

valued. In terms of informational skills, students remarked on the organization and preparation of peers for their interviews. The fact that they knew academic requirements and School policies was impressive to students who found the catalog confusing. Students left interviews feeling relieved because their questions were answered through discussions with peers. Summary comments revealed that students saw the peer advisors as knowledgeable and helpful resources. These positive reactions to this service combined with its immediacy indicates that an organized peer advising program can be beneficial for both students and faculty.

With the rush of a large number of students to Schools of Business and relatively new faculty, academic advising services can suffer. Particularly in an undergraduate program where students want a personal atmosphere and need guidance in a variety of areas from course selection to career possibilities. A peer advisor can be a helpful first stop for students seeking assistance in matters pertaining to academic affairs or personal concerns.

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When the academic advisor and the advisee find the advising experience negative, it is sometimes due to circumstances beyond the control of the involved parties. Some reasons why academic advising conferences yield poor results include: lack of planning and organization on the part of the advisor, advisee or both; lack of or poor communication; goals which are unclear or unknown; information which is unclear, irrelevant or untrue; and, the academic advisor's lack of a sincere interest in assisting the student. Also, according to Gordon, most advisors lack any kind of formal training to improve their advising skills.¹

One of the most common situations which hinders good academic advising is when the faculty or professional academic advisors discover that their advising duties have a second or third priority. A first priority is lacking when faculty do not view academic advising as part of their teaching responsibility. Many institutions of higher education list three areas by which faculty are to be evaluated: teaching, research and service. If academic advising is not included in one of the three areas, faculty advisors are not likely to award a high priority to the task, and academic advising of students is then seen as a hinderance to their main interests of teaching and research. Some faculty members view academic advising as a listing of courses in which students are to register; they believe the institutional catalog serves to meet this particular student need.

On some campuses there are too many students to advise on an individual basis and faculty realize that it is impossible to do an adequate job. In such situations, advising models must

Preserving Faculty Time for Analytical Advising in a High Student-to-Faculty Ratio

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INTRODUCTION

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When the academic advisor and the advisee find the advising experience negative, it is sometimes due to circumstances beyond the control of the involved parties. Some reasons why academic advising conferences yield poor results include: lack of planning and organization on the part of the advisor, advisee or both; lack of or poor communication; goals which are unclear or unknown; information which is unclear, irrelevant or untrue; and, the academic advisor's lack of a sincere interest in assisting the student. Also, according to Gordon, most advisors lack any kind of formal training to improve their advising skills.¹

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On some campuses there are too many students to advise on an individual basis and faculty realize that it is impossible to do an adequate job. In such situations, advising models must

¹ Virginia Gordon, "Training Future Academic Advisors: One Model of A Pre-Service Approach," *NACADA Journal* 2:2 (November 1982): 35-40.

be developed allowing faculty to advise students via a process different than the one-on-one model, while still insuring quality academic advising.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since academic advising is central to the success of any academic institution, it is essential that students, faculty and administrators become aware of and familiar with academic advising models. An academic advising model should accomplish three main purposes. First, it should provide greater information and opportunity to learn about how class selection and extracurricular activities relate to long-range personal and professional student growth. Second, the model should provide sufficient data concerning academic advisees and give faculty members released time or other appropriate rewards for implementing academic advising as a form of teaching.¹ Third, the model should increase institutional efficiency. Improvements in pre-registration and registration processes, reduction in student petitions to administrative committees, and a higher rate of retention can be attained through using a well-chosen model of academic advising.

One must be aware that a model of academic advising cannot usually be accepted without modification. A review of the literature on academic advising reveals that there are conflicts about the definition of academic advising, the forms academic advising should take, and how to clarify roles of various personnel in academic advising. These must be resolved before a particular model can be considered for a given institution. As Spencer, Peterson and Kramer point out, institutional characteristics vary widely.² Each college and university has a specific mission statement unique to that institution. An institution's size and its financial support affect how academic advising is administered on the individual campus. However, McLaughlin and Starr have indicated that there are two unifying themes at all academic institutions with respect to academic advising: "... faculty are the core of effective academic advising, and advising is an important element to student success and satisfaction in college."³

Recognizing that there are qualifiers upon all models of academic advising, Shane has identified four basic types of academic advising activity: informational, explanatory, analytic and therapeutic.⁴ These types can be seen as a continuum. At one end would be informational academic advising, a process of providing rudimentary data concerning such topics as course requirements and dates of registration. Next would be explanatory academic advising, a process of clarifying such topics as course requirements by explaining which classes can be counted for general graduation requirements, as one example. Analytic academic advising follows; it involves a discussion by the faculty member and the advisee of personal goals and how to reach those goals through appropriate course selection. This type of academic advising is not clerical, as are the first two types of academic advising. The final type, therapeutic academic advising, is at the far end of the continuum and is more complex than the others. It is the most psychologically-oriented of the four types and it is an area best left to profes-

Robert W. Spencer, Erlend D. Peterson, and Gary L. Kramer. Utilizing College Advising Centers to Facilitate and Revitalize Academic Advising. *NACADA Journal* 2:1 (March 1982): 13-23.

² Spencer, et. al.

³ Bonnie M. McLaughlin and Emily A. Starr. Academic Advising Literature since 1965: A College Student Personnel Abstracts Review. *NACADA Journal* 2:2 (November 1982): 14-23.

Donea Shane. Academic Advising in Higher Education: A Developmental Approach for College Students of All Ages. *NACADA Journal* 1:2 (September 1982): 12-23.

sionals who have the training and experience to deal with learning problems and other personal issues that cloud academic achievement.

Depending upon the interaction with a student, an academic advisor engages in these different types of academic advising at different times with the same student. This mix of types of academic advising is a reflection of the student's needs, and also a consequence of the academic advisor's competencies as a faculty member, professional academic counselor, a staff office worker, or a peer advisor. It is important for anyone who engages in academic advising to be aware of these different levels of interaction. Furthermore, one must heed Hallberg's reminder about having the appropriate person completing the specific task with a student.⁵ Faculty should not be working as clerks and vice versa.

The proper division of labor is at the heart of various academic advising delivery systems, and Gordon has identified seven basic models:

- 1) faculty advising;
- 2) computer-assisted;
- 3) group;
- 4) self-advising;
- 5) peer;
- 6) paraprofessional; and
- 7) advising center.⁶

Each model has inherent advantages and disadvantages. To evaluate these requires agreement on terminology, e.g., "para-professional," and clarification of what tasks are performed by personnel in each model of the delivery systems. Many overlapping tasks are being performed, especially when the concept of an advising center is implemented on a campus, and each delivery system must be considered in terms of who is to be served. Newhouse and McNamara cited the special needs of transfer students and Hickerson has pointed out that honor students also have particular needs.^{7,8}

Meeting such student needs is the central issue when evaluating academic advising delivery systems. Graff, Danish and Austin examined individual, group, and programmed self-instruction as forms of advising in vocational education and discovered that programmed self-instruction has distinct advantages over the other two approaches.¹⁰ However, they stated the following:

We need to identify the type of client who can maximally benefit from automated procedures. In other words, who best learns from an automated structured situation, or who needs a warm informal relationship, at least a personal contact, in which to explore his vocational decisions.¹¹

⁵ Edmond C. Hallberg. Realism in Academic Advising. *The Journal of College Student Personnel* 6:2 (December 1964): 114-117.

⁶ Gordon, pp. 35-40.

⁷ Janice Slack Newhouse and Alexander McNamara. The Transfer Student: A Dual Approach. *NACADA Journal* 2:1 (March 1982): 24-29.

⁸ Jerry H. Hickerson. A Model for Advising in an Individualized Undergraduate College. *NACADA Journal* 2:2 (November 1982): 90-96.

¹⁰ Robert W. Graff, Steven Danish, and Brian Austin. Reactions to Three Kinds of Vocational Educational Counseling. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 19:3 (May 1972): 224-228.

¹¹ Graff, et. al.

Underlying most of the models of academic advising is the premise that it is a one-to-one process, but as early as 1972 O'Banion, Fordyce, and Goodwin pointed out the interest in increasing the amount of group activity, but not at the expense of undermining individual programming.¹²

Group academic advising has become increasingly attractive. As Shane summarizes, informational and explanatory types of academic advising are simple clerical tasks that can be handled with little effort.¹³ It would thus be a more effective use of an institution's resources to have non-academic staff perform those types of tasks, a point underscored by Spencer, Peterson and Kraemer.¹⁴ Since analytic academic advising and therapeutic academic advising are not suited to a group setting, an effective model must be developed that uses a variety of formats.

After examining the different models of academic advising, on many campuses, one of the best ways to develop the group-advising model would be to work through an advising center. Polson and Jurich have made a strong case for an advising center being a clearing-house that is central to student development.¹⁵ As a multi-purpose center, clerical functions become streamlined, wage resources become maximized, and students become more satisfied through more comprehensive assistance. Having reviewed the literature, it is appropriate to attempt to place the above materials into some type of frame of reference. One way to do this is to consider the systems of delivering academic advising, student needs, and institutional resources as interconnected. An ideal model of academic advising may be arranged in six stages, where the student moves from a large group informational academic advising to a referral for individualized therapeutic counseling. Stage one is entry-level group academic advising. This is the most informational and explanatory type of academic advising. A large number of students can be assisted in a group where they are presented data concerning general graduation requirements, testing procedures, and related basic information. In the second stage, students move from the general group to a divisional or collegiate group. Here, they are introduced to specific issues, e.g., which level of foreign language is necessary to graduate from the College of Arts and Sciences. The third stage, in which the student moves into a department as a major, presents an opportunity for faculty to meet with all of the departmental majors to clarify procedures. Within a department there will be students who share similar academic problems, e.g., petitioning for acceptance into a specific class. At the fourth level, students can be assisted in a small group setting. The fifth level is where analytic academic advisement takes place, and the faculty adviser assists the advisee on a one-to-one basis. Finally, at stage six, the academic adviser touches upon therapeutic academic advising, if necessary, and refers the advisee to a professional counselor.

Such an idealized program described above has merit, but it is also potentially awkward for some groups and/or institutions. Undeclared majors might be better helped by following the model set forth by Beatty, Davis, and White, because no provision has been made in the

above scheme for such a special category of students.¹⁶ Also, the institutional setting may be particularly demanding when a program with a complex set of requirements, e.g., certification procedures or licensing activities, require careful attention to legal ramifications. If the department has a small faculty and a large number of students, such a condition would promote a strong interest in providing group advising.

The task, then, for each department is to inventory its resources, consider the various delivery systems available as discussed above and create a structure which seems most apt to meet the advising needs of its students. The final form of this structure will vary with the resources available, degree of pressure to create a specific advising structure and the need for efficient use of faculty time. Assuming that faculty members' efforts are best utilized for analytic purposes, it will serve the department well to try to meet the informational and explanatory needs of students through some of the other delivery systems. This is especially true in departments which have a high student-faculty ratio. Without a plan, faculty can become saturated with student advising, which leads to frustration, neglect of other professional duties, and escape or avoidance strategies.

One illustration of how a high student-faculty ratio department structures its resources for advising efficiency is that of the Department of Aviation at the University of North Dakota, a nationally recognized program in the Aerospace Science field which has over 650 majors and only 6.5 full-time faculty positions.

Example: A Complex Academic Advising Situation

In addition to a high student-faculty ratio of over one hundred to one, the very nature of the program creates several unique student advising needs that increase the demands on the advisors beyond those normally associated with academic advising.

Factors creating these needs are:

1. Strong Career Orientation of Students

Aviation students are very career-oriented and want to know potential employment possibilities, job qualifications, salaries and advancement possibilities. Considerable time is spent in discussing these concerns because the Aviation Department offers six four-year programs leading to a bachelor degree and two two-year associate in arts programs, and the exploration of the numerous career and degree possibilities becomes a formidable counseling task.

2. Flight Related Complications

All but one two-year degree program require at least one flight rating for graduation and most contain requirements that involve flight training for a number of semesters. A steady stream of questions related to scheduling, flight ratings necessary for various programs, transfer of ratings from other schools and credit for ratings obtained outside of academic institutions, require accurate counseling since the cost of obtaining such ratings is a major factor.

¹² Terry O'Banion, Joseph Fordyce, and Gregory Goodwin, Academic Advising in the Two-Year College: A National Survey, *Journal of College Personnel* 13:5 (September 1972): 411-419.

¹³ Shane.

¹⁴ Spencer, et. al.

¹⁵ Cheryl Jean Polson and Anthony P. Jurich, The Departmental Academic Advising Center: An Alternative to Faculty Advising, *Journal of College Student Personnel* 20:3 (May 1979): 249-253.

¹⁶ J.D. Beatty, Beverly B. Davis and H.J. White, Open Option Advising at Iowa State University: An Integrated Advising and Career Planning Model, *NACADA Journal* 3:1 (March 1983): 39-48.

3. Critical Financial Concerns

Nearly all students seek information concerning flight-costs and availability of loans and scholarships. To complicate matters, the University of North Dakota requires that each student and the student's parents sign and complete a financial statement of agreement regarding anticipated flight costs.

4. Strong Parental Involvement

Because of the additional high cost of flight training, aviation students' parents are perhaps more active than most parents of other college students in seeking information related to costs and careers. This is especially true in the initial exploration phase when many families will travel great distances to examine the program. Others seek information by telephone and by mail.

5. Large Number of Shoppers

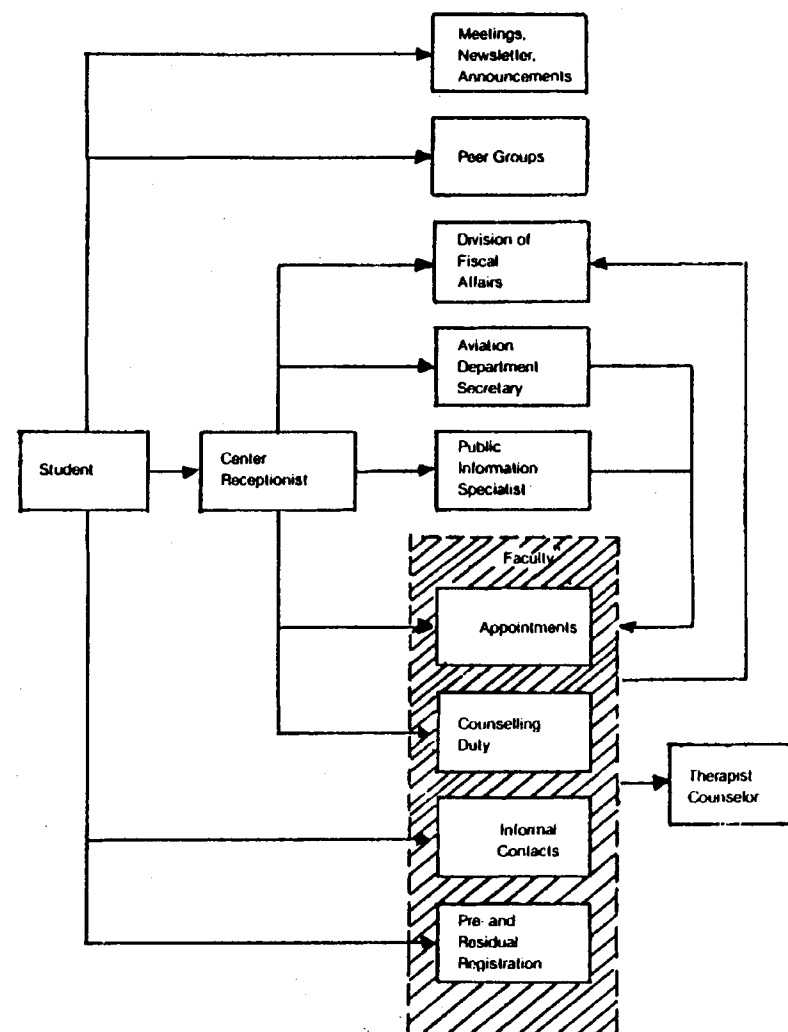
When the Aviation Department grows in national prominence, the number of persons seeking initial information increases. Numerous letters, telephone calls and personal visits require time to adequately convey what the department has to offer. This is especially true of students with complex transfer problems.

The primary question becomes one of matching the numerous counseling and advising needs of students with the resources available. Phrases such as time management, counseling efficiency and work priorities become important in the search for a workable plan.

The Strategy

Following is a description of a model, (Figure 1) which has been implemented by the Aviation Department and takes into account the use of numerous resources and how each is used in the department's effort to meet advising needs of students.

FIGURE 1. AVIATION DEPARTMENT ACADEMIC ADVISING STRUCTURE



FACULTY

Appointments

In an effort to make appointment time efficient, a receptionist screens requests for appointments which are analytic in nature. These are limited to visiting students and parents seeking initial information; students who seek help in a particular class being taught by that faculty member; students with career or program concerns; and, those with personal problems seeking help.

Duty Faculty

In order to accommodate parents and students who require little time, but need information immediately, a schedule has been devised so that during the day, one faculty member is on duty to assist with academic advising and counseling needs. It is the receptionist's responsibility to screen student requests and determine whether to send the student to the duty faculty, make an appointment, or help the student obtain needed information through some other source. The duty faculty also receives all general-information telephone calls.

Early Registration Period

Regular students register for the following semester during a two-week period at the end of the current semester. Since each student needs a faculty academic adviser's signature on the registration form in order to complete registration, over 650 forms must be reviewed and signed. Many students need considerable advising. To accomplish this feat, the department establishes an easily accessible registration area adjacent to the Aviation Department, with tables, chairs, forms, catalogs, etc. Although faculty are asked to be present, at least one, and often two, are on duty at all times. During the early registration period, students are directed to this area for group advising, unless the student has advising needs other than those pertaining to early registration. This group session is perhaps the most concentrated advising that occurs in the program. It is necessary since many courses are closed, students are confused and panicky, and there is such a short time for students to complete early registration.

Informal Advising

Faculty members in the Aviation Department have a great deal of personal contact with students through flight lessons, organizational meetings, and informal encounters. Much information pertaining to academic advising is dispensed in this way and students are encouraged to talk to faculty whenever they can.

Cross Counseling

An important decision made by the Department was, if a faculty member is in charge of one or more degree programs and that person is technically assigned as advisor to all students in the program, that faculty member is able to advise other students regarding all aviation programs. Only when a problem is encountered that needs "expert" advising is a student sent to his or her formal advisor.

*STAFF**Receptionist and Secretaries*

These people are in a position of initial contact with students, and a great deal of information can be distributed by them, for example, how to fill out forms; where to go for advice on finances; and, dates for registration. They also determine students' advising needs and direct them to the appropriate source.

Division of Fiscal Affairs

Requests for financial aid information, student loans, scholarships and financial statements of agreement are referred to the Division of Fiscal Affairs in the Center for Aerospace Sciences. This arrangement removes that responsibility from the academic advisor.

Public Information Specialist

The Center for Aerospace Sciences created a position for public information specialist. Part of this person's responsibilities is to meet with parents and students who are visiting the University of North Dakota, to determine if it is a suitable college to meet their needs. An initial presentation is made, discussions are held, tours are given, and specific questions and needs are referred to the appropriate faculty. For more effective use of time, these visitors are assisted in groups, and since many will have travelled great distances, they are given more than a 15 minute session.

Aviation Students

Currently enrolled students majoring in aviation are often used to conduct tours of the airport. Students in the Aviation Department are a homogenous group; they are together in flight programs, classroom encounters, clubs, and general friendships, where much information regarding all aspects of programs, flight courses and financial aids is exchanged. Sometimes this presents problems, because not all information is accurate.

Other Avenues

An attempt has been made to communicate information through other than personal avenues, such as a monthly seminar, a monthly student newsletter, classroom announcements, bulletin boards and posters.

Assessment of the Plan

The strategy is apparently successful since the Aviation Department continues to thrive. Students register, attend class, complete flight ratings, graduate and praise the program. Informal assessments of student feelings about the availability of information, accessibility of faculty, and adequacy of academic advising and counseling reveal that students are satisfied.

Faculty-student relationships are very positive, derived from a shared interest in aviation and the comradeship that has always been present in the aviation profession.

The greatest advantage of the strategy is the efficient use of faculty time. Time spent with students is limited to those areas of concern that can best utilize faculty expertise, while elemental tasks are handled by staff or through other methods.

There are some obvious problems. The system of having a receptionist make an appointment creates a formal situation which may place a barrier between faculty and students and perhaps even discourage many students from seeking help, especially if the student needs to wait for an appointment. Also, some students seem apologetic for infringing on faculty time.

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With specialization comes a fair amount of "buck-passing" as students are sometimes referred to others in the Center who are specialists in a given degree or major.

Since each faculty member is likely to see any of the more than 650 student aviation majors for academic advising, names are difficult to remember and every session presents the situation of trying to determine where the students is in the program and what the student is seeking.

The informal methods of communication are rather slow and unreliable; not all students read the newsletter and bulletin boards, and there is always the danger of misinterpretation or not understanding the information. In addition, students as a source of information are sometimes rather inaccurate, as rumors spread rapidly and students may get sidetracked with incorrect information. This results in an occasional academic entanglement which requires time and effort to rectify.

Future Modifications

In addition to the process of continued refinement, two major changes seem likely in the future. These are expected to include: 1) *Use of a CRT*. It is planned that in the very near future, faculty members will have CRTs in their offices with direct access to any information on the computer which will include student academic records, closed courses, changes in registration procedures, academic regulations, etc. 2) *A full-time Coordinator*. Some discussion has taken place concerning the possibility of hiring a full-time staff member who would serve as a coordinator for the entire academic advising process.

FOCUS AND SUMMARY

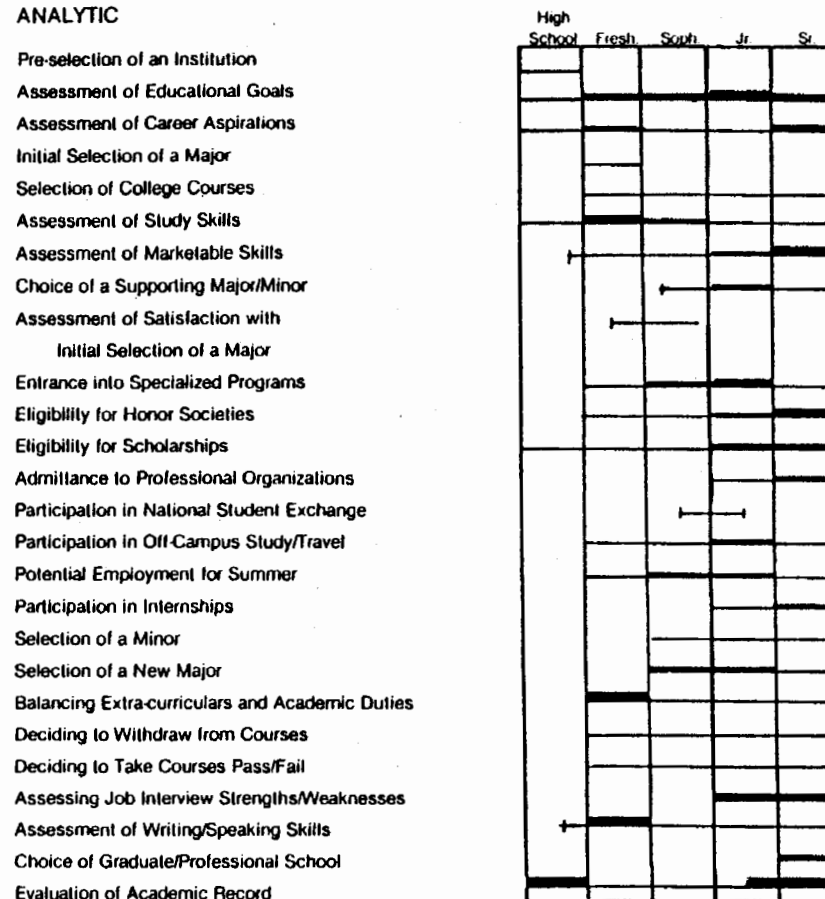
North Dakota's success in handling large numbers of advisees using limited resources can be attributed to the concept of "preserving faculty expertise" as academic advisors. Remembering that Shane has outlined four major types of academic advising, e.e., informational, explanatory, analytic, and therapeutic, the faculty academic advisors from the Aviation Department at the University of North Dakota have concentrated their efforts upon the use of analytic forms to assist students."

This use of the "gatekeeper" approach, i.e., having a departmental secretary channel students to the appropriate person after initial screening has proved efficient. Faculty should not have to spend their time with students in simple informational and explanatory activities of academic advising. Those basic questions and fundamental clarifications can be handled through the use of print or electronic media, e.g., a brochure on general education requirements, or a computer screen presenting updated course offerings. Faculty definitely should not be engaged in therapeutic forms of academic advising beyond identifying a possible need of the student and providing a referral to an appropriate specialist, e.g., a student with math anxiety should be sent to the math lab, a student with a drug-related problem should be referred to the chemical dependency unit.

The faculty advisor should spend the majority of time with academic advisees in analytic forms of academic advising. A sampling of types of activities within analytic forms of academic advising is presented in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2. TYPICAL SAMPLE OF ACADEMIC ADVISING ACTIVITIES

ANALYTIC



Width of Line Indicates Importance at that Given Time Period

Each of these involves the student and the faculty advisor in a discussion lasting from twenty minutes to an hour or more as they discuss:

- selection of alternatives with respect to degree requirements;
- options within a major;
- career-related activities in a liberal arts context; and
- extra-curricular options for a well-rounded university experience.

These are topics which are not well handled by print or electronic media, and clerical staff, peers, or clinicians cannot provide the same insights as faculty. An advising model must keep faculty members free of detail in order to provide such perspectives.

The academic advisor should spend less time handing out forms, providing elementary direction, etc. This does not mean that an advisor should not be knowledgeable about the aforementioned tasks, but when the advisor's time is limited, the advisor should be interacting with a student at the analytical level, rather than the elementary information level.

Along with the emphasis being placed on the analytical nature of academic advising, the advisor must be prepared to discuss the personal needs of the student, keep abreast of current employment trends, be accessible to the student and always give the student his/her undivided and sincere attention.

Advising: Small Wins in Institutional Development

HOWARD C. KRAMER, *Director, Research and Planning Division of Campus Life, Cornell University*

Improvements in advising programs are elements of institutional development, and they may be seen as central to the mission of the institution rather than as peripheral service entities that happen to take place on campus. However, if improving advising programs is a part of institutional development, then "small wins" are necessary to solve the problems of the institution.

There are three propositions that are applicable to most institutions. They are:

1. There is a need to improve (change) our advising system
2. The most important agenda item for an institution is to promote continued development of the faculty, and
3. Advising may serve as a means of facilitating faculty development

Are these propositions problems or wishful thinking; what happens when we entertain such notions? Karl Weick recently published an article that is very useful in this regard.¹ He suggests that people often define social problems in ways that overwhelm their ability to do anything about them. That is, the problem is experienced as such a massive undertaking that the resulting arousal, or anxiety, disarms or disables the potential problem-solver. When social problems are described this way, the effort to convey their gravity undermines the very resources for thought and action necessary to change them.

If the three propositions stated above are defined as massive social problems they may be stated as follows:

- Improving academic advising means investing more resources, which draws funds

¹ K.E. Weick, Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems, *American Psychologist*, 39, 1984, pp. 40-49.