

THE EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIC ADVISING AS A PRACTICE AND AS A PROFESSION

Hilleary Himes and Janet Schulenberg

Study the past if you would define the future.

—Confucius (551–479 BC)

Those who wish to effect change in the role and status of academic advising within higher education need an understanding of the structural obstacles to and opportunities for innovation. We provide an overview of the history of the academic advising field with particular focus on areas with lasting ramifications for status and practice. In tracing the history of academic advising from a structuration perspective, we found three important influential trends: expansion of the purposes for attending higher education, the emergence of academic disciplines and their influence in knowledge generation, and changes in theoretical perspectives and perceived roles of academic advising.

Reader Learning Outcomes

From studying this chapter, advisors will use knowledge gained on the history of advising to

- identify several influences on the development of academic advising in the United States,
- select participation opportunities that may influence future change, and
- explain implicit and explicit structures of the institutional system and their relationship to the local and global history of academic advising.

Over the past two centuries, academic advising has emerged as an increasingly important component of higher education. Attention to the purposes, guiding principles, and outcomes of advising has increased, and as the field matures, practitioners increasingly view advising as a profession. In line with this movement, master

academic advisors must gain an understanding of the ways the history of advising affects their daily interactions with students and the role of practice within higher education. Further, those who wish to effect change need to know the structures and roles that create obstacles to and opportunities for innovation. This chapter provides an overview of the history of the academic advising field with particular focus on areas with lasting ramifications on status and practice.

Scholars have divided the history of academic advising into four eras:

1. Prior to 1870, academic advising was a largely unrecognized activity.
2. Between 1870 and 1970, the role of academic advising was recognized, but remained largely unexamined by both practitioners and other stakeholders.
3. Between 1970 and 2003, academic advising gained greater recognition and examination by practitioners (Frost, 2000; Kuhn, 2008).
4. From 2003 to present, academic advising practitioners attempt to intentionally clarify and convey the role of advising, including that of advising as a profession (Cate & Miller, 2015).

A current focus of advising scholarship is on illuminating the distinctive role of advising in higher education and elevating it in the eyes of others, such as higher education administrators, students, and the general public (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008; Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010). The historical development of the field sheds light on the reasons that those in higher education, including those who advise students, do not consistently value the practice or the expertise of advisors. It also points toward opportunities for change.

Structuration theory informs this discussion. It places social structures (defined roles, institutions, rules, etc.) in a dual role (Giddens, 1984). Social structures shape human practices by defining the goals that can and cannot be accomplished by an actor in a particular social role. Despite the boundaries, actors create and reproduce social structures (Giddens, 1984) that both constrain and enable human action. Further, they effect changes to systems both unintentionally and intentionally:

Human agents [are] “knowledgeable” and “enabled” [implying] that those agents are capable of putting their structurally formed capacities to work in creative or innovative ways. And, if enough people or even a few people who are powerful enough act in innovative ways, their action may have the consequence of transforming the very structures that gave them the capacity to act. (Sewell, 1992, p. 4)

The recent discussion of academic advising as a profession reflects social structures that both enable and constrain academic advisors. As a result, those in positions to innovate benefit from an understanding of the history of academic advising.

The history of academic advising within higher education as viewed from a structuration perspective reveals three influential trends:

- The social and professional roles higher education played for individuals expanded and grew complicated. Increased access to higher education, evolution of the social needs for an educated citizenry, and changes in credentialing for the professions are connected to both an increase in curricular complexity and the enrollment of an expanding and increasingly diverse student body.
- As academic disciplines emerged and the role of knowledge generation gained importance in the funding model for higher education institutions, faculty members became decidedly specialized in their disciplines (Raskin, 1979). At the same time, stakeholders recognized the need for specialization in helping students. Efforts to meet the need for specialized skills and knowledge led to the creation of a student personnel cadre (Cook, 2009), many with backgrounds in psychological theory and method.
- Particularly since 2000, practitioners and other stakeholders have paid increasing attention to the examination of academic advising philosophy, practice, and evaluation (Frost, 2000; Kuhn, 2008; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2010). Changes in the particular theoretical perspectives and perceived roles of academic advising as well as the differential implementation of academic advising among higher education institutions contributed to the current shape and status of academic advising.

These historical trends inform past and present views of academic advising, create the boundaries for current practices and structures, and suggest areas critical to future directions and professionalization of the field. We encourage readers to gain familiarity with the historical accounts of advising by Frost (2000), Grites (1979), Kuhn (2008), as well as Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2010), as this chapter omits details articulated by other authors.

The First Advising Era (1620 to 1870): Academic Advising Is Unrecognized

Frost (2000) and Kuhn (2008) characterized the First Advising Era (1620–1870) as a period when academic advising was undefined within American higher education. By the turn of the 19th century, higher education had transformed dramatically, creating the need for students to make academic decisions with the aid of an academic advisor. The previous 200 years of higher education perpetuated the structures and roles from which academic advising emerged.

Prior to the American Revolution, nine colleges existed in the colonies, and they enrolled few students, predominantly from wealthy classes (Rudolph, 1990). These earliest institutions unified church and state, creating institutions for elite education and socialization for those destined for political and social leadership, primarily as

ministers. By 1750, college affiliation had become a mark of prestige, providing formal socialization of males likely to hold positions of power and providing families a network of social connections that reinforced the existing social hierarchy (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2004; Vine, 1976). Few individuals attended college, and fewer graduated. Colleges played little or no role in credentialing for any professional field (Thelin, 2004); rather, colleges provided young teenage boys an education in manhood through strict intellectual and physical discipline as role modeled and enforced by teachers (Thelin, 2004; Vine, 1976). In particular, institutional leaders meant to prevent the effeminization of society, which they feared would be a consequence of allowing the children of the social and political elite to spend their adolescence with coddling mothers (Vine, 1976).

During this time, relationships between students and teachers were extremely formal and hierarchical. They mainly revolved around disciplinary issues (Thelin, 2004). Students lived and learned in austere environments. As the authoritarian figures, faculty members wielded power over students, who frequently challenged faculty authority with outbursts of riotous behavior. During this era, students and faculty members remained structurally separated, and the notion of a nurturing relationship between a faculty member and a student was antithetical to the role of higher education in socializing elite boys.

Following the American Revolution, the purposes of higher education institutions shifted from educating the clergy toward “educating citizens for a new republic” (Frost, 2000, p. 5). During this period, the enlightenment ideal of an educated citizenry prevailed: Persons put the welfare of the country ahead of individual interests. The colonial universities shed their historical ties to particular religious denominations and aligned control with the state (Thelin, 2004). A broader population of students was educated in subjects in keeping with enlightenment values: applied sciences (e.g., agriculture), professions (e.g., medicine, civics), and modern languages (particularly French). Immediately following the Revolution and into the 19th century, “The American college was conceived of as a social investment” (Thelin, 2004, p. 58). By the end of the 19th century, however, the civic purpose had diminished.

As the public displaced the public servant in the conduct of civil affairs, the college was denied some of its sense of purpose. As Americans lost their sense of society and substituted for it a reckless individualism, there was less demand on the colleges to produce dedicated leaders. . . . In time colleges would be more concerned about the expectations of their students than about the expectations of society. (Thelin, 2004, pp. 59-60)

From 1783 to 1899, more than 450 colleges were founded and enrollments increased a hundredfold (Geiger, 2000). The western frontier was growing, in part because church denominations sought to offer religious-sponsored education to local residents and in part because of the need for educated individuals on the frontier (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2004). Through this expansion of institutional mission and increase in number of institutions, a wider range of individuals gained access to

college. In particular, the number of colleges for women and Blacks, as well as institutions specifically geared toward the emerging sciences of engineering and agriculture (e.g., land grant institutions), increased dramatically (Geiger, 2000). These changes in mission and college-attendance patterns laid the foundation for aspects of American higher education still relevant today. Much more research on the development of academic advising at these emerging institutions is needed; this summary is largely informed by developments at universities.

Of particular salience for this period, classical curricula were evolving and becoming increasingly focused on practical disciplines such as natural sciences and philosophy. Connected to this, more faculty members developed disciplinary specializations. As a result individual faculty members no longer taught all classes for a cohort; rather, each taught within disciplinary areas, and institutions often hired young scholars who had been educated abroad. By the 1830s, some institutions no longer required the student to learn Latin and Greek, and others allowed junior and senior students to select optional studies (Sack, 1963). Also at this time, some college presidents instituted changes such as formal matriculation and established new roles for faculty, including as an academic advisor. In an 1840 letter to his mother, Rutherford B. Hayes, a student at Kenyon College in Ohio, explained the role of advisor to his mother:

A new rule has been established that each student shall choose from among the faculty some one who is to be his adviser and friend in all matters in which assistance is desired and is to be the medium of communication between the student and faculty. This I like very much. My patron is a tutor in the Grammar School who has graduated since I came here. Upon the whole, the President governs very well for those who intend to take every opportunity to evade the laws. But he is rather hard on those who are disposed to conduct themselves properly. (Hayes & Williams, 1922, p. 54)

The intention behind the creation of an advisor role and the subsequent effects on students, faculty members, and institutions remain unclear. Tutors, like the one chosen by Hayes, were recent graduates, who were likely of a similar age to enrolled students. As Hayes indicated, faculty members and presidents served as *in loco parentis* disciplinarians. Other letters sent home by Hayes described turbulent relationships between faculty members and students that often resulted in students' dismissal from college (Hayes & Williams, 1922). During this era, the few college enrollments were further diminished by dismissals (apparently a common form of discipline). In fact, these low enrollments cost the President of Kenyon College his job (Douglass, 1844).

Nineteenth-century students differed from their 18th-century counterparts. They were older, more indulged, operated with a sense of honor, and expected more luxury. Student clubs (eating clubs) had been formed in the colonial era. Later, honor societies were formed by and for students who did not want to rebel against the faculty or indulge in drink or sport. Collegiate sports and other student activities associated with higher education institutions had gained popularity by 1840 (Frost, 2000; Geiger, 2000).

The Second Era (1870 to 1970): Academic Advising Remains Unexamined

The Second Advising Era has been defined as a period during which institutions created the particular role of a primary academic advisor, but the goals, methods, and theories that guided practice were largely undefined and unexamined (Frost, 2000). Several key elements affected the development of academic advising: knowledge expanded as did the college curriculum, student–faculty relationships similar to those of the post-Revolution remained, student enrollment and diversity increased, and student support systems—informed by the emerging field of educational psychology—proliferated (Frost, 2000; Kuhn, 2008; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2010).

Curricular expansion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries exerted an impact on the history of academic advising (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2010). Curricular expansion related to academic advising was embodied in the 1880s at The Johns Hopkins University, which created topical areas of focus—the beginning of undergraduate majors—and the creation of a formal role of academic advisors to guide and approve student choices for study (White & Khakpour, 2006). Around the same time, Harvard University instituted a curriculum based on a system of electives and shortly thereafter coupled that expansion of student choice by using academic advisors to guide students in these choices. Charles Norton (1890), a Harvard graduate, described a provision that

every student on his entrance to college is referred to a member of the Faculty, who will act as his adviser in regard to all matters in which he may stand in need of counsel, such, for instance, as a judicious scheme and choice of courses of study, and the best use of his time and opportunities in college in view of his proposed aims in after-life, or as to his social, economical, and moral interests. (p. 588)

Norton’s description of advisors includes many responsibilities that remain within the purview of academic advisors today.

The 18th-century faculty member as disciplinarian continued well into the 19th century; the few exceptional accounts of beloved faculty members suggest that close relationships between students and faculty were not the norm. The underlying goal of advising appears to include guidance for students in making meaningful choices for their education and to advocate for and mediate the student–faculty relationship (Gilman, 1886):

The adviser’s relation to the student is like that of a lawyer to his client or of a physician to one who seeks his counsel. The office is not that of an inspector, nor of a proctor, nor of a recipient of excuses, nor of a distant and unapproachable embodiment of the authority of the Faculty. It is the adviser’s business to listen to difficulties which the student assigned to him may bring to his notice; to act as his representative if any collective action is necessary on the part of the board of instruction; to see that every part of his course of studies has received the proper attention. (p. 575)

The ideal role of advisor was to facilitate the development of maturity through student choice of educational focus (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2010). Yet in practice, advising was predominantly characterized by the approval of course and major selection, not the relationship and conversation meant to underlie such approval. For example, at Harvard,

sympathetic mentors . . . were the more needed in the era when personal liberty and free election bewildered many students, left them drifting without rudders, the sport of every breeze. The Board of Freshman Advisers was set up in 1889, but they did little except address the entering class en masse, approve study cards, and invite the advisee to a pallid luncheon in the Colonial Club. (Morrison, 1936, p. 403)

Although academic advising appears to have been founded as a means for bringing students and faculty members closer together, the evidence suggests that no such relationship became the norm in 20th-century American higher education.

The 20th-century expansion of higher education included increasing numbers and diversity of students to institutions of all types (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2010). Educational emphasis shifted toward intellectual growth of students and away from their social, moral, and religious development (American Council on Education Studies [ACE], 1949). In addition, the emerging field of educational psychology contributed to the progressive education movement, which emphasized the whole person and individual differences (Schetlin, 1969).

During the first half of the 20th century, the push to study education through a scientific lens contributed to a growing emphasis on practice based on assessment and statistical method (Schetlin, 1969). Schools used IQ tests to determine students' abilities and potential, which allowed placement in course work that best fit their ability level. Founded in a growing literature base on student needs, institutions provided support in the form of orientation, psychological counseling, tutoring, and other services: "With the growth of our understanding and appreciation of the significance of individual differences, some institutions have endeavored to develop the science of advising to keep pace with our more accurate knowledge of human nature" (Hopkins, 1926, p. 25).

Most of these emerging student personnel areas were informed by the growing scholarship in educational psychology as applied to practice by specialists. *The Student Personnel Point of View* (ACE, 1949), created by educators "who were deeply concerned about the welfare and needs of their students" (Schetlin, 1969, p. 63), championed the focus on the whole student and a range of psychosocial needs, including mental, physical, social, spiritual, intellectual, and vocational aspects of individual development (ACE, 1949).

Because few envisioned academic advising as a specialist field, a body of literature about advising was not developed, nor were theories intentionally and consistently applied to practice (Raskin, 1979). As with the original advising roles for faculty in the 19th century, advising in the 20th century was seen as "an extra job added on to

the teaching workload” (Raskin, 1979, p. 101). However, Hopkins’s 1926 summary of the state of student services at 14 institutions suggests that, like other fields, academic advising needed specialists.

Hopkins (1926) thought the addition of academic advising responsibilities to faculty duties impossible because of other demands placed on them for teaching and research. Hopkins recognized that advisors must understand more than institutional structure and program requirements. A multi-institution study revealed that in the mid-1920s advisors were expected to master complex interpersonal skills that allowed them to interpret student information, gather additional information about students’ interests, and identify areas in which the student may need support to engage in a full and honest conversation (Hopkins, 1926).

In this era, the terms *guidance* and *counseling* referred interchangeably to psychological counseling, vocational guidance, and academic advising; practice in all of these areas was informed by clinical methods developed in psychology (Williamson, 1937). The intermingling of the advancing field of psychology, emerging career counseling practice, and guidance in educational decision making was based on the assumptions that students’ abilities were fixed, that academic decisions and vocational decisions were linearly linked, and that the primary aim of education was to increase employability (MacIntosh, 1948). These assumptions, which according to structuration theory may or may not be recognized by those acting on them, have shaped the evolution of academic advising and resulted in expanding the original focus of advising on academic decision making to include a broader perspective on guidance, particularly in career decision making.

Some scholars of the mid-20th century recognized that students make academic decisions within a larger personal and social context than had been regularly considered:

It does not seem reasonable to allow a student to pick and choose his studies from the curriculum without asking any questions as to what the courses are, what relationship they have to other courses, and where they may eventually lead. (MacIntosh, 1948, p. 135)

This perspective on the role of advisor conforms with the charge to advisors as originally outlined at Harvard and Johns Hopkins. However, after World War II, educators increasingly recognized complex influences and factors that affect a student’s educational planning and the need to incorporate social sciences research into academic advising. For example, several publications from the 1950s called for greater attention by faculty members and counselors to student processes in making sense of academic decisions (Hardee, 1955; Havemann & West, 1952). In some cases, this role was shifted from faculty members to specialists in academic advising.

The first dedicated academic advisors and advising units were created during the 1950s (Gordon, 2004). The first primary-role advisors—representatives of the institution whose main responsibility was advising students—often came from counseling and psychology backgrounds and applied theoretical perspectives and methods from

these backgrounds to practice (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). Principles of educational psychology as documented in *The Student Personnel Point of View* (ACE, 1949) informed practice of the first primary-role advisors by creating sets of purposes, assumptions, theories, and methods for working with students and evaluating that work; the guidance differed from that offered by faculty advisors, who were steeped in their respective disciplines (Raskin, 1979). The move toward a psychological basis for advising enabled primary-role advisors to create new structures (e.g., more units devoted to advising) and also constrained their actions by differentiating their advising from that offered by faculty members.

Despite the growing specialization of advisors in the mid-20th century, inconsistency in practice and purpose remained. During the 1950s, Robertson (1958) completed a survey of advising by visiting 20 institutions of higher education to learn more about patterns of operation and common challenges. He observed diversity in program structure and philosophy across institutions and similar diversity across departments within large institutions. Robertson affirmed the perceived importance of helping students navigate academic problems by facilitating student recognition of issues and understanding of their educational directions. In practice, however, advising was predominately clerical in nature. Although more institutions were implementing programs designed to support students, many of the participants in Robertson's study viewed students' desire for guidance as suspect or weak. In response, Robertson expressed concern about the future of advising, calling for the development of a clear philosophy to guide practice. Of particular note, he called for evaluation of advising, in part to prevent unfair criticism of the practice and to mitigate defensiveness and power struggles among students and faculty members.

By the 1960s, institutions had been transformed by both the accelerated research activity promoted by the National Science Foundation and the increased enrollments facilitated by the financial support provided through the GI Bill for veterans (Frost, 2000). The different historical trajectories came together in the structures and cultures that still affect academic advising practice today: faculty allegiance to the discipline, sometimes before the institution; advising as clerical bookkeeping and tracking of degree requirements; and perceptions that students who need help are weak and those who desire to provide them help are coddling or enabling.

The Third Era (1970 to 2003): Academic Advising Is Examined

The Third Advising Era is characterized by an emergence of a more distinct role for academic advising in higher education and increased attention to the purposes, theories, and methods applied to practice. During this era, a wider range of the American population, particularly women and students of color, accessed higher education. Between the 1960s and 1980s, enrollment in higher education increased nearly 400%, as institutions enlarged their enrollment capacity (National Institute of Education, 1984; Snyder, 1993). Consistent with earlier eras of expansion, the greater amount and variety of student needs prompted the continued growth of support

structures for students. However, despite the upturn in nationwide enrollments, many institutions also experienced increased attrition, inspiring stakeholders to recognize academic advising as critical for helping students succeed (Frost, 1991).

As understanding of student needs expanded, those in student counseling acknowledged the distinct issues, theories, and methods of practice associated with career counseling, psychological counseling, and academic advising. At some institutions, more individuals were employed in primary-role academic advising positions (Frost, 2000), many of whom had academic backgrounds in human services (Gordon, 2004; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). At these institutions, the expectations for the faculty role in advising remained unexamined; however, primary-role advising appears to have largely supplemented faculty advising, especially in advising undeclared students (Habley, 1988).

The Student Personnel Point of View (ACE, 1949) directly informed the developmental advising movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Building on the emphasis of counseling during the 1950s, efforts to integrate the faculty, teaching, and the growing field of educational counseling increased (Crookston, 1972/1994/2009; Hardee, 1959, 1970), while at the same time, the number of primary-role advisors also rose (Gordon, 2004; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). The differing perspectives used to inform advising practice contributed to a growing gap between the faculty and advising staffs. These trends facilitated the developmental versus prescriptive rhetoric of the 1970s through 1990s, which posited faculty advising in opposition to advising done by primary-role advisors. The term *professional advisor*, now routinely interchanged with *primary-role advisor*, lingers as a manifestation of the third era rhetoric.

The increased number of academic advisors whose practice was informed by perspectives and skill sets that differed markedly from their faculty peers created a divide between the advising done by faculty and primary-role advisors (Moore, 1976). In 1972, Burns Crookston and Terry O'Banion each connected advising practice to theories of student development and described advising as teaching (Crookston, 1972/1994/2009; O'Banion, 1972/1994/2009). Both of their writings attempted to reconcile student personnel perspectives with teaching and move all advisors toward a common ideal of practice. Through his treatise on developmental advising, Crookston provided clarity on the roles, purposes, and values of academic advising. Notably, the Crookston and O'Banion articles normalized the kind of help students seek through academic advising and each described the teaching roles of advisors addressing normal developmental issues.

As scholarship and attention to advising grew, attempts to clearly articulate the goals and purposes of practice within the academy continued. “[Coordinators of advising] realized that advising can be a single-direction activity to select courses and plan schedules or a process for individualized teaching” (Moore, 1976, p. 374). Efforts to refocus on teaching-oriented goals as the primary function of advising gained momentum.

The rise of dedicated advisors and the increased attention paid to the role of advising in student success led to the formation of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) in 1979. NACADA (now known as NACADA: The Global

Community for Academic Advising) facilitated the conversation about academic advising (Cate & Miller, 2015) by developing leadership within the cadre of academic advisors and garnering commitment to scholarship-based practice through publication venues, conferences, and commissions. The formalized network for sharing practices and theory added to practitioner awareness of student development theory and directed attention to sharing perceived best practices.

As the literature in student personnel concepts and academic advising expanded, the need to identify and support academic advising as a distinct field through scholarship was acknowledged with the first edition of the *NACADA Journal* printed in 1981. Yet, despite the growing network of advisors, a 1984 report by the National Institute of Education found that academic advising was one of the weakest components of the undergraduate academic experience. Consistent with calls for educational reform in K-12 schools in *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), stakeholders used the 1984 National Institute of Education report to examine the quality of education provided to college students. The 1984 report made the critical point that “many faculty members do not participate in advisement, and those who do often treat this responsibility perfunctorily” (p. 31). As in previous decades, advising remained a low status role and often functioned as an informational conduit rather than an important part of student learning and development.

In addition to the predominantly informational practice of advising, few programs implemented assessment that identified and measured desired learning outcomes or created comprehensive statements of the goals and purposes within the institution (Carstensen & Silberhorn, 1979). Further, the prevailing developmental approaches connected with neither practice nor the assessments used at the time to measure success (Carstensen & Silberhorn, 1979; Laff, 1994). Few studies related techniques of advising to educational outcomes. For example, the majority of advising assessments reviewed in 1982 consisted of surveys about student satisfaction with advising (McLaughlin & Starr, 1982). Another report based on survey responses from 820 colleges and universities indicated that the majority of institutions primarily relied on faculty members to provide academic advising. The majority of these institutions did not conduct formal assessment of the advising program, and 68% of those that reportedly conducted evaluations based them solely on advisee satisfaction (Carstensen & Silberhorn, 1979). From these and other studies conducted after 1965, McLaughlin and Starr (1982) found that students expressed overwhelming dissatisfaction with their academic advising, yet they wanted more contact with advisors.

From the 1970s through the 1990s, academic advising was delivered with many different models across and within institutions. National surveys of academic advising conducted by the ACT from 1979 to 1997 (Habley, 1988; Habley & Morales, 1998) indicated national trends toward organizational models in which faculty members and primary-role advisors shared responsibility for advising. The studies seemed to suggest a growing recognition that academic advising must be provided systematically. However, these reports also showed that practices supporting faculty advising

were consistently unsystematic and undervalued; in addition, academic advising centers remained critically underfunded (Habley, 1988). For example, in 1997, only 23% of U.S. campuses required training for faculty advisors, and 31% provided recognition, reward, or compensation for faculty advising (Habley & Morales, 1998). The variation in advising models employed within and across institutions illustrates the diversity in theoretical bases for advising practice and the range of views about the goals of academic advising.

During the 1980s and 1990s, NACADA and the *NACADA Journal* as sources of research on academic advising grew in influence, and through opportunities to discuss important issues and build a literature base focused on advising, they encouraged contributions to address the evolving structure and role of advising practice. Of particular significance, NACADA fostered the assessment of academic advising and the application of technology to advising as described and advocated in *Transforming Academic Advising through the Use of Information Technology* (Kramer & Childs, 1996); these advances came at critical moments because state disinvestment and associated higher tuition costs for students generated calls for accountability.

The Fourth Era (2003 to Present): Role of Academic Advising Is Actively Examined

During the Fourth Era of Academic Advising, practitioners made a concerted effort to clarify the role of academic advising and to demonstrate the value of it to a wide range of stakeholders. During this time, U.S. higher education continued to accommodate increased enrollments (Aud et al., 2012); encourage internationalization of students (Institute of International Education, 2014); and focus directly on accountability, student retention, and completion (McPhail, 2011). At the time of this writing, U.S. institutions enroll a wider diversity of students than they had at other points in history, and these students (or their families) fund much more of the cost of college attendance than in any other era (Aud et al., 2012; Fischer & Stripling, 2014).

Since 2003, as evidenced by the expansion of disciplines and theories applied to advising, practitioners have come from more diverse educational backgrounds than ever before. Further, the advising community has grown through the establishment of a global network (i.e., NACADA). New ways of examining and explaining the role and work of academic advisors have augmented the primary theoretical paradigm of developmental advising. Stakeholders have attempted to further clarify and convey the important role of academic advising through three approaches: clarification of the distinct purposes of academic advising, careful examination of advising practice using diverse theoretical perspectives, and intentional contributions to scholarship in academic advising. Their efforts have enhanced the visibility of advising throughout the higher education community.

Several initiatives culminated in refocused attention on elucidating the purposes of advising: a NACADA-led project to intentionally define *academic advising* and *advisor competencies* (Cate & Miller, 2015); revised emphases on learning and teaching

by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (Cook, 2009); and increased calls for clarification on the distinctive role of advising within higher education (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). In 2003, NACADA sought a definition of *academic advising*, and three years later the endeavor resulted in a concept statement that highlighted the integral role academic advising plays in the teaching and learning mission of higher education institutions; the NACADA Concept of Academic Advising laid out three components of practice: curriculum, pedagogy, and student learning outcomes (NACADA, 2006).

By incorporating new ways to examine academic advising, practitioner-scholars have continued to communicate the purposes of academic advising within higher education. Since 2003 they have expanded the advising literature base with theory from disciplines such as philosophy of science (Bridgen, 2014), education (Musser & Yoder, 2013), sociology (Himes, 2014), and a variety of humanities (Champlin-Scharff, 2010). Although the examination of advising has expanded in many ways, much of the recent literature has featured ideas derived from the perspectives of teaching and learning (Lowenstein, 1999), philosophy (Jackson, 2005), and Socratic self-examination (Kuhtmann, 2005) (chapter 2). Despite the positive growth created by applying theory from and making comparisons to other fields, some thought leaders in advising discourage the use of analogies to other disciplines to describe advising practice or purpose. They argue that scholarship strengthens and highlights the distinctive role advising plays within higher education (see, e.g., Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). An advocate for developing a unique theory of advising, Marc Lowenstein (2013) has called for the reclamation of the original, ideal purpose of advising of helping students make meaning from curricular decisions.

As renewed discussions on the role and purposes of academic advising transpired, endeavors to refine advising practice, advisor qualifications, and assessment were also intensified. New resources to guide advising practice, such as *The New Advisor Guidebook: Mastering the Art of Academic Advising* (Folsom, Yoder, & Joslin, 2015) and *Academic Advising Approaches: Strategies That Teach Students to Make the Most of College* (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013), further expounded on current research about students and education and made intentional connections of theory to practice. In addition, the NACADA Certification Task Force delineated five academic advisor competency areas across relational and informational areas (Cate & Miller, 2015). These competencies—conceptual knowledge of advising, knowledge of college student characteristics, skills and knowledge in career advising, communication and interpersonal skills, and institution-specific knowledge (NACADA, 2003)—reflect the core understandings required by academic advisors, who also must know the diversity in advising structures and models at various institutions.

Several authors have called for a focus on academic advising as a distinctive field worthy of scholarly attention (Lowenstein, 2013; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008; Smith, 2013). In 2008, the coeditors of the *NACADA Journal* suggested that, rather than a dichotomy of research and practice, advising follows a continuum of activities for practitioner and researcher (Kuhn & Padak, 2008). In 2010, Aiken-Wisniewski,

Smith, and Troxel advanced Kuhn and Padak's idea further by calling for advisor-led research: "Academic advisors are uniquely positioned to both affect, and be affected by, important aspects of educational research" (p. 4). Their attempts to remove the division between educational researcher and academic advisor came at the same time that McGillin (2010) explained that advisors did not enjoy a consistent, scholarly voice within the academy.

To support advisors' abilities to undertake and support research, NACADA published *Scholarly Inquiry in Academic Advising* (Hagen, Kuhn, & Padak, 2010). The publication was designed to meet the needs of scholars in academic advising by addressing topics such as applying epistemology, generating scholarship from practice, and utilizing qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

The growth in research and the participation of primary-role advisors in scholarly inquiry has enabled meaningful action among advisors. The growing body of literature shows continued refinement to messages about the role, purpose, and practice of academic advising. However, the structural organization of advising within institutions, which is based on various purposes or advising responsibilities, dampens scholarship efforts; that is, many advisors receive little to no support for engaging in or contributing to scholarship (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2010; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2010). For example, advisors who see many students in short appointments—a result of resource decisions based on assumptions that advising is primarily informational—typically have limited time and resources to participate in scholarship. Until environments that allow advisors to deviate from historic social structures are created by advisors and administrators, many will struggle to find the means or encouragement to contribute to the literature base of advising. Advisors and administrators in environments that allow contributions to scholarship likely have insights about ways others might remove structural barriers to scholarly engagement.

Looking to the Future

Understanding the history of academic advising can help shed light on its future. Structuration theory provides a framework from which to understand the historical influences on academic advising and how social structures enable or limit actors to function. Throughout the history of academic advising, social structures within and beyond higher education (e.g., the changes in size and diversity of student enrollment and the formation of NACADA) have influenced advising. So have the perspectives, roles, and language used by practitioners, as seen in the influence of *The Student Personnel Point of View* (ACE, 1949) and the increased creation and use of scholarship. The history of academic advising shows the critical role practitioners continue to play in facilitating change:

Lasting change is accomplished only when individuals within the institution, and particularly those more affected by the change, understand the need for change, develop ownership by virtue of participation in the planning for change, and become involved in the implementation of change. (Habley, 1988, p. 14)

Advising practitioners' awareness of the past structures and roles that have shaped contemporary academic advising remains critical for identifying strategies to change these social structures in the future. Moreover, practitioners' collaboration on and support of a comprehensive advising philosophy will inspire the continued examination and effectiveness of advising within higher education.

Both language and reward structures continue to perpetuate a division between primary-role and faculty advisors. Through all eras, both faculty members and staff have undertaken advising responsibilities without the necessary comprehensive theoretical base from which to inform their practice. Until publication of *Academic Advising Approaches: Strategies That Teach Students to Make the Most of College* (Drake et al., 2013), no central resource was available to help advisors apply theory to the practice of academic advising. However, the pace of scholarship has quickened, highlighting the importance of the professionalization of advising: "NACADA members should feel a sense of urgency in addressing the evident weak link between practice and the underlying knowledge base of academic advising" (Shaffer et al., 2010, p. 71).

Research specifically addressing questions in academic advising will contribute to the development of advising as a field—a distinctive branch of knowledge studied within higher education—and emphasize the importance of building a strong base of scholarship. As literature and research expand, advising gains momentum; however, scholar-practitioners must exercise care and intentionality so the path forward can be surveyed and purposefully constructed.

Through time, the views and philosophies of advising held by practitioners have influenced the direction and perception of advising within higher education and students' learning experiences. When differences between philosophies surface, as seen between faculty and primary-role advisors during the mid-20th century, ambiguity about the purposes of advising results. Moreover, institutions created advising programs out of existing structures that were informed by existing philosophies. Those local traditions and needs led to the creation of advising programs that vary in form, function, and practice.

The differences in purposes and models of advising have contributed to inconsistency and division in the roles of academic advisors across and within institutions; on many campuses, this ambiguity weakened the move toward professionalization. Inconsistency within academic advising has stubbornly exerted an influence for years. In 1948, MacIntosh quipped, "Before we can tackle the problem of advising and directing our students satisfactorily, we must develop a philosophy on which to base our actions" (p. 135). Sixty-eight years later, the content and the appropriateness of a comprehensive and consistent philosophy of advising remains hotly debated. In 2013, Lowenstein articulated the view that the future of advising depends on a purposeful focus on advisors helping students with academic decision making and advisors being recognized as educator peers with faculty members. Professionalization means that all who advise, regardless of their other institutional responsibilities, should embrace a common and clear purpose for advising interactions, share fundamental understandings developed through education, and share common standards of practice. With a strong understanding of the history of advising, an expansion of

scholarship, and intentional actions by advising practitioners, we are optimistic that academic advising can achieve consistency.

As global change continues to alter the context of higher education, institutions can expect academic advising to play a key role in student success. The size and diversity of the student population will likely continue to extend demands for preparation in a fast-paced, globalized world. Educational trends affecting K-12 schools, such as the Common Core curriculum instituted in the United States, will affect the preparedness and goals of college students, and academic advisors will help them transition to higher education and craft a meaningful educational program.

As a coordinator in the global community, NACADA provides an important social structure that will enable individuals' abilities to contribute to and engage in advising consistent with professionalization. The application of structuration theory to examine history can be expanded as can studies based in new theoretical perspectives. Studies from a wide variety of institutions, including international institutions, will provide a better understanding of ways advisors can intentionally move forward so that the field evolves to better meet the educational mission of advising.

Aiming for Excellence

- Reflect on a conversation with a student, faculty member, staff, or administrator at your institution. How have the historical trends influenced daily practice? Consider mission statements, vision statements, advising philosophies, advising models, and structures.
- How has advising changed since you first experienced the field as a professional in higher education? Are these changes positive or challenging?
- The history of academic advising presented in this chapter is based primarily on documents from large research universities; how does the history of your institution fit this narrative? To learn more about the development of academic advising at your institution, talk to administrators, faculty members, and staff and read institutional records.
- How have academic advising structures and personnel positions evolved at your institution? How does the history compare to that of other institutions? Do you recognize any trends by institution type? Speculate on the reasons for the variation in institutional histories of advising.
- What preconceived ideas about the nature of advising have you developed? Do your initial perceptions fit the history presented in this chapter? If they do not, how do they differ?
- To learn more about and consider the forces acting on academic advising, attend a conference, seminar, or class that addresses current issues in education policy and theory. How can institutions and advisors intentionally direct advising and higher education?

- o If a comprehensive statement of the role and purpose of advising were created, as MacIntosh (1948) advocated, what should be included and excluded from the statement?

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