Assessing Advisor Competencies: A Delphi Method Study

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Through the Delphi method study, we sought to identify essential competencies for entry-level academic advisors. Three surveys were administered to academic advisors with 5 years or more working in the field. Results from 57 advisors who completed all 3 rounds of surveys indicated a wide range of competencies essential for entry-level academic advisors. Consensus centered around 3 essential competencies: Communication skills, interpersonal skills, and knowledge of university policies and resources. We discuss the implications for practice and propose ideas for additional research.

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Academic advising with college faculty members or professional staff provides the space for students to not only learn academic policies and the sequence of courses for their degrees but also ways to navigate their college experience and build a personal and professional identity (Lance, 2009). The manner in which this important process is carried out varies from campus to campus. Advising is conducted solely by faculty members in academic departments, in advising centers staffed by professional (primary-role) academic advisors, and in any combination of both (Habley, 2004). The evolution of academic advising practice in higher education, from a faculty duty to a mixture of faculty and administrative staff responsibilities, resulted in academic advisors with a variety of work backgrounds, training, and experiences. This diversity adds value to the advising profession, but it also makes difficult any agreement on core competencies for the profession. The challenge of creating core competencies for advising is complicated further by the need for specific skills to address different student populations and account for innumerable academic settings. However, the generation of essential competencies for entry-level advisors can help advising administrators hire individuals best suited for the critical function of academic advising. Competencies, as defined by Burkard, Cole, Ott, and Stoflet in their 2004 study on entry-level student affairs professionals, are considered the responsibilities, skills, and knowledge used in a profession. Despite the complications of such an endeavor, we sought to identify the competencies—skills and knowledge—essential and common to the work of academic advising to offer practical guidance to administrators, insight on ways to prepare for a career as an academic advisor or to fulfill the role of an outstanding faculty advisor, and suggestions to advance the field.

Literature Review

Despite 40 years of research in the field, empirical studies on the competencies for academic advising remain limited. Fiddler and Alecia (1996) developed a list of competencies for advisors who work with adult or other nontraditional learners. They grouped these competencies into categories that include planning and organizing, assessment, counseling and communication, teaching and learning, professional development, and values and ethics. As Winston and Sandor (1984) extolled, no single formula leads to successful academic advising.

Hughey (2011) asserted that most academic advisors can challenge advisees without alienating them. Academic advisors who provide a nurturing environment encourage student intellectual growth and success. At the same time, advisors must "stimulate and motivate advisees" to empower them to develop problem-solving skills (Hughey, 2011, p. 30). To meet these advising goals, effective advisors must possess interpersonal skills consistent with demonstrative support and openness to students. McClellan (2005) pointed to necessary interpersonal and intrapersonal skills necessary because sometimes advisors must bear bad news. The ability to convey important or disappointing news in a way that minimizes the distress of a student proves most helpful to the student, advisor, and college.

For years, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising has partnered with the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) in the development of

guiding principles for the academic advising profession. CAS, a consortium of higher education professional associations, including NACADA, establishes and promotes the use of standards to improve student learning and development. The standards cover organization and leadership, ethics, legal concerns, diversity, equity and access, internal and external relations, financial resources, technology, facility, equipment, and assessment (Council for the Study of Higher Education Standards, 2016). The CAS standards also call for academic advising units to design professional development programs and stipulate the availability of ongoing professional development for advisors. However, few academic programs offer certificates or degrees in academic advising. Furthermore, the CAS standards do not set forth competencies necessary for entry into the profession. In 2016, the NACADA Professional Development Committee aimed to establish core competencies for the profession. In 2017, the committee began educating NACADA membership of their recommended core competencies (S. Ackerson, personal communication, July 20, 2017). The efforts of the committee will most certainly add to the professional understanding of competencies necessary in academic advising and lead to a structure of professional development from entry into the profession through advanced professional development opportunities.

Although it frequently falls under academic affairs in the organizational structure of many institutions, academic advising shares the description of responsibilities performed by professionals working within the division of student affairs, such as working in a single location; however, academic advising is infrequently listed as a career field in student affairs graduate programs. Despite the similarities, the knowledge base differs between advising and other student support functions; that is, academic advisors share knowledge specific to the curriculum and help students make decisions while directors of student leadership programs understand leadership theories and motivate students to take on leadership roles. Practitioners in each area require a unique set of competencies in addition to those they share, such as commitment to student success and understanding of the college mission.

With this study, we aimed to develop a consensus of the core competencies essential for entry-level academic advisors. To accomplish this task, we conducted a Delphi method study to gain agreement among experienced academic advisors who, for the purposes of this study, constitute a panel of experts.

Methods

The Delphi method comprises a multiple-step process of consensus building based on a formal questionnaire used to gather anonymous responses. The initial questionnaire is followed by a second iteration and controlled feedback such that the researchers provide a summary of the anonymous responses. For a Delphi method study, Burkard et al. (2004) assessed competencies for entry-level student affairs professionals. In the postsurvey process, they reduced the number of competencies to gain consensus. We followed the Delphi method, as conducted by Burkard et al., to determine the competencies for entry-level academic advisors.

We sent an open-ended survey by e-mail with a prompt that asked participants to list ideal competencies, knowledge necessary, and personal and professional traits and characteristics that entry-level academic advisors should possess. Using the Delphi method protocol, we analyzed the data, using qualitative measures, from the initial survey and boiled down the competencies, which we sent back to the participating advisors, the designated panel of experts, for their feedback. After compiling the feedback, the list of competencies was sent back to the panel for a third time so that they could make final changes to the list.

In summary, we used a series of three survey instruments to illicit a final list of competencies from the panel of experts. In Round 1, the invited participants listed competencies necessary for entry-level academic advisors. In Round 2, we sent the same participants a list created from the responses to Round 1 and asked them to rank order the top 15 competencies. In Round 3, we presented participants with the rank-order listing and invited them to make any changes that they felt necessary to provide an accurate list of entry-level advisor competencies. With this process, we sought to gain consensus among the experts on the panel. Consensus developed from an expert group opinion is assumed to validate the study (Powell, 2003).

Advantages to the Delphi method include the anonymity with which surveys are completed. Because they can answer questions without providing identifying information, participants may answer more honestly and completely, which means that more complete data are acquired. Surveys are also easily accessed across a wide geographic area, sent by e-mail cost effectively, and

result in fast turnaround (Creswell, 2013). The flexible Delphi method can be modified to meet the needs of the researcher using it because, in another advantage, the expert panel is created based on the vested interest of each panel member in the topic. This vested interest and the panelists' desire to contribute to their field support the belief that each will give thoughtful responses to the survey items (Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000).

Participants

The panel of experts for our Delphi study consisted of members of NACADA who had worked as advisors for 5 years or more. In keeping with Delphi method protocols, Mead and Moseley (2001) listed several different ways to identify an expert. In addition to being defined by their positions in an organizational hierarchy, experts are recognized by their experiences. Although the term *expert* may be defined in many ways, the Delphi method, with multiple survey iterations, requires a commitment among participants that attests to their interest and involvement with the topic (Hasson et al., 2000). For this study, we selected experts based on their experience in the field of academic advising.

The number of panel members must be justified by the researcher (Powell, 2003). Because of the open-ended nature of some survey questions, with limited resources to analyze data for the current study, and confident of meeting a 15–25% response rate, we considered 500 participants ideal for the current study. Of the 108 respondents to the initial survey, 57 (30%) completed all three rounds of the Delphi study.

According to self-reports on the survey, 26% of the panelists had been advising between 8 and 11 years. More identified as primary-role advisors (46%) than advising administrators (42%) or faculty advisors (12%).

Data Analysis

As per Delphi method protocols, the initial survey consisted of open-ended items soliciting a collective description of the essential competencies for entry-level academic advisors (per Dalkey, Brown, & Cochran, 1969). In Round 1, survey participants listed 10 competencies they felt essential for entry-level advisors to possess. The response to this iteration yielded 108 completed surveys. As a team of three, we analyzed the results of Round 1 qualitatively because of the open-ended nature of the survey. We culled responses for key words that related to advising competencies, which we then counted for frequency.

During Round 2, we sent the participants the list of the top 15 competencies that we generated from Round 1 of the survey. Participants rank ordered these competencies to determine the most important core competencies for entry-level academic advisors, and the frequency for each competency was counted. Sixty-eight participants completed Round 2 surveys.

In the third and final round, participants reviewed the rankings from Round 2, considered their own responses from the second iteration, and made new ratings for only those items they wished to change. Fifty-seven respondents completed Round 3 of the Delphi surveys. Frequency of the rank order was determined for the findings.

Results

Initially, participants provided clear consensus on the competencies they believed necessary for entry-level academic advisors. However, when presented with a list of 15 competencies and asked to rank them, we found less consensus among the participants. Appearing 99 times in Round 1, communication and listening skills were the most frequently mentioned competencies listed by the panel of experts. Interpersonal skills, such as compassion, empathy, and relatability, appeared 59 times. Knowledge of university policy and resources was ranked third because it was cited 51 times in Round 1. The results from Round 1 are presented in Table 1.

For Round 2, participants ranked the top 15 competencies (presented to them in random order), in descending order, with 1 being the most important and 15 the least important. As is typical with Delphi studies, results varied substantially. Among the 15 competencies ranked in the second round, 30% of the 68 respondents ranked interpersonal skills as most important. Communication and listening skills was ranked second-most important by 25% of the respondents. Knowledge of the curriculum was ranked third by 15% of the respondents. Three competencies were ranked 15th. Of these three, technology was ranked 15th by 23% of the panel. Teamwork and collaboration and knowledge of advising theory were listed as 15th by 16% of respondents. The results from the Round 2 survey are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the competency-rank midscale varied. Willingness to ask questions and knowledge of policy and requirements were both

Table 1. Round 1: Number of times participants suggested competency in open-ended prompt ($N = 108$)

Frequency	Competency
99	Communication and listening
59	Interpersonal skills
51	Knowledge of policy and requirements
32	Time management and organization
31	Technology proficiency
30	Knowledge of curriculum
30	Critical thinking
28	Patience
26	Detail oriented
25	Knowledge of advising theory
24	Student centeredness and knowing student trends
22	Willingness to ask questions
21	Multicultural competence
21	Teamwork and collaboration
20	Resourcefulness

ranked in Position 5 by 15% of respondents. This finding is interesting because each of these competencies was cited relatively less frequently than in the first round of the survey such that they were all placed in the bottom one third of the rankings. Also, multicultural competence was ranked higher in the second iteration of the survey than in the first. In Round 1 it was cited 21 times, but it was subsequently ranked 7th by 13% of Round 2 respondents. Patience, which some may consider more of a characteristic than a competency, appeared 28 times in the open-ended responses in Round 1. It was ranked in the middle, at 7th place, by 13% of the respondents; 4% ranked it at Position 15.

We found more consensus among the panel of experts in Round 3 than we found in Round 2. Like in Round 2, communication and listening skills, interpersonal skills, and knowledge of the curriculum were ranked in the top three slots with 53, 49, and 42% of responses, respectively. In a surprising finding, in Round 3, multicultural competence dropped from Round 2 Position 7 to 11 (16% of the respondents). Teamwork and collaboration was again ranked 15th. Knowledge of advising theory was ranked 14th by 21% of the panel of experts. Resourcefulness (knowledge of campus and resources to refer students) received a higher ranking in Round 3. It moved from Position 14 to Positions 5 and 6 with 14% ranking it as such for both positions. All the Round 3 results, along with a comparison with Round 2, are listed in Table 3.

When we compared the results by number of years of experience in advising, a few interesting trends emerged and are presented in Tables 4–6. Of the respondents with the least experience (5–7 years), 28% ranked knowledge of curriculum at Position 15 of the 15 competencies. An equal percentage (28%) placed willingness to ask questions in Position 3. Respondents with the most experience (12 or more years) ranked time management and organization higher than did those with less experience; that is, 14% of experienced respondents ranked it 4th, and another 14% ranked it 8th; however, the least-experienced

Table 2. Round 2: Percent of participants who selected competency at rank positions 1–15 ($N = 68$)

Rank Chosen	Competency	Respondents (%)
1	Interpersonal skills	30
2	Communication and listening	25
5	Knowledge of curriculum	15
5	Willingness to ask questions	15
5	Time management and organization	13
5	Critical thinking	13
6	Knowledge of policies and requirements	15
7	Patience	13
7	Multicultural competence	13
8	Detail oriented	16
13	Student centered and knowing student trends	16
14	Resourceful	22
15	Technology proficient	23
15	Knowledge of advising theory	16
15	Teamwork and collaboration	16

Table 3. Round 3: Final ranking of competencies and comparison with Round 2 rankings

Rank	Competency	Respondents (%) Round 3 ($n = 57$)	Respondents (%) Round 2 ($n = 68$)
1	Interpersonal skills	53	30
2	Communication and listening	49	25
3	Knowledge of curriculum	42	15
4	Time management and organization	16	15
5	Willingness to ask questions and lifelong learner	16	13
7	Critical thinking and problem solving	19	13
4	Knowledge of policy and requirements	16	15
9	Patience	16	13
10	Detail oriented	19	13
11	Multicultural competence	16	16
12 & 13	Student centered and student trends	19	16
5 & 6	Resourceful	14	22
13	Technology	21	23
14	Advising theory	21	16
15	Teamwork and collaboration	44	16

advisors ranked it 10th. Academic advisors with 12 or more years of experience ranked the 15 competencies with more congruence than did the respondents with less experience.

The results of this study show consensus for ranking communication and listening skills at Position 1 by 53% of respondents, meaning that more than one half of the respondents ranked this competency as most important. The results of this Delphi study showed great variation, and breaking down the data by advisor category provided some interesting results. For example, the top three competencies (interpersonal skills, communication and listening skills, and knowledge of curriculum) remained the top three ranked competencies according to all three types of advisor. The rankings of the competencies deemed least important for an entry-level advisor also remained consistent among groups: Primary-role advisors and advising administrators ranked knowledge of advising theory 14th and teamwork 15th (Tables 7 and 8, respectively), and faculty advisors ranked teamwork in Positions 14 and 15 (Table 9). The other competencies were ranked without a discernable pattern. For example, among the three advising groups, primary-role advisors (22%) ranked multicultural competence highest, at Position 8, and another 22% of the same group ranked it 14th.

Table 4. Round 3 rankings by advisors with 5–7 years of experience ($n = 7$)

Rank	Competency	Respondents (%)
1	Interpersonal skills	28
2	Communication and listening skills	28
15	Knowledge of curriculum	28
10 & 12	Time management and organization	28
3	Willingness to ask questions and lifelong learner	28
7	Critical thinking and problem solving	28
5 & 8	Knowledge of policy and requirements	28
2	Patience	28
10 & 11	Detail oriented	28
11	Multicultural experience	28
4	Student centered and student trends	28
11	Resourceful	28
14	Technology	28
6	Advising theory	28
4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, & 15	Teamwork	14

Table 5. Round 3 rankings by advisors with 8–11 years of experience (n =19)

Rank	Competency	Respondents (%)
1	Interpersonal skills	33
2	Communication and listening skills	33
3	Knowledge of curriculum	33
12	Time management and organization	20
4 & 9	Willingness to ask questions and lifelong learner	20
1, 7, 8, & 14	Critical thinking and problem solving	13
12	Knowledge of policy and requirements	20
5	Patience	20
11	Detail oriented	27
7, 8, 10, & 12	Multicultural experience	13
5 & 13	Student centered and student trends	20
6	Resourceful	20
13	Technology	27
14	Advising theory	27
15	Teamwork	33

Limitations

Because of the multiple rounds used in the Delphi method, participant attrition is commonly cited as a limitation of the study (Chia-Chen & Sandford, 2007). Initially, nearly 200 participants responded to the survey request, but at the end, 57 Round 3 surveys were completed. Identification of a panel of experts presents another challenge of the Delphi method (Chia-Chen & Sandford, 2007), and this difficulty manifests in a field such as academic advising, which is populated with people of different educational backgrounds and functioning in different advising roles within and across institutions. Hence, unlike the field of student affairs, academic advisors do not populate tiered structure career ladders that routinely include midlevel management positions; therefore, identifying the panel of experts proved a particular challenge for this study. We decided that advisors who had worked as academic advisors for 5 years or more qualified as experts for purposes of this study.

In another potential limitation of our study, we needed participants to create an open-ended list of competencies, which we may have failed to categorize properly. However, despite the limitations of this study, we believe the advantages of the Delphi method to process unique information to inform the field outweighed the limitations of attrition and complexity, which we expected to encounter.

Table 6. Round 3 ranking by advisors with 12 and more years of experience ($n = 31$)

Rank	Competency	Respondents (%)
1	Interpersonal skills	49
2	Communication and listening skills	46
3	Knowledge of curriculum	40
4 & 8	Time management and organization	14
6	Willingness to ask questions and lifelong learner	17
7	Critical thinking and problem solving	17
4	Knowledge of policy and requirements	17
9	Patience	17
10	Detail oriented	17
11	Multicultural experience	17
12	Student centered and student trends	20
5	Resourceful	17
15	Technology	23
14	Advising theory	26
15	Teamwork	43

Table 7. Round 3 rankings by primary-role advisors ($n = 27$)

Rank	Competency	Respondents (%)
1	Interpersonal skills	56
2	Communication and listening skills	50
3	Knowledge of curriculum	44
5 & 9	Time management and organization	17
6	Willingness to ask questions and lifelong learner	22
8	Critical thinking and problem solving	28
5, 8, & 12	Knowledge of policy and requirements	17
13	Patience	17
12	Detail oriented	28
8 & 14	Multicultural experience	22
13	Student centered and student trends	22
9	Resourceful	17
14	Technology	33
15	Advising theory	44
16	Teamwork	56

Discussion

Individuals enter into an academic advising role from a variety of different backgrounds. These advisors bring with them unique skill sets, knowledge of a variety of theoretical frameworks for practice, and personalized approaches for working with students. Academic advising practices transpire in varied environments and with different student populations. These variables have made developing core competencies for academic advising a challenge. This Delphi method study seems to support the contention that the broadness of the field makes categorization of skills difficult.

The lack of strong consensus that we found among the panel experts may stem from the variety of competencies necessary coupled with the varied environments where academic advisors work with students. Competencies may take on various levels of importance based on these different environments, causing a lack of strong agreement among the panel of experts in the study.

Despite the problems with consensus on many of the rankings, three competencies consistently appeared as among the most important for entry-level advisors: Communication, listening, and interpersonal skills. This finding aligns with previous literature featuring recommendations that academic advisors must communicate good and bad news effectively and with empathy (Hughey, 2011; McClellan, 2005). The other competencies

Table 8. Round 3 rankings by advising administrators ($n = 20$)

Rank	Competency	Respondents (%)
1	Interpersonal skills	50
2	Communication and listening skills	56
3	Knowledge of curriculum	44
4 & 9	Time management and organization	19
6	Willingness to ask questions and lifelong learner	19
6 & 8	Critical thinking and problem solving	19
4	Knowledge of policy and requirements	25
9	Patience	19
7 & 10	Detail oriented	19
11	Multicultural experience	25
12 & 13	Student centered and student trends	25
5, 6, & 11	Resourceful	19
14	Technology	25
13 & 14	Advising theory	19
15	Teamwork	44

Table 9. Round 3 rankings by faculty advisors ($n = 10$)

Rank	Competency	Respondents (%)
1	Interpersonal skills	56
2	Communication and listening skills	33
3	Knowledge of curriculum	33
12	Time management and organization	33
4 & 9	Willingness to ask questions and lifelong learner	22
14 & 7	Critical thinking and problem solving	22
5 & 6	Knowledge of policy and requirements	33
8	Patience	22
9 & 14	Detail oriented	22
10	Multicultural experience	22
2, 9, & 11	Student centered and student trends	22
8 & 12	Resourceful	22
15	Technology	33
8	Advising theory	22
14 & 15	Teamwork	22

were evenly dispersed, and the positions were altered between Rounds 2 and 3, at which times the participants ranked ($n = 68$) and re-ranked ($n = 57$) the items. After Round 3, multicultural competence was ranked higher, and teamwork and collaboration were ranked lower, than respondents had ranked them in Round 2.

Similar to the Delphi study on entry-level competencies for student affairs professionals (Burkard et al., 2004), our study revealed a myriad of competencies essential for entry-level academic advisors, and some aligned with those of Burkard et al., who also found that participants ranked personal qualities and human relations skills at the top of the list as follows (in descending order): interpersonal, oral and written communication, critical-thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The results comport with the top skills that emerged from our study: communication and interpersonal skills. In a key difference between studies, the relatively high teamwork and collaboration rankings from the student affairs respondents makes sense because of the collaborative work in which they are involved, including student activities, housing, and Greek life.

Although listing competencies that come to mind and ranking competencies presented in a list are two very different tasks, more congruence among the responses might be expected from those in a profession with a solid grasp of the skills and competencies required for success. Knowledge of the curriculum, which appeared 30 times in the open-ended question making it the 6th-most frequently cited skill, was ranked 3rd in importance. Willingness to ask questions, which was ranked 6th after Round 3, was mentioned 22 times in Round 1, placing it as the 12th-most cited competency. Knowledge of advising or student development theories initially appeared 25 times and was ranked 15th; it was tied, along with technology and teamwork and collaboration, as the least-important skill for entry-level advisors.

We found other connections among the data we acquired. When asked to rank order the 15 competencies, an equal percentage of participants (15%) placed knowledge of curriculum, time management and organization, critical thinking, and willingness to ask questions as 5th. Patience and multicultural competence were the most frequently ranked 7th, by 13% of the respondents. These percentages demonstrate even dispersions of the perceptions of these competencies among respondents. The only discrepancy we discerned among groups regarded the variety of environments in which academic advisors work. As discussed by Chia-Chen and Sandford (2007), consensus may be more difficult to reach when variations exist within the reference groups participating in the study.

Results indicated that that the panel of experts was challenged to rank the 15 competencies that originated in Round 1. Little consensus was reached to identify the competencies deemed most or least important for entry-level advisors. That multiple competencies were ranked 5th, 7th, and 15th indicates that each is considered important by some of the respondents.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

This Delphi method study indicated agreement among expert panelists about the top three competencies essential to new academic advisors. This finding has implications for professional development programs for academic advisors and reveals important topics for advising conferences and workshops. The fact that the panel of experts in this study identified a wide range of competencies with little congruence on rankings, except for three of them, suggests that academic advising, as a profession, must establish a means to develop the wide array of skills and traits necessary for academic advisors and identify a core set of competencies essential for new academic advisors.

For advising administrators, ensuring that new advisors demonstrate solid communication, listening, and interpersonal skills aids in the success of those hires. Results of this study indicated that any professional development program for new advisors should include the opportunity to assess and develop these skills. Leaders in academic programs seeking to prepare future academic advisors will want to ensure that developing strong written and oral communication, along with interpersonal skills, is included as part of the curriculum.

For the advising profession, further assessment of core competencies will bring clarity to determine the essential skills most important for new advisors. This knowledge can advance professional development programs within advising units. This study, and the development of core competencies by the NACADA Professional Development Committee, may help establish the descriptions necessary for competencies of entry-level academic advisors and pinpoint advanced-level skills that advisors must gain over the course of their careers. Delineation of the advanced skills, in particular, can inform the growing calls for a career ladder in academic advising (Habley, 1986; Yudof, 2003). At most institutions, primary-role academic advisors report along the academic affairs line. Traditionally, academic affairs units uphold a hierarchical structure for faculty members, who move up from instructors to assistant professors to associate professors to full professors. Primary-role Advisors, to date, have access to no such ladder at the majority of higher education institutions (Carlstrom, 2013).

Advisors who wish to make presentations at regional and national advising conferences can develop workshops to enhance one or more of the competencies described herein knowing it has been identified as essential to the advising profession; however, to institute competencies essential to advising, further assessment is needed. By developing a set of core competencies of advising, the leaders in the profession can identify areas for ongoing training for academic advisors as they progress in their careers.

This study indicated that, according to experienced advisors, a wide variety of competencies are deemed important for academic advisors entering the field. Future researchers could shake out factors that influence this variation. Do specific student populations benefit most from advising delivered through a unique skill set? Does the structural setting of academic advising interactions affect the skills necessary to engage students? Addressing these and other questions can help advising administrators and new advisors find the best fit for their students. Answers may result in more efficient advising and possibly less turnover in academic advisors.

Conclusions

Results of the Delphi method study indicated that academic advisors shoulder a wide variety of responsibilities and need specific skills and knowledge to work with students effectively. The findings made clear that interpersonal, communication, and listening skills were deemed essential for entry-level academic advisors according to all experts on the panel regardless of their advising or administrative role.

The results also indicated that teamwork was not highly ranked as an essential entry-level advisor skill, which differs from findings of a similar study on student affairs competencies (Burkard et al., 2004). Continual research in the area of core competencies is needed before the essential skills necessary for entry-level academic advisors can be reliably established for the profession.

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