

Inviolable Norms of Primary Role Advisors

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The purpose of this study was to determine if there is evidence of a normative structure for primary role advisors and, if so, whether views of those norms vary by personal and positional characteristics. We developed the Academic Advising Behaviors Inventory (AABI) and surveyed members of NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. Using principal components factor analysis, we identified four inviolable norms that primary role advisors regard as requiring severe sanctions when crossed: Policy Violation, Disrespectful Interactions, Neglectful Supervision, and Confidentiality Breach. Regression analyses revealed some significant differences in the perception of these norms by gender identity, race, and supervision. We conclude by discussing implications for practice and future research.

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When primary role advisors (PRAs) in colleges and universities possess a clear understanding of unacceptable behaviors or well-established norms in their roles in academic advising, they are better equipped to protect the welfare of advising constituents, including students, faculty and staff members, the advising unit, and the institution. Norms are shared beliefs about preferred or expected behaviors within a particular social or professional group (Gibbs, 1981; Rossi & Berk, 1985); they represent prescribed or proscribed patterns of behavior (Merton, 1968; 1976). A normative structure is an organized set of values that regulates behaviors for group members (Merton, 1968). Without a normative structure, PRAs may act as they wish, deciding on their own what behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate (Braxton, 2010; Caboni, 2010). PRAs hold considerable autonomy in enacting their typical advising functions; they may make unconstrained or idiosyncratic choices in performing these roles. These choices have the potential to harm the

welfare of advising constituents. Therefore, formal or informal conduct codes such as norms are necessary to safeguard constituents' welfare. The purpose of this study was to learn if there is evidence of a normative structure for PRAs and, if so, whether views of those norms vary by personal and positional characteristics.

The academic advising literature reflects a concern for field-wide normative structures. In particular, leaders of NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising recognize the importance of promoting high quality academic advising in postsecondary institutions, as evidenced by their documents outlining expected professional behaviors. NACADA's (2005) *Core Values for Academic Advising* stressed advisors' responsibilities to individuals they advise, their institutions, higher education in general, and their educational community. Advisors are responsible for involving others in the advising process, for their professional practices, and for themselves personally.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS, 2012) also promulgated standards and guidelines for academic advising, indicating that this functional area is related to student support, development, and success. By articulating what good advising looks like, the standards set clear targets for performance. These standards likewise function as benchmarks for program assessment and the development of student learning outcomes.

Donnelly (2004) found the CAS professional standards and core values increased academic advisors' role clarity and reduced role ambiguity. Participants in his study believed their use of the standards increased their job satisfaction. However, both Donnelly (2004) and Lewis (1990) noted that belief in the validity or relevance of NACADA and/or CAS standards did not lead to their active use in practice.

Freidson (1975) contended that informal rules or conduct codes provide a more important means of social control than formal rules or codes. In academic advising, informal codes in the form of

norms likely come from academic advisors, some of whom belong to professional associations such as NACADA. Hence, norms may offer a more effective means for the social control of academic advising behaviors that harm the welfare of advising constituents than formal NACADA or CAS standards. Knowledge of expected professional norms is imperative to understanding how PRAs work with advising constituents and how they function in daily activities given their considerable autonomy. Academic advisors are critical to students' success, and they comprise an appropriate population to study due to their levels of autonomy and role ambiguity (Donnelly, 2004). In contrast to faculty advisors whose primary roles typically include teaching and/or research, we focus here on those whose primary role is "on academic advising activities that promote the academic success of students" (Self, 2008, p. 267).

Prior Research on Normative Structures

Prior research on normative structures includes housing and residence life professionals (Hirschy et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2016), admissions and recruitment officers (Hodum & James, 2010), institutional advancement officers (Caboni, 2010), presidents (Fleming, 2010), academic deans (Bray, 2010), faculty members (Braxton & Bayer, 1999; Braxton et al., 2011), and graduate teaching assistants (Helland, 2010). These studies revealed some differences among groups based on personal and professional characteristics. Where gender identity differences existed, women were more disapproving of norms violations than men were (Fleming, 2010; Helland, 2010; Hirschy et al., 2015; Hodum & James, 2010; Wilson et al., 2016). Analyses comparing White professionals to professionals of color revealed no significant differences (Fleming, 2010; Wilson et al., 2016). Some found that those with more years of experience had greater disdain for violations than those with fewer years of experience (Hirschy et al., 2015; Hodum & James, 2010; Wilson et al., 2016). Where there were differences based on institution type, those from private institutions sometimes expressed less objection to norms violations than those at public institutions (Fleming, 2010; Hirschy et al., 2015), although they also sometimes expressed more objection (Wilson et al., 2016). In one study, those with lower levels of education expressed greater disapproval of some

norms violations than those with more education (Wilson et al., 2016).

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

Norms emerge from observing the behavior of other professionals (Demsetz, 1967). When people engage in a pattern of behavior, those behaviors become typical or expected and thus normative (Opp, 1982). Some behaviors might evoke approval because of benefits derived from the behavior, whereas others may result in harm and elicit disapproval (Horne, 2001).

Behaviors that result in harm and elicit disapproval assume proscriptive normative properties. Proscribed behaviors elicit varying degrees of objection or moral outrage (Durkheim, 1912/1995). The severity of sanctions individuals regard as befitting proscribed behaviors indicates the degree of objection they experience. Inviolable norms are behaviors that require severe sanctions when crossed. Admonitory norms are inappropriate behaviors that necessitate less severe sanctions (Braxton & Bayer, 1999).

Two research questions framed the study:

- RQ1.** What are the inviolable norms for academic advising espoused by NACADA members?
- RQ2.** Does the level of objection expressed for such inviolable norms differ based on primary role advisors' personal characteristics (i.e., gender identity, race, education level, years of advising experience) and/or positional characteristics (i.e., supervisor of PRAs, institutional type)?

Methods

The Institutional Review Board of the first author's university approved this study. After review by the research committee, NACADA sponsored our survey.

Survey Instrument

We employed a quantitative research design using a 10-15-minute web-based survey, for which we created the Academic Advising Behaviors Inventory (AABI). In addition to demographic items, there were 81 items identifying potentially inappropriate behaviors in advising work. To inform item construction, we used professional literature including NACADA's 2005 *Statement*

of *Core Values*, the 2012 CAS professional standards and guidelines for academic advising programs, and the 2015 American College Personnel Association and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators professional competencies. In crafting the survey, we consulted with a total of nine entry-, mid-, and senior-level advising professionals and scholars, asking them to review the survey, provide feedback on the overall survey structure and item clarity, and give recommendations on missing or unnecessary items. Reviewers commented on the content, length, and wording of the survey. Based on their suggestions, we made edits to increase clarity, reorganized the items, and dropped one item.

Consistent with Durkheim's (1912/1995) contention that norms are best recognized when violated, we designed the AABI to identify only specific behaviors that respondents viewed as inappropriate; hence, the behaviors were worded in the negative. The scale registers a respondent's view of the how inappropriate each behavior is: 1 = Behavior is appropriate; 2 = Behavior is neither inappropriate nor appropriate; 3 = Behavior is mildly inappropriate, generally not confronted; 4 = Behavior is inappropriate, to be handled informally by an administrator suggesting change or improvement; 5 = Behavior is inappropriate, requires formal administrative intervention.

Data Collection

We invited NACADA members to participate in the study via email and sent two reminders over a three-week period during the summer of 2017. Of 11,458 messages that were distributed, 2,645 members started the survey. We analyzed 1,943 completed surveys for a 17% response rate. Just 3.4% of NACADA members and 2.4% ($n = 54$) of our original sample were faculty advisors. The relatively small proportion of faculty advisors who choose to join NACADA may differ from those who do not; therefore, we excluded them from analyses. Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the remaining 1,889 participants and their institutions. The table also includes demographic characteristics of the NACADA population.

Data Analysis

To estimate the effects of response bias, we conducted a mailing wave analysis (Leslie, 1972). Leslie (1972) found that non-respondents are most like late respondents. Therefore, we first

Table 1. Characteristics of sample ($n = 1,889$)

Variables	Sample Percent	NACADA Percent
<i>Gender Identity</i>		
Man	18.0	21.6
Trans*; Genderqueer; Gender Fluid	0.2	>0.1
Woman	78.5	77.1
Prefer not to answer	3.0	1.2
<i>Race</i>		
American Indian/ First Nations	0.3	0.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.5	3.3
Black or African American	6.8	11.6
Latino/a/Hispanic	3.8	6.7
Multi-racial	4.4	1.9
White	76.4	67.3
Not listed	0.3	1.9
Prefer not to answer	5.6	6.3
<i>Highest Educational Level Completed</i>		
Bachelor's degree or less	7.4	N/A
Some master's classes	7.4	
Master's degree	55.6	N/A
Some post-master's classes	17.4	
Doctoral or professional degree	12.1	N/A
<i>Years as an Academic Advising Professional</i>		
0-5 years	39.5	51.6
6-10 years	22.4	20.0
11-15 years	16.6	11.3
>15 years	16.7	12.7
<i>Years Worked in Postsecondary Education</i>		
0-5 years	20.8	N/A
6-10 years	23.8	N/A
11-15 years	20.5	N/A
>15 years	30.5	N/A
<i>Supervise Professional Staff</i>		
No	62.8	N/A
Yes	37.2	N/A
<i>Institutional Type</i>		
Public 4-year	63.3	60.8
Private 4-year	17.6	20.2
Public or private 2-year	14.1	16.3
Other	0.6	2.7
<i>Institution Location</i>		
United States	92.9	96.9
International	2.8	3.1

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding or missing data. N/A = data not available

conducted crosstabs on each of the four personal characteristics variables and the two positional characteristics with the first, second, and third waves of completed surveys. There were two statistically significant differences between Wave 1 and Wave 3 respondents: one personal characteristic (race, $X^2 [2, N = 1,889] = 9.905, p = < 0.01$) and one positional characteristic (supervisor of PRAs, $X^2 [2, N = 1,889] = 7.179, p = < 0.05$), indicating the sample may underrepresent PRAs of color and advising supervisors. We also conducted t -tests on the four norms, described below in the findings section, to compare the mean scores of those who responded in the first wave to those in the third wave. There was a small but statistically significant difference on one inviolable norm. Those in Wave 3 ($M = 4.26, SD = 0.52$) found the proscribed behaviors of *Neglectful Supervision* slightly more objectionable than those in the Wave 1 ($M = 4.19, SD = 0.54$); $t[1346] = -2.215, p = .027$).

To address the first research question, we analyzed data using descriptive and inferential statistics. Of the 81 behaviors, 31 had a mean between 4.07–4.93, 44 between 3.02–3.99, and six between 2.97–2.57. Consistent with other normative structures research (e.g., Hirschy et al., 2015), items with mean scores between 4.0 and 5.0 qualified as inviolable norms. Items with a mean between 3.00–3.99 qualified as admonitory norms; due to space limitations, we do not address them here. The remaining items did not qualify as norms.

We conducted principal components factor analysis (PCA) on the 31 inviolable norms using varimax rotation to determine the normative clustering of the behaviors. We then used the scree test to determine the number of factors we

designated as norms, and we explained the variance of the PCA model by grouping highly related behaviors. In determining factors, individual behavioral items for each factor had a loading of > 0.4 , the factors had an eigenvalue of > 1.0 , the scalar alpha reliability was > 0.6 , and the items in the factor had cognitive coherence (Bray, 2010). The application of these criteria resulted in four factors that constitute inviolable norms for PRAs. Together, these four factors encompassed 22 of the 31 items that qualified as inviolable norms. The remaining nine items were not used in subsequent analyses because they did not meet the four criteria for inclusion; they represent proscriptive behaviors.¹ We describe the norms in the findings section.

To address the second research question, we conducted four multiple linear regression analyses, one for each inviolable norm, to determine the influence of PRAs' four personal and two positional characteristics on the level of disdain they expressed for the normative structures. We set the level of statistical significance for these analyses at $p < 0.05$, and we computed variance inflation factors and tolerance values to determine the magnitude of collinearity. In all analyses, we excluded those who preferred not to answer the demographic items.

Personal characteristics. For gender identity, we compared women (coded as 0) and men (coded as 1), excluding other genders because those groups were too small for analysis (0.2%). Due to small groups of respondents, we aggregated PRAs of color (American Indian/First Nations, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black or African American, Latino/a or Hispanic, Multi-racial, and others as identified in the Not listed option; coded as 1) and compared them to White participants (coded as 0).

¹ Three of the four items with the highest means formed a factor, but the Cronbach's alpha for the factor was < 0.6 , so they did not meet the stated criteria for inclusion. These three items were: *An advisor discriminates against advisees based on their demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, social class)* (4.92); *An advisor has sexual relations with an advisee* (4.87); and *An advisor avoids interactions with advisees because of their demographic characteristics* (4.71). We dropped three additional items because they lacked cognitive coherency with the other items in the factor and three more items because they did not have factor loadings > 0.4 . These items were: *An advisor changes information on an advisee's transcript without authorization to do so* (4.93); *An advisor witnesses a colleague harassing an advisee and does not report it* (4.46); *An advisor teaching a course to advisees gives a higher grade to a student to avoid negative backlash from the student* (4.46); *Two advisors will not speak to each other, interfering with departmental effectiveness* (4.34); *An advisor provides inaccurate information on institutional policies* (4.17); and *An advisor writes a misleading recommendation for graduate school for an advisee* (4.14).

For education level, we compared three groups: bachelor's degree or less plus some master's classes, master's degree plus some post-master's classes, and doctoral or professional degree. For years in the advising profession, we compared four groups (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, >15).

Professional characteristics. We compared those who did not supervise PRAs (coded as 0) to those who did (coded as 1). Finally, we compared those working at four-year institutions (coded as 0) to those at two-year institutions (coded as 1).

Findings

We did find evidence of a normative structure for the role performance of PRAs. Additionally, there were some differences in PRAs' responses to violations of norms based on personal and positional characteristics.

Inviolable Norms

As previously stated, 22 of the 31 inviolable behaviors formed four factors (i.e., norms) that explained 38.85% of the variance of this model. When individuals engage in one or more proscribed behaviors that comprise a norm, they violate that norm. We describe the four inviolable norms below in descending order of the percent of variance explained by each factor. Table 2 displays the proscribed behaviors that comprise each of the norms, along with the Cronbach's alpha (α), factor loading value, composite mean, standard deviation, and percent of variance explained. To calculate the mean for each norm, we summed the mean for each of the proscribed behaviors and divided that sum by the number of behaviors comprising the norm. The descriptions below are based on the proscribed behaviors that comprise each norm.

Policy Violation. Transgressors of the normative pattern *Policy Violation* neglect institutional regulations. Proscribed behaviors of this norm include handling a campus policy violation without referring the incident to conduct officers as required and violating a campus policy to assist an advisee. Noncompliance with policies and procedures may give unfair advantages to some students over others, damage institutional integrity, and harm the reputation and effectiveness of the advising operation.

Disrespectful Interactions. The items comprising *Disrespectful Interactions* display a lack of civility toward others. Complaining publicly about

colleagues and students or blaming others for one's own mistakes, for example, may harm relationships, damage morale, and dissuade students from seeking assistance.

Neglectful Supervision. *Neglectful Supervision* addresses problematic actions by supervisors. Examples of the prohibited behaviors of this norm include an advising supervisor not treating all advising professionals equitably and permitting inexperienced PRAs to advise without adequate training. Violations of these proscribed behaviors can cause personal and professional harm to supervisees.

Confidentiality Breach. The objectionable behaviors of *Confidentiality Breach* reflect an advising professional's disregard for the protection of students' privacy. Examples of proscribed behaviors include discussing an advisee's academic progress with the student's parents without the student's consent and disclosing confidential student information to another person who has no specific need to know. Violations of this norm can damage trust between PRAs, advisees, and the advising unit as well as harm students' academic reputations.

Influence of Personal and Professional Characteristics on Inviolable Norms

Regression analyses revealed the influence of the PRAs' personal characteristics (i.e., gender identity, race, level of education, and years in the advising profession) and positional characteristics (i.e., supervisor of PRAs and institutional type) on the level of objection they expressed for the four inviolable norms. Variance inflation factors ranged from 1.001–1.036 and tolerance values from 0.965–0.999, all within acceptable parameters, indicating the predictor variables were not highly correlated. Table 3 displays the regression results.

Personal Characteristics

Gender identity and race exerted a statistically significant influence on the *Neglectful Supervision* norm. Women voiced stronger objections than did men ($\beta = -.079$, $p < .001$). Tukey post hoc tests showed a significant difference ($p < .05$) on this norm between Trans* PRAs ($\bar{x} = 4.56$, $n = 4$) and men ($\bar{x} = 4.14$, $n = 335$) and women ($\bar{x} = 4.25$, $n = 1476$). PRAs of color showed slightly more disdain toward *Neglectful Supervision* than White PRAs ($\beta = .053$, $p < .05$). Tukey post hoc

Table 2. Principal components factor analysis for inviolable norms of academic advising

Factors	Factor Loading
<i>Policy Violation</i> ($\alpha = 0.824$; <i>Mean</i> = 4.42, <i>SD</i> = 0.45, Variance Explained = 11.67%)	
An advisor violates a campus policy to assist an advisee.	0.640
An advisor adds a favorite student to a closed course without proper approvals.	0.624
An advisor backdates a drop form to avoid additional fees for a favorite student.	0.623
An advisor handles a campus policy violation without referring the incident to conduct officers as required.	0.619
An advisor makes an exception to the rules for a friend's child.	0.596
An advisor ignores a likely instance of cheating because they do not want the hassle of a hearing.	0.511
Advisors do not enforce policies with which they disagree.	0.496
An advisor promises a prospective student that courses will transfer without the authority to do so.	0.473
<i>Disrespectful Interactions</i> ($\alpha = 0.701$; <i>Mean</i> = 4.24, <i>SD</i> = 0.40, Variance Explained = 9.49%)	
An advisor badmouths an instructor to an advisee.	0.606
An advisor makes disparaging remarks to advisees about an academic major or department.	0.573
An advisor is disrespectful to an advisee.	0.560
An advisor complains on Facebook about advisees.	0.556
An advisor is routinely late for student appointments.	0.505
An advisor makes a mistake in advising a student and blames an administrative assistant.	0.440
<i>Neglectful Supervision</i> ($\alpha = 0.658$; <i>Mean</i> = 4.22, <i>SD</i> = 0.53, Variance Explained = 9.28%)	
An advising supervisor permits new staff to advise without adequate training.	0.682
An advising supervisor does not treat all advising professionals equitably.	0.663
An advising supervisor does not provide a space for private advising meetings with advisees.	0.660
An advising supervisor does not actively recruit a diverse pool to fill an advising vacancy.	0.568
<i>Confidentiality Breach</i> ($\alpha = 0.719$; <i>Mean</i> = 4.53, <i>SD</i> = 0.44, Variance Explained = 8.41%)	
An advisor discloses confidential information about a student to another person who has no specific need to know.	0.686
An advisor discusses an advisee's academic progress with the student's parents without the student's consent.	0.608
An advisor is careless with confidential student records.	0.545
An advisor leaves confidential student records unsecured.	0.540

Note. Percent of variance explained includes three items excluded from factors

tests also showed significant differences between Asian/Pacific Islander PRAs ($\bar{x} = 4.00$, $n = 47$) and Black or African American ($\bar{x} = 4.39$, $n = 126$, $p < .001$), Latino/a or Hispanic ($\bar{x} = 4.33$, $n = 71$, $p < .05$), and multi-racial PRAs ($\bar{x} = 4.30$, $n = 81$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, Tukey post hoc tests showed significant differences between White ($\bar{x} = 4.20$, $n = 1429$, $p < .01$) and Black or African American PRAs. The means on the four norms were not significantly different for those who preferred not to answer the gender identity and race questions as opposed to those who did. There were no other statistically significant differences based on personal characteristics.

Positional Characteristics

Supervisors of PRAs declared somewhat more disdain than PRAs who did not supervise others for the norms of *Policy Violation* ($\beta = 0.108$, $p < 0.001$), *Disrespectful Interactions* ($\beta = 0.156$, $p < 0.001$), and *Confidentiality Breach* ($\beta = 0.070$, $p < 0.01$). Additional analyses indicated that White women and men who were supervisors held more disdain for the proscribed behaviors than White women and men who were not supervisors. Conversely, PRAs of color who were not supervisors considered these norms violations as more serious than supervisors of color. There were no significant differences on the norms regarding institutional type. Although our regression analyses identified statistically significant sources of

Table 3. Linear regression analyses of inviolable norms

	Policy Violation		Disrespectful Interactions		Confidentiality Breach		Neglectful Supervision	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Personal Characteristics								
Gender	-.040	-.036	-.016	-.016	-.047	-.042	-.106	-.079***
Race	-.004	-.003	.000	.000	.040	.037	.069	.053*
Education Level	-.013	-.028	-.004	-.011	-.009	-.020	.007	.013
Advising Experience	-.009	-.026	.012	.041	-.001	-.003	-.006	-.016
Positional Characteristics								
Professional Staff Supervision	.100	.108***	.128	.156***	.063	.070**	.041	.038
Institutional Type	.000	.000	-.025	-.023	-.004	-.004	.064	.043
<i>F</i>	3.772		7.652		2.213		3.554	
<i>R</i> ²	.013		.026		.008		.012	

Note. B = Unstandardized regression coefficient. β = Standardized regression coefficient. Gender Identity: Woman = 0, Man = 1. Race: White = 0, All Other Races = 1. Supervise Professional Staff: No = 0, Yes = 1. Institutional Type: Four-year Institution = 0, Two-year Institution = 1.

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

influence on the espousal of the four inviolable norms of PRAs, the amount of variance explained by them range from a low of 0.008 to a high of 0.026; much of the variability remains unexplained.

Limitations

The study had several limitations. First, our use of electronic survey distribution hampered access to many potential participants. In each mailing, 1%–3% of invitations bounced back due to outdated email addresses or full inboxes. In the final mailing, just 18% of messages were opened and 6% clicked to link to the survey. Some institutional servers tagged the email invitation as spam and diverted the message to junk mail. Additionally, the survey was lengthy, and the negative wording of behavioral items deterred some participants, meaning that many started but did not complete the survey. However, our mailing wave analysis mitigates concerns of response bias.

Second, a different approach to the negative wording of the behavioral items for the identification of norms may have resulted in a different set of norms. Rather than norms that proscribe behaviors, a different approach might result in norms that prescribe behaviors, potentially leading to different response levels or different responses altogether.

Third, using dummy variables excluded some participants from select analyses. Our analyses by gender identity excluded a small number of participants who did not identify as a man or woman, and combining all PRAs of color to

account for small group sizes may have masked differences by individual race of respondents. Post hoc analyses provided information on these differences.

Fourth, the list of behaviors comprising the AABI is extensive but not exhaustive. Therefore, nine proscriptive behaviors meeting the inviolable threshold (> 4.0 mean) did not load onto factors or failed to meet criteria for inclusion. This is likely because there were not enough items describing similar behaviors for logical groupings.

Discussion

The empirically-derived norms for PRAs provide moral boundaries to protect the welfare of advising constituents. We drew the behavioral items in part from NACADA's 2005 *Statement of Core Values* and the 2012 CAS professional standards and guidelines for academic advising; therefore, these findings reinforced those values and standards. After the survey was administered, NACADA (2017) again revised its core values. They identified those values as caring, commitment, empowerment, inclusivity, integrity, professionalism, and respect. Engaging in behaviors that comprise the norms addressed in this survey also violate these revised core values. For example, engaging in disrespectful interactions violates the core values of caring and respect. Violating policies is contrary to the values of professionalism and integrity. The survey norms also support aspects of the NACADA (2017) Academic Advising Core Competencies Model. For example, the

expectation to know legal guidelines of advising practices, including privacy regulations and confidentiality, aligns with the *Confidentiality Breach* norm.

Regarding differences in norm espousal by personal and positional characteristics, only the *Neglectful Supervision* norm revealed significant gender identity differences. Consistent with other research, women expressed stronger disapproval than did men (Fleming, 2010; Helland, 2010; Hirschy et al., 2015; Hodum & James, 2010; Wilson et al., 2016). PRAs of color also expressed greater objection to the behaviors comprising *Neglectful Supervision*. The campus racial climate at many predominantly White institutions leaves many racial/ethnic minority students and staff members feeling excluded and marginalized (Harper & Hurtado, 2007), and some items in *Neglectful Supervision* address related issues of equity and inclusion. It is plausible that women and PRAs of color have experienced more harm from past violations of this norm and thus express greater objection to behaviors such as inequitable treatment and failure to recruit diverse pools to fill position vacancies. More research is needed to understand the differences by race and gender identity of supervisors and non-supervisors. Other research on normative structures that has included analyses by race has not revealed significant differences (Fleming, 2010; Wilson et al., 2016). Although prior research has revealed differences based on education level and experience (Hirschy et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2016), this study did not.

Regarding positional characteristics, supervisors of PRAs voiced stronger objections than did non-supervisors on three of the four inviolable norms: *Policy Violation*, *Disrespectful Interactions*, and *Confidentiality Breach*. In their roles, supervisors may see the most direct effects of these violations and be the first to deal with offenders. Given the significant differences on these norms between supervisors and non-supervisors and the contrasting findings by race, clear expectations regarding professional behaviors may assuage performance concerns. There were no differences by institutional type.

Although there were some statistically significant differences across personal and positional characteristics, all subgroups expressed strong objection to the behaviors comprising the norms. The relative absence of influence of PRAs' personal and professional characteristics on their level of disdain for behaviors of the inviolable norms suggests broad agreement across groups.

Implications for Practice

Organizational socialization processes promote the internalization of the role behaviors, norms, and values that a specific organization wants newcomers to learn (Tierney, 1997). However, newcomers also affect the organizations they join. Tierney (1997) stressed the importance of making norms more explicit, especially as people depart and join organizations, changing the organization's culture in these transitions. Professional development and orientation programs for advising faculty and staff members are two avenues for promoting organizational socialization, both of which could include discussion of this normative structure for academic advising. The inviolable normative patterns and proscribed behaviors identified in this study could provide the foundation for such sessions.

Because norms and behaviors are never perfectly correlated (Begley & Johnson, 2001; Merton, 1976), some misconduct will likely occur. Even though participants in this study indicated that 31 behaviors on the survey were inappropriate and required formal administrative intervention, it seems likely that many have witnessed and/or engaged in some of the proscribed behaviors. We noted earlier Donnelly's (2004) and Lewis' (1990) finding that belief in the relevance of NACADA core values and CAS standards did not lead to their active use in practice. This supports a call to enact mechanisms of social control such as practices to detect, deter, and sanction acts of wrongdoing (Zuckerman, 1988). We recommend that organizational socialization processes promote detection and deterrence of violations of the inviolable norms of academic advising discerned by this research. Academic advising units at individual colleges and universities should develop conduct codes. The four inviolable norms identified in this study provide a basis for the tenets of a code. These codes provide a public statement of ethical principles or standards of conduct that assure the lay public that the institution safeguards the welfare of its constituents (Bray et al., 2012).

Advising leaders should also discuss conflicts between personal, professional, and organizational values (Begley & Johnson, 2001) and how best to resolve them. Values conflicts within and across PRAs may lead to varying levels of commitment to avoiding the behaviors comprising the norms. Furthermore, institutional leaders should have or create a reporting mechanism for those harmed by violations and others who know about detected misconduct. They must then follow clear protocols to investigate and respond to those reports. These

protocols should address the processing of allegations, recommend courses of action for responding to them, and develop procedures to assure the confidentiality of both the accuser and the accused as appropriate. Several high-profile campus incidents illuminate the harm inflicted when institutional leaders fail to protect campus and community members from the actions of predators, bullies, and others who inflict damage, even to a lesser degree. When determining the severity of the sanctions for a specific incident, institutional leaders should consider the frequency of the norm violation by the offending PRA as well as the degree of harm suffered by the constituent (Braxton et al., 2011). Throughout the organization, leaders must set clear expectations for protecting constituents' welfare.

Professional socialization in graduate programs promotes the acquisition of the attitudes, values, norms, knowledge, and skills needed for professional role performance (Liddell et al., 2014). In this study, 85.1% of survey respondents had at least a master's degree and another 7.4% had taken graduate courses. However, their graduate programs are unknown. Regression analyses revealed no significant differences by education level or years of advising experience. It is likely that both education and experience contribute to the development of norms to protect the welfare of those served in professional roles. These norms for academic advising, combined with those derived for housing and residence life professionals (Hirschy et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2016), admission and recruitment officers (Hodum & James, 2010), and others, provide a rich foundation for discussion of professional expectations in graduate preparation programs. For example, these normative structures rebuke breaches of confidentiality, dishonesty and misrepresentation, and disrespectful treatment, therefore lending empirical support for the importance of upholding these norms to protect the constituents' welfare. Some but certainly not all PRAs have graduate degrees in higher education and student affairs (HESA) programs. In HESA and related programs, practicum, internship, and other relevant courses should include discussion of professional decisions that ensure the wellbeing of constituents within various functional areas to promote the internationalization of the inviolable norms.

Recommendations for Future Research

We offer recommendations for future research. First, we did not focus on the extent to which PRAs

avoid the proscribed behaviors that comprise the norms we identified, and it would be difficult for many to admit doing so. A qualitative study to learn more about the reasons for differences in norm espousal based on personal and professional characteristics and how PRAs are socialized to the norms of their institution and profession could yield valuable insights for improving practice. Furthermore, it could help uncover gaps between values and actions as well as PRAs' reasons for decisions, all of which is vital information missing from this and other studies.

Second, it is important to study faculty advisors, PRAs who are not NACADA members, and those who function primarily in online settings to determine whether their views align with these findings. Examining the views of advisors based on their varied educational backgrounds may also be fruitful. Researchers should make every effort to recruit diverse participant pools that represent the profession. More diverse samples may provide greater insight into differences by race and gender identity.

Conclusions

The inviolable norms of *Policy Violation*, *Disrespectful Interactions*, *Confidentiality Breach*, and *Neglectful Supervision* had broad support across personal and professional characteristics; PRA characteristics explained less than 3% of the variability in the level of objection expressed for the proscribed behaviors comprising these norms. Further, PRAs' opposition to changing a transcript without proper authorization (4.93), discriminating against advisees (4.92), and having sexual relations with an advisee (4.87) was especially strong.

The four inviolable norms identified in this study provide boundaries for PRAs. Coupled with NACADA's (2017) core values, leaders in the advising profession, advising supervisors, and PRAs can foster internalization of these norms. These parameters provide guidance to PRAs in making decisions that protect the welfare of their various constituents. This study adds PRAs to the group of critical positions in higher education that possess necessary normative structures.

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