EVALUATING THE TRIO ADVISING MODEL:

IDENTIFYING SUCCESSES AND STRENGTHS

by

Mecha L. Crockett

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Ferris State University

June 2017

EVALUATING THE TRIO ADVISING MODEL:

IDENTIFYING SUCCESSES AND STRENGTHS

by

Mecha L. Crockett

Has been approved

June 2017

APPROVED:

Sandra J Balkema, PhD
Committee Chair

Elaine M Dowell, PhD
Committee Member

Cheryl Evans, EdD
Committee Member

Dissertation Committee

ACCEPTED:

Roberta C. Teahen, PhD, Director
Community College Leadership Program

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the TRIO Academic Advising Model and determine what strengths and successes can be utilized by Academic Advising Centers at community colleges and universities. Strong Academic Advising Centers are essential to the retention, persistence, and completion of students who are first generation and low income students. The success of students in college often depends upon the relationships that they have with their academic advisors.

The methodology used for this research was qualitative. There were nine academic advisors who were interviewed for this study. The data were collected and analyzed by the researcher using selective coding, then separated into categories and themes. Five themes emerged from the analysis of the data: (1) Helping students, (2) Academic Advising Systems, (3) Communication, (4) Advisor/Student Relationships, and (5) Training.

Although the findings for this research show the importance of students receiving advising assistance from an advisor with whom they have established a relationship that extends from the beginning of college through graduation, they also indicate the importance of supporting and investing in the professional development of the academic advisors on college campuses. Future research should include interviewing faculty advisors and residential advisors, as well as academic advisors from several community colleges across the country, to analyze the similarities and differences in the advising systems across community colleges. Recommendations for future research suggest the need for a proactive academic advising system

that supports retention, persistence, and completion of first generation students who are non-TRIO participants.

Key Words: TRIO Academic Advisors, Mandatory Advising, Academic Advising Training, Early Alert Systems

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation and degree to my brother, Calvin O. Crockett (1965-2014) and my sister, Anita Crockett, (1961-2016). Unfortunately, you are not here physically to join in the family celebration; but I know you are here in spirit. Love Always.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents for their support throughout my life in all of my educational journeys. You have always told me that I can do and achieve anything I want. There are no limits and nothing is impossible and you have been right. Also, to my siblings and other family members, thanks for your words of encouragement.

Thanks to my committee for their guidance and assistance throughout this dissertation process. First, to my chair, Dr. Sandra Balkema, who believed in me and kept encouraging me through each step of this journey. Her leadership has helped me understand the difference between a research paper and a dissertation. Much thanks to Dr. Cheryl Evans, who listened to me whine and complain every day about the dissertation process and why "ABD" would be best for me. Of course, she did not agree and kept pushing me along the way until I finished "EdD." Thanks to Dr. Elaine Dowell, my sorority sister (AKA), who has always been there for me without question. Thanks for your support and encouragement through this process.

Finally, thanks to the nine academic advisors at Lansing Community College who agreed to participate in the interview process to provide the data needed to complete my research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Context of the Study

Our nation has asserted a commitment to providing educational opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, ethnic background, or economic circumstance. This commitment began in 1964 during the administration of President Johnson. The "War on Poverty," as it was known, included legislation signed by Congress that addressed economic and educational deficiencies in communities that had long been excluded from receiving opportunities that would advance their standings as productive citizens in society (McElroy and Armesto, 1998). This legislation created the "Office of Economic Opportunity Act and Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds or now known as TRIO Programs" (McElroy and Armesto, 1998). From this legislation the first TRIO program, Upward Bound, was born. Upward Bound provides fundamental support to high school students in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for high school students to be successful in their precollege work and prepares them to be successful in their college pursuits. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which students complete high school and enroll in and graduate from four-year institutions. Upward Bound serves "high school students from low-income families, first generation families in which (neither parent holds a bachelor's degree) and students with a disability" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, n.p).

Talent Search was the second TRIO program created by the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. Like Upward Bound, Talent Search identifies students who have the potential to

succeed in college. Talent Search programs begin preparing students for college as early as sixth grade and continues through high school. Unlike Upward Bound, one component of Talent Search is to recruit and encourage students who have dropped out of high school to reenter and complete a high school education and attend college (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Student Support Services (SSS) was the third TRIO program established in 1968 through the reauthorization of the HEA. TRIO SSS programs assist students with their academic development, basic college requirements, and motivation to complete college. TRIO SSS program's main purpose is to increase retention and improve the college graduation rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This is the only TRIO program that assists students already in college.

Since the 1968 reauthorization of the HEA, eight TRIO programs exist under the umbrella of TRIO. The programs are (1) Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs), (2) Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, (3) Upward Bound Math-Science Program, (4) TRIO Staff and Leadership Authority, and (5) Upward Bound Veteran's Program (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). All TRIO programs have the same goals of providing "academic advising, counseling (personal and career), tutoring, cultural events, financial aid advising, financial literacy counseling, mentoring programs, temporary assistance to students who are homeless, or assist students who are in foster care or aging out of the foster care system" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, n.p).

In support of this commitment, Congress established a series of programs to help first generation, low-income students enter college, graduate, and move on to participate more fully in America's economic and social life. The TRIO programs were created to provide equal opportunity for all American citizens by increasing college readiness and developing college

aspirations among students from low-income, first generation, and ethnic and racial backgrounds (Cowan & Pitre, 2009). TRIO programs were intended to address the educational inequities that exist throughout the U.S. For decades, students of color have attended college at lower rates than Whites and higher income students. In 2017, students of color are still less likely to pursue a postsecondary education. According to Cowan & Pitre (2009), 50% of African Americans and 34% of Hispanics have completed some college compared to 66% of Whites. Gender and racial disparities continue to exist among those who have completed college.

Due to the changing demographics in the U.S., TRIO programs are needed more today than ever before in an effort to continue to provide precollege assistance and college readiness to low-income, first generation, and ethnic minority students.

Most students who attend community colleges are first generation, low income, and/or disadvantaged academically or physically. According to Engle (2007), 50% of community college students are first generation. These students find it difficult to navigate through the higher education system on their own: "The academic jargon used so freely among educators requires decoding skills for a student who may not understand the difference between an associate's degree and a bachelor's degree, or the difference between a transfer credit hour and a non-transfer credit hour. These barriers and many others discourage any first generation student from entering our doors. Some students have the added challenges of financial limitations and/or academic/physical disabilities" (Walsh, 2000, p. 5). Higher education institutions need to examine and revise the traditional educational model to offer support services to first generation, low-income students and students with a disability to remove the barriers they may face when entering college.

Thomas, Farrow, and Martinez (1998) reported that first-generation and low-income students experience an increased risk of dropping out of college compared with many other college populations. These students do not have the family support that traditional students have whose parents attended college. First generation students are at a disadvantage to persisting and completing college when their parents are not college graduates or never enrolled in college (Choy, 2001). TRIO programs are designed to reduce the risk of these students dropping out of college and increases their chances of completing college. Students who are first generation, low income, and disabled are selected to participate in the TRIO programs because they are from groups that have been traditionally economically and socially disadvantaged. Participation in these programs provides an opportunity to these select groups to improve their economic and social conditions through higher education (Thomas, et al, 1998).

Definition of the Problem

The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) was part of President Johnson's "Great Society Domestic Agenda." President Johnson wanted to send a message to Congress that there was "a need in higher education to create opportunities for low and middle income families, program assistance for small and less developed colleges, additional and improved library resources at higher education institutions, and utilization of college and university resources to help deal with national problems like poverty and community development" (McElroy & Armesto, 1998, p. 374). The law provided greater educational resources to colleges and universities and financial assistance to students in postsecondary and higher education (Pell Institute, 2007). Grants, loans and other financial aid programs were created from HEA 1965 (Pell Institute, 2007).

While TRIO programs provide educational resources to students such as mandatory academic advising, tutoring, personal counseling and mentoring, financial literacy and exposure to cultural events, the HEA of 1965 created a program that offers financial assistance to students who are first generation, low income, or have a disability to attend college known as Title IV. Title IV programs provide financial aid in the forms of grants, loans, and work-study opportunities to students who meet the federal guidelines to receive financial assistance to attend college (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The TRIO programs receive financial support from the U.S. Department of Education through approved grants. The programs are 100% federal grant funded, and most do not receive financial support from the institutions as a part of institutional commitment to administer the programs. Most colleges that receive these grants can only afford to serve a small number of students (minimum 140) because the programs are all inclusive services and expensive to operate. Most colleges and universities do not have the budget to support and extend the TRIO SSS services to the general population of students due to cuts in state and federal funding.

The future of TRIO Programs are uncertain. TRIO Programs have continued to receive less funding from Congress over the years. According to Childs (2013), "If federal funding for TRIO programs should ever discontinue, identifying these specific, cost-efficient services and interventions would provide institutions insight into how to retain their disadvantaged student population by enabling these institutions to fund a reduced number of services and still remain effective" (p. 6).

While student financial aid programs help students overcome financial barriers to higher education, TRIO programs help students overcome class, social, and cultural barriers to higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). TRIO programs were created to improve

access to higher education and offer support services to first generation, low income students, and to students with a disability to assist them in completing a certificate, associate degree, or transfer to a four-year college or university to complete a bachelor degree. TRIO programs serve a minimum of 140 students per college or university on 1,100 campuses across America.

First Generation, Low-Income, and Disabled

Lansing Community College (LCC) is an urban campus in the heart of metropolitan Lansing, Michigan. The College's service area, which covers a 30-mile radius, has a population of approximately 114,297 (U.S. Census, 2014). Congressional districts served by LCC include Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton Counties. With its open admissions policy, the College serves almost 23,138 students each academic year (CDS, 2015).

In 2013-14, 9,651 students or 41.8% of LCC's 23,138 enrolled students were low-income, according to LCC's Center for Data Science (CDS). CDS also indicated that 5,249 students or 22.7% of the total enrollment at LCC in 2013-14 were first generation, an indication that neither parent graduated from a four-year college or university. LCC also serves a significant number of students with disabilities — a total of 384 or 1.7% students with disabilities. LCC's SSS Program is accessible to disabled students (CDS, 2015).

With almost half of its students identified as low-income and almost a quarter as first-generation, LCC clearly has a high number and percentage of low-income, first-generation, and disabled students — over 11,211 or 48.5% of LCC students are eligible for the TRIO SSS program; 10,986 of them have not been served by the TRIO SSS program (CCDS, 2015).

Successes of TRIO Programs

Community colleges and universities today are challenged to provide higher levels of academic achievement to a growing population of students that are low-income, first generation, and minority (Blake, 1998). Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been successful in meeting this academic challenge over the years. To be competitive with their counterparts, Predominately White Institutions (PWI) offer comprehensive programs like TRIO to meet the academic needs of first generation students (Blake, 1998).

The typical TRIO student is an academically underprepared student meeting the income and college attendance guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Education. A study completed by Gulf Coast Community College (2011) to examine best practices to retain and recruit "at-risk" students, found that the most significant reasons students drop-out of college are due to (1) academic preparation, (2) finances, (3) employment and family responsibilities, and (4) lack of personal motivation. Based on data from the U.S. Department of Education (2015), 69% of students participating in TRIO programs at two-year institutions are first generation and low-income (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

According to Kuh and his colleagues (2005), certain retention programs distinguish high performing institutions from low performing institutions. These programs are successful because they are mandatory. They identify the services students need, and these retention programs are operated by trained faculty and centrally located on campus. As part of a broader institution-wide effort to improve the educational experience and outcomes of students, these programs are well advertised on campus.

According to the U. S. Department of Education (2015), students who participate in the TRIO programs are four-times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than those students from similar backgrounds who did not participate in TRIO. Also, the retention rate of students in TRIO programs are more than twice as likely to remain in college as students who are not in TRIO programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). These services offered to students who enroll in TRIO programs at many community colleges and universities increase the retention and graduation rates of participating students. Based on data from the U.S. Department of Education (2016), the persistence rate for TRIO programs at four-year institutions increased from 87% in 2009-10 to 90% in 2013-14. The persistence rate at two-year institutions remained constant at 85% for the same time-period. TRIO programs, since their inception, have been successful in retaining and graduating first generation, low-income, and students with a disability who have participated in its programs. The TRIO model has proven to be very successful over the past four decades in higher education.

Background of the Problem

TRIO programs serve a specific number of students at community colleges and universities. The number of students served at an institution range from 140-600 students. The number of students served determines the amount of the grant awarded to an institution. In fiscal year 2013 (see Table 1), there were 2,971 TRIO projects serving 758,352 students at two-year and four-year institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Table 1: Fiscal Year 2013 TRIO Student Service Award Summary

PROGRAM	TOTAL NUMBER OF AWARDS	NUMBER OF AWARDS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS SERVED
UPWARD BOUND	816	$249,857,649	59,143
UPWARD BOUND SCIENCE AND MATH	162	$40,519,232	9,687
VETERANS UPWARD BOUND	50	$13,036,887	6,404
RONALD E. MCNAIR POST-BACCALAUREATE ACHIEVEMENT	152	$34,060,382	4,191
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER	126	$44,063,593	181,581
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	1,027	$274,739,441	197,663
TALENT SEARCH	452	$128,116,544	299,683
TRIO TRAINING	6	$1,326,776	N/A
TOTAL	2,791	$785,720,504	758,352

Source: U. S. Department of Education, 2013

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 20.5 million students enrolled in college in 2016. Approximately 7.2 million enrolled in community colleges (NCES, n.d.). The TRIO Programs receive financial support from the U.S. Department of Education through approved grants (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The programs are self-sufficient and do not rely on financial support from the institutions that administer the programs.

The general population at many community colleges and universities in the U.S. have a much larger population of students that need direct academic support services to help improve the retention and graduation rates at their institutions of higher education. For example, Lansing Community College (LCC) TRIO SSS Program has been funded to serve 200 students annually since 1998. In 2015-16, LCC TRIO SSS Program retention rate was 92%, the persistence rate was 86%, and the graduation/transfer rate was 46%, whereas in the LCC general population of students, the retention rate was 10.3% and the completion/graduation rate was 31.4% (CDS, 2015). There is a significant gap in the number of students (200) who participate in LCC_TRIO

SSS and successfully complete college, as opposed to the 10,986 (47.48%) who are eligible for LCC TRIO SSS Program but do not receive services.

Table 2: Number & Percentage of TRIO Eligible Students at Lansing Community College, 2013-14

STUDENT CATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENT
LOW-INCOME*	9,670	41.8%
FIRST-GENERATION*	5,249	22.7%
LOW-INCOME AND FIRST GENERATION	3,865	16.7%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES*	384	1.7%
FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN	7,074	30.6%
STUDENTS WITH BASIC SKILL DEFICIENCIES*	5,528	23.9%
*TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION***	*11,210*	*48.5%*
*TOTAL ELIGIBLE NOT SERVED POPULATION***	*10,986*	*47.48%*
TOTAL ANNUAL STUDENT	23,137	100%

*Includes duplicated counts
**Unduplicated count
Source: Fall 2013 – Summer 2014 TRIO Grant Need Section, LCC Center for Data Science, 2015

Statement of the Problem

Annually, TRIO programs serve 758,352 first generation, low-income, and students with a disability at two-year and four-year institutions across the country. There are 20.5 million students enrolled in college and, of that total, 7.2 million attend community college (NCES, n.d.). According to a study by NCES, in 2003-04, nearly 50% of students enrolled in community colleges had not graduated by 2006 and 45% dropped out without completing a degree or certificate (GCCC, 2011). Of students who attend community colleges, 50% are first generation, low-income, or have a disability (Engle, 2007). While TRIO programs across the nation have been successful in their retention and graduation efforts, limited federal grant funding has allowed TRIO programs to serve only a small percentage of the eligible student population at most community colleges and universities (Childs, 2013).

Many institutions have comprehensive support services programs that are geared toward first generation, low-income, and disabled students. These services include academic advising, tutoring, counseling, and mentoring, similar to what TRIO programs offer; however, the programs are not mandatory. Colleges and universities have focused their attention and resources on improving retention in the areas of (1) first year experience, (2) monitoring student progress, (3) increasing student engagement, and (4) supporting student success. However, academic advising the most important component of any retention effort at a higher education institution is not the focus of attention in retention (Pell Institute, 2007).

In a Pell Institute study, results found that many colleges and universities are underutilizing and poorly administering their advising programs as well as failing to promote advising as a way to increase retention (Pell Institute, 2007). Campbell & Nutt (2008) write that national studies indicate that students are dissatisfied with academic advising during their college experience. Lansing Community College (LCC) is faced with a similar problem. Recent student surveys and student meetings with the Provost show that students are not satisfied with the services they receive from academic advisors (LCC, 2015). Academic advising is not mandatory or proactive — formerly known as intrusive advising — as it is in TRIO programs. Students are not assigned to one advisor during college and, therefore, do not get an opportunity to build a relationship with the advisor. There is no process in place that allows faculty to provide progress reports on students in their classes to the academic advisor. The problem that LCC and many colleges face is how to implement proactive and mandatory academic advising services for students who meet TRIO eligibility criteria but due to funding constraints and program participant limits do not receive TRIO advising services.

Current TRIO Model at LCC

TRIO SSS Program at LCC has a success rate of 81% persistence, 96% good academic standing, and a 46% graduation/transfer rate to a four-year college or university. On the other hand, the TRIO eligible-not-served student population at LCC has a persistence rate of 10.3%, good academic standing rate of 73.3%, a graduation/transfer rate of 31.4%, and average GPA of 2.73. Of TRIO SSS students at LCC, 97% are in good academic standing; whereas, 73.3% of the general population of students at LCC meet this standard (Center for Data Science, 2015). TRIO SSS students are required to meet with an Academic Advisor at least three times per semester. This gives the advisor and student the opportunity to build a relationship and the advisor the ability to monitor the students' progress in courses during the semester. LCC TRIO SSS program requires faculty to complete progress reports regarding student grades mid-semester as a preventive measure to failure. Academic advising in TRIO SSS is not transactional but relational, as suggested by many experts on this subject. The proactive advising model assists advisors in building relationships with students by anticipating their needs and connecting them to appropriate resources and support early in their academic careers (Pargett, 2011).

Current Advising Model at Lansing Community College

Academic advising is offered at LCC, but it is not mandatory or proactive, unlike the advising model used by TRIO. Non-TRIO SSS students meet with an advisor for 30 minutes as opposed to one-hour mandatory advising meetings at least three times per semester as required of TRIO SSS students. Academic advising at LCC has drop-in appointments where the advisor typically only has time to provide transactional services to students and no time to build a relationship with the student: "Advising is the most important component of any institutional

retention effort. A recent survey by ACT and the National Academic Advising Association found that many colleges and universities are underutilizing and poorly administering their advising programs as well as failing to promote advising as a way to increase retention" (Pargett, 2011, p.14). The literature supports that large scale studies have found that graduation rates at colleges and universities that use proactive advising are higher than institutions that do not use this model (Pargett, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze LCC academic advising services and develop a guideline to incorporate the TRIO Academic Advising model in order to provide a proactive advising structure with the goal of improving and increasing the retention rate, persistence rate, and graduation/transfer rate similar to those rates of the LCC TRIO program. In a 2014 study, Noel-Levitz found that two important contributors to student satisfaction and retention are for an advisor to demonstrate knowledge and concern. By engaging in proactive advising, academic advisors can consistently reinforce both characteristics (Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino, 2016).

A primary goal of proactive academic advising at LCC is to aid students in meeting their goal of successful academic completion of LCC degree and certificate programs. While this overarching goal is largely understood by students, staff, faculty, and administration, there may be some question as to whether or not all the components that need to be in place to accomplish this goal are indeed "in place." Specifically, do the primary service delivery agents (academic advisors) have what they need in order to do the job?

Research Questions

The research undertaken utilized the following questions to gain an understanding of the perceptions of LCC non-TRIO advisors regarding academic advising at LCC from the advisor's viewpoint, to explore their opinions regarding their jobs as advisors.

1. Academic Advising

    a. What is the most rewarding aspect of your job as an academic advisor?

    b. What is the most frustrating aspect of your job as an academic advisor?

    c. How can the academic advising system be improved?

2. What type(s) of support from your immediate supervisor would help make the role of the academic advisor more effective?

Research Locale and Design

The study was conducted at LCC. The demographic and racial/ethnicity makeup of LCC students includes 66% who are 24 years of age and under, and 34% who are 25 years of age and over. Students who attend LCC are 68% White, 10% African American, 7% Hispanic, 3% Asian, 1% Native American, and 11% identify as other (See Figures 1 and 2).
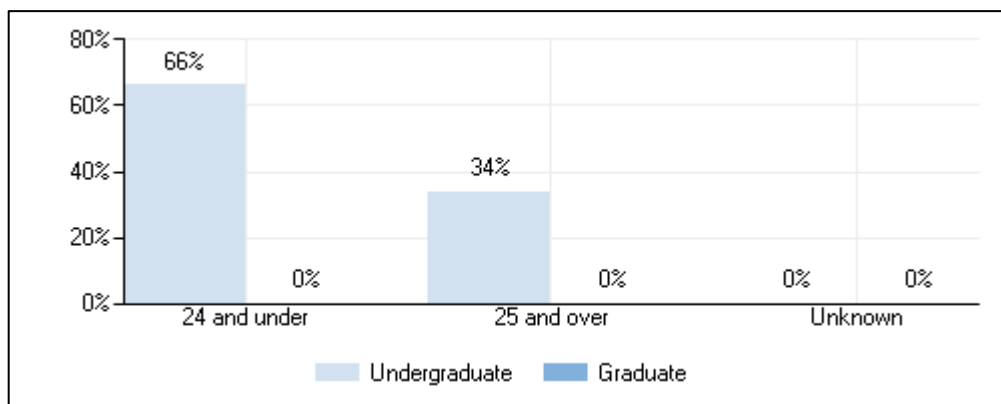
Figure 1:   Age of Students attending LCC (NCES, 2015)
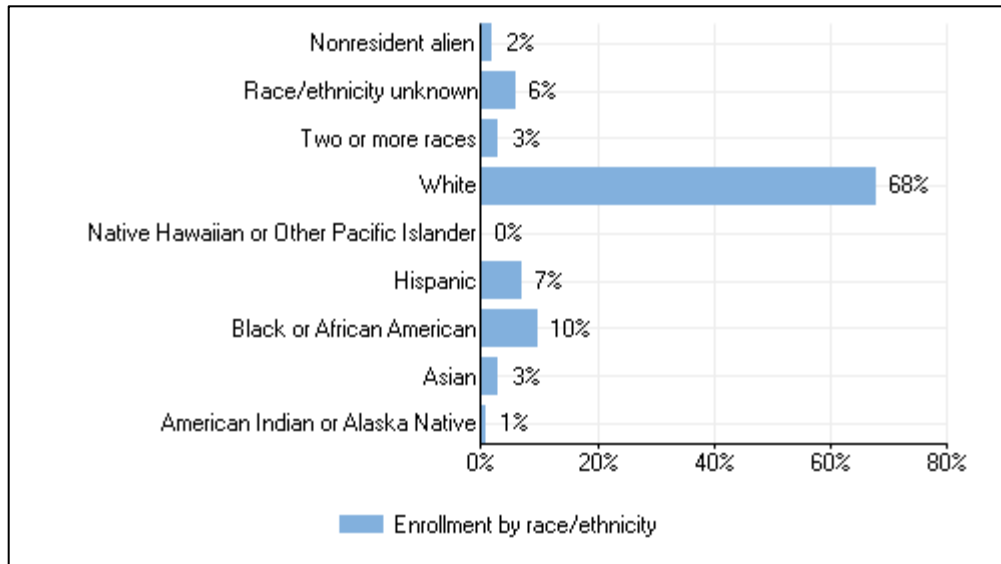
Figure 2:   Racial/Ethnicity Makeup of Student Body at LCC (NCES, 2015).

The research design selected is the qualitative methodology and the interview approach was used to collect data. All interviews were face-to-face at the participants' work site and separate from their work space.

Significance of the Study

Leaders of colleges and universities have committed to increasing the number of college graduates. The significance of this study will address the need for improved and increased support services that directly affect the non-Trio student retention, persistence, and graduation rates at LCC and other community colleges. The study will determine the importance of academic advising and its relationship to the success rates of students that attend institutions of higher education.

Definition of Terms

Listed in the table below are terms used throughout the study.

Table 3: Definitions and Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Retention	Refers to the extent to which students remain enrolled at the institution as they work toward achieving their academic goals.
First Generation Students	The U.S. Department of Education, through the Higher Education Act (2008), has defined a first-generation student as an individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree or, in the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree.
Academic Advising	Academic advising is defined as the process of assisting students in making education plans, selecting and registering for courses, monitoring academic requirements, and assessing academic progress. In addition, students receive assistance in the areas of financial aid, career counseling and graduate school guidance.
Persistence	Refers to the process of both pursuing and achieving educational goals, inclusive of continuing students who are pursuing a bachelor's degree at the host institution as well as those students who have graduated (Engle, 2007).
Completion	Refers to achieving a goal of graduating with a certificate or associates degree and/or transferring to a four-year institution to pursue a bachelor degree.
Academic Need	Academic need refers to one of the five level of needs for participation in the Student Support Services as options outlined by the Office of Postsecondary Education in the U.S. Department of Education.
Low Income	Low-income participant is one whose family's taxable income is less than 150% of the poverty level. The U.S. Department of Commerce (2010), Bureau of the Census, sets guidelines for determining the poverty level for each cohort year.
TRIO	Refers to programs created in response to the Educational Act of 1964 (initially three programs). TRIO began with the Educational Opportunity Act of 1964, the original War on Poverty statute. These federally funded programs were designed to help students overcome class, social, and cultural barriers to higher education.

Summary

Chapter I outlines the history of TRIO Programs and the importance of academic advising as it relates to retention, persistence and completion in higher education. Chapter II is the review of the literature that supports the academic advising model and early warning systems that contribute to the success of first generation, low-income students in higher education.

Chapter III describes the qualitative methodology approach for this study. Chapter IV explains the research results, data analysis and the emerging themes for this study. Chapter V includes the discussion, recommendations, and conclusions as a result of this study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Much of the professional literature written on the subject of at-risk college students has emphasized proactive (intrusive) advising strategies that include prescriptive, developmental, and integrated advising models to help these students succeed in college (Heisserer & Parette, 2002). The Pell Institute (2007) found that when retention services and programs are not centralized, coordinated, or provide resources to first generation and low-income students they "fall through the cracks" and have difficulty navigating the higher education maze. A Gulf Coast Community College (2011) study indicated that many of the programs believed to make the highest contributions to retention at community colleges focuses on academic support/guidance, targeted interventions for specific student populations, and easing the transition of students in to the college environment.

Importance of Academic Advising

King (1993) states that academic advising is a critical component of college support services provided to students in higher education. Academic advising is considered "the only structured service on college campuses that guarantees students interaction with concerned representatives of the institutions" (p. 5). It is the central point in support services where all other campus resources are connected. According to King (1993), a critical factor in assisting first

generation students to adjusting to college life and assimilating into the academic and social environment of higher education is effective academic advising. King points out that effective academic advising is holistic and includes the life of the student, career pathway, academic plan and goals prior to course selection. Effective academic advising leads to student retention, persistence, and completion.

Hunter & White (2004) assert that the only structured program on college campuses that guarantee students sustained interaction with someone who cares about their academic success and future learning experience in college is an academic advisor. The authors believe that academic advising plays a pivotal role in directing student behavior toward those activities that will nurture and support their success toward academic, career, and life goal achievement (Hunter & White, 2004). The literature shows that retention programs that are successful are mandatory; well-advertised and/or proactively identify students in need of services; well-coordinated and/or centrally-operated; run by carefully selected, well-trained faculty and staff; and part of a broader institution-wide effort to improve the educational experience and outcomes of undergraduate students (King, 1993; Gulf Coast Community College, 2011; Pell Institute, 2007). The Pell Institute (2007) suggests that colleges and universities with high graduation rates have proactive academic advising built into their programs. The Pell Institute (2007) believes that proactive advising consists of early warning systems that actively monitor student performance, intervene early when students experience academic difficulty, and follow-up on student progress throughout the semester that the student is enrolled in classes.

Richard Light (2001) states that academic advising adds value to the college experience if done right. Many students at community colleges and universities report a negative experience with an advisor. Light suggests that college administrators must improve teaching and advising

19

so that first generation students have a positive experience on college campuses and feel motivated to succeed. Drake (2011) asserts the role of academic advisors is to build relationships with students and assist them in getting connected to college resources and programs. Drake found that student persistence is linked to "the value of connecting students early on to the institution through learning support systems (tutoring and supplemental instruction programs), first-year programming (learning communities and first-year seminars), and solid academic advising, with advising positioned squarely as the vital link in this retention equation" (p. 9). Academic advising offers students the opportunity of repeated one-on-one interactions throughout their college experience. Advisors should engage the student in meaningful conversations regarding required courses and help the student understand the connectedness to their chosen major. Drake suggests that "the best way to bring all these elements together is by embedding within them solid academic advising" (p.9).

Pargett (2011) asserts that the student-advisor relationship is one where both the student and the advisor know personal information about the other. For example, the advisor should know where the student works, their interests, and some family information. This relationship can provide many benefits to the student by increasing student development and/or academic success for the student. Pargett goes on to point out that continuous interactions with academic advisors can help students develop both academically and professionally because of the relationship has become more personal between the student and the advisor. The literature suggests that students who have developed a relationship with an assigned advisor are more satisfied with their college experience and positively develop as a student (p. ii). In his research, Pargett (2011) found that the more a student and advisor developed a personal relationship and discussed personal and school-related issues, the more likely it is that the student reported a

higher level of satisfaction with the college experience and had a positive experience developing as a student.

The Gulf Coast Community College (2011) study suggests that programs that contribute most to student retention are "academic advising, targeted interventions for special populations, and easing the transition of students through the college" (p. 9). The programs that have the most significant effect on college retention and persistence are those that focus on "academic support/guidance, targeted interventions for specific student populations, and easing the transition of students to the college environment" (p. 9). Pargett (2011) believes that the role of an academic advisor is key in the academic success of a student by mentoring and providing resources to enhance student learning and development. Academic advising, when viewed as an integral part of the educational process, "connects students with learning opportunities and support engagement, success and attainment of key learning outcomes" (p. 2).

Recent advising literature (Gulf Coast Community College, 2011; Pargett, 2011; Drake, 2011) emphasized that nontraditional and first generation student's benefit greatly from proactive advising initiatives. A study completed by Gulf Coast Community College (2011) found that the approach takes into account the needs of each student and focuses on matching interventions and services to those needs. The study suggests that proactive advising is an intrusive method that incorporates intervention strategies for historically at risk groups (p. 9). These proactive advising initiatives include the following:

- Advisors are thoroughly familiar with the college and its available support services, such as counseling, tutoring, career assistance, disability support, student employment, financial aid, and multicultural programs.

- Advisors not only know the resources available at the college, but also know the individual staff and faculty members in charge of various programs in order to provide accurate referrals.

21

- Advisors should be widely available both to schedule formal student/advisor meetings and to field more general inquiries when students drop-in with brief questions.

- Advisors should proactively monitor a student's academic progress even outside of the regular student/advisor meetings (p. 11).

Jennifer Varney (2012) asserts that proactive advising involves the following:

- deliberate intervention to enhance student motivation,

- using strategies to show interest and involvement with students,

- intensive advising designed to increase the probability of student success,

- working to educate students on all options, and

- approaching students before situations develop (p. 1).

Varney's (2012) research found that proactive advising is "a deliberate, structured student intervention at the first indication of academic difficulty in order to motivate the student to seek help. It uses the good qualities of prescriptive advising (experience, awareness of student needs, and structured programs) and of developmental advising (relationship to a student's total needs)" (p. 1). Varney (2012) asserts that proactive advising is directly connected to retention and completion. When students have established an advisor-student relationship they are more connected to the college and the resources it offers. Proactive advisors help students with challenges they face while completing a degree and develop plans with the student to overcome these challenges so they reach their goal.

Researchers (Varney, 2012; and Pell Institute, 2007) believe that by monitoring student grades, attendance, and keeping in communication with faculty, proactive advisors meet and work with students to design support systems and academic safety nets to prevent students from spiraling too far into an academic hole that leads them to drop out of college.

The Role of the Academic Advisor

Strayhorn (2014) emphasized that students need academic advisors who understand the culture of higher education and are able to navigate the system to help students get through it successfully. Varney (2012) believes that each student who enrolls in college plans to complete with a certificate, degree, or transfer. Varney suggests that academic advisors help students make the connection to college. Strayhorn (2014) describes the responsibilities of these cultural navigators as advising students in choosing a major, assisting students in registering for courses related to their major, monitoring student's progress towards degree completion, and assisting students in transferring to a four-year university. Both researchers (Strayhorn, 2014; and Varney, 2012) argue that cultural navigators (academic advisors) in higher educational institutions help guide students through the academic jargon until they arrive at their academic destination or at a minimum they are comfortable steering while their cultural navigators act as guides and keep them focused on their future.

In a similar study, Earl (1988) argued that there are differences between intrusive, prescriptive, and developmental advising, yet the structure of the model remains the same. Earl states that prescriptive advising "mandates the student's performance follow a curriculum, set of rules or regulations and motivation is secondary to performance" (p. 29). He goes on to state that developmental advising is "one-to-one (or small group) interaction between the advisor and student who is motivated to seek assistance" (p. 29). This model is inefficient because it depends upon the workload of the advisors, availability of advisors and motivation of students to meet with the advisors (p. 29). Earl (1988) states in his research that intrusive advising has three principles that support the role of academic advisors:

- The first principle is that academic and social integration is the key to freshmen persistence in college.

- The second principle is that deficiencies in this necessary integration are treatable. Students can be taught orientation skills.

- The third principle is that student motivation to seek assistance does not need to be an operational variable in this treatment. Intrusive orientation does not depend on volunteerism but is a response to identified curriculum need. (p. 32)

Effect of Lack of Resources on Student Success

Tinto (2004), Strayhorn (2014), and the Pell Institute (2007) all found in their research that the lack of access to resources in higher education has a negative effect on student success. Tinto (2004) argues that there are notable differences in academic preparation of two- and four-year students. Although access to higher education has increased and gaps have decreased for low-income and first generation students, completion between high and low-income students remain the same. There is still much work to do to translate access to higher education into student success. Tinto points out that there are five conditions that are needed in order for students to succeed in college: "(1) institutional commitment, (2) institutional expectations, (3) support, (4) feedback, and (5) involvement or engagement" (p. 6). Tinto believes that institutional commitment is important to student success because it is more than words, brochures, and mission statements, but the willingness of the institution to invest in resources to offer incentives and rewards that lead to student success (p. 6).

Like Tinto, Strayhorn (2014) argued that institutions must connect students with the campus resources, both academic and social, for them to be successful in college. Unfortunately, more than 50% of students who enroll in college are unsuccessful because they are not academically prepared to compete in college or they fail to use the resources, information, and advice that is there to help them succeed (p. 57). The Pell Institute (2007) found that high

performing institutions of student success included resources that focused on "first year experience, student involvement and engagement, faculty and staff who are 'first responders' to student needs, early warning and advising systems, special programs for at-risk students and ample academic and social support services" (p. 3).

Summary

The studies presented in this research support the importance of effective academic advising and retention programs that help promote student success among first generation and low income students. Early warning and academic advising systems must be in place to monitor student progress and intervene immediately when student performance is low (Pell Institute, 2007). There must be strong leadership and institutional commitment to resources that support student success of at-risk students. The literature suggests that there must be overall strategies implemented at the institution that support retention efforts focused on at-risk students (p. 4). The role of the academic advisor is to help students make the connection to college (Varney, 2012).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In a nutshell, the proposed research seeks to understand how to infuse the proactive academic advising model into the current LCC academic advising structure. A qualitative research methodology was used to study the primary service delivery agents (academic advisors) and their perceptions as to whether or not they have what they need in order to do the job and meet the overarching goal of aiding students in meeting their goal of successful academic completion of LCC degree and certificate programs. Howell (2010) conducted a qualitative research study on Appreciative Advising from the Academic Advisor's Viewpoint at the University of Nebraska, and it is from the rigor of that endeavor upon which the methodology for the current study draws its structure and inspiration.

Rationale for a Qualitative Design

Creswell (2010) provided the rationale for using qualitative design by stating, "Qualitative research is an inquiry approach that is helpful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon" (p. 626). Earlier, Creswell (1998) listed eight reasons to choose a qualitative study for research: "(1) the research question begins with 'what or how' (2) the topic needs to be explored, (3) there is a need for a detailed view of the topic, (4) individuals are to be studied in their natural setting, (5) there is an interest in writing in a literary style, (6) there are

sufficient time and resources to spend on data collection, (7) the audience is receptive to qualitative data on the subject, and (8) the researchers' role as an active learner who can present the story from the participants' viewpoint is emphasized" (p. 15). The focus of this chapter is to explain the methodological rationale and framework for this LCC study. The need to interview LCC academic advisors to gather data to improve or enhance the LCC general academic advising systems supports the study's qualitative research methodology.

Qualitative Research Design

Drawing from Howell (2010), the research design of the current study used interviews to investigate whether or not the LCC non-TRIO advisors believed that the academic advisement process needed revision and what would help improve the advising services. Howell (2010) noted that "conducting personal individual interviews and observations was the most appropriate means of gathering data regarding academic advisor's perception of the effectiveness…." (p. 34).

Similar to Howell (2010), the participants in the current LCC study were interviewed on-campus individually regarding the challenges and improvements needed in academic advising to form better partnerships with student and academic advisor. The qualitative interview process allowed the researcher to conduct the discussion with a formal set of questions that all of the interviewees were required to answer. However, the interview process also flowed along the lines of an actual conversation in which the researcher often added additional follow up questions based upon the individual unique responses to the structured questions. In some instances, the researcher would pose probing questions during the course of the conversation in order to allow the interviewee to provide a broader context to the thought that they were attempting to express.

Industry and Participant Selection

Careful selection of the interviewees was based upon their current job status at LCC, the defined job description used to hire TRIO advisors, and the expressed willingness of the participants to be interviewed. The primary goals of the research were to gain an understanding of the perception of the LCC academic advisors regarding advising and how to infuse the proactive academic advising model into the current LCC academic advising structure.

Researcher Role

The role of the researcher in this study is that of an "insider" who is a long-time student advocate. The researcher is the Director of the LCC TRIO program and an active academic advisor with more than two decades of student services delivery experience. The researcher has had several years' experience as both a non-TRIO advisor and as a TRIO advisor and drew from her level of expertise to identify and interview the research participants, as well as to interpret and analyze the data gathered.

Data Collection Interview Process

Eight academic advisors from LCC were selected to participate in an interview process. The interviews took place at LCC in the participant's work space or at LCC in a separate area from their work space. The interviews ran approximately forty-five to sixty minutes in length. Each academic advisor was provided a series of standard questions to answer. The participants responded to the questions orally, and an audio recorder was used to record the conversation between the researcher and the interviewee. In addition, the researcher also gathered data via handwritten notes of the interviewee's responses to the questions asked. The interviews were sent to a transcriber to process the oral data (See Appendix A). All interviews were completed

face to face; thus, the subjects were identifiable. However, the information that was collected does not represent any risks to the subjects, and the researcher did use their names or identities in the dissertation. Prior to interview, all participants were asked to sign a Consent Agreement (See Appendix B). A transcriber service (Scribie.com) was used to transcribe the audio recordings.

Data Analysis Strategies

The data analysis effort relied primarily upon the identification of common expressed beliefs in response to the structured questions asked of each interviewee. Prior to the formal transcription of the audio data, the researcher spent several hours reviewing the taped discussions to identify repetitive words and phrasing that might lend themselves to overarching emergent themes coming from the advisors at the forefront of delivering the academic advising services at LCC. Similar to Howell (2010), open coding was used to identify initial similarities and differences between the interviewee's responses. Using selective coding core categories were developed for which the researcher used when undertaking examination of the formal transcribed data.

Verification Strategies

The career expertise and the student service support philosophy of the researcher necessitated that research verification strategies be included in the investigation and analysis of the project. As Howell (2010) discussed in her work regarding academic advisor's perception of appreciative advising, researcher self-disclosure, participant verification, and input from a group of advising experts were all employed to aid in establishing the credibility of the findings of this study.

Creswell and Miller (2000) explained the use of self-disclosure as "a process whereby researchers report on personal beliefs, values, and biases that may shape their inquiry" (p. 5). Helping a reader to understand the beliefs and preconceived ideas that shape the researcher's perspective of understanding the subject that is being examined, also provides the reader the opportunity to filter what the reader could perceive to be a researcher bias. Ultimately, the self-disclosure filter aids via the researcher assist the reader in establishing the credibility of the work.

Furthermore, the process of returning to the interviewees and allowing them to review the information the researcher extracted from their discussion, serves to "double-check" that their perceptions are being accurately expressed as well as accurately heard. Similar to Howell (2010), "any further comments made by the interviewees were incorporated into the final analysis and in this way the participants were able to lend credibility to the study" (p. 39).

Finally, the researcher sought input and guidance from a network of academic advising colleagues who held doctoral degrees and were familiar with both the content area of advising and in employing research methods to satisfy the attainment of a doctoral degree.

Ethical Considerations

Similar to the research methodology employed by Howell (2010) during the dissertation process, each participant in this study was informed of the purpose and objectives of this study. Approval from the Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained prior to the beginning of this study. Each participant signed an Informed Consent form which consented to the audiotaping of the interview prior to the interview. The identity of each participant in this study was kept strictly confidential. After each interview was completed, the

data (voice) file was transferred from the researcher's digital voice recorder to the researcher's computer, which was kept locked in her home personal files. Each audio digital file was erased prior to the subsequent interview. Each interview was transcribed by a trained transcriber who signed a confidential agreement (see Appendix C).

Researcher Bias

According to Merriam (2009), the primary source for data collection, analysis, and research grounded in the participant's experiences and perspectives is the researcher in a qualitative study. The research questions were consistent to minimize negative research bias in this study. The researcher works at the same community college as the interview participants and know the interview participants that participated in this study. The researcher did not provide any additional information to the interview participants beyond the questionnaire used to collect the data for this study. Interview participants provided their own perspectives based on their experiences and opinions and the researcher did not provide any type of definitions or examples of competencies, attributes, and knowledge prior to participant interviews.

Limitations

There are several limitations addressed in this research study methodology:

1. One limitation is students who participate in the TRIO SSS Program are not limited to receiving support services from only the program. TRIO SSS students can use the academic support services available through the college (LCC). Sometimes students must receive tutoring services through the Learning Commons because the TRIO Program does not have enough tutors to assist the students in math, science, writing, or other developmental courses. Counseling services are critical to the success and retention of TRIO students. Limited funding received from the grant does not afford a full-time counselor for the TRIO Program at LCC. Therefore, TRIO students must seek counseling outside of the program and this may prevent them from getting the help they need to continue success at LCC.

2. The second limitation that the researcher faces is the inability to assess what motivates a student to be successful and complete a certificate, degree, and/or graduate and transfer to a four-year institution. Motivation is an intangible that cannot be measured for the purposes of this study.

3. The third limitation is that first generation, low-income students make decisions regarding their success in college based on personal concerns such as illness, finances, and family obligations. For the purposes of this study, it is difficult to measure whether these students can be successful if these barriers or obstacles were removed from their path, giving them a clear path to completion.

4. The fourth limitation is that the data presented in the research study comes from an existing source, Center for Data Science at LCC, and additional specific information about the students may not be available to the researcher.

Delimitations

There were two delimitations considered when deciding the scope of this research. One delimitation is that the research study was conducted at only one community college located in Michigan. Second delimitation focuses only on first-generation and low-income students in the TRIO Program and eligible students not served by TRIO at Lansing Community College (LCC). These two delimitations were selected because the definitions of "first-generation and low-income students" vary among scholars and researchers (Childs, 2013).

Summary

A qualitative research methodology was used to study the academic advisors and their perceptions as to whether or not they have the necessary tools to meet their job responsibilities as advisors and meet the overarching goal of assisting students in meeting their goal of successful academic completion of LCC degree and certificate programs. The methodology for the current study was inspired and structured on the rigor of a qualitative research study completed by Howell (2010) at the University of Nebraska. One-on-one interviews were accomplished to

collect data for this study. A standard format of coding was used to analyze the data gathered in

this study. As a result, themes emerged and are discussed in Chapter IV of this study.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to analyze Lansing Community College academic advising services and develop a guideline to incorporate the TRIO Academic Advising model in order to provide a proactive advising structure with the goal of improving and increasing the retention rate, persistence rate, and graduation/transfer rate similar to LCC TRIO program.

According to the literature, qualitative research is "discovery not hypothesis testing" and "not controlling variables but discovering them" (Service, 2009; Corbin & Strauss 2008). The researcher held one-on-one interviews with academic advisors at LCC between December 15, 2016, and January 15, 2017, to collect data for the study. An audio recorder was used to record each interview. The data were sent to a professional transcriber service to transcribe the data. The researcher learned from reviewing the data and categorizing it that academic advisors expressed common beliefs that a different system of advising is needed at LCC to improve the retention, persistence, and graduation rates of students. Analyzing the data via open coding resulted in five major themes emerging in the study.

Open Coding

Open coding is a process that allows the researcher to ask questions, be objective, interpret, and analyze the data collected so that it is processed into categories and themes

(Howell, 2010). Content analysis is a widely used qualitative research method to assist the researcher in analyzing data. There are three approaches to content analysis: (1) conventional, (2) directed, or (3) summative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researcher used two of the three approaches: (1) conventional and (3) summative. Conventional content analysis allows the researcher to interpret the text data and code into categories. Summative analysis requires the researcher to count and compare words and phrases, and interpret the underlying context of the data collected (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researcher read each interview individually. She looked for similar words or phrases and assigned them into categories related to the research questions. The categories were (1) academic advising, (2) academic advising systems, (3) advising support. Subcategories included words that appeared most often in the data from the interviewees were (a) helping, (b) communication, (c) more advisors, and (d) training. The researcher elected to process the data by hand instead of a software product to categorize the data. This gave the researcher an opportunity to get an in depth understanding of the thoughts of each advisor and how they view academic advising.

Selective Coding

Selective coding is the process used to segment the data gathered into unified categories centered on a central core category that leads to the main phenomenon of the research (Howell, 2010). The researcher may find that the core category already exists, but a subcategory or new words may need to be defined to explain the central phenomenon.

Participants

The proposed research seeks to understand how to infuse the proactive academic advising model into the current LCC academic advising structure. The researcher contacted 10 academic

advisors at LCC and nine agreed to be interviewed. The researcher made several attempts to contact the tenth advisor via email and phone calls but received no response. The data from the first advisor interviewed was unable to be processed due to technical difficulties with the original audio recorder. Attempts were made to reschedule the interview with the advisor, but the advisor was not available. Thus, the researcher interviewed eight academic advisors from LCC. The participants were diverse in ethnicity, age, gender, and experience. Each advisor had at least five years of work experience advising at LCC. The interviews were face to face and one-on-one with the researcher. All interviews took place at LCC in a conference room on a separate floor from where the advisors meet with their students. The interviews were scheduled between December 15, 2016, and January 15, 2017. Although each advisor had various levels of experience in advising, each was similar in their approach to advising. To protect the anonymity of the advisors, the researcher assigned names as Advisor 1 – Advisor 8 to correspond to the answers from each advisor interviewed for this study.

Discussion of Research Questions

To get a clear perspective on academic advising at LCC, the researcher interviewed eight academic advisors at LCC and asked the following questions:

1. Academic Advising

    a. What is the most rewarding aspect of your job as an academic advisor?

    b. What is the most frustrating aspect of your job as an academic advisor?

    c. How can the academic advising system be improved?

2. What type(s) of support from your immediate supervisor would help make the role of the academic advisor more effective?

This chapter provides the results and analysis from the data collected from interviews with the academic advisors and discusses the themes that emerged from the data gathered.

Analysis of Findings

The researcher interviewed eight academic advisors for this study, audio recorded the interviews, had the data transcribed by a professional transcriber, and coded the data for analysis. The first question the researcher asked the participants in the study focused on academic advising and what the advisors like about their job and what are the frustrations of their job. The second part of the question asked the participants what improvements are needed to the academic advising system at LCC. The second question asked by the researcher to the participants in the study was what type of support the advisors receive from their immediate supervisor that help make their job more effective.

Research Question 1 – Academic Advising

Results: 1.a. What is the most rewarding aspect of your job as an academic advisor?

The researcher analyzed the data collected in the interview and found that the most rewarding aspect of the participants' job is helping students make decisions about their career path. The participants appreciate the opportunity advising gives them to build relationships with students to help them achieve their goal of completing a degree or certificate at LCC. Participants enjoy the story telling that they hear from students. Participants commented in the interviews that they enjoy the interaction with the students and sharing the experiences of the students that make them better advisors.

Advisor 3 stated: "When I get a successful student here, nine times of the 10, helping that student here is helping my community here, because they are gonna stay here, their family's here, etc. So, that's why I do this work."

Advisor 4 stated: "when I came here, it was for the purpose of helping students. I thought I was going to make a difference. I thought that I could help students do something different in their lives academically. I was a TRIO student so I understand what it means to have somebody support you, help you make decisions, and that's what I came here for."

Advisor 5 stated: "I find the most rewarding aspect that I help facilitate students making career goals and creating success hopefully in their lives, that I'm helping them to learn skills that are lifelong skills…"

Advisor 6 states: "Seeing student's progress. Yes, I enjoy the opportunity of seeing students early in their academic career and the follow-up each semester or periodically through the time when they eventually complete their degrees, and along the way I like to see the milestones they achieve, whether it's completing math requirements, writing requirements, core requirements. That's what I enjoy the most."

Helping students make career choices that lead to lifelong skills and sustainability in their community and family are important to the participants in this study and are the most rewarding aspects of their job.

Analysis

The findings indicate that the participants interviewed for this study enjoyed their jobs as academic advisors and enjoy helping students make decisions regarding their careers. The participants enjoy developing relationships with students where they get to know them on a

personal level. The advisor-student relationship is important to first generation students because

it connects them to the academic environment and community for the next two to four years.

Helping students reach their goals of completion and building life skills that will sustain them

and their families financially are reasons the participants enjoy their careers. Making a difference

in student lives is a rewarding aspect of the job that the participants do daily. The words that

were common in most responses by the interview participants were "helping students,"

"storytelling," "graduate and complete," "make a difference in their lives."

Results: 1.b. What is the most frustrating aspect of your job as an academic advisor?

Advisors were asked to describe the most frustrating part of their job. The participants

responded that communication was first on their list. Participants commented that

communication is not practiced in divisions or departments at their institution.

Advisor 2 stated:

I guess sometimes as an advisor, I might feel a sense of defeat when we have multiple appointments, and I may not be able to reach every single appointment... I'm sorry, every single student at all, or am able to accomplish every single needs that might be on the student's checklist. So not only does the student want a sense of accomplishment in knowing that he or she has gotten goals met, but then I would too, in knowing that I've gotten through every single thing that I needed to get through with the student.

And this next scenario's not so much a sense of frustration, but a sense of need. It's a little disheartening when I see students who come through, and they've taken classes that don't relate to their goals. So that is disheartening, rather than frustrating. I would just add that as being a little bit disheartening to me, knowing that they've taken these classes they may not transfer, or they don't match the curriculum guide, and then it's almost as if they have a sense of trying to start over when they actually could have been finished with their curriculum a long time ago.

Advisor 3 stated:

Believe it or not my most frustrating job is not my students; the most frustrating job is my administration. That is more frustrating than ever here. Sometimes, you know what, we put rules in place and then someone else comes in and they get rid of the rules. Students get used to the rules and they plan accordingly, then they get rid of the rules. A few years ago we said, "No drop-ins during the week." And guess what? Students wouldn't drop-in; they made appointments. They were getting really good about that, and the crazy rush we

have right now was... We still had a crazy rush but it was minimal compared to what it is today. And then someone says, "Nope, can't do that, gotta have drop-ins." Well now, we don't have time to have one-on-one appointments 'cause all our time is spent with the drop-ins. I have, let's see, all-day Wednesdays, two-and-a-half hour, well it ends up being three or four hours on Tuesday, three or four hours. So I'm spending basically two days a week doing drop-in appointments. That's why I can't really have the quality of time that I'd like to have with my students. So, that's the most frustrating part.

Advisor 4 stated:

Lack of training. I did not get the training that I thought would get. I thought I was going to learn how to be an academic advisor. I made it very clear that I did not know how to advise and I was told I would learn how to be an academic advisor, and two years into it, I still don't believe I have your confidence.

Advisor 5 stated:

Absolutely the most frustrating aspect of my job is that I'm in a part-time position at a campus with over 10,000 students, and I also help the other centers and campuses sometimes, and I'm in a union position.

Additional comments focused on changes that are made in the division and they (advisors) are not included when they happen; advisors felt that they are often the last to know about the changes and their job is to inform students of current policies and procedures at the college during advising meetings. The advisors commented that they would like to do more collaborative work with colleagues in other departments at the college. Communicating with each other through exchange of articles related to their work was suggested in the participant interviews.

Analysis

Findings from the analysis showed that participants are frustrated with their jobs because of lack of communication, no training, inconsistency with rules, and shortage of academic advisors to handle the number of students at the college who need advising. The institution where they work is a large system with many divisions and departments and the way information

is disseminated across campus does not always reach the people that need it most to provide the best quality service to the students. Some common words from the interviewee's were "communication," "connecting," "training," "multiple appointments," and "policies."

Results: 1.c. How can the academic advising system be improved?

The participants responded to this question stating that the academic advising system can be improved through collaborative work with other departments. Advisor 1 commented that "collaboration is a way to get the glitches out of the system." Most of the participants in this study believe that there should be formal training for advisors. Advisors stated that they are trained by sitting and watching other seasoned advisors do the job. Advisor 3 stated: "Well, I'll tell you, with enrollment being as low as it is, I think that we could improve our system by going to a true case-management model, like TRIO has." Advisor 4 commented that training needs to be improved in advising: "I have learned as I go, but that is the worst way to bring an advisor in. If you're going to have an academic advisor, then you should train them." Advisor 6 stated that more time with students would improve the system: "Well, one of the things certainly is the amount of time the advisors have with students. And with extended time, there could be a more holistic approach to advising."

Analysis

The researcher learned from the advisors that the academic advising system at their institution needs improvement. According to the advisors, it is a large system that has many divisions and departments, and information is lost through lack of communication. Advisor 1 suggested that a way to get the glitches out of the system is to collaborate with the different departments and divisions at the college to improve services that directly affect the students. The participants are a small group at the college, yet they have the most important job of advising

students toward a career path. Advisor 3 suggested that the college should consider implementing a case-management model similar to TRIO Program to improve enrollment and better advisor-student relationships. They commented that not being included in the changes made at the college prevents them from doing the best job as an advisor. Better training was suggested by the participants to do their job. Instead of learning as you go and misadvising the student, attending formal advisor training sessions will benefit and support the advisors in their jobs. Better communication can improve the advising system according to the participants. Making sure that information is distributed to each department and divisions in a timely manner determines how good the information that the advisors give to the students will be. It is frustrating to the advisors when they are not completely informed regarding the changes that the administration has made that affects their job and the students they advise.

Common words that appeared in this question were "collaborative," "communication," "training," "mandatory advising."

Research Question 2: What type(s) of support from your immediate supervisor would help make the role of the academic advisor more effective?

Results

Advisors commented in the interviews that they do feel supported by their supervisor. They would like release time to go to conferences and workshops to learn current information about academic advising. Advisor 1 stated: "I haven't gone to an international conference, so I think some maybe targeted professional development." Professional development is needed in their jobs to better serve the students they advise. Advisor 3 states: "As an advisor, when we look at the millennials and the kinds of students that we have coming here. If we don't grow as advisors, how are we gonna help them? They don't do things the old way. We have to know the new ways. We have to be able to do the new ways to get them what they need." Some of the

participants commented that institutional support would be in the form of mandatory advising. This would increase retention efforts on campus. Students would be required to meet with their advisor three or four times a semester, strengthening the advisor/student relationship during the students' college career. Advisor 8 commented: "And then I think that the mandatory advising would help us to retain students, and I think it would make them more successful because they have contact at the beginning, throughout their time here, and then they just kinda know."

Analysis

Because the supervisor for the participants interviewed for this study has never had any advising experience, the researcher was surprised to learn that the eight advisors interviewed was pleased with the support that they receive from their supervisor. They commented that she is busy with various projects and the numerous changes that the division is undergoing, but she does make sure that she meets with them and listen to their concerns about advising. The participants believe that they need more professional development, more advisors, and more training for everyone, including the supervisor.

The participants are concerned that they are not current on trends and best practices in their profession because they do not get the opportunity to attend conferences or workshops that help them develop professionally. Students are different today and expect to learn new ways of doing things and the participants believe that participating in professional development trainings will provide them with the skills needed to be successful in their careers and assist students. Some of the participants commented that institutional support would be in the form of mandatory advising. This would increase retention efforts on campus. Students would be required to meet with their advisor three or four times a semester, strengthening the advisor-student relationship during the students' college career.

Common words used were "more advisors," "training," "case management," and "professional development." The theme developed from this analysis is training.

Emerging Themes

The researcher analyzed the data collected and processed it through open coding and selective coding. The researcher grouped common words and phrases into categories with similar themes. Once the researcher completed the analysis of the data collected for this study, five themes emerged.

Theme 1: Helping Students

One theme that emerged from the interviews was "helping students." The advisors stated that the reason they work as advisors is to help students reach their goals. As noted in the sections above, the following statements illustrate this point:

- Advisor 1 stated, "helping students select classes for their major or curriculum" was a rewarding part of her job as an advisor."

- Advisor 2 said, "helping students select classes for their major…"

- Advisor 4 said, "I thought she was going to make a difference by helping students as an advisor. "I was a TRIO student and I understand what it means to have somebody support you, help you make decisions, that's what I came to do."

- Advisor 5 stated, "that I am helping them learn skills that are lifelong skills …"

- Advisor 7 stated, "Being able to help people. Being able to help students find their way in terms of, not only academically, but career oriented."

- Advisor 8 stated, "part of being an academic advisor is helping students figure out their way to their goal. …so if they don't understand terminology, I help explain it or how classes relate to transfer. …I help them problem solve."

Theme 2: Academic Advising System

The second theme common to two advisors was administration or system preventing

them from getting things done in a timely manner. As the advisors indicated in their interviews,

their frustration with organizational aspects affects their success:

- Advisor 1 stated that "the system is large and the advisors are a small part of the system. The system should be connected at all levels to work smoothly. Staff, administration, and students need to be connected so that students are successful reaching their goals."

- Advisor 2 "…the most frustrating part of the job is the administration. Sometimes we put rules in place, and then someone comes in and they get rid of the rules. Students get used to the rules and they plan accordingly, and then the administration gets rid of the rules."

- Advisor 3 "…I think that when you're looking at what kind of advising system you're gonna to have or what kind of advising model you're gonna take, that you really need the people at the table that are gonna be doing the work."

Some other frustrations cited by the participants were (1) multiple appointments to meet

with students over a short period of time, and (2) advisors feel that they are not giving students

the optimal advice to reach their goal. One advisor, Advisor 3, was frustrated with her job

because "drop-in advising" was added to their work load without any input from the advisors.

Lack of training as an academic advisor was one frustration that Advisor 4 mentioned in her

interview.

Theme 3: Communication

Communication is a third theme that emerges from the data collected for this study.

Advisors believe that more communication is needed within the department and division at their

institution. Decisions are made that affect their job, yet they are not included in the conversations

nor are the changes communicated to them so that they can do their job better. As noted in the

Results sections previously, here are some of the comments shared by the advisors regarding

improving the academic advisement system at LCC:

- Advisor 1 said, "so we have to develop these plans for students, and the system has glitches. But if we don't talk to each other, we don't know there's glitches."

- Advisor 7 stated, "I'm still surprised where an advisor will know a piece of information, but then our customer service representatives over at main campus doesn't have a clue, and it works vice versa, the other way around as well."

- Advisor 8 said, "I feel the most frustrating part of the job is communication being disseminated in a timely manner."

Theme 4: Advisor / Student Relationships

Advisor/student relationship was a fourth emerging theme from the interviews. Advisors

discussed the importance of the relationship between the advisor and the student. The role of the

academic advisor is to build relationships with students and assist them in getting connected to

college resources and programs (Drake, 2011). The participants discussed in the interviews the

limited amount of time they have to build a relationship with the student due to multiple

appointments scheduled throughout the day. As indicated in the Results sections above, many of

the comments reflected the importance of this relationship:

- Advisor 1 feels that she cannot build a relationship with a student because she advises in more than one area of the campus.

- Advisor 8 stated that "…mandatory advising would help us retain students…if I'm seeing you three or four times a week, you know I know you, right? And we having a relationship and should be able to help you better."

- Advisor 7 believes that the newly hired Academic Success Coaches will help solidify the advisor/student relationship. "These coaches will get to know the students that are in academic recess and give them the resources needed to assist them in successfully completing their goals. Students are assigned to a coach and this is where the advisor/student relationship begins."

Theme 5: Training

Training was a theme that advisors believe is needed to improve academic advising at their institution. As indicated by their responses, the advisors feel that their job is more difficult than it should be because there is no formal training to learn the intricacies of advising.

- Advisor 4 said that "the lack of training made it much more difficult to do her job." She thought there would be a formal training where she would sit down one-on-one with a seasoned advisor for several weeks to learn her job and be better prepared to help students. Instead she met with an advisor for a few hours and was expected to know everything about advising. She said in the interview, "it has taken me two years to learn how to advise and I still do not feel comfortable in my job as an advisor."

- Advisor 3 says, "all staff including the supervisor should receive advising training. It's important to know what the job entails in order to be a good supervisor. We don't need an administrator; we need someone that knows advising."

Advisors 4 and 5 shared the need for more full-time advisors to advise 15,000 students at their institution.

- Advisor 4 shared that "academic advising is a full-time job not part-time." It is difficult to establish a relationship with a student in 20 minute sessions.

- Advisor 5 said, "she is frustrated because she is the only career advisor, part-time, for more than 10,000 students that need career advising."

Analysis of Results and Themes

An analysis of the results in this study indicates that the nine participants who were interviewed enjoyed their job as advisors. The participants interviewed enjoyed helping students make decisions regarding their career paths. The participants commented that better training and preparation to do their job as advisors would make their work less frustrating. Better communication and support for professional development are improvements needed in the advising system. Themes that were common in the analysis of the data collected from the

interviews were helping students, communication, training, building better advisor/student relationships and improving the advising system overall.

Summary

The researcher analyzed the results and findings of the data collected from the interviews with the advisors. A key finding of the study is the importance of infusing aspects of the TRIO proactive advising model into the current academic advising model at LCC. The findings from this data resulted in the participants' appreciation for the work that they do with students. The advisors commented that they enjoyed helping students choose a career path that would lead to family sustainability and lifelong skills. The lack of communication and training in the advising department is a frustration to the participants in the study, but it did not disillusion them or discourage them from continuing their job as advisors. Overall, the participants enjoy their work as academic advisors and appreciate the support they receive from their immediate supervisor.

Chapter V presents a discussion, conclusion, and recommendations based on the research in this study.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the research. The researcher offers recommendations for future research to improve academic advising on college campuses. Finally, the chapter concludes with the researcher's perspective on proactive academic advising.

The purpose of this study was to analyze LCC's academic advising services and develop a guideline to incorporate features of the TRIO Academic Advising model, in order to provide a proactive advising structure with the goal of improving and increasing the retention, persistence, and graduation or transfer rate similar to those rates of the LCC TRIO program.

In a 2014 study, Noel-Levitz found that two important contributors to student satisfaction and retention are for an advisor to demonstrate both (1) knowledge and (2) concern. By engaging in proactive advising, academic advisors can consistently reinforce both characteristics (Donaldson, McKinney, Lee, & Pino, 2016). Other studies have shown the importance of academic advising and the effect it has on first generation and low income students' success in completing college (Drake, 2011 & Engle, 2007). Early warning and academic advising systems must be in place to monitor student progress and intervene so that advisors can intervene immediately when student performance is low (Pell Institute, 2007). There must be strong leadership and institutional commitment to resources that support student success of at-risk students. The literature suggests that there must be overall strategies implemented at the institution that support retention efforts focused on at-risk students (p. 4).

49

Nontraditional and first generation student's benefit greatly from proactive advising initiatives on college campuses. The role of academic advisors in higher educational institutions is to help guide students through the academic maze so that they arrive comfortably to their academic destination of graduation (Gulf Coast Community College, 2011; Pargett, 2011; Drake, 2011).

Summary of Study

The research for this study focused on two main questions:

1. Academic Advising:
   a. What is the most rewarding aspect of your job as an academic advisor?
   b. What is the most frustrating aspect of your job as an academic advisor?
   c. How can the academic advising system be improved?

2. What type(s) of support from your immediate supervisor would help make the role of the academic advisor more effective?

The first question addressed the academic advisor's perception of their job. The data were collected and analyzed in Chapter IV and the results indicated that the advisors found their job to be rewarding. They each indicated the pleasure they get from helping students find a career, choose their classes, or achieve a life goal that they have set for themselves. However, the advisors were frustrated with dissemination of information between colleagues, divisions, and departments at the college that directly impact their job. Drop-in advising was another frustration that academic advisors discussed in the interviews. They indicated that there are not enough advisors to handle the number of students who need academic advising daily, and drop-in advising adds more stress to their job by forcing them to attempt to serve even more students in a short period of time. To improve the academic advising system, the results indicated that advisors suggested more advisors are hired to serve the students enrolled at the college. One

advisor suggested that a case-management model be implemented, similar to TRIO's, so that each advisor has a set number of students with whom they can build a relationship and advise on a regular basis.

The second research question addressed whether the immediate supervisor of the academic advisors supported them and the work that they do. The results indicated that the advisors do believe that their immediate supervisor supports them. They indicated, however, that there should be more professional development opportunity for them to attend conferences and workshops to improve their knowledge in advising. The advisors suggested more collaborative meetings across departments and divisions to learn and communicate how to improve support services to help students succeed. Better training of the advisors was an additional common theme in these findings.

As a result of the research questions that were asked in the interviews, there were four themes emerged from the data collected from the eight academic advisors: (1) Helping Students, (2) Academic Advising System, (3) Communication, and (4) Training. These themes are all interconnected to the importance of an effective proactive academic advising model. As the literature in this study has shown, academic advising is the most important component to the success of first generation and low income students. Academic advisors are in these jobs to help students succeed in choosing a course, career, or life skill. The academic advising system should offer collaborative professional development opportunities for advisors to improve their skills so that they can better serve their students. In the interviews, all the advisors discussed how important communication and training is to helping students accomplish their goal of graduating college.

Recommendations for Expanding the Advising Model

The proposed TRIO-infused academic advising model is designed to improve student persistence, retention, and graduation for SSS-eligible students who are not directly served by the TRIO program. The following table, while not comprehensive, details the significant differences between the current academic advising practices and the improvements this new model will bring:

Table 4: Proposed TRIO SSS Infused Academic Advising Model

CURRENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE	STUDENT EXPERIENCE UNDER PROPOSED CHANGES
Students are generally shuffled between advisors during their academic experience and often do not know who their advisors are.	Students work with the same general professional academic advisor from admission through graduation. Faculty advisors and specific-population advisors partner with the general professional advisor to provide consistent student support.
Students receive incorrect and inconsistent advice from multiple advisors.	Students receive assistance from two well-trained advisors. All academic advisors trained to provide consistent standards and are coordinated through a central authority.
Undecided, sophomore, and transfer students feel as if they receive no academic advising support.	Specific academic advising outcomes for undecided, sophomore, and transfer students are woven into the new program.
Students find it difficult to schedule timely appointments to meet with their academic advisors.	Students will have a general professional advisor and a career specific advisor who work as a team to provide timely academic advising. Each advisor will back up the other, and professional academic advisors are centrally located to provide easy access.
Students do not know what is expected of them, or what they can expect from their advisors.	Students will receive an advising syllabus that clearly explains each stakeholder's role in the advising relationship. Advising outcomes will be designed as part of an advising curriculum and receive periodic performance assessments.
Transfer students do not receive timely, accurate, and relevant information about their transfer credits and course equivalencies.	Transfer students' transcripts will be evaluated within two weeks of receipt, ensuring timely and accurate records.
The information and tools students need to create academic plans and track their progress towards graduation are hard to find.	Students and advisors use an e-portfolio to create academic plans, enhance communication, and track academic progress.

1. Limited Availability of Advisor Initiated Pro-Active Academic Advising.

In many institutions, a general academic advising office is responsible for the advising needs of students, and the majority of available academic advising times are on a drop-in, first-come / first-served basis. As a result, students may see different academic advisors throughout their academic career and may receive inconsistent academic advising. Scheduled academic advising appointments fill up during peak registration times resulting in students waiting up to two weeks to see an academic advisor, and advising is initiated by the student — making this a reactive rather than proactive process. For example, at LCC, from a pool of over 10,900 SSS-eligible, not served students, LCC selects 200 eligible students to enroll in its TRIO SSS Program (SSS). The majority of students who have participated in the TRIO SSS programs over the years have overwhelmingly successfully completed the requirements for an associate's degree within four (4) years, with many of them transferring to 4-year colleges and universities. Based on these results, the researcher recommends the TRIO SSS model be expanded to apply it to the general student support services provided to the SSS-eligible students who have not been able to obtain the services that have resulted in the positive outcomes of those selected to receive TRIO services.

2. Early Alert System

An Early Alert Task Force is recommended to identify measures to determine if our current faculty feedback methods utilized by on-campus special programs can be expanded to include an increase in the number of alerts that will come with the increased proactive advising system. If not, how will the system need to be modified or revamped entirely?

3. Advisor Professional Development Workshops to Enhance Advisor's Ability to Provide Information to Students.

The researcher recommends that an advising workshop committee be established to identify possible delivery methods that will allow for development of a series of ongoing professional development activities that will keep advisors current on information that must be provided to the overall student population. An annual staff development day is also suggested to explore provide proactive yearly self-assessment of academic service providers by the providers themselves. In addition, the committee could be responsible for the development of workshop presentations that provide information to students over a variety of different platforms, inclusive of social media. These student workshops would need to coincide with peak times (registration, graduation, etc.) during the year and must be flexible enough in their delivery to allow for frequent accessing at high traffic points in the year. These workshops should be developed and continuously modified using front line advising staff input as to what works and what is still needed in order to meet the College's goals.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this research was to examine the academic advising model of the TRIO Student Support Services program. Data were collected and analyzed from nine participant interviews to test the two research questions in this study. The data were studied and the results of the findings were examined. The results of the findings presented some limitations in the research. One is the study focused only on one community college in mid-Michigan. The researcher chose all nine academic advisors from the same college. The research focused only on one TRIO program, Student Support Services at one community college and examined only academic advising and its impact on first-generation and low-income students. Future research

should consider interviewing faculty advisors and residential advisors, as well as, academic advisors from several community colleges across the country to analyze the similarities and differences in the advising systems across community colleges.

The challenges facing first-generation and low-income students suggest that future research efforts focus on strengthening the academic advising systems at community colleges. As first-generation students continue to enroll in community colleges, the need for a proactive advising model that supports student retention, persistence and completion should exist in community colleges. The limitations in this study suggest future research in the following areas:

1. Compare advising systems in urban community colleges vs. rural community colleges.

2. Compare proactive advising vs. residential advising at community colleges.

3. Consider further research on holistic and professional advising at community colleges and not just academic advising.

4. Compare traditional students vs. non-traditional students at community colleges and their retention rates when a proactive advising system is used.

Finally, the researcher recommends a greater examination of academic advising systems on a larger scale and include several SSS programs from similar institutions in the study.

Conclusion

Academic advising is critical to the success of first generation and low income students that enroll in institutions of higher education. The purpose of this study sought to assess the need for improved and increased support services that directly affect the non-Trio SSS student retention, persistence, and graduation rates at LCC. While the advising literature consistently directs colleges and universities to have a holistic picture of the students they serve, the institutions must engage them academically and socially while they are enrolled at the college.

55

The TRIO Student Support Services program is structured to specifically help first-generation and low-income students succeed in higher education. The research in this study addresses the need for effective proactive academic advising similar to the TRIO SSS model to expand its services to the LCC Advising model. While the results of the study need further research into proactive advising models and the effect it has on retention, persistence, and completion of first generation and low income students, the outcomes inform higher educational professionals of the need to improve the academic advising systems that currently serve these students.

REFERENCES

Blake, J. H. (1998). Guest editor's comments: The full circle: TRIO programs, higher education, and the American future-toward a new vision of democracy. The Journal of Negro Education, 67(4), 329-332.

Center for Data Science. (2015). Lansing Community College.

Childs, S. (2013). Impact of the Student Support Services/TRIO Programming on Persistence and Academic Achievement. (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation). Retrieved from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/

Choy, S. (2001) Students whose parents did not go to college: Postsecondary access, persistence, and attainment. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Cowan C., & Pitre, P. (2009). Increasing underrepresented high school students' college transitions and achievements: TRIO educational opportunity programs. *NASSP Bulletin*, *93*(2), 96-110.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. Sage publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2010). Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. Theory into practice, 39(3), 124-130. Sage publications.

Donaldson, P., McKinney, L., Lee, M. & Pino, D. (2016). First-year community college students' perceptions of and attitudes toward intrusive academic advising. *NACADA Journal* 36(1), 30-42

Drake, J. K. (2011). The role of academic advising in student retention and persistence. About Campus, 16(3), 8-12.

Earl, Walter R. "Intrusive advising of freshmen in academic difficulty." NACADA journal 8.2 (1988): 27-33.

Engle, J. (2007). Postsecondary access and success for first-generation college students. American Academic, (3) 25-48.

Gulf Coast Community College. (2011). Community college retention and recruitment of "at-risk" students. Retrieved from: www.gulfcoast.edu.

Heisserer, D. L., & Parette, P. (2002). Advising at-risk students in college and university settings. College student journal, 36(1).

Higher Education Act 1965. Retrieved from: http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/ TRIO_clearinghouse-The_Early_History_of_the_HEA_of_1965.pdf

Howell, N.G. (2010). Appreciative Advising from the Academic Advisor 's Viewpoint: A Qualitative Study Nancy G. Howell. University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Retrieved from: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cehsedaddiss

Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. Qualitative health research, 15(9), 1277-1288.

Hunter, M. S., & White, E. R. (2004). "Could Fixing Academic Advising Fix Higher Education?" About Campus, 9(1), 20-25.

King, M. C. (1993). Academic advising: Organizing and delivering services for student success. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, number 82 Jossey-Bass, Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94101 ($15.95). Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.ferris.edu/docview/62857587?accountid=10825.

Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J., & Associates. (2005). Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lansing Community College. (2015). Conversations with the Provost. Retrieved from: http://www.lcc.edu/provost/discussions,

Light, R. J. (2004). *Making the most of college*. Harvard University Press.

McElroy, E., & Armesto, M. (1998). TRIO and Upward Bound: History, Programs, and Issues-Past, Present, and Future. The Journal of Negro Education, 67(4), 373-380.

Merriam, S.B. (2009). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons.

National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_306.10.asp?current=yes

Noel-Levitz. (2014). 2014 National student satisfaction and priorities report, addendum two: Four-year public colleges and universities. Coralville, IA: Noel-Levitz

Pargett, K. K. (2011). The effects of academic advising on college student development in higher education.

Service, R. W. (2009). Book Review: Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Organizational Research Methods, 12(3), 614-617.

Strayhorn, T., (2014). Reframing academic advising for student success: from advisor to cultural navigator. NACADA Journal, v35 n1 p56-63 2015.

The Pell Institute. (2007). Demography is not Destiny. Retrieved from: http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Demography_Is_Not_Destiny.pdf

Thomas, E. P., & Farrow, E. V. Martinez., J.(1998). A TRIO program's impact on participant graduation rates: The Rutgers University student support services program and its network of services. *Journal of Negro Education*, *67*(4), 389-403.

Tinto, V. (2004). Student Retention and Graduation: Facing the Truth, Living with the Consequences. Occasional Paper 1. Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education.

Varney, J. (2012). Proactive (intrusive) advising. Academic Advising Today, 35(3), 1-3.

Walsh, J. (2000). Unique and Effective Practices for TRIO Student Support Services Programs.

U. S. Census. (2014). Retrieved from: www.census.gov.

U. S. Department of Education. (2015). Retrieved from: http://www2.ed.gov/programs/TRIOstudsupp/index.html.

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects in Research

Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, 1010 Campus Drive, FLITE 412F · Big Rapids, MI 49307

Date: November 21, 2016

To: Dr. Sandra Balkema and Mecha Crockett
From: Dr. Gregory Wellman, IRB Chair
Re: IRB Application for Review

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, "*Upscale Trio Student Support Services*" and determined that it does not meet the Federal Definition of research on human subjects, as defined by the Department of Health and Human Services or the Food and Drug Administration. As such, approval by the Ferris IRB is not required for the proposed project.

This determination applies only to the activities described in the submission; it does not apply should changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human subjects, submit a new request to the IRB for determination. This letter only applies to Ferris IRB Review; it is your responsibility to ensure all necessary institutional permissions are obtained and policies are met prior to beginning the project, such as documentation of institutional or department support. Note that quality improvement project findings may be published, but any findings presented or published should be clearly identified as part of a quality improvement initiative and not as research.

Your project will remain on file with the Ferris IRB for purposes of tracking research efforts at Ferris. Should you have any questions regarding the determination of this letter, please contact the IRB.

Regards,

Ferris State University Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Version 12.2014