A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF FACULTY ADVISORS' PARTICIPATION IN A SHARED MODEL OF ADVISING AT A PRIVATE, COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITY

by

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ABSTRACT

KRISTINA SIARZYNSKI-FERRER. A qualitative study on the experiences of faculty advisors' participation in a shared model of advising at a private, comprehensive university. (Under the direction of DR. MARK D'AMICO)

Faculty advising has maintained a prominent role in the history of higher education institutions in the United States (Cook, 2009; Habley, 2003; Rudolph 1962). The role of faculty serving as advisors is still significant at private, four-year colleges and universities (Habley, 2004). Over the past several decades, research has recognized the significance between academic advising and student retention. Chickering and Gamson (1987) surmised the importance of encouraging interactions between faculty and students outside the classroom. Transformations in society have occurred, including a change in the student populations entering higher education. To assist faculty in their role as advisors, administrators should provide support through professional development opportunities to address the diversity of today's college students. However, shortcomings in higher education institutions exist for faculty advising development.

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) defined *communities of practice* as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4). The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based study was to describe the experiences of faculty advisors' participation in a shared model of advising at a four-year private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. The implementation of this shared model of advising occurred in 2015 as a replacement to the previous faculty-only model and promoted collaboration among faculty and professional advisors who

work with traditional undergraduate first-year students. This study encompassed advising model redesign, Wenger's community of practice framework, and the elements of an advising community of practice. Grounded in learning theory, communities of practice require the elements of the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The findings showed that each element of a community of practice was present in the advising model at the institution under study. Themes emerged from each of the three areas, including the domain (the advising model and first-year students), the community (shared learning and relationship building), and the practice (advising practice and resources).

DEDICATION

To my two beacons, Aleana, my ray of sunshine and Lucian, my light. You bring insurmountable brightness to my life. To my husband Greg for loving me through yet another journey and for the reassurance to never give up. And to my family, I am always grateful that you believe in me. Each of you has provided encouragement and support even when saying “do your homework”. Thank you for believing in me.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Academic advising is an all-encompassing responsibility because the outputs of student success and retention affect an entire university community. McGillin (2003) posited that "academic advising in a student's life is the single most important relationship offered to students by an institution of higher education" (p. 88). In addition to supporting an institution's mission, skilled advisors assist students in understanding the value of their educational experience comprehensively (Folsom & Scobie, 2010). Furthermore, McGillin (2003) determined that "through the advising relationship students engage in a critical narrative process that will give shape and meaning to their curricular and life choices through which they come to understand the interconnections of knowledge and curricula" (p. 88). However, in order for advisors to accomplish these responsibilities, advisors must receive adequate opportunities to develop in this role.

The role advising has contributed to retention is significant (Habley, 2004; Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980). Glennen (2003) specified that advising has assisted with retention by increasing student matriculation. The Institute of Education Sciences (IES, 2018) indicated the first-year retention rate in fall 2016 at four-year, degree-granting institutions was 81% for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students. Similarly, for students attending private, nonprofit institutions, the first-year retention rate was also 81%. Furthermore, IES (2018) reported "the six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a four-year degree-granting institution in fall 2010 was 60% while private nonprofit institutions graduated in six years at 66%" (paragraph 4). Tinto (1988) ascertained that retention rates could improve when students have meaningful

interactions outside of the classroom. Additionally, advisors were very often the first individuals that students meet early on and work with continuously (Kuh, 2008).

Many researchers recognized that frequent interactions between students and faculty help students persist (Astin, 1993, 1997; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Grites, 1979; Habley, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1987, 1999). Mayhew, Rockenbach, Bowman, Seifert, Wolniak, Pascarella, and Terenzini (2016) described advising as a technique that promotes learning, adjustment, and retention due to students reporting that their college is concerned about them as an individual. Furthermore, Light (2001) defined advising as "the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience (p. 81). When academic advising was well established at an institution, it provided the structure to promote interaction between advisor and student (Hunter & White, 2004). Furthermore, these interactions supported an institution's mission and strategic goals by focusing on student learning, success, satisfaction, and persistence (Folsom & Scobie, 2010).

Shifts in societal demographics have caused higher education institutions to modify curricula and accommodate differing student populations, which resulted in administrators adapting their practices to preserve their respective institutions. Chickering and Gamson (1987) ascertained that college and university leaders could create environments that consist of good practices in higher education. One area that required modifications was the institutional practice of advising. Establishing successful advising on college campuses is multifaceted and begins at the administrative level of higher education institutions. However, commitment at all institutional levels was required to create and maintain an effective faculty advising system (Hemwall, 2008), which could

be achieved when administrators emphasize the importance of advising (Glennen, 2003). In addition, administrators must make decisions that establish advising services reflective of the "institution's mission, student population, faculty role, budget, advisor type, and the organizational structure" (King, 2003, p. 243). Once these macro-level factors were determined, support for an advising model could commence.

Background of the Problem

Habley (1983) delineated advising into seven organizational models as "faculty only; supplementary; split; dual; total intake; satellite; and self-contained" (pp. 536-538). Pardee (2000) further classified the models as decentralized, centralized, and shared. There were two decentralized models, faculty only in which faculty advise and the satellite model comprised of faculty and staff from each department's major to advise students (King, 2008). The self-contained model was the only one classified as centralized because students were assigned to advisors from their respective departments while the university maintained the coordination of advising (King, 2008). Lastly, the supplementary, split, dual, and total intake models were classified as shared because advising responsibilities occurred between faculty and staff in academic departments, and advising coordination came from one office (King, 2008).

Historically, advising responsibilities were fulfilled by faculty (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Milem, Berger, and Dey (2000) reported a decrease in the amount of time that faculty advised students occurred between 1972 and 1989. Although a decrease occurred in the number of faculty who advise, many institutions still made use of faculty for this role. For example, four-year private institutions predominately relied on faculty members to serve as advisors (Habley, 2004; Habley & McCauley, 1987; King, 2005). Historical

trends in academic advising practices were captured in six national surveys. Frost (2000) acknowledged that ACT's First Survey of Academic Advising originated in 1979 with subsequent surveys in 1983 and 1987. ACT's Fourth National Survey of Academic Advising was conducted in 1992, followed by the fifth survey in 1998, and lastly, in 2003, the final ACT Sixth National Survey of Academic Advising was administered (Habley, 2004). The succeeding paragraphs utilized survey findings to illustrate national trends in advising.

The Sixth National ACT Survey of Academic Advising demonstrated that the "faculty only model was utilized by 33% of respondents in 1987 but decreased to 25% in 2003, however at four-year private institutions the predominant model of advising was faculty only" (Habley, 2004, p. 20). Furthermore, Habley (2004) recognized that more than three-quarters of the survey respondents required faculty to advise in all departments at four-year private institutions. Similarly, Carlstrom (2015) employed responses from the 2011 NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA) survey and found that full-time faculty members are responsible for advising at small, private, bachelor, and master institutions of higher education.

However, a review of the literature demonstrated that faculty advisors are satisfactorily meeting student needs. However, the skills and practices of faculty who advise needs to be reinforced, which is demonstrated by previous research where faculty-advising ratings have decreased (Habley, 2003). Limited data of faculty perceptions on advising demonstrated mixed reviews (Kelly, 1995). Further findings documented that faculty receive little to no support in understanding curriculum, general education, and

university policies. Therefore, providing faculty development to those serving as advisors will assist them in being more prepared for this role (Ryan, 1995).

Folsom and Scobie (2010) acknowledged that higher education administrators could support advisors through ongoing training and development. However, Habley (2004) found in the third national advising survey that the organization and administration of advising achieved only minimal improvement. Furthermore, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA) has provided educational leaders with resources, such as the NACADA core values to understand how advising supports students. In 1986, the ACT and NACADA collaborated to provide developmental opportunities for individuals at varying reporting levels in higher education, which originated at the summer institute for advising (Beatty, 1991). When higher education administrators do not support the role of advising, faculty must fulfill this role to the best of their abilities (O'Banion, 1972, 2009).

Statement of Problem

King (2003) discerned that successful faculty advising included "a mission statement guiding advising activities; a specific individual designated by the institution to coordinate advising; a systematic training program for all advisors; evaluation of the advising program and advisors; and recognition and reward for exemplary advising" (p. 136). While an increase in the utilization of an advising mission statement and coordinated advising assignments has occurred, upward movement has not been illustrated in the training, evaluating, and rewarding of advising. King's study emphasized the importance of development opportunities for faculty advisors at a four-

year, private institution based on the premise that development will enrich advising practices, therefore influencing the assessment and recognition of advising.

Wallace and Wallace (2010) described limited comprehensive advisor training and low faculty participation as barriers to quality advising. Wallace (2011) postulated that developmental opportunities are limited for faculty advisors based on the findings of the 2011 NACADA National Survey. Likewise, "32% of four-year private campuses neither offered nor mandated training for all departments" (Habley, 2004, p. 42). However, 70% of respondents from ACT's All Survey Colleges study, and 69% of four-year private institutions identified that advisor training was offered at their institution (Habley & McClanahan, 2004).

Kramer and Spencer (1989) recognized that faculty could help first-year students succeed by "developing personal relationships, approving academic expectations, reviewing academic progress, linking academic and career planning, and serving as a mentor" (p. 106). Furthermore, Glennen (2003) delineated the role of faculty advisors to include "providing academic advice, establishing students' goals, providing career guidance, assisting students in major selection, clarifying graduation requirements, and disseminating information as practices that assist students in achieving academic success" (p. 42). In addition, results from the Sixth National ACT Survey of Academic Advising (Habley, 2004) illustrated that advisors are responsible for working with students from various backgrounds, such as international students and students with disabilities, as well as students with diverse educational interests, such as pre-medicine and pre-law. Meanwhile, Habley (2004) included "advising general education requirements, evaluating transfer credits, establishing and maintaining advising records, certifying

graduation clearance, and approving substitutions/waivers" as responsibilities completed by advisors (p. 40). The above-mentioned circumstances are significant and captured the need for development to prepare advisors to work with students in a more comprehensive manner.

Professional development for advisors should be structured to incorporate the three elements of conceptual, informational, and relational development (Brown, 2008; Habley, 1987). King and Kerr (2005) recommended that advisor training is: (a) conceptual which provides foundational information on advising, such as advising expectations and responsibilities; (b) informational which informs advisors of programmatic and curricular information, institutional policies and available resources for students; and (c) relational which emphasizes the behaviors of advisors, such as listening skills. Voller, Miller, and Neste (2010) ascertained that developmental opportunities that are conceptual, informational, and relational support advisors regardless of their role in advising, such as faculty or professional advisors and institutional type. Competent advisors resulted from professional development programs (Brown, 2008). In addition, successful advising programs enhanced a positive campus environment, which in turn affected student success through collaboration with campus partners (King, 2008). One method to facilitate the collaboration of campus partners and development is through a community of practice.

Communities of Practice

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) defined *communities of practice* as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing

basis" (p. 4). It is through a community of practice that individuals can learn new techniques to assist them in developing (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). Wenger, et al. (2002) concluded that the structures of communities of practice were diverse and varied in size, duration, location, the background of participants, parameters of an organization, reason for beginning, and relational focus. The required elements of a community of practice included the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, et al., 2002; E. Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015).

Wenger, et al. (2002) employed the following definitions:

- The domain is a knowledge base, which creates a common ground and sense of common identity. A well-defined domain legitimizes the community by affirming its purpose and value to members and other stakeholders.
- The community embraces learning and fosters interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust. It encourages a willingness to share one's ideas, expose one's ignorance, ask difficult questions, and listen carefully.
- The practice is a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories, and documents that community members share. (pp. 27-29).

A review of literature provided numerous examples of how communities of practice were employed and successful in corporations, such as Chrysler, World Bank, and Shell Oil (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

E. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) explained that the education sector had focused primarily on "teacher training and techniques for isolated administrators to access colleagues with some interest in peer-to-peer professional development activities" (p. 5). However, a gap in literature existed on communities of practice in higher

education institutions for faculty roles that occurred outside of the classroom. In addition, advising professional development as a shared experience amongst university campus partners was also limited. Moreover, the role of communities of practice in higher education institutions in the United States was incomplete, specifically concerning a shared model of advising. The collection of faculty perspectives of their role in advising provided a basis in which higher education administrators could determine if changes were necessary within their respective institutions. Additionally, those viewpoints offered guidance on how to best support faculty advisors. Regardless of potential changes, feedback from faculty exhibited their understanding of advising, role as an advisor, level of interest in advising, and need for professional development.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based study was to describe the experiences of faculty advisors' participation in a shared model of advising at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. This shared model of advising was implemented in 2015 as the replacement to the previous faculty only model and was structured as a shared-split model of advising that joined faculty and professional advisors who are responsible for working with first-year students. This qualitative study encompassed advising model redesign, a community of practice framework, and the elements of an advising community of practice. Grounded in learning theory, communities of practice require the elements of the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). This qualitative, interview-based study was organized to ascertain if the experiences of faculty advisors within a new advising model satisfied the required elements of a community of practice. Those elements had an

opportunity to emerge through the advising model's development opportunities, known as learning forums. Throughout this study, this shared-split model of advising was distinguished as the “new model of advising”.

This new model of advising was comprised of professional advisors and full-time faculty who served as advisors to first-year, traditional undergraduate students. Incoming students were assigned to an advisor in their college for three semesters or completion of 48 credits. Service for faculty within this advising model began prior to the start of the fall semester and was cohort-based for a term of three semesters. The target population of this study was full-time faculty who participated in this new model of advising during the time frame of fall 2015 to fall 2018. The ending date fall 2018, ensured that participants would not be selected due to limited exposure in the new model of advising, i.e., one semester of participation. Chapter 3 includes a table to demonstrate the timeline of the cohort model.

Between fall 2015 and fall 2018, this new advising model consisted of sixteen to twenty-five full-time faculty, professional academic advisors, a director of academic advising, and a faculty member assigned as an advising co-lead. This study was designed to discover the experiences of faculty participants only. The following questions were used to ascertain the experiences of faculty advisors within this new model of advising:

1. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced a sense of community among faculty advisors?
2. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced faculty perceptions of their role as advisors?

3. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced perceptions of faculty advisors' advising practice?

Significance of the Study

Faculty who were well informed contributed to a student's sense of belonging (Kramer & Spencer, 1989). Research on student retention indicated that good academic advising is a mechanism to support student persistence (Glennen, 2003; Habley, 2004; Habley & McClanahan, 2004; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980; Tinto, 1988). While most literature addressed academic advising from the student perspective, limited information was available on faculty perceptions of their role in advising. This study will contribute to the limited collection of faculty narratives of advising, opportunities for professional development for faculty advisors, and illustrate a model for four-year, private higher education institutions that utilize a split model of advising. Responses to ACT's Sixth National Survey (2004) demonstrated that 17% of four-year private colleges employed a split model of advising, which has grown when compared to previous years. However, little was written in the literature about this.

When higher education administrators encourage faculty to work with students outside of the classroom, faculty are more likely to be better advisors and instructors (O'Banion, 1972, 2009). Wallace and Wallace (2010) ascertained that faculty advisors who were not current on institutional information, advising resources, and best practices inhibited quality advising. Because of the role that faculty advisors have in student retention, proper development was required to strengthen faculty advisors' skills by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to assist the diverse needs of an undergraduate student body. Furthermore, Hunter and White (2004) concluded that

advisor development provides advisors with a knowledge base focused on topics such as student development, demographic information, and institution information, including policies, regulations, and student support.

Theoretical Framework

Higher education is a learning organization that consists of many types of communities, including but not limited to faculty, students, and staff. Those communities have the capabilities to form learning communities, either inclusively or exclusively. Lenning and Ebbers (1999) surmised that "higher education as a community must intentionally develop learning communities that emphasize learning and collaboration, thereby stimulating learning for individuals and groups" (p. 5). Wenger (1998) ascertained that the social process of learning includes a framework to develop principles and recommendations for understanding and enabling learning. When individuals participated, learning occurred (Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, when individuals participate in a community of practice, the opportunity to exchange information and share knowledge occurs, but the characteristics of the domain, the community, and the practice must be incorporated (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Wenger, et al (2002) defined the process of sharing as a knowledge structure as "a social structure that can assume responsibility for developing and sharing knowledge" (p. 29).

The setting of this qualitative study was a four-year, private, comprehensive institution in the southeast United States that implemented a shared-split model of advising in 2015. This shared-split advising model was comprised of an exclusive group of faculty and professional advisors responsible for working with traditional undergraduate first-year students. The organization of this qualitative, interview-based

study was to ascertain if the experiences of faculty advisors within a new model of advising satisfied the required elements of a community of practice. The elements of a community of practice are the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) that had an opportunity to materialize through service within the new model of advising. Within this study, those elements are represented as the domain of an exclusive group of advisors within the new advising model dedicated to working with first-year undergraduate college students, the community comprised of professional advisors and a select group of full-time faculty who meet regularly, and the practice of learning from one another during learning forums, to address concerns related to advising first-year students, and create advising resources. Professional development occurred during the monthly learning forums, which were concentrated on best practices in advising, student development, and institutional information, such as curriculum and policies.

In the following chapter, a comprehensive explanation of a community of practice is provided, as well as evidence that supported the development of advisors in higher education institutions. As noted previously, advisors worked with different student populations, are faced with numerous university requirements, and varying student demographics. In this institution's model, the backgrounds of faculty advisors may not be relatable to their current educational or professional expertise. Through this new model of advising, faculty in higher education settings can benefit by recognizing how professional development can support their current advising practices, which includes the identification and creation of advising resources, an opportunity to build community with campus partners, and forming their advising identity.

Methodology

This qualitative, interview-based study was designed to understand the experiences of full-time faculty participating in a shared-split model of advising at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. This shared-split model of advising was implemented in fall 2015 as a replacement to the previous faculty-only model and was centered on advising first-year traditional undergraduate students. Throughout this study, the shared-split model of advising is distinguished as the "new model of advising." Informed by qualitative research methods, this study concentrated on the experiences of faculty advisors who had completed at least one cohort of advising which is comprised of three semesters within the new advising model between fall 2015 and fall 2018. This study was conducted as a qualitative, interview-based study focused on "understanding the meaning people have constructed" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15).

The procedures utilized to capture these experiences consisted of the researcher conducting 10 individual, in-person interviews with past and current full-time faculty advisors who had completed at least one cohort within the new model of advising. In addition, consistent with the three required elements of communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) and Wenger's model of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), this study concentrated on an advisors' sense of community, knowledge of working with and understanding first-year undergraduate college students and advising practices. The researcher was curious if through the collection of narratives from this select group of faculty that themes would emerge that exemplified how the new advising

model fulfilled the three requirements of a community of practice, the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, et al., 2002).

Assumptions

The participation of faculty who served as an advisor within the new advising model was voluntary. The researcher abided by qualitative research methods to assist in gathering responses related to this study. Furthermore, participants received a description of the study and the necessary measures, such as the assignment of pseudonyms that the researcher shared prior to conducting interviews as a way to encourage authentic responses from faculty. All responses were assumed to be correct and the sole perspectives of faculty participants.

Limitations

This study captured the narratives of faculty participating in a split model of advising at a four-year, private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. The design of this advising model was specific to this institution's size, culture, and student population, which could make its adaptation less probable at other institutions of higher education. Although there is a uniqueness to the advising model, some characteristics apply to other higher education institutions, such as the inclusion of full-time faculty who serve as advisors, professional development or learning forums, the delivery of advising information, and resources based on advising practices.

This qualitative study had a limited sample size due to the number of full-time faculty who advised within this new model which ranged from 16 to 25 faculty. While the number of participants was limited, the researcher achieved data saturation of the narratives collected through in-person interviews. Additional limitations included that the

researcher was a current employee of this institution, the researcher was the creator of this new advising model, and the researcher conducted individual in-person interviews with faculty participants. In order to manage potential bias and maintain all ethical guidelines, the researcher explained that throughout this study, the researcher's role would not influence participants' employment, described the data management process to ensure confidentiality, identified the measures to keep all personal information secure, and removed all identifiable characteristics.

Delimitations

This study concentrated on the perceptions of faculty who had completed at least one cohort within a new model of advising at a four-year, private, comprehensive institution in the southeast United States. Further personnel exclusions were professional academic advisors, a director of academic advising, all adjunct and part-time faculty, and full-time faculty who had not completed one cohort within the new advising model. In addition, this new model of advising was implemented in fall 2015, which could be viewed as a relatively young organization.

Definition of Terms

Grites and Gordon (2009) emphasized that a universal definition for academic advising does not exist. Instead, a concept for advising was adopted by NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA).

NACADA (2006) postulated:

> Academic advising is based on the "teaching and learning mission of higher education, as a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes. Academic advising

> synthesizes and contextualizes students' educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities, and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes. (para. 10).

In addition, the following terms appeared continually throughout this study.

ACT. "A non-profit organization dedicated to helping people achieve education and workplace success through college and career readiness by providing assessments grounded in nearly 60 years of research" (ACT, Inc., 2019, The Story of Act).

Communities of Practice (COP). Communities of practice as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4).

Faculty Only. An advising model occurs when all students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising and no advising office is present on campus (Habley, 1988, 1997; Habley & McCauley, 1987; Habley & Morales, 1998).

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA). An association of professional advisors, counselors, faculty, administrators, and students working to enhance the educational development of students (NACADA, 2017, About NACADA).

Split Model. There is an advising office that advises a specific group of students (e.g., undecided, underprepared, nontraditional). All other students are assigned to instructional units and/or faculty for advising

(Habley, 1988, 1997; Habley & McCauley, 1987; Habley & Morales, 1998).

Conclusion

Preceding sections provided an overview of faculty advising and the effects that advising has in higher education institutions. While faculty advising had been continual for several decades, a common deficit was the lack of professional faculty development to support their role in advising. An introduction to communities of practice provided information on how this framework contributed to professional development. Chapter 2 delves deeper into advising at higher education institutions, specifically the advising structures and models, the role of faculty advisors, and professional development for faculty advisors. Additionally, an examination of communities of practice and the three required elements of the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) are included. Chapter 3 explores the qualitative methods to gather and understand the perceptions of faculty advisors who participated in a new model of advising created for a four-year, private institution. Meanwhile, Chapter 4 provides a summary of faculty narratives who advised within this advising model, and the themes which arose from those narratives. Lastly, Chapter 5 interprets those faculty experiences and their applicability to the domain, the community, and the practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based study was to describe the experiences of faculty advisors' participation in a shared model of advising at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. This shared model of advising was implemented in 2015 as the replacement to the previous faculty only model. The shared-split model connected an exclusive group of faculty and professional advisors who were responsible for advising first-year traditional undergraduate students. This qualitative study encompassed advising model redesign, a community of practice framework, and the elements of an advising community of practice. Grounded in learning theory, communities of practice require the elements of the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Furthermore, the purpose of this qualitative, interview-based study was to ascertain if the experiences of faculty advisors within a new model of advising satisfied the required elements of a community of practice. Throughout the study, this split model of advising will be distinguished as the new model of advising.

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) acknowledged that successful communities of practice are evidenced "when the goals and needs of the organization intersect with the participant's passion" (p. 32). The following research questions are based on Wenger's community of practice model and directed this study:

1. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced a sense of community among faculty advisors?
2. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced faculty perceptions of their role as advisors?

3. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced perceptions of faculty advisors' advising practice?

This chapter presents an examination of advising in higher education and its historical significance, advising model implementation including the determining factors of institutional characteristics, professional development for faculty advisors, and the potential relationship between a theoretical framework and its applicability in a higher education setting.

Initial sections of this literature review provide an overview of academic advising in higher education institutions, the responsibility that faculty have as advisors, and the importance of professional development opportunities. The characteristics of faculty who advise include the history of advising, structures and organizational models, the role of faculty advisors, higher education administrator's support, and the importance of developmental opportunities for faculty advisors.

Succeeding the discussion on academic advising is the examination of communities of practice and its utilization in higher education as a method for professional development. While the community of practice framework has been applied generally in the business sector, limited studies have employed this framework in higher education institutions. Furthermore, research is limited relative to communities of practice in higher education settings in the United States that includes faculty roles occurring outside of the classroom. Literature pertaining to each of these themes is categorized in Figure 1.

Category	Sources
Academic Advising	Advising Structure and Models (Allen & Smith, 2008; Blose, 1999; Campbell, 2008; Carlstrom, 2013, 2015; Cook, 2009; Dillon & Fisher, 2000; Drake, 2008; Glennen, 2003;F Grites,

	1979; Habley, 1983, 1997, 2004; Habley & McCauley, 1987; Habley & Morales, 1998; Hancock, 1996; Hemwall, 2008; Hunter & White, 2004; King, 2003; King & Kerr, 2005; MacIntosh, 1948; McGillin, 2003; Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000; Miller, 2012; Myers & Dyer, 2005; Pardee, 2004; Rudolph, 1962; Tuttle, 2000; Wallace, 2011; Wallace & Wallace, 2010) Advising Development (Carstensen, & Silberhorn, 1979; Folsom, Shultz, Scobie, & Miller, 2010; Givans Voller, 2012; Givans Voller, Miller, & Neste, 2010; Habley, 2004; King & Kerr, 2005; Wallace & Wallace, 2010)
Communities of Practice	(Allen & Smith, 2008; Habley, 2003; Kelly, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991; McGillin, 2003; Merriam, & Bierema, 2014; Merriam, & Brockett, 2007; Wallace & Wallace, 2010; Wenger, 1998, 2010; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; Wenger & Snyder, 2000; Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011; Wenger, E., & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) • The Domain (Bultam, 2008; Cox, 2001; Givans Voller, 2012; Goldenberg, & Permuth, 2003; Hemwall, 2008; NACADA, 2006; Ryan, 1995; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) • The Community (Beatty, 1991; Christman, 2008; Eddy, & Garza Mitchell, 2012; Merriam, & Bierema, 2014; NACADA, 2005; Pardee, 2004; Vygotskiĭ, 1978; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; Wilbur, 2003) • The Practice (Appleby, 2008; Beatty, 1991; Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013; Cook, 2009; Crookston, 2009; Folsom, Shultz, Scobie, & Miller, 2010; Givans Voller, 2012; Gordon & Habley, 2000; Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008; Grites, 2013; Grites, & Gordon, 2009; Pardee, 2004; Schreiner, 2013; Schreiner & Anderson, 2005; Scott, 2013; Tuttle, 2000; Wenger, 2010; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002)

Figure 1. Identified themes in the literature

Academic Advising

Academic advising has a long and changing history in higher education institutions in the United States. Cohen and Kisker (2010) discerned that academic advising began with the founding of Harvard University in 1636, which was performed by the college president. President David Bates Douglass of Kenyon College recognized the need for an academic advisor in 1841, thus establishing the first formal role in advising (Cook, 2009; Kuhn, 2008). In 1876, Johns Hopkins University established faculty advising, which created an inaugural marker (Cook, 2009; Habley, 2003; Rudolph 1962; Tuttle 2000). In 1886 at Johns Hopkins University, President Gilman defined an adviser as "someone who gave direction to students concerning an academic, social, or personal matter" (Kuhn, 2008, p. 5). Several years later, in 1888, Harvard University created a group of freshmen advisors who were also faculty members (Habley, 2003; Rudolph 1962).

During the 1940s and 1950s, colleges and universities continued to use faculty to advise their students (Cook, 2009). It was not until World War II that a shift occurred, and an increase in non-faculty personnel began advising students (Habley, 2003; Tuttle, 2000). At Alfred University in 1947, a personnel office was created to assist faculty advisors with advisor assignments and development opportunities that concentrated on freshman and sophomore advising (Cook, 2009; With the Technicians, 1952). During the 1960s, the faculty advising model was still prominent, but the emergence of a centralized advising office occurred in which staff members began advising students (Cook, 2009; Grites, 1979). Furthermore, changes to advising continued throughout the following years and are illustrated throughout this study.

Advising Structure and Models

Academic advising of undergraduate students consists of many characteristics that are based on each institution's organizational structure and can vary significantly. One characteristic of advising in higher education institutions is the organizational model. Habley and Morales (1998) surmised that the advising model must fit the institutional culture, which includes "an institution's mission, the role of faculty, numerous program policies and procedures, and students' needs" (p. 39). Historically, seven organizational models of advising were originated by Habley (1983) and later modified by Habley and McCauley (1987). Habley (1997) defined the models as:

- Faculty Only: All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising. There is no advising office on the campus.
- Supplementary: All students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising. There is an advising office that provides general academic information and referral for students, but all advising transactions must be approved by the student's faculty advisor.
- Split: There is an advising office that advises a specific group(s) of students (e.g.., those that are undecided, etc.). All other students are assigned to academic units or faculty for advising.
- Dual: Each student has two advisors. A member of the instructional faculty advises the student on matters related to the major. An advisor in an advising office advises the student on general requirements, procedures, and policies.

- Total Intake: Staff in an administrative unit are responsible for advising all students for a specified period of time or until specific requirements have been met. After meeting those requirements, students are assigned to a member of the instructional faculty for advising.
- Satellite: Each school, college, or division within the institution has established its approach to advising.
- Self-contained: Advising for all students from the point of enrollment to the point of departure is done by staff in a centralized advising unit. (p. 39).

Pardee (2004) further classified the organizational structure of advising as "the framework for delivering advising services to students" (para. 1) defined as decentralized, centralized, and shared. Advising structures are influenced by an institution's enrollment, the administrative structure which includes the reporting line for advising, the interest of faculty, academic programs, curriculum and degree programs, an institution's mission, and the make-up of the student body (Pardee, 2004). Pardee (2004) classified the faculty only model as decentralized because it utilizes faculty and staff from their own academic units to advise students. The self-contained model is most prevalent as a centralized structure because the advisors come from one department (Pardee, 2004). Shared models include a central administrative unit, which works with some students while other students are advised within their academic major as supplementary and split models (Pardee, 2004).

Institutions are able to identify their advising structure by responding to the following four questions: "Who is advised; Who advises; Where is advising done; and

How are advising responsibilities divided" (Miller, 2012, para. 4). Responses to the initial question guide administrators in determining if all, some, or a specific subset of students will be advised as well as indicating if advising should be mandatory. Additional factors in determining who should be responsible for advising are based on measuring specific criteria by importance. According to King (as cited in King, 2003), those criteria are the "accessibility and availability of the advisor for students; priority placed on advising by the advisor; the advisor's knowledge of major field of study; the advisor's knowledge of student development theory; the amount of training required; cost; and credibility with faculty and staff" (p. 135). Moreover, Hunter and White (2004) theorized that the advising structure is based on institutional characteristics, such as size, the type of institution defined as two or four years and public, private, or for-profit, and by classification of degrees awarded as bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees.

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising is the professional organization for advising and was formerly identified as the National Academic Advising Association (Nutt, 2019). Responses from the 2011 NACADA National Survey of Academic Advising demonstrated that the majority of advising personnel are comprised of full-time professional advisors, followed by full-time faculty. However, full-time faculty were prominent in the advising role at private, bachelor's degree-granting institutions (Carlstrom, 2013). Carlstrom (2013) reported that responses from the 2011 NACADA National Survey of Academic Advising indicated that no specific advising model was utilized universally. Similarly, the responsibility of who advises is not ubiquitous throughout higher education institutions. Additional results demonstrated that the "shared split model was used at 2 out of 5 institutions; self-contained model was used

by nearly 3 out of 10; and the faculty only, total intake, shared supplementary, and multiple models were used at fewer than 20% of institutions" (Carlstrom, 2013, p. 12).

The aforementioned structures and various models organize the advising services at higher education institutions. Habley (2004) reported that findings from ACT's 5th National Survey of Academic Advising identified decreases in the faculty only and self-contained models by suggesting that shared advising between faculty and professional advisors was more beneficial. Carlstrom (2013) noted that the shared split model of advising occurs at institutions that use both faculty and professional academic advisors. Moreover, faculty and staff working together exemplify an effective advising practice (King, 2003).

In addition to whose responsibility it is to advise students, other significant modifications occurred, such as the identification of advising responsibilities, professionalization, and creation of advising models (Habley 1988; Tuttle, 2000). Grites (1979) acknowledged that many changes occurred on college campuses, including enrollment, student diversity, and student involvement, which led to a new definition of academic advising. Grites (1979) described academic advising during the 1970s as a "decisionmaking process during which students clear up confusion and realize their maximum educational potential and benefits through communication and information exchanges with an advisor which are ongoing, multifaceted, and the responsibility of the student and advisor" (p. 8). MacIntosh (1948) determined that academics of students are influenced by personal, financial, social, and health factors. Furthermore, it was the practice of seeing students as holistic-beings and having discussions about their academics, which helped shape the philosophy of academic advising (Cook, 2009;

MacIntosh, 1948). Cook (2009) determined that through this work, the term academic advising was first employed.

King and Kerr (2005) acknowledged that academic advising programs must include a mission statement, an advising coordinator, training, and recognition. In addition to a mission statement, Campbell (2008) emphasized a vision statement, goals, and program objectives to guide an advising program. Habley (2004) utilized responses from the Sixth National ACT Survey of Academic Advising to illustrate that higher education institutions utilizing an advising policy statement increased from 26% in 1979 to 65% in 2003 for all institutional types while four-year, private institutions reported 67% utilization. This study focused on a four-year, private institution and data specific to this institutional type is emphasized throughout.

The coordination for advising varies by institutional type and by position title. Institutions that have recognized someone as a coordinator of advising have increased from "78% in 1998 to 84% in 2003 for all institutional types compared to 85% of four-year, private institutions that utilized the position title of Director/Coordinator of Advising" (Habley, 2004, p. 14). King and Kerr (2005) recommended that advising offices at small four-year institutions employ a centralized advising office to coordinate all advising responsibilities. According to ACT's data, a movement towards retaining a director or coordinator of academic advising has occurred (Habley, 2004).

Faculty Advising

Rudolph (1962) acknowledged that the faculty members in the earliest American colleges participated in informal advising (as cited in Habley, 2003). Milem, Berger, and Dey (2000) reported that between 1972 and 1989, a decrease occurred in the amount of

time that faculty advise students. Results from the Sixth National Survey on Academic Advising documented the faculty only model as the predominant model at four-year private institutions consistently from 1987 to 2003 (Habley, 2004). Additionally, the 2011 NACADA National Survey of Academic Advising classified that the faculty only model was the most utilized advising model at four-year private institutions.

However, Allen and Smith (2008) recognized the differences between how faculty and students rated 12 advising functions. Both parties agreed on the importance of the function titled "accurate information" but subsequent rankings differed. The results of advising function expressed as "how things work" were disproportionate due to faculty responding that this activity was one they were least responsible for while students rated it highly relevant (Allen & Smith, 2008). This example of advising feedback is problematic since faculty have mainly been responsible for the advising of undergraduate college students. While research is limited on faculty advisors' perceptions of advising, findings included that the most prominent factors were lack of recognition and rewards for advising, limited time to advise, and lack of qualified faculty to advise (Hemwall, 2008). Similarly, Hunter and White (2004) noted that faculty concerns included time, advising assessments, and recognition.

Depending on institutional type, faculty are responsible for teaching, research, and service, which includes committee membership and advising in hopes of obtaining promotion and tenure (Myers & Dyer, 2005). DeLisle (as cited in Grites, 1979) indicated that by the 1950s, faculty were dissatisfied with advising due to advisee loads, lack of time, space, advising materials, and clerical tasks. Dillon and Fisher (2000) concluded that administrative factors, such as promotion and tenure, and unprepared advisors also

affect academic advising. McGillin (2003) classified “merit, promotion, and tenure; stipend or pay considerations; workload or release time; and recognition or award programs as the types of recognition and reward in higher education” (p. 115). Moreover, faculty preference for recognition is merit, promotion, and tenure (McGillin, 2003). Myers and Dyer (2005) found in a study comprised of 222 respondents from 31 land grant institutions that “25% of faculty agreed that advising is a factor considered by administrators in promotion and tenure decisions” (p. 34). Meanwhile, “91% of respondents categorized as department administrators felt that advising should be included in promotion and tenure but only 58% indicated that it was included” (Myers & Dyer, 2005, p. 37).

Additional advising responsibilities at institutions where mandatory advising occurs are most likely due to utilizing only full-time faculty advisors (Carlstrom, 2015). Therefore, Boyer (as cited in Myers & Dyer, 1990) added that faculty’s perceptions of the lack of rewards in activities, such as advising, could have a major impact on the time and effort that faculty put in. Likewise, Dillon and Fisher (2000) acknowledged that faculty agree that good advising takes time. Furthermore, Hancock (1996) added, “the quality and quantity of rewards associated with advising must equal or surpass those associated with activities that routinely compete for faculty time – namely, teaching, and conducting research” (p. 13). A universal advising structure or model does not exist for all higher education institutions, especially faculty recognition comprised of rewards or compensation for advising service.

Hemwall (2008) detected that faculty are frustrated with advising due to “no rewards or recognition for advising; no time to advise; and no qualifications in advising”

(p. 255). In addition to participating in developmental opportunities, rewarding advisors is another practice that demonstrates support. Drake (2008) described that an advising award exhibits support for advisors and their role in student satisfaction and persistence by higher education administrators. Hancock (1996) proposed that clarifying decisions for promotion and tenure of other faculty members did include advising participation as a technique to encourage faculty. Lastly, recognition for good advising emphasizes the importance that institutions place on advising and could assist in improving a student's experience (Glennen, 2003).

Blose (1999) pinpointed that issues with advising, course availability, and scheduling courses can hinder students from persisting, which eventually affects graduation rates. However, higher education administrators have an opportunity to address these challenges. Wallace and Wallace (2010) recognized that higher education administrators should "cultivate institutional support, promote positive faculty attitudes and perceptions, and design programs that implement best practices in faculty advisor development" prior to implementing professional development (p. 52). Furthermore, Hemwall (2008) recognized that higher education institutions could garner support by changing the perception of advising and by supporting faculty responsible for advising. One area that is most amenable is the implementation of faculty advisor development that higher education administrators can provide. The succeeding sections examined how a shared-split model of advising was implemented, professional development for faculty and professional advisors, the framework for a community of practice, and how the collaboration between these factors demonstrates support from higher education administrators.

Advising Development

The collaboration between NACADA and ACT produced the first National Survey of Academic Advising in 1979 (Habley, 2004). This initial assessment captured responses from 820 two-year institutions, four-year public, and four-year private higher education institutions (Carstensen & Silberhorn, 1979). The application of these responses revealed that advising development opportunities consisted of "57% written communications, i.e., handbook; followed by 48% of institutions conducting an annual advisor orientation meeting" (Carstensen & Silberhorn, 1979, p. 7). Although the Second National Survey of Academic Advising was comprised of a greater response rate of 1,095 individuals, responses related to advisor training and development were similar to the first survey (Habley, 2004). Results from the Third National Survey of Academic Advising conducted in 1987, and the fourth version in 1992 further revealed that advisor training continued to be lacking while the fifth version conducted six years later described advisor training programs as ineffective (Habley, 2004). The largest percentage of respondents from the Sixth National Survey of Academic Advising were from four-year private institutions whose predominant advising model was faculty only, and of that, 35% of those institutions mandated faculty advisor training in all departments (Habley, 2004). These factors presented a historical perspective that a need exists for higher education administrators to provide and support a comprehensive advisor development program.

King and Kerr (2005) recommended that advisor training is:

- Conceptual by providing an understanding of the basic concepts of advising, the relationship between advising and student retention, student advising expectations, and the responsibilities of advisors and advisees.
- Informational which addresses programmatic and curricular information, institutional policies, and available resources.
- Relational which focuses on advisor characteristics such as listening skills and inquiry into a student's life. (p. 330).

Furthermore, Folsom, Shultz, Scobie, and Miller (2010) endorsed the utilization of conceptual, informational, and relational skills as the foundational components of advising and should be included in advisor development. In addition, advising development grounded in these three components support development opportunities regardless of advisor role and institutional type (Givans Voller, Miller & Neste, 2010).

While the above-mentioned components provided a framework applicable to the delivery of advising development, other considerations exist. Givans Voller, Miller, and Neste (2010) maintained that training should occur within the first year of advising for faculty, professional, paraprofessional, and peer advisors and continues throughout their advising career. Wallace and Wallace (2010) utilized responses from the 2009 NACADA Faculty Advising Commission Listserve to urge against using the term training when discussing development opportunities. This study adheres to the phrase "development opportunities" due to its utilization in best practice research and because faculty advise in this model.

Additional considerations recommended that the timing of development opportunities is deliberate to accommodate faculty workloads; resource retrieval is easily

accessible; the inclusion of topics and activities that are meaningful; structured activities as professional growth; and the implementation which enables advisors a strategy for their growth (Wallace & Wallace, 2010). Wallace and Wallace (2010) recommended that institutional administrators must provide resources for development opportunities and determine the degree of program assessment for advising. Furthermore, Givans Voller (2012) believed that providing advisor development opportunities assists with job satisfaction, which supports the institution.

Communities of Practice

A collaboration between Lave and Wenger (1991) introduced the term "community of practice" as it related to learning. Merriam and Bierema (2014) recognized that "constructivism is foundational to understanding adult learning" (p. 37). Constructivism is a large umbrella in which the learning frameworks of self-directed learning; transformational learning; experiential learning; reflective practice; situated cognition; and communities of practice are a part of (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Wenger (1998) acknowledged that a social theory of learning must include meaning, practice, community, and identity to facilitate how knowing and learning occurs through social participation.

Wenger (1998) postulated these components explicate:

> meaning through individual and collective ability to experience life and the world meaningfully; practice through shared historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action; community refers to social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is

> recognizable as competence; and identity of how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities. (p. 5).

Communities of practice are defined as "groups of people who share a concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). E. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) described that when individuals join to learn and share knowledge of a specific nature that the structure of a community of practice forms. The role of a community of practice allows for individuals both inside and outside of an organization to work together. Additionally, a community of practice can occur within an organization by connecting several independent units to share knowledge (Wenger, et al., 2002). E. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) described that communities of practice can be formal or informal and that formal communities are more intentional due to a specific concern that an organization wants to address.

The value that a community of practice provides is displayed through tangible and intangible results. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) recommended that tangible outcomes are associated with a community by identifying performance patterns that illustrate that knowledge is occurring. An advising community of practice can demonstrate tangible outcomes by creating an advising manual or through improved skills as an advisor. Intangible results include "the relationships they build among people, the sense of belonging they create, the spirit of inquiry they generate, and the professional confidence and identity they confer to their members" (Wenger, et al., 2002, p. 15).

Interactions between advisors are cultivated, while relationships amongst various disciplines flourish.

In addition, value is produced when organizations support the professional identity of the practitioners in a community through personal development. Aforementioned, Wallace and Wallace (2010) established institutional support, recognition of faculty attitudes, and program development, which includes best practices as considerations in faculty advisor development. Administrators supporting conference attendance, research publications, and advising in promotion and tenure are essential values for faculty advisors.

A collaboration between the Open Universiteit Nederland and an external teacher development organization resulted in the production of a foundation paper focused on a conceptual framework of value creation in communities and networks (Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011). Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat (2011) determined that five cycles occur over time, and while the first four cycles are an adaptation of Kirkpatrick's four levels of training and evaluation, the last cycle is specific to communities and networks. The five cycles utilized by Wenger, et al. (2011):

1. Immediate value as the most basic cycle and that activities and interactions have value in and of themselves.
2. Potential value occurs at a later time and that through the community members' interactions, "knowledge capital" occurs. Knowledge capital consists of personal assets, relationships and connections, resources, collectible intangible assets, and transformed ability to learn.

3. Applied value entails how changes in practice occur based on knowledge capital.
4. Realized value identifies performance improvement based on how the stakeholders identify success.
5. Reframing value is centered on redefining success, which occurs when social learning causes a reconsideration of the learning imperatives and the criteria by which success is defined. (pp. 19-21)

Organizations have formed communities of practice to capture and apply knowledge strategically to further their needs, but there are other settings in which they can occur. E. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) ascertained that communities of practice have occurred in education as a mechanism to facilitate teacher development while also joining administrators and colleagues together. In higher education, communities of practice most frequently appear in the form of professional development for instructors (Wenger, 2010). Merriam and Brockett (2007) recommended that adult education includes "activities designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception, define them as adults" (p. 8). Therefore, professional development should consider the audience's backgrounds and mode when planning.

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) defined a knowledge structure as a "social structure that can assume responsibility for developing and sharing knowledge" (p. 29). Within a community of practice, a knowledge structure is formed as the domain represents what the community will focus on while the practice identifies how they will focus. In addition to creating a community, these characteristics form a knowledge

structure (Wenger, et al., 2002). It is through the social process, and knowledge structure, that faculty in higher education can develop in their role as advisors by incorporating their experience, knowledge, and skillset while learning amongst their peers.

Faculty participation in learning communities contains advantages for students, faculty, staff, and their respective institutions of higher education. Habley (2003) utilized the results from ACT's Survey of Academic Advising from 1995 to 1999 to demonstrate that students were least satisfied with faculty advisors in "initiating meetings, encouraging extracurricular activities, sharing my college experience and self-disclosure, exploring careers interesting to self, and anticipating my needs" (p. 35). Meanwhile, Wallace and Wallace (2010) postulated that the attitudes towards advising are diverse. Feedback on advising provided by faculty can range from positive to negative, with little opinions located in the middle. Kelly (1995) found that faculty advisor responses include, "I would not prefer working as an adviser; We should not be bothered with procedural monkey-business; and I am the weakest and least interested in giving advice on general education requirements" (p.15). Meanwhile, positive responses included statements such as, "my philosophy of advising is to be there, be available" (Kelly, 1995, p. 18).

Wallace and Wallace (2010) acknowledged that the majority of faculty value advising while others feel overwhelmed with the many responsibilities included in their workload. Furthermore, Allen and Smith (2008) recognized that department heads value the contributions that faculty make to advising. Administrators at institutions of higher education can facilitate institutional change, and one method is the creation of a community of practice. When organizations cultivate a community of practice, they exhibit a "value to learning, support of time and resources available, encouragement in

participation, and removal of barriers" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 13). In addition, Wenger and Snyder (2000) specified that value assessment of a community of practice occurs when higher-level personnel listens to member's stories.

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) established that communities of practice include the required elements of the domain, the community, and the practice. The domain includes a commitment from members to maintain a shared competence and learn from one another. However, they may not be recognized for their expertise or valued by individuals outside of their group. The community consists of individuals who build relationships and learn from one another through activities or discussions. Community members are not required to work with each other every day. The practice emphasizes the practitioner and shared work towards identifying or creating resources to assist them. The interaction between the group members demonstrates a social learning system (Wenger, 2010). When members hold the same understanding of the domain, the community establishes a sense of identity. The establishment of an identity assists in the motivation of community members; otherwise, the community will end (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

The Domain

The domain creates "a sense of common identity which legitimizes the community's purpose and value to its members and stakeholders" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 27). When establishing a domain, members are not always from the same professional field but face similar key problems which may not always be clear at first. The domain encourages participation and contribution of knowledge sharing by providing meaning to this work. NACADA (2006) recognized that advisors come from

diverse backgrounds and that the advising profession is comprised of "professional and faculty advisors, administrators, students, and others with a primary interest in the practice of academic advising" (para. 1). Givans Voller (2012) recommended that prior to implementing development opportunities, the identification of participants is critical in planning. Advisors have varying levels of experience, and their responsibilities occur in numerous departments throughout higher education institutions.

Beatty (1991) emphasized that NACADA's dedication is to advise rather than advisors, which have remained a prominent component focused on improving the educational experience of students. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) adheres to six core values which can assist in facilitating an advising community. Those core values are met when advisors are responsible: 1) to the individuals they advise; 2) for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process; 3) to their institutions; 4) to higher education in general; 5) to their educational community; and 6) for their professional practices and for themselves personally (NACADA, 2005). NACADA membership includes faculty, staff, and administrators as members. While membership is inclusive, the practice of advising becomes exclusive, and on-campus boundaries may occur among those advising and those who do not.

Bultam (2008) shared that advising changes at Hope College in Michigan, where he served as President included emphasizing to administrators the importance of advising. In addition to hiring a director of academic advising and conducting advising workshops, the college recognizes advising by selecting a group of faculty who can and want to work with students in the advising setting (Bultam, 2008). This liberal arts

institution designates advising as centered on engagement and connections, not tracking degree progress (Bultam, 2008).

In addition, organizations need to reciprocate by identifying the domain and their contributions. Hemwall (2008) described that commitment can be achieved through "changing the concept and language of academic advising, supporting faculty advising through large-scale institutional strategies, and supporting faculty using small-scale daily strategies" (p. 255). Administrative leaders, such as the president, deans, and department chairs, should encourage and recognize faculty that attend advising development opportunities (Hemwall, 2008). Ryan (1995) emphasized the importance of faculty development to assist them in becoming better advisors. Faculty who complete training through learning communities are provided with a more comprehensive understanding of their institution (Cox, 2001). Moreover, Goldenberg and Permuth (2003) recognized that collaborative planning focused on student learning, faculty understanding of roles, and organizational support is a mechanism that encourages faculty to become invested in quality advising. It is the view of the community member's awareness of the domain that shapes how learning and behaviors will take place (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

The Community

Vygotskiĭ (1978) claimed that people make meaning from their experiences. These experiences are part of a social process that incorporates culture's symbols and language (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). The role of the community is to "foster interaction and relationships based on mutual respect and trust by encouraging idea sharing, exposing one's ignorance, asking difficult questions, and listening" (Wenger,

McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 28). Conversely, Eddy and Garza Mitchell (2012) found that higher education institutions are challenged with identifying how to support faculty in creating networks.

A community is a "group of people who interact, learn together, build relationships, and in the process develop a sense of belonging and mutual commitment" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 34). Wilbur (2003) indicated that collaboration between faculty and staff is a factor in the best advising models. The interchange of information allows for staff to share their proficiency in institutional requirements while faculty provide expertise in their respective academic disciplines. Consequently, the longer the collaboration continues, then a stronger likelihood exists for faculty to adapt from experts in their field to a learner in a new area (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2012). A community of practice must interact regularly and provide a setting for relationship building to occur, which fosters respect and trust. When these events occur over time, they influence a community's history and identity (Wenger, et al., 2002). Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) established that the community relies on members' commitment to prosper, not hierarchical mandates. The shared advising structure allocates advising among a centralized advising office with professional staff and faculty in their respective academic departments (Pardee, 2004).

The atmosphere of the community should provide a supportive environment in which members can communicate openly and ask questions to facilitate collective inquiry. Disagreement among members may arise, which allows for a deeper understanding through continued and productive dialogue to occur amongst the community while relying on trust (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The structure

of the community can be formal or informal and is not governed by one person responsible for leadership (Wenger, et al., 2002). However, employing an administrator to oversee advising allows for a concentrated effort on advising while incorporating the mission statements of the institution and academic advising center (King, 2005). Further responsibilities typically include promoting an understanding of the institution's mission, working with faculty, serving as a resource to students and campus partners, assessing student outcomes, understanding policies and regulations, and identifying student resources (Christman, 2008).

The Practice

A community of practice must utilize a standard knowledge set that allows members to work together systemically (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The practice provides an opportunity for learning to be produced and contributes to the creation of future practices and could result in the creation of potential boundaries since others were not involved in the sharing of information (Wenger, 2010). Wenger (2010) recognized that through practice, a body of knowledge about a profession exists. Formerly known as the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), this professional association is comprised of professional academic advisors, faculty, and administrators focused on the process of advising (Beatty, 1991). Currently, this organization is represented as NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA, 2019).

In 1979, NACADA was created and supported the professionalization of academic advising (Tuttle, 2000). Beatty (1991) stated that according to Toni Trombley, NACADA's first president, the goals of the first conference would "lay a foundation to

build a description of the advising process and that academic advising would be enhanced within the expectation and reward system for faculty" (p. 6). Interest in NACADA grew, and in addition to an annual national conference, NACADA began hosting conferences in all regions by 1988 (Beatty, 1991). By 1993, NACADA assumed responsibility for advisor development during their summer institutes (Grites & Gordon, 2009).

Professionalization was further impacted through NACADA's contribution to scholarly research and through collaborating with the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services (CAS) in 1980. (Beatty, 1991). In 1986, a group of NACADA members outlined the requirements for academic advising in a CAS publication (Beatty, 1991). CAS guidelines served as a resource to higher education institutions to create and evaluate advising programs. Another milestone occurred when the term "academic advising" was added as a descriptor to ERIC in 1981 (Cook, 2009). This implementation assisted NACADA's prominence on a national research level during a time when literature on advising was growing (Beatty, 1991). NACADA continued to expand services by offering continuing education courses, and in 2008, an online master's degree program was offered through NACADA and Kansas State University (Cook, 2009; Grites & Gordon, 2009). Currently, membership includes more than 12,000 members worldwide (Scott, 2013).

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) explained that the practice includes "a socially defined way of doing things in a specific domain: a set of common approaches and standards that create a basis for action, communication, problem-solving, performance, and accountability" (p. 38). Folsom, Shultz, Scobie, and Miller (2010) emphasized that training on conceptual issues provides advisors with a holistic

background in advising, the role of advisors, and the developmental frameworks necessary to understand students. Advisors who receive training based on informational components become "knowledgeable about curricular requirements, institutional resources, and the ways they can assist in connecting students to resources and opportunities inside and outside of the classroom" (Folsom, Shultz, Scobie, & Miller, 2010, pp. 23-24). Lastly, the relational component focuses on establishing a connection between advisor and advisee. Folsom, et al. (2010) endorsed training which contains relational skills activities, such as listening exercises, questioning skills, and role-play, to assist in an advisor's development.

Therefore, the conceptual component of professional development should commence with the different philosophies of advising by applying NACADA's framework of advising as teaching. Advising as teaching encourages advisors to focus on the student as a whole, instead of course decision-making only. This framework promotes a change from decision-making and problem-solving to critical thinking where advisors serve as both advisor and teacher (Crookston, 2009). Perspectives, such as appreciative advising, developmental advising, and strengths-based advising provide guidance for faculty on techniques on how to approach advisees. Bloom, Hutson, and He (2013) asserted that appreciative advising is an approach encouraging advisors to engage in meaningful dialogue where advisors ask "…positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences, achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials" (p. 83). Appreciative advising places a heavy emphasis on communication between advisor and advisee, both being active participants in the interaction. In addition, Grites (2013) theorized that "developmental advising enables the academic advisor to

take a holistic view of each student to maximize that student's educational experiences in an effort to foster his or her current academic, personal, and career goals toward future success" (p. 45). Schreiner (2013) defined strengths-based advising as "helping students envision future possibilities and learning to leverage talents to address obstacles that may emerge in the future" (p. 106). Research supporting strengths-based advising speculated that when advisors believe in students, that students are more likely to succeed if they address weaknesses earlier in their academic career (Schreiner & Anderson, 2005). While higher education institutions establish an advising model, the structure should be based on an understanding of the different advising philosophies to assist faculty in choosing which technique is best situated when working with students.

Additional professional development resources include tangible items such as an advising manual, case studies, and recorded materials (Givans Voller, 2012). NACADA has created and published numerous comprehensive advising resource publications, including *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook* (Gordon & Habley, 2000; Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008), The *NACADA Journal*, *Academic Advising Today*, and several monographs which highlights topics specific to advising. Appleby (2008) defined an advising syllabus as a technique that provides information to advisees regarding advising roles and expectations, which is similar to a course syllabus. In addition, development opportunities should be provided by a centralized advising office (Pardee, 2004). Moreover, it is the resource of an advising community of practice were faculty advisors are provided with an opportunity to support one another, further their development on undergraduate students, and create resources to assist them with their advising practice.

Conclusion

Due to the prominence and tradition of faculty serving as advisors, a comprehensive understanding of advising is necessary as higher education institutions continue to change. Previous sections described the progress of academic advising in higher education by providing historical contexts, organizational structures, and roles of an advisor. While limited feedback exists on faculty perceptions of advising, the need for support and development for faculty in their advising role was emphasized. The incorporation of a community of practice could address these concerns.

This study embodied the three required elements of communities of practice, the domain, the practice, and the community (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The community of practice framework is reflective by creating a knowledge structure for faculty whose primary responsibility is not advising, the forming of a community amongst full-time faculty representing various departments across campus and professional advisors, and cultivating relationships which supports their role in advising first-year undergraduate students while formulating advising practices at their institutions. Additionally, an advising community of practice provides faculty who advise an opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills to work with students in a more holistic manner while supporting their advisees throughout their academic progression. The following chapter identifies the qualitative research methods utilized to capture the experiences of faculty in a new model of advising responsible for working with first-year traditional undergraduate students to ascertain if their responses support the concept of a community of practice.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified that the contact between students and faculty inside and outside of the classroom is a practice that helps students engage in their undergraduate education. One practice that promotes engagement outside of the classroom occurs through advising. While faculty earn degrees in their respective fields, there is no universal method for receiving professional development for their role as an advisor. Also, data is limited in the United States on employing a shared-split model of advising, professional development for faculty advisors, and the role communities of practice have undertaken in higher education settings for faculty in roles that occur outside of the classroom.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the experiences of faculty advisors' participation in a shared model of advising at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. This shared model of advising was implemented in 2015 as a replacement to the previous faculty only model. Structured as a shared-split model of advising, this model joins faculty and professional advisors who are responsible for working with first-year students. This study encompassed advising model redesign, Wenger's community of practice framework, and the elements of an advising community of practice. Grounded in learning theory, communities of practice require the elements of the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based study was to ascertain if the experiences of faculty advisors within a new model of advising satisfied the required elements of a community of practice. The elements of a community of practice could have been developed through the institution's advising model and the development opportunities

known as learning forums. This shared-split model of advising is continually distinguished throughout this study as the "new model of advising". The three questions which guided this study are:

1. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced a sense of community among faculty advisors?
2. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced faculty perceptions of their role as advisors?
3. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced perceptions of faculty advisors' advising practice?

Research Design

Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012) described qualitative research as the "collection, analysis, and interpretation of a comprehensive narrative and visual data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest" (p. 7). Likewise, Creswell (2013) identified that qualitative research allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of a topic based on the experience of participants. Furthermore, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) designated that the purpose of qualitative research as "the achievement in understanding how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience" (p. 15). This study adhered to qualitative research design and sought to understand the experiences of faculty from numerous academic departments at a small, private higher education institution. The participants are faculty with varying years of experience in higher education and differing levels of participation in a new model of advising.

This study focused on the experiences of full-time faculty whose common experience (Creswell, 2013) was participation in a shared-split model of advising, which is relatively new to their higher education institution. Following the collection of individual experiences, an analysis of data prompted the creation of themes that were coded to illustrate the essence or meaning attached to each participant's experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Themes were developed based on the repetitiveness of responses which were then organized into clusters based on similarity. Once the themes were established and the particulars of the advising model were applied, the outcome included features that defined the role of the group, the members of the group, and the group's task. Specifically, these themes determined if the faculty experiences align with fulfilling the three elements of a community of practice, the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, 1998). The advising components of the advisors' role and scope of advising are applicable to the domain. Meanwhile, the identification of the group's members and structure for learning is relative to the community, and how the advisors implement what they learn and the resources they create to assist with advising mirrors the element of the practice. The following figure illustrates the components of the new advising model and its applicability to a community of practice.

Elements of a Community of Practice	Advising Model Components at this Study's Institution
The Domain - common identity; commitment from members to define issues which guides the actions of a community	• Advise first-year traditional undergraduate students • Faculty from various departments represented along with professional academic advisors • Share issues and concerns which arise when advising first-year students • Named entity which campus partners recognize
The Community - individuals who build relationships and learn	• Membership includes full-time faculty and professional academic advisors

from one another through activities or discussions	• Commitment to serve as an advisor for a cohort which is equivalent to three semesters • Participation in monthly learning forums • Facilitation by the director of academic advising and faculty lead
The Practice – sharing knowledge to identify or create resources to assist the community	• Developmental topics, such as intrusive advising during monthly learning forums • Advising forms, curriculum handouts, guides for software retention platform • Electronic calendar

Figure 2. Advising model relevance to Communities of Practice

Researcher's Role

Qualitative researchers collect data by working directly with research participants in the location where an experience occurred (Creswell, 2013). In addition, qualitative researchers seek to understand "how meaning is constructed, how people make sense of their lives, and to uncover and interpret those meanings" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 25). In addition, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) acknowledged that in qualitative research the researcher is primarily responsible for collecting and analyzing data. The researcher in this study is employed at the private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States where the phenomenon, a split model of advising, occurred. Therefore, the researcher identified that biases and assumptions could exist due to her employment at this institution, as the creator of the new model of advising, and previous role as director of academic advising. In order to manage potential bias throughout this study, the researcher identified previous assumptions and did not assume any responses from the participants. The researcher was aware that faculty feedback could consist of negative perceptions about the advising model. Therefore, the researcher worked to limit

nonverbal expressions relative to participant responses on the advising model and refrained from conversations relating to employment. In addition, the researcher repeatedly shared that the purpose of the study was for educational/research purposes only (i.e., not related to employment in any way), participants could skip questions, participation in this study was not relevant to their role as an advisor, and the researcher utilized the pseudonyms when interacting with participants.

Aforementioned, the researcher is the creator of this new model of advising and had direct supervision of this model for approximately two years after its implementation in fall 2015. Currently, the researcher does not directly oversee advising at this four-year, private institution of higher education but a direct report is employed as the director of academic advising who is responsible for the advising model. Due to the researcher's role at this higher education institution, an opportunity to build rapport with faculty has already occurred. However, the researcher managed the semi-structured interview by focusing on the study's purpose and the questions relevant to the advising model. Conversations regarding the relationships between the researcher and participants did not occur. In addition, having access to the faculty at this institution has allowed for prolonged engagement and observation (Glesne, 2016). However, the researcher shared that her role is strictly as the researcher of this study and that data collection of their experiences is not attached to their employment at the institution. In regard to sensitive items, the researcher is cognizant of how findings need to be reported to avoid a participant being identified based on their responses (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, attention to the relationship between the researcher and sample is critical to avoid

potential bias. While the researcher and participants are employed at the same higher education institution, no faculty report to the researcher or director of academic advising.

Protection of Human Subjects

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) identified that researchers need to proactively identify ethical safeguards, such as protecting subjects from harm, maintaining participant's privacy, gathering informed consent, and avoiding deception. The researcher identified that potential risks, such as collecting negative data, could occur. Therefore, any unfavorable data was reported in a manner that avoids participants from being identified (Creswell, 2013). The following considerations were implemented to protect the participants in this study:

1. The researcher communicated in writing the purpose of the study.
2. Participants were informed that their participation is voluntary and can recuse themselves from this study at any time.
3. Participants completed a signed consent form prior to data collection once they agreed to participate in the study (See Appendix A).
4. The researcher provided a copy of the interview transcript as well as the findings for the participants to review.
5. Participants were assigned a pseudonym with no identifiable characteristics. All identifiable data was removed, including faculty rank and role in their respective college and department.

Site and Sample

The setting for this study was a four-year, private, comprehensive institution of higher education in the southeast United States which awards undergraduate and graduate

degrees. While this institution has a strong history in liberal arts education, a move to comprehensive status occurred due to the addition of professional programs. The university was comprised of approximately 2,500 students in which 1,760 are undergraduate students. The university offers 49 undergraduate majors and employs 132 full-time faculty members. Incoming first-year student enrollment has ranged from 284 to 382 incoming traditional undergraduate students from 2015 to 2018.

Historical Site Information

For 25 years, the site of this study, a four-year, private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States, embraced the CORE model of liberal learning for general education. Under the CORE model, all first-year students were enrolled in CORE112 during their fall semester. CORE112 was only offered during the fall semester. Enrollment was between 18 to 20 students in a section and instructors were assigned as the advisor to students enrolled in their respective sections. Registration for this course was completed prior to students attending summer orientation. No specific procedures were followed when enrolling students into CORE112 except that an equal number of students were enrolled in each course section. The philosophy of the CORE model was to promote an opportunity for incoming students to build a relationship with a faculty member and experience consistency in advising. The following semester, spring of a student's first year, students enrolled in CORE122, the second required course in the general education program and continued with the same faculty member who served as the advisor. Students retained the advisor until they officially changed their major. Typically, major declaration occurred during the middle to later part of the spring semester unless a student remained in the major of their CORE122 faculty member. This

process of major verification was in place for many years, and once completed, professional advisors assigned students to a faculty advisor within the student's major.

In spring 2014, faculty of this four-year, private, comprehensive university revised the general education program for all undergraduate students. Given the relationship between the CORE model and advising first-year students, it was necessary to address and change the advising model for incoming students admitted to the university for the 2015-2016 academic year. The director of academic advising researched and created an advising model for traditional undergraduate students which integrated the student population, university culture, and mission statement.

The Director of Academic Advising proposed a model of advising to senior-level administrators in Academic Affairs, which was approved in early 2015. This new model of advising incorporated an initiative of the university's vision statement, which endorsed students working with faculty related to their major. Due to varying enrollment in majors and the desire to maintain an equitable advising structure throughout the university, new students were assigned to an advisor in the college and/or school in which they were enrolled. The new advising model promoted a shared advising approach between faculty and professional advisors. Key differences from the previous model included (a) assigning advisors to students not based on enrollment in a specific course; (b) increasing interaction between students and professional advisors; (c) incorporating theory and best practices in academic advising; (d) providing development for all advisors; (e) incorporating an assessment system for faculty advisors; and (f) assigning students to a trained group of faculty advisors in their college to increase interaction during the earlier years of a student's academic career.

Incoming students for the 2015-2016 academic year participated in a new general education program and advisor assignments were completed following the processes of the new model of advising. This model was named, and first-year advisors were identified by a certain title. All incoming first-year traditional undergraduate students and transfer students with 30 or fewer transfer credits were assigned to a first-year advisor. First-year advisors consisted of both professional advisors and full-time faculty who were assigned to advise students in their respective major or college for a term of three semesters or completion of 48 credits. Professional advisors were assigned students from specific majors, such as undecided majors. Transfer students with more than 31 credits were assigned to a faculty member in their major.

The initial cohort of the new advising model consisted of 25 full-time faculty members who worked with students enrolled in their college throughout the student's first three semesters with a caseload of no more than 18 advisees. O'Banion (1994) recommended that faculty advisors should have an advisee caseload between 15 to 25 students. The structure of the new advising model was cohort-based, consisting of a three-semester sequence. Faculty serving in this new advising model were assigned to approximately seven or eight students during the fall semester, depending on enrollment. Advisors continued with this group into the spring semester. The following fall semester, an additional seven or eight students were added to the advisor's caseload. Once the fall semester of a student's second year commenced, the advisee load decreased due to the reassignment of second-year students to faculty in the student's respective major.

The inaugural group of advisors was selected by self-nomination or department appointments. While the majority of faculty were selected based on interest,

approximately 24% of faculty were assigned by their department chair or college dean. Academic Affairs with support from the Associate Provost and Provost provided an opportunity to reward faculty who served in this advising role. Faculty were compensated by earning one workload credit hour release for each semester and summer orientation for a total release of three workload hours. The workload release was applied to their teaching load once an advisor's cohort of three semesters was complete. In addition, their service as a faculty advisor in the new model counted towards promotion and tenure.

Participants

All full-time faculty are required to advise undergraduate students. For the purpose of this study, participants are faculty members who advised in the university's new model of advising, which is structured as a shared-split model. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recognized that criterion-based selection is based on the identification of which attributes of a sample are required and includes finding participants who meet those criteria. The criterion for this study's participants was faculty who advised within this model who completed at least one cohort, which is based on a three-semester sequence from fall 2015 to fall 2018. The succeeding chart illustrates the cohort structure of a three-semester sequence that faculty advised as cohort 1: fall 2015, spring 2016, and fall 2016; cohort 2: fall 2016, spring 2017, and fall 2017; and cohort 3: fall 2017, spring 2018, and fall 2018.

<table>
<tr><td>Fall
2015</td><td>Spring
2016</td><td>Fall
2016</td><td>Spring
2017</td><td>Fall
2017</td><td>Spring
2018</td><td>Fall
2018</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Cohort 1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="3">Cohort 2</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td colspan="3">Cohort 3</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 3. Timeline of advising cohorts

Creswell (2013) utilized prior research to illustrate that varying numbers of recommendations for participants exist, such as Dukes' recommendation of three to ten participants and Polkinghorne's recommendation of five to 25 participants. There were approximately 25 potential participants and interviews were to be completed with a minimum of seven faculty participants or until saturation of information was achieved. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) designated that saturation has been met when "data collection produces no new information into the phenomenon" (p. 199).

Instrumentation

Interviews are a method of data collection in qualitative research and specifically in the education field (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher asked open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013) in a semi-structured format (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) (See Appendix B). Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat (2011) utilized a conceptual framework to assess value creation in communities of practice, which can guide research and practice. Wenger, et al. (2011) ascertained that this "framework provides an evaluation process that integrates sources and data to create a picture of how communities create value for their members" (p. 8). In addition to providing evaluative procedures, this framework provided questions that centered on the reflection of value creation. Questions provided in Wenger, et al. (2011) framework were utilized as a resource only.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collected in qualitative research includes data from individuals who have experienced a phenomenon of interest (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Recruitment measures included correspondence from the researcher's University of North Carolina at Charlotte's email to the faculty of the institution where the new advising model occurred

to inquire about their willingness to participate in this study, that participation was voluntary, and any data collected was strictly for research purposes. Faculty were informed that interviews could last between 60 to 90 minutes and would include several warm-up questions followed by open-ended questions. However, the in-person interviews lasted between 20 to 50 and half of the participants' interviews occurred between 40 and 50 minutes. Questions were asked in a clear, non-leading way to allow faculty the opportunity to describe their experience. If necessary, the researcher would conduct an additional interview with participants which they were informed of (Moustakas, 1994). Interviews were conducted on the campus of the private, comprehensive university on an individual basis to further the rapport with the participants. During interactions with faculty participants, the researcher utilized the pseudonyms created and did not refer to the employment of herself or the participants. In addition, the researcher reminded each participant that their identity will not be shared with individuals at the institution they are employed, and that information collected is for research purposes only. In addition, the reported findings excluded all relevant information pertaining to the participants' role and faculty rank.

Further attempts to achieve validation included the triangulation of data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher sought permission from the director of academic advising to gather any documents or materials which supported the faculty experience in the new model of advising. Faculty participants were asked to complete surveys during the initial years of the new model of advising, which were structured as questionnaires. The sample size varied based on the number of advisors who completed a survey and the number of faculty available from each cohort. The initial survey concentrated on the

experiences of faculty and the results assisted in the creation of professional development also known as learning forums. At the end of the first academic year, another survey was administered which collected feedback on learning forums. Additional documents requested include attendance records, meeting minutes, and memos (Creswell, 2013).

Managing and Recording Data

Interviews were audio-recorded, and the researcher took notes during each interview. A third party transcribed all the interviews, which were reviewed and edited by the researcher. Once all information was gathered, transcribed, and analyzed, the researcher shared the findings with individual participants to verify the findings and gain credibility (Creswell, 2013). All audio recordings, notes, transcriptions, and computer files were stored in the researcher's password-protected university drive, and the participant's identifiable information was not stored in the same folder. The utilization of pseudonyms ensued throughout this study, and the researcher removed any mention of major, department, and college. All notes on background information were kept separate for the researcher's purposes only. In addition to providing participants an opportunity to review the accuracy of their experience, member checking occurred with this study's findings (Creswell, 2013) which included sharing the interview transcripts and the themes identified by the researcher with all participants. Furthermore, the researcher took the necessary precautions to ensure that participants were not identifiable.

Data Analysis Procedures

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) acknowledged that qualitative data analysis includes consolidating, analyzing, and interpreting a participant's responses to understand the data and provide meaning. The data from this study was gathered to describe a new model of

advising based on the experiences of faculty participants in which the findings were applied to the study's three research questions and the researcher maintained that each process adhered to the qualitative guidelines of data analysis. While engaged in self-reflection throughout this study, the researcher also performed this process prior to starting new tasks, such as data analysis. The researcher utilized the transcriptions to identify words or descriptions frequently shared by participants and created a list of significant statements (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, all data received from the director of academic advising underwent the same process as the interview transcripts to analyze the triangulation of data.

An additional technique in managing any preconceptions is that all data underwent horizontalization or the process of making sure that all data is treated equitability (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Significant statements were developed to create meaning units or themes (Creswell, 2013). The researcher produced a "textural description of what the participants in the study experienced through verbatim examples" (Creswell, 2013, p. 193). Succeeding analysis consisted of how the experience occurred, also known as structural description (Creswell, 2013). Concluding information included the description of the textural and structural descriptions or the "essence" of the participant's experience (Creswell, 2013).

Lastly, the researcher reviewed all available documentation related to the learning forums, such as attendance sheets and the professional development topics offered which were organized by the aforementioned, three-semester sequence. This process allowed the researcher to ascertain the amount of time that the faculty spent with other advisors in the new advising model.

Trustworthiness

Aforementioned, the researcher conducted a triangulation of documentation, completed member checks to verify the accuracy of interviews and provided an opportunity for member checks to occur regarding this study's findings. Additional strategies to promote the validity and reliability which the researcher engaged in include allowing sufficient time for interviews; working with faculty members for assistance with findings and analysis; and providing rich, thick descriptions of participant's experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This collection of full-time faculty member perceptions provided a description to help other institutions support faculty who advise. Although the advising model was designed specific to this institution's size and culture, results are transferrable to other full-time faculty who serve as advisors and professional development opportunities, which included the delivery of advising information and resources on advising practices.

The researcher identified and reflected on all prior assumptions and relationships to this study to maintain trustworthiness throughout this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the director of academic advising, the researcher did not supervise or employ faculty for their role as an advisor. Decisions were made by the faculty's department chair or college dean. During the data collection phase, faculty were reminded that the researcher's role was as a student, not as a representative of the institution. The researcher utilized the pseudonyms created and reminded participants that their feedback will not be shared with members of the institution in which they are employed. Identifying characteristics and pseudonyms were kept separate from other documentation pertaining to this study. In addition, the clarification of researcher bias (Merriam &

Tisdell, 2016) was completed by the researcher in the form of a subjectivity statement in the succeeding section. The researcher received approval from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Institutional Review Board and the Institutional Review Board of the private, comprehensive university where the new model of advising was implemented. The researcher also obtained written permission from the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs where the study was performed.

Subjectivity Statement

The researcher's advising experience consists of full-time employment as an advisor or director for approximately 15 years. Her employment in these roles is comprised of private, public, and for-profit colleges and universities and she has worked with a variety of students. Those students include at-risk, high-achieving, career-driven, and undecided students. Through her interactions, she tailors her conversations and advising approach for each student. This technique required significant time to develop a knowledge-base and understanding of student development, which only intensified her passion for working with undergraduate college students.

In her previous position as the director of academic advising at the same higher education institution in which this study occurred, the researcher changed the advising model, which had been in place for the past 25 years. Structured as a shared-split model of advising, she was encouraged to choose this institution for this study based on the creation of a new model of advising and her interest in understanding the experiences of faculty who advise. Furthermore, she would like to ascertain if those faculty experiences fulfilled the requirements for a community of practice.

The researcher assumed that opinions of faculty would differ among each major and college, and there would be variation in the interest level in advising varies, participation in learning forums, understanding of advising resources, and level of connection with other participants. Additionally, the possibility that participants may feel uncomfortable in their advising role provided the researcher with confirmation that the faculty member's feedback on their role of advising is realistic. The researcher's expectations were that the level of participation would differ based on college and that faculty would provide feedback on how to improve advising that benefits the faculty on an individual basis. Additionally, the researcher was aware that she needed to be open to feedback because some participants may be critical about advising and the current model of advising.

Conclusion

Academic advising has been a component of higher education for many decades, and recent studies indicated that effective advising assists students in persisting to graduation. This new model of advising provided an opportunity for faculty to develop as advisors, learn from one another, build relationships across campus, and gather information to inform their practice when working with first-year students. The responses collected from faculty could potentially lead to further institutional changes. This chapter provided information on qualitative research and the methods that guided the researcher through the process of collecting and analyzing the experiences of faculty to ascertain if the new model of advising fulfilled the requirements of a community of practice. All information related to this study abided by sound qualitative research concepts, including the specifics of participants, data collection, and analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative research was to describe the experiences of faculty advisors' participation in a shared model of advising at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. This chapter provides information on faculty participants, learning forums, advising assessment, and findings from the data collected during the interviews of faculty advisors who have participated in this shared model of advising. The research questions are:

1. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced a sense of community among faculty advisors?
2. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced faculty perceptions of their role as advisors?
3. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced perceptions of faculty advisors' advising practice?

Ten faculty completed in-person interviews on the campus of a private, comprehensive university, which is also their institution of employment. The researcher assigned each participant with a pseudonym to protect their identity and included the designation of Dr. to distinguish their role as a faculty member. Pseudonyms were randomly assigned and are not associated with participant names. Faculty participants represented all colleges except for one since a professional advisor is assigned to first-year students in that college. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format and lasted between 20 and 50 minutes. The researcher created and asked each participant eight open-ended questions. However, some participants were asked additional questions

for clarification. The researcher requested that participants verify and approve the interview transcripts. All participants confirmed with approval.

All participants are faculty who have participated in a new advising model and have completed one advising cohort, which is structured as a three-semester sequence. A distinctive characteristic of this advising model is that all incoming first-year traditional undergraduate students are assigned to an advisor in their department. This study examined three cohorts of faculty advisors who have completed at least one advising cohort between fall 2015 and fall 2018. Therefore, each faculty participant has advised for a minimum of three semesters. While two participants have experience working with first-year students, the majority of the participants have no prior experience advising first-year students. The succeeding figure illustrates the participant's advising experience, including experience with first-year students and advising history.

Participant	Prior Advising Experience	Experience Advising First-Year Students	Years Advising at this Institution	Cohorts completed
Dr. B	No	no	4	2, 3
Dr. C	Upper-class majors only	no	7	1, 2, 3
Dr. D	Upper-class majors only	no	10	1, 2, 3
Dr. G	Yes	yes	9	1, 2, 3
Dr. I	Yes	previous model	10+	1, 2, 3
Dr. K	Upper-class majors only	previous model	9	3
Dr. M	Upper-class majors only	no	4	2, 3
Dr. N	Upper-class majors only	no	4	1, 3
Dr. P	Upper-class majors only	no	25	1, 2, 3
Dr. W	Upper-class majors only	no	5	3

Figure 4. Faculty experience in advising

Document Analysis

The analysis provided an opportunity to gather each participant's experience in advising categorized by the length of time advising at this institution, type of advising experience, i.e. first-year or upper-class students, and knowledge of first-year students, specifically if they advised under the previous model. Documents received from the director of academic advising included a pre-and post-assessment conducted during the initial year of the new advising model; an assessment conducted at the end of fall 2018; learning forum attendance sheets; and learning forum topics. All data was organized, reviewed, and compared to the in-person interviews. The results are located within the different theme sections.

Fall 2015 launched a new model of advising at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. At the beginning of that semester, an assessment was administered to the 22 full-time faculty members of this new advising model to ascertain their history in advising. More than three-quarters of those faculty completed the assessment, and the results indicated that more than half had advised students at this institution for less than five years while fewer faculty advised for less than two years. In addition, more than half of the faculty respondents in the new advising model worked specifically with first-year students.

The pre-assessment (See Appendix C) sought information from faculty to ascertain their understanding as an advisor within the new advising model, advisor expectations, relationship between advising and retention, time served as an advisor, student development theory, and topics for development. At the end of the fall 2015 semester, another assessment (See Appendix D) was provided that focused on topics

similar to the initial assessment. Questions inquired about learning forum attendance, general education, university policies, understanding their role as an advisor as it related to retention, topics for future learning forums, and general feedback. Lastly, an assessment occurred in fall 2018 (See Appendix E) as a follow-up to the previous assessments. A comparison of the three assessments revealed that the questions asked were inconsistent. All assessments were performed anonymously. The original surveys were deleted and the director of advising has access to the results only.

Responses indicated that 19 of the 22 faculty completed the pre-assessment questionnaire in 2015 while 14 faculty completed the post-assessment at the end of fall 2015. A comparison of the initial cohort's responses identified some noteworthy deviations which are incorporated in the section on themes. Meanwhile, data collected from the end of the fall semester 2018 was comprised of 14 responses, but the potential for 22 respondents existed. The timing of this assessment captured three completed advising cohorts while the fourth cohort began at the start of that semester.

Participant's Advising Background

The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based study was to describe the experiences of faculty advisors' participation in a shared model of advising. This shared model of advising was a new concept for this institution because the previous advising model required that all first-year undergraduate students were assigned to a faculty member but not within their major. The new advising model's structure is shared-split, which allows for collaboration between faculty advisors and professional academic advisors who are assigned to first-year students. The importance of capturing the voices of the faculty who experienced this shared model of advising was to improve the advising

at this institution and to serve as a resource for other institutions who may experience a major culture shift with their advising practices.

To capture an overall understanding of the advising model, the researcher asked each participant, “What has been your experience with the new model of advising?” Responses to this inquiry were positive, and the majority of faculty identified that the new model’s structure *supported change in advising*. This theme is based on participants’ responses to learning how to advise, understanding first-year students, changing their previous advising techniques, and feeling supported by the advising unit and peers. In addition, two follow-up questions were asked to ascertain if the participant advised under the previous advising model. Participants noted change was needed in the previous advising model, and the majority of participants expressed an appreciation for advising students in their major. Overall, participants embraced advising first-year students at this institution and enjoyed their service within the new model of advising.

However, some faculty suggested the need for more faculty to participate in the advising model. Responses varied regarding this recommendation, but the main points highlighted relationship building with students, an appreciation for the new advising model, effective advising based on manageable advisee caseloads, and lack of understanding for the work entailed when advising first-year students. Dr. G shared:

> I think actually it would be really beneficial to have more faculty involved because I think the nature of the relationships is really powerful. And when faculty don't meet these students until they're juniors or seniors in their majors that does everyone a disservice.

The succeeding section provides an excerpt from each faculty participant to illustrate their experiences with the new model of advising. While brief, these narratives allow for a contextual variance due to the differences among faculty roles and advising experience and history. Also included is detailed information, such as length of time advising, attendance at learning forums, and the narrative of each participant's experience within the new model of advising.

Dr. B

Dr. B completed two cohorts in the new advising model. Due to contractual obligations, Dr. B is no longer advising under this model but would advise if possible. With no prior experience advising first-year students, Dr. B attended more than half of the learning forums. Dr. B described the new advising model as "very helpful" and enjoyed working with first-year students as, "I really like the program a lot".

Dr. C

Dr. C has advised since the new advising model commenced and completed three cohorts advising. Although Dr. C began with limited experience advising first-year undergraduate students, the caseload within this major reached an unprecedented number of advisees under the new advising model. Dr. C recommended that faculty should rotate through the advising model to capture student experiences in their first and last academic years and add more faculty to this role. In addition, Dr. C shared:

> When they came in through CORE, they had an advisor who is kind of randomly general education, they didn't have that cohort within their kind of primary interest. So that's something I tried to play up a little bit is building on that cohort

> and trying to offer some anecdotes about people who are still in my social circles and professional circles from undergrad.

Dr. D

Dr. D brought approximately 10 years of experience to the advisor role within the new model of advising. Although Dr. D's prior experience is significant, the advisee load consisted of upper-class students in their major only. Currently, Dr. D advises within this advising model, has completed three cohorts within the new advising model and attended most of the learning forums offered. Dr. D explained:

> It seemed reasonable to me that students would be assigned to somebody roughly in their major for the first year and a half. I know some people had concerns that it doesn't promote major exploration as much as it might, but I think with the four-credit hour system especially, that was another change we made at the same time, students kind of have to get into the major pretty quickly. I know with some majors if they don't take that first class the first semester, they don't graduate in four years. So I think I can help a student with major exploration as much as a CORE professor could. I don't think there's any downside to that. I think I have helped students with major exploration, like the student I was telling you about. If there's something else you're thinking about, let's try to get you in an introductory class on that; let's have you talk to somebody at the career center; you know, let's get some resources online.

Dr. G

With prior knowledge obtained through roles as a counseling assistant and academic advisor at previous institutions, Dr. G has extensive experience in advising. Dr.

G has completed nine years of advising at this institution, has advised for three cohorts within the new advising model and has participated in the majority of the learning forums. Still advising, Dr. G conveyed the new advising model has affected the institution:

> If we were to look at say retention data and student performance, I think it's had a really profound positive effect that way. Some of the changes in curriculum or we don't have those barrier courses in the first year, I think has really been incredibly beneficial.

Dr. I

Dr. I has considerable experience in advising due to a decade of advising at this institution under the previous advising model. A major difference between those models is the new model places students with advisors in their major. Dr. I completed three cohorts of advising and has attended almost three-quarters of the learning forums. This new experience is defined by Dr. I:

> I actually have liked it a lot. It was overwhelming at first because I had so many advisees, I had at one point like 40 or 50, which was just too many to do a good job. But I do like the fact that I can get to know our majors well and bring them into the department early and have them sort of learn the culture of the department and we try to do activities to build, you know, community in the department. And for all those reasons, it works out nicely. I get to know the freshmen quite well; I get a better sense of our classes and what classes we need, and so I think I have a better sense of the academic program as well.

Dr. K

Dr. K has completed one cohort or three semesters of advising within the new advising model. In addition, Dr. K's prior experience consisted of approximately nine years at this institution under the old advising model as well as advising experience from two previous institutions which consisted of a limited caseload of upper-class students in the major. While no longer advising in this model, Dr. K attended two learning forums. Dr. K stated:

> It fits as an integrated system of advising rather than an add-on or a marginalized experience that doesn't seem to fit within the overall university. I think it's very specific to the institution in terms of valuing the student experience and ensuring that there's a faculty member or an advisor with that person along the way.

Dr. M

While Dr. M has prior advising experience, it is limited to advising upper-class students in their respective majors only. Dr. M has advised for two cohorts and attended one learning forum. The advising approach utilized by Dr. M is based on what students want which has developed over time based on learning from others. Dr. M described this experience:

> I think overall very positive. I would say that I think it particularly in the beginning, it may have been a bit more of a time commitment. I don't want to even say than anticipated. I knew it was going to be a big-time commitment to fully understand the way it works. But I think that's one of those things where you don't want to half understand it because you want to help your students, so you don't want to get into a situation where you're like, I don't know what that is. So I

> think from an upfront perspective it was a good amount of work to really kind of understand everything involved in it. And, but that's also a positive thing cause I learned a lot more about the university as part of it, more than just curriculum matters.

Dr. N

Dr. N has advised for two cohorts within the new advising model, attended more than half of the learning forums, and had no prior experience advising first-year students. Dr. N had previously advised upper-class majors at two previous institutions and this experience introduced professional advising. No longer advising in the new model, Dr. N's approach to advising embraced a mentor role and enjoyed working with first-year students. Dr. N described:

> I think I've become more effective at the things other than what is the classes you're going to take next semester. So that's probably the most important thing I think is, kind of efficient in the sense of planning and effective in terms of less about what are the classes that you're going to take and more about their mental health, their future plans.

Dr. P

With over 20 years in advising, Dr. P has the longest tenure of this study's participants related to advising at this institution, however that experience was comprised of upper-class major students only. One of the inaugural members of the new advising model, Dr. P attended more than three-quarters of the learning forums during the tenure of three advising cohorts. Dr. P verbalized the experience:

> I think like everything the change at first was hard for me. Like I'm not sure I like this change, but I thought I really appreciated it after I got through that initial, what the heck am I doing phase and that was it for me. It was, this is a whole new way and I don't know what I'm doing and taking on freshmen because I had not taken on freshmen, but the thing I really liked was being able to meet them in the summer and do some of that personal, here's what's going on. So, I was able to grab them before they even were part of the university's community to say, look, I am your advocate. This is what I'm here for and so that I really liked that piece.

Dr. W

Dr. W's advising tenure began with requests from students, which launched Dr. W into advising junior and senior-level students. Advising for five years, Dr. W's experience in this new model provided exposure to first-year students. Dr. W attended the majority of the learning forums during the third cohort, the only cohort of advising within this advising model. Dr. W explained:

> I'd much prefer being an advisor for the majors coming into our department for multiple reasons, but the highest among them is building community within the department. If I'm able to be there as a guide, as a helper, as a mentor from the beginning, I think there's just a greater chance of those students developing an identity through their major and carrying that all the way through.

The inclusion of faculty narratives provided a comprehensive demonstration of the experiences of 10 faculty who participated in a shared-split advising model. These responses varied due to the faculty's choice of which experience they wanted to focus on.

Meanwhile, the following section is arranged by themes that arose from faculty responses to specific inquiries.

Learning Forums

During the initial stages of the new advising model, the creation of an environment to share information about the university's requirements and policies, advising practices, and incoming student demographics became essential in planning the learning forums. In addition, the implementation of a new general education program made the need for accurate and timely information to advisors inevitable. Throughout all three advising cohorts, which consisted of nine semesters, some repetition occurred in the learning forum topics to accommodate new faculty advisors. This provided seasoned faculty advisors the opportunity to share their experiences and knowledge with new members.

Responses collected from the pre-assessment guided the planning of the learning forums. Topics during the cohort's first semester of learning forums included intrusive advising and managing difficult conversations with students, the general education program, registration information, and understanding the characteristics of today's students. The following semester, the learning forums addressed the university's academic standards committee, preparation for spring advising, student accommodations, mental illness, general education updates, registration for upcoming semesters, student financial services, and academic progression requirements.

The last semester for the initial cohort of advisors was also the first semester for a new advising cohort. Topics during this semester focused on the university's retention software, discussions with students based on the first-year assessment, documentation

and management of student notes, registration resources, such as the honors program and pre-law track, handoff of advisees to an advisor not participating in this advising model, final examinations, and techniques to conduct out-reach to students. Figure 5 categorized the learning forum topics for the first-three advising cohorts, attendance for this study's participants, and the semesters when the learning forums occurred.

Cohort	Learning Forum Topics	Dr. B	Dr. C	Dr. D	Dr. G	Dr. I	Dr. K	Dr. M	Dr. N	Dr. P	Dr. W
1	Intrusive advising & difficult conversations with students	N/A	X	X	X	X	N/A	N/A	X	X	N/A
	General Education & Registration		X	X	X				X	X	
1	Understanding the characteristics of today's students		X	X	X	X			X		
1	U-SQC and preparing for spring 2016		X	X	X	X			X	X	
1	Student Accommodations & Mental Illness			X	X	X			X	X	
1	Student Financial Services & Academic Progression		X	X	X	X			X	X	
1, 2	Mapworks & First-Year Assessments	X			X	X	N/A		N/A	X	
1, 2	Managing Student Notes	X		X	X	X				X	
1, 2	Advisee handoff, finals and out-reach	X			X	X				X	
2	Career Development and Internships	X	X	X	X	X				X	
2	Having Difficult Conversations (part 1)	X	X	X	X						
2	Having Difficult Conversations (part 2)	X		X	X						
2	Orientation & International Education	X		X	X	X				X	
2, 3	Advisor Hand-off and Updates			X							X
3	Advising & Success Strategies		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	Advising Resources & Internships	X		X		X			X	X	X
3	Athletics & Advising				X					X	X
3	Student Accessibility Services		X	X	X	X				X	X
3	Advising & Orientation		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
3	Fall Updates, Policies & Registration			X	X	X			X		
3	Advising Outreach, Academic Standing & Graduation		X		X	X			X	X	X
3	Inclusive Design			X		X				X	X

Figure 5. Learning forum attendance

Learning forums provided an opportunity for regular interaction each semester among the advisors who work with first-year students. The director of academic advising and faculty co-lead oversaw the organization of the learning forums. While professional development topics were prearranged for each learning forum, the structure was flexible, and time was reserved for open discussion amongst the group. Providing opportunities for professional development is an essential component of this advising model based on advising best practices. Learning forums were created as opportunities for development in advising and are reflective of the advising model's practice. During the first cohort's initial year, learning forums occurred frequently and centered on the identification of this institution's student population, student development, and the advising experiences of first- and second-year students. There were 12 learning forums scheduled throughout the first cohort's first-three semesters. However, the collection of completed attendance sheets indicated a total of 10 learning forums instead of 12 due to one optional forum and a missing attendance sheet in the archived files. The second cohort consisted of 11 learning forums in which eight attendance sheets were available based on one optional forum and two forums with no attendance sheets. The third and last cohort of this study involved 10 learning forums due to one missing attendance sheet. Therefore, the researcher accounted for attendance at learning forums based on ones with attendance sheets only.

Further analysis included a comparison of participant attendance at learning forums in relation to the number of advising cohorts completed. In addition, the researcher connected those responses to participant narratives to provide a description of each faculty advisor's experience. Based on the 10 participants of this study, six attended

the majority of the learning forums. However, four participants attended less than half of the learning forums. During this time, one participant had advised the three cohorts. The topics of learning forums were frequently mentioned in the faculty participant's responses. Some participants shared that learning forums became less significant due to other obligations or personnel experience. While participants noted the helpfulness of the learning forums, repeat content was expressed. Dr. C shared, "I remember thinking that the forums were a good idea, but not really always useful. They certainly stopped being a priority for me. I think it was repeat content they would do again." On the contrary, Dr. P stated, "I liked the meetings surprisingly." Meanwhile, Dr. M acknowledged that attendance was minimal at the learning forums but obtained notes and updates from the undergraduate director in the college.

Themes

This qualitative, interview-based study was organized to ascertain if the experiences of faculty advisors within a new model of advising satisfied the required elements of a community of practice. Those elements include the domain as a knowledge base, the community which embraces learning and fosters interaction, and the practice which includes frameworks, tools, and information that community members share (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). In-person interviews were conducted with 10 faculty members to understand their experiences of this advising model. Once interviews were completed, participant interviews were transcribed. The researcher reviewed all transcripts, analyzed participant responses, and identified statements that directed the creation of the following four themes: advising model, first-year students, faculty

interaction, and development. The creation of a theme was based on repetitive and similar responses from faculty participants.

In addition, subthemes were established which emphasized the specific details of an experience. Within the four themes, eight subthemes emerged: value and structure, was connected with advising model; advising approach and understanding was associated with first-year students; shared learning and relationship building were related with faculty interaction; and advising practice and resources was linked with development. These themes were then compared to the elements of a community of practice to explore potential relationships. The criteria to determine if the elements of a community of practice were exhibited was based on a minimum of 70% of participants exhibiting a subtheme in their interview responses. Five of the eight subthemes reached this benchmark with at least one related to each component of a community of practice.

The connections between the themes and the elements of the domain, the community, and the practice are provided in the following sections. No participants stated adverse sentiments regarding the advising model; however, if faculty participants offered suggestions, those submissions were incorporated into the themes with which they corresponded.

The Domain

The timeframe for advising service in the new model varies among participants. A comparison of all cohorts demonstrated that approximately three-quarters of the full-time faculty within this advising model had advised for two or more cohorts compared to almost all of this study's participants who completed two or more cohorts of advising. Further specifics recognized that half of the participants had advised for the three cohorts

available while less than half completed two of the three advising cohorts. A comparison between the initial advising assessment in fall 2015 to this study's participants revealed that six of the 10 participants were part of the inaugural group of the new advising model and that seven of the 10 participants had no prior experience advising first-year students. While two of those participants gained experience advising first-year students through the institution's previous advising model, only one participant had experience outside of this institution.

The themes *advising model* and *first-year students* are relevant themes for the domain based on participant's responses identifying the domain, i.e., the new advising model and responsibility for advising first-year students. Responses relevant to the new advising model were captured by 90% of the participants and all of the 10 participants' responses related to first-year students. Upon further analysis and coding, the creation of different sub-themes occurred to signify the experiences of participants in a comprehensive manner. Within the theme *advising model, value* and *structure* emerged while the *first-year students'* theme incorporates the subthemes of *advising approach* and *understanding*. An application of the *advising model* and *first-year students'* themes and corresponding subthemes are depicted in Figure 6.

	Advising Model		First-year students	
Participant	Value	Structure	Advising approach	Understanding
Dr. B	X		X	
Dr. C			X	X
Dr. D		X		X
Dr. G	X	X	X	X
Dr. I	X	X	X	
Dr. K		X		X
Dr. M	X	X		X
Dr. N		X	X	X
Dr. P	X	X	X	

Dr. W	X	X	X

Figure 6. Themes of the Domain

The new model of advising is comprised of faculty from various majors, professional advisors, a faculty co-lead, and a director of academic advising. However, one significant commonality among these faculty is advising within the new advising model. When asked about the advising model, some participants shared their experiences while others focused on the model's structure. The subtheme value entailed the meaning that faculty connected to advising. Five faculty, or 50% of respondents, expressed value in their experiences which occurred while advising within the model. The value was described by terms such as, "enjoyed it"; "changed the way I saw students"; "most impactful advising work"; and "positive." Due to contractual restrictions, Dr. B is not eligible to participate in advising but shared, "I just got off doing [the new advising model] even though I really did enjoy it quite a bit. So that's the only reason otherwise, I would definitely still be doing it. I loved it. I loved it." From a relational stance, Dr. G described, "I've enjoyed it. I think it's actually created some really interesting relationships within the department that didn't happen in the old model of advising. It also has given me a window into students who are having problems in their first year in major classes because their instructors are in my major."

This model of advising was implemented in fall 2015 as a replacement to the previous model. The theme, *advising model*, encapsulates eight of the 10 faculty responses that were centered on the *structure* of the advising model. The subtheme, the *structure* represents experiences that occurred based on the design of the advising model. Those experiences are reflected in creating culture, developing relationships, identifying

advising responsibilities, and attending learning forums. New to advising first-year students, Dr. D explained:

> I enjoy it when they come in over the summer and I kind of get to meet them ahead of time and then I see them again when they come in for fall. I also enjoy, there's usually about four weeks or so into the semester they come in and we kind of have a conversation based on that survey they take, just check-in and kind of troubleshoot any problems that are starting to emerge.

In addition, Dr. G noted a positive change that occurred with the advising model was "I think it's helped build a better culture among our first-year students just because they are connected to the faculty in more direct ways. So, I think that's a good change." Dr. P's narrative recognized professional development opportunities and working with the advising unit which are specific design features of this model:

> I felt like anything I didn't know I could take to that meeting. Although the advising office was always great about answering any questions, we had… But the meetings were, for the most part, helpful because they would cover things that I needed to know and that we all got the same message.

One notation worth pointing out is that Dr. I and Dr. K also advised in the previous advising model, CORE. Both respondents articulated students working with a faculty member in their major. Dr. I shared "it enabled me to follow my advisees a little more closely and respond to their needs a little bit better." Additionally, Dr. K communicated:

> I think it's been the most kind of systematic and organized approach to

> advising and situates the faculty, at least the advisor, as an essential part of the process of orienting students to the experience as well as to the respective major.

This new model of advising was designed to work with incoming students during their first three semesters. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, the amount of experience working with first-year students was minimal. However, all participants provided relevant information to their work with *first-year students* which guided two distinct subthemes, *advising approach* and *understanding*. Within the theme of *first-year students* is the *understanding* or identification of the needs and characteristics of this specific student group which was encompassed in seven of the 10 responses. Some participants found that this advising experience changed their previous opinions of first-year students. Those prior assumptions were not negative but inexperienced. Furthermore, variation occurred among how participants characterized first-year students, such as uncertain and unsure while other participants described them as mature and aware. Through this experience, Dr. C articulated a better understanding of first-year students:

> It changed the way that I saw the students. I think I would usually meet a first-year student in my class and they'd either be performing well or not. That would usually have a big impact on how we got along. If they were able to perform well and take my class seriously and just do good work, then we got along really well and if they didn't want to perform well, then I had a hard time caring a whole lot.

Another example of understanding first-years students was provided by Dr. D who explained, “I think I've noticed even just over the time that I've been advising, students seem more hesitant to make those decisions themselves.” Dr. K specified, “I'm

just constantly reminded of the radical uncertainty that students have when they approach this experience." Furthermore, Dr. W attributed more awareness of first-years students through this experience noting, "I think I've learned that their lives are more complicated than maybe I assumed and that they are more capable than maybe I assumed, you know, I'm always surprised by their maturity, their awareness, their passion, and drive." This is Dr. N's initial experience advising first-year students and advising in a model that includes professional advisors. Dr. N elucidated:

> I guess to some extent I recognize much more of the fact that they come in sort of with a total lack of expectation and so I'm much more cognizant of that. And, I'm much easier, is the only word I can think of, much more sympathetic to the way they do things and the things I have to do to bring them along. To mentor them, not so much even in my field, but to mentor them as a student, as an advocate for themselves.

The subtheme, *advising approach* describes how faculty participants have changed their techniques and behaviors when advising first-year students which were illustrated in seven of the 10 respondent's interviews. Dr. W described, "So it's just a much closer relationship to those students than I've really had with anyone else." Meanwhile, Dr. N postulated, "I feel I've learned to be a much better mentor of new freshmen and the kinds of things that I can help them learn." Dr. C expressed that "When I first came in, I was less accessible" but now as their advisor "meeting them at orientation and then a couple of times a semester. I mean it's a given that you're going to meet, you're going to talk, they're going to have questions."

Two participants with significant advising experience, Dr. G and Dr. I provided distinct approaches to their advising. Dr. G explained:

> I don't know philosophically that it has changed and partly because what I did when I was doing this, I usually worked with primarily first-year students. So I had a lot of experience doing that. The context was different certainly and the ways that we think about their degrees was different.

However, Dr. I identified the change as a holistic approach described as:

> We are looking at these students not just as specific majors but as whole college students who have very various and different capacities or things that they bring with them. So, we find out whether they are first-generation students, we find out whether they're athletes, we find that all these kinds of things in addition to their academic backgrounds. So, we just think a little more holistically about who they are and what the right program is for them.

The themes, *advising model* and *first-year students*, are identifiers for the focus and role of faculty advisors within the new advising model. Furthermore, faculty responses reflected that 90% of the faculty articulated the advising model while all participants focused on first-year students within their responses. The domain of a community of practice was substantiated through member recognition of a common identity, faculty advisors working with first-year students. When members present concerns that affect the domain, the identification and possible remedies guide the community's activities. Several concerns were shared pertaining to the advising model's process when changing advisors after a student completes their first-three semesters. Half of the participants presented this as a concern for students for various reasons. Dr. B

identified that “some students should have stayed with me in terms of career goals” while Dr. P shared, “The transition was hard when you gave up your freshman advisees. So, I don't know if there's anything to make that better.” Furthermore, Dr. D described the process:

> I'll develop this relationship with a student and then as soon as they change their major, they're switched to a different advisor. And I get that that's important. But you say that the purpose of advising is, it's not just to help them pick their classes and yet as soon as they changed their major, we yank them.

Further information relevant to the domain included questions on the pre- and post-assessments which inquired about an advisor’s understanding of their role within the new advising model. The majority of the faculty’s pre-assessment responses showed an *understanding of the role as an advisor in this new model* contrasted by half of respondents *understanding after the learning forums* while approximately one-third *understood their role prior to the learning forums*. In addition, assessment results from fall 2018 revealed that eight of the 13 faculty advisors acknowledged having an *excellent understanding* while four respondents identified *good understanding* regarding their *understanding of the role you play as an advisor in this new model*.

The Community

The community element is comprised of one theme, *faculty interaction* which was identified throughout all of the faculty responses. All of the participants recognized that interaction among the faculty advisors occurred within the advising model. However, participant narratives emphasized either learning or interactions which led to the subthemes of *shared learning* and *relationship building*. *Shared learning* depicts an

exchange of ideas and or knowledge between advisors while *relationship building* portrays that through the advising model, faculty had opportunities to engage with other faculty advisors throughout the university. Furthermore, *shared learning* emerged in eight of the 10 participant's responses while five faculty participants expressed *relationship building* within their responses. Figure 7 illustrates the responses that indicate *shared learn*ing and *relationship building* subthemes.

	Faculty Interaction	
Participant	Shared Learning	Relationship Building
Dr. B	X	
Dr. C	X	X
Dr. D		X
Dr. G	X	
Dr. I	X	X
Dr. K		X
Dr. M	X	
Dr. N	X	
Dr. P	X	X
Dr. W	X	

Figure 7. Themes of the Community

The results of interaction among the faculty advisors in the new advising model occurred primarily during the learning forums. While responses varied, several participants characterized learning from one another since they were dealing with the same population of students. Dr. B's response captured that "it's nice to know that you've got somebody else who's working with some of the same issues with their students that I might have and knowing that I can go and talk to them about it that's really nice." Further illustrations of shared learning include Dr. I's experience portrayed as the "ability to just talk with different advisors about what they're seeing, what they're seeing in the students,

what we're seeing in the academic program, and how to work together across our different academic areas." Dr. M described that as a new advisor, others helped with the transition which is something Dr. M has reciprocated. In addition, Dr. D explained:

> I …think it's created opportunities where we know what each other is doing so we can help and if you think about how the rest of our world works, our disciplines often are very different; we're teaching our own classes; we're doing our own forms of research so there's not a lot of overlapping opportunities that are immediately apparent where you're like, oh, I can help you here or I can ask for help here. Whereas with the new advising model, it brings you the same thing. We're all doing the same things for students within their first three semesters in particular. So you can reach out to people outside of your discipline and ask questions and it creates a thing that you have in common and you can chat about.

Dr. G recognized how conversations based on advising occurred within the new model as, "I guess that is true that because the new advising model faculty do meet, there are different sets of conversations that happen and just sort of different things to be aware of." Meanwhile, Dr. N described faculty interaction within the model:

> It really helped to share information. I mean particularly to share information across campus. You know I might've had some of the same relationships across campus with like [removed advisor named] and others without this but I don't think it's as likely. I know it helped me be a better advisor.

Eighty percent of participants alluded that learning occurred through *sharing information*. While two individuals did not provide similar responses, they each identified the opportunity to *build relationships* due to participation within the advising

model. In addition, the *building relationships* subtheme was documented in half of the interviews. While Dr. D related knowing who to refer students to, Dr. K's example illustrated camaraderie. Dr. D explained that "We see each other at the monthly meetings. And if I ever have a student who's interested in a different major, I'll have them go talk to that person." In addition, Dr. D has participated since the model's inception and shared that, "Sometimes at those meetings, I feel like I may be useful to the newer people, so I don't mind going. Even if it's not particularly informative to me, I can help inform somebody else." Meanwhile, Dr. K's experience interacting with other faculty advisors:

> I think that when you walk in the room with training or ongoing educational sessions, I think it's nice to look around and that this is a full-on effort. You know, I think you become kind of myopic in your view that I'm advising in a vacuum versus there are people who have high loads of advisees and there are people who have low levels of advisees, but we're all advising and it does remind you of the value proposition of the university. I think that's important.

Similarly, Dr. C recognized:

> I know more of them (faculty) now. The forums were especially useful for that initially. When someone's stepping into that role for the first time and they know that you've had some experience, there's a lot of just peer to peer stuff that happens, it's not necessarily organized, you just think to ask somebody who's been through it before.

The Practice

The element of practice recognized what participants learned or gained through the new advising model and monthly forums. The classification of practice incorporated

the theme of *development* which was further categorized into *advising practice* and *resources* subthemes. Ninety percent of faculty participants communicated *development* in their responses based on the subtheme, *advising practice.* Meanwhile, one participant did not illustrate *advising practice* in their response but recognized *resources* obtained within the advising model. Upon further review, four of the 10 participants communicated *resources*. The prevalence of these responses was only moderate, but faculty communicated the significance that *resources* had on their advising practice. These subthemes emphasize different characteristics of the new advising model which occurred in part due to the implementation of professional development or monthly learning forums which are demonstrated in Figure 8.

	Development	
Participant	Advising Practice	Resources
Dr. B	X	X
Dr. C	X	
Dr. D	X	
Dr. G		X
Dr. I	X	X
Dr. K	X	X
Dr. M	X	
Dr. N	X	
Dr. P	X	
Dr. W	X	

Figure 8. Themes of the Practice

One of the subthemes within the *development* theme is *advising practice*. Ninety percent or nine of the 10 participants identified how change occurred due to their development in advising, such as a holistic approach, advising philosophies, university information, support services, or skill development. Some participants shared that their

development increased by focusing on specific topics while others stated that they grew as an advisor in this experience. Dr. K shared how he has become more diligent as an advisor and similarly, Dr. N expressed becoming more efficient. Further development was conveyed by Dr. W as "an advisor in the new model, I have to do a lot more, a lot more work that requires organizational skills and time management skills just to get them all through."

Dr. B signified that development led to becoming a better advisor as, "outside of the check boxing part of advising, to do more of the actual advising where you're helping guide them through their career and adulting." Dr. M recognized growth as an advisor:

> It allows us to be more reflective of what is currently going on with students because I know a bit more about what they're doing. And I also think it's helped me to be, I don't think skeptical is the right word, but it's helped me to ask questions about things that they may not be doing.

Dr. I illustrated meeting with students more which was conveyed as "I have one on one meetings with students two or three times a semester." In addition, Dr. I explained the advising practice as, "Sort of marrying checking up on them with their major is much more explicit. So, I understand their major. I can help them with their major, I can help them anticipate what's coming up next and that kind of stuff." Lastly, Dr. D revealed, "I do think probably having the monthly meetings has made us a little more conscious of that holistic approach with the students." However, one improvement suggested that individual development occurs aside from the learning forums. Dr. W recommended that more onboarding should occur for those new to the advising model prior to attending the learning forums.

Resources comprised a range of responses, such as specific development topics, resources available from campus partners, or tools to assist with advising which occurred in 40% of the participants' responses. In addition, responses from Dr. G and Dr. I pinpointed that learning forums from the Counseling Center, Student Accessibility Services, and Center for International Studies assisted in their development as an advisor. Additional *resources* included advising forms and electronic calendars for scheduling advising meetings. Dr. G's portrayal for understanding campus resources and initiatives:

> I think [of] the structure of the meetings that we've had both with respect to the retention software and the conversations that came out of the software's assessment and what's going to happen this year with respect to the university's initiative and the things that come out of the transition course. I think those have changed the entry point for having certain kinds of conversations that are not necessarily easy to have.

The element of the practice was depicted throughout the faculty narratives recognizing how this experience has affected their advising. However, improvements to assist with advising were suggested by some participants. The university had acquired a software retention program introduced early in the onboarding process to the advisors within this model. The software is no longer available due to the vendor's decision to change the focus of its software platform. As a result, the university has not replaced the software for advisors. Participants remarked on the absence of software to take notes. Meanwhile, Dr. N suggested real-time communication in the form of "a digital posting, kind of like a Twitter but not. Someplace you could post ideas or ask questions and you don't have a particular person that you want to talk to."

Pre-assessment responses acknowledged that a little more than half of the faculty *knew where to find materials related to the university policies and regulations.* However, post-assessment results revealed that half of the respondents were able to *after attending the learning forums* while three faculty indicated *already knew how to find this information*. Neither assessment group identified as *not confident* regarding the general education requirements. However, approximately three respondents were *unsure* or *confident* before the learning forums while afterward, more than half were *somewhat confident*. Learning forums dedicated to the institution's general education program were provided on numerous occasions to assist faculty in understanding the new general education program. Lastly, only five respondents who completed the pre-assessment responded to a question on an understanding of student development theory in which two participants acknowledged *not at all extensive* while three identified *somewhat extensive.* This question was not included in the post-assessment. Meanwhile, one other question asked in the final assessment was comparable to the pre- and post-assessment. Thirteen advisors responded that *the learning forums covered topics that are beneficial to you as an advisor* while one respondent indicated they did not.

The implementation of professional development in the form of learning forums was intentional. Major institutional changes included a new general education program and advising model and the identification of faculty with limited advising experience provided meaningful validation for the creation of professional development opportunities in advising. Minimal responses from the participant's interviews adversely addressed the amount of time that participants attended learning forums and the topics covered during learning forums. However, the responses of faculty participants signaled

that the majority of faculty acknowledged development in advising and first-year students, discovered available resources, and benefitted from the communication which occurred during the learning forums.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the experiences of faculty advisors participating in a shared model of advising implemented in 2015 at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. This qualitative, interview-based study was structured to understand the experiences of faculty who have participated in this new model of advising to ascertain if their experiences satisfied the required elements of a community of practice: the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). A community of practice is defined as "groups of people who share a concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). Those elements had an opportunity to develop throughout the institution's advising model during the development opportunities known as learning forums. There are three questions that guided this study.

1. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced a sense of community among faculty advisors?

The community element of a community of practice was captured in the experiences shared by faculty participants. The new model of advising was comprised of an exclusive group of faculty from various majors and departments and professional advising staff. The implementation of this model began fall semester 2015 and learning forums occurred approximately three to four times a semester since August 2015. The

learning forums were the mechanism for interaction for all members of the advising model. This study included three advising cohorts and based on completed attendance sheets, an average of nine learning forums were offered each cohort, approximately three per semester. Regular interaction is required for a community of practice to thrive. More than half of the participants attended the majority of the learning forums offered. While learning forums were organized around specific development topics, the forum's structure remained casual to allow time for interaction.

Furthermore, all of the participants provided examples applicable to the community element of a community of practice. The subthemes of shared learning and relationship building described how community occurred. While eight of the 10 participants focused their experience of community through shared learning, five or half of the participants mentioned they built relationships with other faculty advisors. Furthermore, 50% of participants utilized the term "community" in their description of the new advising model. Dr. B stated, "it does create kind of a community feel because we all go to the same training. So, we have kind of a common language." Dr. K's sentiment sums up the community as "It's a great opportunity to know who I can reach out to or who I can turn to or to know that people I respect across the university are doing this thing which we believe is valuable."

2. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced faculty perceptions of their role as advisors?

The domain within a community of practice includes a common ground and identity. The theme, *advising model*, was identified in the narratives of nine of the 10 faculty participants illustrating the commonality. Narratives included the explicit

reference to the advising model name and one participant noted that the new advising model aligns with the institutional structure. A commitment to the advising model is demonstrated in responses such as, “It's been the most impactful work that I've done from an advising perspective” stated by Dr. B or through Dr. N’s experience as, “I immediately was meeting faculty from across campus and getting to know them and them getting to know me and I thought that was great. I like the advising model.”

In addition, all participants identified the responsibilities which accompanied this role in the new advising model, specifically working with first-year students. The identification of the common identity in a domain is applicable to first-year students which is the focus of this advising model. Dr. W expressed “I developed more awareness about my students as a result of first-year advising.” Meanwhile, with prior experience working with first-year students, Dr. G shared:

> I think the changes that have come have been about sort of like the nuances of what are the sets of other issues that pop up for certain populations of students in ways that has changed from a billion years ago when I did it in graduate school. But also, just with respect to the populations that we have here. I think that's probably been the biggest or most profound change in sort of the way that I do it.

Some faculty recognized the new advising model while others focused on their role as an advisor to first-year students which indicated a common identity among members and their responsibilities in this new model. Threaded through these narratives is understanding the group and the group’s focus which satisfies the requirements of the domain, another required element within a community of practice.

3. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced perceptions of faculty advisors' advising practice?

The last element of a community of practice is the practice which is applicable to the new advising model as the advising approach. Nine of the 10 participants identified development as an advisor while one participant revealed they learned of resources through the experience in the advising model. The delivery of development occurred during the learning forums. Learning forums were organized to promote regular meetings of faculty and professional advisors to ensure a cohesive understanding of university programs and policies, advising practices, and responsibilities. A focus on resources occurred when Dr. G specified:

> It isn't just the logistics of here's how to read a degree audit though, for some people it is, that is part of it, but it is also the techniques, things to think about with respect to mental health, accessibility services, international status.

In addition, advising practices were altered for various reasons, such as, understanding what students experience, changing the topics of conversations, and focusing on details. Dr. P recognized that preparing for advising meetings changed with "I had to do things that were a little out of my basic knowledge, it wasn't just about my major anymore. I got ready and that helped me get more ready for my major too." The theme of development captured the advising practice, therefore fulfilling the last element of a community of practice.

Conclusion

The structure of the new model of advising is multifaceted and includes a focus on first-year students, faculty representation across various majors, collaboration with

professional advising staff, and advising development. The researcher interviewed and analyzed the responses of 10 faculty advisors that participated in a shared-split model of advising. These faculty were interviewed based on their completion of at least one advising cohort since the model began in fall 2015. After the analysis of faculty narratives, coding of themes, and document analysis, faculty experiences were applied to the study's three research questions based on the domain, the practice, and the community, the required elements of a community of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Those three elements were utilized to ascertain if the new model of advising fulfilled the requirements to be identified as a community of practice. Within each of these elements, themes and subthemes emerged reflecting the experiences of faculty participants of the new advising model.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, & RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the findings of a study on a shared model of advising implemented at a four-year, private, comprehensive university. This model was implemented in 2015 as a replacement to the previous faculty-only model and was structured as a shared-split model of advising which joined faculty and professional advisors responsible for working with traditional first-year students. This study encompassed advising model redesign, a community of practice framework (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), and the elements of an advising community of practice. Grounded in learning theory, communities of practice require the elements of the domain as a knowledge-base, the community which embraces learning and fosters interaction, and the practice of frameworks, tools, and information that community members share (Wenger, et al., 2002).

This qualitative, interview-based study was designed to ascertain if faculty experiences in this new model of advising satisfied those elements of a community of practice. The repetitive nature and similar context of the participants' responses determined the threshold that a relationship between the themes and the elements of a community of practice, the domain, the community, and the practice exists in the advising model. Overall, 7 of the 10 participants provided experiences that illustrated that the themes endorsed the domain, the community, and the practice in the new advising model.

The organization of Chapter 5 includes a summary of the research findings, followed by the application of those findings to three research questions, and the

connection of those findings to existing literature. Succeeding sections address the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research.

Summary

Academic advising occurs in higher education institutions worldwide. However, the model and delivery of advising services differ significantly based on institutional type and classification. Habley and Morales (1998) identified that the correct model of advising fits an institution's mission, faculty roles, program policies, and student needs. Institutional changes at a four-year, private, comprehensive institution of higher education in the southeast United States led to a new model of advising for traditional undergraduate students. This new model of advising incorporated the institution's tradition of faculty advising, development opportunities for faculty and professional advisors, information specific to the institution, such as university requirements and policies, identification of student demographics, student development theories, and collaboration with professional advisors who can share information on the best practices in advising. Furthermore, this shared-split advising model between faculty and professional advisors, emphasis on first-year students, and knowledge sharing support the structure for an advising community of practice.

Discussion

Research Questions

The organization of this study was to determine if the required elements of a community of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) were met through the experiences of faculty who have participated in a new model of advising at private, comprehensive university. This model was structured as a shared model of advising

which was comprised of a select group of faculty, professional advisors, director of advising, and faculty co-lead. Carlstrom (2013) identified that the shared advising model structure occurs more frequently at four-year, private institutions. In addition, this study incorporated the framework of Wenger's community of practice. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) defined *communities of practice* as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4). This study analyzed data from 10 faculty advisors who completed at least one advising cohort, which is structured as a three-semester sequence between fall 2015 and fall 2018.

In addition, the documentation received from the director of academic advising showed that between fall 2015 to fall 2018, the number of faculty in the advising model was between 19 and 22 depending on undergraduate student enrollment. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) related the size of a community of practice to opportunities for relationship building, such as those with "15 to 50 participants could become differentiated" (p. 35). Historical data and enrollment trends at this institution do not indicate that more than 28 faculty members would be needed in advising. This new model of advising supported advisor interaction through monthly learning forums which provided an opportunity for communication, learning, and collaboration to occur. O'Banion (1994) emphasized the importance of continued in-service programming for academic advising. Furthermore, Eddy and Garza Mitchell (2012) acknowledged that faculty benefit when networks occur over extended time when developing new skills. Therefore, learning forums occurred every three to four weeks during the fall and spring

semesters and consisted of on-campus meetings. Approximately, 11 learning forums were offered for each of the three advising cohorts.

The required elements of a community of practice include the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; E. Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). The demonstration of the required elements applicable to the new advising model includes the domain as an exclusive group of advisors committed to first-year undergraduate college students, the community of a select group of full-time faculty and professional advisors who meet regularly, and the practice of development, sharing knowledge, and creating advising resources. Therefore, the research questions of this study aligned with the three elements of a community of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The following section illustrates how the findings from this research correlated to those three questions.

1. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced a sense of community among faculty advisors?

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) recognized the community as "embracing learning, fostering interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust. It encourages a willingness to share one's ideas, expose one's ignorance, ask difficult questions, and listen carefully" (p. 28). The new advising model's community consists of faculty and professional advisors which have been identified as a best practice in advising models (Wilbur, 2003). In addition, King (2003) postulated that an effective advising practice occurs when faculty and staff work together. The structure of this community brought faculty together from various departments throughout the university which assists in alleviating the issue that higher education institutions encounter with

creating networks for faculty (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2012). Participant narratives of their experience within the new advising model illustrated that community occurred through interaction. Furthermore, the interaction allowed the opportunity to share information with other faculty advisors and the potential to build relationships throughout the university.

Within the element of the community, *faculty interaction* arose as the theme along with the subthemes of *shared learning* and *relationship building*. Faculty advisors in this new model are known for their role in the advising model, a named entity on-campus which was reflected in participant's responses. This community has an identity and is affiliated with their work with first-year undergraduate students. Through *faculty interaction*, participants articulated that they learned or built relationships. Half of the faculty participants acknowledged that the learning forums were the mechanism for *faculty interaction.*

The interaction during learning forums provided an opportunity for shared learning to occur between community members and with individuals from different campus services. Some learning forums included an invitation to campus partners to share information about their respective services with the advisors. In addition, learning forums were structured to provide time to ask questions and have an open discussion among all members. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) designated this type of meeting structure as a technique that facilitates trust within the community. Participants stated that the director of academic advising and professional advisors assisted with questions, shared updates and resources, and pertinent university information with the community which was identified by Christman (2008) as responsibilities of an advising

unit. The director of academic advising and faculty co-lead were responsible for organizing the learning forums. While faculty do not report to the director of advising, having an administrator to oversee advising emphasizes the importance of advising (King, 2003).

The applicability of the *faculty interaction* theme and *shared learning* and *relationship building* subthemes reflect the element of the community in this community of practice. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) indicated that communities of practice occur among individual units while joining the entire system around core knowledge requirements. Learning forums provided an opportunity for members of the community to interact and learn. Through the interactions, faculty advisors identified building relationships with other faculty advisors who also focus on advising first-year students.

2. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced faculty perceptions of their role as advisors?

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) defined the domain as "a knowledge base, which creates a common ground and sense of common identity. A well-defined domain legitimizes the community by affirming its purpose and value to members and other stakeholders" (p. 27). Hemwall (2008) indicated that university officials are instrumental in determining how advising is recognized and how faculty feel supported in this role. In addition, factors relevant to the domain include a "focus on the dimensions of the domain; aspects for members to be passionate; and a scope wide enough for new people and new ideas but narrow enough to keep all members interested" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 75). Based on the characteristics of the new advising

model, those factors are applicable based on advising first-year students as the dimension of the domain, faculty are passionate working with students, and the scope includes learning about advising and first-year students.

Faculty narratives identified with their advising role and the specific student population they were working with; hence, the themes of *advising model* and *first-year students.* Nine of the 10 participants provided information that represented the *advising model* and responses were further categorized as *value* and *structure*. Participants referred to the model by name and the title associated with this role at this institution to distinguish their work. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) established that when members have a sense of identity, the community thrives. The recognition of this advising role and feeling of importance by higher education administrators affects a student's experience (Glennen, 2003).

In addition, the theme *first-year students* were depicted by all of the participants in which the *understanding* and *advising approach* further classified working with this student population. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) ascertained that communities form an identity when members know the focus of the domain. The illustration that the majority of participants articulated the importance of understanding first-year students signifies the focus of the advising model. Furthermore, the commitment of this community is based on advising, which adheres to The National Academic Advising Associations (NACADA) value for improving student educational experiences (Beatty, 1991).

3. How has participation in the new model of advising influenced perceptions of faculty advisors' advising practice?

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) postulated that the practice "is a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories, and documents that community members share" (p. 29). Furthermore, the knowledge and resources that members gain will support them in their work (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The element of the practice was differentiated into the theme of *development*. Wallace and Wallace (2010) indicated that development is the preferred terminology when discussing training especially when faculty are involved. The *development* theme was comprised of the *resources* and *advising practice* subthemes. Folsom and Scobie (2010) stressed that skilled advisors can assist students in understanding their educational experience. The majority of faculty, nine out of the 10 participants elucidated how they approached advising which had changed from their previous practices.

King and Kerr (2005) advocated that advising development is conceptual by presenting foundational advising information; informational by sharing university information; and relational through interpersonal skill development. Furthermore, professional development should include topics that are relevant and meaningful and that resources are easily accessible (Wallace & Wallace, 2010). Learning forums included information on the different advising approaches of appreciative advising, developmental advising, and strengths-based advising. Furthermore, several learning forums focused exclusively on the institution's general education program, advising resources, such as first-year assessment and the institution's software retention program, and campus partners including student financial services, health services, career development, and internship offices. Lastly, learning forums included topics on communication and relationship building, such as managing difficult conversations. Furthermore, Folsom,

Shultz, Scobie, and Miller (2010) reinforced those features that provide a comprehensive understanding of advising and its effects on retention, student and advisor relationship, institutional details including policies, curriculum, and resources, and techniques that foster communication.

Voller, Miller, and Neste (2010) ascertained that developmental opportunities which are conceptual, informational, and relational support advisors regardless of their role in advising, such as faculty or professional staff and institutional type. Within this shared model of advising, faculty advisors and professional advisors advised first-year undergraduate students and attended learning forums together. This interaction provided an opportunity for faculty advisors, professional advisors and campus partners to share information and create resources if needed. While several participants recognized resources in their responses, the common premise articulated an understanding of campus resources and initiatives.

Three questions guided this study to determine if the experiences of faculty advisors satisfied the required elements of a community of practice, the domain, the practice, and the community (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Faculty participants were interviewed, transcripts and advising documents were analyzed, and all documentation was applied to the three elements of a community of practice. The narratives of faculty participants in Chapter 4 illustrated how faculty experiences fulfilled those elements. Therefore, an advising community of practice was established.

Value

Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) determined that "communities of practice do not merely manage knowledge but create value in multiple ways for their

members and for the organization" (p. 15). While the researcher did not inquire about value during the in-person interviews, half of the faculty participants specifically mentioned value for advising within the new advising model. Those responses were included in Chapter 4 within the theme, *advising model* in the domain.

In addition, value can be defined as tangible and intangible within a community of practice. Tangible items are validated in performance patterns identifying that knowledge occurred while intangible items are less concrete, such as relationships and a sense of belonging (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). As demonstrated in the *development* theme within the element of the practice, the *first-year students'* theme within the element of the domain, and *shared learning* subtheme in the community element, faculty participants recognized changes in their advising practice. Intangible items were reflected in faculty narratives in the *advising model* theme within the element of the domain and *relationship building* within the community element.

A foundation paper on the conceptual framework of value creation in communities and networks was utilized as a reference in this study only (Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat, 2011). Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat (2011) concluded that the five cycles of "immediate value, potential value, applied value, realized value, and reframing value" occurs over time (pp. 19-21). While this advising community of practice is relatively young, faculty narratives were reflective of the immediate, potential, and applied values. Narratives referenced immediate value that participants experienced within and for the advising model, the potential value was illustrated through the relationships, resources, and intangible items, and the applied value was identified by the change in practice.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the narratives of faculty and an analysis of the new advising model's documentation, the following section focuses on recommendations for the implementation of a shared-split model of advising. This model of advising was created for a private, comprehensive university to meet the advising needs of their traditional undergraduate students. Furthermore, this shared-split advising model aligned with the required elements of a community of practice, the domain, the community, and the practice due to institutional support for a new advising model concentrated on first-year advising among faculty and professional advisors who identity and address advising concerns, and the creation of resources to assist advisors in this role.

Several items must occur prior to the implementation of a new advising model. Habley and Morales (1998) determined that an effective model of advising corresponds with the institution's mission, faculty roles, program policies, and student needs. These characteristics were addressed prior to the creation of the new advising model. A concentrated effort was made to model the institution's mission of providing a transformative educational experience by assigning students to a faculty member in their major who was interested in working with first-year students. Several participants commented that this was a major change from the previous advising model and expressed being pleased with this change. Dr. W acknowledged a preference for advising major students because it provides a sense of community and students can develop an identity within their major which can benefit them throughout their academic career.

All participants in this study reflected in their narratives the theme of *first-year students* which was further characterized by the subthemes, *advising approach* and

understanding. Both subthemes were identified by 7 of the 10 participants. These subthemes portrayed how the study's participants changed or developed an advising approach when working with first-year students and have become knowledgeable about this student population. Participant responses demonstrated the subtheme *advising approach* through practicing holistic advising, understanding the difference between first-year students and upper-class students, and providing an opportunity for relationships to develop. Furthermore, the opportunity to understand the characteristics of first-year students allowed participants to recognize previous misconceptions and how to work specifically with this group at this institution. Participants also shared experiences that focused on an acknowledgment of the radical uncertainty that students have and lack of expectations. However, one participant mentioned that the lives of first-year students are more complicated than they imagined. Experiences focused on advising first-year students are comparable to demonstrating the focus of the domain.

The institution recognized that working with traditional undergraduate students in their first year can be time-consuming (Dillon & Fisher, 2000) and compensated faculty advisors with load credit based on a one-credit hour for each semester in a cohort, therefore, three-credit hours for each cohort completed. This higher education institution supported the recommendation for rewards in the form of load credit to emphasize the importance placed on advising first-year students (Hemwall, 2008; McGillin, 2003;). In addition, the university supported this role by allowing advising completed within this model to count as service when faculty apply for promotion and tenure (Dillon & Fisher, 2000; McGillin, 2003; Myers & Dyer, 1990). Prior to the implementation of this advising model, support from the Provost's Office was obtained. Institutional policies and

requirements were discussed during the learning forums to ensure that all advisors were informed. The inclusion of advising development or learning forums further demonstrated support for advising by university officials at this institution (Hemwall, 2008). During the first cohort, 12 forums were provided, the second cohort offered 11 learning forums, and cohort three consisted of 10 forums. Some forums focused on the institution's specifics, such as the new general education program which was offered numerous times to support advisors with the implementation. The majority of the faculty participants had no prior experience advising first-year students. Learning forums were created to assist faculty in advising development and an opportunity for all advisors working with first-year students to get together regularly each semester. Based on the 10 participants of this study, six attended the majority of the learning forums. The development intended during the learning forums served as an opportunity for faculty advisors to enhance their advising practice and share techniques with other faculty advisors which is indicative of the practice, a required element of a community of practice.

In addition, an examination of the student population consisted of enrollment in majors, university's retention rate, classification as traditional undergraduate or transfer student, and additional characteristics, such as a first-generation college student prior to the advising model's implementation. The identification of the student population is a significant feature when establishing an institution's advising structure (King, 2003). Dr. G had prior advising experience working with first-year students but acknowledged that the learning forums provided data on the institution's student demographics which assisted in understanding this population. Students who were undecided were assigned to

a professional advisor who has the time and resources needed to work intrusively with this student population. Several participants identified the relationship with the professional advisors as supportive and appreciative of their role working with different student groups.

While a decrease in the number of higher education institutions that utilized a faculty only model occurred, Habley (2004) noted that shared advising between faculty and professional advisors has become a more valuable approach. This institution recognized and endorsed the role of faculty advising which guided in the creation of the new advising model. One participant mentioned that their previous institutions did not have professional advising and was surprised by how the new advising was structured. All participants within this study acknowledged that interaction occurred within this advising model creating the *faculty interaction* theme which was further delineated into the *shared learning* and *relationship building* subthemes. Based on the interactions among faculty from multiple departments and majors and professional advisors, learning from one another and relationship building emerged. The element of the community is demonstrated by faculty mentioning that they built relationships with other faculty who advise first-year students and professional advisors as a result of the new advising model's practice of regular interaction in the form of learning forums.

Furthermore, successful faculty advising requires "a mission statement which guides advising activities; an individual designated by the institution to coordinate advising; a systematic training program for all advisors; evaluation of the advising program and advisors; and recognition and reward for exemplary advising" (King, 2003, p. 136). The advising model at this institution included each of those features in its

organizational structure. This advising community's mission statement is to develop a culture of support using a strong knowledge base to promote successful academic advising. The incorporation of learning forums served as development opportunities for advisors within the new model. Meanwhile, a director of academic advising coordinates advising throughout the university while a faculty co-lead supports the new model of advising (Habley, 2004). Throughout this study, training opportunities are depicted as learning forums. The theme, *development* was communicated by the majority of this study's participants in relation to their advising practice. Furthermore, this study included three assessments (See Appendices C, D, and E for details) that were offered throughout the advising model's inception in 2015. However, there is room to develop a comprehensive assessment strategy for advising. Due to the nature of this qualitative research, student feedback on advising was not included. Aforementioned, recognition for advisors in this advising community of practice consisted of credit load and documentation for promotion and tenure. One significant strategy that supported this advising model was the endorsement received from university officials (Wallace & Wallace, 2010).

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative, interview-based study was conducted at a small, private, comprehensive institution in the southeast United States and provides narratives collected from full-time faculty who advise first-year traditional undergraduate students. This study contributes to the research on faculty perceptions of advising and the community of practice framework (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) in higher education institutions which are both limited. Furthermore, this study demonstrates how a shared

model of advising was employed at an institution with a strong history in faculty advising in which participants responded favorably to the change. Recommendations for future research include identifying how institutions adhere to the five features of successful advising; assessing the applicability of the shared advising model to other types of higher education institutions, such as large, private and public colleges or universities; expanding advising development opportunities to faculty and staff who are not included in a specific group or cohort; assessing the nature of professional development topics; and measuring student satisfaction in advising once professional development was completed.

King (2003) determined that successful advising include "a mission statement guiding advising activities; a specific individual designated by the institution to coordinate advising; a systematic training program for all advisors; evaluation of the advising program and advisors; and recognition and reward for exemplary advising" (p. 136). This study applied each of those characteristics to its new advising model. However, research is limited to the implementation of an advising model which emphasizes how those features are applied. In addition, it would be valuable to understand how these features are applied to different institutional types. Habley (2004) identified that faculty and professional advisors working together is beneficial. Future research should examine how the shared model is employed and assessed at different institutions to ascertain if the aforementioned benefits are widely applicable.

While this study focused on first-year students, all advisors can benefit from professional development because the knowledge gained is pertinent when working with all students. Topics, such as academic progress, career planning, major selection, and

graduation requirements (Glennen, 2003; Kramer & Spencer, 1989) are also beneficial to students beyond their first year. In addition, advisors are responsible for working with students with various needs, such as students with disabilities or students interested in professional tracks, such as pre-med and pre-law (Habley, 2004). Future research should describe who advising development is offered to and how it is administered for advisors with varying levels of experience. Previous research has indicated that limited opportunities and minimal participation in advisor development have occurred (Habley, 2004; Wallace & Wallace, 2010). When working with faculty, professional development opportunities should consider the timing of a semester and faculty workloads (Wallace & Wallace, 2010). The identification of when and how professional development was offered, and resource type should be discussed in future research to ascertain if specific accommodations should occur.

The last recommendation for future research emphasizes the assessment and analysis of student satisfaction of advising once professional development has occurred. This recommendation provides faculty advisors an opportunity to receive professional development, time to modify their current advising practice which is followed by the application of their knowledge gained through professional development. This process will be lengthy and requires a strategic plan to implement but the outcome will demonstrate how students perceive their advising experience especially when compared to previous advising assessments.

Conclusion

The present study captured the themes of advising model, first-year students, faculty interaction, development, and resources reflected in faculty narratives who

participated in a new model of advising. Those narratives satisfied the required elements of Wenger's community of practice, the domain, the community, and the practice. The inclusion of the learning forums or advising development assisted with faculty interaction, sharing information across campus, and building relationships among community members. Additionally, this study captured the value of a community of practice.

The inclusion of faculty narratives provides a comprehensive understanding of their experience which differs from the role of a professional advisor. However, responses indicated that a shared model of advising worked for this institution. Faculty feedback shared experiences of their work in a shared model, suggestions for improvement, and an understanding of advising first-year students.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent
Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of the project: A Qualitative Study on the Experiences of Faculty Advisors Participating in a Shared Model of Advising at the Private, Comprehensive University

Principal investigator: Kristina Siarzynski-Ferrer, Student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in the Department of Educational Leadership

Research statement: I am a doctoral student at UNC-Charlotte in the Department of Educational Leadership. A requirement of this program includes conducting a research study and I am seeking your participation.

- This study is completely voluntary and you can recuse yourself at any time.

Research summary: The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the experiences of faculty advisors participating in a shared model of advising at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States.

- This is a qualitative, interview-based study informed by phenomenology. I am looking for faculty to participate in an in-person interview lasting between sixty to ninety minutes which will take place at the institution you are employed. You may choose to skip a question you do not want to answer. If necessary, additional follow-up discussions may be needed to clarify responses.
- You were chosen due to your participation in the new model of advising because you have completed the required minimum of 3 semesters under this advising model. Your responses will assist in understanding the experiences of faculty who have participated in this new model of advising to ascertain if their experiences satisfy the required elements of a community of practice.
- All interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed by a third-party. I will utilize the transcriptions to identity common words or themes. As a participant, you will receive a copy of your interview transcription(s) and any themes, which emerge, in your responses. Once the student's degree is conferred, all audio recordings and transcriptions will be deleted.

Reasonable, foreseeable risk(s): Breach of confidentiality, which is minimal due to the following methods:

- You have been assigned a pseudonym with no identifiable characteristics. All identifiable data has been removed including your faculty rank, role in your respective college and department.
- While the study is active, all data will be stored in a password-protected database that can be accessed by the primary researcher.
- Other people with approval from the Investigator may need to see the information we collect about you. Including people who work for UNC Charlotte and other agencies as required by law or allowed by federal regulations.

Expected benefits: No incentives exist for participation in this study. While you may not benefit directly from being in this study, other faculty members may benefit due to obtaining an understanding of their experience in advising and developmental opportunities in advising.

No alternate procedures exist for this study. This information was provided to help you decide whether or not to participate. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this research study.

Research study details: The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the experiences of faculty advisors participating in a shared model of advising at a private, comprehensive university in the southeast United States. This shared model of advising was implemented in 2015 as a replacement to the previous faculty only model and is structured as a shared-split model of advising joining faculty and professional advisors responsible for working with incoming first-year students. This study provides the fundamentals of an advising model redesign, communities of practice, and the design elements of an advising community of practice. This qualitative, interview-based study informed by phenomenology is organized to understand the experiences of those faculty who have participated in this new model of advising to ascertain if their experiences satisfy the required elements of a community of practice. The 3 elements of the domain, the community, and the practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) have the opportunity to unfold as part of the institution's advising development opportunities known as learning forums.

- Communities of practice are "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4).

How will my information be used after the study is over? After this study is complete, study data may be shared with other researchers for use in other studies or as may be needed as part of publishing our results. The data we share will NOT include information that could identify you.

Who can answer my questions about this study and my rights as a participant? You may contact Kristina Siarzynski-Ferrer at ksiarzyn@uncc.edu or (267) 760-4993. My faculty advisor is Dr. Mark D'Amico at mmdamico@uncc.edu.

If you wish to speak with someone other than the researcher, contact the Office of Research Compliance at 704-687-1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Consent to Participate

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above. I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____

Name (PRINT)

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____ _____

Name & signature of person obtaining consent Date

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your experience in advising. Potential follow-up questions include:
    - How long have you advised at this institution?
    - Did you advise under the CORE model of advising (prior to fall 2015)?
2. What has been your experience with the new model of advising? Potential follow-up questions include:
    - What was your reaction to the advising model changing?
    - How did you handle the change from the CORE model to the new model?
3. Tell me about an advising experience you had that may have been influenced by the new advising model
4. How has participation under the new model of advising affected your relationships with other faculty advisors?
5. Has your understanding of advising first-year college students changed?
6. How has your experience under the new model of advising affected your advising practice?
7. How do you think the new model of advising has affected the institution?
8. What improvements do you think could be made to the new model of advising?

Appendix C: Pre-Assessment

1. I know where to find materials related to university policies and regulations?

1	2	3	4
Absolutely	Somewhat sure	I can figure it out	No idea

2. I am confident in discussing the new general education requirements with my advisees?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Unsure	Not at all

3. I understand my role as an advisor under the new advising model?

Yes	Somewhat	No
* Please share your understanding	Please share your understanding	Did you attend the sessions offered during the spring semester regarding Royal Advising?

4. Do you understand the role that an advisor plays in student retention?

Yes	Somewhat	No
*Please share your understanding	Please share your understanding	

5. Have you served as an advisor at a previous institution?

Yes	No
*How long?	

6. How extensive is your knowledge of student development theory?

1	2	3	4
Very Extensive	Somewhat Extensive	Not at all Extensive	Unsure

7. What are your expectations of being an advisor under the new advising model?

8. What additional information regarding advising, university policies or other areas would you like to gain more understanding?

* additional prompts asked

Appendix D: Post-Assessment

Which learning community forums have you attended? (check all that apply)

_____ September 18th – Intrusive advising and difficult conversations with students
_____ October 9th – How to avoid prescriptive advising during your advising session
_____ October 30th – Open advising forum
_____ November 20th – Understanding the characteristics of today's students
_____ December 11th – U-SQC and preparing for spring 2016

1. After attending the learning community forums, are you able to find materials related to university policies and regulations?

Yes	Somewhat	No	I already knew how to find this information

2. After attending the learning community forums, what is your confidence level in discussing the new general education requirements with my advisees?

Very Confident	Somewhat confident	Not Confident	I was confident in my understanding prior to attending the forums

3. Has attending the learning community forums helped you understand your role as an advisor?

Yes	Somewhat	No	I understood my role prior to attending the forums

4. Has attending the learning community forums increased your understanding in the role that an advisor plays in student retention?

Yes	Somewhat	No	I understood this relationship prior to attending the forums

5. What suggestions and improvements would you like to see implemented in spring 2016? (Please note- learning community forums will be scheduled on a monthly basis, however, dates have yet to be determined)

6. What topics would you like to be covered during spring 2016?

7. Please share your thoughts and any concerns you may have regarding the new advising model.

Appendix E: Fall 2018 Advising Assessment

1. I know where to find materials related to University policies and regulations:

1	2	3	4
Absolutely	Somewhat sure	I can figure it out	No idea

2. I am confident in discussing the General education program with my advisees:

1	2	3	4	5
Very confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Unsure	Not at all

3. I understand my role as an advisor in the new advising model:

Yes	Somewhat	No
Please share:	Please share:	Please explain:

4. Do you understand the role that an advisor plays in student retention?

5. What are your expectations as an advisor? (open-ended)

6. What additional information