



Advising with Intention: Exploring Academic Advising at Minority Serving Institutions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) reflect the growing diversity found across the higher education landscape. As MSIs continue to intentionally serve students, particularly students of color, academic advising is frequently identified as an institutional strategy to recruit, retain, and graduate students.

While literature does focus on advising students of color and marginalized populations, the literature rarely considers the MSI identity as a factor and/or unit of analysis, and provides an opportunity to better understand the organizational patterns of academic advising at MSIs.

Therefore, this study addresses this void in the literature and seeks to better understand academic advising, assessment methods, duties and responsibilities, and competencies/training of academic advisors within and across MSIs. Results of this study are based on qualitative data gathered from 32 MSI academic advising leaders and reflect how MSIs organize academic advising to better serve their diverse undergraduate student population. Consider the following:

- The majority of MSIs use locally created student satisfaction surveys, national student surveys, and student success data as their primary method for assessing academic advising; therefore, MSIs are very likely to assess the student's experience with academic advising. However, MSIs are less likely to assess the academic advisors' or faculty advisors' experience with their practice.
- MSIs use assessments to determine the academic advising needs of students and improve the academic advising experience, yet have an opportunity to be more deliberate in their use of academic advising data when it comes to revising student learning goals, revisiting program goals/objectives, supporting budget requests, and reviewing the advising curriculum.
- While academic advisors at MSIs primary duties mostly reflect recruitment and retention responsibilities, participating MSIs believe academic advisors serve as teachers educating their students on the essentials of learning to navigate their institution, offering interventions to support progress, and making connections to their education both inside and outside the campus.
- Informational competency, cultural competency, relational competency, and technological competency are considered to be extremely essential competencies for academic advisors to demonstrate at MSIs; however, while none are viewed as minimally essential.
- The majority of MSIs are intentional in providing training for new and current academic advisors; however, MSI academic advisor training is often concentrated on informational and technological competencies, while conceptual and anti-racism competencies are rarely a focus of academic advisor training.

This report outlines the findings of the study and shares recommendations for MSIs and other institutions to consider as they reflect upon their academic advising structure.

INTRODUCTION

MSIs reflect the ever-growing communities of color found within the diverse population of the United States (Conrad & Gasman, 2015; Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008). In 2019–2020, MSIs totaled 859 institutions of higher learning within the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). They are recognized for creating institutional conditions designed to serve students with culturally rich backgrounds (Conrad & Gasman, 2015).

MSIs are political and racialized institutions defined by federally articulated enrollment thresholds or institutional missions. Currently, the Higher Education Act of 2008 defines eight MSIs: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNH), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), and Native American Serving, Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTIs).

Table 1 Definitions of Minority Serving Institutions

MSI Type	Federal Definition
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)	HBCUs are colleges and universities founded before 1964 and were originally intended to provide higher education to African American communities. There are 105 HBCUs in 20 states, the District of Columbia & U.S. Virgin Islands. Though they represent less than 3 percent of all colleges and universities, they are responsible for awarding 17 percent of all degrees earned by Black undergraduates.
Alaska Native Serving Institutions (ANNH)	An Alaska Native Serving Institution is a postsecondary institution that receives federal discretionary funding to improve and expand its capacity to serve Alaska Native students. At these colleges and universities, undergraduate students who identify as Alaska Native make up at least 20 percent of total enrollment.
Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNH)	A Native Hawaiian Serving Institution is a postsecondary institution that receives federal discretionary funding to improve and expand its capacity to serve Native Hawaiian students. At these colleges and universities, undergraduate students who identify as Native Hawaiian make up at least 10 percent of total enrollment.
Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU)	TCUs are colleges and universities associated with American Indian and Native Alaskan tribes. There are 32 fully accredited TCUs, and most are public institutions located in rural areas in the Midwest and Southwest. The federal government provides grants and related assistance to TCUs to enable such institutions to improve and expand their capacity to serve American Indian and Native Alaskan students.
Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI)	An AANAPISI is an institution that receives federal discretionary funding to improve and expand its capacity to serve Asian Americans and Native American Pacific Islanders and low income students. At these colleges and universities, undergraduate students that identify as Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander make up at least 10 percent of total enrollment.
Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)	An HSI is an institution that receives federal discretionary funding to improve and expand its capacity to serve Hispanic and low-income students. At these colleges and universities, undergraduate students who identify as Hispanic make up at least 25 percent of total enrollment.
Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI)	A PBI is a postsecondary institution that receives discretionary funding to improve and expand its capacity to serve black students as well as low income and first-generation college students. At these colleges and universities, undergraduate students who identify as Black make up at least 40% of total enrollment and students who identify as low-income and/or first-generation college students make up at least 40% of total enrollment.
Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI)	A Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution is a postsecondary institution that is not affiliated with American Indian and Native Alaskan tribes and receives federal discretionary funding to improve and expand its capacity to serve Native American students. At these colleges and universities, undergraduate students who identify as Native American makeup at least 10 percent of total enrollment.

Source: Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions. (2023). What are MSIs?. Rutgers GSE CMSI. <https://cmsi.gse.rutgers.edu/content/what-are-msis>

In 2019–2020, MSIs enrolled 35% of all undergraduate students in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). When diving deeper into undergraduate enrollment among MSIs, most undergraduate students enrolled at MSIs were students of color (68.08%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Furthermore, MSIs tend to enroll a higher proportion of Pell eligible recipients compared to non-MSIs (46% vs. 39%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Finally, degree completion for students of color is higher at MSIs compared to non-MSIs (62% vs 27%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

With a diverse undergraduate enrollment, MSIs are poised to address the unique needs of their student population and foster success for students of color on their campuses (Espinosa, Turk & Taylor, 2017). MSIs are known for creating conditions that open the gates to education (Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, 2014), meet academic outcomes (Espinosa, Turk & Taylor, 2017), establish an affirming campus culture (Hubbard and Stage 2009), excel at student success outcomes (Gasman & Conrad, 2013), and increase social mobility (Espinosa, Kelchen, & Taylor, 2018).

As strategies evolve to address student needs and increase graduation rates, academic advising has become a more prominent and recognized support across MSIs (Carnaje, 2016). The discussions about academic advising have evolved over the past decade as institutions consider how to adapt academic advising models (Pardee, 2004), implement academic advising technologies (Underwood & Anderson, 2018), and create support structures for new and current academic advisors and faculty advisors (Voller, Miller, & Neste, 2010). For MSIs, these efforts are intended to respond to student needs by offering a more culturally sensitive (Hardin, 2007), humanistic academic advising practice to support students of color (Bermea, 2021). However, while MSIs have taken active steps to respond to the needs of their students, research on academic advising within and across MSIs is sparse.



Background

Although the literature highlights the important role academic advising plays in student success for at-potential undergraduate populations, little is known about academic advising, assessment methods, duties and responsibilities, and training of academic advisors within and across MSIs.

Clayton and Lewis (1984) described resources for academic advisors to reference when “advising minority students” at HBCUs and PBIs. Guiffrida (2004) examined the involvement of African American students at PWIs and discovered “African American student organizations can hinder the academic achievement of students who value hierarchical leadership styles, service toward systemic change, and leadership experiences over grades” (p. 88). While Guiffrida did reference HBCUs within the literature review, the primary unit of analysis was the PWI under examination.

Torres et al.’s (2006) grounded theory study examined how first-generation Latinx students gathered academic information within their institutions. The study highlights how first-generation Latinx students often view academic advisors as non-authorities on campus, gather information from trusted peers and staff with whom a relationship has been established, and offer culturally relevant suggestions for what academic advisors can do to help facilitate the academic information seeking process for Latinx students. While the study focused on student experience, the institutional backdrop included four urban institutions; two that identified as HSIs and two that identified as PWIs.

Harris’ (2018) quantitative study examined the “most prevalent academic advising approaches used at a HBCU in South Carolina” (p. 36) with results demonstrating that a developmental advising approach was most prevalent. Castro & Castro (2018) examined California State University, Fresno’s (Fresno State) approach to accelerating student success. The study identified that campus leadership considered academic advising as a high impact practice to support the fulfillment of their student success goals. While the study did recognize Fresno State as both a HSI and AANAPISI, the primary focus of the study was how leadership managed to achieve the institution’s student success goals through innovative strategies such as investing in academic advising.

When exploring practice, Millin (2018) offered suggestions for enhancing pre-health academic advising practices at MSIs. Based on the needs of health professions and the needs of students of color at MSIs, Millin recommended MSIs take a social justice and networking approach to academic advising that works in tandem with administrative support. The recommendations suggest that academic advisors at MSIs play a role not just in retention and completion but also in student post-completion success.



Ordaz et al., (2020) studied “how HSIs can better serve their Latinx and minoritized students, with the goal of operationalizing servingness as a transformation of organizational structure” (p. 80) and a particular focus on academic advising. Through an interactive theatre experience, academic advisors engaged in professional development focused on cultural humility, microaffirmations and microaggressions, sense of belonging, and academic outcomes. These four areas of focus established a framework for servingness via academic advising. However, the former were the focus of professional development for academic advisors. The results confirmed the importance of academic advisors practicing cultural humility and providing microaffirmations to better serve Latinx students at an HSI.

Finally, as part of a Title V Grant, Hernandez (2020) examined the impact of intrusive advising at a two-year HSI. The study found intrusive advising to be an approach that encourages continuous enrollment (term to term) but suggested final course grades not be used to measure the impact of intrusive advising at HSIs. Additionally, Hernandez expressed the importance of having an academic advisor with the same ethnicity, as the advisee’s perceived value of the academic advising experience is increased.

While literature does focus on advising students of color and marginalized populations, the literature rarely considers the MSI identity as a factor and/or unit of analysis and reflects an opportunity to better understand the organizational patterns of academic advising at MSIs. Therefore, this report addresses this gap in the literature and seeks to offer a better understanding of organizational patterns of academic advising such as assessment methods, duties and responsibilities, and training of academic advisors within and across MSIs.

Approach

This qualitative research is intended to gather a foundational understanding of academic advising at MSIs. As such, my qualitative design enables the study to consider the institution's MSI identity to gain insights about academic advising within and across varying MSI types. My primary focus for this study is to explore the organizational patterns of academic advising within and across the MSIs. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Discover the methods and uses of academic advising assessment within MSIs
- Describe the responsibilities and duties of academic advisors within MSIs
- Understand the competencies and training of academic advisors within MSIs

As a result, this research provides insights into common or divergent organizational patterns of academic advising at the MSIs.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2022), there are 859 MSIs within the United States, American territories, the Federal District, and the Federation of Micronesia. Referencing the MSI list, a list of academic advising leadership on individual campuses was identified to create a potential pool of institutional representatives. An institutional representative was someone familiar with the institution and its academic advising practices. Specifically, the institutional representative understood the institution characteristics and student demographics. Furthermore, the representative had knowledge of the institution's academic advising structure, model, assessment, technologies, and communications. Based on this criteria, 46 academic advising leaders across various MSI types were invited to participate in the study and 32 ultimately agreed.

As reported by the institutions, the institutions within this study include 23 HSIs, 4 HBCUs, 4 AANAPISIs, 2 ANNH, 2 NASNTI, and 2 TCUs. Of our 32 institutions, 4 have multiple MSI identities. One identifies as an HSI and NASNTI. Another identifies as an HSI and an AANAPISI. Another institution identifies as an ANNH and an AANAPISI. Finally, another institution identifies as an ANNH and a NASNTI.

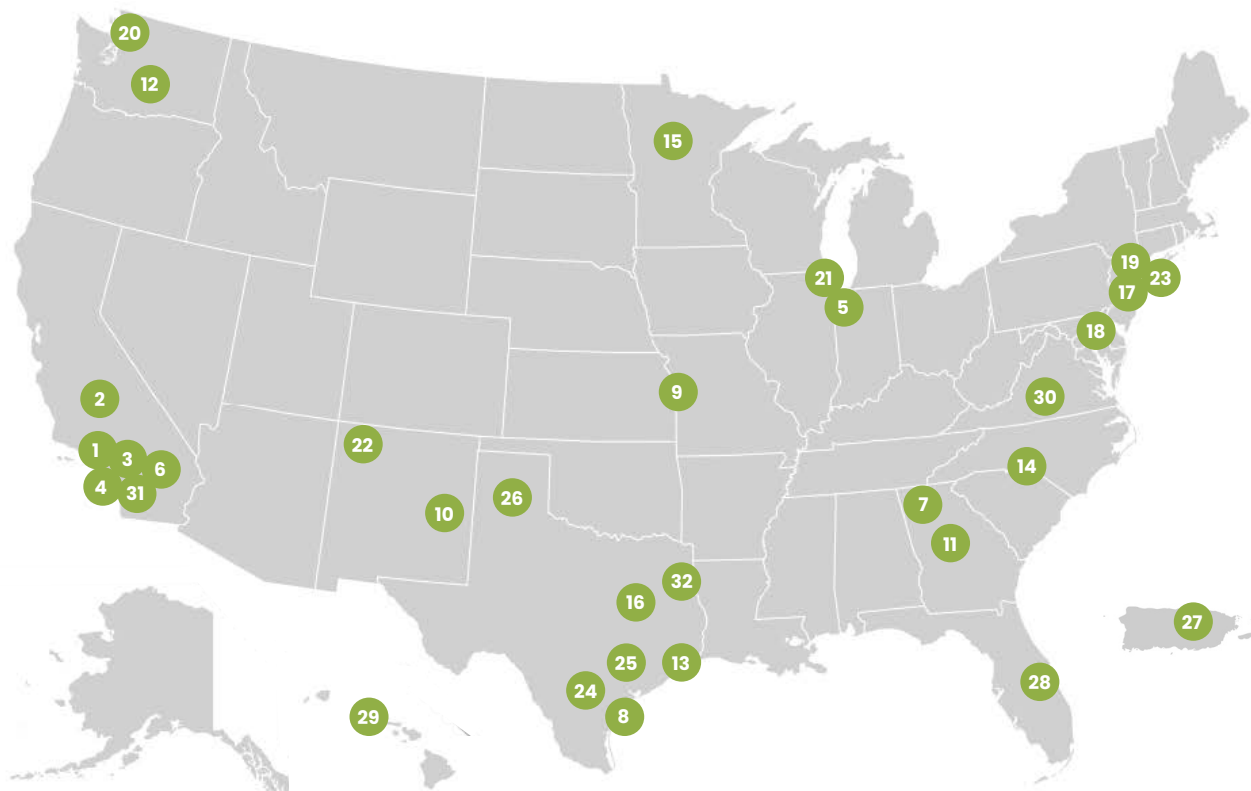
The participating MSIs within this study represent the various enrollments, sectors, locations, and geographic regions. In fall 2020, these institutions enrolled 292,725 undergraduate students with 64% as students of color. Additionally, 16 were public 4-year institutions, 10 were private, non-profit 4-year institutions, and 6 were public 2-year institutions. The majority (19) are located within cities while others are in suburbs (7), rural (4), or town (2) locations. Most are geographically located within the Southern (13) or Western (11) U.S., while a few are geographically located in the Northeast (4) and Midwest (4). As a collective, these MSIs are just as diverse as the students they advise.

My approach applies a qualitative questionnaire design (Creswell, 2012). The qualitative questionnaire asks 32 academic advising leaders across various types of MSIs to answer questions around six primary areas: institutional characteristics, academic advising models and structure, academic advisor competencies, duties and training, the assessment of academic advising, academic advising technologies and the communication of academic advising. My survey was implemented using Qualtrics and combined several questioning methods such as ranking questions, closed-ended questions, and open-ended questions. The questionnaire link was embedded within the outreach message. The link directly connected the participant to the questionnaire and provided the informed consent form. I then stored questionnaire results electronically with password protection to ensure confidentiality and limited access to results.

To analyze the data as a whole set, I used thematic analysis to identify codes across responses (Saldaña, 2021). I organized the codes into categories and themes. Additionally, in select sections, I organized some data sets by MSI types (ex. HBCUs/PBIs, TCUs/NASNTIs, HSIs, and AANAPISIs/ANNHSIs). When organized in this manner, I was able to apply thematic analysis to gain deeper insights into each MSI type’s organizational patterns for academic advising. For institutions that fell into two MSI types, I included both types in the questionnaire analysis. For example, if an institution is both a HSI and PBI, then I included the institution in both the HSI analysis and the PBI analysis to strengthen the analysis of each category and to honor the institution’s dual MSI designation. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, I engaged in a self-reflective process via journaling. Additionally, I had continual discussion with colleagues regarding the process of the study, the data, and the interpretations. Finally, I spent almost two years with the data such that the data became saturated. I represent the results visually through heatmaps, maps, and bubble charts.

Figure 1

Map of Participating MSIs



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1 California State University Channel Islands | 13 Houston Baptist University | 25 Texas State University |
| 2 California State University, Bakersfield | 14 Johnson C Smith University | 26 Texas Tech University |
| 3 California State University, Dominguez Hills | 15 Leech Lake Tribal College | 27 Universidad Politecnica de Puerto Rico, Hato Rey |
| 4 California State University, Long Beach | 16 McLennan Community College | 28 University of Central Florida |
| 5 Calumet College of Saint Joseph | 17 Montclair State University | 29 University of Hawaii – West Oahu |
| 6 College of the Desert | 18 Morgan State University | 30 Virginia University of Lynchburg |
| 7 Dalton State College | 19 New Jersey City University | 31 Whittier College |
| 8 Del Mar College | 20 Northwest Indian College | 32 Wiley College |
| 9 Donnelly College | 21 Saint Augustine College | |
| 10 Eastern New Mexico University, Portales | 22 San Juan College | |
| 11 Georgia Gwinnett College | 23 Stella and Charles Guttman Community College | |
| 12 Heritage University | 24 Texas A&M University–San Antonio | |

Methods of Assessing Academic Advising

The majority of MSIs use locally created student satisfaction surveys, national student surveys, and student success data as their primary method for assessing academic advising; therefore, MSIs are very likely to assess the student’s experience with academic advising. However, MSIs are less likely to assess the academic advisors or faculty advisors experience with their practice.

Table 2

Methods for Assessing Academic Advising at MSIs

	Very Likely	Likely	Less Likely			
Methods of Assessment	MSIs	AANAPISIs/ ANNH	HBCUs	HSIs	TCUs/ NASNTIs	
Locally Created Student Satisfaction Surveys	Very Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
National Student Surveys	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Student Success Data	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Student Focus Groups	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Academic Advisor Focus Groups	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Academic Advisor Performance Measures	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Faculty Advisor Focus Groups	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Academic Advisor Job Satisfaction Surveys	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Faculty Advisor Job Satisfaction Surveys	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Faculty Advisor Portfolios/Dossier	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Student Interviews	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Faculty Advisor Performance Measures	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Academic Advisor Portfolios/Dossier	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely

HSIs are likely to use student success data to determine the impact of academic advising. Among the HBCUs, institutions identified a diverse number of assessment methods. HBCUs are likely to use local and national surveys, student interviews, student focus groups, student success data, and academic advisor focus groups.

TCUs/NASNTIs also identified diverse methods. For example, participating TCUs/NASNTIs are very likely to use local surveys, student success data, national surveys, and student focus groups. Also, TCUs/NASNTIs are likely to use academic advisor performance measures to assess academic advising at their institutions.

Finally, AANAPISI/ANNH institutions identified a variety of methods to assess academic advising. AANAPISIs/ANNHs are very likely to use national and local surveys. While some MSI types are likely to assess academic advising through the work of academic advisors, participating AANAPISI/ANNH identified their assessment efforts were more focused on the faculty advisors experience. AANAPISI/ANNH are likely to assess academic advising via faculty advisor focus groups, job satisfaction surveys, and portfolios/dossiers.

MSIs within this study are intentional about assessing the impact of academic advising. Among the top identified assessment efforts, the majority of MSI are very likely to implement locally created satisfaction surveys. Additionally, MSIs are likely to use national surveys and review student success data to determine the impact of academic advising. However, MSIs have an opportunity to deepen the impact of academic advising by expanding their methods of assessment. For example, participating MSIs are less likely to assess the experiences of academic and faculty advisors, who can inform the institution's organizational approach to academic advising and strengthen the institution's practice of academic advising.



Use of Academic Advising Assessments

Almost every time, MSIs use assessments to determine the academic advising needs of students and improve the academic advising experience, yet have an opportunity to be more deliberate in their use of academic advising data when it comes to revising student learning goals, revisiting program goals/objectives, supporting budget requests, and reviewing the advising curriculum.

Among the participants in this study, MSIs reported the strategic use of academic advising data to inform their efforts to enhance and advance academic advising on their campus.

The use of academic advising data illustrates how intentional MSIs are serving their diverse student populations when it comes to the academic advising experience. Almost every time, MSIs use assessments to determine the academic advising needs of students and improve the academic advising experience. The efforts indicate MSIs are both proactive and reactive to the academic advising experience to better serve their students.

However, MSIs almost never use data to revise the academic advising curriculum, revisit learning goals, support the academic advising budget, and revisit academic advising goals/objectives.

When examining the use of academic advising data by MSI type, the majority of MSIs reported improving the academic advising experience as a top area of invested effort. In addition to focusing on student advising needs, AANAPISI/ANNH reported also using data to inform academic advisor performance and needs. When compared to other MSI types, HSIs, TCUs/NASNTIs, and HBCUs almost never use data to evaluate academic advisor performance and needs respectively.

As noted earlier, as MSIs strive to improve the academic advising experience on their respective campuses, MSIs across the board have an opportunity to be more deliberate in their use of academic advising data when it comes to revising student learning goals, revisiting program goals/objectives, supporting budget request, and reviewing the advising curriculum.



Table 3

Application of Assessment of Academic Advising at MSIs

	Almost Every Time	Sometimes	Almost Never		
Application of Assessment	MSIs	AANAPISIs/ ANNH	HBCUs	HSIs	TCUs/ NASNTIs
Improving the Academic Advising Experience	Almost Every Time	Almost Every Time	Sometimes	Almost Every Time	Almost Every Time
Determining Academic Advising Needs of Students	Almost Every Time	Almost Every Time	Almost Every Time	Almost Every Time	Almost Every Time
Informing Advising Planning and Development	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Almost Every Time
Determining Advisor Needs and Development	Sometimes	Almost Every Time	Sometimes	Sometimes	Almost Every Time
Evaluating Academic Advisor Performance	Almost Every Time	Almost Every Time	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Revising Academic Advising Program Goals & Objectives	Sometimes	Almost Every Time	Sometimes	Sometimes	Almost Every Time
Reviewing or Revising Advising Curriculum	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Supporting Advising Budget Requests	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Revising Academic Advising Student Learning Goals	Sometimes	Almost Every Time	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Preparing Self-studies or Reports for Institutional Accreditation	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Preparing Self-studies or Reports for Specialized Accreditation	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Evaluating Faculty Advisor Performance	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Preparing Self-studies or Reports for Advising Program Review	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes

Overall, MSIs strive to assess the academic advising experience on their campuses. From homegrown assessments, student success data, and national surveys, MSIs concentrate on using specific assessment methods to gather data focused on the students' academic advising experience.

MSIs have an opportunity to gather data from academic advisors and faculty advisors to advance their understanding and impact of academic advising. However, the use of the data to enhance the academic advising experiences varies greatly by MSI types.

Finally, when examining by MSI type, MSIs report using data to improve the academic advising experience, yet what constitutes improving is inconsistent across MSIs. MSIs have an opportunity to consider new ways to leverage their data to enhance the model, structure, budget, and practices of academic advising on their campus to better serve students.

Responsibilities and Duties of Academic Advisors

While academic advisors at MSIs primary duties mostly reflect recruitment and retention responsibilities, participating MSIs believe academic advisors serve as teachers educating their students on the essentials of learning to navigate their institution, offering interventions to support progress, and making connections to their education both inside and outside the campus.

In this study, academic advisor responsibilities are themed into seven responsibilities: 1) recruitment and registration, 2) coaching and development, 3) intervention and support, 4) teaching and learning, 5) service to campus, 6) career education and development, and 7) wellness and well-being. These responsibilities are supported by 40 identified duties academic advisors are responsible for implementing on their respective MSI. Like the student populations MSIs serve, academic advisors carry a diverse range of duties and responsibilities that reflect the nuances

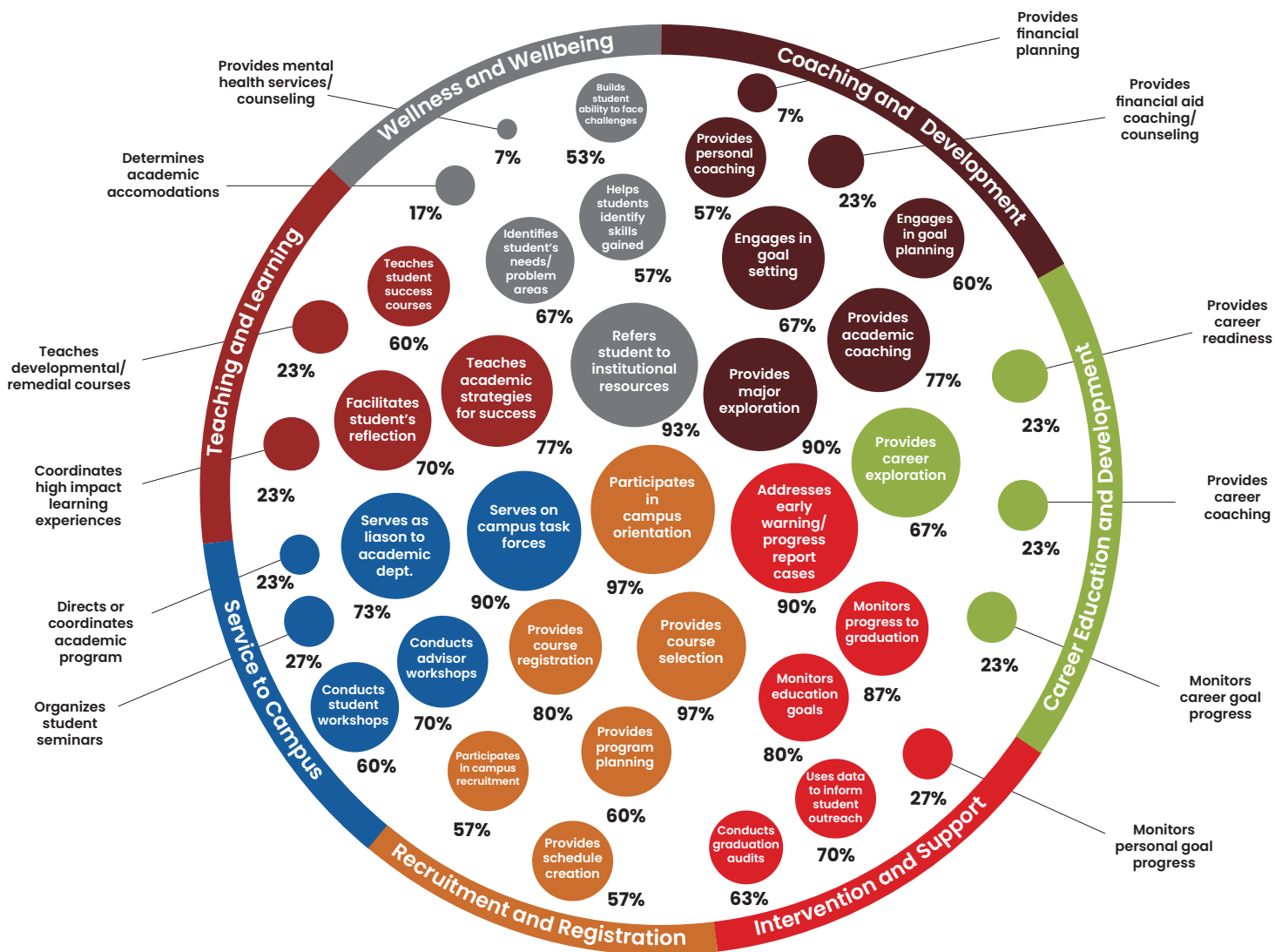
of their role to serve the institution and perform the essential multi-level functions they carry to support students into their academic journey and beyond.

Top six academic advisor duties identified by academic advising leadership at MSIs:

- Participates in campus orientation
- Provides course selection
- Refers students to institutional resources
- Addresses early warning/progress report cases
- Provides major exploration
- Serves on campus committees and task forces



Figure 2 Responsibilities and Duties of Academic Advisors at MSIs*



*The above percentages were calculated using the number of frequency of responses with the number of total responses.

RECRUITMENT AND REGISTRATION

Academic advisors at MSIs are more likely to provide orientation and registration services to support a student's transition to the institution and less likely to perform direct institutional recruitment of students and schedule creation.

Recruitment and registration may include onboarding new students, registration support of new and current students, and recruitment of new students. Among the most frequently identified areas, academic advisors at MSIs play a critical role in registration with some duties recruiting students to the institution. Two of the most frequently identified duties, academic advisors participate in campus orientation and provide course selection at MSIs. While academic advisors do play a critical role in institutional onboarding via orientation, academic advisors are less likely to participate in institutional recruitment events. Finally, while academic advisors at MSIs play a role in course selection and registration, academic advisors are less likely to provide schedule creation services to students across all MSI types.

COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT

Academic advisors at MSIs provide essential coaching and development services to support academic development yet are less likely to provide financial planning and coaching/counseling services.

Coaching and development services may address the academic, social, financial, and behavioral needs to aid students in assessing their interests, developing skills, and establishing plans to achieve current and future goals. Among the most frequently identified

areas, academic advisors at MSIs play an influential role in coaching and developing students. One of the most frequently assigned duties, academic advisors provide major exploration. Among MSIs, academic coaching is also a key duty; however, while academic advisors provide basic coaching and development services such as goal setting, goal planning, academic advisors are less likely to provide financial planning and financial aid coaching/counseling services.

INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT

Academic advisors at MSIs are more likely to provide intervention and support services related to a student's progress towards graduation and less likely to intervene on a student's progress towards personal goals.

Intervention and support may include intentionally designed practices to track, monitor, and support a student's journey through their academic program and college experience. Among the most frequently identified areas, academic advisors at MSIs play an essential duty in providing intervention and support for students. One of the most identified duties, academic advisors address early alert/warning/progress report cases. Overall, interventions and support are a consistent area of responsibility for academic advisors at MSIs. They are more likely to monitor a student's progression to graduation and progress toward educational goals. Additionally, academic advisors at MSIs use data to inform critical student outreach, especially at HSIs. While academic advisors are more likely to monitor a student's academic progress and goals, academic advisors across all MSIs are less likely to monitor a student's progress towards personal goals.



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Academic advisors at MSIs are more likely to teach courses and strategies that support a student's academic success and practice reflection techniques to facilitate a student's learning experience.

Teaching and learning include providing learning experiences that may support the cognitive, emotional, and behavior learning of a student and the application of said knowledge to their personal, career, and academic journey. Academic advisors at MSIs are more likely to teach student strategies related to their academic success. Additionally, as a teaching strategy, academic advisors at MSI frequently facilitate a student's reflection on their education. Furthermore, academic advisors are sometimes called on to teach student success and transition courses, but that duty can vary across MSIs. Finally, academic advisors are less likely to teach developmental courses and coordinate high impact learning experiences for students.

SERVICE TO CAMPUS

Academic advisors at MSIs are called to serve on larger campus task forces and committees yet play a lesser role in the development of academic programs and student seminars.

Services to campus include professional activities that support and advance the larger mission, values, and vision of the institution and the profession of academic advising at large. Among the most identified duties, academic advisors at MSIs engage in professional activities at various levels. One of the most frequently identified duties, academic advisors at MSIs serve on campus task forces and committees. Additionally, academic advisors are likely to serve as liaisons to an academic department/college. While academic advisors do conduct academic advisor workshops and training, academic advisors at MSIs are less likely to organize student seminars or coordinate academic programs.

CAREER ADVISING AND DEVELOPMENT

Academic advisors at MSIs are more likely to provide career exploration but remain largely less likely to engage in career advising and development duties.

With a focus on post-completion success, career advising, and development may include services to prepare and support a student for their future career. Often cited as an essential integrated component to the academic advising experience, academic advisors at MSIs are somewhat likely to provide career exploration for students. However, while academic advisors at MSIs are more likely to provide career

exploration, they are less likely to monitor a students' progress toward career goals, provide career coaching, and provide career readiness strategies and practices.

WELLNESS AND WELL-BEING

Academic advisors at MSIs perform foundational wellness duties to address students' needs in and outside the campus yet defer more specialized support to trained campus colleagues.

Wellness and well-being include duties that address a student's essential needs to overcome unexpected challenges that impact a student's learning experience both inside and outside the classroom and on and off campus. Among the identified responsibilities, academic advisors at MSIs practice various wellness and wellbeing duties. One of the most frequently identified duties, academic advisors at MSIs refer students to key institutional resources. Additionally, academic advisors at MSIs were likely to identify students' current and potential needs. While academic advisors provide basic wellness and well-being support, they are less likely to provide mental health services/counseling and determine academic accommodations.

Overall, academic advisors at MSIs perform a variety of responsibilities and duties to support a student's transition to and through the institution and offer coaching to provide academic support and intervene, as needed, to aid a student's progress towards graduation. Furthermore, academic advisors are teachers who teach student's academic success strategies and facilitate a student's learning through reflection and growth pedagogies. Also, extending beyond stereotypical duties, academic advisors serve on campus task forces and committees. Of note, academic advisors at MSIs tend to provide practices that align with humanistic advising such as addressing students' needs in and outside the campus. Finally, while academic success appears to be an essential focus of academic advisor responsibilities and duties, MSIs have an opportunity to more intentionally integrate career advising and development duties to support post-completion success for their students.

Essential Competencies and Training for Academic Advisors

The overwhelming majority of MSIs provide training to support the transition and development of new and current academic advisors; however, when aligning competencies with the training offered to develop said essential or extremely essential competencies, MSIs are mostly inconsistent or misaligned in their efforts.

Informational competency, cultural competency, relational competency, and technological competency are extremely essential competencies for academic advisors to demonstrate at MSIs; however, while none are viewed as minimally essential, the remaining four competencies are considered as essential for the role of academic advisors.

MSIs call for academic advisors to demonstrate a level of aptitude across multiple competencies. When asked about which competencies were considered essential for the role, MSI, along with all MSI types, identified two competencies as extremely essential: informational and cultural. Additionally, MSIs considered relational as an

extremely essential competency; however, HBCUs and TCUs/NASNTIs considered this competency as essential. Finally, MSIs believe technological competency as extremely essential to the work of an academic advisor yet, AANAPISIs/ANNHs, HBCUs, and TCUs/NASNTIs thought the competency to be essential.

Of the remaining four competencies, MSIs identified personal, communication, anti-racism, and conceptual as essential competencies for academic advisors. While considered essential for MSIs, the personal competency is believed to be extremely essential at AANAPISIs/ANNHs and HBCUs. Additionally, the communication competency is extremely essential at AANAPISIs/ANNHs, HBCUs, and HSIs. Of note, AANAPISIs/ANNHs and HSIs consider anti-racism to be extremely essential for academic advisors while HBCUs, and TCUs/NASNTIs consider it to be essential. Finally, MSIs, along with all MSI types, considered conceptual competency to be essential for academic advisors.

Table 4 Essential Competencies for Academic Advisor at MSIs

Competency	Essential Competencies for Academic Advisor at MSIs				
	MSIs	AANAPISIs/ ANNH	HBCUs	HSIs	TCUs/ NASNTIs
Conceptual*	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Informational*	Extremely Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Relational*	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Cultural	Extremely Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Technological	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Personal	Essential	Extremely Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
Communication	Essential	Essential	Essential	Extremely Essential	Essential
Anti-racism	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential

*NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2017). NACADA academic advising core competencies model. <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/CoreCompetencies.aspx>

The majority of MSIs are intentional in providing training for new and current academic advisors; however, MSI academic advisor training is often concentrated on informational and technological competencies, while conceptual and anti-racism competencies are rarely a focus of academic advisor training.

Collectively, MSIs frequently provide training to support the development of essential academic advising competencies to support student success. Specifically, most of the academic advisor training at MSIs is concentrated on informational competence, which calls on academic advisors to demonstrate their knowledge of institutional policies, procedures, resources, and programs. Training on the informational competency is often provided at most MSIs and sometimes provided at TCU/NASNTI. Additionally, technological competence, which includes an academic advisor’s ability to leverage institutional systems that hold key student data (ex. course schedule, degree plans, degree audits), is also a frequent training area for most MSIs.

Furthermore, relational competency, which provides academic advisors an opportunity to demonstrate interpersonal communication skills, is sometimes a form of training for new and current academic advisors at MSIs but often provided at HSIs and AANAPISIs/ANNHs. In line with relational competency is an academic advisor’s ability to communicate, which calls for academic advisors to demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively by applying cultural communication skills when communicating

with students through various mediums. Most MSIs sometimes provide such training to develop communication competency, yet TCUs/NASNTIs tend to rarely provide such training. As most MSIs sometimes provide training in communication and relational competencies, cultural competency, which enables academic advisors to demonstrate culturally relevant skills, receives inconsistent focus across MSIs.

AANAPISIs/ANNHs and TCUs/NASNTIs often provide cultural competency training for academic advisors; however, HBCUs rarely provide such training while HSIs only sometimes provide training in this area. Personal competence, which speaks to an academic advisor’s ability to self-assess their practice, is sometimes embedded in training at most MSIs yet TCUs/NASNTIs tend to rarely provide such training.

Finally, when examining anti-racism, MSIs rarely provide training on these competencies. The conceptual competency, which calls for academic advisors to demonstrate their knowledge of academic advising frameworks, models, and philosophies, is rarely provided as a part of training across all MSI types. Further, anti-racism competence, which is the demonstration of equity-minded advising practices, is rarely a topic of training for new and current academic advisors across all MSIs and MSI types.

Table 5 Training Received by Academic Advisor to Develop Competencies at MSIs

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely		
Competency	MSIs	AANAPISIs/ ANNH	HBCUs	HSIs	TCUs/ NASNTIs
Conceptual*					
Informational*					
Relational*					
Cultural					
Technological					
Personal					
Communication					
Anti-racism					

*NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2017). NACADA academic advising core competencies model. <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/CoreCompetencies.aspx>



Overall, MSIs are intentional in providing training to support the development of academic advisors on their campus. However, when considering the competencies and the training offered to develop said competencies, there appears to be alignment and/or misalignment in some areas. For example, as informational competence is considered extremely essential, MSIs often provide training for academic advisors in this area. This demonstrates proper alignment between training and competency development.

However, while cultural competence is also considered extremely essential, MSIs sometimes provide training to aid academic advisors in developing the competency. This presents an inconsistent alignment between training and competency development. Finally, MSIs believe conceptual and anti-racism competencies are essential for academic advisors on their campus, yet rarely provide training. This points to a misalignment between training and competency development. As a result, MSIs have an opportunity to align their training with their competencies. By doing so, academic advisors will be better trained to meet the needs of their diverse student population.

Reflective Recommendations

As MSIs continue to strengthen their efforts to serve students, academic advising remains an influential experience that links the undergraduate experience both on and off campus. Thus, as institutions consider new ways to advise students more intentionally, particularly students of color, the following are a few reflective recommendations for MSIs, and other institutions, to consider.

Be deliberate about the integration of career and academic advising.

Academic advisors take on several essential responsibilities and duties that illustrate the complexity and multifunctional nature of their role within and across MSIs. Many of their responsibilities focus on recruitment, retention, and completion – supporting the important role academic advisors play in a student's overall success; however, an opportunity exists for academic advisors at MSIs to integrate career and post-completion success more intentionally into their practice.

Research illustrates that a primary reason students enroll in higher education is to secure a good paying job after graduation (Gallup, 2018). As MSIs continue to play a critical role in student access and completion, several MSIs are beginning to see an opportunity to go beyond completion and shift their focus to post-completion success. Academic advisors, who primarily focus on a student's academic journey at MSIs, have an influential role in integrating conversations and practicing strategies that link advisees to career and post-completion success.

Be intentional in the alignment of competencies with the content of academic advisor training.

MSIs within this study are intentional in providing training for academic advisors. The training is often concentrated on developing an academic advisor's informational and technological competencies, while conceptual and anti-racism competencies are rarely a focus within academic advisor training. An opportunity exists for MSIs to align their competencies more intentionally with the content of their academic advisor training.

As academic advisors at MSIs prepare to serve the growing and diverse students, the expansion of the scope of academic advisor training should include conceptual and anti-racism competencies. As a result, academic advisors are likely to gain a deeper understanding of their professional craft, offer a more humanized academic advising experience, and create conditions to better serve their students. Without awareness and intentional training in the areas of conceptualization and anti-racism competencies, academic advisors may be lacking in their ability to effectively serve their advisees and impact how academic advisors function respectfully and competently.

Be mindful of both the student and academic advisor voice to create a more intentional academic advising experience.

With a large focus on student satisfaction and student success measures, MSI within this study are highly intentional in their efforts to assess the impact of the academic advising experience on their students. Furthermore, the methods of assessment and uses of assessment data are relatively consistent across all MSI types, which reflect that the student voice is at the center of the assessment efforts.

However, given the collaborative nature of academic advising, the academic advisor voice is just as essential. MSIs have an opportunity to gather data from academic advisors and faculty advisors to advance their understanding and impact of academic advising. With this in mind, MSIs have an opportunity to implement assessment methods that take into account the experiences, work, and needs of their academic advisors to enhance institution level academic advising goals and efforts.

For example, MSIs within this study could use academic advising data to enhance the institutional structure (ex. goals, budget, curriculum, self-studies) of academic advising on their campus to better serve students. By doing so, MSIs can leverage assessments to elevate the voices of both student and academic advisors to create a more intentional academic advising experience.



Conclusion

The intentional design of academic advising by MSIs to cater to their diverse student population is a vital step toward promoting inclusivity and student success. By recognizing and addressing the unique needs and opportunities presented to underrepresented students, MSIs within this study have made significant strides in fostering supportive and empowering academic advising environments for academic advisors and advisees. As shared, MSIs advise with intention through the implementation of assessment methods designed to enhance the academic advising experience for both advisee and advisor; the organization of academic advisor responsibilities and duties to meet students where they are in their academic journey; and train academic advisors in key select competencies to provide a more humanistic advising experience.

However, there are still areas that require further research to enhance our organizational understanding of academic advising at MSIs. Future research is needed on how MSIs influence professional identity development of academic advisors, explore how MSIs develop training models for academic advisors, or examine the communication methods used to engage advisees in academic advising. The need to understand academic advising efforts within and among MSIs continues as it is essential for researchers and practitioners to strive to comprehend the conditions of student success within these nuanced, creative and invested institutions. Overall, the commitment of MSIs to intentional academic advising serves as a beacon of progress, providing inspiration and valuable insights for institutions seeking to promote equity and foster academic achievement for all students.

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