that the development critical thinking and communication skills was a major payoff of a CHSS degree.

Two participants (22.22%) responded with broad worldview and knowledge being a benefit of a CHSS degree and two participants (22.22%) responded that moral responsibility and good citizenship is an advantage of a CHSS degree. These two findings support the findings by Rosenfeld, Shakespeare, and Imbriale (2014), which explain that liberal arts students are able to "turn a critical and questioning eye on social forces, technologies, and institutions that have the capacity to dwarf individualism and choice" (para. 3). Additionally, these findings support research by Shatzer (2008), which suggest that liberal arts students have the ability to "work in a diverse and global population and to graduate as responsible citizens serving as tomorrow's leaders" (p. 101).

Next, the benefits of earning a degree from CHSS was presented in terms of employment opportunities for CHSS students. Two themes emerged regarding employment opportunities for CHSS students and the results were decided split between the nine participants with five participants answering in favor of one theme and four participants answering in favor of the other. Five participants (55.55%) responded that CHSS students could obtain almost any type of employment while four participants

(44.44%) responded that employment opportunities depend on experiential learning experiences and coursework. The significance of experiential learning is supported by Cantor (1995) and Kuh, Schuh, and Whitt (1991) in their findings that emphasize success in the workplace after graduation is contingent upon an experiential learning experience.

Moreover, the benefits of earning a CHSS degree can be examined from a different perspective by looking at methods that will showcase the value of the liberal arts in order to combat the devaluing and decline of the liberal arts. Six participants (66.67%) answered that highlighting employability would be a way to combat the declining enrollment in the liberal arts. This finding is supported by research by Herndon's (2015) suggestion that the primary responsibility of academic advisors is to show students parallels between knowledge and employment options. Moreover, Roche (2013) explains that the focus today is on the economic marketability of a degree. Thus, showing how a liberal arts degree is employable will help stop the devaluing of the liberal arts.

Additionally, increasing career readiness programs and experiences was answered by two participants (22.22%). This finding is supported by Astin's (1999b) theory of student involvement and development. According to Astin, student affairs workers are integral in monitoring and increasing student involvement. Academic advisors are in a great position to encourage students to get more involved in academic programs and experiences (Astin, 1999b). Moreover, highlighting the flexibility of the liberal arts was mentioned by two participants (22.22%), which is supported by Roche (2013).

Beside highlighting employability, increasing career readiness programs and experiences, and highlighting flexibility, the study participants suggested some innovative ways to fight the decline and devaluing of the liberal arts: long view instead of

short view; increased public awareness and public relations; and strengthened alumni relations. More research is needed in order to support and evaluate these findings.

Finally, the technique of viewing what changes can be made in order to help CHSS students secure employment will help show the benefit of earning a degree from CHSS. Expanding experiential learning opportunities was mentioned by six participants (66.67%). The criticalness of experiential learning experiences is supported by Cantor (1995) and Kuh, Schuh, and Whitt (1991) who argue that experiential learning experiences assist students in identifying and obtaining employment opportunities after graduation.

An emphasis on career preparation was a change suggested by two (22.22%) participants. This finding is supported by Smith III (2013). Smith III argues that academic advisors must help students prepare for their future in terms of career paths and alternate options. Additionally, Herndon (2015) tasks the academic advisor with the responsibility of career knowledge and career assistance for students.

Besides increasing experiential learning opportunities and emphasizing career preparation, the study participants suggested some insightful changes to help CHSS students secure employment after graduation: mandatory career course/careers embedded in the curriculum; increased OCA staffing and forming a strong partnership with the OCA; creating advisory boards and panels; and increasing career events. More research is needed in order to support and evaluate these findings.

Research question 3. What is the perceived role of professional academic advisors in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?

First, the perceived role of professional academic advisors in CHSS was simply presented by the five academic advisors only. Four participants (80%) explained that the role of professional academic advisors is to prepare students for graduation. Interestingly, preparing students for graduation is not explicitly stated or supported in the literature.

Also, four participants (80%) emphasized that the academic advisor is a navigator or guide for the student. Hemwell and Trachte (2005) and Rosenfeld, Shakespeare and Imbriale (2014) support this finding by highlighting that before any other responsibilities, the academic advisor functions as a student guide. Three participants (60%) mentioned offering career guidance as a role, which is supported by O'Banion (1994) as it relates to "exploration of vocational goals" (p. 83). Additionally, two participants (40%) mentioned counseling and social/emotional support as a major role of an academic advisor, which is supported by Kuhn's (2008) research that suggests the academic advisor works as a counselor.

The role of an academic advisor as being knowledgeable about policies and procedures, having program knowledge, or being holistic is not addressed by the literature. More research is needed in order to support and evaluate these findings.

Then, the perceived role of the professional academic advisors was offered in relation to the academic advisor's responsibility to help CHSS students identify and seek employment opportunities. A total of 100% of participants responded with experiential learning as the best way for CHSS students to identify and seek employment opportunities. The unmatched value of experiential learning opportunities has been emphasized numerous times and is supported by Breslin (1980), Cantor (1995), Kolb (2015), and Kuh, Schuh, and Whitt (1991).

Speaking with advisors and faculty about employment opportunities was mentioned by six participants (66.67%). This is supported by O'Banion's (1994) research which highlights employment knowledge as a critical trait for academic advisors. Additionally, two participants (22.22%), exclusively administrators, outlined that showcasing transferable skills, a more technical component, will help CHSS students seek employment opportunities. Showcasing these transferable skills, characterized as "soft," is supported by Vitto (2015). Moreover, increased campus involvement was answered by one administrator. This finding is supported by Astin (1999b) through research, which suggests that increased student involvement leads to increased favorable student outcomes.

Additional methods for identifying and seeing CHSS employment opportunities as mentioned by the study participants were also critical: working with the office of career advancement; research; attending career-related events; the CHSS Match Internship Program; informational interviewing; a career course; and networking. More research is needed in order to support and evaluate these findings.

Finally, the perceived role of the professional academic advisors was framed in terms of offering graduate education options for CHSS students. All of the administrators and four of the academic advisors felt that a major role of academic advisors is to help interested students identify graduate school options. One academic advisor asked to pass on this question. The answers ranged drastically with no category garnering a response rate of 100%. The literature did not exclusively address graduate opportunities available for liberal arts students; however, Herndon (2015) emphasized that liberal arts students could enter into the fields of education, social services, and governmental organizations.

Three participants (37.5%) answered that education or higher education are graduate opportunities available to CHSS students. Two participants (25%) of participants responded that social work is a graduate option available to CHSS students.

Research question 4. What is the perceived impact professional advisor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences feel they have on students?

The perceived impact of CHSS professional advising on CHSS students was evaluated by asking administrators and the academic advisors about the impact. Seven participants (77.78%) answered that CHSS embedded advising has helped strengthen partnerships between the faculty and academic advisors. This finding is supported by Kuhn's (2008) prediction that as academic advising continues to develop, relationships between faculty and professional advisors will continue to advance.

Moreover, seven participants (77.78%) answered that increased student support is an impact that CHSS embedded advising has on students. This finding is supported Hoffman's (1974) research, which argues that the academic advisor should be there to support students both personally and academically. Also, career development as an impact of professional academic advising on students was responded as an impact by five participants (55.56%), which has found support from Herndon (2015). Furthermore, two participants (22.22%) mentioned one benefit as the ability for CHSS embedded advisors to provide a link for students between inside and outside the classroom, which is supported by Thurmond and Miller's (2006) research that suggests that the academic advisor must link academic and student affairs together for students. Also, this is supported by Hoffman's research that the academic advisor is there for both the personal and academic needs of the student.

More ways in which professional academic advising impacts students were discussed by the participants; however, further research is needed in order to support and evaluate these findings. These additional findings regarding how CHSS embedded advising impacts CHSS students include the following: increased accessibility to advising services; in-depth program knowledge; increased student retention; service bridging; consistency; increased likeliness for students to seek advising; and, strengthened departments.

Conclusions

This study has found just how impactful professional academic advising is on helping students see both the abstract and practical value in the liberal arts. The data presented suggest that in viewing the impact of professional academic advising, administrators and academic advisors have both converging and diverging beliefs. Most notably, administrators framed most answers in a more technical, statistical, measurable and data-driven way, while the CHSS academic advisors often answered in a more holistic manner.

Regarding skill and knowledge required to be a CHSS academic advisor, knowledge of CHSS degree programs and identifying gaps in service were themes that primarily interested administrators. The CHSS academic advisors were more focused on the ability to be student-centered, empathetic and understanding, and career counsel. These three prevalent themes suggest that the CHSS academic advisors view their role more counseling driven than administrative. This affirms the belief of Hoffman (1974) that academic advising should go beyond clerical and administrative responsibilities.

The benefits of earning a CHSS degree can be viewed in terms of the payoff or value of the degree over degrees with better-defined career paths. The majority of the administrators responded with more technical answers including the themes of career readiness, long-term benefits, and skills in terms of transferable, flexible and adaptable. While some academic advisors did answer in these more technical terms, they also answered in terms of more intrinsic benefits like good citizenship, a broadened worldview, and finding passion. This emphasizes the approach by Roche (2013) that values a degree in the liberal arts in terms of allowing students the opportunity to go beyond program knowledge and explore the complexities of life.

Also, the benefits of earning a CHSS degree can be analyzed in terms of employment opportunities. Interestingly, all four (100%) administrators responded with the theme that CHSS students can enter into almost any type of employment and, consequently, zero administrators replied that employment is contingent upon experiential learning and coursework. Four academic advisors, however, highlighted the criticalness of experiential learning. This suggests that academic advisors, those who are actually in daily contact with CHSS students, are more aware that experiences outside the classroom help students connect their liberal arts education with real world applications (Breslin, 1980).

Moreover, highlighting the ways to combat the devaluing and decline of the liberal arts is a way to showcase the benefits of earning a CHSS degree. Dougherty (2008) and Roche (2013) emphasize the need to stop the devaluing of the liberal arts since in the United States less than 40% of undergraduate students have majors that fall in the liberal arts.

Finally, viewing what changes can be made in order to help CHSS students secure employment opportunities are emphasized in order to highlight the benefits of a CHSS degree. For CHSS students, increasing experiential learning opportunities and increasing access was mentioned by six participants with the CHSS Match Internship Program and requiring internships as sub categories. Experiential learning, according to Kolb (2015), assists in student development since students are able to transition what is learned in the classroom into marketable and transferable skills. Also, increasing career preparation can be hugely impactful in helping students secure employment opportunities as per Herndon (2015).

The perceived role of professional academic advisors in CHSS can be interpreted directly from the five professional academic advisors. Two overarching themes characterize the perceived role: fundamental (graduation preparation, knowledge of policies and procedures and program knowledge) and multidimensional student support (navigator and guide, career guidance, holistic, and counseling and social and emotional support). The multidimensional student support perspective is supported by Hemwell and Trachte (2005), Kuhn (2008), O'Banion (1994) and Rosenfeld, Shakespeare and Imbriale (2014).

The perceived role of professional academic advisors can also be interpreted through the role of academic advisors to help CHSS students identify and seek employment opportunities. Experiential learning, which is supported by extensive research (Breslin, 1980; Cantor, 1995; Kolb (2015); Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991), appears to be the strongest and most successful method for CHSS students to identify and seek employment opportunities.

Finally, the perceived role of professional academic advisors can be framed in terms of offering advice for graduate school. Herndon (2015) emphasizes education, social services, and governmental organizations as viable career options for liberal arts students, which can indirectly be interpreted also as graduate school options.

The highlight of the perceived impact of professional advising in CHSS on CHSS students was the strong partnership between faculty and academic advisors. Kuhn (2008) completed extensive research on academic advising and outlined many trends and predictions. Kuhn anticipated a stronger bond between faculty and advisors, which has been supported by the study findings.

Recommendations for Practice

The following presents recommendations for practice in order to investigate the impact of professional academic advising on students in the liberal arts informed by this study and the available knowledge base presented in the Literature Review:

Valuing the liberal arts was mentioned as a skill required by CHSS academic advisors; however, no literature available presents the proper way for academic advisors to value the liberal arts. During professional development training for academic advisors for liberal arts students, a unified mission should be developed regarding how to value the liberal arts and how to integrate this valuing into everyday practice. A unified mission will create a unified advising mission, which will best serve the liberal arts student population.

Students in liberal arts disciplines are constantly pressured by society to defend their decision to pursue a liberal arts majors; therefore, students need hard data as a strong defense. Data comes out every year about job placement and the high salaries of

STEM majors. Career centers and individual liberal arts majors should follow up with alumni one year out, five years out, and 10 years out and showcase successes and salaries. Degree practicality and employability are huge concerns today and easily accessible and accurate data will greatly assist both students and student affairs professionals within the liberal arts.

Majors categorized as liberal arts majors need to completely revamp their public relations. An innovative public relations campaign should be established. Energy must be directed into increased print and social media in order to increase public awareness about the liberal arts. Additionally, misconceptions regarding employment and salary must be addressed in the public relations campaign.

A strong relationship with the liberal arts alumni should be developed and maintained. Events ranging from formal panel discussions to informal “mocktails” should be offered throughout the year. These networking opportunities will allow students, faculty, and staff to form strong relationships with alumni. Alumni can offer liberal arts students support and relay real world experiences in terms of finding jobs and pursuing a graduate degree.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. A mixed-method study including a survey and multiple interviews should be completed in order to more fully investigate the impact of professional academic advising on students in the liberal arts should be conducted with a larger population.
2. Another qualitative study at a public research institution, similar to this study, should be completed and expanded to include faculty and liberal arts students in

order to have a fully rounded understanding of the impact of academic advising in the liberal arts.

3. A similar research study should be completed at a small private liberal arts institution and the results compared to this study to identify convergent and divergent findings.
4. Research should be conducted exclusively on liberal arts alumni to determine how alumni value a liberal arts degree and if that valuing increasing or decreases as the years after graduation increases.
5. More research is needed on the effects of integrating a career component in the curriculum of liberal arts majors or requiring a career development course for liberal arts majors.
6. Additional research is needed on the impact of a strong relationships between liberal arts majors and career services. Specifically, investigating if as the strength of the relationship increases does the awareness of job opportunities available to liberal arts majors increase.
7. More research regarding what graduate options are pursued by liberal arts students is needed in order to help show current liberal arts students the flexibility and accessibility of liberal arts degrees.
8. Research should be conducted to determine if student retention increases as professional advising staff members increase. Most beneficial would be to look at data before an institution implements professional advising and compare that with data after the same institution implements professional advising. Additionally,

retention trends should be analyzed after a professional advising model is developed to determine if retention increases as the years increase.

9. Research is needed to assess if students are more likely to independently seek advising services with professional academic advisors.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval



** This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.
The originating e-mail account is not monitored.
If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office **

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance

Identifier: FWA00007111

IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman

IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy

Effective Date: 12/23/2015

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID: [Pro2015000602](#)

Title: The Role of Professional Advising in the Liberal Arts

Principal Investigator:	Burton Sisco	Study Coordinator:	None
Co-Investigator(s):	Kimberly Poolos	Other Study Staff:	None
Sponsor:	Department Funded	Approval Cycle:	Twelve Months
Risk Determination:	Minimal Risk	Device Determination:	Not Applicable
Review Type:	Expedited	Expedited Category:	6 7
Subjects:	9		

CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type:	Research Protocol/Study	Submission Status:	Approved
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Approval Date: 12/23/2015 Expiration Date: 12/22/2016

Pregnancy Code:	No Pregnant Women as Subjects Not Applicable	Pediatric Code:	Not Applicable No Children As Subjects	Prisoner Code:	Not Applicable No Prisoners As Subjects
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Protocol:	PROTOCOLTEMPLATE-Poolos.docx Recruitment Email, Request for Permission Emails and Research Questions.docx Ed Services Leadership-letterhead CONSENT FORM-3.docx Guidance_audio_videotape_addendum_to _consent_form_v02-10-2015-Final (1).docx	Consent:	There are no items to display	Recruitment Materials:	Recruitment Email Only.docx
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*** Study Performance Sites:**

Glassboro Campus Office of Career Advancement 2nd Floor, Savitz Hall

ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
2. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**
4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions :** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.
5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations :** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if

FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.

8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor or the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application or final report.

9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.

10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email communication may contain private, confidential, or legally privileged information intended for the sole use of the designated and/or duly authorized recipients(s). If you are not the intended recipient or have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and permanently delete all copies of this email including all attachments without reading them. If you are the intended recipient, secure the contents in a manner that conforms to all applicable state and/or federal requirements related to privacy and confidentiality of such information.

Appendix B

Permissions to Conduct Research

23 December 2015

Dean Cindy Vitto
Rowan University, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Dean Vitto,

I would like to interview the five College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) embedded advisors as well as four professional administrators with vested interest in the success of the CHSS embedded advisors. These interviews will be used to complete a research study titled *The Role of Professional Advising in the Liberal Arts*. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Specifically, this study focused on the impact of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Moreover, this study focused on the extent to which professional administrators are involved in supporting the professional academic advisors. These points were assessed through qualitative research methods and analysis. This study is being conducted to satisfy the thesis requirement for the Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration.

I will select the participants from the five professional CHSS embedded advisors and four professional administrators identified in having interest in the success of the CHSS embedded advisors. I will send recruitment emails to the identified participants explaining my research goals and requesting an interview with them. The academic advisors who agree to come in for an interview, will be identified through “AA#” to indicate the interview order. The professional administrators who agree to come in for an interview, will be identified through “AD#” to indicate the interview order. This identification method will assure participant anonymity since no personally identifiable information will be collected. The participant consent form and a copy of the interview questions that will be asked are attached.

If all is satisfactory, please send written or electronic permission to conduct the interviews as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Kimberly Poolos
Graduate Coordinator, CHSS Match Internship Program
Graduate Intern, Thomas N. Bantivoglio Honors Concentration

23 December 2015

Robert Bullard
Associate Director, University Advising Services
Rowan University, University Advising Services
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Mr. Bullard,

I would like to interview the five College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) embedded advisors as well as four professional administrators with vested interest in the success of the CHSS embedded advisors. These interviews will be used to complete a research study titled *The Role of Professional Advising in the Liberal Arts*. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Specifically, this study focused on the impact of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Moreover, this study focused on the extent to which professional administrators are involved in supporting the professional academic advisors. These points were assessed through qualitative research methods and analysis. This study is being conducted to satisfy the thesis requirement for the Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration.

I will select the participants from the five professional CHSS embedded advisors and four professional administrators identified in having interest in the success of the CHSS embedded advisors. I will send recruitment emails to the identified participants explaining my research goals and requesting an interview with them. The academic advisors who agree to come in for an interview, will be identified through “AA#” to indicate the interview order. The professional administrators who agree to come in for an interview, will be identified through “AD#” to indicate the interview order. This identification method will assure participant anonymity since no personally identifiable information will be collected. The participant consent form and a copy of the interview questions that will be asked are attached.

If all is satisfactory, please send written or electronic permission to conduct the interviews as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Kimberly Poolos
Graduate Coordinator, CHSS Match Internship Program
Graduate Intern, Thomas N. Bantivoglio Honors Concentration

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Dear, [Name of Administrator or Advisor],

Good Afternoon. My name is Kimberly Poolos and I am a graduate student pursuing a Masters of Arts in Higher Education Administration in the Department of Educational Services and Leadership at Rowan University. In order to fulfill my thesis requirement, I am conducting a qualitative research study titled *The Role of Professional Advising in the Liberal Arts*. My study attempts to compare the importance of professional advising in the liberal arts and the investment of administrators in showing that the liberal arts are valuable. Specifically, my study focuses on if professional academic advisors were able to show the liberal arts course of study as valuable. Moreover, my study focuses on the extent to which professional administrators are involved in supporting the professional academic advisors and also showing the liberal arts as valuable.

Interviews will take place at Rowan University and will be scheduled at your convenience. Interviews will take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete and all participants will remain confidential.

Participation in my research study will greatly aid in the success of my study. If you are interested in participating in my study, please email me at poolos24@students.rowan.edu

Best,

Kimberly Poolos

Graduate Coordinator, CHSS Match Internship Program

Graduate Intern, Thomas N. Bantivoglio Honors Concentration

Appendix D

Consent Forms



The Role of Professional Advising in the Liberal Arts

Informed Consent for Interviews or Interviews with Record Reviews (Expedited Review with identifiers)

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

You are invited to participate in a research study about understanding the role of professional academic advisors in the Liberal Arts. This study is being conducted by researchers in the Department of Educational Services and Leadership at Rowan University. My name is Kimberly Poolos and I am conducting research for my thesis requirement in the M.A. in Higher Education Program at Rowan University; I serve as co-investigator. The Principal Investigator of the study is Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate in this study, you would be interviewed for about thirty minutes. The number of participants in the study is nine.

The interview questions will focus on demographic information, advising role, advising skills and education, post-graduation options, degree value, and any suggested changes.

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number that is unique to this study. No one other than the researchers would know whether you participated in the study. Study findings will be presented only in summary form and your name will not be used in any report or publications.

Participating in this study may not benefit you directly, but it will help us learn the impact professional academic advisors and administrators on students with majors in the liberal arts. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate in this study, this will have no effect on the services or benefits you are currently receiving. You may skip any questions you don't want to answer and withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Rowan University Glassboro/CMSRU IRB at 856-256-5150 or 856-256-4058.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM WHETHER OR NOT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE.

Social and Behavioral IRB Research Agreement

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and **I have received a copy of this description.**

Name (Printed) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Investigator: _____ Date: _____

**ROWAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
AUDIO/VIDEOTAPE ADDENDUM TO CONSENT FORM**

You have already agreed to participate in a research study conducted by Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D. We are asking for your permission to allow us to use audiotape (sound) as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for:

- Analysis by the research team

The video recording(s) will include the unique identifier assigned to each participant (AA# for Academic Advisors and AD# for Administrators) and the interview questions and answers.

The recording(s) will be stored in a locked file cabinet labeled with the unique identifier assigned to each participant. The recordings will be retained for six ears and then destroyed.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Social and Behavioral IRB Research Agreement

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and **I have received a copy of this description.**

Name (Printed) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

Interview Protocol

Administrator or Academic Advisor:

Participant Identifier:

Interview Location:

Date and Time:

Pre-Interview: Thank the participant for taking the time to come in for the interview. Ask how her/his week is going thus far. Ask if the participant has any questions or concerns before we begin the interview.

Study Synopsis: Let the participant know a synopsis of this study: The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Specifically, this study focused on the impact of professional academic advising in the liberal arts. Moreover, this study focused on the extent to which professional administrators are involved in supporting the professional academic advisors.

Background Information:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your race/ethnicity?
3. What was your undergraduate degree and where did you earn the degree?
4. What graduate degree(s) have you obtained and where did you earn the degree(s)?
5. How long have you worked for Rowan University?

Interview Questions:

1. How did your academic and professional journey lead you to this position?
2. What do you understand your role to be?
3. What skill and knowledge set is necessary in order to be a College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) Advisor?
4. What kind of employment can graduates with CHSS degrees secure?
5. How do you suggest CHSS students identify and seek employment opportunities (career fairs, online, campus resources, etc.)?
6. What changes do you think should be implemented to help CHSS students secure careers post graduation?
7. What graduate options are available for CHSS students? Specifically, programs that may seem unconventional for students with CHSS degrees?
8. What is the payoff/value of a CHSS degree over a degree with a better-defined career path upon graduation?
9. In your opinion, what can be done to combat the devaluing of majors in the liberal arts and the decline of enrollment in the liberal arts?
10. What do you perceive the impact of CHSS embedded advising has on CHSS students?

Post-Interview: Thank you for participating in the interview today. Do you have any additional questions or concerns?