

Organizational Models and Institutional Advising Practices

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This is the first in a series of NACADA Journal articles featuring an analysis of practices related to seven organizational models for academic advising. It is based on data collected as part of the fifth ACT national survey on advising practices. The topics covered include a brief description of the organizational models, the prevalence of the paradigms in institutions of varying size and type, as well as existing institutional practices regarding policy statements, program evaluations, and coordination of the advising system.

In the spring of 1997, the American College Testing program (ACT) conducted the fifth in a series of national surveys on current academic advising practices. The academic advising survey included a stratified random sample of 2-year public, 2-year private, 4-year public, and 4-year private colleges from a national cohort of 2,710 colleges which were both accredited by one of the six regional accrediting associations and offered an associate's or bachelor's degree. Based on response rates from the previous four surveys, as well as the diminished national response rate, the largest sample ever drawn (1,395 institutions) constituted the mailing group. Responses were received from 754 colleges (54.1%). Because of the sampling technique employed, and the number and distribution of responding institutions (see Table 1), the findings of the survey may be generalized to the national population of institutions studied by Habley and McCauley.

Table 1 Institutions by Sample and Response

Institution Type	%Sample	%Respondents
2-year Public	35.9	35.7
2-year Private	4.4	3.1
4-year Public	20.2	22.5
4-year Private	39.3	38.1

Note. Four respondents (0.5%) did not identify type.

Although the overall results of the survey will be published in a monograph due for completion later in 1998, this article, as well as those to follow in later issues of the *NACADA Journal*, will focus on the analysis of survey databases on the seven organizational models first proposed by

Habley (1983) and later studied by Habley and McCauley (1987) and Habley (1987, 1992).

The seven organizational models and the brief descriptions that appeared in the survey are:

Faculty Only: All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising. There is no advising office on the campus.

Supplementary: All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising. There is an advising office that 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 that advises a specific group(s) of students (e.g., those that are undecided about a major, underprepared, etc.). All other students are assigned to academic units 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 the student 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 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 its own approach to advising.

Self-Contained: Advising for all students from point of enrollment to point of departure is done by staff in a centralized advising unit.

Readers who would like more detailed descriptions of these models should consult Habley (1983, 1987).

Trends in Utilization

Data on the deployment of particular models were collected in the third (1987) and fourth (1992) ACT Survey to track trends in advising delivery. See Table 2.

Among the more important observations were decreases in the use of both the most decentralized (Faculty Only) and the most centralized (Self-Contained) models. More campuses are moving to paradigms that blend the advising office concept with academic advising by instructional faculty. Those increases are most notable in the Supplementary model, which provides support for a faculty advising paradigm, and in the Split model, where responsibility for advising specific groups of students resides with an advising office while all other advising is conducted by faculty.

When institutional type is considered, several clear trends emerge in the utilization of organizational models (see Table 3). First, the two models where all advising is conducted by faculty (Faculty Only and Supplementary) account for the vast majority of structures utilized in private institutions, with 71% of the 2-year colleges and 72% of the 4-year colleges using one of those two systems. Second, the Self-Contained model continues to be predominantly a 2-year college model

in use at 27% of the 2-year public colleges and at 10% of the 2-year private colleges. Third, the most popular model at both the 2-year public colleges has been the Split (30%) which has supplanted the Self-Contained (31%) between the 1992 and 1997 surveys. Within the same time frame, in the 2-year private colleges the Supplementary (38%) has replaced the Faculty Only (56%) as the most popular model. In addition, the Dual, Total Intake, and Satellite models continue to be far less prevalent across almost all institutional types. Finally, it is important to note that nearly one half (46%) of 4-year public colleges employ the Split model.

Institutional size also significantly impacts the choice of model for academic advising delivery. Table 4 shows an inverse relationship between size and the use of faculty delivered (Faculty Only and Supplementary) models. While those two paradigms account for 75% of the models at campuses with less than 1,000 enrollments, they account for only 9% of the campuses with enrollments of 20,000 or more. In addition, as size (and probably administrative decentralization) increases, the campus is more likely to vest autonomy for structuring academic advising in the colleges or divisions and less likely to provide for an overall campus advising system; note the increased use of the Satellite model among larger

Table 2 Trends in Institutional Models 1987–1997

	1987		1992		1997	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Faculty Only	147	33	140	35	209	28
Supplementary	89	20	64	16	150	20
Split	98	22	80	20	203	27
Dual	18	4	24	6	22	3
Total Intake	22	5	20	5	37	5
Satellite	22	5	12	3	44	6
Self-Contained	48	11	64	16	89	12
<i>N</i>	444		404		754	

Table 3 Organizational Models by Institution Type (%)

	<i>n</i>	2-Year	2-Year	4-Year	4-Year
		Public	Private	Public	Private
Faculty Only	209	19	33	15	43
Supplementary	150	13	38	11	29
Split	203	30	14	46	14
Dual	22	3	0	4	4
Total Intake	37	5	0	8	3
Satellite	44	3	5	14	4
Self-Contained	89	27	10	2	3

universities. A third impact of institutional size can be seen in the increasing use of the Self-Contained model as the size of the campus increases. Note that the Split model appears to be consistently employed across the institutional size categories with the exception of institutions with less than 1,000 enrollments.

Models and Practices

In addition to looking at organizational models from the national perspective, and studying the effects of institutional type and size, the fifth ACT national survey also allows for the organizational model comparison of policy statements, program evaluations, and institutional coordination of advising.

Policy Statements

While nearly 61% of the respondents indicated that their campuses had a written policy statement on academic advising, the range of percentages varied within the seven organizational models (Table 5, Column 1). Only 33% of the Satellite model campuses reported the existence of a policy statement while 75% of the Supplementary model campuses reported that they generated such an articulation. Note that on campuses with the most centralized advising model (Self-Contained), only 48% reported the existence of a

policy statement. A review of the policy statements indicates that the least comprehensive statements exist on campuses that utilize the Satellite and the Self-Contained models (data not shown). The remaining five models have moderately comprehensive policy statements.

Program Evaluation

Table 5, Column 2 reports the percentage of institutions by model who answered "Yes" to the question, "Does your institution regularly evaluate the overall effectiveness of your advising program?" Although the percentage (51%) for all institutions is the highest reported in the five ACT surveys, a fairly wide range exists among the organizational models, with the lowest percentage reported in the Satellite model (33%) and the highest percentage reported for the Dual model (62%).

Coordination/Reporting Lines for Advising

In response to a survey item that asked respondents, "Is there an individual who is responsible for coordinating your institution's academic advising system?" Seventy-seven percent of the survey respondents said, "Yes." A distribution of the percentage of positive responses by organizational model (Table 4, column 3) shows that the range of "yes" responses ranged from 23% of the institutions with the Satellite model to 92% of the

Table 4 Organizational Models by Undergraduate Enrollment (%)

	<i>n</i>	≤1,000	1,000– 2,499	2,500– 4,999	5,000– 9,999	10,000– 19,999	≥20,000
Faculty Only	209	48	38	20	10	4	3
Supplementary	150	27	26	17	13	5	6
Split	203	8	22	39	39	37	35
Dual	22	3	2	4	5	8	0
Total Intake	37	3	6	4	5	9	6
Satellite	44	2	2	4	12	15	23
Self-Contained	89	10	5	13	17	23	26

Table 5 Policy, Program Evaluation, Coordination By Organizational Model

	<i>n</i>	Written Policy % Yes	Program Evaluation % Yes	Coordination % Yes
Faculty Only	209	63	49	73
Supplementary	150	75	56	92
Split	203	62	48	76
Dual	22	59	62	88
Total Intake	37	63	47	76
Satellite	44	33	33	23
Self-Contained	89	48	60	90
TOTAL	754	61	51	77

institutions with the Supplementary model.

Table 6 provides information on the titles of individuals who coordinate the campus advising system for those surveyed institutions (77%) which report that there is an individual so designated. Nearly one half of these institutions indicate that the title of the campus coordinator is either the Director/Coordinator of Advising (Dir/Coor) (31%) or the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) (16%). Nearly one in ten individuals holds the title of Director of Counseling (Dir Coun) (primarily 2-year colleges), Associate/Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA), or Registrar (a dominant title in colleges with under 5,000 students). Significant variations in coordinator titles exist within the organizational models—with the Director/Coordinator title being most common among the Supplementary, Split, Dual, and Total Intake models, the Director of Counseling the most common in the Self-Contained model, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs most common in colleges deploying the Faculty Only model.

A review of Table 7 suggests that those who coordinate academic advising hold other responsibilities on campus. One half of all campus coordinators spend 25% or less of their time coordinating academic advising while only 17% report that the coordination of advising occupies 75% or more of their time. Again, there are significant variations among the organizational models in time professionals spent coordinating advising. For those administrators in the Faculty Only, Supplementary, and Satellite models, the modal time spent in coordination was less than 25%. For those colleges using the Split, Dual, and Total Intake models, a bimodal distribution, nearly equal percentages of coordinators reported 25% or less and 76% or more as the time commitment made to the coordination of advising. Finally, the Self-Contained model shows a nearly equal distribution across all four categories of time committed to advising coordination.

Table 8 provides information on the reporting line for the individuals responsible for coordinating the campus advising system. A number of important observations can be gleaned from these

Table 6 Coordinator Title by Organizational Model (%)

	<i>n</i>	Dir/Coor Adv.	Dir Coun.	VP AA	AVP AA	VP SA	AVP SA	VP Enroll	Dean/ Chair	Reg- istrar	Dir Adm	Other
Faculty Only	209	8	3	38	17	1	2	1	3	19	1	6
Supplementary	150	40	4	11	10	2	2	1	8	11	1	11
Split	203	50	8	6	9	5	1	1	3	6	0	10
Dual	22	24	14	19	5	0	0	0	19	5	0	14
Total Intake	37	41	7	10	0	10	0	0	7	3	0	21
Satellite	44	10	20	30	10	0	0	0	10	0	0	20
Self-Contained	89	20	28	4	0	6	4	3	11	6	0	18
TOTAL	754	31	9	16	9	3	2	1	6	10	1	11

Notes. VPSA is Vice President of Student Affairs.

AVPSA is Associate/Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs.

VP Enroll is the Vice President of Enrollments.

Dir Adm is Director of Administration

Table 7 Coordinator Time Spent by Organizational Model (%)

	<i>n</i>	≤25	26– 50	51– 75	76– 100
Faculty	209	88	10	1	1
Supplementary	150	41	35	11	13
Split	203	37	16	18	29
Dual	22	29	24	10	38
Total Intake	37	38	10	10	41
Satellite	44	80	10	0	10
Self Contained	89	26	31	23	19
TOTAL	754	50	21	11	17

Table 8 Coordinator Reporting Line by Organization Model (%)

	<i>n</i>	Pres.	VP AA	AVP AA	VP Enroll	VP SA	AVP SA	Dean	Other
Faculty Only	209	41	41	2	0	5	0	6	6
Supplementary	150	14	46	9	3	6	3	9	10
Split	203	13	39	8	2	19	6	4	9
Dual	22	29	24	10	5	19	5	0	10
Total Intake	37	24	17	14	3	10	3	14	14
Satellite	44	20	50	0	0	0	10	10	10
Self-Contained	89	21	13	0	6	38	5	6	10
TOTAL	754	23	36	6	3	14	4	6	9

Note. Pres. is President.

data. First, approximately one quarter of all individuals who coordinate advising systems report to the President of the institution. Although this percentage may seem inordinately high, it is important to note that coordinating responsibility (Table 6) is vested in several Vice President titles: Academic Affairs (16%), Student Affairs (VPSA) (3%), Enrollment Management (Enroll) (1%), where people generally report to the President. Also, academic advising is much more likely to communicate through Academic Affairs than it is through Student Affairs. Nearly one half of the institutions designate an Academic Affairs (Vice President, Associate/Assistant Vice President [AVPAA], or Dean) reporting line while only 18% designate a Student Affairs (Vice President, Associate/Assistant Vice President [AVPSA]) reporting line. The preference for an Academic Affairs reporting line remains consistent across the seven organizational models with the exception of the Self-Contained model, where a greater percentage of institutions stipulate a Student Affairs communication chain.

Summary

Three themes become clear in the review of the data presented in this article.

Shared Responsibility. The movement toward shared responsibility is particularly evident in downward trends both in the percentage of campuses that report a totally centralized (Self-Contained) model and in those that report a totally decentralized (Faculty Only) model. In fact, the decreases in the use of those two models have been reflected in concomitant increases in the use of the Supplementary and Split models. While it is not possible to predict the continuation of this trend, the pattern may reflect the maturation of the field of advising where neither a totally decentralized (traditional) or centralized

model is interpreted as the best overall method for meeting student needs. Rather, it appears that campuses are moving toward models that blend the best attributes of the Faculty Only model with the positive aspects of more centralized models. And, colleges with Self-Contained models may become less centralized because of the benefits of involving faculty in the advising process.

Diversity. While there are several obvious themes in these data, it continues to be impossible to describe, in other than very general terms, the common characteristics of institutions that deploy the various organizational models. Nearly all models can be found in all institutions whether characterized by type or size. And although 10 different titles for advising coordinators have been reported, 11% of the survey respondents have coordinator titles other than those listed in the survey. Finally, there is a great variety among the models when they are compared for the existence of policy statements, coordination practices, and program evaluations.

Institutional practices. While incremental gains in institutional advising practices appear, national activities have not become exemplary. Nearly four institutions in ten do not have policy statements on advising, almost half of the institutions do not conduct evaluation of the advising program, and almost one in four institutions have not identified an individual to coordinate the advising program. And even when an individual is identified to integrate advising activities, the responsibility does not merit a significant time commitment. Of special concern is the fact that these practices are far less likely to be in place at institutions that utilize the Satellite model for delivery.

The next article in this series will feature rankings of the seven organizational models on the achievement of eight goals for advising. It will

also focus on the ratings of the models on eleven effectiveness variables.

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