

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR IN LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

Abstract

Despite the relevance of academic advising to the college student experience, there is little research to define the role of academic advisors in leadership education. This study uses qualitative case study research to explore the role of the academic advisor in the leadership education process within institutions of higher education. The findings and resulting implications provide context for creating a more holistic approach to leadership education through the maximization of advising relationships. Academic advisors can leverage their knowledge of student development theory, leadership education, and their role in the higher education process to maximize their advising relationships and facilitate student leadership development.

Introduction

For learners within higher education, leadership education is taught via application of knowledge and skills acquired through theory and leadership competencies taught in formal educational experiences. Similarly, informal educational experiences such as co-curricular activities provide students the opportunity to move from theory to practice in leadership education. Connecting students to these opportunities are academic advisors, one of a student's most consistent academic relationships during their time in college (Hunter & White, 2004). Hunter & White posit that "academic advising, well developed and appropriately accessed, is perhaps the only structured campus endeavor that can guarantee students sustained interaction with a caring and concerned adult who can help them shape such an experience" (2004, p. 21). Academic advising is crucial to student success in facilitating student development

of competencies such as the ability to partake in interpersonal interactions, fulfilling major and career objectives, and aiding in student self-exploration, all of which aid in providing the student with the capacity for success in society (NACADA, 2006). The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) reinforces that "through academic advising, students learn to become members of their higher education community, to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students, and to prepare to be educated citizens of a democratic society and a global community" (2006). Academic advisors are a catalyst for the extension of the student learning environment, as they assist students in navigating their own personal development and provide a connection to faculty, academic and campus resources, as well as resources outside of the university setting.

Despite the relevance of academic advising to the college student experience, there is little research to

define the role of academic advisors in leadership education. Students invested in their own personal development, in addition to academic advisors, faculty, and future employers, all have a connected role in the process of understanding student development through leadership education. If students are to become informed, productive members of society, it is important to better understand the role of academic advisors in helping students develop leadership competencies. This study explores the role of the academic advisor in the leadership education process within institutions of higher education. The findings and resulting implications provide context for creating a more holistic approach to leadership education through the maximization of advising relationships.

Literature Review

Understanding leadership education, college student development, and the foundations of academic advising leads to a framework for defining the role of the academic advisor in leadership education. Relevant literature defining leadership education, the role of academic advising programs, and related student development theories provide the foundation for further understanding the role of the academic advisor in leadership education. For advisors to facilitate leadership education, McClellan (2013) states that they “need to begin by developing a basic understanding of leadership development models in higher education and the process of leadership development” (p. 212). By understanding the qualities of leadership, academic advisors can work to further understand the purpose and development of leadership education programs. Astin & Astin (2000) posit that the concept of leadership consists of the following assumptions: “leadership is concerned with fostering change, leadership is inherently value-based, all people are potential leaders, and leadership is a group process” (p. 19). With knowledge of these assumptions of leadership, McClellan (2013) asserts

that advisors can “articulate a clear set of leadership outcomes...[and] then intentionally embed leadership development efforts into their work as advisors consistent with their roles within the institution” (p. 212). In defining and understanding the concept of leadership, educators and higher education administrators can work toward developing meaningful leadership education opportunities for students. Furthermore, understanding the processes of student development and student learning styles enables advisors to provide students the challenge and support they need to develop during their higher education experience (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). In addition, an understanding of student development theory allows academic advisors to engage students in reflective thinking about their experiences. According to McClellan (2013), the foundations of academic advising “may already be contributing to the development of leadership among [college] students as the nature of the [advising] process is conducive to the promotion and development of many leadership competencies” (p. 212-213). Moreover, assisting academic advisors in facilitating leadership education requires “the focus and framing of the developmental process within advising” (McClellan, 2013, p. 212).

Understanding Leadership Education. The interdisciplinary nature of leadership education has made defining the discipline difficult. At most higher education institutions, forms of leadership education are being taught through individual college or major programs, in addition to various departments within student affairs (Andenoro, Allen, Haber-Curran, Jenkins, Sowcik, Dugan, & Osteen, 2013). The National Leadership Education Research Agenda (2013) explores the interdisciplinary nature of leadership education and defines it as:

the pedagogical practice of facilitating leadership learning in an effort to build human capacity...informed by leadership theory and research. It values and

is inclusive of both curricular and co-curricular educational contexts (Andenoro, et al., p.3).

Leadership development “involves self-awareness and understanding of others, values and diverse perspectives, organizations, and change” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2009). In addition, “leadership programs seek to empower students to enhance their self-efficacy as leaders and understand how they can make a difference” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2009). The concept of leadership does not apply to a single individual, but stems “from a relationship with others fostered through self-awareness and an understanding for context” (Andenoro, et al., 2013, p. 13). Through a better understanding of self and working with others, students can become informed and productive members of society.

Literature on leadership education agrees that every student engages in some form of leadership practice whether it be inside or outside of a formal classroom setting (Astin & Astin, 2000; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2009). As a result, students must be well prepared to transition out of higher education with the capacities to become citizen-leaders. Astin and Astin (2000) define a leader as “anyone—regardless of formal position—who serves as an effective social change agent” (p. 12). Thus, if students are to be leaders, the responsibility of higher education is to facilitate their knowledge and skills and empower them to become effective agents of social change (Astin & Astin, 2000). To this effect, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has developed standards and guidelines for Student Leadership Programs (SLP). These standards include that SLP must:

prepare students to engage in the process of leadership; provide students with opportunities to develop and enhance a personal philosophy of leadership that includes understanding of self, others, and community, and acceptance of

responsibilities inherent in community membership; and promote intentional student involvement and learning in varied leadership experiences (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2009).

Through personal and interpersonal development and further understanding of the development of groups and organizations, students can successfully navigate a changing world.

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (SCM) provides a framework to further understand the application of leadership development in the higher education setting. The model is inclusive in that it attempts to understand leadership development for all individuals participating in leadership education. The model connects individual values, group values, and society/community values with critical values identified as: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship (HERI, 1996). Using the SCM, Dugan and Komives (2007) conducted a national study on developing leadership capacity in college students. The multi-institutional study found that college experiences matter in developing leadership capacity. The college environment and related experiences influence student leadership outcomes in citizenship, controversy with civility, and common purpose (Dugan & Komives, 2007). In addition, the study concludes that students with any level of involvement in campus organizations have higher scores on all SCM measures, but particularly in collaboration, common purpose, and citizenship (Dugan & Komives, 2007).

Related Student Development Theory. An understanding of student development theory is crucial in developing leadership education programs that are accessible and appropriate for students (Owen, 2012). Owen (2012) states that “theories of student learning and development are particularly important in leadership education because they make prescriptions about how people can adopt increasingly complex ways of being, knowing,

and doing—essential forms of development for leadership learning” (p. 17). Furthermore, Hall (2004) states, “Regarding personality characteristics of the leader, identity is probably the most important aspect of leader and career development” (p. 154). David Kolb’s theory of experiential learning (1984), Marcia Baxter Magolda’s theory of self-authorship (2008), and the Leadership Identity Development (LID) Theory and Model presented by Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen (2005), can aid leadership educators and academic advisors in understanding student development in a higher education context.

Kolb’s theory of experiential learning focuses on learning styles and the relationship between learning and development. Kolb (1984) defines learning as a cyclical four-stage model comprised of concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC), and active experimentation (AE). Essentially, the four-stages encompass the feeling, watching, thinking, and doing aspects of learning. For learning to occur, learners must be able to navigate conflicts among the four abilities. Kolb (1984) named the subsequent four learning styles converging (AC/AE), diverging (CE/RO), assimilating (AC/RO), and accommodating (CE/AE) to reflect that learning styles can change as they are influenced by factors such as environment and experiences. Learning styles contribute to student development of critical skills such as adapting to change, awareness of meaning and values, decision making, and inductive reasoning. Evans, et al. (2010) emphasize that academic disciplines can be accessible to students with diverse learning styles by providing varied methods of instruction to help students connect with subject matter. Disciplines can also challenge students to develop the “nondominant aspects of their preferred learning styles so that they can achieve the level of flexibility needed to respond to differing environmental needs” (Evans, et al., 2010, p. 143). For higher education professionals, Evans, et al. (2010) assert that:

learning style information can assist us in providing support by demonstrating

our understanding, fostering feelings of connectedness, and building on individual strengths, as well as challenge by supplying developmental mismatches to aid in overcoming weaknesses and by helping individuals to value differences in others (p. 151).

A second student development theory to be considered when developing leadership education programs is Baxter Magolda’s theory of self-authorship. Baxter Magolda (2008) highlights the dimensions of self-authorship as the “interconnectivity of how we view the world (the epistemological dimension), how we view ourselves (the intrapersonal dimension), and how we view social relations (the interpersonal dimension)” (p. 271). Leadership education programs and academic advisors can assist in providing students the support they need to explore and develop their beliefs and identities. Students’ journeys to self-authorship are varied based on their unique personal experiences and environmental contexts. The three elements of self-authorship are trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitments (Baxter Magolda, 2008). In trusting the internal voice, individuals are able to recognize that reality is beyond their control, but that they can control their reactions to events. This enables an individual to take ownership of meaning making and to be more flexible when they encounter obstacles. In building an internal foundation, individuals “refine their personal, internal authority in determining their beliefs, identity, and relationships” (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 280). This gives individuals the ability to take part in reflective thinking and recognize and explain the choices they make. Lastly, in securing internal commitments, individuals are certain in their internal convictions and can continue or adjust their convictions or relationships as needed (Baxter Magolda, 2008).

Understanding the theory of self-authorship can assist leadership education programs and academic advisors in partnering with students to develop an understanding of their relationships, identity, and

beliefs. Academic advising in particular, allows space for reflective conversations with students where advisors can “[validate] their capacity to use their internal voices, [situate] learning in their experience, and [invite] them to construct meaning of their experiences” (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 283). This can assist students in framing academic and career choices, as well as understanding the impact of internal voice in the many aspects of their life.

Komives, et al. (2005) present the LID Theory and Model which focuses on how leadership identity develops over time and is connected to the categories of developmental influences, developing self, group influences, students’ changing view of self with others, and students’ broadening view of leadership. As a result, Komives, et al., provide a conceptual model detailing the development of leadership identity through the connection of these influences. An individual’s leadership identity involves six developmental stages: awareness, exploration/engagement, leader identified, leadership differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis (Komives, et al., 2005). Students typically move through the awareness and exploration/engagement stages prior to college, while moving through the remaining four stages throughout college. The remaining four stages each have implications for student development. In the leader identified stage, adults move into mentoring roles and are models of different leadership styles. Adults and peers then become someone that facilitates reflection and meaning making from experiences in the leadership differentiated stage. In the generativity stage, individuals can reflect on how their experiences and leadership values will apply to varied contexts. Finally, in integration/synthesis individuals in new contexts consciously seek opportunities to participate in experiences that will further develop their leadership identity (Komives, et al., 2005).

Using the LID Model, leadership educators can further understand student development and provide the environment, challenge, and support in which students can develop. It is important that “educators realize that growth and complexity cannot be forced,

only facilitated” (Owens, 2012, p. 26). Thus, leadership educators can “create environments, opportunities, and conditions that encourage more complex ways of being” (Owen, 2012, p. 22). Leadership educators and academic advisors can meet students where they are in their development and create experiences and facilitate conversations that meet the needs of individual students. As individuals develop their own sense of self, these conversations and experiences can help students navigate a complex world.

Foundations of Academic Advising. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) summarizes the role of academic advising as:

a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes. Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students’ educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes (NACADA, 2006).

In this regard, academic advisors work with all students to define and progress toward their educational, personal, and life goals while meeting the objectives of the higher education experience. According to the CAS Standards and Guidelines for Academic Advising Programs (AAP), academic advising “encourages students to cultivate meaning in their lives, make significant decisions about their futures, and access institutional resources” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2013, p.3). The academic advisor provides a consistent relationship for students throughout their higher education experience, while also facilitating student success, persistence, and retention.

Like the CAS Standards and Guidelines for SLP, the CAS Standards and Guidelines for AAP span student learning and development domains including cognitive complexity; intrapersonal development; interpersonal competence; humanitarianism and civic engagement; and practical competence (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher

Education, 2013). In collaboration with the CAS Standards and Guidelines for AAP, NACADA uses a Core Competencies Model and a Statement of Core Values to delineate the broad range of knowledge and skills that support academic advising. The NACADA Core Competencies Model lists three content areas for mastery by academic advisors: conceptual, informational, and relational. The conceptual component covers the theories and ideas behind the context of advising. The informational component includes advisors understanding institutional specific information and needs of student populations, while the relational component highlights the skills advisors must demonstrate to build advising relationships and communicate with students (NACADA, 2017). The NACADA Statement of Core Values includes seven domains that apply to the profession of advising as a whole. One of the core values is the value of empowerment. NACADA states, "Academic advisors motivate, encourage, and support students and the greater educational community to recognize their potential, meet challenges, and respect and express individuality" (2017). Like leadership education programs, academic advising programs allow students to develop their sense of self through varied curricular and co-curricular experiences.

There are multiple theoretical and practical approaches to academic advising; however, developmental academic advising remains at the core of each of these approaches (Grites, 2013). Developmental advisors "gather information to recognize where the student stands along the educational, career, and personal dimensions of his or her life, discusses where the student plans to be, and assists the student in getting to that point as readily as possible" (Grites, 2013, p. 13). Developmental advising considers the holistic development of the student and understands the connectedness of all attributes of an individual. The advisor promotes student growth and success by meeting students where they are developmentally and facilitating their educational and personal growth. Both students and advisors contribute to the developmental advising approach (Grites, 2013).

Academic advisors are a key element in the higher education experience that facilitate students' development of self, as well as the capacities required to become informed, productive members of society. Baxter Magolda states that students progress toward self-authorship when they "encounter challenges that bring their assumptions into question, have opportunities to reflect on their assumptions, and are supported in reframing their assumptions into more complex frames of reference" (2008). Academic advisors challenge students through developmental conversations that allow for students to use reflective thinking. Baxter Magolda suggests that encouraging advisees to reflect on their experiences helps them "consciously analyze their assumptions about the world, themselves, and their relationships" (2008). Academic advising provides a structured context where students engage in self-reflection and determine how their experiences affect their developing identities. Through reflective conversations, academic advisors assist students in thinking critically about their educational and co-curricular experiences and in turn connect them to their personal, educational, and future goals.

Conceptual Framework

Knowledge of leadership education, the college student development process, and the principles of academic advising leads to a conceptual framework that delineates the connection between the three concepts and student leadership development (Figure 1). Leadership education is an interdisciplinary approach to developing students' capacities for personal and interpersonal interactions, including being agents for social change. Providing a college environment that encourages self and values exploration enhances students' capacities in working with others and understanding their own identities. Involvement in campus organizations and activities enables students the ability to move from theory to practice in their leadership development. An understanding of student development theory directly impacts a leadership education program's effectiveness, as well as the effectiveness of academic

advising. By providing students an environment to reflect on their knowledge and identity, students can make meaning from their college experiences. Through these experiences and reflection, advisors assist students in framing their educational and co-curricular experiences and connect them with personal and future goals. This situates academic advisors with the potential to have a critical role in student leadership development through the maximization of their relationship with students. Despite separate research in leadership education

and academic advising, more research is needed to further define the role of the academic advisor within leadership education. This understanding of leadership education, relevant student development theory, and the foundations of academic advising will inform research into the role of the academic advisor in leadership education.

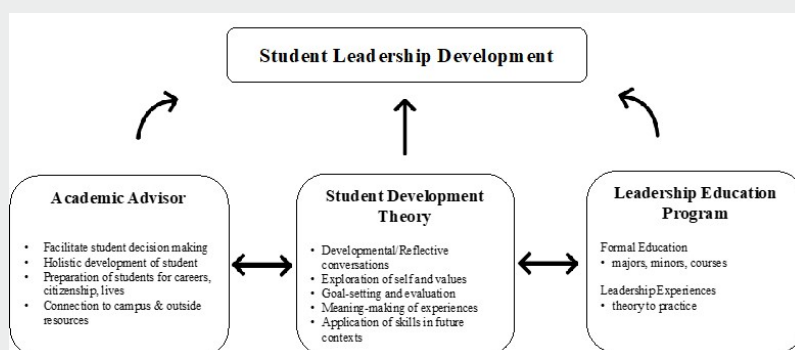


Figure 1. Academic Factors that Contribute to Student Leadership Development: Illustrating the Process

Methods

The purpose of this qualitative study is to use case study research to explore the role of the academic advisor in leadership education. Data collection for this study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. Explore academic advisors' perceptions of leadership development.
2. Explore current advising practices that impact student leadership development.
3. Explore academic advisors' knowledge of leadership education programs.
4. Explore academic advisors' self-perceptions on their role in leadership education.

Sampling & Participants. Typical case sampling within an overarching purpose sampling technique was used within this qualitative case study research design. Typical case sampling considers the advisor as a typical member of the population being researched and studies the phenomenon of the advisor's role in leadership education and its impact on students. The typical case sampling method provides access to a cross-section of advisors that represent the institution's larger body of academic advisors. The study explores the role of the academic advisor in

leadership education by sampling advisors across campus whose role has the same impact on students in various campus programs. The advisors participating in the study are employed at a large land grant university in the southeast region of the United States with the primary job responsibility of academic advising.

Data Collection. The researcher conducted a content analysis of materials and websites provided by advising program gatekeepers, including advising syllabi or similar webpages that outline advising missions, values, and expectations. The researcher also conducted personal one-on-one interviews with respondents using a sample of advisors (n=10) from varying departments on campus. Respondents participated in a one hour interview that explored their views of leadership, leadership education, current advising practices that foster leadership development, and their perceptions of the role of academic advisors in leadership education. Using digital materials and advisor interviews with a sample of advisors from varied campus departments enabled research to be collected and triangulated from multiple sources and perspectives within the sample population of advisors to provide credibility and dependability. The use of field notes and audio recordings, along with member checks allowed respondents the opportunity to clarify recorded statements. A varied sample of academic advisors at the institution provides thick-rich description which allows for transferability across the institution and in similar contexts. The research findings give confirmability to the respondents' perceptions of the role of academic advising in leadership education.

Data Analysis. The researcher used both content and thematic analysis to analyze data collected. A content analysis was performed first on advising documents accessed from college or advising web materials. Advising documents accessed include college advising webpages and advising syllabi. A thematic analysis was performed to analyze data from advisor interviews. Open coding was used to code the advising documents to identify patterns in the purpose, mission, values, and processes of advising

across colleges at the institution. Open coding was also used to organize data collected via advisor interviews. Following open coding, axial coding was performed to analyze relationships between open code categories to further understand advisor perceptions of leadership, leadership education, and the advisor's role in leadership education. Respondent perceptions were coded and data is reported in aggregate form. The researcher provided consistent interview conditions for each respondent, including a private interview room where interviews would not be disturbed. The research protocol provided a list of 18 interview questions that were posed to each respondent in their hourlong interview session. Interview questions were developed by narrowing the central and sub questions in the study (Creswell, 2007). Respondents completed consent forms and were informed of the purpose of the study, time needed to complete the interview, and information on how interview results would be used (Creswell, 2007).

Findings

Findings from the content analysis of advising documents revealed that of the 11 colleges within the institution, three colleges had advising syllabi and two colleges had advising-specific webpages. There is no university-wide advising document outlining the university's standard advising practices or expectations. Open coding of the advising documents led to patterns in the advising mission, purposes, and delivery of services across campus. All five of the advising documents listed an advising mission or values statement, including expectations for the advisor and student during interactions. Following a developmental advising approach, all documents also included a listing of both advisor and student roles and responsibilities in the advising relationship, setting expectations and underscoring the role of a student's academic advisor. Within the roles and responsibilities portions of the advising documents, the documents from different colleges differed in their inclusion and presentation of student leadership and skill development resources. However, each

advising document followed the CAS Standards for AAP (2013) and addressed student leadership and skill development in some form, including development of personal values, development of skills and strengths, career development, and opportunities for involvement. Lastly, the documents clearly articulated the role of the academic advisor in connecting students with campus resources. The advising documents analyzed provided a clear and concise expectation of advising services in specific colleges, including the impact of the academic advising relationship on students and the university community.

The thematic analysis and open coding performed on data from advisor interviews organized data collected from interviews and enabled further axial coding. Axial coding provided analysis of relationships between the open code categories which allowed for understanding of advisor perceptions of leadership and their role in leadership education. Findings reported address each of the four research objectives assessed in the study.

Academic Advisors' Perceptions of Leadership Development. Following McClellan's (2013) call for academic advisors to develop an understanding of leadership development, respondents each identified their knowledge of leadership development, including their perceptions on leadership competencies they valued as important. Respondents defined leadership as a "combination of personality, interest, and skills used for the betterment of mankind" (R2) and "contributing back to a greater sense of humanity" (R3). Themes emerged from responses that enabled the grouping of leadership development knowledge into soft skills such as collaboration, communication, and listening, each being identified as critical to leadership development. Respondents believed that leadership development can be intentional, but that it takes time and is a multifaceted undertaking. According to respondents, critical to developing leadership competencies is the development of self and being aware of one's strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. Leadership is "inspiring others to bring the best out in others around them—not just

professionally, but as humans" (R9). Leadership development involves the gaining of skills that enable one to be seen as a voice of knowledge and information.

In addition to defining leadership development, respondents identified perceived competencies of leadership that align with the CAS Standards and Guidelines for SLP (2009). Being open-minded and willing to be challenged, as well as possessing listening and communication skills were the most frequently identified competencies by 80% of respondents. Interpersonal skills such as listening and communication skills were seen as critical in allowing for reflection, seeing value in disagreement, collaborating, and providing and receiving feedback, all of which are important in the academic advising setting. Being open-minded and willing to be challenged is important when leadership requires individuals to adapt and take on different roles. Self-direction and self-awareness were also commonly cited by 70% of respondents as important leadership competencies. Being self-directed and self-aware enables leaders to empathize and see other perspectives, believe in what they are leading, act responsibly and take measured risks, and lead with integrity. Self-aware leaders are also likely to be perceived as genuine in their actions and intentions. Collaboration was mentioned by 50% of respondents as an important leadership competency. When a leader is collaborative, they practice active listening and are open to other perspectives, "seeing qualities in others worth developing," including "strengths or weaknesses and helping people grow" (R6). Respondents viewed leaders as those who can take ownership of situations and developers of others, who can "seek out others who can contribute and cultivate those skills" (R10). These leadership competencies transcend any specific discipline and can be applied across varied life contexts.

Current Advising Practices that Impact Student Leadership Development. McClellan (2013) advocates for academic advisors to embed leadership development into their role as an advisor. As such, four themes were present among respondents'

perceptions of their current advising practices that impact student leadership development. Those themes include connecting students to campus resources, participating in reflective conversations with students, encouraging student involvement, and utilizing college ambassadors and peer advising models. All respondents stated that they impact student leadership development by providing students with a connection to campus resources. The ability of advisors to connect students with campus resources opens opportunities in areas such as student organizations, study abroad, and student helping resources that allow students to create meaning from their college experience and gain leadership skills. In order to facilitate necessary connections to campus resources, all respondents mentioned that they must engage students in reflective conversations, as described by Baxter Magolda (2008). These conversations should “be intentional about how time is spent in college” and should “pair [student] likes with opportunities” (R3, R4). Advisors can assist students in self-reflection, the “developmental piece” that provides students the “competencies to meet to get where [they] want to be” (R4). Fifty percent of respondents spoke of encouraging student involvement during these reflective conversations. This encouragement serves to allow students to think about the future and “attach action to overall goals” (R4), with the value of student involvement toward building leadership competencies confirmed in Dugan and Komives’ (2007) multi-institutional study. Respondents stated that building relationships with students through reflective conversations allows them to be credible sources of information in communicating with students, yet also impart to students the value of self-responsibility and self-reliance. Advisors “facilitate students becoming leaders” and help them “learn the language they need to facilitate what they want to do” (R6). In addition, 40% of respondents mentioned the use of college ambassadors or peer advisors in facilitating student leadership development. Interacting with student ambassadors or peer advisors allows students to view other peers who are modeling the way. Ambassadors and peer advisors

can also encourage student involvement and increase student knowledge of leadership opportunities on and off campus. Respondents deemed that their current advising practices encourage student curiosity and exploration of leadership opportunities, encourage student self-reflection, and ultimately lead to student growth and development in areas of leadership.

Academic Advisors’ Knowledge of Leadership Education Programs. Mirroring the National Leadership Education Research Agenda’s (2013) interdisciplinary definition of leadership education, advisor knowledge of leadership education programs spanned both formal and co-curricular opportunities. All respondents were aware of various leadership education programs and opportunities within their colleges and departments, as well as a variety of opportunities offered university-wide. Respondents recognized formal leadership education programs and other formal education programs with a leadership education component. These programs included a university-wide leadership minor for undergraduate students, leadership education Master’s and Ph.D. programs, student research and teaching assistant positions, and college-specific leadership education programs. Respondents also identified co-curricular opportunities that provided students with leadership education. These opportunities included involvement in student organizations and student government, student employment opportunities at the university, campus recreation involvement and employment, the university’s Center for Leadership and Service, involvement in student orientation programs, and study abroad opportunities. Respondents deemed that co-curricular opportunities “build skills that make good leaders” and offer students the ability to develop these leadership skills in a non-formal context (R3). Both formal programs and co-curricular programs are offered “across campus” that “match to career goals and relate to student goals” (R4). Academic advisors serve as catalysts to the student learning environment by generating awareness and connecting students to leadership education opportunities. In addition to leadership education opportunities for students,

respondents also identified several trainings and certificate programs for academic advisors. Advisor professional development opportunities were identified as computer-based trainings, leadership trainings offered by university human resources, and membership in the university's Undergraduate Advising Council.

Academic Advisors' Self-Perceptions of Their Role in Leadership Education. Respondents defined academic advisors as the "front line of the student experience," mentioning that "students are leaders and they are missing out if we aren't training them to be leaders" (R3, R2). Academic advisors set expectations for students and "help prepare students for the real world" (R5). Respondents expressed the importance of the conceptual, informational, and relational content areas for academic advising included in the NACADA Core Competencies Model (2017). All respondents perceived their role in leadership education as providing students with the connection to resources and opportunities that will develop their leadership capacities. Respondents stated that advisors "can point students to resources to develop skills, both inside and outside of class, can encourage students to value and pursue these opportunities, and can facilitate student character development to help students realize their values and put those values into practice" (R3). Advisors "work most closely with students and understand their challenges" and can advocate on their behalf (R6). All respondents also identified their role in the encouragement and support of students, evoking the NACADA Core Value of empowerment (2017). Respondents acknowledged the role academic advising plays in a student's education and the ways academic advisors can "build a more connected community" within the university setting (R8). Respondents stated that advisors can "help students conceptualize what skills they have and where they can improve," in addition to "guiding students to recognize how skills are developed and how to apply those skills" (R4). Respondent 8 suggests that "having leadership skills is important in life and that an academic advisor can help students understand

the skill sets associated with leadership and how they can be effective in a variety of contexts." Fifty percent of the respondents also identified the importance of academic advisors in modeling the way and leading by example for students. Not only can academic advisors advocate for students, they can also "lead by example in different contexts" (R8). Advisors can model the skills of networking, watching and learning from others, and self-reflection. Through leading by example, academic advisors can "encourage students to be active players in their own education" and "provide students with continuity" in their college experience (R8, R9). Advisors can be mindful of student leadership development and have intentional conversations with students that facilitate students "taking ownership of their own path" (R10).

Discussion/Implications

Although not an intended research objective, all respondents identified barriers and challenges for academic advisors in advising for leadership education. A lack of time was identified by all respondents as the most influential barrier in advising for leadership education. Respondents noted that it is "hard to juggle all of the things we need to do" (R1). Seventy percent of respondents identified money and resources as having a direct impact on their opportunities for professional development. Money and resources also impact the number of advisors hired within an advising office. Thirty percent of respondents indicated that hiring more academic advisors would allow them to spend more time in meaningful conversation with students. In addition, 90% of respondents identified the perceptions of academic advising by both university administration and students as directly impacting academic advising on campus. Respondents suggested that students "do not always see the impact of advising" and that some "students overestimate or severely underestimate what advisors do" (R3, R4). Respondents suggested a need for "senior administration to give advisors their own voice" (R10). In addition, developing university-wide policies and procedures would allow for consistency among the decentralized academic

advising units on campus. Future research can explore barriers and challenges within academic advising that prevent the maximization of advising services at an institution. Addressing these barriers can provide advisors with increased time to focus on developmental advising and leadership education.

Academic advisors should have the proper training and opportunity for continuing education and professional development that allows them to facilitate a student's journey toward self-authorship and critical thinking of their own beliefs and identities. Advisors should work to dispel student "assumptions about knowledge and self [that] lead students to view faculty and academic advisers alike as having the formula for students' academic and career success" (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Time is often a challenge for academic advisors as most advisors have additional job responsibilities such as course scheduling, administering orientation programs, and meetings or campus engagement requirements. Advisors must work within the time constraints imposed by these other responsibilities to effectively engage students in meaningful conversation.

Future research opportunities can explore the leadership identities of academic advising professionals. Understanding their own leadership identities and identity development process would be valuable for advisors who are working with students during their developmental process. In addition, research should also explore professional development opportunities for academic advisors in the areas of leadership education and development. By increasing their capacities in leadership education and in supporting leadership programs, academic advisors can become a useful tool for universities in promoting student leadership education and in creating and facilitating such programs.

Limitations

As this study is limited to advisors at one institution, caution must be taken in applying the conclusions to other universities. Academic advising at this particular

institution operates using a shared academic advising model, where some students receive advising services in a central administrative unit such as an advising center, while other students receive advising services in their academic department. Other institutions use a decentralized advising model, where students receive advising services within their specific academic department or college. A third model is a centralized advising model, where students receive advising services from a centralized advising office, regardless of their chosen discipline (Pardee, 2004). Not only can students receive academic advising from a professional academic advisor, they may also receive academic advising from a faculty advisor or peer advisors. In addition to differing service models, each individual academic advisor comes to the advising role from varied backgrounds. Some advisors may even serve multiple roles within the institution, such as instructors, student affairs professionals, or counselors. Thus different theories and models may inform their work with their specific student populations (He & Hutson, 2016). The differences in advising approaches and from whom students are receiving academic advising may have a direct impact on the services offered to students.

Conclusion

Leadership education programs must consider their respective institution's mission, goals, curriculum, and co-curriculum in carrying out their purpose. Many organizations and programs within the university setting claim to promote and facilitate leadership education and development. For instance, formal leadership education programs such as college majors and minors, co-curricular organizations and experiences, and opportunities presented through internships and entities outside of the institution are all viable leadership development opportunities for students. Leadership educators and academic advisors need to be integrally involved and committed to the development and facilitation of leadership education within the university setting. Institutions, leadership educators, and academic advisors should work to collaborate with campus

partners to ensure that efforts are not being duplicated across campus. According to McClellan (2013), "not all of the resources of the university are dedicated to the achievement of the multitude of university missions that both overtly and indirectly espouse leadership development" (p. 225). As more students are becoming actively involved in campus activities and opportunities, "there remains a gap to fill in the intentional promotion of [students'] growth as leaders" (McClellan, 2013, p. 225). Academic advisors have the knowledge and skills to become intentional promoters of leadership education. Academic advisors can leverage their knowledge of student development theory, leadership education, and their role in the higher education process to maximize their advising relationships and facilitate student leadership development.

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