

2011-12 Academic Advising Council Activity Report*Table of Contents*

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2011-12 Advising Council Executive Summary

Charge element 1: The purpose of the Academic Advising Council is to evaluate the administration and delivery of advising services to all students at Missouri State University and to make recommendations for improvements.

Actions

- Based on the Council's stated intent to focus the 2011-12 academic year on advancing MSU advising assessment, the Chair drafted and shared with members (prior to the first fall meeting) an in-depth report on assessment of campus academic advising (**see Appendix A**). Report suggested potential action steps, including recommendations to consider practices at peer institutions as benchmarks, to identify student learning outcomes related to advising, to consider possible venues for deploying future assessment, and to write assessment items.
- Chair shared highlights of NACADA Advising Assessment Institute to establish a foundation upon which the Council could construct an assessment plan.
- Council decided to initially focus assessment efforts on student learning over advising process and delivery outcomes, as advisors may view the latter as more evaluative than constructive in relation to their job performance. As a more assessment-oriented culture is embraced at MSU, both faculty and professional advisors may feel more comfortable participating in a comprehensive advising assessment process.
- Current and past Chairs worked with Computer Services representatives to investigate one aspect of advising process and delivery. Reports indicated that the vast majority of student advising releases provided across campus are unfortunately *not* accompanied by an advising note documenting the advising interaction. This is an area for potential improvement in the MSU advising process.
- Chair met with Assessment Research Coordinator to explore existing assessments that address academic advising at MSU. Six currently used instruments (**see Appendix B**) ask one question apiece related to academic advising, but a comprehensive overview of student learning outcomes is not provided by this constellation of assessments.
- Aligned with the MSU Advising Mission Statement (**see Appendix C**), the Council identified student learning outcomes expected as a result of academic advising.
- Based on learning outcomes, assessment questions were drafted for three specific student groups: freshmen, transfers, and graduating seniors (**see Appendix D**). Instruments for transfers and seniors were piloted in a class at the end of the spring 2012 semester. The MSU Assessment Research Coordinator's pilot result analysis (**see Appendix E**) was based on a sample size too small for robust reliability checks, however, reports demonstrated correlations between expected items, and minor wording changes were suggested and applied to each instrument.

Future focus

- Council intent is to launch freshman and senior assessments in fall 2012, possibly repeating in three year cycles. Freshman assessment will be conducted through advisor presentations in GEP 101 classes. Senior assessment will be incorporated as supplemental items with the University Exit Exam (GEN 499). The MSU Transfer Advising Committee will be asked to consider the transfer student instrument and an optimal venue for its launch. Data analysis and reporting is planned for spring 2013 through a Council subcommittee led by the exiting Chair.
- Investigate accreditation reports, program review documents, and other sources to explore existing advising assessment practices in MSU academic departments.

Charge element 2: The Council will identify current advising practices that are successful and encourage those practices among more advisors.

Actions

- Subcommittee collected information on advising assessment practices from benchmark institutions including UT-Arlington, James Madison, Ball State, and U of Iowa. Results of this research suggest that MSU's emerging focus on advising assessment aligns with similar foci at peer institutions (**see Appendix F**).
- Council created a "Be Advised" bookmark (**see Appendix G**) highlighting student best practices for developing a successful advising relationship. Bookmarks were distributed to all MSU academic departments and advisement centers to guide advisors in communicating what is expected of students through the advising process. Bookmark content is also included on the Academic Advisement Center website, in Admissions communications, and in the SOAR 2012 student book.

Future focus

- Within the next year, the Council aims to develop a web page to increase visibility of the group's contribution to MSU advising. Best practice documents (and potentially advising assessment results and related recommendations) can be communicated through this venue to encourage quality advising practice across campus. Additionally, as the Council's composition is primarily based on rotating terms, communication of the group's activities may encourage new advisors to seek involvement with the Council.
- Communicate through additional modalities the importance of advisors employing advising notes to document interactions with students.

Charge element 3: The Academic Advising Council will work to enhance consistency and quality within the advising system and support student development initiatives.

Actions

- Chair met with Director and Assistant Director of MSU Admissions to discuss ways to communicate with students about academic advising from the earliest points of contact with MSU. The Council provided revised content related to advising which was incorporated throughout the Admissions communication plan (e.g., initial admittance email, transfer to-do list, and FAQ booklet provided for admitted incoming students).
- The Council provided additional advising-related content (e.g., importance of the advising relationship) for inclusion in emails to prospective students and emails to be sent to students after their arrival at MSU.

Future focus

- Council will work with Transfer Advising Committee to address campus transfer advising needs.

Charge element 4: (Added June 2010) The Academic Advising Council is available for consultation as policy decisions are made that affect academic advising practice at Missouri State University.

Actions

- Consulted with representatives from the Office of the Registrar to discuss how future registration sequences could be planned to provide optimal access for students while also considering timing of financial holds and holidays.

Future focus

- Council will maintain availability to consult with campus groups regarding processes and policies that affect the quality of academic advising.

Appendix A

Analysis of Academic Advising Assessment at MSU

*(The following report incorporates pseudonyms, referring to MSU as “New Horizons University”,
Kathy Davis as “D. Sage, and Tracie Burt—then Chair—as B.C. King.)*

Part I: Organizational Overview of New Horizons University

New Horizons University (NHU) is a higher education system with multiple campuses in a Midwestern metropolitan region populated by approximately 420,000 citizens. NHU was founded in the early 1900's to prepare teachers for positions in the state's public schools, but it has since evolved to provide undergraduate and graduate degree programs for annual enrollments of nearly 23,000 students. NHU's primary campus is a selective-admission, graduate-level teaching and research institution. An additional open-admission campus serves students in seven counties across the state. NHU also administers programs in other locations that provide educational opportunities based on community needs (e.g., distance learning and study abroad). The guiding mission of NHU is to develop educated individuals through an institutional commitment to promote citizenship, competence, and responsibility of students, employees, and NHU alumni within local and global society.

The University system is overseen by a board of individuals appointed by the state Governor. NHU's chief executive officer, the President, reports directly to the Board of Governors. The President supervises the Chief of Staff, General Counsel, two-year campus Chancellor, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, Equal Opportunity Officer, Provost, Chief Financial Officer, Vice President (V. P.) for Advancement, V. P for Administrative and Information Services, V. P. for Student Affairs (Auxiliaries), and V. P. for Research and Development. The Provost (also titled V. P. for Academic Affairs) supervises the V. P. for Student Affairs (also titled Dean of Students), the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and the Honors College, the Associate Provost for Student Development and Public Affairs, the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, the Budget Financial Officer, the Director of Institutional Research, and all academic deans (see Appendix).

Academic Advising at New Horizons University

Academic advising, under Academic Affairs, is a common thread woven through each NHU student's educational experience. Early advising occurs when potential students and their families visit

NHU to meet with program advisors. Advising continues at NHU recruitment events for high school and community college students. New NHU students with less than 24 post-high school college credits participate in a two-day orientation program before beginning classes. Orientation includes extensive academic advising that emphasizes general education, first-year student opportunities, and the importance of students getting to know their advisors.

Academic advising is required once a semester prior to course registration until NHU students have completed 75 credit hours. Undecided majors are advised by professional staff advisors, and students with declared majors are advised primarily by faculty members in specific academic departments. Though this system appears seamless, little is known about the actual impact of academic advising on NHU student experiences. This lack of understanding (and data) is not unique to NHU. In fact, academic advising is commonly assumed to contribute to college student success and retention, but Campbell and Nutt (2008) suggested that this case is not explicitly supported in existing literature. Additionally, the American College Testing (ACT) program and the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) indicated that many higher education institutions do not capitalize on the potential of academic advising to promote student success (Habley, 2004; NACADA, 2004).

New Horizons University Academic Advising Council

In 2008, NHU's Provost displayed interest in more clearly understanding the relationship between academic advising and student success by establishing an Academic Advising Council (AAC). Provost-appointed AAC membership includes advisement center coordinators, directors of programs with advising components, faculty advisors, and professional staff advisors. These individuals represent all NHU colleges as well as campus advisement centers serving specific populations (i.e., undecided, business, psychology, and education majors). The AAC is charged to evaluate administration and delivery of advising to all NHU students, make recommendations for improvements, identify and

encourage successful advising practices, and enhance consistency and quality of the NHU advising system.

To date, the AAC has made measurable progress toward meeting its charge. The AAC composed a mission statement for campus advising and, based on recommendations from the Council for Advancement of Standards in higher education, the AAC identified best practices for NHU advising. These materials have been distributed campus-wide through multiple methods and are now core components of NHU advisor training, recognized by NACADA as one of the nation's ten exemplary advisor training programs (Voller, Miller, & Neste, 2010). The AAC also collaborated with campus groups including Computer Services, Student Government, and the Office of the Registrar to acquire software that reduces time required for advisors to assist students with course scheduling, thereby increasing the time available for developmental and learning-centered advising interactions. These accomplishments demonstrated AAC's progress toward meeting its charge; however, evaluation of advising remained uncharted territory.

In 2009, the AAC conducted a survey to investigate student satisfaction with NHU academic advising. Understanding student satisfaction with advising is important; however, results of this evaluation did not address the impact of advising on student success, learning, or retention, and results did not inform improvement of the NHU advising process. AAC membership agreed that a satisfaction survey cannot be the sole data source applied to evaluation and enhancement of NHU's advising system. AAC members determined that their charge can be most effectively and accurately met through implementation of a systematic, consistent, but completely absent assessment process investigating both advising delivery and student outcomes.

The New Horizons University Assessment Dilemma

Evaluating and enhancing advising at NHU will require multifaceted understanding of advising assessment within its many contexts: higher education, NHU's decentralized advising structure, and

among members of the Academic Advising Council charged to develop the assessment process. In 2011, the AAC Chair, B. C. King, attended NACADA's Assessment Institute to learn about systematic assessment of academic advising in the context of higher education. Following the institute, King presented a brief summary of this information to the AAC and was elected to serve an additional term as Chair to lead the group's development of an advising assessment process for NHU. The present dilemma centers on how King can effectively lead the AAC, a group without formal authority, to develop and ultimately implement a systematic process to assess and enhance a complex decentralized advising system. As preliminary groundwork, King analyzed the issue's structural dimensions.

Part II: Structural Analysis

Bolman and Deal (2008) likened formally assigned roles and responsibilities to a skeletal structure or framework within which an organization can successfully attain its goals. Effective structure must authentically align with an organization's mission. As previously stated, NHU's mission is to develop educated individuals by promoting responsible citizenship of its students and alumni in a global society. All colleges, offices, departments, and programs are expected to support the NHU mission through unique contributions to each student's educational experience. While most NHU roles and responsibilities are clearly assigned to a single department, program, or employee, academic advising spans numerous aspects of the institution's complex structure.

Advising and NHU Organizational Structure

Operating from the organization's socially constructed *strategic apex* (Mintzberg, 1979/2011), the Provost is expected to ensure that NHU meets the academic aspects of its mission. The Provost oversees the division of Academic Affairs encompassing NHU's *operating core* (Mintzberg, 1979/2011)—those who provide all student advisement and instruction. Viewed through a structural lens, the Provost is positioned to guide success of the Academic Affairs division by maintaining adaptive tension between allocation and coordination of employee responsibilities (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The concept

of dividing labor to increase organizational efficiency is not a new element of organization theory (Fayol, 1949/2011; Taylor, 1916/2011; Gulick, 1937/2011); however, integrating the efforts of diverse work units in increasingly complex modern organizations (with humans as finished products) is more complicated than can be addressed by a simple list of management principles and an organizational chart. To address diverse needs of declared and undecided majors, NHU academic advising is distributed among faculty and professional staff. Decentralized structure contributes to the dilemma of developing a unified assessment program for NHU advising.

Advising undecided majors. Professional staff advisors advise students prior to their selection of a major. This advisement is overseen by the Director of the Academic Advisement Center, D. Sage, who is supervised by the Associate Provost for Student Development and Public Affairs. All professional advisors who work with undeclared majors communicate expectations to their advisees through an academic advising syllabus which includes measurable learning objectives. The process appears to facilitate major selection by the time most students earn 75 credit hours. Advising undecided majors toward learning objectives lends itself to outcome assessment; however, advising becomes less structured once major declaration occurs.

Advising declared majors. Academic advising is provided at the college or departmental level for NHU students with declared majors. Business and education majors are advised in centers by professional advisors, and all other majors are assigned for advisement by faculty in academic departments. Department heads oversee faculty advising and report to college deans who are overseen by the Provost. B. C. King, faculty member and AAC Chair, coordinates advisement for an academic department while advising approximately 200 of its 700 majors. King's hybrid position as coordinator, instructor, advisor, researcher, and AAC Chair offers a unique opportunity for experience across NHU's academic structure and provides King with a multifaceted perspective on the implications of advising assessment.

Structural Implications of NHU Advising Assessment

NHU's organizational structure is progressing from a professional bureaucracy to a divisionalized form requiring more complex coordination of labor (Bolman & Deal, 2008). As NHU moves toward centralization of authority, faculty may perceive participation in shared institutional governance as diminishing. According to Robert Merton (1957/2011), informal structure may emerge alongside a centralized bureaucratic structure, leading group members to behave defensively when traditional advantage appears threatened by potential change. Thus, faculty accustomed to high autonomy may resist assessment of their advising activity even if the initiative is meant to foster an outcome most faculty espouse as valued: student success. The AAC must consider challenges posed by these implications when setting performance goals.

Approaching Advising Assessment as a Team

Whether the Provost's creation of the NHU Academic Advising Council (AAC) was fortuitous or foresight, the AAC has developed into a high-performing team determined to meet its complex charge (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Members are mutually respectful, strive to set measurable goals, represent broad areas of expertise, and are collectively motivated by the belief that effective academic advising facilitates student success. Structural analysis highlights how decentralized advisement contributes to the AAC's assessment dilemma. The AAC's task is further complicated by the highly educated nature of those whose advising will be assessed within formal and informal structures that distinguish professional from faculty advising. To better understand potential assessment of NHU's advising function within these groups, B. C. King must also consider the assessment dilemma from a political perspective.

Part III: Political Analysis

The political frame compares organizations to jungles or arenas where interdependent individuals and coalitions with enduring differences grapple for scarce resources. This view of organizations illustrates why conflict is a core element and power a crucial asset within organizational

dynamics, why bargaining and negotiation are necessary for attaining desirable outcomes, and why “organizations are inevitably political” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 196). In addition to explaining core political assumptions, Bolman and Deal (2008) contended that effective leaders must master certain skills to thrive in the organizational arena. How do power, conflict, and political skills relate to B. C. King’s analysis of the NHU advising assessment dilemma?

Power and the NHU Academic Advising Council

Power often carries negative connotations of dominance and control, but it can also be the impetus for positive organizational change (Kanter, 1979/2011). According to Kanter, “productive power has to do with *connections* with other parts of a system. Such systemic aspects of power derive from two sources—job activities and political alliances” (Kanter, 1979/2011, p. 321). From this perspective, the concept of power bridges structural and political aspects of organizational dynamics. For example, a job assignment that structures work activities as more flexible, visible, and central to an organization’s operations contributes to a position’s power potential; additionally, interaction with influential members of an organization, alliances with acquaintances across a wide section of the organization, and influence on development of subordinate attitudes can contribute to power potential.

The NHU Academic Advising Council (AAC) is a group filled with power potential due to the diverse organizational roles and existing institutional alliances of its members. In spite of this potential, the AAC does not have reward, coercive, or legitimate power (French & Raven, 1959/2011)—deficits that may be overcome through the group’s rich collective of expert power. AAC members are knowledgeable of institutional policy and student development theory, and they are known for practical application of that knowledge to assist students, colleagues, and often supervisors who are not as familiar with related policy and practice.

Bolman and Deal (2008) asserted that power is also conferred through framing or controlling meaning in a given situation. The NHU advising mission statement, drafted by the AAC, emphasizes

advising as a form of teaching. Defining advising as an interaction wherein a student is expected to learn sets a stage for future assessment of related learning outcomes. The AAC's motivation to proactively address assessment of NHU advising is advantageous because members have the autonomy to design and construct a meaningful assessment process that seeks input from and meets the needs of all NHU constituents instead of being told to implement a pre-fabricated plan. However, in spite of the defining advantage and collective expert power of the AAC, other NHU professionals may counter assessment efforts with expert power of their own.

Conflict and Advising Assessment at NHU

Bolman and Deal (2008) suggested that "conflict is particularly likely to occur at boundaries, or interfaces, between groups and units" (p. 207). Academic advising crosses the boundary between professional (staff) advisors and faculty advisors. B. C. King is particularly concerned with potential resistance from faculty advisors with regard to assessment of their advising activity. NHU advisors are distinguished not only by a formal structure determining their assigned advisees, but by organizational norms that confer what is, in essence, higher status on faculty than professional advisors.

Faculty members appear to have higher institutional status when compared to staff advisors. Faculty members collectively have higher terminal degrees, work fewer days each year, earn more, and have greater autonomy to determine their work schedules and responsibilities. Faculty members, by King's observation, often view academic advising as time consuming and less valuable than teaching or research in pursuit of tenure (a perk not available to staff advisors). For faculty, especially those for whom tenure is the highest priority, advising and its assessment may seem insignificant. Time initially appears to be the scarce resource around which conflict emerges; however, when viewed from a political perspective, faculty advisors are advantaged by higher status and greater privilege than staff advisors, which uncovers a seedbed of potential conflict over power. Additionally, a top-down administrative initiative requiring assessment of faculty advising may cause faculty to resent a potential

loss of power. The tenacious grip of faculty on traditional levels of status and influence may conflict with the AAC's aim to implement advising assessment at NHU.

AAC Political Skill Primer

According to Bolman and Deal (2008), leaders must develop core navigational and interactive skills to protect their interests in the arena of organizational politics. These skills are essential for effecting organizational change and include agenda setting, political terrain mapping, networking, coalition building, bargaining, and negotiating.

Navigational skills. An effective political agenda is a strategy developed to advance a set of interests in an environment wherein channels of communication and influence have been carefully investigated (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Members of the NHU Academic Advising Council (AAC) must explore the NHU advising system, map the political terrain (including potential sources of powerful support and opposition), and strategically develop an agenda that navigates successfully toward the AAC's vision: to develop and implement an advising assessment process that meets the needs of all stakeholders and actually enhances NHU advising.

Interactive skills. The AAC cannot develop and implement a systemic assessment process in a strategic vacuum; in fact, relying "too much on reason and too little on relationships" is a common root of failure in many leadership initiatives (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 218). B. C. King must encourage AAC members to nurture relationships across their professional networks to strengthen a coalition supporting the AAC's advising assessment agenda. Additionally, to advance the AAC's agenda, the group must bargain for resources and negotiate alliances within NHU's power structure in ways that benefit all involved.

Part IV: Action and Inquiry

B. C. King's analysis of the NHU advising dilemma results in one solid conclusion: the NHU Academic Advising Council (AAC) must invest considerable thought, planning, and effort to gain

understanding of the NHU advising environment before attempting to construct or implement an assessment process. Bolman and Deal (2008) suggested that from a structural perspective, agents of organizational change must develop strategies, plans, and structures to support change. Similarly, from a political frame, change agents should network with key players, use power, build teams with influential members, map political terrains, build agendas and alliances, wisely handle opposition, and invest in early wins. Based on these suggestions and the preceding structural and political analyses, King drafted a potential AAC action plan, including elements of lateral coordination and political strategy. The action plan will be distributed to the AAC in August, 2011, and King will ask the group to review and be ready to discuss the document when the AAC reconvenes in September, 2011.

AAC Lateral Coordination within NHU Structure

As change significantly impacts anyone touched by it, the AAC will seek to acquire understanding of the potential implications of advising assessment for all NHU constituents. AAC members will meet with representatives from NHU Institutional Research, First-Year Programs, and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning to discuss possible links between ongoing campus-wide assessment processes and academic advising. Department-specific advising assessment will be investigated in a later phase of AAC's development of the campus-wide advising assessment process. AAC members will also investigate the NHU accreditation cycle to determine how advising may or may not be addressed in past recommendations. These inquiries may allow the AAC to discover existing campus-wide assessment processes to which advising assessment may be attached without great disruption to work flow and norms—a tactic “essential to successful change” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 387).

Feasibility of new assessment options. In addition to exploring existing NHU assessment processes, the AAC will investigate feasible options for introducing new assessment methods. Members of a designated AAC subcommittee will benchmark best practices of advising assessment at peer

institutions through a survey designed by the subcommittee to collect quantitative data (Creswell, 2009). B. C. King will encourage subcommittee members to speak or correspond directly with an individual at each institution as opposed to emailing the survey without prior communication. The benchmarking subcommittee chair will summarize and communicate findings to the AAC via email. Approximately two weeks after that communication, the AAC will meet with representatives from NHU Computer Services and the Office of the Registrar to discuss linking brief online assessment of advising to student registration, as is the practice of some universities. Benchmarked practices from peer institutions may provide ideas for implementation of advising assessment processes appropriate for NHU.

Student and advisor input. AAC members will discuss how to solicit and include student and advisor input to develop the NHU advising assessment process. King will suggest AAC consideration of piloting an online student survey with questions relating to student expectations of learning outcomes from the advising process. King will ask for AAC volunteers to form a subcommittee to design the student survey. As an incentive for students to complete the survey, King will discuss options with the Office of the Registrar to offer ten random student participants early registration options for completing the survey. King will also ask AAC members to have informal conversations with professional and faculty advisors in their networks regarding a planned campus-wide survey investigating advisor perceptions and expectations of the advising process. Ideally, advisors outside of AAC membership will express interest in helping the AAC to develop the advisor survey. Once student and advisor surveys have been developed and assessment options have been explored both within existing NHU processes and at peer institutions, AAC members will collaborate to compose a strategic plan for developing NHU's comprehensive advising assessment process.

AAC Political Agenda and Development Strategy

B. C. King and the Director of the Academic Advisement Center, D. Sage, will schedule a meeting to discuss the future of NHU advising assessment with NHU Associate Provosts for Undergraduate Education, Faculty Affairs and the Honors College, and Student Development and Public Affairs. Sage, a standing member of the AAC, is a key player in this meeting due to respect garnered across NHU and beyond for a lengthy career characterized by advising expertise and interpersonal diplomacy. King recognizes Sage's referent power (French & Raven, 1959/2011) and views Sage as a mentor with substantial influence on public opinion. King and Sage will present to the Associate Provosts the AAC's strategic plan, AAC requests for support, and AAC's request to begin data collection and analysis.

Communicating the strategic plan. King and Sage understand that potential for negotiation with the Associate Provosts will be increased by quickly establishing a credible agenda and presenting a viable strategic plan to advance that agenda (Bolman & Deal, 2008). King and Sage will begin the meeting by introducing the AAC's recommended strategic plan to develop a comprehensive assessment process for NHU academic advising. The plan will address the feasibility of implementing benchmarked options as well as creating new options to assess NHU advising. Survey instruments designed to investigate student and advisor expectations of the advising process will be introduced to the Associate Provosts, and survey administration will be discussed as a preliminary step toward developing a campus-wide advising assessment process through constituent involvement.

Administrator support. King and Sage will then ask the Associate Provosts to encourage the college deans, program directors, the Office of Institutional Research, faculty and professional advisors, and students to readily assist the AAC's efforts to collect information. For example, the AAC members will eventually survey academic departments regarding advising practices and any existing advising evaluations in use—an endeavor which may progress more smoothly if deans and department heads know in advance that AAC data collection is part of a campus-wide initiative to enhance advising.

Data and process development. AAC members will conduct student and advisor surveys and review results to guide development of the NHU advising assessment process. B. C. King anticipates that survey results will help the AAC to identify learning outcomes that students and advisors most commonly expect from the advising process. This information will help the AAC to identify three to five specific learning outcomes expected for each of various student groups (e.g., freshmen, transfers, students with 75 credit hours, and graduating seniors). AAC members will then determine when each outcome should be assessed, as well as possibilities for embedding evaluation of outcomes within existing campus-wide assessment processes. Finally, the AAC will develop, and present to the Associate Provosts, a comprehensive assessment proposal that maps expected learning outcomes for specified student groups, when outcomes will be assessed, in what venue, through what medium, who will process results, how results will be communicated to stakeholders, and how results will be used to enhance NHU advising. Upon gaining appropriate approvals, the AAC will stage implementation of the assessment program.

Conclusion

The NHU Academic Advising Council (AAC) must incorporate not only structural and political analyses, but also human resource and symbolic perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 2008) in their development and implementation of the NHU advising assessment process. AAC members must understand and sensitively address the fact that systemic change reverberates to the core of each person's experience within an organization's structure. People must feel included in the inquiry stage and development of the advising assessment process. Additionally, B. C. King and the AAC must remember that implementing an advising assessment program will be more effective if NHU stakeholders help to build it and can internalize the process as meaningful and significant to their roles in the authentic mission of New Horizons University.

Appendix B

Current Campus-wide Advising Assessment at MSU

First Year Programs (JumpSTART program)

- One item on pre/post-test: "I understand the benefits of establishing a relationship with my academic advisor." (scale of 1 – *strongly disagree* to 5 – *strongly agree*)

Residence Life and Services (Living Learning Communities study)

- One item on pre/post-test: "Helpfulness of your academic advisor." (scale of 1 – *strongly dissatisfied* to 7 *strongly satisfied*)

UHC 110 course evaluation

- One item: "This course strengthened my understanding of how academic advising works in the Honors College and allowed me to identify my academic advisors." (scale of 1 – *strongly disagree* to 5 – *strongly agree*)

GEP 101 course evaluation (7/7/11 draft – contact Mike Wood for final version)

- One item: "I can identify resources that I need for academic advising. (e.g., I know who my advisor is, etc.)." (scale of 1 – *strongly disagree* to 5 – *strongly agree*)

NSSE

- One item: "Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution? (scale is *Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent*)

BCSSE

- One item: "During your last year of high school, about how often did you do each of the following: Talked with a counselor, teacher, or other staff member about college or career plans?" (scale is *Never, Sometimes, Often, Very Often*)

Appendix C

MSU Advising Mission Statement

Missouri State University Advising Mission Statement
(adopted December 2009)

Academic advisors at Missouri State University provide academic and professional guidance as students develop meaningful educational plans in pursuit of their life goals. Advisors provide students with information about coursework, University policies and procedures, the Public Affairs mission, and career options and opportunities. They require student participation in the decision-making process, help students become lifelong learners, and encourage self-reliant problem solving through exploration of students' own interests and values. Advisors support students as they seek the best possible education at Missouri State University.

Appendix D

MSU Advising Assessment Questions

Advising Assessment Questions for Freshmen
(July 2012)

1. So far, how would you rate your overall experience with academic advising (e.g., SOAR) at Missouri State University?

- a) Extremely positive
- b) Positive
- c) Neutral
- d) Negative
- e) Extremely negative

Please explain (*optional*):

2. After you complete 75 credit hours you are no longer required to meet with your academic advisor before registration. How often do you expect to meet with your advisor after that point?

- a) Never
- b) Occasionally (i.e., about once a semester or as questions arise)
- c) About once a year
- d) Once as a senior for a final degree check
- e) We will communicate via email without meeting in person.

3. During your experience at Missouri State University, in which of the following areas do you expect to receive help from a faculty or staff academic advisor? (Please check all that apply):

- a) Information about academic rules, regulations, and deadlines
- b) Requirements for your major and minor
- c) Referrals to campus resources
- d) General education requirements

4. During your experience at Missouri State University, in which of the following areas do you expect to receive help from a faculty or staff academic advisor? (Please check all that apply):

- a) Career-related options (e.g., internships, work experience, graduate school preparation)
- b) Study habits and time management
- c) Opportunities for involvement (e.g., campus organizations, community involvement, cultural opportunities)
- d) Other (please specify)

5. How much personal responsibility do you expect to take with regard to your academic planning?

- a) I will make all decisions without input from an academic advisor.
- b) I will take the lead role in decision making with input from my academic advisor.
- c) I will partner 50/50 with my academic advisor.
- d) My academic advisor will take the lead role in decision making with my input.
- e) My academic advisor will make the decisions with little input from me.
 - *If you do not know, please leave this question blank.*

6. How much personal responsibility do you expect to take with regard to your goals following college graduation?

- a) I will make all decisions without input from an academic advisor.
- b) I will take the lead role in decision making with input from my academic advisor.
- c) I will partner 50/50 with my academic advisor.
- d) My academic advisor will take the lead role in decision making with my input.
- e) My academic advisor will make the decisions with little input from me.
 - *If you do not know, please leave this question blank.*

7. Do you expect your academic advisor to support you in seeking the best possible education at Missouri State University?

- a) Absolutely
- b) Yes
- c) Somewhat
- d) No
- e) Not at all

Please explain (*optional*)

8. Please share any additional thoughts related to your academic advising experience or related expectations at Missouri State University.

University Exit Assessment – Supplemental Questions for Graduating Seniors
(July 2012)

1. How would you rate your overall experience with academic advising at Missouri State University?

- a) Extremely positive
- b) Positive
- c) Neutral
- d) Negative
- e) Extremely negative

Please explain (*optional*):

2. How often did you continue to meet with an academic advisor after you completed 75 hours and were no longer required to receive an advisor release to register for classes?

- a) Never
- b) Occasionally (*i.e.*, about once a semester or as questions arose)
- c) About once a year
- d) Once as a senior for a final degree check
- e) We communicated via email but did not meet in person.

3. At Missouri State University, in which areas did you receive help from a faculty or staff academic advisor? (Please check all that apply):

- a) Information about academic rules, regulations, and deadlines
- b) Requirements for your major and minor
- c) Referrals to campus resources
- d) General education requirements

4. This question is a continuation of the previous item. At Missouri State University, in which areas did you receive help from a faculty or staff academic advisor? (Please check all that apply):

- a) Career-related options (*e.g.*, internships, work experience, graduate school preparation)
- b) Study habits and time management
- c) Opportunities for involvement (*e.g.*, campus organizations, community involvement, cultural opportunities)
- d) Other (please specify)

5. How much personal responsibility did you take with regard to your academic planning?

- a) I made all decisions without input from an academic advisor.
- b) I took the lead role in decision making with input from my academic advisor.
- c) I partnered 50/50 with my academic advisor.
- d) My academic advisor took the lead role in decision making with my input.
- e) My academic advisor made the decisions with little input from me.

6. How much personal responsibility did you take with regard to your goals following college graduation?

- a) I made all decisions without input from an academic advisor.
- b) I took the lead role in decision making with input from my academic advisor.
- c) I partnered 50/50 with my academic advisor.
- d) My academic advisor took the lead role in decision making with my input.
- e) My academic advisor made the decisions with little input from me.

7. Did your academic advisor support you in seeking the best possible education at Missouri State University?

- a) Absolutely
- b) Yes
- c) Somewhat
- d) No
- e) Not at all

Please explain (*optional*)

8. Please select the option that best describes you:

- a) I earned all of my college credits at MSU.
- b) I transferred 23 or fewer hours to MSU from another college.
- c) I transferred 24 or more hours to MSU from another college.
- d) Other (please explain)

9. Please share any additional thoughts related to your academic advising experience at Missouri State University.

Advising Assessment Questions for Transfer Students*(July 2012)*

1. How would you rate your overall experience with academic advising at your previous institution(s)?

- f) Extremely positive
- g) Positive
- h) Neutral
- i) Negative
- j) Extremely negative

Please explain *(optional)*:

2. So far, how would you rate your overall experience with academic advising at Missouri State University?

- f) Extremely positive
- g) Positive
- h) Neutral
- i) Negative
- j) Extremely negative

Please explain *(optional)*:

3. After you complete 75 credit hours you are no longer required to meet with your academic advisor before registration. How often do you expect to meet with your advisor after that point?

- f) Never
- g) Occasionally (i.e., about once a semester or as questions arise)
- h) About once a year
- i) Once as a senior for a final degree check
- j) We will communicate via email without meeting in person.

4. During your experience at Missouri State University, in which of the following areas do you expect to receive help from a faculty or staff academic advisor? (Please check all that apply):

- e) Information about academic rules, regulations, and deadlines
- f) Requirements for your major and minor
- g) Referrals to campus resources
- h) General education requirements

5. During your experience at Missouri State University, in which of the following areas do you expect to receive help from a faculty or staff academic advisor? (Please check all that apply):

- e) Career-related options (e.g., internships, work experience, graduate school preparation)
- f) Study habits and time management
- g) Opportunities for involvement (e.g., campus organizations, community involvement, cultural opportunities)
- h) Other (please specify)

6. How much personal responsibility do you expect to take with regard to your goals following college graduation?

- f) I will make all decisions without input from an academic advisor.
- g) I will take the lead role in decision making with input from my academic advisor.
- h) I will partner 50/50 with my academic advisor.
- i) My academic advisor will take the lead role in decision making with my input.
- j) My academic advisor will make the decisions with little input from me.
 - *If you do not know, please leave this question blank.*

7. How much personal responsibility do you expect to take with regard to your academic career planning?

- f) I will make all decisions without input from an academic advisor.
- g) I will take the lead role in decision making with input from my academic advisor.
- h) I will partner 50/50 with my academic advisor.
- i) My academic advisor will take the lead role in decision making with my input.
- j) My academic advisor will make the decisions with little input from me.
 - *If you do not know, please leave this question blank.*

8. Do you expect your academic advisor to support you in seeking the best possible education at Missouri State University?

- f) Absolutely
- g) Yes
- h) Somewhat
- i) No
- j) Not at all

Please explain (*optional*)

9. Please share any additional thoughts related to your academic advising experience at Missouri State University.

Appendix E

Pilot Advising Assessment Analysis

(Provided by Kelly Cara)

Graduating Seniors Questionnaire

All items were worded as questions except the final two items:

- My academic advisor supported me to seek the best possible education at Missouri State University.
- Please select the option that best describes you.

This may or may not be an issue, but I recommend using the same format for all items. Examples below:

- Did your academic advisor support you in seeking the best possible education at Missouri State University? (Rating scale can be “Absolutely, Yes, Somewhat, No, Not at all”)
- Regarding transfer credits, which of these options best describes you?

I at least recommend altering the wording of the first item above to “My academic advisor supported me in seeking . . .” rather than “to seek.” Lastly, I also recommend combining Items 3 and 4 if possible (I know some Scantron sheets can accommodate eight answer choices).

Since this is a small sample, it is difficult to tell if the items are working as they should. It is ideal for all answer options to be selected to show that they are relevant to the question and the population. This sample did not use all answer options except for on Items 3 and 4 (choose all that apply). In a larger and broader sample, it is possible that all options could be utilized. Frequency tables for each question are included in the attached output.

After running correlations on items 1, 2, and 5-8, two relationships produced a significant result. Not surprisingly, students gave similar ratings on the first item, “How would you rate your overall experience with academic advising at Missouri State University?” and on Item 7, “My academic advisor supported me to seek the best possible education at Missouri State University” ($\alpha = .81, p \leq 0.001$). The only other really plausible correlation one could expect is between Items 5 and 6: “How much personal responsibility did you take with regard to your academic planning?” and “How much personal responsibility did you take with regard to your goals following college graduation?” The positive correlation between these items was marginally significant ($\alpha = .37, p \leq 0.1$). Since the remaining items are not directly related to one another, one should not expect them to be significantly correlated with each other. This was the case according to these tests which suggests that the items are all working as they should.

Transfer Students Questionnaire

All items were worded as questions except the final item:

- I expect that my academic advisor will support me to seek the best possible education at Missouri State University.

This may or may not be an issue, but I recommend using the same format for all items. Example below:

- Do you expect your academic advisor to support you in seeking the best possible education at Missouri State University? (Rating scale can be “Absolutely, Yes, Somewhat, No, Not at all”)

I at least recommend altering the wording to “I expect that my academic advisor will support me in seeking . . .” rather than “to seek.” I also recommend using a different phrase at the mid-point of this item’s rating scale. Currently, the mid-point option is “I don’t know.” Since this item asks about student expectations, I recommend using “I have no expectations” instead.

Other wording changes I suggest are for Items 6 and 7. I recommend deleting the statement “If you do not know, please leave this question blank” from both items because students should be able to indicate some expectation from the answer choices you have created. If you want to give them one more option to indicate no expectations, I recommend the same wording as above: “I have no expectations.” For Item 7, I also recommend using “academic and career planning” or “academic/career planning” rather than what is currently written (“academic career planning”). Lastly, I also recommend combining Items 4 and 5 if possible (I know some Scantron sheets can accommodate eight answer choices).

Since this is a small sample, it is difficult to tell if the items are working as they should. It is ideal for all answer options to be selected to show that they are relevant to the question and the population. This sample did not use all answer options except for on Items 3 and 4. In a larger and broader sample, it is possible that all options could be utilized. Frequency tables for each question are included in the attached output.

After running correlations on items 1-3 and 6-8, two relationships produced a significant result. Not surprisingly, students gave similar ratings on Item 6, “How much personal responsibility do you expect to take with regard to your goals following college graduation?” and on Item 7, “How much personal responsibility do you expect to take with regard to your academic career planning?” ($\alpha = .49, p \leq 0.05$). A marginally significant positive relationship was found between Items 1 and 2: “How would you rate your overall experience with academic advising at your previous institutions?” and “So far, how would you rate your overall experience with academic advising at Missouri State University?” ($\alpha = .40, p \leq 0.1$). In addition to these correlations, one would expect Item 8 to be significantly positively correlated with Items 1 and 2, but it is not ($p > 0.1$). However, the relationship between Items 8 and 2 is approaching significance and is positive ($\alpha = .30, p = 0.17$). It is likely that with a larger sample, this correlation would become significant.

Appendix F

Advising Assessment Benchmarks

Academic Advising Assessment at Benchmark Institutions

University of Texas at Arlington

Liz Hannabas, Assistant Director

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Enrollment: about 33,000 students and 13 staff advisors

In 2010, UTA changed its structure. All incoming freshmen enter through University College and receive a UCL advisor, with whom they stay for the entire first year at least. In the second year, if they meet certain transfer criteria (GPA, hours, courses completed), they transition to a faculty or a staff advisor in their major area. Like us, some majors use faculty advisors and some use professional staff advisors; more and more staff advisors are being hired to perform this function.

UCL operates on a walk-in basis; it has begun to allow appointments for certain students, but basically all advisors are knowledgeable about all areas.

Assessment is done by the individual units. UCL does its own, and different departments do their own.

UCL uses a survey sent to every student who comes through UCL or is readmitted or has not selected a major yet (both of those latter categories are advised through UCL). The survey is sent electronically and asks things like the number of times a student has seen his/her advisor and how satisfied students are; the survey is linked to a specific advisor (which may be different each time a student comes in)—the survey is triggered after an appointment, I believe. UCL gets a 15% return on surveys, and is satisfied with that.

A survey is also completed after orientation. It gathers demographic information and the data are made available to advisees.

UTA also uses a lot of group advising, beginning with orientation (similar to ours, UTA groups students together by major or general area and has an advisor for that area working with a group). However, this also continues through the first year, if there doesn't seem to be any worry about a student (e.g., at the fourth week, the GPA is OK and things seem to be going OK).

UCL hasn't done as much with the assessment data as it would like. UCL's initial director left after one year; the next one left after 5 months, and UCL is searching for a permanent director. However, last year, the electronic survey happened to be sent just around the drop deadline (students at UTA are not allowed to drop without talking to an advisor, so they have to see a person to do this, and that is by intention). This survey indicated serious problems with traffic flow, getting in to see someone, etc., so UCL changed some things to get better control of traffic flow.

The departments and colleges have a University Academic Advising Committee (similar to our Academic Advising Council) that gets together to share information and collaborate about what is working, what isn't working, and so forth. The UCL is seen as the leader of this group. However, each individual unit is left to decide how to assess and how to use the assessment data.

James Madison University
Anna Lynn Bell, Director of University Advising
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Enrollment: about 18,000 undergrads

At JMU, advising is done depending on your major, whether you have selected your major, and so forth:

- Declared majors are advised by a faculty freshman advisor.
- Honors Program Scholars are advised by an Honors advisor through the first semester.
- Undeclared freshmen are advised by an advisor in Career and Academic Planning.
- Undeclared student athletes are advised by staff in Student Athlete Services through their first semester at JMU.

Anna Lynn directs the Advising Center, which handles new transfer students, international students, and partnerships with the local community colleges. The Career and Academic Planning office handles advising for undeclared students and coordinates freshman advising (this office is directed by Renee Herrell, 540-568-6390). By the first semester of sophomore year, students are supposed to declare a major and receive a faculty or staff advisor. Like us, there are some full-time staff advisors and some faculty advisors. JMU has hired five full-time staff advisors to help in the oversubscribed departments (Psychology, Political Science, Health, ICLS (teaching), Nursing) to support faculty advisors in those areas. These extra support advisors report both to the department heads and the advising center, which are supposed to coordinate the evaluation. Generally, advising is done by faculty but with the staff support in those heavily-subscribed areas.

All faculty are required to advise, but it's a hot potato issue with regard to whether advising "counts" as teaching or service; different departments count it differently.

There is no uniform way that advising is assessed across the institution. JMU is trying to move away from the satisfaction with advisers to the "do you have a clear understanding of general education" area [more related to student knowledge and outcomes, I gathered].

There is also an Athletic Advising Office that looks at things like degree progress and compliance.

Assessments in the departments are handled by the department heads and are done differently by different departments. Generally department heads send out evaluations to all students, as electronic surveys.

A survey is distributed at orientation, with some assessment questions about advising. Also, the Office of Institutional Research collects and analyzes a new transfer student survey, and as part of that, the students are asked, "Have you ever met with a community college advisor?"

JMU also has a Peer Advising program that serves all undergraduates. These are paid undergrads with at least 3.0 GPAS, at least rising sophomores, and are well received.

University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls

Jean Neibauer, Director of Academic Advising

319-273-3406; Jean.neibauer@uni.eduDavid Marchesani, Associate Director of Academic Advising (*interviewed, April 3, 2012*)david.marchesani@uni.edu**Enrollment:** about 13,000 student; 800+ undecided majors**Office of Academic Advising website**

- *Faculty/Staff Advisors NACADA page:* This page lists NACADA concepts of advising and the group's other resources. It also provides links to university resources.

Orientation advising

During initial freshman orientation before their first semester, students entering UNI experience advising like our first-time freshmen do at SOAR. At UNI, advising is split into two days:

- *Day 1)* Students meet by college for preliminary advising and instruction about academics.
- *Day 2)* Students meet one-on-one with an academic advisor to register.

Assessment: Students complete a survey following orientation—David thought one question pertained to advising.

General assessment/advising information

- *Advising Model:* David called the advising at UNI “decentralized,” which means advising across campus ranges from advisement centers with staff advisors to faculty advisors within departments, though he said 90 percent of advising is through faculty advisors. He said this makes assessment “tricky.” The advising model varies by department, too. In the business college, for example, staff advisors meet with advisees to determine “technical” aspects of advising like course selection, and faculty advisors mentor advisees about professional, job-related information and connections between courses.
- *Office of Academic Advising:* David said UNI uses a partial intake model for the Office of Academic Advising where all students are advised, regardless of their declaration of a major, until the second semester of their sophomore years. At that time, the office transitions students to their major departments.
- *Assessments:* Since advising is decentralized, there is no cohesion to the assessment of advising across campus, though some surveys take place. He his office *does not* use satisfaction survey. Instead, students take a pre-advising survey (September) and a post-advising survey (March/April); both tools are based on the advising learning outcomes the office has written, which are based on NACADA's outcomes. The surveys are electronic through Survey Monkey.
- *University of South Carolina First-Year Foundations:* David said that 4-5 years ago, UNI entered this program for self-study about first-year programs, which included information about advising (www.fyfoundations.org). They worked with 1st-year freshmen and then 1st-year transfer students and then developed their First-Year Council to continue to develop UNI's first-year programs and services. Members on this council include 12-14 faculty and staff members from student services, academics, and other campus programs directed toward freshmen.
- *Graduating student survey:* This survey is like our GEN 499 assessment. David said the survey includes 1-2 questions about advising, which are “generic and vanilla.” He didn't find this tool is strong since students have been through various advising situations on campus.

- *Advisor survey:* At UNI, advisors across campus take a survey every 3-4 years to determine satisfaction with advising services and situations as well as to gauge the advising culture on campus. He said right now, advising is considered “service” for promotion and tenure decisions, though he would like it to be considered under teaching. He said the culture there is slow to change.
- *UNI Advising Council:* This group reports to the Provost. Recently, this council sponsored a NACADA workshop with Rick Robbins and Jane Drake.

University of North Carolina-Charlotte

Contact: Henrietta Thomas, Director of the University Advising Center (*interviewed April 10, 2012*)
hlthomas@uncc.edu 704-687-7719

Enrollment: Approx. 25,000+ students

Note: Director Henrietta Thomas attended the NACADA Assessment Institute during summer 2011.

University Advising Center website

- Site lists the mission statement for the center: **Academic advising at UNC Charlotte assists students to achieve their educational and lifelong learning goals through an interactive and educational partnership** (<http://advisingcenter.uncc.edu/>).
- Major planning sheets are posted there, too, which are similar to the SOAR planning sheets provided to advisors.

Incoming students

- UNCC provides a folder to all incoming freshmen that lists the advising mission statement.

General assessment/advising information

- UNCC does not have an assessment plan in place, though satisfaction surveys have been conducted for quite a long time, but she said this tool “doesn’t give much useful information.” She said they want to measure student advising outcomes, gauge what students learn from one phase of education to the next, and determine if advising has made an impact or if the changes are just the natural progression of knowledge as students grow and mature.
- Currently, a Campus Advising Redesign team is working to develop one, campus-wide assessment tool for UNCC to provide consistent and useful data for the entire campus.
- Henrietta said accreditation boards for UNCC are asking for more data about assessment, so they are trying to respond.

Appendix G

Student Best Practices – “Be Advised: Help Your Advisor Help You”

Be Advised: Help Your Advisor Help You

(Content below was distributed in various formats, including as bookmarks.)

Academic Advisors at Missouri State are committed to helping you meet your educational goals, and we want you to use available resources to help you succeed in college and beyond. These guidelines for working with your academic advisor will assist you with completing your degree and in planning for your future:

- Meet with your advisor at least once a semester to discuss your long-term and short-term goals and evaluate your academic progress.
- Prepare for meetings with your advisor; bring a list of questions, a current degree audit, and ideas about class choices. Check program requirements and class prerequisites, too.
- Be punctual for appointments and contact your advisor in advance of any necessary schedule changes.
- Seek help from your advisor when you need it, so any problems you face don't become overwhelming.
- Communicate honestly with your advisor about information he or she may need to know about you in order to help you effectively; this includes information about significant changes that can affect your academic progress and goals, like a job change or new choice of a major.
- Appreciate your advisor's multiple duties--which can include teaching, committee work and research activities--and be prepared to work with his or her schedule, too.
- Accept responsibility for the decisions and actions (or inactions) you take that affect your educational progress.