

Prescriptive vs. Developmental: Academic Advising at a Historically Black University in South Carolina

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Many academic support programs promote the academic success of first-year students, and research has shown the importance of effective academic advising to first-year student retention. Among the numerous approaches to academic advising, the strategy used by advisors at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) remains relatively unknown. This quantitative study is based on the most prevalent academic advising approach used at a HBCU in South Carolina. A well-documented survey was administered to 77 first-year students attending this institution to measure their experiences with prescriptive and developmental advising and their satisfaction with these advising approaches. The results showed that the most prevalent advising approach was developmental advising, and students were satisfied with aspects of both strategies.

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KEY WORD: African American students

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) refers to any college or university established before 1964 for the purpose of educating African Americans (U.S. Department of Education, 1991). To reach the goal for which they were established, to make college education accessible to those who were denied access, HBCUs have featured relatively less selective admission standards than other postsecondary institutions (Albritton, 2012; Avery, 2009; Redd, 1998). Initially, the HBCU mission applied to freed slaves, but over the past century, this primary goal had changed (Albritton, 2012). Despite relatively easy admissions criteria, a growing number of admitted students at HBCUs encounter challenges that impede their progression from one year to the next; these difficulties have been related to finances (Redd, 1998) and also include inadequate time-management and study skills (Albritton, 2012; Avery, 2009; Redd, 1998).

Many resources on HBCU campuses assist in the holistic development of students, including academic advising, which is considered essential to overall student development (NACADA: The

Global Community for Academic Advising, 2006) and plays a major role in the transition of first-year students to college (Bigger, 2005). Although several factors contribute to a student's decision not to re-enroll at an institution, research has indicated that quality interactions between students and faculty members, staff, and peers affect retention rates enormously (Bigger, 2005). Because of caring, consistent, and person-to-person interactions, effective academic advising has been posited as a critical factor for retaining students (Drake, 2011) because through it students discover their talents, purposes, and life goals among other aspects of self-discovery.

The traditional college student of today is categorized as part of the Millennial generation, which has been characterized with (a) grandiose idealism for life goals and achievements and (b) high levels of stress (Bland, Melton, Welle, & Bigham, 2012). Bigger (2005) noted that academic advisors are expected to engage Millennial students in conversations that lead to self-discovery and realistic aspirations. Most important, advisors must recognize any indication of the coping difficulties known to affect this generation of students. By asking about and understanding the past experiences of students, academic advisors obtain valuable information for identifying potential obstacles to and motivational factors of student college success (Williams, 2007).

Academic Advising Approaches

Academic advisors use specific approaches to guide students toward self-discovery and to set life goals and recognize academic challenges. Despite multiple approaches to academic advising, two have historically dominated the field: prescriptive and developmental (Barbuto, Story, Fritz, & Schinstock, 2011; Crookston, 1972/2009; King, 2005; Williams, 2007). Prescriptive advising involves limiting advising sessions to academic matters such as course selection, the process of registration, and explanations of degree curricula (Drake, 2011, p. 10). The least complex form of practice, prescriptive advising may be the most commonly used (Barbuto et al., 2011). Barbuto et al. (2011) summarized the approach as entailing the student listening and following the advice of an

advisor. Drake (2011) likened the prescriptive advising experience to a physician (academic advisor) writing a prescription to a patient (student). Through prescriptive advising, students receive information necessary for progression in baccalaureate degree programs, but the approach does not typically promote an advising relationship (Barbuto et al., 2011). Students need guidance for course registration, but under a prescriptive approach, they seek assistance from their advisors only for this limited purpose.

The advising relationship created through conversations with students serves as a catalyst for developmental advising. Using a developmental approach, the advisor focuses on the whole person sitting before them and addresses every aspect of the student's life in the advising process (Drake, 2011). Because it leads to student growth, developmental advising is based on several developmental theories, such as those related to personal, cognitive, career, and psychosocial advancement. Advisors use these theories to assist students with goal setting, decision making, problem solving, creating self-awareness, and other areas to promote academic success (Williams, 2007).

Previous Studies of Prescriptive and Developmental Academic Advising

Research has shown that academic advising, as an effective resource on college campuses, affects student retention, especially during the first year of enrollment (Drake, 2011; Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Klepfer & Hull, 2012). Studies about the academic advising strategies implemented were designed to improve first-year student retention and to assist students in general. Barbuto et al. (2011) discussed ways academic advisors can use characteristics of leadership in their advising philosophy and style. Steingass and Sykes (2008) provided insight into the revamped advising program at the Virginia Commonwealth University to increase student retention. Drake (2011) explained ways advising transforms the academic lives of college students. The studies cited herein, and others, showed the importance and value of effective academic advising.

Some researchers compared the use of prescriptive and developmental advising. Davis and Cooper (2001) conducted a study to determine student perceptions of the academic advising services at a public 4-year institution in the southeastern United States using the *Academic Advising Inventory* (AAI) created by Winston and

Sandor in 1984 and based on Crookston's (1972/2009) theory of prescriptive and developmental advising approaches. The AAI provides results useful for comparing students' experiences with prescriptive and developmental academic advising.

At the institution under study by Davis and Cooper (2001), academic advising was practiced by faculty advisors, professional staff, and residential life staff. In total, 1,900 AAI surveys were mailed to 600 students advised by faculty members; 1,120 students advised by professional advisors; and 180 students advised by residential life staff. Of these 1,900 surveys, 198 were returned: 122 respondents with faculty advisors, 63 with professional advisors, and 13 with residential life advisors. The results revealed that most faculty and professional advisors practiced the developmental approach. Overall, the students at this institution perceived the advising to be developmental, and they were satisfied with this approach.

For another study, Hale, Graham, and Johnson (2009) administered the AAI to 429 students enrolled at a mid South doctoral university. Of the students who completed the AAI, 360 students preferred the developmental approach and 17 preferred prescriptive advising. Two hundred sixty-three students experienced congruence between their preferred advising approach and the strategy used by their advisor. Students indicated satisfaction when they experienced congruence in the advising approach used and their preference, but students who experienced developmental advising showed a higher degree of satisfaction than those who received prescriptive advising.

The results from these studies using the AAI indicated that the developmental approach to academic advising was most commonly used at the two institutions studied. Also, the results showed that participants in these studies were satisfied with the developmental approach.

Academic Advising at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Unfortunately, research relating prescriptive and developmental advising to HBCUs has been limited and not easily identified. Therefore, because advising factors into the retention of first-year students (Bigger, 2005) and relates to student success, this study was designed to identify the most prevalent academic advising approach used at a HBCU in South Carolina. For the purposes of this study, the identification of the most prevalent academic advising approach used at

the HBCU was based on the academic advising experiences of first-year students attending the institution.

Research Question and Hypothesis

Because few research studies on academic advising and HBCUs have been conducted and academic advising has been shown an important resource for first-year students, academic advising practices at HBCUs need to be more fully understood. Furthermore, research has indicated that current first-year students seek the personal attention more consistent with a developmental approach, and the prescriptive advising approach may prove inadequate to fulfill students' expectations for individualized support.

Reeder and Schmitt (2013) found that highly motivated African American students familiar with the academic expectations of college life thrived at both HBCUs and predominantly White institutions (PWIs). However, they implied that African Americans with uncertain motivation and unfamiliarity with college life might find success more readily at HBCUs than PWIs.

To address the hypothesis that first-year students attending the HBCU under study will express more satisfaction with the developmental advising than with the prescriptive academic advising approach, the following research question was first addressed: Is developmental or prescriptive advising the most prevalent academic advising approach at a HBCU?

Methods

In this quantitative study, data were collected from the first-year students to gather evidence about their academic advising experiences at a HBCU in South Carolina, hereafter referred to as *HBCU¹*. Student responses to an electronically administered survey were used to describe and identify the most-used academic advising approach, as reported by students, at *HBCU¹*. Because this study was based on quantitative research, statistical procedures and concepts, as described by Creswell (2012), were used for analyzing and explaining trends in participant responses. To identify the most commonly reported academic advising approach, a statistical analysis was conducted on survey responses. The results of this study may help administrators and advisors at HBCUs exploring academic advising practices to increase first-year student retention and to develop unified strategies for enhancing student satisfaction with academic advising.

Participants

Purposeful sampling, the intentional selection of study participants for understanding situations or occurrences according to their experiences, was conducted to select first-year HBCU students for this quantitative study (as per Creswell, 2012). Because no identifying information was collected on study participants, other than their institution of current enrollment, first-year students were recruited for participation in this study according to enrollment in typical first-year courses at *HBCU¹*: English composition, basic college mathematics, and orientation courses. To avoid any duplication of study participants, during the recruitment phase of this study participants were asked to complete the electronic survey only once.

Sampling Procedures

With approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I contacted the directors of first-year programming to obtain permission and to recruit participants. The enrollment of first-year students at *HBCU¹* was 384 at the time of this study (Carullo & Charbonneau, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). From these 384 students, 77 students completed the electronic survey at their convenience. These survey responses represented approximately 20% of the first-year population enrolled at *HBCU¹*.

HBCU¹ operates a split academic advising model, which is characterized by the advising in academic departments by faculty members and in a center or office dedicated to student success by primary-role advisors (Pardee, 2004). In typical split model arrangements, student success centers or offices provide academic advising to specific student populations (e.g., probationary, first-year, first-generation students, or student-athletes). At *HBCU¹*, faculty members in academic departments serve as primary advisors, and staff advisors in the retention center provide early alert services, address academic probation, and offer other programming that supports student academic success. In addition, staff in a first-year programming department advise students who are undecided about their major.

In determining the sample size for this study, I used Fowler's table (per Creswell, 2012) to assume that 50% of first-year students experienced developmental advising. With a 10% sampling error, I predicted that the sample mean would differ from the population mean 10 times of 100. The targeted sample size necessary to meet the

50% chance and 10% sampling error (*SE*) criteria according to Fowler's table was 100. With an actual sample size of 77, the sampling error for this study was between 10 and 12%. According to the formula of $SE = (1 / \sqrt{N}) \times 100$, the actual *SE* for a sample size of 77 was $1 / \sqrt{77} \times 11.4\%$ (per Lund & Lund, 2013). Therefore, with a target population of 384, as many as 11.4 of the 77 responses were expected to differ from those of the target population.

Instrumentation

Participants completed an electronic survey, the AAI (Winston & Sandor, 1984), about their first-year academic advising experience. The AAI is used to compare and distinguish prescriptive and developmental advising on the basis of students' responses to a series of questions. Results from the AAI can be used to enhance advising strategies and practices. NACADA granted permission to me to use the AAI free of charge for this research study.

Most participants responded to the 63 items in approximately 10 minutes, as tracked through the instrument. For Part I of the AAI, participants chose from among 14 pairs of statements on prescriptive and developmental advising the one that best described their academic advising experience. For example, "My advisor plans my schedule" reflects a prescriptive advising item; in contrast, "My advisor and I plan my schedule together" references a descriptive advising approach. Participants also rated the level of accuracy to which the chosen statement represented their experience on a scale from *slightly true* to *very true*. For example, a participant could select the developmental advising statement and rate it as a *slightly true* representation of his or her advising experience.

For AAI Part II, participants indicated the frequency with which they experienced 30 specific academic advising activities. For Part III, they responded to 5 statements describing satisfaction with academic advising. Part IV contained personal and demographic information, which I modified for this study. Questions related to gender, birth date, and racial background were excluded. AAI questions about the location of advising, frequency and duration of advising sessions, and academic classification (e.g., first year, second year, etc.) were retained. For Part V, participants were asked to compare 14 pairs of statements and to choose the statement that

matches the ideal or preferred academic advising experience (Winston & Sandor, 1984).

Originally, a paper and pencil instrument, the AAI was converted to a Microsoft Excel document for electronic access and is known as the *Academic Advising Inventory System* (AAIS) (Freitag, 2008). For this study, the AAIS was further transposed for use with SurveyMonkey (2014), a web-based survey-development application with enhanced security features, for administration and the collection of data for statistical analysis.

Winston and Sandor (1984) established reliability for the AAI by using the Cronbach's alpha procedure commonly used to measure reliability in Likert-scale survey instruments (per Lund & Lund, 2013). To understand the reliability of items used to measure developmental and prescriptive advising, they conducted Cronbach's alpha testing on 476 scales of developmental and prescriptive advising and subscales (personalizing education, academic decision making, and selecting courses). With a Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$, the developmental-prescriptive advising scale was shown to be an appropriate measure to use with groups of students (Winston & Sandor, 1984).

To establish validity, Winston and Sandor (1984) administered the AAI to two groups of students attending the University of Georgia: One group consisted of 53 conditionally admitted students enrolled in developmental education courses, and the other group comprised 74 admitted and enrolled students in standard courses. The results showed a statistically significant difference in the overall scores of the AAI used to measure whether students received developmental or prescriptive advising. Also, they revealed a statistically significant difference in the subset of scores used to measure personal education experiences. However, Winston and Sandor found no statistically significant difference in the subset of items used to measure student academic decision making and course selection, perhaps because both groups perceived that they had experienced developmental advising.

Results

For this study, a general statistical analysis was performed on data collected from the 77 study participants. Part I of the AAI features 2 statements for each of the 14 questions. One statement describes a prescriptive advising experience, and the other statement describes a developmental

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of predominately prescriptive and developmental advising

Advising Types	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Scores
Prescriptive	10	51.90	2.56	46–56
Developmental	67	83.63	13.94	58–12

advising experience. Responses from the Likert scale were interpreted as follows: Ratings from 8 for *very true* to 5 for *slightly true* corresponded to a developmental advising response, and scores from 1 for *very true* to 4 for *slightly true* corresponded to a prescriptive advising response. The total number of Likert-scale responses was used to create a composite score for each participant. Under this method, the highest and lowest possible composite scores for prescriptive advising were calculated as 56 and 14, respectively; the highest and lowest possible composite scores were calculated as 112 and 57 for developmental advising. To separate the groups of prescriptive advising responses and developmental advising responses for SPSS analysis, a value of 0 was assigned to scores 14–56 for prescriptive advising and a value of 1 was assigned to scores 57–112 for developmental advising. According to the data collected from participant responses, descriptive statistics were determined to create a general analysis of the 77 responses.

Descriptive Statistics of Responses

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for participants who reported experiencing predominantly prescriptive advising and those who reported experiencing developmental advising. Although participants identified a predominant advising approach, they all indicated some experience with the nonpredominant advising approach.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data showed that 87% of the 77 study participants experienced developmental academic advising, and 13% experienced prescriptive academic advising. To calculate the statistical difference between the mean scores for developmental advising and prescriptive advising experiences, an independent samples *t* test was performed on AAI responses from study participants. For calculating the effect size for an independent *t* test, Cohen's *d* calculation was used as per Lund and Lund (2013). With the level of significance $\alpha_s = .05$ and equal variances not assumed, a statistically significant

difference existed between the mean scores from first-year students who experienced prescriptive ($M = 51.90$, $SD = 2.56$, $p = .000$) and those who experienced developmental advising ($M = 83.63$, $SD = 13.94$, $p = .000$): The mean difference was -31.73 (95% CI, 27.97–35.49), $t(72.189) = -16.83$, $p < .05$, $d = 3.16$ with a standard error difference of 1.89.

To address the research question for this study, whether developmental or prescriptive advising is the most prevalent academic advising approach at HBCU¹, the results of the independent *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between study participants who experienced mostly prescriptive academic advising and study participants who experienced mostly developmental academic advising. Because students experienced more developmental than prescriptive academic advising, the most prevalent academic advising approach for first-year students at HBCU¹ was determined to be developmental academic advising.

With the finding that students experienced relatively more developmental academic advising, the hypothesis was addressed: First-year students attending HBCU¹ express more satisfaction with the developmental advising than the prescriptive academic advising approach. To determine the satisfaction of study participants with these two approaches, their responses to Part III of the AAI were analyzed with an independent samples *t* test.

Part III of the AAI presented study participants with five positive statements about their satisfaction with the academic advising approach they experienced. Study participants were asked to rate each statement using a Likert scale that included the following terms with the numeric value for the SPSS analysis in parentheses: *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *agree* (3), and *strongly agree* (4). For the SPSS analysis, higher numeric values attributed by participants indicated relatively greater satisfaction with the element of advising described in the statement.

General statistical information for each statement is presented in Table 2. The mean response for each statement of satisfaction was close to 3.0, which indicated that, on average, study participants agreed with each statement of satisfaction. Also, for the most part, they were satisfied with their academic advising experiences.

An independent samples *t* test was performed to determine the significance, if any, in the differences of study participants' levels of satisfaction with academic advising experiences.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation for statements of satisfaction

Statement of Satisfaction	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I am satisfied in general with the academic advising I received.	72	3.21	1.00
2. I have received accurate information about courses, programs, and requirements through academic advising.	66	3.26	0.70
3. Sufficient prior notice has been provided about deadlines related to institutional policies and procedures.	68	3.18	0.77
4. Advising has been available when I needed it.	68	3.31	0.77
5. Sufficient time has been available during advising sessions.	74	3.30	0.74

Table 3 shows the mean responses for each statement of satisfaction in relation to groups of data for participants who experienced prescriptive advising and participants who experienced developmental advising. As indicated by Table 3, study participants experiencing developmental advising rated their satisfaction with each of the five statements higher than the participants who experienced prescriptive advising.

Independent samples *t* tests were performed on responses to the five statements of satisfaction to determine whether participants were more satisfied with one advising approach than the other. Table 3 shows the results of these analyses for each satisfaction statement also. Maintaining the standard level of significance ($\alpha_s = .05$), statistically significant differences were found between participants' satisfaction levels with their academic advising experiences, in general (-1.18 [95% CI, -1.83 – $(-.53)$], $t[8.20] = -4.18$, $p < .05$, $d = 1.50$), between prescriptive advising ($M = 2.14$, $SD = .69$) and developmental advising

($M = 3.32$, $SD = .87$). Also, differences were found in satisfaction with prior notification of deadlines related to institutional policies and procedures ($-.83$ [95% CI, -1.57 – $(-.10)$], $t[7.23] = -2.68$, $p < .05$, $d = 1.09$) through prescriptive advising ($M = 2.43$, $SD = .79$) and developmental advising ($M = 3.26$, $SD = .73$) and in satisfaction with the amount of time allotted for advising sessions ($.96$ [95% CI, -1.46 – $(-.46)$], $t[8.29] = -4.38$, $p < .05$, $d = 1.55$) of prescriptive advising ($M = 2.43$, $SD = .53$) and developmental advising ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .70$).

No statistically significant difference was found in participant satisfaction with the accuracy of information about courses, programs, and requirements ($-.83$ [95% CI, 1.71 – $-.04$], $t[5.58] = -2.37$, $p > .05$, $d = 1.12$) for prescriptive ($M = 2.50$, $SD = .84$) and developmental ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .63$) advising. Also, no statistically significant difference was found for participant satisfaction with the availability of advising when students needed it

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and independent *t* test for statements of satisfaction

Statement of Satisfaction	PA		DA		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Signif. (2-tail)	<i>M</i> Diff.	<i>SE</i> Diff.
	<i>M</i> (<i>n</i>)	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> (<i>n</i>)	<i>SD</i>					
1. I am satisfied in general with the academic advising I received.	2.14 (7)	.69	3.32 (65)	.87	-4.18	8.20	.003	-1.18	.28
2. I have received accurate information about courses, programs, and requirements through academic advising.	2.50 (6)	.84	3.33 (60)	.63	-2.37	5.58	.058	-.83	.35
3. Sufficient prior notice has been provided about deadlines related to institutional policies and procedures.	2.43 (7)	.79	3.26 (61)	.73	-2.68	7.23	.031	-.83	.31
4. Advising has been available when I needed it.	3.00 (7)	.58	3.34 (61)	.79	-1.43	8.84	.187	-.34	.24
5. Sufficient time has been available during advising sessions.	2.43 (7)	.53	3.39 (67)	.70	-4.38	8.29	.002	-.96	.22

Note. DA = developmental advising; PA = prescriptive advising

($-.34$ [95% *CI*, $-.89$ – $.20$], $t[8.84] = -1.43$, $p > .05$, $d = .49$) for their prescriptive ($M = 3.0$, $SD = .58$) and developmental ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .79$) advising experiences.

According to these results, the hypothesis, that students report greater satisfaction with developmental advising than with the prescriptive academic, was rejected. Although it was shown that study participants who experienced developmental advising expressed greater satisfaction than their peers who had experienced prescriptive advising on three of the five statements, no statistically significant difference was found between satisfaction with developmental advising and prescriptive advising for all five AAI statements. As explained by Hale et al. (2009), students indicated satisfaction when they experienced the academic advising approach they preferred. In receiving accurate information and academic advising when it was needed, both groups of study participants from HBCU¹ indicated nearly identical levels of satisfaction. This finding indicates that the participants who experienced prescriptive advising and participants who experienced developmental advising received the advising approach they preferred for accurate information and opportune advising.

Discussion

According to previous research studies, effective academic advising helps first-year students gain self-awareness, set realistic goals, recognize academic challenges, and transition effectively into college. About the two main approaches to academic advising (prescriptive and developmental), Davis and Cooper (2001) and Hale et al. (2009) reported developmental advising as the most commonly used approach in their studies of public 4-year institutions and a mid South doctoral university, respectively. The study presented herein, of 77 first-year participants from a HBCU in South Carolina, showed results similar to those cited by Davis and Cooper and by Hale. Summed participant responses to the AAI Likert scale were used to determine composite scores for each participant. Composite scores between 14 and 56 indicated that respondents had experienced prescriptive advising, and composite scores between 57 and 112 indicated their experiences with developmental advising. The means of the composite scores showed statistically significant differences between prescriptive advising ($M = 51.90$, $SD = 2.56$) and developmental advising ($M = 83.63$, $SD = 13.94$) with more participants

reporting experiences with developmental advising.

Additional analysis performed with independent samples *t* tests showed that study participants were more satisfied with developmental advising, in general, for receiving sufficient notice regarding institutional policies and the time spent in advising sessions. Regarding the accuracy of information received and the receipt of advising when needed, no statistically significant difference was found in satisfaction between participants' experience with prescriptive or developmental advising.

Implications of the Study

The results of this study show that the most prevalent advising approach used with first-year students attending HBCU¹, in South Carolina, reflects the same advising approach used most at a public 4-year institution (Davis & Cooper, 2001) and a mid South doctoral university (Hale et al., 2009). In addition, study participants at HBCU¹ rated satisfaction with developmental advising, in general (satisfaction statement 1), more highly than those who had received prescriptive advising. This finding aligns with those from the public 4-year institution, which suggests that students enrolled at public 4-year institutions and first-year students at HBCUs express similar contentment with the same approach to academic advising. According to this implication, leaders of academic advising programs at HBCUs should administer the AAI to determine the most commonly used advising approach on their campuses and the level of satisfaction students report with this approach. Armed with this information, they can review their academic advising services for implementing any necessary changes. For example, thought leaders can use the results of the AAI to develop, enhance, or modify advisor training and thereby provide students with the approach that they prefer and thus enhance their satisfaction.

Also, this study contributes to the argument that that minority students are satisfied with a prevailing developmental approach. Underrepresented students feeling isolated or uncertain about their role in the campus community may find the needed connection to the institution and the campus community through the relationships established with advisors using the developmental approach. Affirmation of belonging to the institution will more likely emerge from developmental advising interactions than through the

one-way directive approach of prescriptive advising.

Modifications to the AAI, or development of another academic advising survey, to include other nuanced approaches, such as proactive advising, may provide important information to supplement the findings of this study. The AAI was developed in 1984, and since that time, academic advising has evolved beyond the prescriptive and developmental dichotomy. Therefore, results from an updated survey instrument that measures student experience, satisfaction, and preference for prescriptive, developmental, proactive, appreciative, and other advising approaches might better ensure that advising meets students' needs, aligns with their preferences, and leads to their satisfaction than the results from the AAI can inspire in the 21st century.

Limitations

This study was conducted at one of six 4-year HBCUs in South Carolina. For this reason, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other like institutions or those in other regions. Also, I am employed by HBCU¹ and work with first-year students, which inspired the study. Despite care to remove any bias associated with my position, my familiarity and rapport with first-year students must be acknowledged. Also, as expected, not every first-year student invited chose to participate in this study. The number of participants fell short of the 200 sample goal, so the margin of error in the statistical analysis was greater than desired.

Before administering the survey protocol, I followed the institutional procedures for HBCU¹. The survey was administered in April prior to the final exam period. The ideal time frame for the recruitment of study participants and the administration of the survey was February to April. This extended time frame would have allowed me to reach more students and a longer period for students to reflect on their fall and spring advising experiences and to complete the survey.

Suggestion for Future Studies

A gap in the literature regarding research studies on academic advising at HBCUs was addressed with this study. However, additional research studies are needed to increase the knowledge about the effective use of academic advising at these institutions. Recommendations

for further research studies include the following:

- duplicating this study to include more participants and broadening the scope to include more HBCUs to overcome limitations of this study. In particular, more studies contribute to generalizable conclusions about students attending HBCUs, including their experiences, satisfaction levels, and preferences for the developmental advising approach.
- correlational studies on the use of developmental and proactive advising approaches and the impact of them on first-year retention rates may yield particularly interesting results. These studies may contribute valuable information for use by all institutions in developing initiatives and goals related to student success and graduation.

HBCUs are perceived to have more nurturing and catering environments than other postsecondary institutions (Reeder & Schmitt, 2013). The accuracy of this perception should be explored and the relationship, if any, to the effectiveness of any academic advising approach (particularly developmental advising) might be illuminated in future studies. Understanding the possible cultural differences between HBCUs and PWIs might lead to changes in the advising approach and practices used with students at HBCUs and with HBCU students who transfer to other types of institutions.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

Of the collegiate academic support services available to students, academic advising has been shown as a major factor for the successful transition of first-year students, and the caring and supportive environment created by advisors has been shown as a critical factor for retaining students beyond the first year. Research has shown that quality and frequent academic advising interactions can positively affect student retention (Bigger, 2005; Bland et al., 2012; Drake, 2011; Williams, 2007). Quality academic advising helps students appreciate the collegiate experience, encourages relationship building, promotes self-awareness, and addresses realistic academic and career goals. The advising relationship and the rapport that is built through frequent interactions with students help them persist to degree attainment. However, few researchers have

investigated the advising practices at HBCUs in relation to student retention or student satisfaction with the advising practiced. This study provides the foundation to encourage future studies related to academic advising at these institutions. With a better understanding of the advising practices at HBCUs, academic advising programs can be strengthened to increase student retention.

Student satisfaction with academic advising affects student retention and a successful college experience (Bigger, 2005; Bland et al., 2012; Drake, 2011; Williams, 2007). In this study, the foundation was laid through the identification of the most prevalent academic advising approach experienced by first-year students attending a HBCU in South Carolina. To make this determination, statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS on data collected through the administration of the AAI (Windsor & Sandor, 1984). The results of these analyses showed that study participants identified developmental advising as the most prevalent approach used at this HBCU and that those who experienced developmental advising expressed more satisfaction with advising than those who received prescriptive advising in terms of information on institutional policies and time spent in advising sessions. Also, no statistically significant differences were found between those who received developmental and descriptive advising regarding the accuracy of information received or the receipt of advising as needed.

The results of this study show that first-year students attending HBCU¹ in South Carolina prefer the developmental advising approach more than the prescriptive advising approach. For Goal 2030, the Higher Education Study Committee (2009) of South Carolina called for unified strategies among the institutions of higher education to measure and increase degree attainment (Walters, 2010). The results from this study support the adoption and implementation of the developmental advising approach across institutions, especially for HBCUs, to address the unified strategies for consideration by state leaders. For example, advisor training on the developmental advising approach might be unified across institutions. Also, underrepresented students attending other minority-serving institutions and PWIs may be more satisfied with the developmental advising approach than the prescriptive advising approach, and leaders might evaluate academic advising programs to determine students' experiences and promote student

satisfaction. Also, the development of an academic advising assessment tool for measuring multiple advising approaches would be a timely and useful contribution.

To build on the foundation created by this study, I encourage other researchers to replicate it by including additional HBCUs. Also, correlational studies that show the impact of developmental and other academic advising approaches on first-year student retention are needed to add context to the findings. Finally, the cultural differences between HBCUs and other postsecondary institutions should be investigated to determine the recommended advising approach for HBCU students transferring to other institutions.

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Editors' Note

NACADA members can access the AAI (Winston & Sandor, 1984) for their own research. Go to the NACADA Clearinghouse: <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Academic-Advising-Inventory.aspx>