

Academic Advisors and Students with Disabilities: A National Survey of Advisors' Experiences and Needs

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During the last 25 years, the number of students with disabilities seeking higher education has tripled. However, these students may not readily identify their disability to those responsible for coordinating disability services. Consequently, academic advisors may be among the first campus employees to become aware of an individual's disability. We investigated the responses of collegiate academic advisors (N ≈ 1,500) regarding their training, experience, comfort level, and knowledge of working with students with disabilities. While 83% of advisors reported advising students with disabilities, only 44% had taken a college course dealing with disabilities, and 47% have had no training on the Americans with Disabilities Act. Many advisors also reported student disclosures of thoughts about suicide and self-harm.

KEY WORDS: ADA, advisor role, Americans with Disability Act, NACADA membership survey, Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Relative emphasis: research, practice, theory

Introduction

Less than 30% of students with disabilities go to college; however, between 1980 and 1998 the number of students with disabilities pursuing higher education had tripled (Hehir, 1998). According to data collected by the American Council on Education, 6% of entering freshmen attending 4-year colleges and universities in the fall of 2000 reported having a disability (Henderson, 2001). These data do not include students who attended 2-year institutions. Therefore, the statistic may not accurately reflect the number of students with disabilities pursuing a postsecondary education. In addition, data from the *National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey* indicate that 9.3% of all undergraduates reported having a disability (Riccobono, Cominole, Siegel, Gabel, Link, & Berkner, 2002).

This influx of students with disabilities attending colleges and universities may be directly related

to the passage of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) in 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. Each of these acts prohibits discrimination based on a student's disability status. Furthermore, both acts require that educational institutions provide students with reasonable accommodations for their disabilities, thereby allowing equal access to educational opportunities (Niesslein & Linstrom, 1997; O'Brien & Wright-Tatum, 1997; Sergeant, Carter, Sedlacek, & Scales, 1998).

While institutions must make accommodations, students are not obligated under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the ADA to identify themselves as persons with disabilities either upon application or after admission (Jarrow, 1996). Therefore, postsecondary personnel have difficulty identifying students with disabilities and their needs. Many students with disabilities choose not to self-identify due to concerns about various stigmas associated with having a disability (Collins & Mowbray, 2005; Rickerson, Souma, & Burgstahler, 2004). Regardless of the reasons for not disclosing a disability, students with disabilities may find themselves facing challenges that impair their potential for academic success rather than having them mitigated or eliminated through appropriate accommodations.

Because a substantial proportion of students with disabilities may choose not to access a designated office of disability services, academic advisors may become the first, and perhaps most frequent, service personnel who meet students with disabilities and learn of their needs. For example, while meeting with an advisor about class selection, a student wanting an appropriate schedule may disclose a particular disability. As a consequence, academic advisors may often be in the best position to assist students in receiving the accommodations they need. Therefore, advisors need to be prepared to serve students with disabilities or to refer them to the appropriate service providers (e.g., the Disability Services Office) (Vallandingham, 1997).

Knight (2000) asserted that the quality of advisement is an important determinant of the academic

success of a student with a disability. Therefore, advisor knowledge of a student's disability can be crucial to the student's success. However, with minimal understanding or awareness of the needs of students with disabilities, advisors may find themselves overwhelmed and underprepared to assist these students. The well-intentioned but underprepared academic advisor may feel ill at ease when working with a student who, from the advisor's perspective, has chosen a major that seems inappropriate for someone with a disability (Jarrow, 1996). If a student has not disclosed a disability and their abilities and choice of major seem to be at odds, a discussion about the implications of that discrepancy could lead to a disclosure of a disability, functional limitation, academic difficulty, and other issues that the advisor can address. Advisors may find that additional concerns, such as disability stereotyping or questions about the reality of a disability and its limitations, may surface, particularly when the disability is hidden (Jarrow, 1996).

Several authors in a 1997 NACADA monograph, *Advising Students with Disabilities*, voiced a need for greater understanding of students with disabilities and the processes involved in advising them. O'Brien and Wright-Tatum (1997, p. 19) suggested that "as academic advisors we must be acutely aware of the law and the special separate but equal status that the ADA law affords disabled students." One of the editors of the monograph suggested that "academic advisors would do well to continue to grow in several areas related to disabilities: attitudes, knowledge, and resource awareness" (Vallandingham, 1997, p. 79). In addition, the push for universal design, whereby environments and materials are accessible to as many people as possible (regardless of their situation), invites those in all areas of a campus to increase service accessibility (Mace, Hardie, & Place, 1996).

Based on recommendations from the literature, we developed and administered a survey to obtain information about advisors' experiences working with students with disabilities. In the survey we particularly focused on the following five areas: awareness of disability issues, comfort level with various types of disabilities, concerns about the accessibility of advisement services, training on disability law and service provision, and secrets to success.

Method

Participants

Participants were university and college advisors who are members of NACADA in the United States and Canada. Using the NACADA membership E-

mail list, we sent our survey to the entire NACADA membership (nearly 8,000 academic advisors) in 2005. Nearly one fifth (1,498 advisors) completed the survey; however, not everyone completed all of the survey items. Therefore, we have indicated data that reflect a number of respondents that differs from 1,498. Seventy-nine percent of the survey respondents were female and the estimated mean age, based on the number of respondents per age category, was 44 years. Sixty-four percent of the respondents reported having a master's degree, 20% a bachelor's degree, and 14% a doctorate. When asked to identify their racial or ethnic group, 84% identified themselves as Caucasian (non-Hispanic), with 8% reporting African American and 6% Hispanic or Latino. Six percent of the respondents identified themselves with more than one racial group.

Survey

We developed a survey (Appendix 1) to assess advisors' experiences with and feelings about working with students with disabilities generally and students with emotional disabilities specifically. We developed survey items based on our combined 79 years of experience in advisement and serving students with disabilities. The instrument consisted of 30 items that focused on advisors' training, experience, comfort level, and knowledge. Questions were based on the following response formats: yes or no, multiple choice, check all that apply, or a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *not comfortable*; 4 = *very comfortable*).

Procedure

We piloted the survey with advisors at Brigham Young University (BYU) (including the staff of the BYU University Accessibility Center) and made modifications based on their feedback. We sent the final survey with an accompanying introduction and consent document to the NACADA Commission for Disabilities. This commission sponsored the study and forwarded the survey and accompanying documents to the NACADA Executive Office, who distributed the survey to the NACADA membership via a secure, Web-based application.

The survey was available for 2 weeks, and the NACADA Executive Office sent two reminders to potential respondents. After the 2 week availability period, the NACADA Executive Office downloaded the responses and delivered them to us. As most of the data were categorical or descriptive, we simply computed the percentage of respondents who answered each yes-no, multiple choice, and

check-all-that-apply questions. For Likert scale items, we computed the average response per item.

Results

Those who completed the survey appeared representative of the NACADA membership (NACADA, 2001). When asked about their institutions, 75% of respondents reported being from a public institution, with 72% of all these respondents indicating that they are from institutions that offer a graduate degree. The data regarding size of the respondents' institutions approximate a normal distribution. The median size of 10,000 to 20,000 students comprised 20% of the respondents' institutions. Seventy-four percent reported that they worked either as an academic advisor or academic administrator at their institution, while 16% reported administrative responsibility over a broad area that included advising graduate students. Only 4% of the respondents identified themselves as faculty advisors. Almost one half of the survey respondents (48%) reported having worked less than 6 years in a position "similar to your current one." Eighty-nine percent of the respondents reported having no disability, while over 3% reported a physical/orthopedic disability, and nearly 3% reported a learning/cognitive disability.

When asked about their training or education specifically related to disabilities, less than one half (44%) of the respondents indicated having had a college course on disabilities and 47% indicated no training on the ADA. Approximately 43% of the respondents reported having at least general training on disabilities, typically through workshops offered by their employer or others. The respondents reported the highest frequency of workshop training in the areas of learning disabilities, emotional disorders, and attention deficit disorder or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADD or AD/HD), with 25 to 30% of the respondents attending workshops on these topics. The respon-

dents reported the least amount of training workshop experiences in the areas of speech impairments, movement disorders (e.g., cerebral palsy), and amputations. The number of advisors reporting training in these areas ranged from 3 to 9%. Respondents indicated that of all the support needs listed on the survey, training related to serving students with disabilities was most needed. The relative frequency with which training was selected as a need was nearly twice that for information need, which was the support identified second among those needs listed (see Table 1).

Even though advisors typically see very few students with disabilities (see Table 2), 85% reported having referred students with disabilities to the disability services office for accessibility services, 81% have referred students to a counseling center, and 63% had been directly involved in arranging accommodations for students with disabilities. At least one third of the respondents arranged for extended time on tests, scheduling accommodations, accommodative testing rooms, or note takers. The accommodation least sought by advisors for their students, copies of professors' notes, had been arranged by 17% of those advisors who reported helping advisees with accommodations.

Table 3 indicates the frequency that advisors reported various barriers to serving students with disabilities. The most commonly endorsed physical barrier was inadequate space (24.7%). The most commonly endorsed training barrier was lack of knowledge (74.2%). In terms of other barriers to service provision, the vast majority (90.8%) reported that students' nondisclosure of their disability status hindered the advisement process.

On items related to the quality of advisement services to students with disabilities (Table 4), 55.3% of the 3,611 responses given by the 1,498 respondents indicated that genuine empathy was the secret to their success in working with students with disabilities. Only 14.8% indicated that personal expe-

Table 1 Support needs of academic advisors in their work with students with disabilities, $N = 1,498$

Advisors' Reported Support Needs	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
Training related to serving persons with disabilities	922	61.5
Information about disability services and resources	541	36.1
Support from your campus/department administration (e.g., increased budget, personnel, etc.)	465	31.0
Access to resources to improve the accessibility of your services (e.g., interpreters, building modifications, etc.)	425	28.4
Access to consultants or mentors	306	20.4
No additional supports needed	132	8.8

Table 2 Percentages of advised students with disabilities, $N = 1,470$

Reported Range of Advised Students with Disabilities (%)	Percent of Advisors Reporting Range
0 to 10	61.4
11 to 20	14.0
21 to 30	2.5
31 to 40	1.2
41 to 50	0.7
51 to 60	0.6
61 to 70	0.5
71 to 80	0.5
81 to 90	0.3
91 to 100	3.1
Don't know	15.0

Table 3 Barriers to serving students with disabilities

Barriers	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
Physical ($n = 1,732$ Responses to this category)		
Inadequate space	427	24.7
Lack of personnel	406	23.4
Stairs with no ramp	266	15.4
No sign language interpreter capability	239	13.8
No TTY available	218	12.6
Restrooms not accessible	176	10.2
Training ($n = 991$ Responses to this category)		
Lack of knowledge	735	74.2
Lack of awareness of campus resources	148	14.9
Discomfort working with disabilities	108	10.9
Other ($n = 1,074$ Responses to this category)		
Students, particularly those with nonvisible disabilities (emotional, learning, etc.), don't tell me about their disability	975	90.8
Students with disabilities do not come for advisement, although access and expertise pose no problems	56	5.2
No students with disabilities come for advisement, although problems could exist if they did	43	4.0

rience with a disability was the secret to advising students with disabilities successfully, but from 25 to 30% identified such factors as a personal connection to people with disabilities, training in disability issues, mentoring or consultation, and previous experience. Respondents' comfort level in working with students with disabilities (Table 5) appears to be a function of the disability. On a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *very uncomfortable* to 4 = *very comfortable*), respondents rated their greatest comfort with mobility impairment ($M = 3.4$), ADD or AD/HD, ($M = 3.3$), amputations ($M = 3.2$), learning disabilities

($M = 3.2$), and visual impairments ($M = 3.1$). According to the survey, the respondents appeared to be least comfortable with hearing impairments and emotional disorders ($M = 2.9$).

We asked the survey participants to respond to items relating to life and safety concerns about students and themselves. Forty-eight percent of the survey respondents indicated that a student had confided in them thoughts about suicide and 37% indicated that students had reported self-destructive behaviors, such as cutting, burning, or self-strangulation. When asked about their own personal

Table 4 Academic advisors' reported secrets to success in working with students with disabilities
(*N* = 1,498)

Advisement Characteristic	Frequency	Respondents (%)
Genuine empathy	828	55.3
Consultation from campus counseling services	450	30.0
Personal connections to people with disabilities	449	30.0
Training in disability issues and resources	432	28.8
Mentorship or consultation from campus services for students with disabilities	428	28.6
Previous professional experience in serving persons with disabilities	424	28.3
Mentorship or consultation from colleagues with experience in disability issues	379	25.3
Personal experience with disability	221	14.8

Table 5 Academic advisors' reported comfort level advising persons with specified disabilities

Disability	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	Response Frequencies (%)			
			Very Uncomfortable (1)	Uncomfortable (2)	Comfortable (3)	Very Comfortable (4)
Mobility impaired	1,482	3.4	2	11	36	51
ADD or AD/HD	1,474	3.3	3	13	40	44
Amputations	1,462	3.2	3	16	35	46
Learning/memory	1,481	3.2	4	17	39	40
Visual impairments ¹	1,479	3.1	5	18	41	36
Speech impairments	1,480	3.0	4	23	43	30
Developmental	1,470	3.0	5	24	40	31
Movement disorders ²	1,471	3.0	6	24	39	31
Hearing loss ³	1,481	2.9	7	24	40	29
Emotional disorders ⁴	1,485	2.9	8	23	38	31

Note. ¹For example, blindness, low vision; ²for example, cerebral palsy; ³for example, deafness, hard of hearing; ⁴for example, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia

safety, 42% of the respondents claimed they had felt threatened by a student, and of this group, nearly one half believed the threat was related to an emotional disorder.

Discussion

The passage of Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA has enabled an ever-increasing number of students with disabilities to attend colleges and universities. However, with this increase, academic advisors may face disability-related awareness issues for which they are insufficiently prepared. The results of this study suggest that the issues for advisors range from lack of basic physical accessibility for students to the possibly less obvious issues of advisors' lack of training regarding specific disabilities and their broad impact upon an individual who is entering the physical, academic, social, and psychological rigors of academia.

Perhaps recognizing and managing their own level of discomfort in working with students with disabilities are most challenging for advisors.

Most universities have done much to improve the physical and service accessibility of their campuses; however, praise for this progress is tempered by the recognition that 30 years have passed since the passage of The Rehabilitation Act (specifically Section 504) and 15 years since the passage of the ADA. Despite advancements that have been made in this area, a substantial proportion of survey participants reported that students with disabilities still face significant physical accessibility barriers on their campuses. Examples of such barriers include inaccessible restrooms, inadequate office space, and stairs without ramps. While the remedies for such barriers are often beyond the direct control of a typical academic advisor, the consequences for students remain an unmitigated real-

ity. Physical barriers impact each academic advisor's ability to serve students with disabilities in an equitable, appropriate, and dignified manner.

As a consequence, a student in a wheelchair may find him or herself sitting halfway in a hallway during an advising session because an advisor's office is too small or the furniture is inadequately configured to accommodate the student's chair. In the worse case, a student may be unable to keep an appointment because no ramp exists to the building in which the advisor is housed. Although restroom accessibility for people with mobility impairments may not seem to have a direct impact on an advising session, the personal discomfort, embarrassment, or indignity for the individual student may be sufficient to create a tension in the relationship with the advisor.

Though physical accessibility of advisement is certainly a significant concern, a deeper problem may well be the lack of training for advisors working with students with disabilities. The demographic summary of our survey suggests that the typical respondent holds a graduate degree (most frequently in the area of counseling), is fairly new to the profession (less than 6 years), and has advising as her or his primary institutional responsibility. Because of the respondents' recent entrance into the field and their educational and professional experiences, one might conclude that such advisors would be sufficiently trained and professionally equipped to advise students with disabilities confidently and competently. However, this does not seem to be the case.

Less than one half of respondents reported that they had taken a course on disabilities as part of their college preparation. A large percentage (47%) indicated that they had received no training regarding the ADA. In addition, advisors reported that the training they had received was relatively confined to specific disabilities such as AD/HD and learning disabilities. This finding seems fairly remarkable, especially when one takes into consideration that, according to the survey, most advisors (78%) hold a postgraduate degree. If advisors are not receiving *de facto* training in the ADA as part of their graduate educations, then college and university administrators, as well as advising administrators, may need to feel a compulsion to facilitate ongoing training in the area of disabilities. While training in the ADA may not directly relate to contact with students and service provision, an understanding of the legal and accommodation requirements may help advisors understand linkages to their practice. As the data suggest (Table 1), a sig-

nificant proportion of advisors (61.5%) feel a need for training related to serving individuals with disabilities. Other resources available for advisors seeking to increase their effectiveness and repertoire of skills when working with students with disabilities are listed in Appendix 2.

The need for training is emphasized by respondents' reported level of comfort when working with students having certain types of disabilities. Survey respondents reported the greatest levels of comfort in working with students who have mobility impairments, learning disabilities, ADD or AD/HD, or visual impairments. They indicated lower levels of comfort when working with students with hearing loss or emotional disorders. More than 30% of the respondents indicated they were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable in working with students with hearing loss or emotional disorders. This lack of comfort is not an indictment of advisor preparation. The challenges presented by certain disabilities can be overwhelming and intimidating for both the student and those to whom the student reaches out for support. Nevertheless, adequate training with regard to emotional and hearing disabilities, along with disabilities in general, may provide advisors with increased comfort and greater confidence in their abilities to assist students in accessing the resources appropriate for their needs.

In an important finding, advisors' discomfort in working with students with emotional disabilities appears unrelated to the amount of contact or involvement with students with emotional disabilities. For example, nearly one half of the survey respondents reported that students have revealed in the course of their advising sessions that they are contemplating suicide; suicidal ideation (thoughts about taking one's own life) can often accompany several emotional disabilities (major depressive, bipolar, psychotic disorders, etc.). In addition, 37% of advisors indicated that they had worked with students who reported having engaged in self-destructive behaviors.

Because advisors are often the first and the most persistent point of contact for students with disabilities, academic departments, as part of advisor preparation programs, need to provide adequate training pertaining to disability issues. While they need not be trained as mental health therapists or as accessibility specialists, advisors should work closely with counseling center personnel and disability service providers on their campuses to avoid redundancy of services and to ensure consistency of services provided by each office.

In this survey, advisors expressed frustration

that students do not disclose disabilities, and this is a particular problem when the disability is not readily evident, as may be the case with learning disabilities, chronic illness, or emotional disorders. Approximately 91% of the survey respondents reported that students with invisible disabilities do not inform advisors of their particular disability until they are in significant academic trouble.

However, students are not required by law to divulge whether or not they have a disability (Jarrow, 1996). The fact that a student has a specific disability is shared on a need to know basis only, and it is the student who determines who needs to know about it. Unfortunately, students may be very reluctant to disclose information about their disability status due to certain stereotypes or stigmas, particularly with regard to emotional disabilities.

As a by-product of students' nondisclosure, advisors may not be aware of advisees' particular needs, and many advisors and university officials may underestimate the number of students with disabilities on their campuses. As a result, stakeholders may fail to allocate funding and implement programs designed to provide effective and appropriate accommodations to students. They may also be reluctant to provide disability training for advisors.

Whereas some advisors may not be aware of advisees' disabilities, the results of this survey suggest that some advisors may be overly involved in arranging accommodations for students. Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated that they had been involved in making arrangements for students. At first, this figure seemed staggering because typically a disability services provider, not an advisor, has the responsibility to arrange these accommodations. However, to gain a better understanding of this issue, we presented these findings to colleagues from around the nation at the NACADA National Conference held in Las Vegas, Nevada, in October 2005. During the course of the discussion, advisors (many of whom participated in the survey) indicated that their definition of *arranging* for an accommodation was far broader than was our definition.

Nevertheless, we also discussed that in some instances, particularly at small institutions, the academic advisor also functions as the school's disability services provider or accommodations specialist. At the same time, respondents also reported that they had arranged very specific accommodations for students with disabilities such as extended test periods, scheduling accommodations, accommodative testing rooms, and note takers. An advisor takes on significant responsibility when arranging or denying accommodations for a

student. Because the determination of disability status and the accommodations provided or denied can become a legal matter, policies and procedures must be established to ensure that qualified students receive needed services and that students who do not qualify are not given accommodation. Therefore, accommodation decisions are best left for the designated disability-service providers to implement.

Although this study reveals several areas where improvement is crucially needed, it also highlights advisors' secrets to success in working with students with disabilities. Academic and career advisors regularly negotiate their way through complexities inherent in an institution of higher learning. Providing advisement services to advisees with disabilities certainly adds to this complexity. To best meet advisee needs, advisors need to know how, when, and where on campus to refer students with disabilities. Respondents reported significant cooperation and consultation with staffs of disability services and counseling centers where they exist. Advisors also reported being able to draw from their past experiences and personal connections to people with disabilities to serve students at their institutions better. Above all, advisors attributed their success to their ability to empathize genuinely with students.

This study represents an initial exploration of the issues advisors face when working with students with disabilities. Though our response rate and representative sample lend credibility to our results, we recognize that further investigation and development may be necessary to enhance the validity of the instrument. The feedback we received at the NACADA 2005 National Conference predominantly confirmed our results.

This survey has raised many questions that warrant further investigation. For example, more information about advisors' perceptions of students with emotional disorders and how their views impact their interactions with students is warranted. The level of advisors' comfort may have an effect upon the level of service they provide students and the specific strategies they use to facilitate the students' success.

Also, investigations into advisors' reported low levels of comfort with hearing loss may yield interesting results. The difficulties in these advisee-advisor relationships may be related to communication problems caused by advisors' limited skills or the availability of interpreters rather than to advisors' preconceived notions about people with hearing loss.

Advisors will continue to encounter students with

disabilities in ever-increasing numbers. Therefore, we hope others will join in expanding the research base in the area of advisees with disabilities.

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Authors' Notes

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Appendix 1 Survey of advisement services for people with disabilities

Institutional Role

1. Which of the following best describes your primary role at your institution?

- ☐ Faculty Advisor
- ☐ Academic Advisor/Counselor
- ☐ Advising Administrator
- ☐ Administrator with responsibilities over several areas, one of which is advising graduate students
- ☐ Institutional position that supports advising—Registrar, admissions, financial aid, technology specialist, office assistant, etc.
- ☐ Affiliated with a college or university but not in any of the roles previously mentioned
- ☐ Not affiliated with an institution of higher education

Institutional Type

2. Your institution would best be described as:

- ☐ Public
- ☐ Private (nonprofit)
- ☐ Proprietary (for profit)
- ☐ Employed by agency or firm; primary income not from an institution of higher education
- ☐ Not currently employed
- ☐ Other:

3. The highest degree granted by your institution:

- ☐ Technical (vocational) certificate
- ☐ Associate's Degree
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Specialist
- ☐ Ph.D., Ed.D., or professional degrees, i.e. M.D., J.D., D.D.S. etc.
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Not applicable

Region

4. You belong to which of the following regions?

- ☐ Northeast Region (ME, VT, NY, NH, MA, RI, CT, Quebec, New Brunswick, Maritime provinces)
- ☐ Mid-Atlantic (PA, NJ, DE, MD, VA, DC)
- ☐ Mid-South (WV, KY, TN, NC, SC)
- ☐ Southeast (MS, AL, GA, FL, Caribbean)
- ☐ Great Lakes (WI, IL, MI, IN, OH, Ontario)
- ☐ North Central (NE, IA, SD, ND, MN, MT, Saskatchewan, Manitoba)
- ☐ South Central (KS, MO, OK, AR, TX, LA)
- ☐ Northwest (AK, WA, OR, ID, MT, British Columbia, Alberta)
- ☐ Pacific (CA, NV, HI)
- ☐ Rocky Mountain (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY)
- ☐ International (other than Canada)

Appendix 1 Survey of advisement services for people with disabilities (continued)

Institutional Size

5. The number of students enrolled at your institution:

- ☐ Less than 2,500
- ☐ 2,5001 – 4,999
- ☐ 5,000 – 9,999
- ☐ 10,000 – 19,999
- ☐ 20,000 – 29,999
- ☐ 30,000 – 39,999
- ☐ 40,000 or more
- ☐ Not applicable

Gender

6. ☐ Female
☐ Male

Age

7. ☐ Under 22
☐ 22 – 29
☐ 30 – 39
☐ 40 – 49
☐ 50 – 59
☐ 60 – 69
☐ 70 or over

Degree

8. Highest degree you have earned:

- ☐ Associate's
- ☐ Bachelor's
- ☐ Master's
- ☐ Educational Specialist
- ☐ Ph.D. or Ed.D. or equivalent
- ☐ Other:

Racial/Ethnic Background

9. To which racial or ethnic group(s) do you most identify? (Mark more than one if applicable)

(Note: catagories are defined by the federal government).

- ☐ African-American (Non-Hispanic)
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islanders
- ☐ Caucasian (non Hispanic)
- ☐ Latino or Hispanic
- ☐ Native American, Aleut or Aboriginal Peoples
- ☐ Other:

I marked more than one racial or ethnic group listed above.

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Appendix 1 Survey of advisement services for people with disabilities (continued)

Salary

10. Current Gross Salary (if currently employed as an academic advisor or advising administrator)

- ☐ Under \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,001 - \$24,999
- ☐ \$25,000 - \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 - \$34,999
- ☐ \$35,000 - \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 - \$44,999
- ☐ \$45,000 - \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$54,999
- ☐ \$55,000 - \$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 - \$64,999
- ☐ \$65,000 - \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 - \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 - \$89,999
- ☐ \$90,000 - \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 or above

Time in Position

11. How long have you held a position similar to your current one? (e.g. you may have advised in your current position for 2 years, but you were a full-time advisor at another institution for 5 years; therefore you have been a full-time advisor for 7 years. Mark "at least 6 years but less than 10 years.")

- ☐ Less than 3 years
- ☐ At least 3 years but less than 6 years
- ☐ At least 6 years but less than 10 years
- ☐ At least 10 years but less than 15 years
- ☐ 15 or more years

Disability Status

12. Do you have a disability? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, Blind/Visually Impaired
- ☐ Yes, Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- ☐ Yes, Physical/Orthopedic
- ☐ Yes, Learning Disability/Cognitive
- ☐ Yes, Emotional Disability
- ☐ Yes, other, please specify _____

Training

13. When you were in college did any of your academic programs offer course work that dealt with disability issues?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Appendix 1 Survey of advisement services for people with disabilities (continued)

14. Please indicate training you have had from an employer for any of the following disabilities:
(please check all that apply)

- ☐ Visual impairments (e.g. blindness, low vision)
- ☐ Hearing loss (e.g. deafness, hard of hearing)
- ☐ Mobility impaired
- ☐ Amputations
- ☐ Speech impairments
- ☐ Developmental disabilities
- ☐ Learning or memory disabilities
- ☐ Movement disorders (e.g. cerebral palsy)
- ☐ Emotional disorders (e.g. depression, OCD, schizophrenia)
- ☐ ADD/ADHD
- ☐ General disability training
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

15. Please indicate workshops or other training opportunities you have had for any of the following disabilities: (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Visual impairments (e.g. blindness, low vision)
- ☐ Hearing loss (e.g. deafness, hard of hearing)
- ☐ Mobility impaired
- ☐ Amputations
- ☐ Speech impairments
- ☐ Developmental disabilities
- ☐ Learning or memory disabilities
- ☐ Movement disorders (e.g. cerebral palsy)
- ☐ Emotional disorders (e.g. depression, OCD, schizophrenia)
- ☐ ADD/ADHD
- ☐ General disability training
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

16. Have you ever received training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Experience with Students with Disabilities

17. On average, how many students do you advise each week?

- ☐ less than 5
- ☐ 5 to 10
- ☐ 10 to 20
- ☐ 20 to 30
- ☐ more than 30
- ☐ I do not advise students as part of my duties

Appendix 1 Survey of advisement services for people with disabilities (continued)

18. On average, how many of the students that you advise have disabilities?

- ☐ 0 to 10%
- ☐ 11 to 20%
- ☐ 21 to 30%
- ☐ 31 to 40%
- ☐ 41 to 50%
- ☐ 51 to 60%
- ☐ 61 to 70%
- ☐ 71 to 80%
- ☐ 81 to 90%
- ☐ 91 to 100%
- ☐ I don't know

Student Resources

19. Do you, as a general rule, refer students with suspected or reported physical and emotional disabilities to your Disabilities Resource Center/Accessibilities Office?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ We don't have this service
- ☐ I am responsible to provide this service in addition to my advisement duties

20. Do you, as a general rule, refer students with suspected or reported emotional disabilities to your counseling center?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ We don't have this service
- ☐ I am responsible to provide this service in addition to my advisement duties

21. Have you ever been directly involved in providing or arranging for an accommodation(s) for a student with a physical or emotional disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'm not sure

If yes, what accommodations have you been involved in providing/procuring? (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Extended time on tests
- ☐ Reduced course load
- ☐ Scheduling accommodations
- ☐ Books on tape
- ☐ Note takers
- ☐ Readers
- ☐ Oral exams
- ☐ Accommodative testing rooms
- ☐ Copies of professor's notes
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

Appendix 1 Survey of advisement services for people with disabilities (continued)

Potential Barriers

22. What, if any physical barriers have you found that hinder you from serving students with disabilities? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Stairs with no ramp
- ☐ Restrooms not accessible
- ☐ Inadequate space
- ☐ No TTY available (telecommunications device for the deaf, hearing impaired)
- ☐ No sign language interpreter capability
- ☐ Lack of personnel
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

23. What, if any, training barriers have you found that hinder you from serving students with disabilities? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ I feel some discomfort working with students with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of knowledge
- ☐ Lack of awareness of or connection to campus resources for students with disabilities
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

24. What other barriers have you found that hinder you from serving students with disabilities? (please check all that apply)

- ☐ No students with disabilities come for advisement, although access and expertise pose no problems
- ☐ No students with disabilities come for advisement, although problems could exist if they did
- ☐ Students, particularly those with non-visible disabilities (emotional, learning, etc.), don't tell me about their disability
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

25. If you advise students with disabilities and believe that you serve them just as well as any other student subgroup, please indicate your "secret to success" (please check all that apply)

- ☐ Genuine empathy
- ☐ Personal experience with disability
- ☐ Personal connections to people with disabilities
- ☐ Training in disability issues and resources
- ☐ Mentorship or consultation from colleagues with experience in disability issues
- ☐ Previous professional experience in serving persons with disabilities
- ☐ Mentorship or consultation from campus services for students with disabilities
- ☐ Consultation from campus counseling services
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

Appendix 1 Survey of advisement services for people with disabilities (continued)

26. Please indicate what supports you need to build your capacities to serve persons with disabilities. (please check all that apply)

- ☐ No additional supports needed
☐ Training related to serving persons with disabilities
☐ Information about disability services and resources
☐ Access to consultants or mentors
☐ Access to resources to improve the accessibility of your services (e.g., interpreters, building modifications, etc.)
☐ Support from your campus/department administration (e.g., increase budget, personnel, etc.)
☐ Other, please specify _____

Specific Disability/Disorder Information

27. Please rate your level of comfort when working with students with the following specific disabilities/diagnoses.

1 = not comfortable 2 = somewhat comfortable 3 = moderately comfortable 4 = Very comfortable

Circle the number corresponding with your comfort level

Visual impairments (e.g. blindness, low vision)	1	2	3	4
Hearing loss (e.g. deafness, hard of hearing)	1	2	3	4
Mobility impaired	1	2	3	4
Amputations	1	2	3	4
Speech impairments	1	2	3	4
Developmental disabilities	1	2	3	4
Learning or memory disabilities	1	2	3	4
Movement disorders (e.g. cerebral palsy)	1	2	3	4
Emotional disorders (e.g. depression, OCD, schizophrenia)	1	2	3	4
ADD/ADHD	1	2	3	4
Other, please specify:	1	2	3	4

28. Have you ever had a student confide in you thoughts about suicide?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

29. Have you ever had a student confide in you thoughts about or experience with self-destructive behavior? (e.g. cutting, burning, self-strangulation)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

30. Have you ever felt threatened by a student?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, did the threat have anything to do with an emotional disorder?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I don't know

Appendix 2 Resources for advisors regarding disability and advising related issues

Accessible Environments: Toward Universal Design. Mace, R. L., Hardie, G. J., & Place, J. P. (1996). Raleigh: North Carolina State University, The Center for Universal Design. AUED.9.96, 44 pp., \$5.00. See www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/pubs_p/docs/ACC%20Environments.pdf

Advising Students with Disabilities. (1995). M. Ramos & D. Vallandingham, Eds. (Monograph No. 5). Manhattan, KS: National Academic Advising Association. 81 pp., \$25.00 for members; \$40 for non-members. Order at www.nacada.ksu.edu/Monographs/index.htm#Disabilities

AHEAD Best Practices For Disability Documentation in Higher Education. Waltham, MA: Association of Higher Education and Disability. Available from www.ahead.org/resources/bestpracticesdoc.htm