Importance of, Responsibility for, and Satisfaction With Academic Advising: A Faculty Perspective

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A convenient response to the perennial problem of student dissatisfaction with academic advising is to simply say that faculty need to do more and better advising. In this study, faculty were surveyed about their attitudes toward, and experiences with, academic advising. Results showed that faculty, although generally satisfied with the advising they provide, do not necessarily feel responsible for all of the kinds of academic advising they believe are important for students to receive. These findings point to a gap in advising services that we suggest might best be bridged through faculty and student affairs partnerships.

Since the 1970s, quality academic advising has been touted as a key ingredient in student retention (e.g., Grites, 1977). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), academic advising can directly affect students’ persistence and probability of graduating, or have indirect effects through grades, intentions, or satisfaction with the student role. Unfortunately, despite the link between retention and academic advising, students are often dissatisfied with the advising they receive. According to national surveys dating from the late 1960s, academic advising is among the college experiences rated lowest in student satisfaction (Astin, Korn, & Green, 1987; Keup & Stolzenberg, 2004).

A convenient response to this perennial problem of student dissatisfaction is to say that faculty, who provide the bulk of academic advising (Habley, 2003, 2004), just need to do more and better advising. Indeed, there is a stereotype held by many professional advisors that faculty are “uninterested, unskilled, and unconcerned” advisors (Habley, 1994, p. 25). It is not clear to what extent this stereotype is shared by student affairs practitioners. However, because the student affairs profession is concerned with the entirety of the student experience (Evans & Reason, 2001), and because student affairs professionals themselves may be academic advisors, may direct advising centers, or may assist students in dealing with the consequences of poor faculty advising, they need to understand the faculty perspective. Without this understanding, they may be vulnerable to believing unwarranted stereotypes about their faculty colleagues that are counterproductive to collective action that would enhance the student experience of advising.

Although a number of organizational models exist for delivering academic advising, ranging from those where faculty do all advising to those which use professional advisors exclusively (Habley, 2004, defines them and delineates their use by institutional type), advising continues to be part of the role of most faculty, with faculty responsible for 75% to 90% of the academic advising in American colleges and universities (Habley, 2003, 2004). Nonetheless, faculty are not expected to be advisors and teachers only; they also conduct research, participate in institutional governance, and provide service to the...
broader community and their discipline. In many institutions, faculty are also expected to procure external funding. The primacy of the role of advisor has declined as these other expectations have increased. Milem, Berger, and Dey (2000) reported that the time faculty spend conducting research has increased since 1972, whereas the time they spend advising and counseling students has decreased.

Faculty often regard advising “as a low-status activity or as an add-on to a faculty load already full with the obligations of teaching, research, and service” (Vowell & Farren, 2003, p. 66). Faculty do not believe that advising is valued by upper administration or that it carries much weight in tenure decisions (Dillon & Fisher, 2000). These perceptions are not surprising, in that only 31% of all institutions provide any form of recognition, reward, or compensation for faculty advising (Habley, 2003). Further, although some evidence suggests that faculty believe advising loads and responsibilities should be considered in promotion and tenure decisions (Dillon & Fisher; McAnulty, O’Connor, & Sklare, 1987), only 8% of all institutions do so in all academic departments (Habley, 2003). And the status of advising is not improving; Habley’s (2003) survey results showed a decline in rewards, recognition, and compensation for faculty advising from 1992 to 1998.

Developing the requisite skills and knowledge to provide all of the kinds of advising that are important to students, and especially important to underrepresented students (Smith & Allen, 2006), is time-consuming and challenging. Indeed, providing quality academic advising (i.e., the kind of advising that contributes to student development), necessitates developing a skill set in five separate domains: integration, referral, information, individuation, and shared responsibility. It involves helping students integrate the various curricular and cocurricular aspects of their education into a meaningful whole (i.e., holistic advising), referring them to campus resources, providing information about degree requirements and how things work at the university, considering students as unique individuals, and providing them with opportunities to develop planning, problem solving, and decision making capabilities in a context of shared responsibility (Smith & Allen, 2006). Although students may appreciate faculty who take the time to develop advising expertise, there are unintended consequences of providing quality (i.e., developmental) advising. Dillon and Fisher (2000) noted that “the reputation of being a good advisor can act as a double-edged sword” (p. 21). Students identify those faculty who are “good advisors” and seek advice from them rather than their officially assigned advisor, which often results in advising loads for some individuals that are higher than officially recognized (Dillon & Fisher; Padilla & Pavel, 1994; Vowell, 1995). The research seems to echo a common refrain we hear from faculty, that the only reward a faculty member gets for being a good advisor is more advisees.

The cynicism embedded in the above sentiment brought about by a reward system that is heavily skewed toward some roles and responsibilities to the exclusion of others may exacerbate stereotypes of uninterested, unconcerned, and unskilled faculty advisors. But given the contribution to student retention that is attributed to academic advising, and the fact that most advising continues to be provided by instructional faculty (Habley, 2003, 2004), it behooves researchers to move beyond stereotypes and ask faculty directly about their attitudes toward, and experiences with, academic advising.

In spite of the predominance of the use of instructional faculty in advising models, surprisingly little research has examined the advising attitudes and experiences of faculty. Moreover, research that exists lacks consistent
definitions of who the faculty are and what kinds of advising they do. Studies often incorporate under the term “faculty advisors” a variety of employees, including professional or staff advisors, adjunct faculty and/or graduate teaching assistants, and instructional faculty. By virtue of their relationship to the institution and primary job responsibilities, these individuals may not represent a single perspective, yet no attempt is made to distinguish those differing perspectives. Although we use the term faculty as we review the literature, it is important to keep in mind that respondents in these studies may not have been exclusively instructional faculty.

Studies also vary greatly in the number and kind of activities they include under the term “academic advising.” Survey items range from specific tasks (e.g., “Authorize adds and drops,” Guinn & Mitchell, 1986, or “Makes referral to other campus resources,” Lowe & Toney, 2000) to broad categories of advising (e.g., “Help with program of study planning,” Smerglia & Bouchet, 1999, or “Assistance in solving career problems,” Kramer, Arrington, & Chynoweth, 1985). Although it seems important to tap a wide variety of advising functions, the advising activities assessed in extant research do not seem to have been consistently chosen for their theoretical significance or implications for practice. As a result, we do not know if and at which institutions faculty actually provide the kinds of advising encompassed in the five domains—integration, referral, information, individuation, and shared responsibility—described earlier.

Studies are also inconsistent with regard to what attribute of advising faculty are asked to rate. On some survey instruments, faculty rate the importance of various kinds of academic advising tasks (e.g., Dillon & Fisher, 2000; Lowe & Toney, 2000) or the appropriateness of advising goals (e.g., Creeden, 1990; Kramer et al., 1985), whereas on others, faculty rate the level of responsibility they have for certain kinds of advising (Guinn & Mitchell, 1986; Smerglia & Bouchet, 1999). This lack of consistency makes comparison among studies difficult. For example, importance and responsibility ratings are not the same; faculty may recognize that a particular kind of advising is important to undergraduate students, but may not feel it is their responsibility to provide it.

Researchers have typically not asked faculty to evaluate the advising they or others provide. In a few studies participants rated the effectiveness of an entire department (Creeden, 1990; McAnulty et al., 1987; Saving & Keim, 1998). Unfortunately, this strategy masks any variability that may exist across advisors within a given unit. We could find only one study where faculty assessed the advising they themselves provide (Stickle, 1982), and in that study faculty consistently rated the effectiveness of their advising higher than did students. Overall, we concur with Smerglia and Bouchet (1999) that the state of research on advising experiences and attitudes of faculty makes it difficult to draw conclusions. Current research also offers little insight into how student affairs professionals might contribute to the improvement of advising services.

Nevertheless, several consistent findings from this research are worth noting. Advising activities related to dispensing accurate information about academic requirements are rated by faculty on the high end of whatever scale (i.e., importance, appropriateness, responsibility) is used (Creeden, 1990; Dillon & Fisher, 2000; Lowe & Toney, 2000; McAnulty et al., 1987; Smerglia & Bouchet, 1999). Although not consistently included as an advising activity in all studies, assisting students with what Frost and Brown-Wheeler (2003) characterized as “big picture questions” (p. 234) involving educational or career plans
is also rated on the high end of the scale (Creedon; Dillon & Fisher; Kramer et al., 1985). However, advising that addresses more nonacademic issues such as self understanding and personal concerns is rated lower (Creeden; Guinn & Mitchell, 1986; Pisani & Stott, 1998; Smerglia & Bouchet).

In the current article, we report a study designed with the limitations of existing research in mind. First, it was important to capture the breadth of what faculty actually do when providing academic advising, and to inquire about advising tasks that are both theoretically meaningful and of significance for practice. Thus we used a comprehensive set of 12 advising functions that operationalized the five domains that the literature over the last 30 years suggests are indicative of quality, that is, developmental, advising (Smith & Allen, 2006). We included activities that faculty in previous studies viewed as central (i.e., dispensing accurate information about requirements and assisting students with big picture questions), but omitted those related to counseling about personal issues. Second, we obtained multiple measures from our faculty respondents: the importance of, their responsibility for, and their satisfaction with the advising they provide on each of the 12 advising functions. Finally, our sample was a true faculty sample, comprised of instructional faculty whose primary duties included teaching.

Although we were interested in replicating the finding that faculty perceive academic advising as unrecognized and undervalued in the faculty reward structure, our central research questions were:

1. According to instructional faculty, how important is it for undergraduate students to get advising on each of the 12 advising functions?

2. To what extent do faculty agree that providing each of these advising functions to undergraduate students is their responsibility?

3. How satisfied are faculty with the advising they provide on each advising function?

METHOD

Participants and Institutional Context

The 171 participants were instructional faculty at a doctoral-research-intensive public urban university whose enrollment of approximately 25,000 included many students from groups historically underrepresented in higher education. The sample represented 23.3% of the target population of instructional faculty with an annual full time equivalent (FTE) employment appointment of .50 or higher. Table 1 gives the demographic breakdown of the sample and population. Fixed-term faculty (those whose appointment was not tenure-related), faculty with the rank instructor, males, and most ethnic minority groups were somewhat underrepresented. Sample mean age and mean years of service closely represented the population figures.

The study institution mirrors the state of affairs in advising at many colleges and universities; it relies heavily on faculty to deliver advising, and student dissatisfaction with advising has been a perennial problem. In 1999, a presidential initiative aimed at addressing student concerns about academic advising was launched. Academic advising continues to be a focus because it is seen as a process through which the institution can improve student retention.

The responsibility for advising students who have declared majors rests with the respective academic unit, whereas advising undeclared students is the responsibility of a central advising center. In most units all faculty are expected to advise; in other units advising is assigned to designated faculty or professional
advisors. The university claims that students will receive advising that touches on all five advising domains addressed in this study. However, although advising is listed as a faculty responsibility in the labor contract and is 1 of 17 items to be considered in the evaluation of teaching in the promotion and tenure guidelines, it is not defined but merely mentioned in passing in these documents. Although the advising center provides opportunities for faculty advisors to enhance their skills and knowledge, few participate.

Measures
The survey instrument, *Inventory of Academic Advising Functions-Faculty*, is a companion to our student survey (Smith & Allen, 2006). We developed both surveys by examining the advising literature of the past 30 years and devising survey items that addressed the dominant themes therein. We also consulted with professional and faculty academic advisors and members of a standing committee charged with examining academic advising at the university. Finally, we piloted the instrument on students in a graduate-level preparation program for student affairs professionals.

On the survey instrument, we asked faculty to rate the importance of (How important is it for undergraduate students to get this kind of advising?), their responsibility for (It is part of my responsibility to provide...). The survey instrument, *Inventory of Academic Advising Functions-Faculty*, is a companion to our student survey (Smith & Allen, 2006). We developed both surveys by examining the advising literature of the past 30 years and devising survey items that addressed the dominant themes therein. We also consulted with professional and faculty academic advisors and members of a standing committee charged with examining academic advising at the university. Finally, we piloted the instrument on students in a graduate-level preparation program for student affairs professionals.

### TABLE 1.
Characteristics of Faculty Participants Relative to all Faculty at the Study Institution Population Characteristics (*N* = 737, *n* = 171)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Sample</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>N</em></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite Tenure</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual (Tenure Track)</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Term</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rank</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer/Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined to Respond</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Service</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Years at University</td>
<td>11.0 years</td>
<td>10.8 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.
Definitions of and Corresponding Variable Names for Academic Advising Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Names</th>
<th>Definitions of Academic Advising Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration Functions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Connect</td>
<td>Academic advising that helps undergraduate students connect their academic, career, and life goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Connect</td>
<td>Academic advising that helps undergraduate students choose among courses in the major that connect their academic, career, and life goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Ed Connect</td>
<td>Academic advising that assists undergraduate students with choosing among the various general education options (e.g., choice of capstone, cluster, courses within cluster) that connect their academic, career, and life goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Connect</td>
<td>Academic advising that assists undergraduate students with deciding what kind of degree to pursue (Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music) in order to connect their academic, career, and life goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of Class Connect</td>
<td>Academic advising that assists undergraduate students with choosing out-of-class activities (e.g., part-time or summer employment, internships or practicum, participation in clubs or organizations) that connect their academic, career, and life goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Referral Functions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Academic</td>
<td>Advising that refers undergraduate students, when they need it, to campus resources that address academic problems (e.g., math or science tutoring, writing, disability accommodation, testing anxiety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Nonacademic</td>
<td>Advising that refers undergraduate students, when they need it, to campus resources that address nonacademic problems (e.g., childcare, financial, physical and mental health)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Functions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Things Work</td>
<td>Advising that assists undergraduate students with understanding how things work at this university (understanding timelines, policies, and procedures with regard to registration, financial aid, grading, graduation, petition and appeals, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate Information</td>
<td>Advising that gives undergraduate students accurate information about degree requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuation Functions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Abilities Interests</td>
<td>Advising that takes into account undergraduate students’ skills, abilities, and interests in helping them choose courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know as Individual</td>
<td>Advising that includes knowing the student as an individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared Responsibility Function</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Responsibility</td>
<td>Advising that encourages undergraduate students to assume responsibility for their education by helping them develop planning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
students with this kind of advising), and their satisfaction with (How satisfied are you with the advising you provide in this area?) 12 academic advising functions that operationalized the 5 domains described earlier. Table 2 lists each of the 12 advising functions with its corresponding variable name.

Faculty rated the importance of, their responsibility for, and their satisfaction with each advising function using 6-point Likert-type scales, where 1 = Not Important, Strongly Disagree, or Not Satisfied, respectively, and 6 = Very Important, Strongly Agree, or Very Satisfied, respectively. With satisfaction ratings faculty had the option of marking “Not applicable, I do not provide this kind of advising.” Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient was .85 for importance ratings, .84 for responsibility ratings, and .88 for satisfaction ratings.

We also asked faculty whether providing academic advising to undergraduate students is valued by (a) senior administrators at this university, (b) the dean of their school or college, (c) their department chairperson, and (d) colleagues in their department. All ratings were on a 6-point Likert-type scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 6 = Strongly Agree.

Procedure
In April 2006 the university provost sent all full-time (annual FTE .50 or above) instructional faculty an email message inviting them to complete a Web-based survey that could be accessed through a link embedded in the email message. The message explained the purpose of the survey and emphasized its importance in improving academic advising at the university. The message also assured faculty that their responses would be confidential and whether they participated would not affect their relationship with the university. The initial message was sent during online registration for classes for the upcoming term, which is a time when students might be seeking advice and faculty would likely be dispensing it. To widen the response pool, respondents were offered a chance to be selected to receive $500 in faculty development funds. We believe this incentive reduced bias due to nonresponse because it likely attracted faculty other than those with an interest in advising. Two weeks after the initial invitation, the provost sent a follow-up email invitation to those who had not taken the survey. To provide information about demographic characteristics of participants and guarantee their anonymity to the researchers, the institutional research office merged faculty responses to the survey with data from the personnel information system.

Data Analyses
We conducted one-way within-subjects analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to ascertain whether faculty differentiated among the 12 advising functions on the importance and responsibility rating scales, as well as whether faculty believed that advising is differentially valued by senior administrators, deans, department chairpersons, and colleagues. For the post hoc analyses we used the Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons. For all within-subjects analyses, Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(65) = 305.66$ and 212.64, for importance and responsibility ratings, respectively, both $p = .000; \chi^2(5) = 26.53$, $p = .000$ for the value question; therefore we corrected degrees of freedom using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\varepsilon = .75, .81, \text{and} .88$, respectively). We did not conduct a one-way within-subjects ANOVA to examine whether faculty were differentially satisfied with the advising they provided on the 12 advising functions because many faculty ($n = 120$) indicated that they did not provide advising on one or more of the functions, leaving only 51 who indicated their satisfaction with all 12 functions, a requirement for the analysis.
Table 3.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranks of Importance, Responsibility, and Satisfaction Ratings; Post Hoc Analyses of One-Way Within-Subjects ANOVAs of Importance and Responsibility Ratings; and Numbers and Percentages of Faculty Who Do Not Provide Advising on the Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advising Function</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n  M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Connect</td>
<td>170 5.46b</td>
<td>.86 2</td>
<td>169 5.08a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Connect</td>
<td>169 5.41b</td>
<td>.94 3</td>
<td>169 5.08a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Ed Connect</td>
<td>169 4.89de</td>
<td>1.26 9</td>
<td>168 3.63e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Connect</td>
<td>168 4.90de</td>
<td>1.25 8</td>
<td>168 3.90de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-Class Connect</td>
<td>167 4.51e</td>
<td>1.38 12</td>
<td>166 3.72de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Academic</td>
<td>170 5.37b</td>
<td>.91 4</td>
<td>168 4.79ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral NonAcademic</td>
<td>170 5.08cd</td>
<td>1.10 6</td>
<td>167 3.66e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Things Work</td>
<td>169 5.21bc</td>
<td>1.08 5</td>
<td>169 3.35e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate Information</td>
<td>170 5.70a</td>
<td>.73 1</td>
<td>169 4.49bc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Abilities Interests</td>
<td>169 4.94cd</td>
<td>1.12 7</td>
<td>168 4.03de</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know as Individual</td>
<td>171 4.75de</td>
<td>1.30 11</td>
<td>169 4.27cd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Responsibility</td>
<td>169 4.86de</td>
<td>1.30 10</td>
<td>167 3.80de</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ratings were made on 6-point scales (1 = not important, strongly disagree, not satisfied, 6 = very important, strongly agree, very satisfied). Within each column, means with different subscripts differ at $p < .05$ minimally, with subscript “a” signifying the highest rated functions and subscript “e” signifying the lowest rated functions. Satisfaction ratings exclude those who indicated they did not provide this type of advice.
RESULTS

The means and standard deviations of the importance, responsibility, and satisfaction ratings for the 12 advising functions for the entire sample are shown in Table 3. For the convenience of the reader, the rank order of the function ratings within each set (importance, responsibility, and satisfaction) is also included. However, comparisons of the rank order of the functions for the three types of ratings should be interpreted with caution because the three sets of ratings differed in variability.

Importance Ratings

Faculty rated all functions on the important end of the scale (i.e., above 4 on the 6-point scale). The top-rated functions, Accurate Information, Overall Connect, and Referral Academic, showed the least variability. The one-way within-subjects ANOVAs showed that faculty perceived that the 12 advising functions differ in importance, $F(8.22, 1323.41) = 25.89, p = .000$. Results of post hoc analyses are included in Table 3. Accurate Information was rated as significantly more important than all other functions. Similarly, Overall Connect, Major Connect, and Referral Academic did not differ from each other, but were rated as significantly more important than all remaining functions except How Things Work (the 5th highest rated function). Finally, the five functions rated lowest in importance (Degree Connect, Gen Ed Connect, Shared Responsibility, Know as Individual, and Out-of-Class Connect) did not differ from each other, but were rated as significantly less important than the five functions rated most important.

Responsibility Ratings

Although mean responsibility ratings were lower overall than mean importance ratings, they were all above Point 3 on the scale. Responsibility ratings presented a greater range across functions (more than 1.5 scale points) and larger standard deviations on individual functions than importance ratings.

The one-way within-subjects ANOVA showed that faculty perceived that they have varying amounts of responsibility for the 12 functions, $F(8.92, 1400.12) = 29.26, p = .000$. Results of post hoc analyses are included in Table 3. The two functions with the highest responsibility ratings, Overall Connect and Major Connect, did not differ from each other, but differed significantly from all other functions except Referral Academic, which had the third highest responsibility rating. The seven functions with the lowest responsibility ratings (Skills Abilities Interests, Degree Connect, Shared Responsibility, Out-of-Class Connect, Referral Nonacademic, Gen Ed Connect, and How Things Work) did not differ from each other, but differed significantly from the three functions with the highest responsibility ratings.

Satisfaction Ratings

Mean satisfaction ratings were generally lower than mean importance ratings, but higher than mean responsibility ratings. Satisfaction ratings were between scale point 4 and 5; their range was also more narrow (0.80 scale point) than the range of importance and responsibility ratings (1.19 and 1.73 scale points, respectively). The number and percentage of faculty who indicated they did not provide advising on each of the functions are listed in Table 3. The two functions that the fewest number of faculty did not provide, Overall Connect and Major Connect, also had the highest responsibility ratings. Over 25% of the faculty reported that they did not provide advising on the Gen Ed Connect, Referral Nonacademic, How Things Work, and Degree Connect functions.
Perception of How Others Value Advising

Faculty mean ratings of agreement that advising is valued by senior administrators, deans, department chairpersons, and colleagues are presented in Table 4. The one-way within-subjects ANOVA showed that faculty perceive differences in the value these groups place on academic advising of undergraduate students, $F(2.65, 395.35) = 54.84, p = .000$. Post hoc analyses, included in Table 4, showed that faculty believe all four entities differ from each other: department chairs were perceived to value academic advising the most, senior administrators the least, and departmental colleagues more than deans.

**DISCUSSION**

In this study we provide data on a topic that has been understudied but has implications for student success, faculty work life, and the nature of partnerships that might be forged between faculty and student affairs professionals. Unlike previous research, we asked faculty to consider academic advising from multiple perspectives by rating the importance of, their responsibility for, and their satisfaction with a comprehensive set of advising functions informed by both theory and practice. Overall our results support the value of a multifaceted examination of faculty attitudes toward, and experiences with, academic advising of undergraduate students.

Faculty thought that all 12 advising functions are important for undergraduate students to receive, which is a central finding that should provide a context for all that follows. Even the advising function rated least important (assisting students with choosing cocurricular activities) was rated on the important end of the scale (i.e., above 4 on the 6-point scale).

Although all functions were rated as important, faculty nonetheless discriminated among them, even within the five domains. Moreover, ratings of responsibility for providing a particular kind of advising were not always commensurate with the faculty’s perception of its importance for students. Consider the two information functions. Consistent with previous research, faculty agreed with each
other than providing accurate information about degree requirements is the most important kind of advising students can receive. But it was not one of the two functions for which faculty felt most responsible. Furthermore, although faculty believed that How Things Work, the other information function that involves helping students navigate the institutional landscape through understanding policies and procedures, was relatively important (albeit not as important as Accurate Information), it was one of the functions for which they felt least responsible.

The disproportionately low responsibility ratings for the information functions are understandable once we consider that those ratings included the 21% of faculty who indicated they did not provide accurate information about degree requirements and the 26% who indicated that they did not assist students with understanding how things work at the university. Both of these information functions involve requirements, policies, and/or procedures that assume a certain level of up-to-date knowledge and expertise, which faculty may not have occasion to use often enough to recall from memory or to keep abreast of changes. Although faculty realize that the information functions are of utmost importance, they may be reluctant to appear to be the final authority or risk giving students wrong information that the final authority (i.e., degree requirements office) may later find to be inaccurate. Especially with regard to advising students on policies and procedures, faculty may believe that this type of advising is best left to others at the institution, who by the nature of their job responsibilities, deal with How Things Work on a daily basis.

Faculty likewise believed that the various integration functions differ in importance. However, unlike the information functions, responsibility ratings for the integration functions reflected the relative importance faculty ascribed to them. Helping students integrate their academic, career, and life goals and choose courses in the major that connect those goals were second in importance only to the provision of accurate information. Moreover, faculty saw Overall Connect and Major Connect as squarely within their scope of responsibility. In contrast, advising functions that involve helping students integrate their academic, career, and life goals in their choice of general education options, type of degree to pursue, and cocurricular activities were rated least important, and were among the functions for which faculty felt least responsible.

Apparently for faculty, holistic advising emphasizes what Frost and Brown-Wheeler (2003) call “the big questions” (p. 234) concerning academic, career, and life goals, as well as the connection of options within the major to those goals, over aspects of the educational experience that faculty consider more peripheral. This emphasis may be a reflection of the faculty’s focus on their discipline over other aspects of the curriculum and on curricular over cocurricular aspects of the students’ experience (Altbach, 2005). As with the information functions, however, the fact that faculty rated all integration functions on the important end of the scale, yet assumed responsibility for only some of them, suggests that they believe these kinds of advising should be provided to students by “someone” at the institution. Given the unfailing commitment of the student affairs profession to considering the whole student (Evans & Reason, 2001), student affairs practitioners may be well poised to assist in these endeavors.

Faculty also differentiated between the two advising functions that involve referral of students to campus resources that address barriers to success. Faculty saw referral for academic problems as more important than referral for nonacademic problems. Furthermore, faculty felt significantly more responsible
for the former kind of advising. Again, faculty
placed a higher priority on the function that
they apparently perceived as more germane to
the academic core. Because many campus
resources, particularly those dealing with
nonacademic problems, are within the purview
of student affairs units, it seems reasonable to
suggest again that student affairs professionals
could be instrumental in linking students with
the resources they need to be successful.

Interestingly, the individuation and shared
responsibility functions that, according to
some theorists (e.g., Berdahl, 1995; Crookston,
1972; Frost, 1991) define the essence of devel­
opmental advising, were not among the top
rated functions in either importance or respon­
sibility. Establishing the longer term and more
in-depth relationship implied in getting to
know students as individuals; taking into
account their skills, abilities, and interests in
helping them choose courses; and/or
providing the scaffolding through which they gradually
assume responsibility for their education, is
time consuming for both students and faculty.
Faculty apparently believed their time is better
invested in addressing the overall integration
of students’ academic, career, and life goals,
connecting options in the major to these goals,
and referring students to resources that help
them become better learners.

Within the narrow range of satisfaction
ratings overall, faculty were most satisfied with
the advising they provide on Overall Connect
and Major Connect, which were also among
those functions they perceived as most
important and for which they assumed greatest
responsibility. Faculty were least satisfied with
the advising they provide on Gen Ed Connect,
Nonacademic Referral, and How Things
Work, which were the functions that had the
lowest responsibility ratings. Although faculty
satisfaction with the advising they provide was
fairly high for all functions (between 4 and 5
on the scale), student satisfaction with the
advising they receive at this institution on the
same 12 advising functions was lukewarm at
best (between 3 and 4 on the scale), and
particularly low on How Things Work, even
though students rated that function as highly
important (Allen & Smith, in press). This
discrepancy between faculty and student
satisfaction suggests that faculty advising
ability may not be commensurate with faculty
advising satisfaction.

Generally our results confirmed that
faculty perceived academic advising to be
undervalued by senior administrators and
deans. Despite a presidential initiative aimed
at improving academic advising on this
campus, advising is barely mentioned in the
promotion and tenure guidelines which, by
articulating what is rewarded, suggest what is
valued. On the other hand, faculty perceived
department heads as valuing the provision of
academic advising more than senior admini­
strators and deans, and even more than their
departmental colleagues. Department chairs
must ensure that all departmental duties,
including advising, are done. And if depart­
mental responsibilities are not done well,
department chairs must deal with complaints
and address problems. Thus it is not surprising
that faculty, who are aware of the role of
department chairs, would see them as placing
higher value on advising than deans and senior
administrators do.

Our comprehensive examination of the
faculty perspective on academic advising helps
us move beyond stereotypes of faculty as
“uninterested, unskilled, and unconcerned”
advisors (Habley, 1994, p. 25). Although
students’ low satisfaction with advising may
speak to the issue of faculty skill, the finding
that faculty understand that all advising
functions are important for students suggests
that faculty are neither uninterested nor
unconcerned. Indeed, their importance ratings
imply that faculty believe these functions
should be provided by the institution. However, when ratings of importance are considered in relation to ratings of responsibility, the data indicate that faculty do not believe they can be responsible for all advising functions.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

The expectation that faculty can provide advising on all aspects of the student’s curricular and cocurricular education may be unrealistic, as are calls to change the reward structure so as to make advising a more attractive activity (e.g., Byrd, 1995; Kerr, 2000). However, given the importance attributed to advising, it is appropriate to examine alternative models that may allow faculty to do what they do best.

The findings reported here not only lend support for what Habley (2004) termed the dual model of academic advising, in which each student has access to two advisors, they further delineate the responsibilities of each advisor. Under the kind of dual model suggested by the current data, faculty advisors would lend their expertise in helping students integrate their overall academic, career, and life goals; connect those goals to choices in the major; and access resources to overcome academic barriers to learning. The student’s second advisor would be a student affairs professional who would assist with aspects of the curriculum outside the student’s major, including cocurricular matters, connect the student to services that address nonacademic barriers to success, and help the student understand how things work at the university. Helping students understand how things work at the institution is a particularly critical role for student affairs professionals because that kind of advising is judged by both faculty and students to be highly important, but one for which faculty are reluctant to assume responsibility. Furthermore, student affairs professionals are uniquely situated to provide this kind of advising because it is their organizational divisions that are most often charged with implementing and enforcing institutional policies and procedures that students must navigate.

Regardless of who provides which functions, good academic advising may very well be the key to success for many students, particularly at urban universities. Advising involves interaction between students and representatives of the university, which has been consistently shown to contribute to retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In the model of advising delineated here, all advising interactions would be built on a foundation of trust in which students rely upon the advisor to provide accurate information, respect their individuality, and provide scaffolding that encourages them to gradually acquire the skills to fully assume responsibility for their education.

Although the current study provides some insight into how faculty regard advising, it is limited by the fact that the data were collected at a single university. Faculty perspectives on advising are likely influenced by a number of institutional factors, including how and by whom advising is delivered to students, whether or not advising is recognized in the reward structure, and mission as it relates to emphases on research and undergraduate teaching (Habley, 2004). Future research should examine how faculty attitudes about and experiences with academic advising may vary by these institutional factors. Such research could spark campus dialogues among faculty, deans, department chairs, and student affairs professionals that address critical questions about who in the institution is or should be responsible for which advising functions. Discussions might begin with those functions where there is a mismatch between faculty importance and responsibility ratings.

Future study should consider other mea-
sures that more directly tap faculty advising abilities (e.g., direct observations of faculty behavior during advising encounters and/or ratings by department chairs). Such ability measures would allow us to examine the relationships among student satisfaction, faculty responsibility, and faculty ability. Is student satisfaction predicted by faculty advising ability, and does ability predict the responsibility faculty assume for various advising functions? In other words, are responsibility ratings lower on some functions because faculty lack the expertise necessary to provide these kinds of advising? Or, if responsibility predicts ability, is ability lower because faculty do not see some advising functions as their responsibility and thus have not developed expertise in these areas? Answering these questions would help inform whether interventions could focus on bolstering faculty advising abilities rather than, as advocated here, implementing alternative models for delivering advising to students.

In summary, faculty think academic advising is important, they feel most responsible for those advising functions they see as most important, and they are moderately satisfied with the advising they provide. But the fact remains that students are dissatisfied with the advising they receive. Rather than suggesting that faculty simply need to do more and better advising, institutions might ask whether it is even reasonable to expect that any one individual can provide the full complement of functions that the literature suggests is indicative of quality academic advising. And if it is not reasonable, institutions need to look at models of collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals to ensure that students get what they need to succeed.

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