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Career-advising from the primary role academic advisor's viewpoint: A qualitative case study

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CAREER-ADVISING FROM THE PRIMARY ROLE ACADEMIC ADVISOR'S VIEWPOINT: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

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Dedications

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family, friends, and colleagues. A very special thank you to my husband, George and my children, Makenzie and George as it was with your continued support and encouragement that kept me motivated and focused throughout this journey.

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Abstract

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The role of today's primary role academic advisor is robust and multifaceted. Advisors must continually provide supportive outreach and engagement to address student interests, develop academic plans, and identify career paths from the time students first enroll, throughout their college experience, and oftentimes, well past graduation. Although meeting with students is at the forefront of expected duties, advisors must also balance working with various data sets and systems, faculty and chairs, and stay abreast of changes in procedures and processes. The purpose of this inquiry was to document and further understand the current career-advising practices of primary role academic advisors as they work directly with students. Using a qualitative, single case study approach, I acquired data through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Results of this study reflect deeper-level understanding of current career-advising practices used by primary role advisors along with recommendations to improve the connection from academic advising to career decision-making.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Today's primary academic advising role in higher education often extends well beyond simply telling a student which classes to select or where to find the library. Advisors must engage with students through consistent and ongoing outreach and provide support and guidance from the time students first enroll, throughout their college experience, and oftentimes, well past graduation. With 60 %of all Americans continuing the educational journey beyond high school, 63 percent of all jobs in 2018 were estimated to require postsecondary education (Perna, 2013). Thus, the need for continued education, beyond the high school diploma, to reach gainful employment is compounded by the need for supportive academic and career advising to provide the tools necessary to assist students reach academic and career goals.

Where responsibilities of the primary academic advisor can vary considerably between individual offices and departments on the same campus, the overarching responsibilities typically require advisors to meet Academic Advising Core Competencies as outlined by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA, 2017). Three competency areas outline the conceptual, informational, and relational components necessary for all advisors to understand, master, and demonstrate (NACADA, 2017). Where meeting with students is at the forefront of expected duties, advisors must also balance working with various data sets and systems, faculty and chairs, and stay abreast of changes in procedures. Thus, the daily work life of the academic advisor is robust with each day bringing new student issues and challenges.

Problem Statement

While understanding that a college education will significantly increase an individual's lifetime earnings, what that individual selects as an academic major and future career choice will also impact economic returns (Perna, 2013). Regardless of academic program chosen, having a college degree provides overall increased earnings and opportunities for career flexibility. In fact, those with a postsecondary education are three times less likely to be unemployed as compared to those without a high school diploma (Perna, 2013). For those that choose to enter higher education, there is a need for guidance to connect academic programming to possible future career paths and ensure students receive accurate and timely advisement on potential career paths that align with personal needs and goals. Where career-advising practices in higher education are a typical a part of the academic advising process, little is known on how these practices are applied by primary role advisors. Therefore, additional understanding on career-advising practices employed by primary role academic advisors is necessary to further understand how students are receiving career-related information and make career-based decisions.

Career-advising is defined as "helping students understand how their personal interests, abilities, and values might predict success in the academic and career fields they are considering and how to form their academic and career goals accordingly" (Gordon, 2006, p.12). While this definition provides clarity to the purpose and intent of career-advising, there is little, current research available on the actual practice of career-advising employed by primary role advisors. What available research does reflect is a considerable lack of consistency in daily advisor functions and little collaboration between career services and advising services. Further, Gordon and Habley (2000) note how academic advisors may be uncomfortable with providing career information and feel they lack the expertise required to discuss careers with their students.

Perhaps one of the greatest issues with understanding the daily career-advising practices of academic advisors is how career services and academic advising often work in silos and tend to lack collaboration concerning services and programming. The notion of integrating or partnering these services has been a discussion point for many years by both academic advising and career service professionals yet, for many institutions, these departments remain autonomous. This may be due to numerous factors but may include the organization’s structure, reporting lines, or type of institution (Ledwith, 2014).

Significance of the Study

College students of today, along with their families are seeking a return on their investment with the promise of sustainable employment (Koproske, 2018). As tuition prices increase and students take on larger amounts of debt, college affordability has become a genuine concern. Harnisch and Lebidoa (2016) shared that college affordability is a top ten higher education state policy issue and Ledwith (2014) furthers this argument with how time to degree influences the total amount of debt students acquire. Thus, finishing college in a timely manner with a degree and an offer of full-time employment is not only desired, but also necessary for many graduates.

Thus, the role of the primary role academic advisor becomes a critical form of support and guidance to students, as advisors must balance the academic and personal interests of the student with program requirements and course sequencing. At the same time, advisors also must balance institutional pressures of timely graduation with providing timely and relevant career information so that students can make informed career-based decisions.

Context of the Study

I conducted my study at Rowan University, a public mid-size, Research University located in Glassboro, New Jersey and enrolling 16,120 undergraduate students, 2,228 graduate students, and 1,117 professional/medical students comprised the total student body during the 2018-2019 academic year (Fast Facts, 2019). Rowan University has been in a period of constant growth, made evident by increased enrollment and response to this increase in the form of additional hiring, expanded services, and the building of additional facilities. Within academic advising, over 50 primary role academic advisors, many of which were recently hired in the past few years are part of University Advising Services and housed under the division of Student Affairs. Thus, using this location allowed ample access to view current phenomenon within a practical and everyday setting (Yin, 2014).

Research Questions

To understand the current career-advising practices of University Advising Center, primary role academic advisors, I sought to answer these research questions:

1. How do primary role academic advisors of undergraduate students employed at Rowan University define the term "career-advising" as it relates to their individual practice?
2. How do primary role academic advisors describe their current career-advising practices?
    a. What are the tools they use?

b. How do they use those tools within individual advising sessions?

3. For what purposes do primary role academic advisors refer or connect students with the Office of Career Advancement?
4. What challenges in career-related services are perceived by the primary role academic advisor as they work with their assigned caseloads?

Conceptual Framework

The Terry O'Banion (1972/2012) five steps academic advising model functioned as the foundation of the conceptual framework for this study. The O'Banion (1972/2012) developmental advising model follows a sequenced approach to academic advising using five, intentional steps. These include: exploration of life goals, exploration of vocational goals, choosing an academic program, selection of courses, and scheduling of courses. Although I reviewed other advising models, I specifically chose his developmental advising approach due to its practical application within the academic advising field and specific focus on vocational goal setting. With the first 30 volumes of the NACADA *Journal* including a total of 82 articles (out of 449 total) referencing the developmental advising approach, developmental advising has a long-standing and vetted history within the advising profession (Grites, 2013).

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to assist the reader understand the framework of the terminology used within this study.

Academic advising. A process employed by academic advisors to assist students with exploring life and vocational goals, academic program and individual course selection (O'Banion, 1972, 2012).

Career-advising. A cross-function between career counseling and academic advising that provides an opportunity for students to research and explore personal interests, goals, and evaluate career options (Gordon, 2006 and McCalla-Wriggins, 2009).

Career counseling. A process employed by career-services professionals to assist students with the development of life-long career-decision making skills. This may include the offering and/or use of career-assessments, career-related events, workshops, and individual meetings (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014).

Career-Services professional. Professionally trained individuals working in higher education institutions who provide a variety of direct/indirect services to students and may include the use of career assessments, workshops and other career events, individual career counseling, resume reviews and mock interviews (Gordon, 2006, Rayman, 1993).

Marketization. Societal expectations of direct placement into employment upon graduation (Restrepo, 2017).

Primary role academic advisor. Professionally trained, non-faculty individuals with responsibilities to serve as a primary support, guiding students towards and beyond graduation (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013).

Conclusion

This study sought to understand the primary role academic advisors' career-advising practice as they work with both exploratory and declared major students. Conducted at a mid-size, public research University with primary role academic advisors housed under University Advising Services, I focused on answering four, qualitative research questions with a goal to better understand current career-advising practices.

My study consisted of semi-structured interviews with 12 full-time, primary role academic advisors housed under University Advising Services. Using a criterion-based selection model the primary role advisors selected worked with Exploratory students or were embedded within academic departments. The findings revealed five themes and included an advisor-driven definition of career-advising, a strong connection between the advisor's personal and professional experience, a large volume and variety of career tools and resources used but no centralized repository, referrals for career readiness based on advisor knowledge and available resources, and identified career-advising challenges encountered by primary role advisors.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

As students enter into college programs upon post high school graduation and seeking job-readiness skills, college can easily become a hardship as it often comes with a high price tag, one parents and students may be unprepared for. Harnisch and Lebioda (2016) listed college affordability as one of the top 10 higher education state policy issues for 2016. However, in 2020, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2020) raised the level of importance, ranking college affordability in the top three higher education state policy issues (AASCU, 2020). Yet, time to degree also plays a large role in the amount of debt students and families accrue (Ledwith, 2014). Many institutions encourage timely degree completion as a response to student loan debt but this may place undue pressure on students to make decisions quickly. Therefore, it is critical for institutions making promises of gainful employment post-graduation to empower their student support personnel with the tools and resources necessary to ensure students make future academic and career decisions that will not only lead them to careers that are both fulfilling to the individual but will also lead to personal self-sufficiency.

Career services and academic advising are two support services in higher education that vary greatly in design, mission, and programmatic offerings. Academic advisors often provide some level of career-advising services, but the role of career-advising within academic advising is often left unevaluated by both individual institutions and advising organization administrators due to inconsistent practices from department to department and from institution to institution (Gordon, 2006). Academic advisors are not typically experts in career readiness, yet there are expectations that they are able to provide students with career support. However, advisors lacking career-advising with individual practices can leave a potential gap in services where students may not receive the support needed to make well-informed, concrete career plans.

Career-advising has become a trend in higher education advising literature, but research is limited and more is needed (Gordon, 2006). Academic advisors work in a field that does not have its own theory and advising practices can vary greatly (Gordon & Habley, 2000, Grites and Gordon, 2009 and Larson, et al., 2018). This can then lead to ambiguity in understanding the career-advising skill-set of the advisor. While some advisors may provide a level of career-advising, it is unknown if all do and to what extent services are being provided to students. The NACADA Academic Core Competencies Guide (NACADA, 2017) outlines various conceptual, informational, and relational components, which academic advisors must understand. Included in these competencies is the expectation that advisors will have the knowledge base to know how to locate information and make proper referrals to address student needs. However, career-specific advising is not mentioned.

Additionally, what little career-advising literature exists focuses on the undeclared or undecided student and not the already declared student. Knowing that many traditional-age college students are still developing career interests, the majority in this age group fall under the category of late adolescence as defined by Marcia's Identity Formation concept (Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010). At this developmental stage, students may find it difficult to articulate career decisions. Career-advising guidance then becomes a critical, paired component to academic advising (Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010). Thus, learning more about career-advising services and available resources advisors provide to students, along with the referral process, will provide a better understanding where potential gaps in services may exist.

Two student support systems in higher education, academic advising and career services, were originally created on college campuses to address a communication need with students (Ledwith, 2014). Although these departments originated at different times in higher education history and with very different missions, there is overlap in provided services due to a shared focus on career preparation and academic goal setting (Ledwith, 2014). This overlap is due, partially to the economic role played by higher education, which, as of 2018 requires education and training beyond the high school diploma for at least 63 percent of all jobs (Perna, 2013). Prior to the 1980s, a high school diploma was sufficient to secure middle-class salaries with nearly three out of four employees possessing a high school diploma or less (Carnevale, 2015). Yet, the complexity of labor market demands has evolved to where a high school diploma without additional training is no longer sufficient to earn a middle-class lifestyle.

However, while those that are college educated as compared to those with a high school diploma will earn approximately 84 percent more, the difference in median earnings between lowest and highest paid academic programs at the bachelor degree level is 314 percent (Perna, 2013). Thus, looking at career-advising from a workforce perspective reflects a critical need to ensure students make decisions regarding their future career path with accurate information and careful planning.

However, career services and academic advising departments have traditionally been housed under separate organizational umbrellas with staff trained in either advising or career services, but not typically both (Restrepo, 2016). To further examine and understand these functional areas, this chapter will review the relevant literature focusing on academic advising, career services, and career-advising. Separating by discipline allows for further evaluation by historical context, roles and responsibilities, theory, and more.

Academic Advising

Historical context. Advising was first acknowledged in 1841 where Kenyon College required students to select a faculty member as their advisor (Harrison, 2009; Cook, 2009). In this advisor role, faculty members were charged with helping students with course selection. However, it was not until 1958 that academic advising first became defined as a practice (Cook, 2009). Following a transactional approach, focus was placed on course scheduling. This remained the norm until psychosocial development theories by Erickson, Levinson, and Piaget published their work in the late 1960s (Harrison, 2009). The influence of these developmental theories progressed into student development theories, based on the developmental tasks necessary for students to complete as they move into adulthood (Harrison, 2009). Chickering's (1993) model of 7 vectors being one of the most popular and prominent student development theories provided the basis for the creation of developmental advising models shifting the advising practices away from prescriptive course scheduling (Harrison, 2009).

As the profession continued to evolve and gain momentum, there was additional focus placed on the need for formalization. In 1972, The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education recommended that academic advising receive additional attention in higher education (Cook, 2009). A few years later, in 1977, the first national academic advising conference was held in Burlington, Vermont (Cook, 2009). One year later, in

1978, acknowledgement of the profession of academic advising with a formal description with primary role academic advisors took place (Cook, 2009). Previously, it was the responsibility of academic faculty to provide advising, but there was now delineation made between the responsibilities of the faculty advisor for major-specific advising and primary role advisors' focus on undeclared students or general advising responsibilities.

As the advising role continued to gain momentum in colleges nationwide, there was also an increase in the numbers of individuals serving in these roles. To further support the needs and continued growth of academic advisors, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was established in 1979 with a purpose "to promote the quality of Academic Advising in institutions of higher education, and to this end, it is dedicated to the support and professional growth of academic advising and advisors" (National Academic Advising Association, 2018, p.1). Serving as a national organization dedicated to academic advising in higher education, NACADA greatly expanded over the years with regards to membership, annual, regional, and state conferences. The launch of a professional journal was first published in 1981 (Cook, 2009). This was followed by the addition of numerous publications, the publishing of an advising handbook, professional awards, and research institutes. Along with changes in technology, additional resources became available with a website first published in 1995 (Cook, 2009).

Today, NACADA remains a highly regarded, professional organization that works to continue expanding its services and meet the needs of its membership. With its 10 regions covering the entire United States and Canada, and other countries, membership has grown considerably over the years including a Global membership base. This growth has directly reflected the influence NACADA has had on advising, as there are now countless resources available to advisors through conferences, publications, interest groups, scholarship, and research. However, beyond the professional development opportunities NACADA also serves as a leader of the advising profession with elected leadership and dedicated resources to continuing research and development (NACADA, 2018, 2020).

Roles and responsibilities of the academic advisor. The daily responsibilities of the primary role academic advisor in higher education are multifaceted. Although specific functions may vary from institution to institution, academic advisors generally serve as a principal form of support, one that escorts students through a personalized journey towards graduation and beyond (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013). However, the role of the advisor goes well beyond that of a tour guide as they must support students with identification and solidification of personal values and career goals, make referrals to other services on campus, analyze student data, review academic progress, provide outreach to students, send email correspondence, approve graduation applications, and more (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013)**.**

While over the years, there has been incredible growth in membership and services, the NACADA organization has been unable to provide a singular definition of the role of the advisor. Grites and Gordon (2009) pointed out how, in a 1985 edition of the NACADA Newsletter, ten questions focused on student, advisor, and institutional needs. Yet, even after over 30 years, these questions remain unanswered. Grites (2013) later provided another attempt to define the role of the academic advisor by stating “the developmental academic advisor gathers information to recognize where the student stands along the educational, career, and personal dimensions of her or his life, discusses where the student plans to be, and assists the student in getting to that point as readily as possible. This approach remains at the core of every theoretical and practical approach to academic advising" (p.13).

To understand advising functions, Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski and Barkemeyer (2018) surveyed academic advisors attending two different advising conferences in 2015. The first conference was the 2015 Utah Advising Association Annual statewide conference in St. George and the 2^{nd} was the 2015 NACADA Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. The survey consisted of five questions given to academic advisors and focused on advisor-specific functions. The results reflected variability in the manner in performed responsibilities. The results provided the following baseline definition: "academic advising applies knowledge of the field to empower students and campus and community members to successfully navigate academic interactions related to higher education – provides a focal point for both the person advising and those interested in the work of advising" (Larson et al., p.89).

Assessment in academic advising. The assessment of advisor practices and procedures is complex and varies greatly by institution. Sheldon and Garton (2015) suggest that many institutions do not assess the quality of and satisfaction with academic advising to the same degree as professors. Although many institutions do not assess advising, the University of Missouri established a self-designed survey instrument, The Advisor Quality Survey (AQS) (Sheldon & Garton, 2015). This survey was administered three phases to students at the University of Missouri. The first was a 15-item version of the scale, administered online to students enrolled in specific colleges at the University of Missouri. The second phase, the same 15-item version was administered to recent graduates of the same university and, in the third phase, the instrument was administered to current students enrolled in nine different schools and colleges.

The AQS assessed three specific areas of advising and included the advisor's knowledge, availability and level of independent support. The survey found advisor support to be the strongest predictor of student satisfaction but independent support was associated with a greater quantity of time spent by the advisor with the student during meetings. Faculty advisors rated higher by students when compared to primary role staff advisors. While this was unexpected, Sheldon and Garton (2015) suggested that having a mentoring relationship or receiving attention or lack of attention from a professor might have significant impact on the student-advisor relationship. However, primary role advisors may tend to have higher caseloads with additional duties than faculty advisors, but this could not be evaluated from the data (Sheldon & Garton, 2015). Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, and Hawthorne (2013) also examined academic advising services through student experience surveys and agreed with Sheldon and Garton's (2015) study results. Both concluded that advisors have an immediate impact on student success from the first year until graduation.

Lack of common functions. Without a common definition for advisor functions, there is limited clarity on the actual role of the academic advisor within higher education. Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski and Barkemeyer (2018) agreed with Gordon and Habley (2000) and concluded the lack of definition, function, and theory may be the result of inconsistent practices and lack of regular assessment due to differences in advisor roles between institutions and even within offices. While Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski and Barkemeyer (2018) discussed how a generalized definition would be helpful to reflect a common voice with advising, they also share how the role of an advisor is simply too complex to define. In fact, Larson, et al. (2018) further suggested that a generalized definition might lead to negative outcomes as institutions could potentially develop job descriptions that pull away from the actual intent of working directly with students by including activities outside of advising responsibilities.

Advising approaches. There are multiple approaches to academic advising ranging from prescriptive relationships mimicking that of a doctor and patient or, in contrast, to a developmental relationship where advisor and student focus on developmental tasks resulting in a learning experience (Crookston, 1972). Regardless of the process, Crookston (1972) describes this relationship as a learning community, one with developmental undertakings fostering personal growth and development taking place both inside and outside of the classroom. Additionally, this relationship serves as a contract between the student and advisor where the outcome is learning (Crookston, 1972).

Various developmental theories help provide understanding and explanation of student behavior, yet also provide a framework for advisors to use when working directly with students (Roufs, 2015). While no individual theory fully describes academic advising, various theorists have laid the groundwork with a helpful set of tools for advisors to apply and, as these theories change and advance over time; many overlap with blurred lines or contradictions (Roufs, 2015). Developmental theories of Chickering and Reisser (1993), Erikson (1968), Kohlberg (1964), Perry (1970), and Piaget (1952), and others have laid the groundwork for further understanding student behavior. However, as there is no singular theory that fully explains academic advising, there is also no singular theory that explains human behavior (Robbins, 2012). Thus, advisors must apply the most suitable theory when working with students (Robbins, 2012).

Perhaps the most comprehensive model found that describes academic advisor function is by Terry O'Banion (1972) who suggested the purpose of academic advising is to assist students with selecting an academic program to meet both vocational and personal goals. This advising model employs a system wide, team approach to focus on five, interdependent steps (O'Banion, 2012). The five steps reflect an expanded role of advising that moves well past course selection to assist the student with personal and career goals. This model also puts the student in the driver's seat as the decision-maker and stresses the need for students to experience all five steps. Finally, it provides a flexible framework for advisors to follow and create a sense of consistency yet still allowing for independent approaches.

However, both Cookston and O'Banion's models of advising are not without criticism. Rooney (1994) explains how both Crookston and O'Banion were visionary and forward thinking as both developed models years ago without knowing or understanding the current landscape. Both these models were created over 40 years ago when the student body reflected mostly white males, 18-22 years of age. Today's college students are much more diverse concerning gender, ethnicity, race, physical ability, academic ability, and economic background (Rooney, 1994). Additionally, where the student demographics have changed, so has the technology and delivery of services on college campuses. As institutions respond to changes in student populations, academic advisors have the additional tools and resources to serve and refer students. Regardless of these changes, Crookston and O'Banion's models remain relevant today as they continue to address student needs within a developmental framework. However, Rooney (1994) points out how O'Banion's (1972) model needs to be targeted to the student's individual needs and, rather than a team approach, should be a customized team approach with critical need for collaboration between academic and student affairs. Additionally, a sequential approach to the five steps is no longer appropriate as students have individual needs, which may not fit within the prescribed sequence.

O'Banion's (1972) revised his model of academic advising in 2012 to reflect the needs of today's students. The updated model now allows the application of steps applied out of sequence based on student needs. This model also focuses on a team-oriented, university-wide approach but acknowledges the flipped model with the steps sometimes in reverse order. The steps include exploration of life goals, exploration of vocational goals, choosing an academic program, selection of courses, and scheduling of courses. In addition, the model includes the competencies an advisor should have with each of these steps. O'Banion (2012) suggests these steps in sequence yet advisors tend to miss the connection with the steps, sometimes intentionally or unintentionally ignoring the first two due to time constraints and other institutional pressures.

The first step focuses on the exploration of life goals. O'Banion (2012) shares that a college education should be one that completely changes the student through exposure to a new learning environment. Through advising, students should be guided as they begin to better understand who they are and what they want in life. In the second step, the focus is to explore vocational goals. This step builds upon the first step with exposure to career interests. Accomplished through career assessment instruments, exposure to career planning in courses, and further clarification of personal life goals, students develop career interests. Additionally, advisors should not be separating the first two steps as clarification of life and career goals work in tandem. O'Banion (2012) further shares how the first two steps are exceptionally important yet academic advising programs often overlook these steps and begin with the third step to focus on academic program choices rather than personal and career interests. This is due to a common notion that students arrive to college with the first two steps already completed. However, these same assumptions can be damaging to the student's progress towards graduation.

The third step of the model focuses on program selection. If followed in sequence, the student has reviewed their career and personal goals and is ideally, ready to select a major. If the student is ready to make a commitment to a program then, moving into steps four and five, course selection and scheduling should be seamless. However, if the student remains undecided, the advisor will need to follow a generalized path with courses until the student decides.

I selected this model as the framework for my study as it focuses specifically on the advising relationship between advisors and students. Other researchers have emulated various applications of this model. Burton and Wellington (1998) employed O'Banion's (2012) model in a modified format and sequence as led by the student. By applying the steps within a developmental framework, Burton and Wellington (1998) found O'Banion's model still allowed for the advising relationship to progress, but it allowed the academic advisor to understand the student's needs quickly and efficiently. This Integrative Advising Model used both formal and informal advising practices to better clarify the advising relationship.

O'Banion (2012) addressed how the steps may not necessarily be in sequence as it depends on the student's needs. A realistic model, O'Banion (2012) outlines steps as what should be the ideal model but also shares the practicalities and limitations within advising. Finally, his model focuses on a team approach where other departments share in the advising process. This includes the need for career services to be an active participant in the advising role.

Career Services in Higher Education

Historical context. Much like academic advising, career services in higher education has also morphed in design and evolved with functions and services over time. Pope (2000) reviewed the historical evolution of career counseling and the terminology associated with the field and found the terms career counseling, career development, and vocational guidance being specific to both era and culture. Starting in the early 1900s, career services were first referred to as vocation bureaus. These agencies assisted new immigrants to the United States with finding employment (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014). Where vocational guidance was coined as the original term used throughout the world to define the career services role, the terms career counseling and career development became more common in the 1950s. However, it was not until 1984 when the National Vocational Guidance Association changed its name to the National Career Development Association to reflect current trends (Pope, 2000).

Dey and Cruzvergara (2014) reflected on how the 1920s-era found a shortage of teachers, leading to an active movement to recruit teachers through vocational guidance, 1940-1960 saw a need for returning veterans to find employment. This led to the creation of GI Bill funding for higher education retraining for veterans to reenter the workforce.

The additional veterans on college campuses needing to find employment upon graduation led to the creation of job placement centers on college campuses. Dey and Cruzvergara (2014) noted how the early 1970s and 1980s saw the first career planning and counseling centers established on college campuses.

While trends in societal hiring practices reflect the services provided in higher education career centers, the historical focus has remained, specifically on career preparation skills and placement. Dey and Cruzvergara (2014) further this thinking by noting how the 2008 economic depression shook previous trends in higher education with society questioning the value of a college degree. Once again, economic pressures outside of higher education led to an evolution where higher education career centers refocused transactional career preparation services as students neared graduation to one of a customized model throughout the student's educational career. Although career preparation traditional services remained at the forefront, higher education career services refocused on student and employer connections. Where previously career services focused on students nearing graduation, this shift in thinking brought career planning and development services to the student from entrance, through the entire college experience. Through mentoring programs, networking experiences and other avenues, the goal became to help students develop life-long career-decision making skills (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014).

Marketization of career services in higher education. Today, higher education leaders are taking renewed interest in career services. While the marketization of career services in higher education is not a new trend, but a continued evolution of higher education, the expectations of direct placement into sustainable employment upon graduation has added pressure for career services departments (Restrepo, 2016). However, the need to compete with other institutions has also led to creative approaches with building new state-of-the-art academic and residential buildings, support programs, and extracurricular services designed to attract and retain students. These practices have resulted in a higher price tag for higher education (Restrepo, 2016).

To remain competitive, some institutions must respond to these demands through admissions, recruitment, marketing, and enticement by highlighting a connection from education to employment. Koproske (2018) furthers this argument with a growing concern by students and parents alike, as they want specific details on the financial return on their investment of a higher education degree in the form of gainful employment. States such as Minnesota, Louisiana, and Florida have responded to this by employing performance-based funding models with specific focus on career placement results. Other states including Colorado, Texas, Louisiana, Ohio, and Indiana have now required career planning and preparation as a part of the student experience prior to graduation (Koproske, 2018).

Kwong (2000) explains this commercialized approach as a need to supplement dwindling federal and state funding by boosting enrollment numbers through creative approaches to recruitment. This evolution of higher education marketization views students as consumers and the institution as the vendor. Institutions must then continually seek out new, innovative methods to outshine each other and increase student enrollment (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Changes in access to technology has also changed the relationship between students, the institution itself, and career services. Rather than providing generalized, transactional career information which may include jobs listings, workshops, and job fairs, career offices now provide a variety of services, tailored to the individual student's needs and interests. This may include individual career counseling, mock interviewing, and coordinating informational interviews between the student and employer (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014).

Roles and responsibilities of career services professionals. The daily responsibilities of the career services professional in higher education can also vary greatly in both scope and function. Duties differ from institution to institution and may include working directly with employers, hosting career-related events, or creating employer connections. Where the role of the career services professional may include some direction on academic programming to help the student make career-based decisions, academic advising is typically left to the academic advisor. Career services personnel can vary greatly and may include a large range with faculty, professional career advisors, graduate students, and volunteers. Regardless of title, career service professionals work directly with students to provide career-readiness development through career assessment, individual career counseling, resume reviews, and mock interviews (Rayman, 1993; Gordon, 2006). Career planning and counseling functions may include career-planning workshops, career planning classes, assessment instruments, and individual career counseling. Each of these areas may vary in number, type or offering. Placement functions may include placement advising, training workshops, career fairs, on-campus recruitment visits; resume referral services and placement resource library. Career programming functions can include outreach programs, specific programs designed for minority students, and experiential education program opportunities. Information support functions can include a placement library, support materials, surveys, salary surveys, or a student advisory board (Rayman, 1993). The communications functions may include brochures advertising services, annual reports, newsletters, message boards, bulletin boards, and media announcements. Training functions may include work-study opportunities, internship placements, graduate internships or assistants who work within the career center, and sponsored research opportunities. Finally, assessment and research function include post-graduation surveys and evaluation of employer services (Rayman 1993).

Career-advising as a practice. Today, career services and academic advising are two specific organizations found in most higher education institutions. Both have mature histories and have evolved with offerings and scope over time. Yet many institutions do not link these services together and work in silos. A lack of partnership between academic advising and career services may result in a potential gap in services, with students ultimately paying the price. Reardon and Bullock (2004) explain the differences between academic advising and career counseling: where academic advising has a more specific student focus on life and future career decision making as it relates to academic and social activities, career counseling has a wider focus and extends well-beyond the walls of higher education.

Career services and academic advising employ individual approaches to assist students with making academic and career decisions to align with personal interests and goals. Reardon and Bullock (2004) suggest academic advisors and career counseling centers develop a common, career-based terminology to use with students. Gordon and Habley (2000) have pointed out how academic advisors may be uncomfortable with the use of career theory and may not feel they have the expertise to engage students with career assessment instruments. Rather than directly assist, they may choose to refer students to career services to work with career professionals. Another reason advisors may be apprehensive of the use of career assessment may be due to a lack of time. Sheldon and Garton (2015) furthered this argument by suggesting from their Advisor Satisfaction Survey results that primary role advisors may have high caseloads or are charged with other tasks, thus preventing them from engaging in additional career-advising conversations.

Career theory applied to academic advising. The use of career theory can be helpful to academic advisors by providing a career-specific framework to use with students. John Holland's theory (1971) provides a categorization of six different codes – Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (Holland, 1971). The Realistic type typically enjoys working more with things than with people and are generally described as practical, natural, genuine, and honest. The Investigative type typically enjoys working with ideas or concepts more than people or things and are generally described as being curious, intellectual, cautious, and independent. The Artistic type typically tends to enjoy working with ideas and often described as being creative, emotional, impulsive and original. The Social type typically enjoys working with people more than with things and are generally described as being empathetic, responsible, cooperative, kind and generous. The Enterprising type tends to enjoy working with people and ideas and often described as being energetic, confident, persuasive, and optimistic. Finally, the Conventional type generally likes to work more with papers and numbers and are often described as being organized, practical, and efficient (Self-Directed Search, 2019).

Using a career-based assessment, such as the *Self-Directed Search*, which follows Holland's theory of vocational choice, allows students the freedom of being completed, scored, and interpreted by the student. While this can be empowering to the student, academic advisors can also discuss the results with students to review and further interpret how career titles relate to academic majors. In their 2014 study on the effectiveness of the *Self-Directed Search* instrument, Behrens and Nauta (2014) suggest that facilitators administering the Self-Directed Search should provide additional support to increase exploration of career titles about making sound career decisions.

Reardon and Bullock (2004) specifically review John Holland's RIASEC theory for its practical application to both career counseling and academic advising. Using the *Self-Directed Search: Internet Version* along with the Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes. Reardon and Bullock (2004) make note of how the design of self-help instruments benefit those individuals with a high degree of motivation to make career decisions. This may be very helpful with students currently undecided but ready to make a decision. The results of their review indicated that undecided students tend to have higher levels of negative career thinking which tends to result in difficulty with choosing a major. The students in this study were also considered high risk as they reported negative thinking with perseverance in college. Reardon and Bullock (2004) suggest advisors provide interventions on negative career thoughts by providing positive feedback and encouragement to the student. Bullock-Yowell, McConnell, and Schedin (2014) further shared this can be done by showing the student ways to make good career choices through taking steps to select a plan of action. Career planning courses and career assessment offerings may also provide a way to address negative career thoughts.

Results from Bullock-Yowell, McConnell, and Schedin's (2014) study also suggest that although undecided students often struggle with general decision-making difficulties, they are not more or less ready or motivated to make career decisions. Two reported types of obstacles to decision making tend to include a lack of information and inconsistent information. Academic advisors can assist with this by sharing accurate career and academic information on a regular basis. To assist with ensuring academic advisors are on target with career information, Gordon (2005) provides a short quiz to share with advisors to assess their knowledge of career advising and expresses the dangers that if advisors do not provide accurate career advising, their students may turn to other sources which may lack substance or accuracy.

Although having some knowledge of career information is necessary, advisors must also understand career trends. In addition to understanding trends, advisors must also understand how trends influence the student's ability to make career-based decisions. This includes academic choices, career decisions, and social interactions or involvement influencing future aspirations (Gordon, 2006). Additionally, advisors can help to promote career development courses, make referrals to career services personnel and promote career-related events. Also, by keeping program guides updated and easily available to students along with course descriptions and promotion of courses advisors can ensure students have the most accurate and timely information available.

To further the need for academic advisors and career services professionals to work together through referrals and joint collaborations, Milsom and Coughlin (2015) conducted a grounded theory study to understand the experiences students have from initially choosing an academic major. Created as an outcome of these experiences, the

College Major Satisfaction Model highlights the satisfaction or dissatisfaction study participants developed with their majors. The study found that regardless of the initial choice made, participants found themselves either growing either more satisfied or dissatisfied with their choice. However, having various opportunities to interact with others or spend time within their major helped to understand themselves and their career interests. The results also focus on academic advising and ways that advisors can help facilitate this process through encouraging students to explore career options and interests. A final suggestion for advisors was understanding the advisor is one part of this process and should work in tandem with other support services. This can include career courses with both academic advisor and career services professional as co-teachers. Continued encouragement to explore interests and referral to others is also helpful. Collaboration of services is an important feature of career-advising. In addition, while co-teaching career development courses and providing career assessment instruments is all incredibly valuable, it is important to understand the process for how and when students typically make career decisions.

Career decision theoretical framework. Where Reardon and Bullock (2004) share how career assessment tends to work better with students who are ready to make career decisions, it is important to understand how traditional-age college students tend to make career decisions. Kroger, Martinussen, and Marcia (2010) reviewed developmental changes in the identity status of adolescents and young adults. Marcias Identity Formation concept (1966) was used as part of this study to better understand four styles of identity: Diffusion (no sense of choices or commitment), Foreclosure (willingness to commitment to some goal), Moratorium (in crisis but exploring choices without making a commitment), and Achievement (commitment to a sense of identity).

Kroger, Martinussen, and Marcia (2010) found that ongoing identity development occurred well past the period of adolescence. Since traditional-age college students tend to fall into the category of late adolescence and young adults, career guidance becomes a critical component to the student's career decision-making process and ongoing success. As it applies to career advising, this theory provides an opportunity for career professionals and academic advisors to understand how students are able and willing to explore and make career path decisions. Although Marcias' Identity Formation (1966) concept is incredibly helpful to understanding how traditional undergraduate students may make their career decisions, there are also students who may fall into different categories of choices (Marcia & Marcia, 1966). They may have difficulty articulating one academic area or they may have trouble narrowing down numerous interests. Either way, the decision-making process can be very difficult with too few or too many options.

Bloom, Tripp, and Shaffer (2011) employed Bloom's (2009) *The Scanner Self Inventory* as they worked with students identified as *Scanners*. Scanners are students who experience extreme difficulty limiting their interests and career paths. Scanners tend to have commonalities with high achieving students and gifted in multiple areas. Since they have experienced success and encouragement in multiple academic areas, they are often reluctant to discard interests to focus on one career path (Bloom, Tripp, & Shaffer, 2011). Academic advisors and career personnel may find these students experiencing anxiety or loss when attempting to focus on career decision making and may present similar behaviors as students who are truly undecided.

Using the results of the inventory, Bloom, Tripp and Shaffer (2011) found that academic advisors could better understand the needs of their students who may appear to be undecided. Scanners, much like undecided students may benefit from additional exploration of career paths and academic majors. Career professionals may also use the inventory results to choose additional career assessments that complement the needs of a Scanner student. Thus, understanding these different types of student populations may be helpful for both academic advisors and career service professionals as they provide services that meet the needs of such a variety of students.

Integration of Academic Advising and Career Services

Charged with additional non-advising responsibilities, primary role advisors feel increasingly pressured to move students to graduation in a timely manner. With many institutions pushing time to degree and student loan debt mounting, students may feel pressured to make major decisions quickly. Ledwith (2014) focused on how academic advising of today is very different from that of former years. Where in the past, advisors focused a prescriptive approach of mostly course selection; advisors of today are using student development theories to address many student needs. Following this viewpoint, if career services and academic advising can collaborate through referrals, programming, and defined roles concerning individual practices, career-advising can be impactful to addressing student career concerns and academic advising issues. On a larger scale, a partnership may assist with communication between offices but also assist with promoting time to degree while also addressing student career-based questions and concern.

Fisher (1999) reviewed differences between career and advising services to better understand how career services professionals and academic advisors can work together to provide seamless services. Where academic advisors are the experts in course details and how academic classes' influences the student's professional and personal interests, career counselors understand the employment market along with how to make the transition from student to employee. Fisher (1999) further explains that where career counselors focus on values and goal setting, academic advisors focus on the journey from the academic major to a future career path.

Koproske (2018) took Fisher's (1999) concept a step further to share that career advising requires the student to seek the answers to questions. These may include "Where should I seek an internship?", "Which companies are currently growing?", "What activities on campus fit my goals?", and "What is a typical alumni career path?" (p.26). Questions such as these require the student to ask them and this may be difficult. Ramos (2013) points out parents may have specific views on career paths leaving the student afraid to question their path. In other situations, students may be uncomfortable for a number of reasons including being non-traditional age to ask these questions.

Regardless of how or why the student begins to ask career questions, the advisor must be well informed to assist. Additionally, the advisor must have the ability and authority to contact alumni and other industry specialists currently working in occupations. This may include using Alumni Services offices within an institution as a resource. Thus, through combining services, communicating with both career services along with others outside the institution, sharing information and providing referrals, both career services and academic advising can collaborate to work in tandem and provide both skill development along with career planning for a meaningful student experience.

Conclusion

Career-advising has become a buzzword in higher education advising literature, but research is limited and more is needed to understand what appears to be two, unique and, often separated disciplines. While both career services and academic advising histories are well documented and ample literature is available on the individual fields, the limited literature that currently exists specifically on the blend of career-advising tends to focus on the undecided or exploratory student population. However, knowing that approximately 80 percent of all students studying in the United States will change academic programs at least once with an average of changing majors at least three times during their college years (Ramos, 2013) there is a need to further delve into the career-advising field from the primary role academic advisor’s viewpoint. This is necessary to explore career-advising procedures and practices for all students.

Chapter 3

Methodology

While there is plentiful research on the field of academic advising (Cook, 2009; Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013; Grites, 2013; Grites and Gordon, 2009) and career services (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Gordon, 2006; Koproske, 2018; Pope, 2000; Rayman, 1993) in higher education, there are few authors who have examined the career-advising practice employed by academic advisors as they work with their students (Donnelly, 2009; Gordon, 2005; Gordon, 2006; McCalla-Wriggins, 2009; Reardon and Bullock, 2004). Further, what current career-advising research is available tends to focus on the Exploratory or undecided student population. I sought to discover and understand what current career-advising practices employed by primary role academic advisors as they work with all students, regardless of intended academic major.

This chapter provided clarification and understanding of the research study including the data collected and analyzed. Employing a qualitative, single case study research design (Yin, 2014), I followed a semi-structured interview approach along with participant-observations and document collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). This chapter justifies the need for the design of this case study, shares proposed research questions, and the rationale for the site of the study. In addition, the chapter further explains sources of data, its collection approaches, and data analysis techniques.

Problem Statement

As the primary academic advising role continues its development into a profession, the daily duties and responsibilities have also continued to evolve. This may be due to affordability factors, time to degree, and the need for immediate, sustainable employment to begin to pay back on student debt (Harnisch & Lebioda, 2016). In response and viewed as a need to create a supportive structure, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was created in 1979, (National Academic Advising Association, 2018, p.1) and has greatly assisted with formalizing the profession with the development of professional standards, resources and conferences.

While over the years, academic advising has become a mature, critical support service in higher education, actual advising roles vary considerably. Where at some institutions faculty may fill the advising role, other institutions employ primary role academic advisors. Advising models may also vary and can be centralized, decentralized or a combination of both. Additionally, the individual, daily responsibilities of the advisor can vary from department to department and even office-to-office (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013). Thus, it was my goal to examine the current career-advising practices of primary role academic advisors with the goal to understand current career-advising practices.

Research Questions

The research questions posed for this study are listed as follows.

Research Question #1: How do primary role academic advisors of undergraduate students employed at Rowan University define the term "career-advising" as it relates to their individual advising practice?

Research Question #2: How do primary role academic advisors describe their current career-advising practices?

a. What tools do they use?

b. How do they use those tools within individual advising sessions?

Research Question #3: For what purposes do primary role academic advisors refer or connect students with the Office of Career Advancement?

Research Question #4: What challenges in career-related services are perceived by the primary role academic advisor as they work with their assigned caseloads?

Research Site

I conducted my research at Rowan University, a mid-size, public research university located in rural Glassboro, New Jersey. The student body included 16,120 undergraduate students, 2,228 graduate students and 1,117 professional/medical students (Fast Facts, 2019). Historic growth of the institution has been ongoing for several years. This continuous development is evident by the consistent increase in student enrollment. Additionally, recent and continual construction has continued with multiple new academic buildings, student housing, dining facilities, and recreation center. As the campus has evolved, new retail and food vendors have also located to the area, further expanding the overall campus physical landscape. Student support program growth and academic offerings has also responded to the increased student population with creation of new academic programs and the hiring of additional faculty and support personnel.

In a time where other institutions struggle with declining enrollment, Rowan University has uniquely employed creative tactics to increase enrollment. This includes partnerships with local community colleges, setting affordable tuition prices, and other successful programming and marketing campaigns. Continued growth has resulted in additional revenue, which has led to additional hiring and increased budgets. In a time where other institutions may struggle with staff layoffs, declining budgets, and low employee morale, Rowan employees are enjoying a time of overall positive staff morale with opportunity for professional development and advancement.

I chose a mid-size public research institution for this study due to ongoing growth of the campus, and specifically, due to the growth within undergraduate academic advising and additional staffing within the Office of Career Advancement. In 2012, the University Advising Center hosted four primary role academic advisors. At that time, those four advisors were previous employees of the Career and Academic Planning Center (today known as the Office of Career Advancement) and were trained in both career services and academic advising. Today, over 50 primary role academic advisors are housed in two academic advising centers (University Advising Center and the College of Education Academic Advising Center) and are embedded within academic departments across campus.

While the ongoing growth of academic advising has been very positive, the quick and expansive growth has also resulted in fast-paced hiring, training, and placement into needed areas of the campus. In a national survey of academic advisor job satisfaction, 74 percent of nearly 1,700 participants shared they did not hold a counseling-specific degree (Donnelly, 2005). At Rowan University, academic advising experience has been the focus for hiring with career services experience a desired, but not required skillset. In addition, the establishment of two different advisor-level positions has resulted in assistant academic advisor and senior academic advisor classifications. By looking at Rowan University's quick growth and overall primary role advising my goal was to understand how career-advising practices employed regardless of academic program, student population, advisor status, or physical location.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is considered a decisive factor for a study if it meets the prerequisites of a case study (Yin, 2014). Within my study, I focused on a collective group of undergraduate, primary role academic advisors assigned to University Advising Services at Rowan University as the unit of analysis. All academic advisors selected were full-time employees and most were members of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), a professional association of the advising field. The advisors in my study were housed within one of the two advising centers on campus or embedded within an academic department. Focusing on only the primary role academic advisor as one single case was with intention. Primary role academic advisors had more overall experience in academic advising. All academic advisors had a bachelor or master degree in counseling, education, or a related field and all advisors were expected to provide career-advising services with their students. Additionally, since academic advising can vary greatly from institution to institution, focusing on one umbrella of primary role academic advisors at Rowan University provided a specific lens in which to view the larger picture of career advising.

Participants

The participants I chose were considered informants and experienced with the phenomenon studied since they could provide critical data but also propose additional resources to be investigated (Yin, 2014). Approximately 50 academic advisors are housed under University Advising Services. 15 advisors were pre-selected; however, the 12 final participants were determined by saturation. Saturation is defined as being at a place where no new data is found (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

To identify the advisors selected for this study, I used a criterion-based selection method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An invitation to participate in an interview was sent via email to pre-selected academic advisors housed under the University Advising Services organizational umbrella. Employing criterion-based selection criteria was ideal, as "information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016. p.96). The selection process reflected advisors with a large range of advising experience from those new to advising to those with extensive years of experience at Rowan University. I then applied additional selection criteria to ensure a balance of assistant academic advisors, senior academic advisors, advisors housed in centers, and those embedded in academic departments.

All University Services advisors undergo the same initial training program, have access to the same professional development opportunities, and share a common position description. This provided some commonality about understanding of the role. However, once trained, they are placed into either a center or office where there is much autonomy. Within the University Advising Center, advisors work specifically with change of major students or those students who are undeclared (Exploratory Studies). Those advisors housed in the College of Education Advising Center work specifically with students declared as education majors. Typically housed within an academic department, embedded advisors work specifically with assigned students declared under individual academic program majors. Thus, using criteria-based sampling was an important aspect to ensuring the advisors chosen to represent an accurate cross-section of all academic advisors in University Advising Services.

Data Collection Procedure

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) encourage the researcher to have an open mind when reviewing and uncovering documents as this can lead to new discoveries and provides a list of helpful questions upon reviewing the relevancy of the material. This was helpful as a guide with the collection of data. Yin (2014) further identifies six, specific areas of evidence sources. These include documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) acknowledge how there are both strengths and limitations of documents and artifacts collected. Both genuineness and accurateness must be reviewed. Thus, it was important to review each piece of evidence thoroughly as the process moved forward. Regardless of the type of data collected, data storage was an important element of case study research. As part of the data collection process, I used a coding system so that retrieval and organization was easily accessible.

Physical artifacts. I designed and followed a document collection protocol that included the date I acquired the document, the type of document, who prepared the document, the intended audience, the purpose, utilization method, and who had access to the document (Saldaña, 2016). As Yin (2014) describes, “this type of information can take many forms and should be the object of explicit data collection plans” (p.105). The creation of this protocol established a baseline of support services and program offerings made available to students. Additionally, I collected documents before, during, and after the interview process from primary role academic advisors.

Artifacts collected for this study included advising and career-related advertisements or tools located in student waiting areas or individual advisor offices.

While I did not evaluate the contents of the document, the collection process helped to understand the advertised and promoted services made available and how the individual advisor was using them within their individual advising appointments.

Semi-structured interviews. For this case study, I used a semi-structured, fluid, in-person interview approach as a key source to evidence collection (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Interviews focused on following a systematic inquiry of asking conversational questions that were unbiased but also met the needs of the line of inquiry. Additionally, I used open-ended techniques to encourage conversation and the additional information obtained assisted with data collection to examine advising phenomenon (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

As those interviewed were considered technical experts (Rossman & Rallis, 2012), it was important to also recognize University Advising Services primary role advisors were experts in their respective fields. This resulted in a discussion where the interviewee and interviewer had interactive dialogue to understand viewpoints (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Anticipated that interview questions would generate additional discussion, I addressed this in Appendix I as part of the interview protocol.

The interview questions I developed focused on how advisors guide their individual practice as it related to career advising and included lead, probing, and follow-up questions infused as was needed. Opening the interview with questions to help document the individual advisor's academic training and advising experience along with how this preparation drives their advising practice, I moved on to a line of questioning to focus on the advisor's use of career-advising terminology and practice with student appointments. Additional questions centered upon specific career-advising tools used within individual advising sessions along with the application of tools used. I asked questions regarding the purpose, referral, and follow-up process to the Office of Career Advancement along with asking advisors to identify any gaps that existed with this process.

I sought permission prior to the start of the interview to record the conversation. Using a software transcription system, I recorded my conversations on a laptop and back-up device for review after the interview concluded. However, Yin (2014) pointed out that if an interviewee refuses permission or appears to be uncomfortable with the recording process, then recording should not be used. Regardless of being recorded or not, I kept interviews conversational in nature, but followed the interview protocol.

Data Analysis

To analyze and make sense of the interview data and collected artifacts, Yin (2014) suggests starting with small questions in the case study protocol rather than with the data itself and then asking increasingly larger questions, drawing tentative answers from the evidence, and reflecting on how this evidence is shared with readers. Using this process, I looped conversation continuously until the research questions were addressed.

Analysis of interview data. Throughout the interview process, I transcribed each interview using a voice to text software program. The use of an affective values coding technique for classification and identification processes helped to keep my data organized. The affective method "investigates the subjective qualities of human experience (e.g., emotions, values, conflicts, judgements) by directly acknowledging and naming those experience" (Saldaña, 2016). Since my study focused on the qualitative perceptions of primary role academic advisors, values coding was an appropriate choice as it reflected the individual values, attitudes, and beliefs of the interviewee. Recognizing the applicability among the three can be difficult to decipher and are the perspective of the interviewee. Using multiple data sources and applying values coding to documents helped with triangulating the data.

Through use of Saldaña's (2016) process, I also recorded my observations as field notes. Since field notes also included my own personal thoughts and reflections, these field notes resulted in additional analysis. However, Saldaña's (2016) shares how field notes are different from analytic memos since these do include subjective details. I also created, dated and organized analytic memos to allow me additional insight to answer the posed research questions. Using these techniques, I was also able to link my analytic memos to specific codes. "The purpose of the analytic strategy is to link your case study data to some concepts of interest, then to have the concepts give you a sense of direction in analyzing the data" (Yin, 2014, p.142). Therefore, I chose to focus on Yin's (2014) second strategy and worked directly with the data to find a common concept. This strategy led towards an investigative trail which I followed throughout my analysis.

Artifact analysis. Document analysis also focused on Yin's (2014) second strategy to find commonalities leading to an investigative trail. Since the purpose of this collection of artifacts was to determine usage, I collected career-related documents from the advisor's offices and waiting areas, and coded each document using values coding as was done with the individual interviews (Saldaña, 2016). However, the intent of this artifact collection was not of the materials itself. I focused on how\w career-related materials were being incorporated into the advisor's individual practice. Therefore, it was important to review the materials found in the advisor's office. Additionally, through the interview process, I asked questions s to see if the materials were being used and to what extent.

Limitations

This study was conducted at one institution and focused on primary role academic advisors housed under University Advising Services. Since academic advising may be conducted differently from campus to campus and from institution to institution, it is recognized that this study was limited in its scope and focused on the primary role academic advisor role at one, public, four-year research university.

Reliability & Validity

To safeguard the credibility and quality of research designs, Yin (2014) suggests four tests, relevant to case study research. These include construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Construct validity is process of establishing correct operational measures for the study. Two tactics as suggested by Yin (2014) include using multiple data sources and establishing a linking of evidence with the data. For this study, my data sources included advisor interviews and artifacts collected from both advising and career services offices. Sequencing was employed using my codebooks, field notes, and the flow of artifact collection and the reported usage by the advisor.

For this study, my data sources included semi structured, in-person interviews (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Several follow-up and probing questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2016) were also included to assist with conversation flow. I interviewed 12 University Advising Services academic advisors with each interview lasting approximately one hour in duration. I also used an interview protocol form for consistency (see Appendix A for

Interview Protocol). In addition to interviews, the collection of appropriate artifacts in conjunction with a document collection protocol sheet was also used (see Appendix B for Document Collection Protocol). Interviewees were invited to participate through an email invitation sent to their Rowan University email account (see Appendix C for Invitation to Participate email). Once selected, participants signed two forms and included a Key Information and Consent to Take Part in a Research Study (see Appendix D for Key Information and Consent to Take Part in a Research Study Form) and Audio/Videotape Addendum to Consent Form (see Appendix E for Audio/Videotape Addendum to Consent Form). Finally, I gave key personnel the opportunity to review interview transcripts and draft case study for feedback and to ensure authenticity. External validity includes the use of theory and Yin (2014) further suggests this is the most appropriate opportunity to speak to generalizability. Chapter two focused on academic advising and career services research and reflected a limited amount of career-advising research. Thus, the use of theoretical findings of the research is specific to the university studied and not applicable to other institutions where advising models may differ.

Finally, reliability testing reflects the ability to repeat the study and find consistent outcomes. The organization of data collection was through the development of my protocol sheets for consistency and documentation purposes (Rossman & Rallis, 2012 and Rubin & Rubin, 2016). This included both interview and document collection protocols. Interviews were transcribed using computer software and pattern coding to seek themes. A case study database was also development for organization and categorization purposes. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further speak to reliability and validity with the ethics of the research and share "it is the training, experience, and “intellectual rigor” of the researcher, then that determines the credibility or a qualitative research study” (p. 260).

Conclusion

Using a single case study as the research methodology, my study sought to understand the current career-advising practices and limitations currently employed by undergraduate, primary role academic advisors, housed under University Advising Services at the Rowan University main campus in Glassboro, New Jersey. To conduct this study, I posed research questions within this chapter. Additionally, the description of how my study was conducted; including protocols, semi-structured interviews, and participant-observations were shared. Data analysis was also included. Finally, potential limitations and biases were identified and addressed.

Chapter 4

Findings

My study pursued understanding and examination of the career-advising practices employed by full-time, primary role, undergraduate academic advisors at Rowan University, Glassboro campus. Defined as "helping students understand how their academic and personal interests, abilities and values might relate to the career field they are considering and how to form their academic a career goals accordingly" (Gordon, 2005, p.1), past research on career-advising has typically been focused on the exploratory or undeclared student population. This study focused on the primary role advisor's work with both the Exploratory population and those students already declared in academic majors.

I developed four specific research questions to guide this study. The research questions included:

Research Question #1: How do primary role academic advisors of undergraduate students employed at Rowan University define the term "career-advising" as it relates to their individual advising practice?

Research Question #2: How do primary role academic advisors describe their current career-advising practices?

a. What tools do they use?

   b. How do they use those tools within individual advising sessions?

Research Question #3: For what purposes do primary role academic advisors refer or connect students with the Office of Career Advancement?

Research Question #4: What challenges in career-related services are perceived by the primary role academic advisor as they work with their assigned caseloads?

After analyzing the collected data, five overarching themes emerged. These included a cohesive definition of career-advising, understanding of the career-advising practices advisors, tools used in career-advising, career-related referrals, and advisor-perceived gaps in under graduate, career-related services at the Rowan University main campus. In addition to the major findings of the study, this chapter included detailed information regarding participant responses obtained from the semi-structured qualitative interviews. The use of pseudonyms was applied to maintain advisor anonymity.

Career-Advising Defined and Enacted

All the advisors I interviewed initially offered similar definitions of the term career-advising. Generally described as linking academic programming to career opportunities, advisors further described career-advising as providing students with an unbiased ear to ask questions and receive the accurate information necessary to make informed decisions on a future career path. Advisors accomplish this by using the resources and knowledge made available to them.

Often referred to as being a process of mining for current understanding, advisors further defined the career-advising process as being one where they would tunnel below surface-level career-based understanding of the student by asking intentional questions to measure current knowledge, meeting the student where they are, and guiding the student through providing accurate information, resources, and referrals. The ideal career-advising conduit was further described as the creation of a link between academic programs with potential careers. This was obtained by focusing on course exploration, determining student understanding, and career knowledge. Knowing that students, regardless of entering under a declared major or as an Exploratory student typically had very little knowledge of careers, advisors defined career-advising as linking academic programs to career titles. Exploratory advisors focused on making course exploration connections. Embedded advisors focused on student understanding. All advisors, regardless of student population developed career-specific connections, and dispelled career-based myths.

Linking academic programs to career titles. Career-advising was defined by all the advisors I had interviewed as a need to create a connection for students by linking an academic discipline to potential career paths. Through my interviews, I learned that advisors felt most students enter college with a limited or inaccurate understanding of career fields and academic program requirements. Carol, an embedded academic advisor shared “Even though they have declared a major, they're truly undecided. When I ask them what they plan on doing with their degree, they really don't know” (January 15, 2020). Jane, an embedded advisor shared:

> Career advising to me means making sure that I'm bridging together the academics to ensure that they're on path to get their degree, but they're also being very intentional with what they're doing and the choices they're making throughout that time so they can get a career when they graduate or begin a career (January 14, 2020).

This aligned with Frank’s response, an advisor working with Exploratory students. Frank shared “I’m helping these students figure things out. These are really big decisions in their lives so it’s important to have someone who’s unbiased give them accurate information" (February 3, 2020). As I moved through my interviews, I realized all advisors had similar definitions, regardless if the advisor worked with declared majors or if they worked with Exploratory students as all focused on helping the student make decisions regarding a future career path.

> Jamie, an embedded advisor shared: Career-advising to me means that I am giving students the information they need to learn more about themselves and the world. Traditional-age students usually don't have clear views on the world of work so I see it as being the job of the advisor to provide students with the information in a way that makes sense to them so they can make those decisions. Then, it's guiding them through the process to make sure they have the right courses and plan of action to make that end goal become their reality (January 27, 2020).

Regardless of the student population the advisor worked with, all advisors provided similar definitions with helping students make career-based decisions throughout their time at the University.

Exploratory advisors focus on making course exploration connections. Although all the advisors I interviewed provided similar definitions of career-advising, those advisors working specifically with the Exploratory students felt they did not actively apply career-advising, as they had defined it within their typical, daily practice. As they elaborated, advisors working with Exploratory students clarified they do actively apply a form of career-advising that looks different from those embedded advisors working with declared students. Tina, an advisor working with the Exploratory population shared: "I wish I could get to the career-advising piece but, our main priority is to get them into certain classes. I give them a list of majors to get them to start thinking and then I'll refer them to the OCA (Office of Career Advancement)" (January 16, 2020). This was a similar view expressed by Ellie, also an advisor working with Exploratory students who shared:

> Most of my time is just trying to find them classes. If they have an idea of something, this helps but I just try to get them classes they are interested in and hope this will help get them thinking and making some decisions (January 7, 2020).

Thus, while the advisors working with Exploratory students readily gave comparable definitions of career-advising as those advisors working with declared students, all the advisors working with Exploratory students shared a common view of their focus being on immediate needs of course registration and basic exploration of academic programs.

Amy, an advisor working with Exploratory students first shared with me that career-advising was not something she did in her advising appointments. "So much of my time and energy with students is focused on what's going on right now, and having them just figure out what class they most enjoy" (Amy, January 14, 2020). However, as the interview progressed, she returned to the question, stating:

> I guess I do actually do career-advising with the students but it looks different here. Since they don't know what they want, it's really more about figuring out interests and getting them to a path where they can explore more. These students have their interests but they haven't committed to a major so my job is to really help them make that connection and, to me that's career-advising (Amy, January 14, 2020).

Amy's reflection provided some additional insight to the differences between the initial career-advising definition and the actual career-advising practices employed by those advisors working with Exploratory students. All the advisors working with the Exploratory population shared how their daily advising practices did not match the career-advising definition they had first provided, yet all were actively applying career-advising with their student caseloads.

Those advisors working with Exploratory students interpreted the work as being basic, everyday advising responsibilities. However, the intentional use of course descriptions to determine interests, discussions about various academic programs, and referrals to the Office of Career Advancement all reflected a high level of career exploration employed daily by Exploratory advisors.

Embedded advisors focus on student understanding and developing career-specific connections. When conducting my interviews, it became apparent there was a common view held by embedded advisors that when a student declares an academic major, the student has made a conscious decision to pursue the chosen academic program. As Dottie, an embedded advisor shared "I figure, they wouldn't be in this major if they weren't interested so I work off that assumption, that students want to be here, they have that basic interest that got them to me" (January 13, 2020). Jane, another embedded advisor stated "I always work from the mindset that the student is in my program because they at least have an interest in working with people. It's my job to help them refine that interest by answering questions and making referrals" (January 14, 2020). This reflects the advisor's assumption on how the student has some desired interest in the academic program and career field.

Further, all embedded advisors readily shared how it is the advisor’s responsibility to uncover what the student knows about the major and to provide information to ensure the student can make well-informed career decisions. My findings with embedded advisors reflected a much different approach to career-advising when compared to the advisors working with Exploratory students. Since embedded advisors assume the student has an interest in a specific academic program, career-advising, at this level, focuses on student understanding of the program and connection to future career paths. Jack, another embedded advisor reflected:

> The advisor’s job is to assess, based on learning experience. I need to be able to help the student understand the options that are available and if they do have a specific career in mind, which major has lent the most success in getting to that career. Then there’s getting students to the next level. I ask what experiences do you have at this level? It’s making sure that this area is the best fit for their talents by being able to maximize themselves. I want them to see their own strengths so we can identify weaknesses and we can make sure that we're aware of them (January 7, 2020).

Jamie, an embedded advisor also shared:

> It’s taking a high school student or a transfer student, and having them grow their passion for their field. Whether or not they decide that that is the passion that they want to follow, my role is to get them to where they want to be (January 27, 2020).

This suggests the advisor’s self-described responsibility is to support students and through helping them to explore and move forward with their interests.

All embedded advisors I had interviewed reflected ownership of career-advising as an integrated and natural functionality within the advising role. Further, embedded advisors viewed career-advising as being a responsibility within their daily advising activities to help students navigate the career decision-making path.

Advisors dispel career-based myths. My data revealed that advisors held a common view that students tended to enter college with a limited lens of the work world and tended to select an academic program with little or no prior, personal research or direct work experience. As part of the career-advising process, advisors felt first they needed to uncover the student's level of understanding and dispel the career-based myths students have. Embedded advisors working with students in a major noted how many students could provide an occupational title for what they wanted to do, but were unable to define it or list the required responsibilities of the actual role.

The need to uncover the student's knowledge of career titles as part of the career-advising process was a consistent theme drawn from my data. All advisors regardless of the student population held similar views. Tina, an advisor working with the Exploratory student population reflected:

> The practice of career advising comes up every day with the Exploratory Studies students. Because so many will come in and will say well I'm not really sure what I want to do or I want to... one of my favorite ones is the coveted, I want to do Business. And I will say, Well, what does Business mean to you? Everything's a business. This is a business, you could work here at Rowan. What do you mean by Business? So, I think a lot of them just have those ideas of, I should do this or

I've heard of this or my friend does that or my parents said I should do that (January 16, 2020).

Jane, an embedded advisor stated:

> But I think parents also have a big involvement in what they're deciding to go into. I hear this every day…."Well, my family are all accountants. So, it was just the natural thing to go into." I think a lot of business students go follow that path because of family pressures (January 14, 2020).

My findings reflected how advisors viewed students as often having a lack of career knowledge and, the knowledge they entered the University with was often the result of family or friend influences, but rarely based on personal research or experience conducted by the student. This knowledge was oftentimes inaccurate or sensationalized by the media. Thus, advisors defined career-advising as a process to understand that most students are truly undecided and the advisor's role is to assess the student's current level of understanding as a starting point. From there, advisors will offer additional resources, correct misinformation, and make referrals to help create a bridge to understanding career-based information.

Why Advisors Advise

All the advisors I interviewed shared how their personal and professional journeys led them on a path to a career as a primary role academic advisor. Two themes emerged from these findings of why advisors advise. The first included how the advisor's personal academic experience or previous work experience informs their practice. The second was the strong connection with other advisors as part of an informal advisor network reflecting a deep camaraderie among advisors across campus and readily shared support and resources. Together, these themes reflect not only how positive or negative past academic experiences led the advisor to the advising profession, but how the desire to help others along working in a positive and supportive environment hold great impact for why advisors advise.

Professional and personal backgrounds lead to advising field. When conducting interviews for this study, I found great consistency with advisor academic backgrounds as reflected in Table 1. All Senior Academic Advisors and several Assistant Academic Advisors had completed a Master Degree in either Higher Education Administration, School Counseling, or a related discipline. This was consistent with the requirements listed in the University Advising Services Senior and Assistant Academic Advisor position descriptions. However, the professional backgrounds advisors varied prior to working in their current role. Some advisors shared prior experience in a corporate environment and others had only experienced working in a higher education setting. Table 1 reflects the advising population, if they had previous work experience outside of higher education, if they worked at another institution prior to Rowan University, advisor title, and education levels of the advisors.

Table 1

Participant Information

Advisor's Name (pseudonym)	Embedded or Exploratory Advising	Previous work experience outside of higher education	Previous experience in higher education in different institution	Senior /Assistant Advisor	Holds Master Degree
Burt	Embedded	No	Yes	Senior	Yes
Jane	Embedded	Yes	Yes	Senior	Yes
Dottie	Embedded	Yes	No	Senior	Yes
Jamie	Embedded	Yes	Yes	Senior	Yes
Betty	Embedded	Yes	Yes	Senior	Yes
Carol	Embedded	Yes	No	Senior	Yes
Tammy	Embedded	No	Yes	Senior	Yes
Jack	Embedded	Yes	Yes	Assistant	No
Ellie	Exploratory	No	No	Senior	Yes
Frank	Exploratory	Yes	Yes	Senior	Yes
Tina	Exploratory	No	No	Assistant	Yes
Amy	Exploratory	Yes	No	Assistant	No

Personal academic advising experience leads to advising career. Regardless of type of prior experience, all advisors interviewed for this study shared with me how their personal experiences in higher education along with their professional experiences are what led them to enter the advising profession. Jane, an embedded, senior academic advisor stated:

> I don't feel like I had, for myself, a lot of career guidance along the way. I feel like that guides how I work with students now because I really try to instill, and encourage them to make use of the resources that we have and to really try to develop their professional skills so they have a clear path of what they're going to

> do and they're not here just spinning their wheels, wasting time and money (January 14, 2020).

Tina, an Assistant Advisor, working with Exploratory students shared similar reasons and stated:

> I had horrible advising when I was in college and wound up self-advising for most of the time I was there. I don't want to see other students have that experience because it cost me time and money. I wound up staying there an extra semester and felt like there was just nobody to help me. This is why I became an advisor, I want to make sure students get the help (January 16, 2020).

Carol, an embedded senior advisor also shared similar experiences and reflected:

> I felt that the advising that I received as an undergraduate student was lacking. It was not as holistic, it was very much major specific and one of the reasons I wanted to become an advisor. I just think there's so much more I can do to help my students (January 15, 2020).

Most of the advisors I interviewed shared a negative, personal advising experience. This prompted them to pursue advising in higher education as a career. Although not all advisors shared negative experiences, all reflected upon how either a positive or a negative relationship with an advisor during their college experience formed the basis for why they chose to enter the advising profession.

Professional experiences drive advising practice. Where most of those I interviewed did not initially set out to become a primary role academic advisor as a career choice, many stated previous professional experience led them to the field. Burt, a senior, embedded academic advisor shared:

> I think both my academic and professional experience looped together for what I do as an academic advisor, because I have a liberal arts background, which is the programs that I advise. I know the uncertainty that they have about whether or not their major is going to be profitable or employable. I've experienced that doubt myself. So, I think that because I had such good advising in college, I have learned the art of patience and really asking people questions about what they want outside of just a job (January 8, 2020).

Jack, an embedded, assistant academic advisor stated:

> I went to school for communications. I always thought I'd be on ESPN or be a journalist on NBC news, learned very quickly that demand of that type wasn't with my goals but, I had more effect with students and with being a mentor. I used to work in the world of sales and I talked with people every day. So that migrated very easily into this field and it's much more rewarding. I'm going to do something to really help somebody else (January 7, 2020).

Amy shared:

> I worked for four and a half years for another department. So advising was not my first higher ed experience. When I was in my previous position, I was not necessarily getting bored with it, but I was looking for a new challenge. I wanted to use that experience to get more involved in ways that facilitated more interaction with students with a closer relationship with students (January 14, 2020).

Thus, the previous professional experiences outside of higher education are what led these individuals into academic advising as a career. However, the advisors I interviewed also shared how this previous experience has helped to inform their practice with students.

Resources, Support, and Connection

As advisors shared their individual backgrounds, it became apparent that much of their experience drives their work in academic advising, and since the advisors shared with me how there is currently no formalized career-advising program training offered on campus, many advisors tend to rely on an informal, University Advising Services, advisor network for assistance. As University Advising Services has grown over time, the advisors have developed a camaraderie from working together on projects, professional development activities, committees and more. As the friendships have evolved, so has the connection with each other over regularly scheduled happy hours and lunchtime meetings. One of the benefits to this relationship building has been the word of mouth assistance, relying on each other for informal onboarding of new advisors, sharing of resources, and providing helpful feedback. Dottie, an embedded advisor shared:

> When I started, I went through the advisor training program but, once I became embedded into the department I had to figure things out on my own. I had to learn things on my own and that meant learning how faculty did things and who to go to. But, I also go through our UAS network of advisors. They are the biggest help to me because I can ask them what they do and use their ideas or contacts to steer my own practice with my students (January 13, 2020).

Ellie, an advisor working with the Exploratory students stated:

> I don’t have a career background, but I wish I had one. I could take a course in career counseling, but within advising, much of what we do is learned over time. I

> pull from my counseling background but career-advising is not something you can really learn from a book, it takes time. Each school is different so it's learning the network of the whos' and wheres' to refer to (January 7, 2020).

Tina also shared: "I don't know what I would have done without the other advisors helping me. From the time I started, they've been a great support and I rely on them all the time for help" (January 16, 2020). Thus, the findings suggest a strong fellowship and an informal, internal support structure within the University Advising Services department. It was clear that advisors use the partnership they develop with other advisors regularly for assistance and ongoing feedback.

Advisors also shared formalized support in the form of professional development opportunities, training, and team meetings. Additionally, all primary role advisors are members of NACADA (National Academic Advising Association). As Amy, an advisor working with Exploratory students shared: "I really like our PD sessions and think they are helpful. I also like being a member of NACADA and attending the conferences. I enjoy that network and learn so much from the workshops and sharing opportunities" (January 14, 2020). Jack, an embedded advisor agreed with Amy and shared:

> I enjoy our professional development opportunities. The PD sessions we go to are helpful but usually to see the other advisors, not so much for the information itself. I also enjoy being a part of NACADA. I get much more out of that network with the website resources and drive-in conferences (January 7, 2020).

Many of the advisors I interviewed shared how their involvement or attendance with formalized training provided opportunities for learning. However, all advisors shared a positive experience with the informal network.

Incorporating Advising Tools and Techniques

When I asked about the tools and techniques advisors use with their students, all shared their personalized career-advising toolbox. These toolboxes included individualized resources added or modified overtime and often through independent research. Resources included both printed and online professional associations, job search websites, posters for upcoming club or group activities, and more. Additionally, all advisor toolboxes included offices and departments for making student referrals. While each advisor had, individualized resources based on the department or academic program they advised, there was also great consistency with many of the same tools and resources shared, regardless if the advisor was embedded in an academic department or working with Exploratory students. Table 2 reflects the various resources used by participants.

Table 2

Participant Resources

Advisor Name (pseudonym)	Embedded or Exploratory Advising	FOCUS 2 Intensive Student Referrals	FOCUS 2 Limited Student Referrals	Online Resources	On-Campus Department or College Resources
Dottie	Embedded	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Carol	Embedded	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Burt	Embedded	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Jane	Embedded	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jamie	Embedded	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Jack	Embedded	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Betty	Embedded	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tammy	Embedded	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Amy	Exploratory	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ellie	Exploratory	No	Yes	Yes	No
Tina	Exploratory	No	Yes	Yes	No
Frank	Exploratory	Yes	No	Yes	No

All advisors shared how they typically used the printed advertisements to help remind themselves to promote different opportunities for students. However, all advisors, as reflected in Table 2 also reported using online resources as these are easier to share with students and tend to update more frequently. The FOCUS 2 system is one of the provided online systems that all advisors are expected to use and an overview of the system is provided during the advisor onboarding process. Table 2 reflects either an intensive or a limited use of FOCUS 2. However, although all advisors shared use of the system with students in some capacity, there was great variation in both how the system is used and knowledge of the advisor with the system.

Individualized career-advising toolboxes. All advisors I interviewed shared resources and tools which included referrals to specific offices and campus departments, personal connections with local employers, and website resources. Having the advisors share their most commonly used career-advising tools reflected the high individuality and autonomy advisors have within their respective advising roles.

Jack, an embedded advisor, stated:

> I use the Bureau of Labor Statistics, our website, alumni network, etc. I'll look it up with them. I also use our website and our Communications and alumni network. Alumni also has workshops and resources and so they give some really good information" (January 7, 2020).

Dottie, an embedded advisor shared:

> I just Google it and look with them to figure out what a job title includes, how much money they make, or whatever else the student asks. I also refer to the Department Chairs because they know so much about the fields and can give the student some perspective to chew on" (January 13, 2020).

The websites and referrals shared varied greatly due to the student population advised. However, there was consistency in general with use of online tools and resources. Much of what the advisor used reflected the individual advisor's comfort level and personal research or knowledge of the online tool.

Many advisors also shared the same list of all Rowan University academic majors. This was most often used by the advisors working with the Exploratory students but also used by embedded advisors with students considering changing programs. In each case, the advisor would have the student view the list and cross off those programs they would not consider. As Dottie, an embedded advisor further shared:

> There's no theory or practice behind this, but I just take the list of programs. I explain to the student. Look at all of the programs and start crossing out the types of programs that you just don't need like, "Absolutely not, I am not a science person." You know that. Because once you start narrowing down on things that you do like and those absolutely not for you, you can look at what the potential options that could be, that you wouldn't have otherwise considered (January 23, 2020).

Tina, an advisor working with Exploratory students stated:

> I use the list of majors with students. If they cross out the ones that they don't like then it makes it more manageable. Now you don't have 150 majors to choose from. You maybe only have 20 majors. I would also use that technique a lot with the students who are in a major or changing out of it because a lot of the students who come through here are changing a major (January 16, 2020).

There was great consistency by most of the of the advisors with using the list of academic programs along with the process of having the student cross off the one where there was no interest. All advisors reported using this list in some capacity as it is the one repository where all academic program titles are located and easily accessible to the advisor for to use with their students.

Advertisements serve as reminders. When observing the offices of the advisors I had interviewed, various advertisements and posters were easily visible in most offices and often included both academic registration information and career fair advertisements.

When I raised the question about the advertisements or other handouts, all advisors reported the advertisements served as visual reminders to mention the information.

Both advising centers had waiting areas with multiple displays. The University Advising Center had a large display of academic program brochures, FOCUS 2 directions, upcoming career fairs and speaker series, and business cards for all UAS advisors. This information was easily viewable to anyone sitting in the waiting area. In the College of Education Advising Center, a large television rotated screens of upcoming speakers and advertised benchmark due dates for required paperwork or testing. A dry-erase board also hosted registration-related information along with a current teaching opportunity in a local school district. For those embedded advisors, academic departments also had designated waiting areas that also included career-related information but also housed speaker handouts or college-specific events and activities.

Online resources in advising toolboxes. When questioned specifically about career-related advertisements and resources, many of the embedded advisors shared how most of what they use consists of online resources. While all advisors mentioned some level of use with FOCUS 2, other resources were specific to the individual college or program. This included websites of professional associations, guest speaker series, academic clubs and activities. Regardless of the websites used, all advisors shared with me that they regularly promote online resources with their students as these resources are easy to locate, be emailed to students, and are typically updated faster than printed materials. Table 2 reflects the unanimous usage of online resources. Burt, an embedded advisor shared:

> Since they already have a vague idea of what they want, I use CareerShift. And you know, there's certain websites for job search that really speak to the students I advise. I always encourage them to check out whatever professional association is associated with their major, or what they want to do (January 8, 2020).

Jamie, an embedded advisor also stated:

> I have a cut and paste that I put on their RSN note. That says where to go for more information on careers. I'll also provide a link to the professional associations for them to look at that. I think it's important for them to look at some of the what to do with a major, and I use myplan.com and Occupational Outlook Handbook a lot (January 27, 2020).

Regardless of the website, there was a comfort level with regular use of specific resources shared by all the advisors I interviewed. It also became apparent through my interviews that since there is currently no formal career-advising training program for advisors, there is also no current career-advising library of resources available to University Advising Services. Advisors must conduct online research or ask to share with other advisors the resources that work best for them. Although I did notice a few resources repeated by different advisors, no pattern of usage emerged, which likely accounts for the wide variability of resources used by individual advisors and presents a need for the internal communication network created by advisors.

Inconsistent Advisor Use of the FOCUS 2 System

FOCUS 2 is an online career assessment/research software platform, leased by the University and provided free for student use. As Rowan University's primary career-assessment tool, interviews reflected how advisors typically learn about the system during initial onboarding advisor training. However, unless the advisor seeks out additional training, none is typically provided. While all advisors used the FOCUS 2 system with students in some capacity, use greatly depended on the individual advisor's personal toolbox concerning both the knowledge of and comfort level with using additional resources and tools. As reflected in Table 2, embedded advisors used the FOCUS2 system more intensively than Exploratory advisors. Some advisors, regardless of being a senior or assistant academic advisor, had a deeper understanding and experience level of the FOCUS 2 system and, as they discussed their use of the system, made it clear they had an in-depth knowledge of not only the system but how to interpret the results to their students. Other advisors shared less knowledge and understanding of the system and provided a surface level of understanding.

Intensive knowledge of FOCUS 2. Although all advisors reported using the FOCUS 2 system in some manner with students, some advisors reported having significant knowledge of the system and use it with students regularly. This is reflected in Table 2. Carol, an embedded advisor shared: "I just love FOCUS 2, but in addition to FOCUS 2, I asked them to bring me the results, because when students look at these results, they just don't understand what they're looking at, and I can help them with that (January 15, 2020). Amy shared a similar approach to Carol's with "I try not to say, you should take the FOCUS 2, and send them on their way. I try to have them take it, and schedule a follow-up where we can review the results together" (January 14, 2020). For the advisors that used an intrusive approach the FOCUS 2, students were asked to return for an additional appointment to discuss the findings. However, a few of those advisors reported that oftentimes, the student did not return for that follow-up appointment.

Limited knowledge of FOCUS 2. Other advisors felt more comfortable giving the FOCUS 2 information without scheduled follow-up. Ellie also shared, “I always mentioned doing the Focus 2 and then taking those results to the Office of Career Advancement” (January 7, 2020). Dottie, an embedded advisor shared:

> I don’t really understand FOCUS 2. I give the handout to students and tell them to talk with the OCA if needed, but it’s been so long since I’ve used it myself. I really don’t even know what it can do” (January 13, 2020).

Amy, an advisor working with Exploratory students reflected “I just give them the handout for FOCUS 2, but if they ask questions I have to refer them to the Office of Career Advancement because I really don’t know much about it” (January 14, 2020). While it should be noted that all advisors reported knowing that FOUCS 2 was a career assessment instrument and all shared having either handouts or FOCUS 2 flyers on display in their offices, some of the advisors reported having very little knowledge, training, or comfort with the system.

Advisor Referrals for Career Readiness

One of the interview questions I had posed to advisors included when and for what purpose were referrals made to the Office of Career Advancement. Although all advisors reported regularly making referrals to this department, embedded advisors first referred students to individual department faculty members or college-specific career-based resources prior to making referrals to the Office of Career Advancement. This differed greatly from the advisors working with Exploratory students as those advisors first referred students to the Office of Career Advancement. Table 2 reflects the advisor’s access to department or college-specific resources. Additionally, embedded advisors, most often made referrals, regardless if in the academic department, college or Office of Career Advancement to a specific individual. This was typically based on the advisor's professional or personal connection to that individual or having direct knowledge of the individual's skillset. This also differed from the advisors working with the Exploratory students as referrals by these advisors were most often made as a general referral to the Office of Career Advancement front desk.

All advisors, regardless of those embedded or working with Exploratory students reported a unanimous, positive response with the Office of Career Advancement career events. When observing the offices of those advisors I had interviewed, all advisors had posters or other advertisement on display. Advisors regularly and heavily promote these events with their students and many attend the events themselves.

Exploratory advisors make referrals for general career exploration. Referrals by advisors working with Exploratory students to the Office of Career Advancement were most often made for general career exploration or to discuss FOCUS 2 results. Rarely, were referrals made for resume development or critiques, mock interviews, or employer visitations. While this was likely due to most Exploratory students typically not yet decided upon an academic discipline, referrals were infrequently made to a specific staff member and most students were provided with the main phone number or general email address for the Office of Career Advancement. Since both departments are in the same building, some of the advisors shared they often walk with the student to the Office of Career Advancement reception desk to make a formal introduction. Tina, an advisor working with Exploratory students shared: "Usually I offer to walk them there" (January 16, 2020). Ellie, an advisor working with Exploratory students stated: "I just walk them down to the front desk and make the introduction. I find this is much easier for the student and I know they actually made an appointment" (January 7, 2020). Tina, an advisor working with Exploratory students shared:

> If a student is just lost or if they were in a major and now are unsure because they had always wanted to do one thing but they can't or no longer want to, I send them right down to the OCA" (January 16, 2020).

Thus, advisors working with Exploratory students tend to make referrals to the Office of Career Advancement for general career exploration needs and infrequently for specific career information or career-related document preparation.

Embedded advisors make referrals to address specific services. Referrals made by embedded advisors were most often made to the Office of Career Advancement for specific reasons including: resume critiques, mock interviews, or employer visitations. However, if services were available within the advisor's college or academic department, especially with internships or faculty mentors, many of the embedded advisors preferred to use college-based resources. As Dottie, an embedded advisor shared: "I definitely rely a lot on the program coordinators and the instructors teaching the courses because I'm not the one that's out there in the field" (January 13, 2020). Frank, another embedded advisor shared: "I usually refer my students to specific faculty because they know the field better than anyone and can answer those type of questions" (February 3, 2020). Most embedded advisors reported feeling a closer connection to the faculty and academic department, which reflected having developed professional connections within the department and a deep understanding of department and college resources.

Additionally, most embedded advisors shared how they typically preferred to make referrals to specific individuals within the Office of Career Advancement rather than general referrals made to the office. As Burt, an embedded advisor stated:

> If I have a student that I know is really interested in say, Urban Planning, I can connect them to a specific career counselor in the OCA because I know one of the counselors was an Urban Planner in her former life and can better help my student with his resume. I know these people, which I think is helpful. I don't know how many other advisors know about individual staff over there, especially the newer advisors. I know who to call on because I have that connection (January 8, 2020).

Further, Carol, an embedded advisor shared:

> I usually make referrals within my department as we have a great internship program coordinator here. However, there are times when I will refer my students to the OCA because he doesn't want to write resumes. When students don't have a resume or really just have no clue how to get started with the process, I refer to "Jane" in the OCA because I know she will be the most helpful and understands my student needs best.

Jamie, an embedded advisor also reflected:

> You don't practice on an employer, you practice on a career counselor. I talk about the OCA all the time but I refer people to specific people. I'll give them an individual that they should make an appointment with because the OCA staff all have specific areas of expertise and I like to make sure my students get to the person I trust to give them the best help. (January 27, 2020).

Regardless of the type of referral made, it became clear from the research how an embedded advisor's knowledge and informal network connections with individual employees influenced the type of referral made. This is likely the result of numerous factors including the experience, personal knowledge, and relationships advisors have with the faculty, staff, and other advisors within and outside the academic department. This finding was for all embedded advisors, regardless if they were a senior or assistant academic advisor.

Advisors rely on Office of Career Advancement events for career readiness. Regardless of academic programs and services offered within a college or department, embedded advisors and advisors working with Exploratory students alike all suggest students prepare for and attend the career fairs hosted by the Office of Career Advancement. Jamie, an embedded advisor stated: "I talk about career fairs and career events and I'll send them emails with reminders" (January 27, 2020).

Additionally, all advisors, regardless of location or student caseload assisted with promoting the Office of Career Advancement career events. Many advisors sent emails but also advertised with posters on office doors. As Amy, an advisor working with Exploratory students shared: "I do try to promote the Office of Career Advancement events. I keep the advertisements on my office door" (January 14, 2020). Burt, an embedded advisor shared: "I always tell my students they should use the Office of Career Advancement for all the job fairs" (January 8, 2020). Dottie, another embedded advisor stated: "The OCA career center is doing so many fantastic things with their events. There's so many resources over there that no student on this campus should pass on them" (January 13, 2020). All advisors I had interviewed unanimously reflected this strong and positive sentiment. Regardless of the knowledge or personal connections with the staff in the Office of Career Advancement, it was clear that advisors were well informed and regularly promoted the events hosted by this department. Many also shared that they regularly attend these events themselves.

Career-Advising Challenges

All the advisors I interviewed clearly expressed high levels of passion and devotion to the students they serve. However, they also readily shared some of the frustrations they experience within their work. Perhaps the greatest source of frustration was the limited time advisors felt they had when it came to meaningful career-advising conversations. This was most often due to needing to balance large caseloads and other work responsibilities. The lack of time coupled with differing views on student follow-up. Where time was once again reported as a reason some advisors did not follow-up with their students, results of the data varied with the advisor's view on if it is the advisor's or student's responsibility to take the lead to follow-up on referrals.

Students lacking motivation was another source of frustration shared by advisors. However, while advisors all advisors readily agreed, all advisors also shared it was one of the primary reasons they enjoyed their work. Some advisors further shared that student lack of motivation for one student to lose focus may be the same reason; in a different context that motivates another student. Using Marcia's Identify Formation concept (Marcia & Marcia, 1966) to help frame this question, many of the advisors shared they felt it was during the junior year when students began to make firm career-based decisions. This was reported as a critical time by advisors as a delay to making career-based decisions at this point could delay graduation.

Finally, the lack of consistent career-based services available to students was a source of frustration to some advisors. With two of the seven colleges on the main campus now having independent career services departments, there is concern by many of the advisors with a perceived inequity. For those advisors embedded in departments and with one of those college-based career centers, the additional services were viewed as a benefit. However, to those advisors without the additional services, it is viewed as a being a disadvantage to the student populations they serve.

Lack of time limits career conversations. Nearly all the advisors I interviewed expressed some level of frustration with the limited time they have when meeting with students. Regardless of the student population they worked with, advisors shared how there was never enough time for true, career-based discussions. Dottie, an embedded advisor reflected “It's just because I don't have the time. I have to rely on the student to take my suggestion and follow through and I wish there was just more time to have those meaningful, career conversations” (January 13, 2020). Additionally, Burt, an embedded advisor further explained, “I wish there was enough hours in the day to have an hour with everyone, and I actually think the students would want an hour” (January 8, 2020). Amy, an advisor working with Exploratory students also shared:

> So much in my time and energy with students is focused on what's going on right now, and having them just figure out what class they most enjoyed in the last year. And then trying out a new major, we really don't get to the career discussion. Sometimes we do, but we really don't get to the point of you're interested in this major and these are all the different avenues that you can do with it. I wish I had more time to explore with the students I see (January 14, 2020).

Lack of time to provide career-advising was a sentiment shared by nearly every one of the advisors I had interviewed, regardless of embedded or working with Exploratory students. While advising appointment time slots averaged 30 minutes for most advisors, some advisors shared they will schedule a longer time slot if working with a student with specific needs or interests that require a longer appointment time. However, many of the advisors also shared that offering a longer appointment time was not a commonly used approach as large caseloads and other work responsibilities limited flexibility.

Views on student follow-up lead to frustration. All advisors I interviewed for this study readily agreed student follow-up with referrals was important, and most identified this as a source of frustration. Advisor responses also varied concerning responsibility. While some reported individual methods in place to ensure they follow-up with their student caseloads, others felt this was the student's responsibility. Yet other advisors shared they wanted to follow-up but did not simply due to time constraints. However, all advisors, regardless if embedded in an academic department or working with Exploratory students shared a wish to have more meaningful conversations with their students. The lack of follow-up on referrals was mostly due to time constraints and not for lack of wanting to assist their students.

Dottie, an embedded advisor stated:

> Because I know that I'm not going to be able to follow up on it, I leave the referral open-ended for the student for a reason. I will tell them, there's these things out here that you need that are on you to go and explore. It's almost like I put that weight on the student and it's up to them to take me up on it or not (January 13, 2020).

Frank, an embedded advisor had a similar approach and shared “I am not following up with them. I am recommending that they follow up with me” (January 13, 2020). Ellie, an advisor working with Exploratory students also shared “I would say I don't do a ton of follow up with the career center with the referrals that I’ve made but I do feel that scheduling the appointment for the OCA in my office with the student there makes it more likely that they will attend” (January 7, 2020). For many of the advisors, there was a view of accountability on the student that was required within the advising relationship. However, advisors readily acknowledged that students would not often follow the guidance on their own.

Some advisors held a very different view concerning student follow-up. Jack, an embedded advisor reported that he did extensive follow-up with his referrals and shared his specific process. Jack stated:

> I use post-it notes with my students and use those as reminders. I keep them on my desk. So I look at those at the end of the week to follow up. I follow up with the resources. I usually send them an email. Sometimes this happens before meetings where I see my colleagues and I’ll just ask them if so and so came to see them or made an appointment. Other times, I will email to see if they showed up. Little follow ups that I do to ensure the student has acted and followed up with what we discussed but also to make sure that they don’t have any lasting questions they forgot to ask or were afraid to ask (January 7, 2020).

Carol, an embedded advisor also stated:

> I'm not a big advocate of a lot of handholding, but I almost feel like, if it's not in the moment, they're not doing it. I wish sometimes I had more time and another

> computer in my office, so I could sit them down and say, "Hey, just started here. Do the first 15-minute assessment." So they can at least start to see what it is, and maybe be engaged enough that they'd like to continue it. I think it's hard. There is a gap in meeting the patterns of their behavior because they don't seem to want to go off and do something later. They want to do it now or never. I don't know how we meet that pattern of behavior, but that's the gap I see (January 15, 2020).

Most advisors shared they are consistent with their approach (to follow-up or not to follow-up) with all referrals and held strong views on whether it was the student's responsibility or the advisors to ensure the student has taken the steps suggested by the advisor.

Students' lack of motivation is a source of frustration. A consistent theme in my findings has been the advisor's perception of student motivation as it applies to career-advising. I found very little consistency among the advisors with why students lacked motivation. Many of the advisors shared how each student is an individual and arrives with their own situations and experiences. What may work as motivation to one student can slow another student's progress.

To address student motivation further, I had asked advisors when and how students tend to make career-based decisions as motivation may relate to timing and identity formation since traditional-age students often experience difficulty making career-based decisions. This question centered on Marcia's Identity Formation concept with focus on the developmental changes of identity status for traditional college-age students (Marcia & Marcia, 1966). Many of those I had interviewed shared how students tended to focus on making career decisions during the junior or senior year, which was consistent with Marcia's Identify Formation concept (Marcia & Marcia, 1966). Jane, an embedded advisor shared: "A lot of it, I feel like, is hitting junior, senior year because often that's when they have their first internship experience" (January 14, 2020). As Jack, an embedded advisor shared: "In this major, it generally happens in about junior year, when they really start to make some firm decisions" (January 7, 2020).

Embedded advisors often expressed frustration with those upper-level students lacking in motivation to make career-decisions as they can easily fall off course with their graduation date and need to remain in an undergraduate program longer than anticipated. However, advisors also realize there are often numerous reasons for a lack of motivation. Some of these may include needing to focus on work, family obligations, fear of making the wrong choice, or struggling academically. As Jack shared:

> Things happen, emergency, family passing away, not having daycare for their younger kids, spousal issues, so those are generally the things where students will step back and you won't be able to reach or contact the student so those are the ones that tend to fall through the cracks because the communication stops or is lacking (January 7, 2020).

Carol, an embedded advisor also stated: "So while I recommend these tools and make these referrals, some students are just too busy to actually take action which is really frustrating to me but I keep trying" (January 15, 2020). Thus, advisors' express frustration by not being able to help students more.

Being frustrated with students lacking motivation was a consistent theme shared by all advisors interviewed for this study. However, nearly all advisors also shared that this is a primary reason why students need to meet regularly with an advisor and many shared that advising should be mandatory for all students.

Inconsistent career-based services are viewed as a barrier to some advisors. Another theme that emerged from my study was an identified lack of consistency in career services across the undergraduate, main campus. As shared earlier, the Office of Career Advancement is considered the centralized hub on campus for all career services. However, two of the seven colleges on campus now have dedicated career departments. As these two career departments are growing their services and offerings, those advisors working in colleges without these services have taken notice. Jamie, an embedded advisor in a college without a dedicated career department stated:

> I think that we have pockets of career assistance for students. Some departments do not have a dedicated career office and have to rely on the Office of Career Advancement. They are generalists and not experts in every field. I think that could be something that could be worked on. Because not every student is getting the same level of service (January 27, 2020).

Amy, an advisor working with Exploratory students shared similar thoughts as Jamie and stated "we really can't use those new career offices because our students are not in those programs, it's becoming a land of have and have nots and we can really only send to the OCA. They (OCA) do a great job, but it's limiting to students" (January 14, 2020).

While many embedded advisors typically had access to faculty and coordinators within their department, other advisors, both embedded and those working with Exploratory students in a center shared they did not. Betty, an embedded advisor not working in an academic department shared "I'm in a weird situation where I work with all different departments so I'm not really connected with any one department. I only feel like I should be referring to the OCA with my students" (February 4, 2020). While it should be noted that it is unknown if students outside of the college could use the college-specific services, the advisor's view infers they are not making referrals to any other resource other than the Office of Career Advancement and do not feel they are able to do so.

However, the advisors working in colleges with dedicated career services shared a different perspective. Burt, an embedded advisor with a college-dedicated, career department shared:

> I would say over the years the cracks in services have gotten smaller because it's never too late to go do an internship or an experience and with our new career center in our college, we've really kind of encouraged the internships and experiential learning piece from our new office and they are just getting started (January 8, 2020).

Carol, also an embedded advisor in the same college as Burt shared: "So now there's two layers of help and I can refer students to wherever will be the best fit, either to the Office of Career Advancement or to the new career-services department in my own college" (January 15, 2020). Thus, the advisors viewed career services in varied ways. Some saw this as a source of frustration if they were not able to access newer services or as an inequity to some student populations. Still other advisors were happy to have the additional services for their student populations.

While advisors had different options for student referrals depending on it their college hosted its own career services department, other advisors shared differences with faculty or other resources within their academic department. Dottie, an embedded advisor stated “I usually go to the faculty coordinators. They teach pre-professional courses so they are a great resource for students before they enter the field” (January 13, 2020). These thoughts were similar to Carol who also shared:

> Our internship coordinator gives them help with careers in a way that isn't captured at this time by the Office of Career Advancement. He has long-time, trusted, relationships with his employer contacts and, when students do well in their internships, they get jobs from that experience (January 15, 2020).

Both advisors shared they also made referrals to the Office of Career Advancement but typically relied on department-specific referrals before doing so.

Conclusion

The findings of this study included five themes. The first was an advisor-driven definition of career-advising. My findings revealed the term, career-advising, is similarly defined by all University Advising Services advisors as linking academic programs to career titles, dispelling any myths, and then assisting the student with making connections between the academic program and potential career paths. However, the process used by those advisors working with Exploratory students and those used by embedded advisors varied greatly. Where Exploratory advisors focused on course exploration connections, embedded advisors focused on student understanding and making career-specific connections.

The second theme of career-advising implementation practices reflected a strong connection between the advisor’s personal and professional experience, reflection why the advisors I had interviewed may have chosen to enter the advising vocation. However, most advisors do not enter the advising field with a formalized career training background and often rely on their own research or through personal connections made with other advisors and career-center personnel to obtain career-based information for their students.

The third theme, incorporating advising tools and techniques found large volume and variety with career tools and resources but no centralized depository on campus. All advisors reported creating and regularly using a personalized career-advising toolbox. Regardless of the office or department, advertisements for career-related events served as a reminder to advisors to help with promotion and researched, online resources were commonly used as tools to assist students. Referrals to internships, faculty, or other work-related experiences were also commonly made to help the student stretch and learn more about career interests. However, there was much inconsistency with the use of the FOCUS 2 system and much depended on the advisor's knowledge and comfort with the system.

The fourth theme found that advisors made referrals for career readiness based on advisor knowledge and available resources. Referrals were often made to specific individuals within the academic department or to other college-based career resources if the advisor was embedded. This differed from the advisors working with Exploratory students or those advisors outside an academic department where referrals were typically made directly to the Office of Career Advancement front desk. However, all advisors regularly made student referrals and heavily promoted the events of the Office of Career Advancement, relying upon this department for career readiness.

The fifth and final theme, were the career-advising challenges advisors encountered. Nearly all advisors reported a lack of time being a primary source of frustration due to large caseloads coupled with other work responsibilities. Students lacking motivation was another source of frustration but the reasons advisors shared regarding why students lack motivation varied considerably and many reflected that what may be a source for one student to lack motivation might be the same situation, in a different context, which motivates another student. While this was frustrating to advisors, many also shared it was a primary reason why they enjoy their work as each student has unique needs. Finally, I identified a lack of consistent, career-based services available to all students as a source of frustration with some advisors, viewed as an inequity to all students.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to examine and understand the current career-advising practices employed by primary role academic advisors at a mid-size, public research University. The findings revealed five specific themes. The first was an advisor-driven definition of career-advising. While a generalized definition was shared by all advisors and included linking academic programs to career titles, dispelling career myths, and assisting students with making connections between academic programs and potential career paths, the process employed by advisors differed greatly between the advisors working with Exploratory students and those used by embedded advisors. Exploratory advisors focused on making career exploration connections but embedded advisors focused on student understanding and making career-specific connections. The second theme of career-advising implementation practices reflected a strong association between the individual advisor's personal and professional experience. While the advisor's personal, academic experience attributed to what led advisor to the profession, most advisors lack a formal career training background and rely upon personal research and connections developed with other advisors and career personnel over time to obtain the career information they share with students.

The third theme focused on the advising tools and techniques primary role advisors incorporate into their personal career-advising toolbox. Where all advisors reported regularly using numerous different resources regularly, there was inconsistency with usage with no centralized career-resource depository on campus. The fourth theme found similar inconsistency with referrals made for career readiness across campus.

Referrals linked to specific individuals within the academic departments or to other college-based career resources by embedded advisors. However, student referrals for career services by those advisors working with Exploratory students were made most often as a general referral to the Office of Career Advancement. Regardless, all advisors regularly promoted and made referrals to the events hosted by the Office of Career Advancement and heavily rely upon this department for student support with career readiness assistance.

The fifth theme identified the career-advising challenges combatted by primary role advisors. A lack of time was identified as being a primary impediment by nearly all advisors interviewed. This was most often reported due to having large caseloads and other responsibilities. Students lacking motivation was another identified source of frustration. However, many advisors shared this lack of motivation was a primary reason for why they enjoy their work. Finally, a lack of consistency with the career-based services available to students was viewed as an inequity by advisors as some colleges have created additional career-related services and opportunities made available to students within specific major programs.

Discussion of Research Questions and Findings

Within this dissertation, Chapter Two reviewed the existing literature on the fields of academic advising and career services. Within that chapter, it was noted how limited career-advising literature currently exists and, what is available tends to focus on the undecided student population. Thus, this study, with results presented in Chapter Four, focused on the current career-advising practices of primary role academic advisors working with both Exploratory students and embedded advisors working with declared students. Within this chapter, the four research questions will be further reviewed. Additionally, implications for further research will be discussed along with limitations and validity issues.

Research question one. *How do primary role academic advisors of undergraduate students employed at Rowan University define the term "career-advising" as it relates to their individual advising practice?*

Career-advising was defined by University Advising Advisors as a process of linking academic programs to career titles, dispelling career-based myths, and helping students to make connections between academic coursework and potential career paths. Advisors felt that most students were truly undecided at the freshmen and sophomore levels, regardless if they were Exploratory or in a declared major. This was often due to students arriving to campus with limited career knowledge or career preparation. All advisors shared their role was to uncover current understanding and dispel the career-based myths student brought to campus. However, this required all advisors, regardless of experience, placement, or advising population to use career-advising tools and techniques through application of appropriate referrals and/or resources.

Career-advising was defined by Gordon (2005) as "helping students understand how their academic and personal interests, abilities and values might relate to the career fields they are considering and how to form their academic and career goals accordingly" (p.1.). Although other definitions were shared in my literature review, this version closely aligned with the initial responses shared by advisors. However, it quickly became apparent that while all advisors provided this initial, surface-level definition, definitions became much more robust and descriptive based on the student population they worked with. Gordon's (2005) definition provides insight to the career-advising role through helping students uncover their interests and create a career plan, but it does not address the need for the advisor to uncover the student's current knowledge and identify any career-based misconceptions the student brings with them. This is an important element in career-advising as advisors must regularly apply multiple career-based resources, stay abreast of current career trends, and know when and how to apply this information with their student caseloads.

One aspect to defining career-advising provided by the advisors interviewed for my study was the need to understand and respond to the current understanding of the individual student. Since the advisors worked with undergraduate students, most of their advising population consisted of traditional-age students, mostly in the late adolescence phase of development. Koger, Martinussen, and Marcia (2010) focused on understanding the developmental changes of identity status of adolescents and young adults by reviewing Marcia's Identity Formation (1966) concept, finding traditional-age college students were often in a period of identity development. At this developmental stage, students often experience difficulty with making career-based decisions. This also follows Bloom, Tripp and Shaffer's (2011) concept of *Scanners*, which are often high achieving students experiencing extreme difficulty with making career decisions. Thus, the difficulty students often experience with making career-based decisions directly relates to the definition provided by University Advising Services advisors as being a process that focuses on connecting academic program choices to career titles, dispelling career-based myths, and assisting students with making connections between academic coursework and potential career paths.

Another overarching aspect to defining career-advising, consistently expressed by those advisors interviewed, was the need to meet the student where they are and work with the student as a guide to get them to where they need to be. This directly reflected O'Banion's model. Additionally, O'Banion's (2012) model of academic advising includes five specific advising steps: exploration of life goals, exploration of vocational goals, choosing an academic program, selection of courses, and scheduling of courses. All advisors also reflected these same steps but often in varying order. While O'Banion (2012) suggests the ideal applied method would follow a sequenced and team approach, other researches like Burton and Wellington (1998) found the application of the steps within a developmental framework allowed advisors to address the steps based on student's needs. Advisors reported their responsibility was to identify and assess student understanding of career interests and respond with providing academic information, referrals to other offices, and career-based resources to the student but did suggest a specific sequence. Each advisor interviewed for this study had a unique method or approach to addressing student career-advising needs, but all advisors, regardless of the student population they advised, title of assistant or senior advisor, or years of experience, regularly applied O'Banion's (2012) steps in some variation, depending on the individual student's needs.

O'Banion's (2012) model also provides a flexible framework, which creates consistency in advising practices but allows for an independent approach. Thus, this framework is an excellent fit since the advisors I had interviewed all had unique approaches to career-advising. This was due to the flexibility of using the steps in the order based on student needs but also allowed the advisors to use a common framework.

Finally, the O'Banion (2012) model focuses on a team approach, which is also reflective of the advising practices of those advisors I interviewed. As advisors defined career-advising as making the connections between academic coursework and potential career paths, this requires advisors to establish relationships with others on campus and develop an advisor toolbox of resources to make referrals and connections for their students.

Research question two. *How do primary role academic advisors describe their current career-advising practices?*

My findings reflected the daily advising practices of advisors did not match the initial career-advising definition they had initially provided. All advisors reported applying active, integrated career-advising within their student caseloads as a part of every advising session unless the student was seeking very specific information or in crisis. Additionally, all advisors regularly used a personalized career-advising toolbox of self-developed resources the advisor found most reliable or appropriate for the individual student's needs. These resources were also regularly shared with other advisors as part of a strong, informal advisor network. However, there was also great inconsistency by advisors with the type of resources and applications applied. Very few advisors within my study had formalized prior career experience or training. However, all advisors shared how they regularly drew from their personal academic and professional experience along with the shared advisor network to assist students.

My findings are in contrast with the reviewed, existing literature. While the advisors in my study shared that career-advising was an integrated function of nearly all advising appointments, the reviewed literature reflected otherwise. Sheldon and Garton (2015) reported that primary role advisors might have high caseloads or other tasks that prevent career-advising. Gordon and Habley (2000) further suggest advisors think they lack the necessary expertise to provide career-advising. Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski and Barkemeyer (2018) and Gordon and Habley (2000) concluded the lack of consistent practices in advising may be the result of differences in advisor roles between institutions and even within offices.

The differences in my findings as compared to those of Sheldon and Garton (2015), Gordon and Habley (2000) and Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski and Barkemeyer (2018) may be the result the uniqueness of the centralized and decentralized advising model that comprises University Advising Services. As advisors become embedded within academic departments, advisors learn more about academic disciplines, faculty research interests, and the resources available within the department. Within many academic departments, the advisor regularly attends department meetings. Additionally, the strong, informal network between advisors has provided a venue to share these resources and contacts to further support career-advising for all advisors, including those advisors working with the Exploratory student population. Thus, the unique culture may help to explain the differences between my findings and the literature.

a. What tools do they use?

All advisors regularly use a variety of tools and resources when working with students. Tools most often included the FOCUS 2 system, specific career-related websites, promotion of career-related events, and referrals to career-services personnel. For students wanting to explore potential career paths within their academic program, advisors shared information on upcoming career fairs, internship opportunities, speaker series, or made referrals to specific faculty members.

While the tools listed were regularly used by all advisors, they also varied according to the major(s) the advisor advised and were most comfortable. Since most advisors do not have formalized career-services training, knowing which resources to use and when to apply them was a decision made with complete autonomy and based on the career-advising toolkit the advisor had created for themselves. Additionally, since there is no one, repository of career-related resources, advisors develop this toolbox over time, adding or discarding resources they find helpful through self-discovery, and through networking with other colleagues.

Drake, Jordan, & Miller (2013) shared a view that the role of an academic advisor is a multifaceted, supportive function that assists the students throughout their time in college. Thus, having a multifaceted role also requires the advisor to apply various tools depending on student needs. As the literature suggests, the use of developmental theories can provide a framework for advisors to use with students (Roufs, 2015). As Roufs (2015) further pointed out, although there is no one individual theory to fully describe academic advising, several developmental theorists have provided a helpful set of tools for advisors to use.

b. *How do they use those tools within individual advising sessions?*

Although my findings reflected large variety and inconsistency of tools used by advisors, patterns emerged with how these tools are applied within individual advising sessions. Advertisements for upcoming career events, FOCUS 2 flyers, and other career-related information hung in most advisor offices or waiting areas. Most advisors reported using those materials as visual reminders to themselves to share and actively discuss with their students. Career-related websites were most often used as part of the advising appointment to answer specific career-related questions. Many times, these sites were emailed to the student as follow-up and as part of the recorded advising notes. Other resources included the use of the FOCUS 2 system. As a tool, this was used with great inconsistency by advisors and ranged from in-depth discussions by some and others simply mentioning the system and providing a link or handout. Advisors also reported regularly sharing the events and program offerings of the Office of Career Advancement and department or college. All advisors encouraged students to attend and related how the activity or event would be beneficial. Often the advisor attended the event themselves to stay informed and share the knowledge obtained in future advising appointments.

Closely reflecting Milsom and Coughlin's (2015) grounded theory study on The College Major Satisfaction Model, students either grow more or less satisfied based on the choice made. Through advisors actively using these advising tools as part of the advising appointment, students can make well-informed decisions on a future career path. As they learn more through the tools applied by the advisor, they may find themselves growing more or less interested in the academic program and future careers associated with that program. My findings reflected similar outcomes where advisors felt that having opportunities to explore, interact with others, and spend time within their major was helpful to better understanding career interests. This is consistent with the reviewed literature and directly ties to O'Banion's (2012) advising model and the first two steps that focus on exploration of life goals and vocational goals.

Research question three. *For what purposes do primary role academic advisors refer or connect students with the Office of Career Advancement?*

Regardless of being an embedded advisor or working with Exploratory students, advisors unanimously made student referrals to the career events offered by the Office of Career Advancement and routinely encouraged students to actively participate. Many advisors also shared they attended events themselves to learn and remain current with employment trends. Referrals for career readiness to the Office of Career Advancement most often included assistance with resume and other employment-related document preparation, mock interviewing assistance, and employer visitations. However, the reason for referrals beyond career events varied greatly depending if the advisor was embedded or working with Exploratory students. Embedded advisors tended to first use the resources available within their college or academic department for career exploration referrals. These included referrals made to college-specific career services personnel, department sponsored career events, and specific faculty members. When embedded advisors did make referrals to the Office of Career Advancement, the referrals were typically made to a specific individual. This was typically due to the advisor's connection with an individual in the Office of Career Advancement or knowledge of a career counselor's specialty area. Advisors working with Exploratory students tended to use the Office of Career Advancement as their primary source of referral for all career-related needs and most often made the referral to the front desk, not a specific individual.

Understanding that students may change academic programs multiple times during their time in higher education, advisors must assist students with making well-informed career decisions. Ramos (2013) reported that approximately 80 percent of all United States college students will change academic programs at least once with an average of changing majors at least three times. Thus, the literature supports the daily practices of advisors as they provide individualized career-advising to ensure students make the best decision possible. However, the unanimous referrals made to the Office of Career Advancement is consistent with the literature. Koproske (2018) shares that students and their families have a growing concern on the financial return of the investment made in a higher education degree. Where some states now require career planning, there is a strong emphasis placed on career readiness assistance. These services are also expected to be provided by advisors and career services in tandem. Fisher (1999) furthers this thinking with how career services and advising should work together and further shared how advising should focus on the process of connecting an academic program to a future career path and career services should focus on values and goal setting. Beyond career events, all advisors reported they actively refer students to others on campus that can assist with the career development process.

Research question four. *What challenges in career-related services are perceived by the primary role academic advisor as they work with their assigned caseloads?*

My findings revealed several challenges in career-related services as perceived by the primary role academic advisor. Regardless of caseload or location on campus, advisors shared how a lack of time was a significant challenge within their roles. However, the reasons varied and included not having enough time to address student needs within individual advising sessions, balancing large caseloads with other work responsibilities, and following-up with students. A secondary challenge reported by advisors focused on students lacking motivation. Advisors noted that what may be a source for one student lacking motivation might be the same situation, in a different context, which motivates another. A third challenge reflected a lack of consistency and access to career-based services. Where some colleges and academic departments offered additional career-based support services, those advisors without those additional resources felt limited.

The challenges identified by the primary role advisors with time limitations closely reflect the reviewed literature. Primary role advisors typically have high caseloads that must be balanced with other work responsibilities. The results of an Advisor Satisfaction Survey by Sheldon and Garton (2015) reflected how high caseloads might prevent primary role advisors from engaging in career-advising conversations with students. This was further concluded by Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski and Barkemeyer's (2018) survey, which found variability with how advising functions were performed. Drake, Jordan, and Miller (2013) also agreed and reflected how the advising role is robust and advisors support students with identification and solidification of personal values and goals but also make referrals, analyze student data, review academic progress, provide outreach to students, email correspondence, approve graduation applications, and more.

The variety of reasons shared by advisors for why they found having a lack of time as a challenge may be reflective of the lack of definition and robust responsibilities within the role of academic advising. As a function first acknowledged in 1841 but not defined as a practice until 1958, the advising field is one that continues to evolve (Cook, 2009). Noting that advisors often work in autonomous settings with different student populations. Varying settings, large caseloads, and addressing student needs may account for the lack of common definition of the advising role but may also reflect the time limitations advisors reported as being a challenge within their practices. The use of developmental theories may help to provide a general framework to help address time limitations for all advisors (Roufs, 2015). Providing a framework of guidance and approach for advisors, Crookston (2009) and O'Banion (1972, 2012) are two advising models reviewed in the literature that may assist advisors with addressing student issues and structuring appointments to assist with time limitations in advising meetings.

My findings also revealed students lacking motivation to be a challenge shared by advisors. The reasons shared by advisors varied greatly but all agreed what may work as motivation to one student can slow another student's progress. The collective views on why students lack motivation also supported the reviewed literature. Bullock-Yowell, McConnell, and Schedin (2014) concluded that although undecided students often struggle with general decision-making, they are not more or less ready or motivated to make career decisions. With traditional-age college students tending to fall into the category of late adolescence, lack of motivation may also be attributed to ongoing identity development as shared by Kroger, Martinussen, and Marcia (2010) which further reflect how motivation levels may influence student decision-making.

Although the Office of Career Advancement was a career-based resource regularly used by all advisors, regardless of location or caseload, the inequity of career-based services beyond this department was another challenge identified from my findings. A few colleges offer independent career services and many academic departments offer additional career-related support. These services included faculty members with specialized research or career interests, internship coordinators, and department-specific career events. Much of the resources shared with advisors depended greatly on the advisor's individual relationship with those faculty or physical location within or outside of the academic department. Those advisors working specifically with Exploratory students or in departments with limited resources felt they were unable to access these additional services and limited to only using those services offered by the Office of Career Advancement.

While the literature did not reflect the inequality of campus-wide career-based resources, the growth of individual colleges creating independent career-based services may be explained by the marketization of career services as a need to remain competitive in higher education markets and supplement funding (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Institutions are under increased pressure to find creative approaches to attract and retain students (Kwong, 2000). This has resulted in a higher price tag for higher education but marketed as a return on investment to students by showcasing a connection from education to sustainable employment upon graduation (Koproske, 2018). As individual colleges and departments also feel the pressure to grow their student populations, they must also provide the connection to employment for both students and their families (Koproske, 2018). However, as individual colleges and academic departments dedicate their resources to address these needs, it has become apparent that not all colleges or academic departments have the same, dedicated resources.

Limitations and Delimitations

Conducted at a mid-size, public research university located in rural, southern New Jersey, the institution selected for the study included two advising centers along with embedded, primary role academic advisors housed in academic departments.

A delimitation of this qualitative, single case study was the exclusion of faculty advisors. For this study, I chose to focus on full-time, primary role advisors housed under

University Advising Services. Since there are very few faculty advisors on the main campus working specifically with undergraduate students, faculty advisors were intentionally excluded. However, other institutions may have faculty-based or other advising models. Sheldon and Garton's (2015) Advisor Quality Survey (ASQ) results found students rated faculty advisors higher when compared to primary role advisors. Thus, there are many opportunities to research the faculty-advising role and other advising models.

Implications

There are several implications identified in the sections below. The practice of career-advising requires formalized training with partnerships to be created and maintained between all campus-based career-services personnel and primary role academic advisors. With career-advising toolboxes created and maintained on an individual basis, there is also a need to catalog and maintain resources for all to use. Finally, dedicated policy for career-advising services at both University leadership and national professional association levels will bring awareness and further drive the need for dedicated career-advising resources to address growing student concerns regarding time to degree and student debt.

Practice. While advisors regularly provide ongoing career-advising with students as part of daily advising practices, advisors must create and maintain their own career-advising toolboxes. Thus, ongoing, career-advising training is needed for all advisors, regardless of being a senior or assistant level advisor. Additionally, the creation of a formalized partnership between University Advising Services and the Office of Career Advancement can assist with the development of relationship building between advisors and career personnel on campus. Finally, for advisors working with Exploratory students, an additional partnership between the Office of Career Advancement and the University Advising Center to further share services and develop shared use of career-based terminology.

My findings revealed that all primary role advisors, regardless of setting had similar definitions of career-advising and all provide high level career-advising with students as part of daily practices. However, it was evident that each advisor currently relies upon their own methodology, self-teaching, and personal connections to apply career-advising tools, resources, and referrals. While this allows advisors complete autonomy, it is unknown which resources are being shared with students and if these resources are, appropriate, current, or credible. Thus, career-advising training should be made a centralized part of ongoing professional development for all advisors housed under University Advising Services. Providing such support will greatly enhance and maintain current career-advising toolboxes, allowing advisors to apply the most recent and relevant information, but also remain autonomous within their individual advising practices.

Additionally, the tools and resources regularly used by primary role advisors had great variation. The advisors working with Exploratory students had few resources to draw upon. Since advisors working with the Exploratory student population need to be well versed in all academic programs with the ability to share a wide-range of details, it makes sense that advisors working with undecided students have a greater understanding and knowledge of career-exploration tools and regular access to career personnel. My findings found the FOCUS 2 system was the main tool advisors shared as a resource with students, but there was a lack of knowledge regarding the FOCUS 2 system. Since this system is the primary career-resource tool leased and managed by the Office of Career Advancement, advisors working specifically with the Exploratory student population would greatly benefit from FOCUS 2 training conducted by the Office of Career Advancement.

Finally, the connection between the Office of Career Advancement and University Advising Services should be formalized and strengthened. Consistent with the literature, academic advising and career services tend to work in silos due to being housed under different organizational umbrellas or with staff training specifically in advising or career services, but not both (Restrepo, 2016). Although the Office of Career Advancement and University Advising Services are housed under the same division there is little to no cross training between advisors and career personnel. Additional training and combined staff meetings on a rotational basis with other advising teams would allow for small group meetings and address specific career-advising questions. Additionally, Reardon and Bullock (2004) suggest academic advisors and career counseling centers develop a common, career-based terminology to use with students. Since the FOCUS 2 uses John Holland's theoretical framework, both Office of Career Advancement personnel and University Advising Services advisors (SDS, 2019) to assist students could easily share this terminology, once adopted by advisors. Through providing a common partnership between career services personnel and academic advising, shared terminology, shared resources, and additional understanding of roles, the student experience will be greatly enhanced with regards to career information and understanding.

Research. To further the research, there is a need to understand embedded advising functions as compared to Exploratory advising functions. There are many differences between the two roles and additional research will help to understand the commonalities and differences between roles. My findings revealed embedded, primary role advisor resources varied considerably and often depended on the established relationship the advisor had with the academic department faculty, and if there was a college-specific career center. However, resources beyond the department varied even further and were largely based on the advisor's self-taught knowledge of online resources or connectedness with specific individuals on campus. Some advisors pulled information from professional association websites and others regularly used national career-based databases. While all helpful, there lacks a repository of vetted, current career resources. Additionally, to further the research, the process of creating a shared database will identify key resources most commonly used by all advisors and those resources specialized for specific student populations. The creation and regular maintenance of such a database will also allow for continuous and timely research as career information is ever changing.

Understanding the differences between embedded and Exploratory advising roles will also require additional research. Multiple approaches to academic advising current exist in the literature but tend to focus on prescriptive or developmental relationships (Crookston, 2009). Thus, there is a need for additional research between the embedded advisor working with declared students as compared to those working in advising centers with Exploratory students.

Finally, where the reviewed literature reflected primary role advisors may not regularly provide career-advising due to caseload size, other advising tasks, or lack the experience to provide career information, my findings revealed that career-advising is an integral part of all advising sessions unless the student was in crisis or needing very specific information. This was reflected regardless of advisor's title (senior or assistant) or embedded or working with Exploratory students. Thus, there is a need for further research of career-advising with primary role academic advisors to understand actual advisor functions.

Policy. As institutions continue to supplement federal and state funding by increasing enrollment numbers through creative recruitment tactics, many institutions actively promote a connection from degree to sustainable employment (Koproske, 2018). Some states, including Minnesota, Louisiana and Florida have implemented performance-based funding models based on career placement results. Other state institutions now require career planning and preparation instruction as a graduation requirement (Koproske, 2018). With college affordability and student debt a serious concern for many students, direct placement into sustainable employment upon graduation has become a necessity for many graduates. This presents a critical need for the creation of policy at the national, state, and college level to formalize the relationship between career services and academic advising. Policy should include uniting these critical services under one organizational umbrella with shared leadership, funding resources, and cross training.

However, national organizations specific to both career services and academic advising must also recognize and further address the need to intertwine these critical functions. With the support of nationally recognized professional associations, partnerships will heighten attention through jointly advertised training opportunities, conferences, journals, and other publications. Having a nationally recognized professional association to endorse and back the needs of career-advising within the advising practice will also help to drive policy creation at the University, state, or national levels.

Although creating connections with the Office of Career Advancement and developing a repository of career resources will address some of the findings within my study, students lacking motivation to make career-based decisions for a plethora of reasons was also a significant finding. Noted as a source of frustration to advisors, advisors have numerous other responsibilities outside of direct advising time with students. In the ideal setting, advising would be made mandatory and increased staffing would remove the burden of stress of high caseload management. However, even with a small caseload, follow-up with student referrals may be difficult to manage and data revealed differing views of responsibility by those advisors I had interviewed.

Advisors felt they were under enormous pressure to guide students to graduation in four years. However, students could easily be derailed with graduation plans if taking too long to decide upon an academic program or career. This follows Perna's (2013) view that although a college education will significantly increase lifetime earnings, the academic program selected and career choice will influence economic returns. The cost of higher education in addition to the student debt students incur is also a factor with career decision-making. Students and their families seek sustainable employment upon graduation to pay back on student loan debt (Koproske, 2018). Feeling that pressure, advisors must continually work to keep students focused on timely graduation but also continually address the student's interests and needs. Having policy dedicated to career-advising at both at the University and professional association level will help to increase the attention and importance of how career-advising can have impact on both time to degree and impact student debt.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to examine and understand the current career-advising practices employed by primary role academic advisors at a mid-size, public research University. Five themes emerged from the findings and included an advisor-driven definition of career-advising, the identification of a strong connection between the advisor's personal and professional experience, a large volume of career tools and resources being regularly used by advisors lacking a centralized repository, referrals made to others on campus based on individual advisor knowledge of available resources, and the identification of numerous advisor challenges. These findings have expanded upon the limited current literature currently available. Additionally, the findings further provide insight to current career-advising practices and provide additional context to the lack of consistency in daily advising functions and collaboration with career services.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Using a semi-structured interview format, I will begin the interview session with an introduction of my study and why I've chosen this research focus. I will share my dissertation topic: *Career-Advising from the Primary Role Academic Advisor's Viewpoint: A Qualitative Study.* I will then ask the interviewee if he/she has questions and have them sign a consent form.

Lead Questions:

1. Please tell me about your advising experience and formal education?
2. What made you decide to enter the academic advising profession?
3. How has your academic and professional experience helped to guide your practice as a academic advisor? How does the practice of career-advising apply to your individual and daily advising?
4. *Probing Question:* Tell me more about what the term career-advising means to you? How do you apply career-advising within your individual and daily practice?
5. At what point during an individual advising session do you offer career-related information and how is this incorporated into the advising meeting with your students?
6. Do you find that students readily ask about potential career paths? If not, how do you address those students unable/unwilling to ask?

   Probing Question: How often does other advising conversation (i.e. course selection, procedures, deadlines, etc.) prevent you from engaging in a career-related discussion with your students?

7. How do you decide when to employ career-advising techniques in an advising session? What influences your decision?
8. How do you address students who experience anxiety or loss when attempting to focus on career decision making and may present similar behaviors as students who are truly undecided (i.e. “Scanners”)?

   Probing Question: What resources do you offer to completely undecided students?
9. Is there a time where you would choose/not choose to employ career-advising techniques during an advising session? Why?
10. Marcia’s Identity Formation concept focuses on the developmental changes with identity status of traditional college-age students. What is your understanding of when and how students tend to make career-based decisions?
11. When do you provide referrals to the Office of Career Advancement and for what purpose?
12. What tools do you typically use when working with students (i.e. FOUCS2, Self-Directed Search, Office of Career Advancement promotional events, etc.)

    Probing Question: What documents or tools can you share that would help me better understand your career-advising approach to working with your caseload and can you explain how you use these documents when working with your students?

13. What gaps in career-related services do you think currently exist at Rowan University?
14. Where do you think a student may fall through the cracks with making career choices?
15. What process do you use to follow-up with student referrals?

Follow-up Questions:

Will be infused as needed.

Appendix B

Document Collection Protocol

Protocol for tracking data on career-advising practices by University Advising Services primary role academic advisors at Rowan University.

Date of Document:
Type of Document:

- UAS (University Advising Services) advising forms
- OCA (Office of Career Advancement) forms
- UAS event advertisements
- OCA event advertisements
- Referral data collected from RSN (Rowan Success Network)
- Advising Notes from RSN
- Other

Who prepared this document? Name/Date

- Administration
- Academic Advisor in UAS
- Personnel Outside of UAS
- Other

Who is the audience for this document?

- Internal Use Only
- Students
- Parents
- General Use

What is the purpose of this document?

- Documentation of Advising Appointment
- Follow-Up
- Referral
- Supplemental Information
- Other

How is this document utilized within UAS?

- Mandatory - All Student Appointments
- Used as Needed
- Other

Who has access to this document?

- Student
- Academic Advisor

- Office of Career Advancement Personnel
- Other

Appendix C

Invitation to Participate

Dear xxx:

I am currently pursuing a doctorate of Education as part of the Educational Leadership program with Rowan University. As part of dissertation, I am conducting interviews to increase my understanding of how University Advising Services full-time academic advisors conduct career-advising from the academic advisor's viewpoint. As a full-time UAS advisor, you are in an ideal position to give valuable information on this topic.

Since I will need to interview to the point of data saturation, I will be using a criterion-based selection process to ensure a wide range of advising experience. This will require me to make selections based on your experience level, title (assistant vs. senior academic advisor), and physical location on campus (embedded vs. housed in an advising center). Therefore, it is possible your participation may not be required.

It is anticipated that the interview will take approximately one hour. There is no compensation, but your participation is valued and may directly impact the understanding and future trajectory of career-advising services at Rowan University.

If you are willing to participate, please respond with your availability over the next few weeks. If you have questions please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,
Julia Beth Rey

Appendix D

Key Information and Consent to Take Part in a Research Study

ADULT CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

RowanUniversity
UNIVERSITY ADVISING SERVICES

TITLE OF STUDY: Career-Advising from the Primary Role Academic Advisor's Viewpoint: A Qualitative Case Study
Principal Investigator: Dr. Monica Kerrigan

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide key information that will help you decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study.
Please carefully read the key information provided in questions 1-9 and 14 below. The purpose behind those questions is to provide clear information about the purpose of the study, study specific information about what will happen in the course of the study, what are the anticipated risks and benefits, and what alternatives are available to you if you do not wish to participate in this research study.
The study team will explain the study to you and they will answer any question you might have before volunteering to take part in this study. It is important that you take your time to make your decision. You may take this consent form with you to ask a family member or anyone else before agreeing to participate in the study.
If you have questions at any time during the research study, you should feel free to ask the study team and should expect to be given answers that you completely understand.
After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.
You are not giving up any of your legal rights by volunteering for this research study or by signing this consent form.
After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.
The Principal Investigator, Dr. Monica Kerrigan, or another member of the study team will also be asked to sign this informed consent.

1. **What is the purpose of the study?**
   The purpose of this study is for my doctoral dissertation as part of the Educational Leadership Ed.D. program. The purpose of this qualitative, single case study is to investigate and understand the current, career-advising practices of undergraduate Rowan University Advising Services primary role academic advisors, leading to further understanding of the current career-advising practices at Rowan University with recommendations to improve the connection from advising to career services.
2. **Why have you been asked to take part in this study?**

You have been asked to participate in this study because of your primary academic advising role in University Advising Services.

3. **What will you be asked to do if you take part in this research study?**
You will be asked to participate in an interview which will last approximately one hour. The questions will focus on your individual career-advising practices with your assigned caseload. This interview will be conducted at a time convenient to you and will be held in your office. You will also be asked to share career materials you may use with students as part of your individual advising sessions.
4. **Who may take part in this research study? And who may not?**
This research study will include approximately 50 primary role academic advisors under the University Advising Services department. All advisors will be full-time employees and will hold either assistant or senior academic advisor titles.
5. **How long will the study take and where will the research study be conducted?**
This study will take approximately six months and will be conducted on the Rowan University Glassboro campus.
6. **How many visits may take to complete the study?**
This study will take approximately one visit with each advisor interviewed to complete.
7. **What are the risks and/or discomforts you might experience if you take part in this study?**
Risks and/or discomforts with participation in this study are rare.
8. **Are there any benefits for you if you choose to take part in this research study?**
Benefits to participation in this study will include a better understanding of current career-advising practices for the individual academic advisor and collectively as part of University Advising Services.
9. **What are the alternatives if you do not wish to participate in the study?**
Your alternative is not to participate in the study.
10. **How many subjects will be enrolled in the study?**
Approximately 8-12 subjects will be enrolled in the study.
11. **How will you know if new information is learned that may affect whether you are willing to stay in this research study?**
During the course of the study, you will be updated about any new information that may affect whether you are willing to continue taking part in the study. If new information is learned that may affect you, you will be contacted.
12. **Will there be any cost to you to take part in this study?**
There will be no cost to the participants in this study.
13. **Will you be paid to take part in this study?**
You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.
14. **How will information about you be kept private or confidential?**
All efforts will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your personal information may be given out, if required by law. Presentations and publications to the public and at scientific conferences and meetings will not use your name and other personal information. Data collection will be stored on a personal computer. Hard copies and documents collected will be stored in office.

15. What will happen if you do not wish to take part in the study or if you later decide not to stay in the study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may change your mind at any time.

If you do not want to enter the study or decide to stop participating, your relationship with the study staff will not change, and you may do so without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may also withdraw your consent for the use of data already collected about you, but you must do this in writing to Dr. Monica Kerrigan, Rowan University, College of Education and Leadership, 3rd floor, James Hall – 201 Mullica Road, Glassboro NJ 08028

If you decide to withdraw from the study for any reason, you may be asked to participate in one meeting with the Principal Investigator.

16. Who can you call if you have any questions?

If you have any questions about taking part in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research related injury, you can call the Principal Investigator:

Monica Reid Kerrigan, Ed.D.
Associate Professor, Educational Services & Leadership
CCLI Liaison
University Ombudsperson
Rowan University
856-256-4500 x53658
KerriganM@Rowan.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:
Office of Research Compliance
(856) 256-4078– Glassboro/CMSRU

17. What are your rights if you decide to take part in this research study?

You have the right to ask questions about any part of the study at any time. You should not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have been given answers to all of your questions.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the entire information about the research study, research risks, benefits and the alternatives, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed.

All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered and I agree to volunteer to participate in the study.

Subject Name:____
Subject Signature:____________________________ Date:_____________

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent:____

Signature: ______________________________________ Date_____________________

FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING SUBJECTS:

Translation of the consent document (either verbal or written) must have prior approval by the IRB. Contact your local IRB office for assistance.

Appendix E

Audio/Videotape Addendum to Consent Form

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

RowanUniversity
UNIVERSITY ADVISING SERVICES

You have already agreed to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Monica Kerrigan. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audio tape 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 and possible use as a teaching tool to those who are no members of the research staff (i.e. for educational purposes).

The recording(s) will include your name and the full conversation during the interview.

The recording(s) will be stored in a locked file cabinet with no identification and will be destroyed upon completion of the study procedures

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.

Subject Name:____

Subject Signature:____________________________ Date:_____________