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Academic advising in distance education

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ACADEMIC ADVISING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Robert Furman Curry

April 1997

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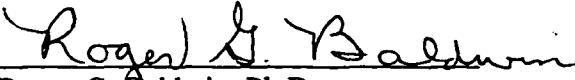
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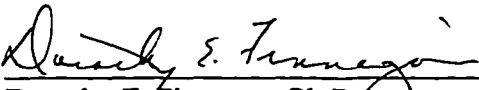ACADEMIC ADVISING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

by

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Approved April 1997

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents

Pug and Bob Curry

who taught me the importance of education.

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Finally, I thank the participants of this study. Because they allocated time in their hectic schedules to complete my survey, the results of this study are meaningful.

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ABSTRACT

This study compared and contrasted current goals and practices of institutional advising programs with those utilized specifically by distance education programs. As part of the conceptual framework, the study analyzed seven practices of advising programs identified through previous research on academic advising: delivery systems, organizational models, evaluation, support or reference materials, required occasions for academic advising, group advising, and advisor-student communication. The eight advising goals of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) were also used to build the conceptual framework.

Data were collected through a survey which resulted in descriptive statistics on advising goals and practices in distance education. Data analysis involved comparisons of results of the Academic Advising in Distance Education Survey developed for this study with data from American College Testing's Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising. Participants were identified from Peterson's 1996 publication, Guide to Distance Learning. Institutions selected for the sample had at least one baccalaureate degree program available at a distance, using primarily electronic means of instruction. One institutional representative completed the survey. Eight-nine surveys were mailed to institutions that met the study's definition of distance education. Seventy-three of these surveys were returned for a response rate of 82%.

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Results showed that NACADA's advising goals were relevant for distance education; mean achievement was higher for each goal in distance education when compared with institutional advising programs. Advising practices were similar for distance education and institutions as a whole in that faculty advisors were the most frequent deliverers of advising services. There were differences between institutional and distance education advising programs in other practices, with less utilization of group advising, institutional reference materials, and advising evaluation in distance education.

ROBERT FURMAN CURRY

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ACADEMIC ADVISING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Distance education programs which provide electronic means of instruction have become increasing more available in recent years (Kohl, 1996). Guide to Distance Learning (Peterson's, 1996) has 700 accredited North American institutions listed. This guide's predecessor (Peterson's Guides, 1993) included fewer than 100 institutions. This study examines academic advising in distance education programs. To understand advising for this specific situation, advising in institutions as a whole is addressed.

In College: The Undergraduate Experience in America, Boyer (1987) stressed the importance of academic advising services for undergraduate students. Greenwood (1984) argued that good academic advising contributes to a caring collegiate environment, students' academic and career development, and a positive public image through satisfied students.

As a structured process that can provide continual, individual interaction between students and concerned institutional representatives, advising is a strong means of promoting informal and out-of-class contact between students and faculty (Habley, 1995). According to Gordon (1992), it is typical for institutions' mission statements to include information on educating the whole student, but few have systematically integrated academic and student services to accomplish this goal. Academic advising is the one service that covers both areas and deals with students from their first day at the institution

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to graduation (Gordon, 1992).

Despite advising's importance, several key sources indicate academic advising services need to be improved. National surveys reported by Boyer (1987) and Astin, Korn, and Green (1987) found students to be dissatisfied with academic advising.

As a means of improving advising services in higher education, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was formed in 1979 (White, 1995). NACADA developed eight goals for college and university advising programs. These are:

1. Assisting students with self-understanding and self-acceptance.

2. Assisting students in their consideration of life goals by relating interests, skills, abilities, and values to careers, the world of work, and the nature and purpose of higher education.

3. Assisting students in developing an educational plan consistent with life goals and objectives.

4. Assisting students in developing decision-making skills.

5. Providing accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs.

6. Making referrals to other institutional or community support services.

7. Assisting students in evaluation or reevaluation of progress toward the establishment of goals and educational plans.

8. Providing information about students to the institution, college, and/or academic departments (Habley & Crockett, 1988).

In the American College Testing (ACT) Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, advising administrators gave an average rating of 3.31 on a 5 point scale when asked to rate their institutions on the accomplishment of NACADA's eight goals (Habley, 1993).

Usable responses were obtained from 404 colleges and universities for the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising. The survey provided data on various practices in advising, as reported by one representative of each institution. These practices included organizational models of advising, providers of advising services, required occasions for students to meet with advisors, supplementary materials available to advisors, evaluation of advising services, and group advising methods. ACT conducted national surveys four times between 1979 and 1992. These results allow for comparison of practices and goals in the United States, and evaluation of trends in advising during this time period (Habley, 1993).

In the United States, the proportion of college students age 25 and over rose from 41.6% in 1985 to 44.3% in 1993 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995). For adults to develop the skills to keep pace with rapid changes in technology, the economy, and society in general, lifelong learning has become increasingly important. Higher education is also providing training for adults who are making mid-career transitions (Polson & Eriksen, 1988).

In a study of male students 25 or older, Brown and Robinson (1988) found advising services were more frequently used by male students who continued enrollment than by those who eventually dropped out. Contact with an academic advisor also had a significant positive effect on retention of male and female adult students in research by

Shields (1994). Because other institutional involvement variables (e. g., use of other campus services, communication with students outside of class) did not affect retention, Shields suggested that academic advising is the primary means of institutional integration for adult students.

According to Bitterman (1985), several characteristics of adult students should be understood by advisors in order for their advising to be effective. An adult student often attends college part-time. Adults are interested in choosing courses that are immediately applicable to their lives. They may be anxious about attending college, feeling too old to learn or embarrassed by previous mediocre academic records. Adult students also expect information to be accurate, concise, and current.

Frost (1995) wrote that many students over age 25 attend college to prepare for a second, third, or fourth career. They usually have clear objectives and are committed to their educational goals. Some adult students report, however, that college brings more change than anticipated. Frost indicated that effective advisors of adult students work with four areas of concern: *transition issues*, such as doubts about ability to handle college work and adjustment to new responsibilities; *academic issues*, such as the fit with students' abilities and intended academic majors; *connection issues*, such as establishing a sense of belonging on campus; and *policy and procedure issues*, which sometimes provide logistical obstacles for part-time, evening students. According to Frost, advisors must understand institutional resources and how students can obtain them since the advisor is often the principal source of institutional contact for the adult student.

Distance education is an educational option increasingly available and of

particular interest to adult students. As educational technology has increased in complexity and become more widely adopted, distance learning programs have grown. They provide opportunities for students to complete degrees through instruction that is delivered primarily through telecommunications. Instruction may be facilitated through computers or interactive television. Interaction is not in person, however, since faculty and students are in different locations (Toby Levine Communications, Inc., 1992).

The main reason students enroll in distance learning courses is convenience. Many students are time-bound. They may work on shifts, travel with their jobs, and have home responsibilities that make attendance difficult at any regularly scheduled class time. Many students are also place-bound. Some live too far away from a campus to attend college in a traditional way. Others may be kept at home by family responsibilities, illness, or disability. Potential students may be in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, or prison (Toby Levine Communications, Inc., 1992).

Students may choose distance education because the subject and level of degree they wish to study are not available through conventional means (Verudin and Clark, 1991). For example, Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, Texas broadcasts nursing classes by two-way audio and video technology to Laredo Community College. Before this program, nurses who wanted to pursue degrees higher than the associate level had to move at least 150 miles away to the closest four-year college. The program addresses the severe staffing shortage at the local hospital, by providing a means to keep potential nurses in their home area of Texas (Rojas and Anderson, 1994). Telecommunications has also been used in Maine to provide higher education to the state's primarily rural and

often isolated population (Toby Levine Communications, Inc., 1992).

Distance education gives students more control over when and where they take a course. Some courses are videotaped to allow viewing at the student's convenience. Other courses are available at many sites, allowing flexibility for students who must travel or relocate with their jobs. Students in distance education courses are usually over 25 years old, employed, and have some previous college experience (Peterson's Guides, 1993).

Distance courses often involve the work of many specialists for course design and student support. The work of these specialists is integrated so that a course is produced on schedule and provides effective learning opportunities for a large and diverse student population. With the high cost of media, technology, and specialized staff, the total expense of distance courses is considerably higher than standard courses. With one course available in a wide geographic area, however, considerably more students are able to take a course than through traditional means. The increased enrollment at a distance allows the total course cost to be spread; this restructuring of costs can result in lower per student costs than traditional courses (Moore, Thompson, Quigley, Clark, & Goff, 1990).

In addition to providing instruction in distance education, programs should provide advising services to assist students in their academic planning. Academic advising for distance education students may be accomplished with limited face-to-face meetings. Advisors and distance education students also use mail, fax, or electronic mail for communication (Peterson's Guides, 1993).

Statement of the Problem

In a recent survey of college students 25 years or older, academic advising was listed second only to financial problems as a barrier to degree completion. Students expressed concerns about advisors' lack of sensitivity to nontraditional students. Advisors were deemed inadequate in giving advice, helping with scheduling problems, and being informed about degree programs (Ryder, Bowman, & Newman, 1994).

The ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising has provided information on goals and practices of institutional advising programs (academic advising throughout the institution). Little research has been published, however, on advising practices or goals for distance education programs. Only three studies focus on academic advising for distance programs. Beitz (1987) studied academic advising in distance graduate library science programs. Fornshell (1993) described academic advising in the graduate Computer and Information Sciences program at Nova University. Trent (1993) studied academic advising for the Statewide Nursing Program of California State University.

Academic advising for students at a distance provides new challenges to the advisor. With physical separation of advisor and student, communication may be infrequent and impersonal. If the advisor never meets the student individually, the student may not be comfortable sharing personal information that may affect academic choices and outcomes. Without such disclosure, the advisor may have difficulty understanding the educational planning needs of the student (Reed and Sork, 1990).

The problem of this study is to compare and contrast current goals and practices

of institutional advising programs with those that are utilized by distance education programs; the study identifies the current stage of development of academic advising within distance education programs as it relates to academic advising in institutions as a whole.

Purpose of the Study

As part of their study on disadvantaged students and course completion rates, Carr and Ledwith (1980) found that academic advising had a significant positive effect on the retention of distance education students in Venezuela. This information and the literature on academic advising for adult students (Brown & Robinson, 1988; Ryder, Bowman, & Newman, 1994; Shields, 1994) indicate academic advising is a potentially important service for distance education students in the United States. Research is needed to inform the advising field and the higher education community on the current status of academic advising in distance education programs. This research examines what differences exist between on-campus and distance advising practices.

Results of this research can provide assistance to administrators of current distance advising programs in identifying goals, improving practices, and signaling deficiencies in programs. For institutions planning new distance education efforts, the discussion section provides ideas to assist in meeting the challenge of providing quality advising services for students who may not have the opportunity to meet regularly with an advisor in person.

Research Questions

Academic advising practices and goals provide the conceptual framework for this study. The study's research questions emerge from this framework. Six of the seven advising practices used in this study arise from the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising (Habley, 1993). The seventh practice, advisor-student communication, was added because of its special relevance to distance education students and educators. Since distance students often do not have the option of meeting with an advisor in person, alternative means of communication and the likelihood of developing personal advisor-student relationships are important. NACADA's eight advising goals were also part of the framework. These goals were developed by the major national organization specifically dedicated to advancing the field of academic advising (White, 1995).

The data from the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising are compared to data from a survey developed for this research. The National Survey data, which result from responses about advising programs for entire institutions, serve as the basis for "institutional advising programs" information in the research questions.

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What are the current academic advising practices in distance education programs?

2. To what extent are academic advising goals in distance education programs consistent with goals established by NACADA?

3. To what extent are advising goals achieved in distance education programs?

4. How do current advising practices for distance education programs

differ from advising practices of institutional advising programs?

5. How does achievement of NACADA's advising goals in distance

education programs compare to the achievement of NACADA's goals in

institutional advising programs?

<div align="center">Limitations and Delimitations</div>

A limitation of the study is the comparison of a 1996 survey on advising for

distance programs with results of a 1992 survey on institutional advising programs.

Advising practices within institutions may have changed during this four year period.

A major purpose of the study is to compare advising practices and goals for

distance education students with those for students attending classes on an institution's

main campus. The ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising was drawn from

a population of 2606 institutions; the existence of distance education programs was not an

issue in the selection of institutions or of the respondent's questions in the survey. Some

questions on the survey refer to "the campus advising program," and it is assumed

responses are based on advising primarily for students taught on-campus. Because this is

an assumption, data from the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising will be

called "institutional advising programs."

This study is limited to baccalaureate programs. Community colleges do not

normally include distance education beyond their service region (Brey, 1991). This close

geography would not bring the insights to distance advising sought by this study; with

baccalaureate distance education programs, the distance is often statewide or national. Because advising issues would likely differ for graduate students, graduate programs are not studied. In addition, the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising concerned advising only for undergraduates.

A delimitation of the study is that one contact person at an institution may not be extremely knowledgeable about academic advising for all distance education students. This potential problem is especially likely if the institution offers several baccalaureate programs at a distance. Services may be decentralized without one person coordinating the whole advising program. With only one person completing the survey per institution, the information supplied may not be complete and accurate.

Definition of Terms

Distance education

"Distance education can be defined as formal instruction in which a majority of the teaching function occurs while educator and learner are at a distance from one another" (Verudin & Clark, 1991, p. 13). This broad definition is used in the literature review because it includes correspondence courses, important for an historical overview of distance education. The broad definition also allows for inclusion of studies that focus on individual distance education courses, where degree programs may not be available. For this study, however, distance education is defined as a baccalaureate degree program with the majority of course work available off-campus, using primarily electronic means (e.g, telephone, video, computer) for course delivery and class interaction. This definition does not include correspondence and independent study courses that are based

only on written interaction between faculty and students (Peterson's Guides, 1993).

Distance education advising program

Academic advising practices for the distance education program at a college or university.

Distant student or Distance education student

A student who takes courses through distance education is referred to by these designations in this study. Although there may be alternative interpretations of "distant student," the designation refers only to any student enrolled in a distance education course.

Institutional advising program

The advising practices of an entire college or university. For an institution with only on-campus courses, the advising practices are associated with a student population attending those classes. For an institution with off-campus courses, advising services for distance education students are included in the institutional advising program.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Academic Advising

History of Academic Advising

In colonial colleges, academic advising was performed by the president of the college. With the domination of the clergy, advising's goals were to save students' souls and guide their personal lives. As the size of colleges grew, faculty assumed the advising role. The first system of faculty advisors was initiated at Johns Hopkins in 1876. The elective system at Harvard resulted in a freshmen advising system by 1888. As the breadth and complexity of the college curriculum increased, the need for educational counseling became more critical (Gordon, 1992).

While students in higher education gradually became more numerous and diverse, they often received less individual contact with faculty. Faculty became more specialized and interested in research in their academic disciplines. By the 1930's, most colleges and universities had formal advising programs. With teaching and research responsibilities, however, faculty had little time or incentive for personalized academic counseling with students (Frost, 1991). Advising had become primarily a record keeping function for many faculty (Gordon, 1992).

After World War II, college enrollments increased further and student services were initiated on many campuses. Because academic advising was considered the domain of academic affairs, it did not receive attention from early student affairs

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professionals (Frost, 1991). By the 1960's and 1970's, students began demanding

improvements in academic advising. As the population grew more diverse with

underprepared, returning adult, and minority students, administrators saw academic

advising as a way of helping academic adjustment. In addition, administrative concern

about expected enrollment declines in the 1980's refocused efforts on the retention of

students (Gordon, 1992).

The concept of developmental academic advising received attention in the 1970's

and 1980's (Gordon, 1992). Academic advising is often considered synonymous with

class scheduling and registration. Although an outcome is likely to be the selection of

appropriate courses, developmental academic advising is much more than that. Ender,

Winston, and Miller (1984, p. 19) defined developmental academic advising as "a

systematic process based on a close student-advisor relationship intended to aid students

in achieving educational, career, and personal goals through the utilization of the full

range of institutional and community resources."

The responses to the ACT Third National Survey of Academic Advising

provided insight into the use of developmental advising. In this aggregated national

sample, some institutional administrators reported having a high quality advising system,

while others reported poor systems. Although developmental advising programs were not

yet in the majority, it was easier in 1988 to find examples of developmental advising

programs than it would have been twenty years earlier (Habley, 1988a). By the ACT

Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, Habley (1993) found that developmental

academic advising was still not widely practiced.

Goals of Academic Advising

In 1979, NACADA created a task force to develop a goals statement for academic advising programs to be submitted to the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The eight NACADA goals were approved by the NACADA Board of Directors, and subsequently modified by CAS (W. R. Habley, personal communication, November 13, 1995). The eight goals adopted by NACADA are similar to the ten institutional goals of academic advising later included in the CAS Standards (1995).

The NACADA goals and the results of the most recent three ACT National Surveys of Academic Advising are presented in Table 1. The mean rating of perceived institutional achievement on a 5 point scale is indicated for each goal (Habley, 1993).

With the exception of the first goal to provide accurate information, each goal had a modest gain in mean institutional achievement from 1983 to 1992. The mean of means for the goals increased for each survey, with this mean between somewhat satisfactory (3) to satisfactory (4) for each survey (Habley, 1993).

Table 1 Mean Achievement of Advising Goals By Year of ACT National Survey of Academic Advising

YEAR OF ACT SURVEY

Goal	1983	1987	1992
Providing accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs	4.01	3.95	3.99
Providing information about students to the institution, colleges, and/or academic departments	3.25	3.38	3.47
Making referrals to other institutional or community support services	3.30	3.36	3.43
Assisting students in developing an educational plan consistent with life goals and objectives	3.35	3.33	3.48
Assisting students in evaluation or re-evaluation of progress toward established goals and educational plans	3.33	3.21	3.49
Assisting students in considering life goals by relating interests, skills, abilities, and values to careers, world or work, and nature and purpose of higher education	3.01	3.05	3.12
Assisting students in self-understanding and self-acceptance	2.73	2.84	2.82
Assisting students in developing decision-making skills	2.55	2.62	2.71
Mean of means	3.19	3.22	3.31

Note. From Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.

In addition to identifying institutional goals for advising and other student

development programs, CAS has standards that specify the minimum essential elements

for these programs. A standard for academic advising programs is that services must be

accessible and respond to needs of special student populations, including evening, part-

time, and commuter students. While the intent is clearly to be inclusive, distant students

are not mentioned specifically (CAS Standards, 1995).

Practices in Academic Advising

Delivery Systems

Not all institutions deliver advising through the same type of personnel.

Full-time teaching faculty are utilized more than any other provider of academic advising.

Faculty usually do advising for majors at the department level, but may also participate in

the activities of centralized advising offices, where undecided students are advised (King,

1988).

The ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising results demonstrated the

predominance of the faculty advising delivery mode. In institutions with advising in

academic departments, instructional faculty were utilized in some or all departments by

98% of institutions. For institutions with advising offices, faculty were utilized in 65% of

these offices (Habley, 1993).

King (1988) identified several advantages and disadvantages of using faculty as

advisors. One advantage is that faculty are experts in their disciplines. They can give

detailed information about courses and programs in their departments, and about career

and educational opportunities in their fields. Faculty advising promotes interaction

between faculty and students. If advising is considered a part of the faculty load, there are low budgetary costs. A disadvantage of faculty advising is their lack of knowledge of student development theory. Faculty are usually less knowledgeable about other campus resources, and often less effective in making referrals. Faculty access and availability for students can be difficult, since advising is normally a low priority for faculty.

The ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising indicated professional advisors are the second most frequently used deliverer of advising services. In institutions with advising conducted in academic departments, non-instructional personnel are used in some or all departments by 65% of institutions. In institutions with advising offices, full-time advisors are utilized in 64% of these offices (Habley, 1993).

Professional advisors are typically full-time staff members whose primary role is to provide academic and support services for students. Professional advisors normally have knowledge of student development theory through prior education or training. An advantage is their knowledge of a broad range of academic programs and campus resources. Although they are usually more accessible than faculty, caseloads are sometimes so large that access is still limited. A disadvantage of professional advisors is that they are not able to provide as much specific knowledge on academic disciplines to students as faculty can. Another disadvantage is the high cost of hiring additional staff, which may not be budgeted amidst mandates for reduced administrative expenses (King, 1988).

According to the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, peer advisors are less frequently used than faculty or professional advisors. In institutions

with advising done in academic departments, peer advisors are utilized in some or all departments by 26% of institutions. In institutions with advising offices, peer advisors are used in 19% of these offices (Habley, 1993).

As undergraduate students, peer advisors have the advantage of accessibility to students and minimal salary expenditures. Another advantage is that peers can be used for some routine advising matters such as scheduling class times, allowing other advisors more time to deal with in-depth issues. A disadvantage is that peers may sometimes state biased opinions of professors and courses based on their own experiences. Another disadvantage is less accountability than with professional personnel, as they may have graduated by the time errors in their advising are detected (King, 1988).

Organizational Models

Habley (1983) identified a typology of seven organizational models for academic advising. He distinguished between organizational models and delivery systems. Delivery systems describe the provider of services, while organizational models also include the policies and procedures of the institution. Through Habley and McCauley's research (1987) and the ACT Third and Fourth National Surveys of Academic Advising (Habley & Crockett, 1988; Habley, 1993), the models have been demonstrated as providing appropriate and sufficient categories to incorporate the types of organizational advising models used in higher education.

With the *faculty only* model, teaching faculty serve as the only academic advisors. In the *supplementary* advising model, faculty also provide all advising. In contrast to the

faculty only model, an advising office is available to provide advisor handbooks, training, or other support of faculty efforts (Habley, 1983).

In a *split* advising model, advising is done by staff in an advising office for some students, by faculty advisors for others. The advising office is responsible for students who are undecided about a major or need improvement in basic academic skills such as mathematics, reading, or writing before declaring a major. Faculty members advise students who have declared an academic major. In the *dual* advising model, faculty advisors and staff in an advising office share responsibility for each individual student. Faculty advisors provide information regarding the student's major, while advising office staff advise the student on general education requirements and institutional policies and procedures (Habley, 1983).

In the *total intake* model, all students are initially advised by staff in an advising office. Students change to a faculty advisor after a specific action has occurred or time has passed, such as completion of core courses with a required grade point average or the end of the first year. The *satellite* model features advising offices within academic units on the campus. Each satellite advising office provides advising services for all students whose majors are with a specific college or school. Undecided students may need to choose an academic advising office that has majors of some interest, or they may be advised in a separate satellite office. In a *self-contained* model, a centralized advising office is responsible for all academic advising throughout each student's academic career (Habley, 1983).

In the Third National Survey of Academic Advising, the self-contained and total

intake models were most positively viewed by administrators whose institutions used those models. The satellite and faculty only models were most negatively rated with regard to goal achievement as assessed by the institutional survey respondent (Habley, 1988b). Nevertheless, the faculty only model is used more frequently than any other model. The faculty only model was used by 35% of the institutions included in the Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising (Habley, 1993).

Evaluation

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) developed a document to promote excellence in the student services/student development field in postsecondary education. CAS developed uniform national criteria and guidelines for assessing educational effectiveness and encouraging improvement of institutions and programs.

One of the standards is that systematic and regular evaluation of the academic advising program must be done to determine if student needs are being met (CAS Standards, 1995). Although CAS does not have the authority to accredit programs, it intends for its standards to be used by institutions in the regional accreditation process. Advising program evaluation may be done by committee, self-study, or outside consultants (Gordon, 1992). In the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, only 50% of respondents indicated effectiveness of the institutional advising program was regularly evaluated (Habley, 1993).

Evaluation methods for academic advisors include student evaluation, self-evaluation, supervisory performance review, and peer review (Gordon, 1992). In the

ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, performance review by a supervisor was the evaluation method cited most often (56%) for advisors in advising offices. Performance review by a supervisor was also cited most frequently for faculty advisors in academic departments, with this method used in some or all academic departments at 60% of institutions represented. Student evaluation was the second most cited evaluation method: 54% for faculty advisors in academic departments and 40% for academic advisors in advising offices (Habley, 1993).

ACT developed an instrument to assist higher education administrators in evaluating their advising programs. The ACT Survey of Academic Advising is completed by students; in contrast, the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising was completed by administrators. Nobel (1988) did a composite study of students taking the ACT Survey of Academic Advising between 1985 and 1987; students gave a mean rating of 3.51 on a 5 point scale when asked how well the advising system met their needs. The ratings were somewhat lower in a composite of students taking the survey from 1989-1993, with a mean rating of 3.28 for students meeting with faculty advisors and 3.22 for those meeting with other advisors. Test results show no clear preference between faculty and non-faculty advisors (Habley, 1994). With 3 as adequate and 4 as more than adequate, there is room for improvement in providing advising services that satisfy and meet the needs of students.

Support or Reference Materials

Resource materials are essential in helping academic advisors provide accurate information in their work with students. These materials include college catalogs,

advising handbooks, curriculum sheets, and computer advising programs (Gordon, 1992).

Based on the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, campus referral

directories and academic planning worksheets are the materials most often provided to

advisors. At institutions with advising in academic departments, academic planning

worksheets were provided to advisors in 95% of institutions, while campus referral

directories were provided to advisors in 82% of institutions. At institutions with advising

offices, staff were provided with academic planning worksheets at 84% of these

institutions and with campus referral directories at 70% of the institutions (Habley, 1993).

A computer-assisted advising system was evaluated by Ray, Moore, and Oliver

(1991). A computer printout was made available to students to provide routine

information such as course options for the next semester, as well as other basic academic

information. Seeing the advisor in person became optional, with the goal of making more

time available for students to address additional concerns. An evaluation found 71.2% of

students indicating the system was better than the required in-person advising it replaced,

and 38.2% saying they did not need an advisor. Almost all faculty (95.4%) indicated

they spent less time on advising with the new system. The authors concluded that the

system met its goal of providing routine information to students in an efficient manner,

allowing students to meet with faculty when they wanted and needed this personal

contact.

Required Occasions for Academic Advising

According to Gordon (1992), requiring advising can result in perfunctory contact

in some cases. She also argued, however, that the required contact may provide an

opportunity for quality student-advisor interaction that would not occur if advising were voluntary.

In the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, respondents indicated class scheduling/registration as the occasion when the most institutions required students to contact an advisor. For institutions with advising in academic departments, 96% of respondents indicated some or all departments required advising for this purpose. For institutions with advising offices, 58% of these offices required students to contact advisors for class scheduling/registration (Habley, 1993).

Group Advising

The traditional method of academic advising takes place on an individual basis. Individual advising allows for the personalization of academic and other information, and provides an opportunity for advisor and student to establish a relationship. Group advising is also recognized as an economical and effective method for providing academic, career, and other information. Academic advising courses are often used to provide several weeks of orientation to the institution for new students (Gordon, 1992).

In the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, small group meetings during orientation or registration were the most frequently cited means of group advising. At institutions with advising in academic departments, these meetings were available in some or all departments at 82% of the institutions. In institutions with advising offices, these meetings were available in 81% of the advising offices (Habley, 1993).

Advisor-Student Communication

NACADA's goals are based on the principles of developmental academic advising

(Habley & Crockett, 1988). Included in the definition of developmental academic advising is a close advisor-student relationship (Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1984). Some studies have sought to determine whether students actually want this kind of relationship.

In one of these studies, Beasley-Fielstein (1986) examined sophomore and senior students. She found student satisfaction with academic advisors was related to the following characteristics of advisors: generosity with their time, provision of accurate information, accessibility, provision of practical help, and willingness to take personal interest in students. The age of the students was not identified in this study.

Fielstein (1989) reported that students considered prescriptive advising tasks, such as explaining registration procedures, more of a priority than the developmental tasks, such as providing support in clarifying values, beliefs, and attitudes. Her study also suggested students do want a personal relationship with an academic advisor, but one that does not include discussion of personal problems and relationships with family and friends. Although results were not tabulated by age groups, undergraduates of below and above 25 were represented in Fielstein's sample.

In a related study, Fielstein, Scoles, and Webb (1992) defined non-traditional students as those students who had a lapse of more than two years in college attendance. Nontraditional and traditional students rated prescriptive advising activities as more important than the developmental ones. The nontraditional students rated the developmental items as less important than did the traditional students.

In NACADA's Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising (1995), the importance of regular contact with students is stressed. With this contact advisors can

better understand students' academic, social, and personal experiences, and subsequently

help students develop appropriate academic and career goals. According to NACADA's

Statement of Core Values, this contact could be in person, through mail, on the telephone,

or through computer-mediated systems (Kramer, 1995). The ACT Fourth National

Survey of Academic Advising did not survey respondents about different means of

communication between students and advisors.

Sloan and Wilmes (1989) suggested that advising by telephone could be a means

of convenient advising for commuter students, but did not test this suggestion. Although

they did not provide specifications, Sloan and Wilmes suggested other technologies could

also be adapted to help these students get information promptly and efficiently.

Advising Adult Students

A nationwide survey (Polson, Eriksen, LeClaire, Murray, Mann, & Webb, 1986)

of colleges and universities found that 79% of respondents offered some advising services

for adult students, with 56% having office hours at non-traditional times. Special

orientation sessions for adult students were held at 60% of the institutions. The survey

report did not include information on the activities of these orientation sessions.

Sloan and Wilmes (1989) offered several suggestions on the roles of academic

advisors for adult students. Since adult students do not generally spend a lot of time on

the campus, an academic advisor may be the first and only institutional contact students

have outside the classroom. Sloan and Wilmes suggested that advisors can assist

commuter students by helping them clarify goals and evaluate priorities as they manage

their multiple commitments. Finally, these authors indicated that advisors can also help

commuter students find appropriate means on campus to achieve goals and learn the "insider" information important to surviving at the institution.

In a survey of students over age 25 at a medium-sized southern university, 66% of students indicated they needed more information on long range course offerings so they could plan a schedule compatible with their multiple responsibilities (Ryder, Bowman, & Newman, 1994). Of survey respondents, 44.7% also expressed concern about campus office hours not being convenient for adult students. The authors called for advisors to find ways to disseminate information that fits with the lifestyle of adult students, who may not be available during traditional office hours.

Academic advising was more satisfactorily viewed by some adult students at one large land grant university (Greenland, 1992). Students over age 25 in a specific "University without Walls" program rated advising very satisfactory, higher than other adult students at the university studied by Greenland. The students in the "University without Walls" program found that advisors were more accessible, provided more valuable information, and worked with the students in designing a flexible degree plan.

Sweitzer (1993) studied traditional students (22 years or younger) and nontraditional students (23 years or older) at the University of Findlay. In general, the older students rated most advising topics as less important for them than did the younger students. For example, the older students indicated significantly less need for learning more about entrance requirements for educational programs, financial aid, and graduation requirements. Responses on some items were similar. Out of 66 items, "learning about job opportunities in my career interest areas" was ranked first for the nontraditional

students and second for traditional students as a perceived need. "Getting advice about

my educational plans" ranked second for nontraditional students, and ninth for traditional

students.

Distance Education

History of Distance Education

Distance education began with correspondence education that involved instruction through print materials and communication between instructor and student through the mail. The earliest correspondence programs began in Europe in the later half of the nineteenth century (Garrison, 1989). The beginning of higher education correspondence courses in the United States is usually considered to have occurred in 1892, when the University of Chicago was established with a home study department in the Division of Extension (Pittman, 1987). By 1910 there were more than 200 correspondence schools in the United States (Garrison, 1989).

In the 1920's and 1930's, 13 higher education institutions in the United States offered credit courses by radio. They were discontinued by 1940. Although some successful radio courses later developed, radio is not considered an important medium in distance education (Pittman, 1987).

Despite large enrollments, correspondence education appeared to have a doubtful future in the 1960's because of low completion rates. The delayed feedback from the instructor resulted in isolation and lack of motivation for some students. In the early 1970's, the printed educational materials were enhanced with television broadcasts, audio cassettes, and study centers. The British Open University was the leader in these changes; it was the first large-scale public correspondence education organization (Garrison, 1989).

In the United States, the first reported educational audioconference was held in

Iowa in 1939. It was not until 1965 that the University of Wisconsin began an extensive

and continued use of audioconferencing (Garrison, 1989).

Videoconferencing began in the 1960's with closed circuit television (Garrison,

1989). This in-house television grew in use in United States colleges and universities in

the 1960's and 1970's, as federal and state grant money was available for

telecommunication equipment. The projects were often not successful, however, as

students complained about dull lectures, amateurish video productions, and lack of

personal contact. With the explosion of technology, distant students now have a wide

range of television options with higher quality production--broadcast television, cable

television, satellite delivery, videocassettes, and videodiscs. These options vary in

flexibility. Students may view lectures at home, business sites, or educational centers at

specific times. Other distance education programs allow students to view courses

through videotapes at their own convenience (Zigerell, 1991).

Live television instruction is most often one-way video supplemented by two-way

audio. Students can see the instructor, but not the reverse. Two-way audio allows

interaction between instructors and students; two-way video may actually discourage

interaction as some students are uncomfortable with being televised. Two-way video is

also considerably more expensive than one-way video. Having a television camera at

each receive site also increases the technical and logistical complications when many

sites are involved (Garrison, 1989).

Computer assisted instruction began in 1960, with students accessing a mainframe

computer as a teaching machine. With the advent of personal computers, this question

and answer instruction is still available as a convenient option for some college courses. It does not, however, facilitate teacher-learner communication as do some of the newer computer technologies (Verudin & Clark, 1991). Computer conferencing, for example, allows students in nationwide and worldwide locations to participate in class activities through networking of computers (Burgess, 1994). Electronic delivery allows people with home or other personal computers to access a variety of degree programs and on-line library resources (Verudin and Clark, 1991).

Toby Levine Communications (1992) identified several trends in distance education degree programs. Among these are:

1. Distance learning degree programs usually use several instructional approaches and delivery systems to offer a range of options to students. Students may take courses at community sites, at home or work; they may combine off-campus with on-campus attendance.

2. Newer telecommunications technologies, for example, electronic mail, voice mail, computer conferencing, audiobridges, and audiographic devices, allow students and faculty communication with each other to enhance the learning experience.

Kohl (1996) commented on the rapid growth of electronic higher education. Guide to Distance Learning (Peterson's, 1996) has 700 accredited North American institutions listed. This guide's predecessor (Peterson's Guides, 1993) had less than 100 institutional listings.

Distance Education Organizations and Systems

Higher education institutions may be affiliated with distance education organizations so that their programs are accessible to a broader population. Affiliation can also expand course options available to a university's students. Two types of distance education organizations are consortia and networks. In consortia, higher education institutions cooperate in the creation and dissemination of courses. With networks, companies use communications technologies to provide access to programs at participating institutions (Peterson's Guides, 1993.)

Toby Levine Communications, Inc. (1992) noted two major categories of systems for distance education. In delivery systems, students get instruction directly from a television, satellite, computer, radio, facsimile machine, telephone, or by mail. In information storage systems, students are given a computer disc, videodisc, videocassette, audiocassette, or printed text for direct use or play on a machine.

In nonprint technologies, instruction is divided into two categories. Synchronous technologies allow two or more people to communicate in real-time, while asynchronous technologies are time-delayed. The most widely used form of synchronous distance education is telephone conferencing. This allows class members at different sites to be in voice communication with each other and the instructor. Audiobridges provide high-fidelity conference calls. In an audiographic conference, this conference call is combined with some graphic support so that students can talk while looking at the same text and graphics on a computer screen. With computer conferencing systems, people can type messages that appear quickly on receivers' computer screens. Comments can then be

added by others. This method can be synchronous or asynchronous. Other

asynchronous methods of communication include facsimile machine, electronic mail, and

voice mail (Toby Levine Communications, Inc., 1992).

Verudin and Clark (1991) identified six types of educational system models in

distance education. They are:

Type I. These postsecondary educational institutions offer degrees to

students, but do not teach them directly. Students obtain credit through

proficiency examinations and prior learning experiences. Thomas A.

Edison College in New Jersey is an example.

Type II. These postsecondary educational institutions offer credit through

conventional classes, independent study, or distance study. Degree

requirements can also be met with prior learning and proficiency

examinations. Stephens College Without Walls Program in Missouri is an

example.

Type III. These colleges and universities offer distance education in

addition to regular on-campus programs. Old Dominion University in

Virginia is an example.

Type IV. These consortia of institutions are formed to provide courses at

a distance. The National Technological University, a nonprofit

consortium of engineering schools, is an example.

Type V. These autonomous institutions have been established for distant

students, and include education at elementary, secondary, vocational, and

secondary levels. The Open University of the United Kingdom is an example that has served as the model for other institutions. No Type V institutions exist in the United States currently.

Type VI. These organizations develop educational media used by learners not connected to an educational organization.

Academic Advising and Related Student Services

in Distance Education

Academic Advising in Distance Education

Trent (1993) studied the academic advising services associated with the Statewide

Nursing Program of California State University, in which faculty travel to distance sites

for accelerated classes. There is no distance technology involved in instruction.

Although instruction is face-to-face, advising is done at a distance since students attend

classes away from the main campus. Academic advising occurs through telephone

conversations with faculty advisors. Results of a survey to students indicated they were

generally not satisfied with academic advising. Although the majority of students said

advisors provided accurate information, others expressed concern about vague or

incorrect information. Some students indicated they had received no advising, and

wanted more availability of advisors.

Beitz (1987) studied academic advising in distance graduate library science

programs in the United States. The majority of programs had academic advising by

telephone, but students were encouraged to come to the main campus for advising

sessions when possible.

Fornshell (1993) described academic advising in the graduate Computer and

Information Sciences program at Nova University. Students have initial advising when

they come to the campus for training and course instruction. After they are trained on the

use of the on-line electronic classroom, they receive instruction and academic advising

thorough electronic classroom sessions. Approximately six students participate in each

advising session, allowing students to exchange ideas with each other and the advisor. If issues of a personal or sensitive nature are mentioned, advisors suggest the student call them the next day.

Related Student Services in Distance Education

Experience at colleges with distance education programs has indicated the need to address issues of student support services. These services should be accessible and meet the needs of distant students (Toby Levine Communications, Inc., 1992).

An article by Kirkwood (1989) stressed the importance of providing new or prospective distance education students with the opportunity to consider the suitability of distance education for their goals and life situations and the intellectual demands of the study. The article had examples of materials sent to students at distance learning programs in Australia and Great Britain to stimulate thinking on those issues.

Bowser and Race (1991) evaluated the orientation program for new students in distance education programs at an institution in Australia. Students attended orientation sessions the week before the academic year began in 14 centers. Students ranked the opportunity to meet other students as the most important function of the session. Clarification of academic, administrative, and enrollment information was also rated high in importance.

Keegan (1984) described the evolution of the student support services at the Open University of the United Kingdom. Tutor-counsellors provide support for students from initial inquiry about the university to job change or placement after graduation. Although they are not called academic advisors, tutor-counsellors are responsible for tracking

academic progress and providing study skills sessions.

Keegan (1984) wrote that student services were responsible for the success of the British Open University and the reduction of preventable drop-outs, but did not provide data to support his claim. McIntosh, Woodley, and Morrison's study (1983) of the British Open University indicated eight of ten registered students gained some credit, and half who registered eventually graduated. Retention rates of distance courses in Venezuela improved after the institution increased academic counseling assistance to students (de Freitas and Lynch, 1986).

A study by Carr and Fedwith (1980) found that 63% of students at the Open University in Scotland considered valuable the advice that they received from introductory advising sessions, open houses, and mailed written material. Nevertheless, 66% of respondents stated that they would have benefitted from more advice, in particular on the level and pace of course work.

Wagner (1993) wrote an article based on the results of focus group discussions of educators experienced in telecommunications systems development. She indicated that the success of distance learning depends upon the quality of support services. Services may be provided by on-campus specialized personnel, a central office for distance education, or inter-institutional partnerships. Wagner stressed the importance of allocating responsibilities so that all personnel involved know who is responsible for meeting the varied needs of distance education students.

Paist (1995) stressed the importance of distance education in providing access to students with disabilities. She described the program of the University of Wisconsin-

Extension. It includes a disabilities liaison that coordinates individual cases for accommodation. This liaison communicates with academic advisors since they are often the personnel who deal with students directly and continually.

<div align="center">Summary of the Literature Review</div>

The history of academic advising has been well documented by Frost (1991) and Gordon (1992). Current advising practices and goals have been described in detail with the results of the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising. The survey results have provided information on the following advising practices: evaluation methods, delivery systems, supplementary materials, organizational models, group advising, and required occasions of academic advising. The results also demonstrated that institutions have not been completely successful in meeting NACADA's goals for advising programs (Habley, 1993).

The history of distance education has been well documented by Garrison (1989). Authors such as Toby Levine Communications, Inc. (1992) have provided good practical descriptions of delivery options and trends in distance education.

Despite the increased use of distance education, very little research has been published on academic advising for distant students. Although Trent's study (1993) had academic advising for distant students as its focus, the distance education program studied did not involve any electronic instruction. Other studies (Beitz, 1987; Fornshell, 1993) were focused on academic advising for the distant graduate student.

Studies by de Freitas and Lynch (1986) and Carr and Fedwith (1980) demonstrated the potential value of academic advising services to distant students. As

older studies from foreign countries, however, they have not described distance education advising services in the 1990's in the United States.

Because distant students are generally over 25 years old, studies on academic advising for adults are relevant. Although adult students have fewer and different academic advising needs than traditional students, adult students still desire academic and career information (Sweitzer, 1993). Polson et. al. (1986) found that academic advising services were available for adult students at most institutions. These studies do not provide any data, however, on how advising services might be delivered to distant students.

It appears there are no published studies on academic advising for students in distance education baccalaureate degree programs that provide the majority of instruction at a distance, using primarily electronic means. With this new trend in instructional delivery, research is needed to provide comprehensive information on academic advising in distance education.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Conceptual Framework

Advising goals and practices in distance education served as the conceptual framework for the study. These goals and practices were based on those utilized in institutional advising programs. Academic advising in distance education was examined by comparing and contrasting its goals and practices with those utilized in institutional advising programs.

Practices in Academic Advising

This study analyzed seven advising practices identified through previous research on academic advising: delivery systems, organizational models, evaluation, support or reference materials, required occasions for academic advising, group advising, and advisor-student communication. With the exception of advisor-student communication, these practices were examined in the ACT National Surveys of Academic Advising. ACT's survey instruments included elements identified in academic advising research as important characteristics in the organization and delivery of advising services for undergraduate students (Habley & Crockett, 1988).

To focus the research on those practices most germane to distance advising, some characteristics from the ACT survey instruments were not included in the research on academic advising in distance education. Written policy statements on academic

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advising, mandatory training programs, and advisor reward systems were among the omitted practices.

Results from ACT's national surveys have been sources of information about current advising practices and stimuli for professionals to improve academic advising on campuses (Habley & Crockett, 1988). According to Frost (1991), the first three ACT surveys provided the most comprehensive empirical research on academic advising practices in the 1980's. A chapter in Developmental Academic Advising (Winston, Jr., Miller, Ender, Grites, and Associates, 1984) was devoted to the second survey results; the first survey was referenced in other chapters. The third survey results were cited frequently in another key source, Handbook of Academic Advising (Gordon, 1992).

Because there is little research on academic advising in distance education, practices from institutional advising programs served as means to understand advising services in distance education. By using practices identified in a national survey on advising services, this study was able to compare advising practices in distance programs with those practices operating currently in institutions as a whole. Although the ACT Fourth National Survey separated practices for advising in centralized offices from advising in academic departments (Habley, 1993), the seven advising practices in this research are important considerations for distance education programs utilizing any advising organizational model.

Practices from ACT Fourth National Survey on Academic Advising

Advising as evidenced by the components of the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising consists of various practices: delivery systems, organizational

models, evaluation, support or reference materials, required occasions for academic

advising, and group advising. Because the National Survey examined these elements of

advising practices, data exist to contrast institutional advising programs with a

comparable study of distance education advising programs. The comparison of these

elements serve as part of the conceptual framework for this study.

Institutions may deliver advising through the following types of personnel: full-

time advisors, part-time advisors, non-faculty advisors, academic department heads,

faculty advisors, paraprofessional advisors, and peer advisors. Institutions may utilize

one of the following organizational models for academic advising: faculty only,

supplementary, split, dual, total intake, satellite, and self-contained (Habley, 1993).

The following are means of evaluating academic advisors: student evaluation,

self-evaluation, performance review by supervisor, and peer review. In addition to

evaluation of individual advisors, institutions may evaluate the overall advising program

for effectiveness (Habley, 1993).

The following are among the support or reference materials that may be provided

for advisors: data on student retention, advising handbooks, employment outlook

projections, computerized degree audits, academic planning worksheets, forms for

anecdotal records or contracts, articulation worksheets or agreements between

institutions, and campus referral directories. Advising may be required on the following

occasions: class scheduling/registration, dropping a class, adding a class, declaring a

major, following a report of unsatisfactory progress, and having a graduation plan

approved. Institutions may utilize the following group advising formats: credit or non-

credit courses, workshops or seminars, and small group meetings during orientation or registration (Habley, 1993).

Advisor-Student Communication

In addition, the practice of advisor-student communication is included in the conceptual framework. Means of communication and the advising relationship are the two key elements of advisor-student communication examined in this study.

According to NACADA's Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising, regular contact with students allows advisors to gain insights into students' academic, social, and personal experiences and needs. Advisors use these insights to help students feel a part of the academic community, develop appropriate academic and career goals, and become successful learners. The regular contact between advisors and students could occur through several different means of communication: face-to-face, mail, telephone, or computer mediated systems (Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising, 1995).

The ACT National Surveys of Academic Advising did not survey respondents about different means of communication between students and advisors. Hence, national data on the variety of student-advisor contact are not available. Because distant students often do not have the option of in-person contact with their advisors, means of communication is of special interest to distance educators. For this reason, this study on academic advising in distance education examined communication between students and advisors.

The ACT National Surveys of Academic Advising also did not include data on the likelihood that advisors develop a personal relationship with students. Research by

Fielstein (1989), however, suggested that students want a personal relationship with an academic advisor. With the unavailability of face-to-face contact between advisors and many distant students, the likelihood of developing a personal relationship is an issue of interest for distance educators. Therefore, this issue was examined in this study on academic advising in distance education.

Goals of Academic Advising

In addition to advising practices, advising goals of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) were studied in the ACT National Surveys. Survey respondents were asked to consider whether current advising services were delivered in a way that each of the goals was successfully achieved for most students. With this data, one can assess whether advising programs are becoming more successful in achieving their goals.

NACADA's eight advising goals are based on the principles of developmental academic advising (Habley, 1988). They emphasize the advisor assisting the student with educational and life planning issues, and providing referrals to appropriate resources when necessary. NACADA's goals were listed in the introduction and review of the literature.

These goals are employed in the conceptual framework. With formal goals specific to distance advising not established by a national organization, NACADA's goals are useful guidelines. Since these goals are accepted for on-campus advising, they can also help identify the goals of distance education advising programs. Likewise, NACADA's advising goals provide appropriate benchmarks to determine the

accomplishment of advising goals in distance programs, and compare them to the accomplishment of institutional advising programs.

Linking Advising Goals with Practices

For the ACT National Surveys, there is one example of linking accomplishment of advising goals with practices. Habley (1988b) analyzed data from the ACT Third National Survey of Academic Advising to link NACADA's advising goals with organizational models. Habley reported that the respondents perceived the self-contained and total intake models to be the most successful in achieving advising goals. His analysis did not treat the other advising practices identified for this current conceptual framework. In the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising (Habley, 1993), there was no analysis of data reported that linked the goals with practices in the survey.

This linkage, however, was made in this study. A purpose of this research is to gain understanding of the successful academic advising practices used in distance education programs. Therefore, data on the seven academic advising practices are compared to data on achievement of the eight advising goals. Through this process, the study seeks to demonstrate which advising practices used in distance education programs are associated with the accomplishment of NACADA's goals.

The conceptual framework included advising practices identified from the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, additional advising practices of specific interest in distance education, and NACADA's advising goals. This study examined those advising practices and goals in distance education as they relate to practices and goals in institutional advising programs.

Methods

The study employed a survey methodology resulting in descriptive statistics on advising goals and practices in distance education. Comparisons were made of results of the Academic Advising in Distance Education Survey developed for this study with data from the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising.

Participants

To identify institutions with electronic instructional methods, I purchased from Peterson's part of the data base used for Guide to Distance Learning (Peterson's, 1996). The information provided pertained to baccalaureate programs. This guide lists United States and Canadian institutions whose distance learning programs have obtained accreditation by a regional accrediting association, or in some special situations, accreditation by another recognized organization (Peterson's, 1996).

This study focused on baccalaureate distance education programs in the United States. Sample selection excluded Canadian institutions in order to permit the comparison to the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, which was sent only to United States institutions. Results from the Academic Advising in Distance Education survey were compared to the results from the four-year institutions in the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising.

Peterson's provided the data base before publication of Guide to Distance Learning (1996). Ninety-seven institutions were listed in the data base as having baccalaureate programs available at a distance; these institutions comprised the original sample for this research.

After reading the published <u>Guide to Distance Learning</u> (Peterson's, 1996) and

receiving responses to the survey, eight institutions were found in the sample that did not

meet the definition of distance education for this study. Seven of these institutions did

not provide electronic instruction and one institution did not have any baccalaureate

programs with the majority of the course work available off-campus. These eight

institutions were removed from the sample, resulting in a revised sample total of 89

institutions.

<u>Instrumentation and Pilot Study</u>

The survey used in this study is in Appendix A. Several questions (marked

with an asterisk) were adapted from the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic

Advising. Modifications were minor, often only adding the designation "distance

education students or programs." The ACT Fourth National Survey is copyrighted;

Wesley Habley, Director of ACT Assessment Program Services, approved my adaption

of the ACT items. His permission letter is in Appendix B.

To provide an opportunity for fine tuning on the survey, a pilot study was

conducted. Respondents were asked to indicate the length of time for completion of the

questionnaire and to provide comments about clarity of items.

The pilot sample was comprised of nine people who are academic advisors or

distance education administrators at Old Dominion University, which offers a distance

education program called TELETECHNET. The sample included one or two advisors

from each academic college with a baccalaureate program in TELETECHNET. The

sample also had two representatives from Distance Learning and Extended Education, the

coordinating office for the program.

A letter to the pilot participants is included in Appendix C. Three weeks after sending the survey, the nonrespondents were telephoned to remind them of the survey and to request their participation. One hundred percent of the pilot surveys were returned. Based on feedback from participants, questions that were identified as ambiguous or misleading were modified.

Data Collection

For the main study, the survey and the cover letter (in Appendix D) were sent to one representative of each institution in the original sample. A self-addressed prepaid envelope was also provided for return of the survey.

Peterson's data base included names for distance learning unit head, admissions application contact, or academic program contact. For institutions with more than one academic program, the survey was mailed to the distance learning office unit head or admissions application contact. For institutions with only one baccalaureate degree program, the program contact was used instead if the name was available from the Peterson's data base.

The requested return date indicated on the survey was three weeks after the survey had been mailed. Two to three days after the requested return date, a follow-up for nonrespondents was sent. This follow-up was done through electronic mail for those whose e-mail addresses were provided by Peterson's. If the e-mail address was not available for the institutional contact, a letter with the same information was sent through the U.S. Postal Service. This follow-up letter is in Appendix E.

Approximately two weeks after the first follow-up, the remaining nonrespondents were telephoned. In some cases, the original contact was no longer with the institution. Therefore, another name was obtained. In other cases, the survey had been lost or forgotten. For these situations, another complete packet was mailed with a final deadline date.

For institutions that were not sent the second complete mailing after the telephone reminder, I sent the packet if they had not responded to the reminder after two weeks. The complete packet had the survey, cover letter, and return envelope with the final deadline date. This final cover letter is in Appendix F. In some cases, one sentence was added to personalize the letter based on the telephone conversation.

Confidentiality and Permission

Respondents were asked to sign their names at the end of the questionnaire, indicating their agreement to participate in the study. Individual survey results are confidential, as neither respondents nor their institutions will be identified in any report of results.

At the College of William and Mary, the School of Education Human Subjects Review Committee approved the research. Old Dominion University's Human Subjects Institutional Review Board approved the pilot study (see Appendix G). It was determined that there was minimal risk to subjects.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including percentages and means on individual questions, were computed. These statistics were used to report results of the ACT Fourth National

Survey of Academic Advising (Habley, 1993). Using the same statistics in this study provided consistency for data comparisons. Responses to open-ended questions were reviewed to identify illuminating insights and to highlight or clarify frequent responses.

In the results section, findings concerning academic advising goals and practices in distance education are presented. Each item of questionnaire data is reported. In addition to total responses, tables examine data according to program enrollment (1-100, 101-500, and 501 or more distance education students). This examination provides insights into the similarities and differences in advising goals and practices based on size of distance education program.

Advising goals and practices in distance education are compared to those of institutional advising programs. Data are from the Academic Advising in Distance Education Survey and from the ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising. ACT's data on advising practices were distinguished between advising done in academic departments and advising done in centralized advising offices (Habley, 1993). Therefore, reporting of results includes tables with descriptive statistics in three categories for advising practices: distance, ACT-- academic departments, and ACT--advising offices.

To link the NACADA advising goals to advising practices, the institutions' advising programs were divided into three categories based on the level at which they had achieved NACADA's advising goals. These categories were defined by the number of goals achieved rather than mean ratings. Therefore, the following ratings of goals were treated the same when distinguishing programs: less than satisfactorily achieved but with services implemented, relevant but with no services implemented, and not relevant.

The categories, and the number of goals satisfactorily or very satisfactorily achieved, are: low (2 or fewer goals), intermediate (3-5 goals), and high (6-8 goals). The study seeks to determine the advising practices that distinguish among these three groups of advising programs. The dependent variable was group membership and the independent variables were all of the advising practices from the Academic Advising in Distance Education Survey developed for this study.

For a categorical dependent variable and multiple independent variables with metric values, discriminant analysis is the statistical technique most commonly used. This technique investigates the variables important for distinguishing among the groups and develops a procedure for predicting group membership for new cases where group membership is not known (Norusis, 1985). Discriminant analysis was the statistical technique used in this study to determine the advising practices associated with achieving NACADA's goals.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Description of Sample

The institutions were identified through a recent study for Guide to Distance Learning (Peterson's, 1996). Of the 89 institutions in the sample, 73 returned completed surveys. This return rate of 82% is high enough to justify population validity.

Respondents had a choice of seven titles (or "Other") that was closest to their own. The titles, followed by percentages of respondents, are: Academic Advisor (9%), Director/Coordinator of Advising (4%), Director of Counseling (1%), Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs (4%), Vice President/Dean of Student Affairs (1%), College Dean or Department Chairperson (10%), Director/Coordinator of Distance Education (49%), and Other (21%).

Respondents were asked the number of baccalaureate degree programs offered at their institutions with the majority of course work available at a distance. The results were: 1 (28%), 2-3 (40%), 4-6 (17%), 7-10 (6%), and 11 or more (10%).

Another indicator of program size was enrollment. Respondents were asked to provide the approximate number of students enrolled in undergraduate distance education courses at their institutions. Results were: 1-100 (28%), 101-500 (36%), 501-1000 (17%), and 1001 or more (19%). The latter two groups were combined for reporting of data. Tables report data for distance education programs that are small (1-100 students),

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medium (101-500 students), and large (501 or more students).

Respondents were asked to rank up to three of the most frequent means of delivering instruction for distance education. The following list has each type of instruction option, with the percentage of institutions ranking the option in the top three: videocassette (58%), television transmission (21%), videoconferencing (61%), audiographics conference (5%), computer conferencing out of real-time (43%), and computer conferencing in real-time (13%). Use of videocassettes was the only means of instruction with a meaningful difference in response based on distance education program enrollment. Forty-two percent of small, 65% of medium-sized, and 62% of large programs use videocassettes for instruction.

On the survey Peterson's used to identify institutions for its <u>Guide to Distance Learning</u> (Peterson's, 1996), respondents were asked to indicate the widest geographical region for which courses were available and the primary (target) audience. For the institutions in this study, the primary target audiences for distance courses were: local-- city, county, district (7%), in-state (58%), multi-state (10%), nationwide (19%), and global (7%).

<div align="center">Analysis of Data</div>

Data are organized by the research questions. Tables include complete descriptive statistics from the Academic Advising in Distance Education Survey. Tables that compare advising in distance education programs with advising in institutions as a whole are classified by survey category. These categories are the distance education survey and the ACT survey, which is divided into advising in academic departments and advising

done in advising offices.

<u>Research Question 1</u>

<u>What are the current academic advising practices in distance education programs?</u>

The most frequently used advisors for distance education students are located on the main campus of the institution offering the distance education program. As shown in Table 2, faculty advisors (70%), academic department heads (46%), and full-time advisors (44%) were most often ranked as the top three deliverers of advising services. For advisors based closer to distant students, faculty advisors (19%), full-time advisors (10%) and part-time advisors (11%) were the advisor types most often mentioned as one of the top three providers of advising services.

Table 2 Advising Delivery Systems Used Most Often

Delivery System	Rank 1st	Rank 2nd	Rank 3rd	Rank in Top 3
Full-time advisors based on the main campus	16 25%	6 10%	6 10%	28 44%
based closer to distant students	5 8%	1 2%	0 0%	6 10%
Part-time advisors based on the main campus	2 3%	3 5%	3 5%	8 13%
based closer to distant students	1 2%	2 3%	4 6%	7 11%
Academic department heads based on the main campus	5 8%	11 17%	13 21%	29 46%
based closer to distant students	0 0%	2 3%	0 0%	2 3%
Faculty advisors based on the main campus	23 37%	14 22%	7 11%	44 70%
based closer to distant students	3 5%	5 8%	4 6%	12 19%
Paraprofessional advisors based on the main campus	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	2 3%
based closer to distant students	0 0%	3 5%	0 0%	3 5%
Peer advisors based on the main campus	0 0%	0 0%	2 3%	2 3%
based closer to distant students	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Other	9 14%	2 3%	3 5%	14 22%

Note. N=63 valid cases. Ten cases did provide valid responses on ranking the three most frequently utilized delivery systems.

Table 3 shows the types of advisors used for each enrollment category of distance education program. Faculty advisors on the main campus were most often cited by the large (73%) and medium-sized (77%) programs, while academic department heads on the main campus were most cited by the small programs (75%). Regardless of program enrollment, faculty advisors were the advisor type most likely to be utilized near the distant students. Fifteen percent of small, 31% of medium, and 35% of large programs had faculty advisors based closer to distance education students providing advising services.

For institutions that indicated "other" advisor types, a connection to distance education was cited most often. Four institutions mentioned administrators in the central distance education office were serving as advisors, while three institutions had site coordinators at the distance education site who were utilized as advisors. These seven institutions with a distance education professional serving as an advisor all ranked this "other" advisor type as one of the top three advising delivery systems used.

Table 3 Advising Delivery Systems Utilized by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

Delivery systems	Small N=20	Medium N=26	Large N=26	Total N=73
Full-time advisors based on the main campus	10 50%	12 46%	16 62%	38 52%
based closer to distant students	0 0%	6 23%	7 27%	13 18%
Part-time advisors based on the main campus	3 15%	5 19%	6 23%	14 19%
based closer to distant students	1 5%	4 15%	6 23%	11 15%
Academic department heads based on the main campus	15 75%	15 58%	13 50%	43 59%
based closer to distant students	1 5%	1 4%	4 15%	6 8%
Faculty advisors based on the main campus	14 70%	20 77%	19 73%	54 74%
based closer to distant students	3 15%	8 31%	9 35%	21 29%
Paraprofessional advisors based on the main campus	2 10%	3 12%	2 8%	7 10%
based closer to distant students	1 5%	3 12%	2 8%	6 8%
Peer advisors based on the main campus	2 10%	3 12%	1 4%	6 8%
based closer to distant students	0 0%	0 0%	2 8%	2 3%
Other	5 25%	7 27%	6 23%	18 25%

Note. N=valid cases. One case did not indicate enrollment, and is counted only in total.

The aggregate results for distance education programs did not provide a consensus on use of advising organizational models (see Table 4). The self-contained model was most frequently utilized (23%). The models least frequently cited were the supplementary, dual, and total intake models, each used by 10% of the institutions.

When viewing results by enrollment, however, differences in utilization of the advising organizational models are more pronounced. The large institutions use the self-contained model most often (42%) and the medium-sized institutions use the split model most often (23%). The small institutions had two models listed most frequently; the faculty only and satellite models each were cited by 25% of these institutions.

Respondents were able to provide additional information to help clarify their choice of advising organizational model. Three of the model definitions include the phrase "advising office." For programs that provided additional comments to clarify their response, the most frequent comment was substituting another administrative office for the advising office. For example, one respondent indicated "We do not have an advising office per say [sic], but rather the administrative offices [which provide some advising services]." Eight other programs have such units as admissions and distance education that serve an advising function.

Table 4 <u>Advising Organizational Models Utilized by Program Enrollment</u>

ENROLLMENT

Organizational Model	Small N=20	Medium N=26	Large N=26	Total N=73
Faculty only	5 25%	4 15%	3 12%	12 16%
Supplementary	1 5%	4 15%	2 8%	7 10%
Split	3 15%	6 23%	5 19%	14 19%
Dual	2 10%	4 15%	0 0%	7 10%
Total intake	2 10%	3 12%	2 8%	7 10%
Satellite	5 25%	1 4%	3 12%	9 12%
Self-contained	2 10%	4 15%	11 42%	17 23%

<u>Note</u>. N=valid cases. One case did not indicate enrollment, and is counted only in total column.

Faculty only. All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising.
Supplementary. All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising. There is an advising office which provides general academic information and referral for students, but all advising transactions must be approved by the student's faculty advisor.
Split. There is an advising office which advises a specific group of students, e.g. undecided, underprepared, non-traditional. All other students are assigned to academic units and/or faculty for advising.
Dual. Each student has two advisors. A member of the instructional faculty advises the student on matters related to the major. An advisor in an advising office advises students on general requirements, procedures, and policies.
Total intake. Staff in an administrative unit are responsible for advising ALL students for a specified period of time and/or until specific requirements have been met. After meeting those requirements, students are assigned to a member of the instructional faculty for advising.

Satellite. Each school, college, or division within the institution has established a unit which is responsible for advising.

Self-contained. Advising for all students from initial enrollment to departure from the institution is done by staff in a centralized unit.

Table 5 shows that overall advising effectiveness is evaluated regularly at 33% of

the institutions studied. Regular evaluation of advising services was mentioned most

often by large programs and least often by small distance education programs.

Table 5 Advising Services Evaluation by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

Evaluation of Advising Services	Small N=19	Medium N=25	Large N=25	Total N=69
Overall effectiveness is regularly evaluated	4 21%	7 28%	12 48%	23 33%

Note. N=valid cases. Four cases did not provide valid information on advising services evaluation.

The large programs were also most likely to evaluate individual advisors (see

Table 6). Although 41% of the total indicated there were no formal methods of

evaluating advisors, only 27% of the large programs gave that response. The method of

evaluation cited most frequently was performance review by supervisor, with 51% of all

programs using this type of review. Twenty-six percent of distance education programs

use self-evaluation, while 28% of programs use student evaluation as a means to evaluate

advisors.

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Table 6 Advisor Evaluation Methods Utilized by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

Advisor Evaluation Method	Small N=19	Medium N=23	Large N=26	Total N=68
No formal methods	11 58%	10 43%	7 27%	28 41%
Self-evaluation	3 16%	10 43%	5 19%	18 26%
Student evaluation	4 21%	6 26%	9 35%	19 28%
Performance review by supervisor	6 32%	10 43%	19 73%	35 51%
Peer review	2 11%	1 4%	2 8%	5 7%
Other	1 5%	1 4%	0 0%	2 3%

Note. N=valid cases. Three cases did not provide valid information on advisor evaluation methods.

As shown in Table 7, academic planning worksheets are the most often support or reference material supplied for academic advisors. The results were similar for each enrollment group, with 84% of small, 83% of medium and 77% of large institutions providing this material. Other support materials provided in a majority of distance education programs are advising handbooks (58%), articulation worksheets or agreements between institutions (58%), and directories of campus referral sources (57%). The least cited material was employment outlook projections, provided by only 12% of all programs.

Table 7 Support or Reference Materials by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

Support or Reference Material Provided to Advisors	Small N=19	Medium N=23	Large N=26[a]	Total N=69[a]
Aggregate data on student retention	2 11%	6 26%	6 24%	15 22%
Advising handbook	10 53%	14 61%	15 58%	40 58%
Employment outlook projections	1 5%	2 9%	4 15%	8 12%
Computerized degree audits	7 37%	12 52%	9 35%	29 42%
Academic planning worksheets	16 84%	19 83%	20 77%	56 81%
Forms for anecdotal records or contacts	12 63%	8 35%	14 54%	34 49%
Articulation worksheets or agreements between institutions	11 58%	10 43%	18 69%	40 58%
Directory of campus referral sources	13 68%	13 57%	12 46%	39 57%
Other	2 11%	2 9%	2 8%	6 9%

Note. N=valid cases. One case did not indicate enrollment, and is counted only in the total column. Four other cases did not provide valid responses on any reference materials.

a. N is reduced by one for aggregate data on student retention. One case did not provide a valid answer for that reference material only.

Academic advising in distance education is required on at least some occasions by most programs; only 11% of all institutions indicated contact was not required for any advising purpose (see Table 8). The aggregate data show that advising is most often required for class scheduling/registration (62%) and for approval of a graduation plan (64%). Advising is also required by the majority of distance education programs for declaring a major (53%) and changing a major (52%). The largest difference among enrollment groups was for class scheduling/registration. Eighty-one percent of medium, 58% of large, and 45% of small institutions require advising for that purpose.

Sixty-seven percent of all programs indicated that group advising is provided to their distance education students. There was a wide difference by enrollment classification, however. Group advising for distance education students is done in 77% of medium, 65% of large, and 55% of small programs. The group advising format most often cited was small group meetings during orientation or registration. Thirty-three percent of all distance education programs have these meetings at the main campus,

Table 8 Required Advising Occasions by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

Occasions when Students are Required to Contact Advisor	Small N=20	Medium N=26	Large N=12	Total N=73
Class scheduling/registration	9 45%	21 81%	15 58%	45 62%
Dropping a class	9 45%	13 50%	14 54%	36 49%
Adding a class	8 40%	14 54%	10 38%	32 44%
Declaring a major	9 45%	14 54%	16 62%	39 53%
Changing a major	9 45%	14 54%	15 58%	38 52%
Following a report of unsatisfactory progress	6 30%	7 27%	7 27%	20 27%
Before withdrawing from the institution	9 45%	15 58%	8 31%	32 44%
For approval of a graduation plan	9 45%	20 77%	18 69%	47 64%
Other	6 30%	2 8%	3 12%	11 15%
Contact is not a requirement	3 15%	1 4%	3 12%	8 11%

Note. N=valid cases. One case did not indicate enrollment and is counted only in the total column.

while 38% hold them at a location closer to distant students (see Table 9).

Of the institutions that identified another group advising format, seven of these were using some means of electronic delivery. These methods included video-conferencing, videotapes on study skills, and on-line computer conferencing.

Table 9 Group Advising by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

Available Group Advising Formats	Small N=20	Medium N=26	Large N=26	Total N=73
Credit or non-credit classes at the main campus	4 20%	9 35%	6 23%	19 26%
at a location near the distance site	3 15%	6 23%	6 23%	15 21%
Workshops or seminars at the main campus	4 20%	9 35%	7 27%	20 27%
at a location near the distance site	5 25%	6 23%	6 23%	17 23%
Small group meetings during orientation or registration at the main campus	5 25%	10 38%	9 35%	24 33%
at a location near the distance site	6 30%	9 35%	12 46%	28 38%
Other	4 20%	7 27%	2 8%	13 18%
No group advising is done	9 45%	6 23%	9 35%	24 33%

Note. N=valid cases. One case did not indicate enrollment and is counted only in the total column.

Table 10 shows that 55% of all distance education programs ranked telephone conversations in real-time as the most often used means of communication. Many students, however, do have an opportunity to meet with an advisor in person. Sixty-one percent of all institutions ranked in-person communication as one of the top three means of communication between advisors and distance education students. Written correspondence by mail was cited by 53% of programs as one of the three most frequently used means of advisor-student communication.

Table 10 Means of Communication Used Most Often for Advising in Distance Education Programs

Means of Communication Between Advisors and Students	Rank 1st	Rank 2nd	Rank 3rd	Rank in Top 3
In-person	17 26%	14 21%	9 14%	40 61%
Telephone conversations in real-time	36 55%	22 33%	4 6%	62 94%
Telephone conversations through voice mail	1 2%	9 14%	12 18%	22 33%
Written correspondence by mail	7 11%	11 17%	17 26%	35 53%
Written correspondence by fax	0 0%	3 5%	7 11%	10 15%
Computer conferencing out of real-time such as electronic mail	5 8%	4 6%	13 20%	22 33%
Computer conferencing in real-time, such as chat rooms	0 0%	1 2%	1 2%	2 3%
Other	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%

Note. N=66 valid cases. Seven cases did not provide valid information on ranking the three most frequently utilized means of communication.

Consistent with the results on Table 10, Table 11 shows that telephone conversations in real-time are the most frequently used means of communication between advisors and distance education students. Almost all distance education programs in each enrollment category ranked these conversations as one of the top three means of communication. Ninety-five percent of small programs, 92% of medium programs, and

95% of large programs indicated telephone conversations in real-time was one of the three most frequently used means of communication.

Table 11 Top 3 Means of Communication By Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

Means of Communication Between Advisors and Students	Small N=19	Medium N=24	Large N=22
In-person	10 53%	16 67%	13 59%
Telephone conversations in real-time	18 95%	22 92%	21 95%
Telephone conversations through voice mail	5 26%	8 33%	9 41%
Written correspondence by mail	13 68%	10 42%	11 50%
Written correspondence by fax	2 11%	4 17%	4 18%
Computer conferencing out of real-time such as electronic mail	6 32%	9 38%	7 32%
Computer conferencing in real-time, such as chat rooms	0 0%	1 4%	1 5%
Other	1 5%	0 0%	0 0%

Note. N= valid cases. Seven cases did provide valid information on ranking the three most frequently utilized means of communication. One case did not provide enrollment information. Each cell includes the frequency and percentage of programs that ranked a particular means of communication as one of the top three means of communication.

As shown in Table 12, 43% of respondents believed it was very likely that students and academic advisors develop a personal relationship. This response was the most often given in a range of six choices on this practice. This choice was emphasized

by one respondent who wrote, "Our student representatives [appears to be respondent's

choice of words for academic advisors—undergraduate peer advisors are not utilized]

know many of our adult learners and personal things about them." Another respondent

who reported that a personal relationship was likely qualified the answer with the

statement, " if indicating a satisfactory comfort level in their interactions as opposed to a

social type relationship." A respondent who indicated this relationship was unlikely

added "[it] depends on the student and frequency of contact."

Table 12 Likelihood of Personal Relationship between Distance Education
        Students and Advisors

Likelihood of Personal Relationship	Frequency N=72	Percentage N=72
Extremely unlikely	1	1%
Very unlikely	3	4%
Unlikely	9	13%
Likely	20	28%
Very likely	31	43%
Extremely likely	8	11%

Note. N=valid cases. One case did not provide a valid response on the advising
relationship.

Table 13 shows the mean likelihood of personal relationships between advisors

and distance education students, classified by program enrollment. A response of 1 was

extremely unlikely and 6 was extremely likely, as assessed by the institutional

representative. The mean was 4.35 for small, 4.24 for medium, and 4.65 for large

programs.

Table 13 Mean Likelihood of Personal Relationship Between Advisors and Distance Education Students by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

Mean Likelihood of Personal Relationship	Small N=20	Medium N=25	Large N=26	Total N=72
Range- 1=extremely unlikely to 6=extremely likely	4.35	4.24	4.65	4.40

Note. N=valid cases. One case did not provide a valid response on the advising relationship. One case did not provide enrollment data and is counted only in total column.

Complete data on the current academic advising practices in distance education programs are provided in Tables 2-13. The most prevalent practices include utilizing faculty advisors on the main campus, providing academic planning worksheets as support material for advisors, requiring academic advising on some occasions, and using telephone conversations in real-time for advisor-student communication. These prevalent practices were evident regardless of distance education program enrollment. The most noticeable difference in practice by program enrollment was the advising organizational model. The small, medium, and large programs each had a different advising organizational model used most frequently.

Research Question 2

To what extent are academic advising goals in distance education programs consistent with goals established by NACADA?

The NACADA goal cited most often as not relevant was assisting students in developing decision-making skills. As shown in Table 14, 18% of all institutions reported this goal does not appear relevant for distance education students. One respondent wrote, "Our learners are adults with careers who already are secure in themselves." Another commented, "Our students are all working adults who have used decision-making skills to enroll." Assisting students in developing decision-making skills was also the goal with the biggest difference reported among program size categories. While 31% of large programs considered this goal not relevant, 15% of small and only 8% of medium-sized programs considered it not relevant.

Table 14 NACADA Advising Goals Considered Not Relevant for Distance Education
Students by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

NACADA Advising Goal	Small N=20	Medium N=25	Large N=26	Total N=72
Assisting students in self-understanding and self-acceptance	3 15%	4 16%	4 15%	12 17%
Assisting students in their consideration of life goals	3 15%	1 4%	5 19%	10 14%
Assisting students in developing an educational plan	2 10%	1 4%	1 4%	4 6%
Assisting students in developing decision-making skills	3 15%	2 8%	8 31%	13 18%
Providing accurate information about institutional policies	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
Making referrals to other support services	3 15%	3 12%	2 8%	8 11%
Assisting students in evaluation of progress toward established goals and educational plans	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	1 1%
Providing information about students to the institution	1 5%	1 4%	2 8%	4 6%

Note. N=valid cases. One case did not indicate enrollment and is counted only in the
total column. That case also did not provide a valid response on decision-making skills;
total N=71 for that goal.

A comment related to life goals was particularly illuminating. One respondent

wrote, "Students in the completion track programs are already RNs. The degree earned is

a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, so they are quite firm in their life goals before coming

into the program."

No programs reported providing accurate information about institutions as not

relevant. Only 1% of programs reported as not relevant assisting students in evaluation of progress toward established goals and education plans. Therefore, those two goals are without question considered relevant for distance education students.

Ten institutions (7%) listed a goal for their advising program in addition to NACADA's goals. None of these goals was listed more than once. Some of these stated goals related to the distance program, such as making students feel a part of the university as a whole. Another goal, providing spiritual counseling, appears related to the institution's mission.

Goals of distance education advising programs are largely consistent with NACADA's goals. Some programs indicated some of NACADA's goals are not relevant. The goal cited as not relevant most often, however, still had 82% of institutions reporting it was relevant for distance education students. The higher percentage for this goal, assisting students in developing decision-making skills, was attributed mostly to the large distance education programs. No specific goals for distance education advising programs other than NACADA's were identified by more than one institution.

Research Question 3

To what extent are advising goals achieved in distance education?

Table 15 shows the mean ratings of perceived achievement of NACADA's goals. A score of 3 is somewhat satisfactory, 4 is satisfactory, and 5 is very satisfactory. The lowest mean rating for all institutions was 3.63 for assisting students in self-understanding and self-acceptance. The highest mean was 4.42 for providing accurate information about institutional policies. Mean achievement did not differ widely among

the enrollment classifications. The largest range across programs was for assisting

students in developing decision-making skills: 3.62 for small, 3.84 for medium, and 4.0

for large programs.

Table 15 Mean Ratings of Achievement of NACADA Advising Goals By Program
Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

NACADA Advising Goal	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Assisting students in self-understanding and acceptance	N=12 3.67	N=15 3.67	N=16 3.56	N=43 3.63
Assisting students in their consideration of life goals	N=16 3.69	N=21 4.0	N=18 3.89	N=55 3.87
Assisting students in developing an educational plan	N=17 4.29	N=24 4.17	N=23 4.26	N=65 4.23
Assisting students in developing decision-making skills	N=13 3.62	N=19 3.84	N=12 4.00	N=44 3.82
Providing accurate information about institutional policies	N=20 4.45	N=25 4.32	N=25 4.48	N=71 4.42
Making referrals to other support services	N=16 3.75	N=18 3.78	N=22 3.68	N=57 3.74
Assisting students in evaluation of progress toward goals	N=20 4.25	N=25 4.08	N=24 4.13	N=70 4.16
Providing information about students to the institution	N=19 4.00	N=24 4.04	N=23 3.78	N=67 3.94

Note. N= cases that rated a goal 2 (not very satisfactory)-5 (very satisfactory). Cases that
responded with 1 (no implemented services to address the goal) or 6 (goal not relevant)
were not included in means.

Table 16 shows data for respondents that considered NACADA's goals relevant,

but whose distance education programs do not currently have services implemented to

address the goals. The unaddressed goal indicated most often was assisting students in

self-understanding and self-acceptance, with results very similar in the three groups: 25% of small, 24% of medium, and 23% of large programs. The second most frequently mentioned unaddressed goal had more variation. Assisting students in developing decision-making skills was cited by 20% of small, 16% of medium, and 23% of large programs as a goal that had no related services that had been implemented.

Table 16 NACADA Advising Goals with No Implemented Services by Program Enrollment

ENROLLMENT

NACADA Advising Goal	Small N=20	Medium N=25	Large N=26	Total N=72
Assisting students in self-understanding and acceptance	5 25%	6 24%	6 23%	17 24%
Assisting students in their consideration of life goals	1 5%	3 12%	3 12%	7 10%
Assisting students in developing an educational plan	1 5%	0 0%	2 8%	3 4%
Assisting students in developing decision-making skills	4 20%	4 16%	6 23%	14 20%
Providing accurate information about institutional policies	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	1 1%
Making referrals to other support services	1 5%	4 16%	2 8%	7 10%
Assisting students in evaluation of progress toward goals	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	1 1%
Providing information about students to the institution	0 0%	0 0%	1 4%	1 1%

Note. N=valid cases. One case did not indicate enrollment and is counted only in the total column. This case also did not provide a valid response on decision-making skills; total N=71 for that goal.

Three of NACADA's goals had total means above 4.0. In addition, for these three

goals only 4% or fewer of the programs studied indicated that services had not been implemented to address these goals. The three goals with these high results are assisting students in developing an educational plan, providing accurate information about institutional policies, and assisting students in the evaluation of progress toward goals and plans. These results indicate that generally these advising goals are currently being achieved. Not far behind is providing information about students to the institution. The mean rating of this variable was 3.94, with only 1% of institutions not having services for this goal.

The other four NACADA goals had mean ratings below satisfactory, but above somewhat satisfactory (3.63-3.87). These goals had higher percentages of institutions considering the goal relevant, but not having services to address the goal (10-24%).

To determine the advising practices associated with the respondents' perceptions of achievement of advising goals by distance education programs, institutions were divided into three groups. The institutions' advising programs were segregated based on the extent to which they achieved NACADA's advising goals: low (0-2 goals achieved), intermediate (3-5 goals achieved), and high (6-8 goals achieved).

In a discriminant analysis statistical procedure, group membership was the dependent variable. All of the advising practices from the survey were the independent variables in the analysis.

The discriminant analysis resulted in two functions which contributed to the differences among the three groups. As shown in Table 17, function 1 explained 55% of the variance and function 2 explained 45% of the variance.

Table 17 Canonical Discriminant Functions for Discriminating Advising Practices

Function	Eigenvalue	Percent of Variance	Canonical Correlation
1	.23	55%	.44
2	.19	45%	.40

The functions consist of variables that distinguish the three groups. These discriminating variables were advising-related courses at the main campus and advising handbooks as reference materials.

The stepwise discriminant procedure identifies the variables that work together to contribute to the differences. Table 18 shows the standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients; they indicate each variable's relative contribution to the differences for each function. In function 1, the coefficient absolute value of the advising handbook is much greater than that of the courses. The reverse is true for function 2. One variable has such a preponderance of weight for each function that the differences are best explained by the primary variable for each function.

Table 18 Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients for Discriminating Advising Practices

Discriminating Variables	Function 1	Function 2
Courses at the main campus	.15	.99
Advising handbook	.99	-.13

Offering advising-oriented courses to students at the main campus and providing handbooks to academic advisors are the two practices associated with achieving more of

NACADA's advising goals. Function 1, primarily based on offering courses, explained 45% of the variance. Function 2, primarily based on providing handbooks, explained 55% of the variance.

Table 19 shows the classification prediction results, indicating how well the discriminating variables predicted group membership. With 33% as the percentage that would be expected by chance, 91% for the low achievement group is an excellent prediction classification rate. Although the actual low achievement programs could be accurately predicted as low, 36% of the intermediate achievement programs and 28% of the high achievement programs were also predicted to be in the low achievement group.

The classification prediction rate for the intermediate achievement group was 61%, better than chance. The discriminating variables did not classify the high achievement groups well, slightly less than chance at 32%.

Table 19 Classification Prediction Results for Achievement Group Membership

PREDICTED GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Actual Group	N for Actual Group	Low	Intermediate	High
Low	11	91%	0%	9%
Intermediate	33	36%	61%	3%
High	25	28%	40%	32%

Note. 4 cases had at least one missing discriminating variable and could not be classified.

In response to the third research question, advising programs in distance education are meeting NACADA's advising goals to a large extent for small, medium, and large distance education programs. The two practices associated with achieving goals are

providing advising handbooks and offering advising-oriented courses on the main campus.

Research Question 4

How do current advising practices for distance education programs differ from advising practices of institutional programs?

Table 20 shows comparisons for different advising delivery systems. One category in the ACT Survey, non-faculty advisors, was not included in the distance survey. It was possible this category could overlap with full-time or part-time advisors; with inclusion of main campus and distant location options, it was determined this additional category would have decreased clarity of the distance survey items. Although percentage comparisons lose some validity because of this omission, it is clear that faculty are the predominant advisors for both distance and institutional programs. Faculty advisors are used in 81% of distance programs, some or all academic departments in 98% of institutions, and 65% of advising offices. Full-time advisors, however, are also major providers of advising services. They are utilized in 64% of advising offices in institutional advising programs and 56% of distance education programs.

Table 20 <u>Advising Delivery Systems Utilized by Survey Category</u>

SURVEY CATEGORY

Delivery System	Distance Education N=73	ACT --Academic Department N=339[a]	ACT -- Advising Office N=253
Full-time advisors	56%	--	64%
Part-time advisors	30%	--	57%
Non-faculty advisors	--	51% 14%	47%
Academic department heads	62%	37% 62%	--
Faculty advisors	81%	30% 68%	65%
Paraprofessional advisors	15%	23% 4%	14%
Peer advisors	11%	22% 4%	19%

Note. Data in columns 3 and 4 are from <u>Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising</u>, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.
a. Percentage in upper part of cell is a response of "some departments" at the institution. Percentage in lower part of cell is a response of "all departments" at the institution. No institution is counted in both categories.

Table 21 shows the comparisons for advising organizational models. While institutional advising programs have a heavy concentration of faculty only advising (35%), only 16% of distance education programs use the faculty only model. Advising in distance education has more even distribution among the models than does advising in institutional advising programs.

Table 21 Advising Organizational Models Utilized By Survey Category

SURVEY CATEGORY

Organizational Model	Distance Education N=73	ACT N=404
Faculty only	16%	35%
Supplementary	10%	16%
Split	19%	20%
Dual	10%	6%
Total intake	10%	5%
Satellite	12%	3%
Self-contained	23%	16%

Note. Data in column 3 are from Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.

Faculty only. All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising.
Supplementary. All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising. There is an advising office which provides general academic information and referral for students, but all advising transactions must be approved by the student's faculty advisor.
Split. There is an advising office which advises a specific group of students, e.g. undecided, underprepared, non-traditional. All other students are assigned to academic units and/or faculty for advising.
Dual. Each student has two advisors. A member of the instructional faculty advises the student on matters related to the major. An advisor in an advising office advises students on general requirements, procedures, and policies.
Total intake. Staff in an administrative unit are responsible for advising ALL students for a specified period of time and/or until specific requirements have been met. After meeting those requirements, students are assigned to a member of the instructional faculty for advising.
Satellite. Each school, college, or division within the institution has established a unit which is responsible for advising.
Self-contained. Advising for all students from initial enrollment to departure from the institution is done by staff in a centralized unit.

Table 22 shows advising services evaluation. Overall effectiveness is evaluated

regularly in 17% fewer distance education programs than in institutional advising

programs. With only 50% of institutional advising programs regularly evaluating

advising services, the practice is not widespread in higher education in general. One

distance education respondent brought attention to that issue with the comment, "nor do

we evaluate effectiveness of advising services for non-distance students."

Table 22 Advising Services Evaluation By Survey Category

SURVEY CATEGORY

Evaluation of Advising Services	Distance Education N=69	ACT N=404
Overall effectiveness is regularly evaluated	33%	50%

Note. Data in column 3 are from Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.

For individual advisor evaluation, Table 23 shows the comparisons. The

differences are most pronounced for student evaluation. Students evaluate individual

advisor effectiveness in 28% of distance education programs, 54% of some or all

academic departments, and 40% of advising offices.

Table 23 Advisor Evaluation Methods Utilized by Survey Category

SURVEY CATEGORY

Advisor Evaluation Method	Distance Education N=68	ACT--Academic Departments[a] N=339	ACT--Advising Office N=253
Student evaluation	28%	22% 32%	40%
Self-evaluation	26%	31% 20%	24%
Performance review by supervisor	51%	31% 29%	56%
Peer review	7%	--	13%

Note. Data in columns 3 and 4 are from Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.
a. Percentage in upper part of cell is a response of "some departments" at the institution. Percentage in lower part of cell is a response of "all departments" at the institution. No institution is counted in both categories.

The comparisons for support materials are in Table 24. In most cases, support materials are provided less often to distance advisors. The differences are most pronounced for providing aggregate data on student retention: 22% in distance education, 70% in some or all academic departments, and 59% in advising offices. Although it might be expected that distance programs would make more use of such technical advising support materials as computerized degree audits, the differences among groups are not pronounced. Forty-two percent of distance education programs provide advisors with computerized degree audits; in institutional advising programs, these audits are provided in 54% of academic departments (some or all) and in 38% of advising offices.

Table 24 Support or Reference Materials by Survey Category

SURVEY CATEGORY

Support Material Provided to Advisors	Distance Education N=73	ACT--Academic Departments N=339[a]	ACT--Advising Offices N=253
Aggregate data on student retention	22%	35% 35%	59%
Advising handbook	58%	15% 64%	68%
Employment outlook projections	12%	42% 12%	36%
Computerized degree audits	42%	17% 37%	38%
Academic planning worksheets	81%	22% 73%	84%
Forms for anecdotal records	49%	32% 31%	50%
Articulation worksheets	58%	32% 35%	62%
Campus referral directory	57%	21% 61%	70%

Note. Data in column 3 and 4 are from Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.

a. Percentage in upper part of cell is a response of "some departments" at the institution. Percentage in lower part of cell is a response of "all departments" at the institution.

Table 25 shows differences for required advising occasions. Distance education students are less often required to contact an advisor after an unsatisfactory progress report. The results for the survey categories are: 27% in distance education, 71% in some or all academic departments, 44% in advising offices. Class scheduling/registration is the occasion when students are most often required to contact an advisor in institutional advising programs. Advising offices in 58% of these programs and academic departments (some or all) in 96% of these institutions required advising for class scheduling/ registration. That activity is the second most frequently required advising occasion in distance education programs, with 62% of programs requiring advising for class scheduling/ registration. Slightly more distance education programs (64%) require advising for approval of a graduation plan.

Table 25 Required Advising Occasions by Survey Category

SURVEY CATEGORY

Occasions when Advising Contact is Required	Distance Education N=73	ACT--Academic Departments [a] N=339	ACT--Advising Offices N=253
Class scheduling/ registration	62%	14% 82%	58%
Dropping a class	49%	17% 66%	48% [b]
Adding a class	44%	18% 65%	48% [b]
Declaring a major	53%	17% 57%	47%
Changing a major	52%	15% 60%	56%
After unsatisfactory progress report	27%	33% 38%	44%
Before withdrawal from the institution	44%	14% 44%	51%
For approval of a graduation plan	64%	16% 59%	42%
Contact is not a requirement	11%	--	13%

Note. Data in column 3 are from Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.
a. Percentage in upper part of cell is the response for "some departments" at the institution. Percentage in lower part of cell is the response for "all departments" at the institution.
b. For advising offices, survey participants were not asked to distinguish between advising required for dropping or adding classes. These percentages are the institutions that indicated advising was required for "changing class registration."

Group advising opportunities are less common in distance education than in

institutional advising programs, as shown in Table 26. Differences of utilization are most

pronounced with small group meetings during orientation or registration: 49% in distance

education, 82% in some or all academic departments, and 81% in advising offices.

Table 26 Group Advising by Survey Category

SURVEY CATEGORY

Available Group Advising Format	Distance Education N=73	ACT--Academic Departments N=339[a]	ACT--Advising Offices N=253
Credit or non-credit courses	30%	30% 18%	29%
Workshops or seminars	34%	37% 11%	38%
Small group meetings, orientation/registration	49%	39% 43%	81%

Note. Data in columns 3 and 4 are from Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.
a. Percentage in upper part of cell is the response for "some departments" at the institution. Percentage in lower part of cell is the response for "all departments" at the institution.

Faculty advisors are the most frequent deliverers of advising services in distance

education programs and institutions as a whole. Advising practices between distance

education and institutional advising programs have differences, however, with less

utilization of evaluation, group advising, and institutional reference materials in distance

education. Advising organizational models are more widely dispersed in distance

education when compared to institutional advising programs.

Research Question 5

How does achievement of NACADA's advising goals in distance education programs compare to the achievement of NACADA's goals in institutional advising programs?

As indicated by survey respondents, mean achievement is higher in distance education than in institutional advising programs for every goal (see Table 27). The mean of means for the advising goals in distance education is 3.97, compared with 3.31 for institutional advising programs. With a rating of 4 indicating satisfactorily achieving a goal, distance education programs are closer to that aggregate achievement level than institutional advising programs. The goal with the largest difference between programs is assisting students in developing decision-making skills, with a mean 1.1 higher for distance education than for institutional advising programs.

Table 27 Mean Achievement of Advising Goals by Survey Category

SURVEY CATEGORY

NACADA Advising Goal	Distance Education	ACT
Assisting students in self-understanding and self-acceptance	3.63	2.82
Assisting students in their consideration of life goals	3.87	3.12
Assisting students in developing an educational plan	4.23	3.48
Assisting students in developing decision-making skills	3.82	2.71
Providing accurate information about institutional policies	4.42	3.99
Making referrals to other support services	3.74	3.43
Assisting students in evaluation of progress toward established goals and educational plans	4.16	3.49
Providing information about students to the institution	3.94	3.47
Mean of means	3.97	3.31

Note. Data in column 3 are from Fulfilling the Promise? Final Report: ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising, by W. R. Habley, 1993, Iowa City: The American College Testing Program.

Summary

Research Question 1

What are the current academic advising practices in distance education programs?

The most utilized advising delivery system is faculty advisors on the main campus of the institution sponsoring the distance education program. Although the self-contained model was the most frequently cited advising organizational model, each of the seven models identified by Habley (1983) has representation in distance education programs.

Most distance education programs do not regularly evaluate overall effectiveness of advising services. The most common form of individual advisor evaluation is performance review by a supervisor.

Advising handbooks, academic planning worksheets, articulation agreements between institutions, and directories of campus referral sources are provided to academic advisors in the majority of distance education programs. Distant students are often required to have advising contact for class scheduling/registration and for approval of a graduation plan. Group advising formats are not common in distance education programs. Most distance education programs utilize telephone conversations in real-time for advisor-student communication. This study found that administrators perceive it is likely that advisors and distance education students develop personal relationships.

Research Question 2

To what extent are academic advising goals in distance education programs consistent with goals established by NACADA?

Goals of distance education programs are generally consistent with the eight

advising goals established by NACADA. Most survey respondents rated the goals relevant for distance education students and did not identify other advising goals for their programs.

Research Question 3

To what extent are advising goals achieved in distance education programs?

The results of this study indicate distance education programs are achieving NACADA's advising goals to a large extent. These results are based on the opinion of one representative of the institution offering the distance education program. Providing advising handbooks to academic advisors and offering advising-oriented courses on the main campus are the advising practices associated with achieving goals.

Research Question 4

How do current advising practices for distance education programs differ from advising practices of institutional advising programs?

Advising practices for distance education programs have less use of the faculty only advising organizational model. Fewer distance education programs have evaluation of overall advising services and individual advisors than do institutional advising programs. Distance education programs are less likely than institutional advising programs to provide advisors with data on student retention, to require advising contact after unsatisfactory progress reports, and to provide small group meetings during orientation/registration.

Research Question 5

How does achievement of NACADA's advising goals in distance education programs compare to the achievement of NACADA's goals in institutional advising programs?

According to the results of this study, distance education programs have greater achievement of NACADA's advising goals than do institutional advising programs. In distance education programs, mean achievement is higher for each of the eight advising goals. Results pertaining to goal achievement were subjective, reported by one survey respondent for institutional advising programs and for distance education advising programs.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Summary and Discussion of Results

This study identified the advising practices currently utilized by distance

education baccalaureate degree programs in colleges and universities across the United

States. These practices had similarities and differences from those in institutional

advising programs. The study also provided information on the self-reported

achievement of the National Association of Academic Advising's (NACADA) advising

goals in distance education, and compared those results to goal achievement in

institutional advising programs.

Academic Advising Practices in Distance Education

The ACT Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising demonstrated the

increasing diversity in the types of personnel who deliver advising services (Habley,

1993). This diversity is certainly present in distance education programs (see Table 3).

Six types of advisors identified from the ACT survey are all represented in distance

education programs. In addition, each type of advisor is based on the institution's main

campus for some programs and is based closer to distance education students for some

programs. Furthermore, 25% of respondents identified a type of advisor different from

those listed on the Academic Advising in Distance Education Survey. The most

frequently mentioned additional type had some association with distance education, such

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as a coordinating office administrator or site director.

Although diversity of advisor types was found, faculty advisors are the most frequently utilized advising delivery system in distance education. This is consistent with institutional advising programs. Composite results from the ACT Survey of Academic Advising found that students did not have significant preferences between faculty and other types of advisors (Habley, 1994). King (1988) identified several advantages and disadvantages of the different delivery systems. She concluded the ideal would include some combination of the different types. In distance education, this combination includes all different advisor types with personnel based on the main campus and closer to distance education students. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated more than one of the thirteen choices of advisor types listed on this study's survey was utilized to provide advising services to distance education students. Most institutions are following King's suggestion to provide diverse advising personnel.

The diversity in distance education advising practices is also shown in use of advising organizational models (e.g., satellite, self-contained) with no model dominating (see Table 4). Only 16% of institutions use the faculty only model, compared with 35% in institutional advising programs. In the discriminant analysis identifying practices associated with achieving advising goals, advising organizational model was not found to be one of the distinguishing factors. It seems there is no one "best" organizational model in distance education. Instead, programs are using and adapting various models to provide advising services for distant students. Distance education program size is a factor in the use of advising organizational models. The largest difference among enrollment

categories was for the self-contained model, used most often by large programs. Perhaps there is more need for an advising office with greater numbers of students.

Compared with institutional advising programs, fewer institutions in distance education provide advisors with such support materials as data on student retention, advising handbooks, and campus referral directories (see Table 21). It may be these materials are not available for any advisors at the institution, or they have not yet been developed for distance education. In the discriminant analysis, having advising handbooks was found to be associated with achieving advising goals.

As with institutional advising programs, advising is required on at least some occasions for most distance education programs (see Table 25). Advising is required less often in distance education when a student receives an unsatisfactory progress report. Perhaps for this population, largely adult, it is not considered necessary to require advising at that time.

The discriminant analysis found having credit or non-credit courses at the main campus was associated with achieving NACADA's advising goals (see Table 18). For programs which have an on-campus residency requirement or option, these advising-related courses could be very helpful in orienting the students to distance education. In addition, the ongoing nature of such courses allows time for developmental advising issues to be addressed (Habley & Crockett, 1988). These courses, however, may not be an option for all distance education programs. They may not be compatible with the overall mission of a program to provide all course work at a distance.

Whether based on the main campus or closer to distant students, group advising is

utilized less in distance education than in institutional advising programs (see Table 26).

An explanation may be that arranging such groups is more difficult in distance education,

with less frequent in-person contact and scheduling conflicts among working adult

students. Although electronic advising formats such as video conferences and on-line

computer conferences were cited infrequently, use of these kinds of group advising may

increase as technology becomes increasingly sophisticated and available.

As reported by Sloan and Wilmes (1989), an academic advisor may be the first

and only institutional contact adult students have outside the classroom. This statement

seems even more important for distant students, who may not have a classroom; or if they

do, it is away from the main campus. In Fielstein's study (1989), 83% of students

indicated it was a priority advising activity that advisors be personally acquainted with

their students. Based on respondents' perceptions, there is a significant likelihood that

students and academic advisors develop a personal relationship (see Table 12).

Despite the distance from the main campus, the advisor-student relationship is

developing with some in-person contact at a majority of institutions (see Table 11).

Telephone conversations, however, were reported as the most frequent means of

communication between advisors and distance education students. The suggestion by

Sloan and Wilmes (1989) to utilize telephone conversations as a convenient means of

advising commuter students is certainly being implemented in distance education.

Habley (1993) reported the increase in the use of program and advisor evaluation

in institutional advising programs. This study found less utilization of program

evaluation and student evaluation of advisors in distance education advising programs

(see Tables 22 and 23). Only 33% of programs regularly evaluate overall advising

services in distance education, while only 28% of programs have distant students evaluate

their academic advisors. Perhaps these institutions happen to be among those that do not

evaluate any advising services; one respondent confirmed that situation at his institution.

It seems possible, however, that because many distance education programs are new,

advising evaluation may not be a priority. The opinion that advising program evaluation

would come later was implied by one respondent who wrote, "not yet."

Academic Advising Goals in Distance Education

The advising goals established by NACADA are largely considered relevant for

distance education. The most prescriptive goal, providing accurate information about

institutional policies, was the one goal that all institutions considered relevant. Other

goals such as assisting students in consideration of life goals and educational plans, based

on the concept of developmental advising, were considered relevant by the vast majority

of respondents (see Table 14).

Providing accurate information about institutional policies was also the goal with

the highest achievement rating (see Table 15). The other goals, however, were still rated

reasonably highly. Mean achievement for all goals was higher in distance education

programs than in institutional advising programs (see Table 24).

These results are surprising given the study (Fielstein, Scoles, & Webb, 1992) that

found developmental advising was less important for nontraditional students than for

traditional students. It is possible that institutions are putting special efforts into advising

for distance education, recognizing the need to serve this population. It is also possible, however, that the self-reported goal achievements are somewhat inflated. These ratings were based on the opinion of one representative at each institution, the majority of which do not have evaluation of the distance education advising program.

<div align="center">Limitations of Study</div>

Although institutional representatives may have been overly favorable when reporting goal achievement, most respondents did seem to have knowledge of advising practices. The consequences of one person completing the survey for the entire distance education advising program were actually less limiting than anticipated when planning the study. With a high return rate, the sample is considered representative of the population. A still relatively small sample, however, limits the generalizability of the findings for the discriminant analysis. This statistical technique can bring variable results with a small sample, so discriminant analysis results should be interpreted with reservations.

The discriminant analysis provided a good classification prediction for those programs that were low in achievement of NACADA's goals. It did less well in distinguishing the groups that achieved more of the advising goals. This result may have been due to the group definitions; achieving 3-5 versus 6-8 goals may not have provided a large enough distinction. The distinction between the groups may have been small since the responses generally found that all distance education programs were meeting NACADA's goals. The mean of means for the goals was 3.97, very close to the

satisfactory rating of 4.0, and higher than the 3.31 mean of means for institutional advising programs (Habley, 1993).

Recommendations for Distance Education Advising Programs

With considerable variability in the means of instruction and organization of distance programs, there will be diversity in the advising services available for distant students. It is hoped those involved in academic advising can learn from the results of this study, and obtain ideas based on services other institutions are providing. Several recommendations, however, are appropriate for any distance education program.

Academic advisors should be given an advising handbook. In Trent's study of a statewide nursing program (1993), some students reported receiving vague or incorrect information from their advisors. Faculty members and some administrators who serve as advisors do not have advising as their primary function. Even professional advisors are likely to have responsibilities other than advising distant students. The accessibility of an advising handbook can help save advisors time in searching for information and result in more efficient and competent advising.

Ford (1983) identified three categories of materials for inclusion in an advising handbook:

1. Information about the advisor role and academic regulations in general.

2. Articles and other resource materials concerning advising theory and techniques.

3. Information pertaining to specific departments and specific regulations at the institution.

Gordon (1992) suggested loose-leaf notebooks to facilitate the ease and efficiency of updating materials in the advising handbook.

As part of this handbook or as a separate document, advisors should be given a campus referral directory. The extent of this directory and services available will vary, but advisors need to have ready access to the information. Making referrals to other support services was one of the lower rated advising goals in the study (see Table 15). Although advisors are likely to be primary resources, distant students will need referrals to other institutional representatives on some occasions. In a study of adult students, Ryder, Bowman, and Newman (1994) found being given the "run-around" at campus offices was a frequent complaint. If students are not provided with the correct office or individual to contact, they may receive this poor service during long distance telephone calls.

Academic advisors should seek ways to develop personal relationships with their distance education students. Fielstein's study (1989) found that students want a personal relationship with their academic advisor. Distant students may not be seen directly by instructors or institutional staff members. Perhaps a personal relationship with an advisor could help prevent students from feeling they are invisible and treated only "as a number" in a bureaucracy. With much of advising in distance education done through telephone conversations and written correspondence, advisors should personalize this contact as much as possible. The extent of contact will vary depending on the student's needs and desires. Advisors who are personable and approachable, however, can send students the message that they care and are available if needed.

Advising programs and individual advisors need to be evaluated in distance education. With the intention of its standards being used by institutions undergoing regional accreditation, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Education (CAS) requires regular systematic evaluations of program quality. Although the assessment methods will vary, programs must have a range of measures to ensure objectivity and comprehensiveness. Data must include responses from students and other relevant constituencies. Results of evaluations must be used to improve services (CAS Standards, 1995).

In conducting program evaluation, current academic advisors of distant students should be consulted. For student evaluation, institution specific instruments may be developed or standardized instruments such as the ACT Survey of Academic Advising (see page 23) could be used.

Recommendations for Further Research

Qualitative case studies should be conducted to learn more details of the nature of advising services and goals in distance education. These studies should include interviews with advisors and students. One study could be of an institution that has an overall advising program evaluation, and is found to be achieving all of NACADA's advising goals. Advising practices for this exemplary advising program would be of interest to the field.

Another case study could be of a distance program offering at least one professional degree and one non-professional degree at a distance. Advising goals for programs such as RN to BSN, where students are already in a profession, and for a liberal

arts major could be very different.

Another study could be of a program that utilizes the same electronic means for advising and instruction. This kind of program could provide opportunities for integrating advising with instruction, allowing time for developmental issues to be explored. A program that provides advising through computer conferencing could give students opportunities to learn the technology necessary for instruction. In addition to studying those program features, this case study could examine issues involved with using technology to advise students. A related study could compare a program that utilizes electronic means for academic advising with a distance education program that utilizes more traditional face-to-face contact for advising.

The present study of academic advising in distance education was based on responses to a survey completed by an institutional representative. To obtain assessment of another constituency, a study should be conducted with a survey sent to distant students. This study could determine which academic advising services students want, and how well their needs are currently being met. Although generalizations can be made from the literature on academic advising for adult students, a more specific study would inform the field of the distant student population's advising needs. This recommended study would provide quantitative data from the student perspective. Case studies could provide rich qualitative data from advisors and students. Combined with the results of this quantitative study, the field would continue to gain knowledge of academic advising in distance education.

APPENDIX A

Academic Advising In Distance Education Survey

Please answer the questions below, based on academic advising services provided to all undergraduate distance education students at your institution. You may provide additional information on any item to clarify your responses. Return the form in the enclosed prepaid envelope to: Rob Curry, Room 346, Technology Building, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 23529. Please return the survey by December 16, 1996.

In the left column, indicate which of the following advisor types are utilized to provide academic advising for distance education students at your institution. (Check all that **apply**). In the right column, **rank up to** *three* (3) advisor types that are most frequently used (1 is the advisor type most often used to advise distance education students, etc.)*

Rank

Apply? 1-3

_____ _____ Full-time advisors (hired specifically to advise) based on the main campus

_____ _____ Full-time advisors (hired specifically to advise) based closer to distance education students

_____ _____ Part-time advisors (hired specifically to advise) based on the main campus

_____ _____ Part-time advisors (hired specifically to advise) based closer to distance education students

_____ _____ Academic department heads based on the main campus

_____ _____ Academic department heads based closer to distance education students

_____ _____ Faculty advisors (those with teaching as a primary responsibility) based on the main campus

_____ _____ Faculty advisors (those with teaching as a primary responsibility) based closer to distance education students

_____ _____ Paraprofessional advisors (graduate assistants, practicum students, outside individuals hired for peak period) based on the main campus

_____ _____ Paraprofessional advisors (graduate assistants, practicum students, outside individuals hired for peak period) based closer to distance education students

_____ _____ Peer advisors (undergraduate students) based on the main campus

_____ _____ Peer advisors (undergraduate students) based closer to distance education students

_____ _____ Other, please specify advisor type and location _____

If you have not marked items on the right column above already, please rank up to three (3) advisor types that are most frequently used.

Please **rank up to** *three* (3) of the most frequent means of communication between advisors and students in your institution's distance education program (1 is most frequently used, etc.)

_____ In-person

_____ Telephone conversations in real-time

_____ Telephone conversations through voice mail

_____ Written correspondence by mail

_____ Written correspondence by fax

_____ Computer conferencing out of real-time, such as electronic mail

_____ Computer conferencing in real-time, such as chat rooms

_____ Other, please specify_____

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Please **rank up to *three* (3)** of the most frequent means of delivering instruction in your institution's distance education program (1 is most frequently used, etc.)

    _____ Videocassette
    _____ Television transmission (one-way video and audio)
    _____ Videoconferencing (one or two-way video **with** 2-way audio)
    _____ Audiographics conference (two-way audio with shared graphics display such as networked computers)
    _____ Computer conferencing out of real-time, such as electronic mail
    _____ Computer conferencing in real-time, such as chat rooms

Distance education students are __required__ to contact an advisor on the following occasions (check all that apply): *

    _____ Class scheduling/registration
    _____ Dropping a class
    _____ Adding a class
    _____ Declaring a major
    _____ Changing a major
    _____ Following a report of unsatisfactory progress
    _____ Before withdrawing from the institution
    _____ For approval of a graduation plan
    _____ Other, please specify _____
    _____ Contact is not a requirement

How likely do you think it is that academic advisors develop a personal relationship with their distance education students?

    _____ Extremely unlikely
    _____ Very unlikely
    _____ Unlikely
    _____ Likely
    _____ Very likely
    _____ Extremely likely

The following group advising formats are available for distance education students (check all that apply): *

    _____ Credit or non-credit courses at the main campus
    _____ Credit or non-credit courses at a location near the distance site
    _____ Workshops or seminars at the main campus
    _____ Workshops or seminars at a location near the distance site
    _____ Small group meetings during orientation or registration at the main campus
    _____ Small group meetings during orientation or registration at a location near the distance site
    _____ Other, please specify_____
    _____ No group advising is done

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The following goals for advising programs have been established by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Consider whether these goals are relevant for distance education students, and whether your institution's current advising services are delivered in a way that these goals are successfully achieved for most distance education students. Use the following scale to rate each goal.

Circle 6 if you do not consider the goal relevant.
If you consider the goal relevant, *circle 1-5* to rate the achievement of the goal. *
1. No services have been implemented to address this goal
2. Achievement not very satisfactory
3. Achievement somewhat satisfactory
4. Achievement satisfactory
5. Achievement very satisfactory
6. This goal does not appear relevant for distance education students

1 2 3 4 5 6   Assisting students in self-understanding and self-acceptance (value clarification, understanding abilities, interests, and limitations)

1 2 3 4 5 6   Assisting students in their consideration of life goals by relating interests, skills, abilities, and values to careers, the world of work, and the nature and purpose of higher education.

1 2 3 4 5 6   Assisting students in developing an educational plan consistent with life goals and objectives (alternative courses of action, alternate career considerations, and selection of courses)

1 2 3 4 5 6   Assisting students in developing decision-making skills

1 2 3 4 5 6   Providing accurate information about institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs

1 2 3 4 5 6   Making referrals to other institutional or community support services

1 2 3 4 5 6   Assisting students in evaluation or reevaluation of progress toward established goals and educational plans

1 2 3 4 5 6   Providing information about students to the institution, colleges, and/or academic departments

Please indicate below *any additional goal(s)* of your institution's distance education advising program. Also indicate the achievement of this goal for most students based on the rating in the above question.

GOAL   ACHIEVEMENT

_____   1 2 3 4 5

_____   1 2 3 4 5

_____   1 2 3 4 5

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Which of the following support or reference materials are routinely provided to advisors of distance education students? (check all that apply) *

      _____ Aggregate data on student retention
      _____ Advising handbook
      _____ Employment outlook projections
      _____ Computerized degree audits
      _____ Academic planning worksheets
      _____ Forms for anecdotal records or contracts
      _____ Articulation worksheets or agreements between institutions
      _____ Directory of campus referral sources
      _____ Other, please specify_____

Please carefully consider the following descriptions and _check the one_ which most closely describes the organization of advising for your institution's distance education program. The choice of one for the entire program may be difficult, but it is important that you choose only one. *

_____ 1. All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising.

_____ 2. All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising. There is an advising office which provides general academic information and referral for students, but all advising transactions must be approved by the student's faculty advisor.

_____ 3. There is an advising office which advises a specific group of students, e.g. undecided, underprepared, non-traditional. All other students are assigned to academic units and/or faculty for advising.

_____ 4. Each student has two advisors. A member of the instructional faculty advises the student on matters related to the major. An advisor in an advising office advises students on general requirements, procedures, and policies.

_____ 5. Staff in an administrative unit are responsible for advising ALL students for a specified period of time and/or until specific requirements have been met. After meeting those requirements, students are assigned to a member of the instructional faculty for advising.

_____ 6. Each school, college, or division within the institution has established a unit which is responsible for advising.

_____ 7. Advising for all students from initial enrollment to departure from the institution is done by staff in a centralized advising unit.

Descriptions above may not completely detail advising organization at distance programs. For example, coordinators at the distant sites might provide advising services. Please indicate below any variation to the model you chose above which would help describe the organization of advising services for your institution's distance education students.

_____

_____

_____

What methods are used to evaluate academic advisors of distance education students at your institution? (check all that apply) *

    ____   There are no formal methods of evaluation
    ____   Self-evaluation
    ____   Student evaluation
    ____   Performance review by supervisor
    ____   Peer review
    ____   Other, please specify _____

Does your institution regularly evaluate the overall effectiveness of advising services for distance education students? *

    ____   Yes
    ____   No

Please provide below descriptions of any advising services for distance education students at your institution that have not been mentioned previously on this survey.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the approximate number of students enrolled in undergraduate distance education courses at your institution?

    ____   1-100
    ____   101-500
    ____   501-1000
    ____   1001 or more

How many baccalaureate degree programs are offered at your institution with the majority of the course work available at a distance?

    ____   1
    ____   2-3
    ____   4-6
    ____   7-10
    ____   11 or more

Which of the following titles is closest to your own (the individual completing the questionnaire)?*

      ____   Academic Advisor
      ____   Director/Coordinator of Advising
      ____   Director of Counseling
      ____   Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs
      ____   Vice President/Dean of Student Affairs
      ____   College Dean or Department Chairperson
      ____   Director/Coordinator of Distance Education
      ____   Other, please specify _____

Thank you for your time and assistance. Please mail this survey in the enclosed prepaid envelope to: Rob Curry, Room 346, Technology Building, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 23529. Please sign below to indicate your consent to participate in this research. Completion of this survey is the only task for research participation; interviews will not be requested. Indicate if you would like to receive a summary of the survey results.

_____

Signature   Title

_____

Institution

_____

City, State, ZIP Code

_____Please send a copy of the survey results to the address above.

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APPENDIX B

PERMISSION TO ADAPT SURVEY ITEMS

ACT

Educational Services Division

July 1, 1996

Mr. Rob Curry
Coordinator for Corporate Sites/Advisor
Old Dominion University
College of Health Sciences
School of Nursing
Norfolk, VA   23529-0500

Dear Mr. Curry:

Permission is hereby granted for your use of items adapted from ACT's Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising. It is my understanding that adapted items will be used in a survey supporting your dissertation and that the adapted items will be identified and ACT will be given credit in the final copy of your dissertation.

If you have questions regarding this permission, please contact me. Good luck with your study.

Sincerely,

Wesley R. Habley
ACT Postsecondary Services

2201 North Dodge Street, P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, Iowa 52243
(319) 337-1000

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER TO PILOT STUDY SAMPLE

May 15, 1996

Dr. Fred Jones
Dean
College of Health Sciences
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23508

Dear Fred:

The proposal for my dissertation, "Academic Advising in Distance Education" was recently approved. My study will compare and contrast goals and practices of academic advising in distance education with those that are utilized throughout an institution. Since very little has been written on the subject, my study will provide a means to identify the current stage of development of academic advising within distance education.

For a pilot study, I will be using faculty and administrators involved with academic advising at TELETECHNET. I would very much appreciate your participation by completing the enclosed survey. I value your opinion and would also appreciate any feedback and suggestions for clarifying the survey.

I would appreciate your returning the survey to me in my office by June 5, 1996. Since I will need the pilot results before continuing with the study, your response is appreciated. I would be happy to send you a copy of the pilot results, as well as the main study. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Curry
Advisor

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER TO MAIN STUDY SAMPLE

September 25, 1996

Dr. Mary Dillard
Associate Director of Distance Learning
University
City, State

Dear Dr. Dillard:

I am conducting a study on academic advising in distance education for my dissertation at the College of William and Mary. My study will compare and contrast goals and practices of academic advising in distance education with those that are utilized by institutions as a whole. Because very little has been written on the subject, my study will provide a means to identify the current stage of development of academic advising within distance education. The committee chair is Dr. Roger Baldwin, who can be reached at 757-221-2322.

I would very much appreciate your participation by completion of the enclosed survey. It took pilot participants an average of **22 minutes** to complete the instrument. The sample consists of institutions that have baccalaureate programs with the majority of courses available from a distance. These institutions were identified by Peterson's and included in the 1996 publication, *Peterson's Guide to Distance Learning*. Your response is very important to the results of the study. If you have questions about the survey, please contact me by telephone (757-683-5246) or e-mail (rfc100u@giraffe.tech.odu.edu).

A follow-up mailing is planned for October 16, 1996. I would appreciate your returning the survey to me in the enclosed prepaid envelope by that time. I would be happy to send you a copy of the survey results. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Curry
Advisor, TELETECHNET RN to BSN Program

APPENDIX E

FIRST FOLLOW-UP LETTER

November 15, 1996

John Marshall
Director of Continuing Education
College
City, State

Dear Mr. Marshall:

I recently sent you a survey on academic advising in distance education. I have not yet received your response. If your response to the survey is already in the mail, thank you for your assistance. If you have not had time to review the survey, I would appreciate your completing it at your earliest convenience. You can return it to me in the prepaid envelope provided with the survey.

Please contact me if you would like another copy of the survey. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Rob Curry
Advisor, TELETECHNET RN to BSN Program
Phone: (757) 683-5246
Fax: (757) 683-5253
E-mail: rfc100u@giraffe.tech.odu.edu

APPENDIX F

FINAL FOLLOW-UP LETTER

November 29, 1996

Dr. Joanna Fairfield
University
City, State

Dear Dr. Fairfield:

I promise this is the final follow-up! I have not yet received your response to my survey on academic advising in distance education. If your response to the survey is already in the mail, thank you for your assistance. If you have not had time to review the survey, I would appreciate your completing it by December 16, 1996. You can return it to me in the enclosed prepaid envelope.

Please contact me by telephone (757-683-5246) or email (rfc100u@giraffe.tech.odu.edu) if you have questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Rob Curry
Advisor, TELETECHNET RN to BSN Program

APPENDIX G

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

Office of Research, Economic Development and Graduate Studies
Norfolk, Virginia 23529-0013
Phone: (804) 683-3460
FAX: (804) 683-3004

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 4, 1996

TO: Robert F. Curry, Advisor
School of Nursing

FROM: Steven R. Hoagland, Ex-officio
Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB)

SUBJECT: Review and approval of protocol

The pilot study for your dissertation research project (entitled "ACADEMIC ADVISING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION") was reviewed for compliance with guidelines governing the use of human subjects in research. This project qualifies for Expedited Review because it involves the study of survey data to investigate subject characteristics and/or perceptions. Based on the information received by this office on 3 June 1996 which was reviewed by one or more members of the University IRB, the project satisfactorily addresses the issues of informed consent, confidentiality, and minimal risk. Consequently, the IRB approves the pilot study protocol and it requests student access to the sample as stated in the protocol.

This approval is valid (a) for a period of twelve months from today or (b) until the research design or methodology is modified, whichever occurs first--(a) or (b). In either case, this approval will be rescinded and another review of the project is required according to federal guidelines. Should another review be required, please initiate the review process via your college's review committee or IRB representative.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

c: Robert L. Ash, Interim AVP for REDGS
Valerian J. Derlega, IRB Chair
Martha Smith Sharpe, Director of UPIR
and member of student's dissertation committee
Members of IRB

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VITA

Robert Furman Curry

Birth date:	December 13, 1953	
Birthplace:	Anderson, South Carolina	
Education:	1990-1997	The College of William and Mary Williamsburg, Virginia **Doctor of Education** **Education Specialist**
	1975-1976	The University of Georgia Athens, Georgia **Master of Education**
	1971-1975	Furman University Greenville, South Carolina **Bachelor of Arts**, cum laude
Professional Experience:	1979-present	Old Dominion University Norfolk, Virginia **Coordinator for Corporate Sites/Advisor,** TELETECHNET **Site Director,** TELETECHNET **Assistant Director of Advising Services,** College of Business and Public Administration **Academic Counselor,** School of General Studies