

QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF UNDERGRADUATE ADVISEMENT
AS PERCEIVED BY ACADEMIC ADVISORS WITHIN
THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
OKLAHOMA STATE
UNIVERSITY

By

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1989

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
July, 1992

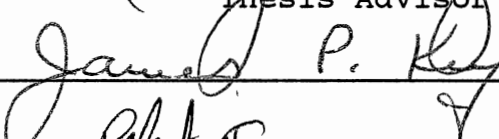
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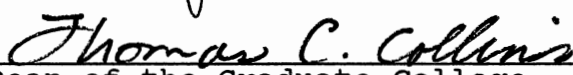


Thesis Advisor



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Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher wishes to acknowledge sincere appreciation to the many people who gave of their time and talents in order to make this effort possible:

The academic advisors within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Oklahoma State University, who took time out of their busy schedules to complete and return the questionnaire, without which the research could not have proceeded;

The members of my committee, Dr. Robert Terry and Dr. James Key, and especially Dr. Eddy Finley, my major advisor, who always gave me the advice and encouragement needed to finish the project and who served as excellent role models during my first year of graduate school;

Dr. Bill Weeks, who assisted with research materials and a good sense of humor throughout the year;

Dr. Robert Price, "The Old Camel", for being a constant source of inspiration and wisdom;

Dr. Ben Shaw, who shared not only his office and advice, but his family, Melynda and Kyle, who made being so far from home a little easier;

Mrs. Tresa Runyan, Agricultural Education Secretary, who always had a positive attitude and the answer to any questions; and

The rest of the Ag Ed "Family", who made my first year at Oklahoma State a wonderful experience.

Special recognition is extended to the following people who have played major roles in the researcher's academic career:

Mrs. Kimberly Dyer Lochbaum, my best friend since elementary school and the one person who thinks I can do anything - and often makes me think so, too;

Dr. Gary L. Roberts, Professor of History at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, who has been both a mentor and friend and who always encouraged me to follow my dreams;

My husband, Jeff, for being supportive of the idea of returning to school, and for tolerating with all the long hours I spent at school instead of being at home;

And finally, my family, which includes an incredibly large number of people without whose love and support none of this would have even been attempted, much less accomplished.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
Statement of the Problem.	2
Purpose of the Study.	3
Objectives of the Study	3
Assumptions of the Study.	4
Scope and Limitation of the Study	5
Definitions of Terms.	5
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.	8
Definition of Academic Advising	8
Status of Academic Advising	11
Characteristics of Excellent Advisors	13
General Knowledge Areas.	14
Counseling Skills.	16
Summary	22
III. METHODOLOGY	24
Institutional Review Board.	24
Population.	25
Selection and Development of the Instrument.	26
Collection of Data.	28
Analysis of Data.	29
IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	31
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	56
Introduction.	56
Purpose of the Study.	56
Objectives of the Study	57
Assumptions of the Study.	58
Scope and Limitation of the Study.	58
Major Findings of the Study	59
Conclusions	66
Recommendations	69
Recommendations for Additional Research	70

Chapter	Page
REFERENCES	71
APPENDICES	73
APPENDIX A - IRB STATEMENT.	74
APPENDIX B - COVER LETTER	76
APPENDIX C - QUESTIONNAIRE.	78
APPENDIX D - RESPONSES, QUESTION #33.	82
APPENDIX E - RESPONSES, QUESTION #34.	86
APPENDIX F - GENERAL COMMENTS	91

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Population and Number of Respondents by Department	26
II. Distribution of Respondents by Whether or Not They Would Choose to be an Advisor if Given a Choice	32
III. Distribution of Respondents by Whether or Not They Enjoy Advising Students	32
IV. Distribution of Respondents by Whether or Not They Have Regular Office Hours and/or Allow Students to Make Appointments.	33
V. Distribution of Respondents by Approximate Number of Students They Currently Advise	34
VI. Distribution of Respondents by Approximate Number of Advisees They Consider to be Reasonable	35
VII. Distribution of Respondents by Approximate Number of Hours per Week They Spend Advising Students.	36
VIII. Distribution of Respondents by Their Perceived Extent of Time Spent Advising Students	37
IX. Distribution of Respondents by How Often, on the Average, They Meet with Each Student They Advise.	38
X. Descriptive Analysis of the Approachability of Respondents by Levels of Agreement as Perceived by Them.	40
XI. Descriptive Analysis of General Attributes of Advisement Practices of Respondents by Levels of Agreement as Perceived by Them	44

Table	Page
XII. Descriptive Analysis of Counseling Attributes of Advisement Practices of Respondents by Levels of Agreement as Perceived by Them . . .	49
XIII. Comparison of the Quality of Advisement Within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources to the Remainder of the University as Perceived by the Respondents.	53
XIV. Topics Most Frequently Discussed in Student Conferences as Ranked by Respondents	54
XV. Summary of Responses	60
XVI. Summary of Mean Responses Relative to Respondents' Agreeance with Advisement Attributes	64
XVII. Summary of Topics Most Frequently Discussed in Student Conferences as Ranked by Respondents.	67

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As enrollments drop in colleges of agriculture across the country, effective ways to recruit and especially to retain students are being sought. An important factor in achieving this goal is effective academic advising (Fernandes and Jimmerson, 1988). Students are showing more concern for improving both quantity and quality of faculty-student contact in and out of the classroom, and colleges are using the faculty-advising system to accomplish this aim (Moore, 1976).

According to Koerin (1991),

Academic advising has been "re-discovered" within the last several years, emerging as a topic of particular interest in relation to student academic performance, satisfaction, and attrition (p. 323).

The academic advisor does indeed play a vital role in the success of any college student. Hoops (1983), in pointing out the rewards of advising, said that the thing that makes advising worthwhile is that probably no one is

more valued in the career of a student than a knowledgeable, compassionate advisor.

Unfortunately, academic advising is often perceived as a low-status function by institutional leaders (Trombley and Holmes, 1980), possibly because the advising function does not have a clear sense of institutional priority (Kramer, Arrington, and Chynoweth, 1985). Another problem facing advising is that it is looked upon by some faculty simply as an "extra duty" which is required by their position (Williams, 1987).

In order for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Oklahoma State University, to better serve its student population, thus increasing student retention and success, it is important to evaluate the advising practices currently being used by departmental advisors and determine ways to improve advising.

Statement of the Problem

It was determined by the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (hereafter referred to as the College of Agriculture), Oklahoma State University (OSU), to be essential to conduct research that would assess the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of academic advisement within the College of Agriculture at OSU; therefore, a research initiative was implemented to ascertain the aforementioned information. As a result of

this research initiative, it was further determined to be essential to conduct concurrent research in order to determine effective advisement qualities and/or attributes as perceived by academic advisors within the College of Agriculture. In brief, because there is no evidence of what constitutes quality advisement within the College of Agriculture at OSU, it was determined that this research initiative be implemented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to characterize qualities and/or attributes of undergraduate advisement as perceived by academic advisors within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University.

Objectives of the Study

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the following objectives were established:

1. To determine in which major department the faculty member is an advisor; whether or not he/she had a choice with regard to advisement responsibilities; whether or not he/she enjoys advising students; and, whether or not he/she maintains regular office hours and/or allows students to make appointments;

2. To determine the approximate number of students the respondent currently advises; the approximate number of advisees he/she considers to be reasonable; the approximate number of hours he/she spends each week advising students; and, approximately how often he/she meets with each student per semester;

3. To determine the level of agreeance, as perceived by the advisors, with regard to the following advisement attributes - Approachability, General Information, and Counseling;

4. To determine the most common problems and/or reasons which cause students to request advice as perceived by the advisors;

5. To determine the most frustrating aspect of advisement responsibilities as perceived by the advisors;

6. To obtain the advisors' perceptions with regard to how they believe the quality of advisement within the College of Agriculture compares to the rest of the University; and,

7. To determine the most frequently discussed topic in student conferences as perceived by the advisors.

Assumptions of the Study

For the purpose of the study, the following assumptions were accepted by the researcher:

1. That the respondents indicated honest opinions and/or perceptions.
2. That the instrument administered would elicit accurate responses that would satisfy the objectives of the study.
3. That the *Departmental Student Advisors List* provided by the Associate Dean's Office for Academic Affairs included the names of all faculty with advisement responsibilities for the academic year 1991-92 and was all-inclusive, and that all faculty named on the list did indeed have advisement responsibilities.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study included all 70 Academic Advisors within the College of Agriculture at OSU during the 1991-92 academic year. The list of advisors was provided courtesy of the Associate Dean's Office for Academic Affairs, OSU.

The scope of this study was limited in that faculty assigned advisement responsibilities after the beginning of the Fall Semester 1991 were not included in the study.

Definitions of Terms Used in the Study

The following definitions are presented as they apply to the study.

Academic Advisor - a faculty member with whom a student works to plan and conduct their college experience.

Approachability - the degree to which students feel at ease in going to their advisor for help or advice.

College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources - The College within Oklahoma State University which offers educational programs in the fields of Agricultural Communications, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Education, Agricultural Engineering, General Agriculture, Agronomy, Animal Science, Biochemistry, Entomology, Forestry, Horticulture/Landscape Architecture, and Pre-Veterinary Science.

Counseling Skills - human relation skills which help academic advisors to gain students' confidence, motivate students to achieve academic excellence, and build a better advisor-advisee relationship.

General Information - knowledge about common college or university issues; including policies and procedures, student services, and career opportunities.

Junior College - a two-year college which offers technical programs as well as the general education courses required for most four-year degrees.

Major Department - the department within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in which an academic advisor teaches.

Plan of Study - an outline sequencing the course a student will take to complete his or her degree program.

Transfer Student - a student who has previously attended another college or university and transfers courses from that institution to Oklahoma State University.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of literature which the researcher deemed relevant to this study. This review of literature is divided into the following sections: (1) Definition of Academic Advising; (2) Status of Academic Advising; (3) Characteristics of Excellent Academic Advisors; and, (4) Summary.

Definition of Academic Advising

Before beginning a study of Academic Advising, it is important that a clear definition of the term be established. Many of the problems found in advisement are a result of neither advisors nor advisees being knowledgeable about what advising really encompasses. In order to define what academic advising is, it is important to clarify what advising is not (Ender, 1983):

1. *Academic advisor* is not synonymous with *faculty member*.
2. Academic advising is not primarily an administrative function.

3. Academic advising is not a paper relationship.
4. Academic advising is not a computer printout.
5. Academic advising is not a conference held once a term.
6. Academic advising is not obtaining a signature to schedule classes.
7. Academic advising is not a closed or limited activity.
8. Academic advising is not a judgmental process.
9. Academic advising is not personal counseling.
10. Academic advising is not supplementary to the educational process (pp. 5-6).

If academic advising is not any of the above, what is it? Koerin (1991) gave the following viewpoint:

Narrowly defined, advising is little more than a procedural task, reviewing semester registration schedules and signing required university or college forms (p. 324).

More broadly defined, academic advising is,

...a developmental process which assists students in the clarification of their goals and in the development of educational plans for the realization of these goals. This is an ongoing process of clarification, evaluation, reclarification, and re-evaluation (NACADA, 1983, p.).

Ender, Winston, and Miller (1984) also defined academic advising from the perspective of student development, being a process that stimulates and supports students in their quest for an enriched quality of life and as a process based

on a close student-advisor relationship which aids students in achieving emotional and personal goals (Groth, 1990).

Ender (1983) listed seven conditions which are key to the academic advising program:

1. Advising is a continuous process with an accumulation of personal contacts between advisor and advisee - these contacts have both direction and purpose.
2. Advising must concern itself with quality of life issues and the advisor has a responsibility to facilitate the quality of a student's experience while on the college campus.
3. Advising is goal-oriented and goals should be established and owned by the advisee - these goals should include academic, career, and personal planning areas.
4. Advising requires the establishment of a caring human relationship - one in which the advisor must take primary responsibility for its initial development.
5. Advisors should be models for students to emulate - specifically demonstrating behaviors that lead to self-responsibility and self-directiveness.
6. The advisor seeks to integrate the services and expertise of both an academic and a student affairs professional.
7. Advisors should seek to use as many campus and community resources as possible (pp. 8-10).

Clearly, academic advising can be seen as a process which involves all areas of a student's education, not just the selection of classes each semester.

Status of Academic Advising

Historically, advising undergraduate students has ranked low as a professional priority among most tenure-track faculty and the advising program, likewise, has not been a top priority among most college administrators (Williams, 1990). Astin (1985) noted that,

Academic advising is "one of the weakest areas in the entire range of student services" and that "undergraduates were more likely to express dissatisfaction with one-on-one services...than with other aspects of their college exposure (p. 165).

A major source of discontent among faculty is the lack of recognition given for the time and effort they put into advising. Unlike teaching load or research, the number of advisees a faculty member has or the quality of his or her advising is rarely considered in evaluating performance. In national surveys conducted on academic advising in higher education, Crockett, et. al. (1979 and 1983) found that,

Faculty advising continues to be the predominant advising delivery mode at all types of institutions...(yet) three-fourths of the colleges do not consider advising effectiveness in making promotion/tenure decisions (p. 2, 1983).

Additionally, Koerin (1991) noted the many new challenges facing academic advisors, including a tremendous growth in the number of older students, minority students, part-time students, first-generation college students, and

the number of students with physical and/or learning disabilities. Nonetheless, she found,

The reward structure in most institutions does not provide a great incentive for faculty to invest much time or energy in these new challenges inherent in the advising role (p. 325).

The previously mentioned national surveys (Crockett, et. al., 1979 and 1983), supported this finding:

The surveys suggest that advising continues to be perceived as a low-status function by administrators, that it consists largely of information dissemination and referrals, and that most institutions do not engage in systematic evaluation of their advising programs and do little to recognize or reward effective advising (p. 3).

Fortunately, however, more and more administrators are realizing the benefits of effective advising and placing more emphasis on this area of the educational program.

Koerin (1991) described it in this way:

Academic advising has been "re-discovered" within the last several years, emerging as a topic of particular interest in relation to student academic performance, satisfaction, and attrition. Student Affairs has often shown interest in advising, but academic administrators have now also begun to recognize its importance as a means of achieving institutional goals (p. 324).

Greenwood (1984) explained one reason for administrators' renewed interest in academic advising in *Academic Advising and Institutional Goals: A President's Perspective*:

Academic advising exerts a major influence on the image of the

institution in the student's mind, both during the college years and long afterward, ... (and that) poor quality academic advising will likely result in the institutional image being tarnished and public relations efforts being undermined (p. 69).

With the renewed interest in academic advising and the increased awareness of the time and effort required to carry out advisement responsibilities, the future should find this vital part of education in a more prominent position, with faculty and administrators alike esteeming its worth.

Characteristics of Excellent Advisors

Williams (1990) gave two general purposes of the academic advising program. The first is student oriented; to help, encourage, direct, and motivate the student in achieving "academic excellence" and to assist the student in identifying, developing, and achieving academic, professional, and personal goals. The second purpose, to recruit and retain students and to project a positive image for the institution, is institutionally oriented. In order to serve these purposes, there are certain characteristics that should be developed by advisors.

Characteristics of excellent advisors can be divided into two general areas: Knowledge areas needed to answer students' questions, and counseling skills needed to work effectively with students. Too many times advisors develop their skills in only one of these areas, which prevents them

from advising as effectively as they should. This presents problems for both the students and the institution, as effective advising has been found to improve retention rates (Ender, Winston, and Miller, 1984) and therefore provide a more stable student body.

General Knowledge Areas

Knowledge areas identified by Williams (1987) were:

1. Departmental Course and Instructor Familiarity,
2. University Policies and Procedures,
3. University Student Services, and
4. Career Development and Job Placement (pp.16-17).

A working knowledge of each of these areas is important for the academic advisor. Without being familiar with courses and instructors, an advisor cannot effectively advise students in selecting courses best suited to individual needs and goals. It is also necessary when course substitutions must be made in a student's plan of study. One method of improving the knowledge base concerning courses is through seminars and written communications with other departments (Williams, 1987).

University policies and procedures must be followed by academic advisors as well as students. It is important to be aware of the proper steps which must be followed in requesting permission to take extra hours, to drop a class, or apply for graduation. It is also necessary that the

advisor stay informed concerning dates and deadlines which are important to his or her advisees. An Academic Advisor's Handbook is useful for this purpose.

Academic matters are only one concern of college students. In order to advise the student concerning all their needs, the advisor must know what services are available on campus and be able to direct students to the proper place for assistance. Six basic knowledge areas identified by Williams (1987) were:

1. Available Counseling Services,
2. Financial Aid Information,
3. Student Housing,
4. Food Services,
5. Student Health Services, and
6. Information Concerning Student Organizations and Student Life (pp. 17-18).

The last knowledge area Williams discussed, Career Development and Job Placement, is one of the most vital components of the advising process. As advisors guide students through their plan of study, the end product must be kept in mind. Students are in college in order to get an education, it's true; their biggest concern, however, is usually the job they hope to find after graduation. As graduation nears, especially, students begin to wonder what the past four years have prepared them to do. Some students come to their advisor with a clearly defined career goal, but most have only a general idea of what they want to do.

Kramer, Arrington, and Chynoweth (1985) stressed that an advisor who is familiar with the career options in his or her field and who knows advisees as individuals will be able to make career suggestions which will match the student's skills and preferences with demands of the job.

Counseling Skills

Counseling skills are the second area in which advisors need to work. Students need much more than just advisement in course selection. Freshmen are often overwhelmed by the many changes facing them when they enter college. Helsel (1987) described some of these challenges as:

1. An unparalleled sense of freedom,
2. A substantial amount of responsibility,
3. High expectations of self,
4. Pressure from parental expectations,
5. Uncertainty about faculty expectations, and
6. Breadth of careers to choose from
(p. 22).

Because of these pressures, academic advisors must also be available to students in the role of a counselor. Williams (1987) provided a list of counseling suggestions for improving the relationship between advisors and advisees. These are listed below, and a discussion of each follows:

1. Develop rapport and gain confidence of students,

2. Show a real interest in students,
3. Plan programs according to ability,
4. Endeavor to develop self-reliance and maturity,
5. Keep appointment summaries,
6. Be professional,
7. Allocate time for advising, and
8. Outline advisee-advisor expectations (pp. 17-18).

Unless there is a feeling of trust and confidence in the advisor-advisee relationship, effective advisement cannot take place. One-on-one contact with a faculty member not only makes all faculty seem more approachable, but also greatly increases a student's sense of belonging (Helsel, 1987). One way to gain this confidence and rapport is to find out something about the student's background and discuss common interests.

It is important that students be aware and feel that their advisor has a special interest in them as individuals. In a large college or university, students often feel they are "just a number" and that they aren't important (Astin, 1985). Advisors should be familiar with their students' long-range goals and career plans, and help them plan their program of study according to their individual needs. The advisor should take an interest in students' lives outside the classroom and be aware of outside problems that might influence advisees' academic careers.

No two students are exactly alike in regard to ability, background, and goals. Advisors must work with students to plan a program of study that will be challenging as well as rewarding. Gordon (1988) said that the ideal academic advising relationship offers students "a positive, dynamic, and maturing experience" (p. 109). Unless advisors take the time necessary to really know their students, this cannot happen. Advisors should take into consideration demands placed on the student from a job, family responsibilities, and/or student activities.

Advisors cannot, and should not, make all the decisions regarding their advisees' academic career. In a study on retention and advising, Dreisbach (1990) found that a paternalistic approach to advising, in which the advisor assumes responsibility and authority for decision making, was inappropriate for college level students because they are capable of and should be involved in making their own decisions. One goal of the educational process is to produce graduates who can think for themselves and make their own decisions; advisors should work toward developing self-reliance in their students by encouraging them to be more and more independent.

The advisor should keep a file on each student he or she advises. This file should contain transcripts, schedules, personal information, and a summary of each advisement session. This information, consolidated into a

single packet, will make advising much easier for both the advisor and the advisee.

Because advising is an extremely important responsibility, the advisor must maintain a sense of professionalism at all times. Williams (1987) divides professionalism into three areas which must be considered:

First is the concept of objectivity. The advisor is not a judge. It is the advisor's responsibility, as hard as it may be, to remain neutral and not side with the advisee or other faculty members.

The second area involves the misuse of information. Advisors have access to a considerable amount of privileged information concerning each advisee. Insure that this information is not released to others as a result of "careless talk."

The third area concerns "self-serving advising." The advisor is to assist the student in identifying and achieving academic, career and other personal goals. Sometimes when advising students it is tempting to provide "self-serving" advice. Be objective! Advise students with respect to their best interests (p. 18).

When faced with the demands of teaching, research, extension and/or administrative responsibilities, faculty members often put advising on the "back burner." There are two basic philosophies concerning the availability of the advisor to the advisees. Weigers (1973) insisted that you must put your students' interests above your own much, if not all, of the time in order to maximize the benefits of your advising efforts, and quoted the Rotary International

motto of "Service Above Self." Williams (1987), on the other hand, has a different philosophy:

Advising is one of my most important professional and personal responsibilities; however, it does not always receive "top" priority above all teaching and research efforts. It is important that my advisees realize that I, too, have other responsibilities. There is, in fact, a very high professional opportunity cost associated with the time spent advising students. My advisees know that I am always available and willing to work with them, but I also have other commitments which demand my attention and time. Even though I have an "open door" policy with respect to advising, I am not reluctant to request that an advisee set up an appointment to discuss the issue at hand if I'm not in a position to visit at that immediate time. "Quality time" associated with each advising session is important. This is important in gaining confidence of the advisee. Once an appointment is set, I insure that the allocated time is uninterrupted, available, and devoted to the advisee (p. 18).

The last of the eight Counseling suggestions outlined by Williams involves establishing Advisor-Advisee expectations. This enhances the relationship by clearly defining the responsibilities of both parties. The College of Agriculture's advisor's manual gave the following expectations:

- A. What the advisee can expect from their advisor:
 1. Concern for me and my welfare as an individual.
 2. Accurate information concerning academic programs, requirements, policies, and procedures.

3. Assistance in the exploration of career, educational, and academic goals.
 4. Assistance in the exploration of educational options and the planning of the advisee's academic program.
 5. Assistance in the selection and scheduling of courses.
 6. Assistance with the processing of academic forms required for enrollment, changing enrollment, and graduation.
 7. Assistance with implementing an official degree check prior to their last semester in school.
 8. Referrals when needed to other support services, i.e. student health, financial aid, etc.
 9. Confidentiality concerning all personal and private matters.
- B. What advisors can expect from advisees:
1. Thoughtful consideration of education and academic goals.
 2. Familiarity with the advisee's academic program including applicable requirements.
 3. Acceptance of responsibility for the advisee's choices and decisions concerning academic and educational goals.
 4. Questions when the advisee feels a lack of sufficient information.
 5. Notification when the advisee encounters academic or other problems where the advisor might be an information or solution source.

6. Careful reading and appropriate responses to communications from the advisor, department, college, or university.
7. Consideration for other students.
8. Time for the advisor to be able to fulfill certain advisement responsibilities rather than expecting "just a signature."
9. An effort to become aware of important deadlines.
10. An awareness that the advisor has other professional responsibilities and obligations in addition to academic advising (pp. 18-19).

If these expectations are clearly understood and accepted by both parties, advising fulfills the effective role for which it is designed.

Summary

Academic advising is much more than simply reviewing and signing registration schedules before each semester begins. It is a relationship which serves as the foundation of a student's college experience, and often a major factor in determining the degree to which that experience truly fulfills the student's needs.

Although academic advising has traditionally been viewed as a low-priority function of faculty, more and more institutions are realizing its importance with regard to student success and retention and to the overall image of their educational programs. Despite this, there are still

very few colleges in the country which consider advisement responsibilities in making tenure/promotion decisions.

Academic advising is a multi-faceted responsibility, requiring faculty to meet many different needs of students. In order to meet these needs, advisors must possess multiple characteristics in the areas of both general knowledge and counseling skills. This is becoming more and more evident as the student body changes to include non-traditional students with needs very different from those to which advisors have been accustomed.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methods and procedures used to conduct this study. The intent of this study was to characterize the advisement qualities and/or attributes as perceived by academic advisors within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (hereafter referred to as the College of Agriculture), at Oklahoma State University (OSU).

In order to accomplish the purpose and objectives of this study, it was necessary to determine the population and develop an instrument which would elicit the perceptions of advisors within the College of Agriculture. A procedure for the collection of data was established and the methods to be used to analyze the data were selected. The data for this study were collected during the Spring Semester 1992.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University

policy require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators can begin their research. The Oklahoma State University Research Services and the IRB conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. In compliance with the aforementioned policy, this study received the proper surveillance, was granted permission to continue, and was assigned the following number: AG-92-016 (Refer to Appendix A).

Population

The population of this study consisted of all academic advisors in the College of Agriculture, Oklahoma State University. The population was determined by the *Departmental Student Advisors List, 1991-92 Academic Year*, provided by the Associate Dean's Office for Academic Affairs. The 70 advisors comprising the population represented all 11 departments within the College of Agriculture.

Table I reflects the total population and number of respondents of this study by department within the College of Agriculture. Of the 70 academic advisors included in this study, 53 (75.7 percent) responded.

TABLE I
POPULATION AND NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY DEPARTMENT

Department	Number of Advisors	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Ag. Communications	1	1.4	--	--
Ag. Economics	16	22.8	14	26.4
Ag. Education	6	8.6	6	11.3
Ag. Engineering	2	2.9	--	--
Agriculture (Gen)	3	4.3	3	5.7
Agronomy	6	8.6	3	5.7
Animal Science	20	28.6	13	24.5
Biochemistry	1	1.4	1	1.9
Entomology	1	1.4	1	1.9
Forestry	2	2.9	2	3.8
Horticulture and Landscape Arch.	12	17.1	10	18.8
Total	<u>70</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Selection and Development of the Instrument

In the preparation of an instrument to meet the objectives of the study, the first step was to review and evaluate the instruments used in related studies.

After analyzing various methods of data gathering, the mailed questionnaire was determined to be the most appropriate to meet the study objectives.

The first step in the preparation of the questionnaire was to compile a list of general questions that were relevant to characterizing the advisement qualities and/or attributes as perceived by academic advisors within the College of Agriculture, OSU. These questions were derived from related studies (primarily Fernandes, et. al., 1988 and Saxowsky, et. al., 1985) and interviews with the chairman of the Committee on Advisement, Retention and Counseling and the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Agriculture. Further input regarding the questions to be used in the questionnaire was obtained from the members of the Committee on Advisement, Retention and Counseling.

Because the Committee on Advisement, Retention, and Counseling wished to compare the findings of this study with those from a study being done concurrently (*The Efficacy of Academic Advisement as Perceived by Undergraduate Students Within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Oklahoma State University*), the next step was to correlate selected questions from that study's questionnaire in order to obtain more comparable results.

The third phase was to make the necessary revisions and then test the applicability and continuity of the questions to be used. In this process the questionnaire was field

tested utilizing academic advisors outside the College of Agriculture.

Finally, the researcher strengthened the questionnaire, based on comments and suggestions for revisions, and then concluded the questionnaire was ready to be administered.

In its final form, most of the questions on the questionnaire utilized the forced-response format that provided the advisors several options regarding choice. This allowed data of a quantitative nature to be obtained, thereby facilitating analysis of data. There were also several open-ended questions on the questionnaire which were designed to obtain qualitative responses. The final form of this questionnaire may be found in Appendix C.

Collection of Data

After final revisions were made, the instrument was ready to be mailed to the selected academic advisors within the College of Agriculture. The questionnaire was distributed utilizing Campus Mail on April 17, 1992 to each person in the population. Included with the questionnaire was a cover letter (see Appendix B) which requested the advisor's cooperation, explained the nature of the research, and assured them of their anonymity. Also enclosed in the sealed envelope was a self-addressed Campus Mail envelope for the advisors' convenience in returning the completed questionnaire. It is important to note that it was left to

the discretion of the respondents regarding whether or not to respond to any or all of the questions on the instrument. The responses were totally voluntary.

After a two week waiting period, 53 (75.7 percent) of the questionnaires had been returned, and the researcher determined this to be a sufficient number with which to work. Therefore, no attempts were made to collect data from the nonrespondents.

Analysis of Data

A record was kept of the qualitative information collected from the survey instrument. This information was analyzed by the researcher and reported in narrative format. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics which primarily included frequency distribution, percentages, and means.

The primary use of descriptive statistics is to describe information or data through the use of numbers. The characteristics of groups of numbers representing information or data are called descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to describe groups of numerical data such as test scores, number of hours of instruction, or the number of students enrolled in a particular course (Key, 1981, p. 126).

Statistical manipulation of the data collected from the questionnaire was accomplished by programming the information into the Microsoft Works Spreadsheet, using an

IBM-compatible computer. This enabled the researcher to determine frequency distributions, percentages, and means for the quantitative data.

In order to establish a meaningful basis for interpretation of the mean responses reported for questions involving a Likert-type scale, the following real limits were established: 1.00 to 1.49 = *Strongly Agree*; 1.50 to 2.49 = *Agree*; 2.50 to 3.49 = *Disagree*; and 3.50 to 4.00 = *Strongly Disagree*. The *Not Applicable* category was assigned a value of zero; however, this was not computed with the other responses to determine means.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results from the mailed questionnaire used to conduct the study. The purpose of the study was to characterize effective advisement qualities and/or attributes as perceived by academic advisors within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Oklahoma State University.

The scope of this study included all 70 academic advisors within the College of Agriculture at OSU during the 1991-92 academic year, as identified by the *Departmental Student Advisors List*. Of the 70 advisors in the total population, 53 (75.7 percent) responded to the mailed questionnaire.

Reported in Table II is the distribution of respondents by whether or not they would choose to be an advisor if given a choice. Of the 50 respondents who answered this question, 46 (92.0 percent) indicated yes, they would choose to be an advisor if given a choice. Four (8.0 percent) of the respondents answered no, they would not choose to be an advisor if given a choice. An additional respondent, who

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD
CHOOSE TO BE AN ADVISOR IF GIVEN A CHOICE

Response	<u>Frequency Distribution</u>	
	N*	%
Yes	46	92.0
No	4	8.0
Total	<u>50</u>	<u>100.0</u>

*N varies because not all respondents answered each question.

did not choose either option, did add these comments:

I would improve the availability of
information. I would change the role of
the advisor. I would have more
specialization.

Table III reported the distribution of respondents by
whether or not they enjoy advising students.

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER OR NOT THEY
ENJOY ADVISING STUDENTS

Response	<u>Frequency Distribution</u>	
	N*	%
Yes	49	96.1
No	2	3.9
Total	<u>51</u>	<u>100.0</u>

*N varies because not all respondents answered each question.

Fifty-one respondents answered this question. Of these, 49 (96.1 percent) answered yes, they enjoy advising students. Two (3.9 percent) answered no, they do not enjoy advising students. One respondent chose not to select either yes or no, saying,

It depends on the student. Some are wonderful. Some are a constant problem.

Reported in Table IV is the distribution of respondents by whether or not they have regular office hours and/or allow students to make appointments. Of the 53 respondents, 50 (94.3 percent) answered yes, they do have regular office hours and/or allow students to make appointments. Three (5.7 percent) indicated no, they neither have regular office hours or allow students to make appointments.

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE
REGULAR OFFICE HOURS AND/OR ALLOW STUDENTS
TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS

Response	<u>Frequency Distribution</u>	
	N	%
Yes	50	94.3
No	3	5.7
Total	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Illustrated in Table V is the distribution of respondents by the approximate number of students they currently advise.

TABLE V
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY APPROXIMATE NUMBER
OF STUDENTS THEY CURRENTLY ADVISE

Number of Students	Frequency Distribution	
	N	%
1 to 10	12	22.6
11 to 20	17	32.1
21 to 30	16	30.2
31 to 40	7	13.2
41 to 50	--	--
51 or more	1	1.9
Total	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Of the 53 respondents, 12 (22.6 percent) indicated that they advise one to ten students. Seventeen (32.1 percent) reported that they advise 11 to 20 students. Sixteen (30.2 percent) implied that they advise 21 to 30 students. Seven (13.2 percent) indicated that they advise 31 to 40 students. None of the respondents reported advising 41 to 50 students, and only one (1.9 percent) indicated that he/she advises 51 or more students.

Reported in Table VI is the distribution of respondents by approximate number of advisees they consider to be reasonable. Fifty-two of the respondents answered this question. Of these, five (9.6 percent) indicated that they consider one to ten to be a reasonable number of advisees.

TABLE VI
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF
ADVISEES THEY CONSIDER TO BE REASONABLE

Number of Students	Frequency Distribution	
	N*	%
1 to 10	5	9.6
11 to 20	32	61.5
21 to 30	12	23.2
31 to 40	2	3.8
41 to 50	1	1.9
51 or more	--	---
Total	52	100.0

*N varies because not all respondents answered each question.

Thirty-two (61.5 percent) reported 11 to 20 to be a reasonable number. Twelve (23.2 percent) identified 21 to 30 to be reasonable. Two (3.8 percent) chose 31 to 40 to be a reasonable number of advisees, and only one (1.9 percent) identified 41 to 50 as reasonable. None of the respondents indicated that 51 or more was a reasonable number of

advisees. One respondent did qualify his/her answer by adding that, "It depends on other duties." Another respondent did not select any of the options, but wrote in, "Zero if no credit is provided."

Table VII was designed to report the distribution of respondents by approximate number of hours per week they spend advising students. Of the 53 respondents, 40 (75.5

TABLE VII
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOURS
PER WEEK THEY SPEND ADVISING STUDENTS

Number of Hours	Frequency Distribution	
	N*	%
5 or less	40	75.5
6 to 10	10	18.9
11 to 15	1	1.9
more than 15	2	3.7
Total	53	100.0

*N varies because not all respondents answered each question.

percent) indicated that they spend five hours or less per week advising students. However, two of the 40 added these comments:

Most of the time. More during
enrollment periods, and

Varies greatly with the time of year. I have checked my estimated average.

Ten (18.9 percent) identified six to ten as the number of hours per week they spend advising students, and one (1.9 percent) reported spending 11 to 15 hours per week in advising. Two respondents (3.7 percent) indicated that they spend more than 15 hours per week advising students.

Table VIII reported the distribution of respondents by their perceived extent of time spent advising students. Fifty-one respondents answered this question. Of these, 38 (74.5 percent) indicated that the time spent advising students was *Adequate*. Ten (19.6 percent) of the respondents reported that the time spent advising students was *Insufficient*, and three (5.9 percent) chose *Excessive* to

TABLE VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR PERCEIVED EXTENT OF TIME SPENT ADVISING STUDENTS

Extent of Time	Frequency Distribution	
	N*	%
Adequate	38	74.5
Insufficient	10	19.6
Excessive	3	5.9
Total	51	100.0

*N varies because not all respondents answered each question.

describe the extent of time spent advising students. Of these three, one added the comment, "Excessive at peak times."

Table IX contains a report of the distribution of respondents by how often, on the average, they meet with each student they advise. Of the 53 respondents, five (9.4 percent) indicated that on the average they meet with each advisee four or more times per semester. Nine (17.0 percent) reported three times per semester as average. Thirty (56.6 percent) said they meet with each student, on the average, twice per semester. Six respondents (11.3 percent) indicated that they meet an average of one time per semester with each advisee, and three (5.7 percent) chose

TABLE IX

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY HOW OFTEN, ON THE AVERAGE, THEY MEET WITH EACH STUDENT THEY ADVISE

Number of Times Per Semester	Frequency Distribution	
	N	%
Four or more times	5	9.4
Three times	9	17.0
Twice	30	56.6
Once	6	11.3
Other	3	5.7
Total	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Other. Comments given regarding this question included,

Some daily and some once per semester.

Some students I see ten times per semester, some once. It depends on the student.

Varies greatly with the student. 1 Student = 10 times or more, 2 students 5 times, 2 students 1 time, others 3 or 4 times.

At least once. Depends on the student and their progress.

Table X was structured to present a descriptive analysis of the approachability of respondents by levels of agreement as perceived by the advisors. Eight statements (items 10 through 17 on the questionnaire) were selected to elicit information concerning approachability. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, or *Strongly Disagree* with each statement. A *Not Applicable* option was also given. The respondents' perceptions follow.

The first statement was, "As an Advisor, I am friendly and approachable." Of the 53 respondents, 29 (54.7 percent) marked *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-three (43.4 percent) chose *Agree*, and one respondent (1.9 percent) selected *Disagree*. None of the respondents chose *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this item was 1.48 and the standard deviation 0.53. The mean response for this translated to the descriptor *Strongly Agree*.

TABLE X

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE APPROACHABILITY OF RESPONDENTS BY LEVELS OF AGREEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY THEM

Approachability	Frequency Distribution						Total N (%)	Mean	S D	Descriptor	
	Strongly Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree						Not Applicable
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)					
As an Advisor, I...											
...am friendly and approachable.	29 (54.7)	23 (43.4)	1 (1.9)	--	--	--	53 (100.0)	1.48	0.53	Str Agree	
...am interested in students and what they say.	31 (58.5)	22 (41.5)	--	--	--	--	53 (100.0)	1.42	0.49	Str Agree	
...am willing to meet with students needing assistance.	32 (60.4)	21 (39.6)	--	--	--	--	53 (100.0)	1.40	0.49	Str Agree	
...keep appointments with students.	32 (62.7)	19 (37.3)	--	--	--	--	*51 (100.0)	1.37	0.48	Str Agree	
...answer students' questions concisely.	21 (39.6)	29 (54.7)	3 (5.7)	--	--	--	53 (100.0)	1.66	0.58	Agree	
...provide a caring, open atmosphere.	26 (49.1)	27 (50.9)	--	--	--	--	53 (100.0)	1.51	0.50	Agree	
...am a good listener.	21 (39.6)	31 (58.5)	1 (1.9)	--	--	--	53 (100.0)	1.62	0.52	Agree	
...provide full attention at meetings.	23 (43.4)	28 (52.8)	2 (3.8)	--	--	--	53 (100.0)	1.60	0.56	Agree	

*N varies because not all respondents answered each question

Advisors were asked to indicate their level of agreeance with the statement, "As an Advisor, I am interested in students and what they say." Fifty-three respondents answered this question, with 31 (58.5 percent) choosing *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-two (41.5 percent) selected *Agree*. None of the respondents selected *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this question was 1.42, and the standard deviation 0.49. The descriptor was *Strongly Agree*.

The third statement, item #12, was, "As an Advisor, I am willing to meet with students needing advice." Of the 53 respondents, 32 (60.4 percent) selected *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-one (39.6 percent) chose *Agree*, and none of the respondents marked *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this item was 1.40. The standard deviation was 0.49. The descriptor was *Strongly Agree*.

Item #13 said, "As an Advisor, I keep appointments with students." Only 51 of the respondents answered this question. Of these, 32 (62.7 percent) indicated *Strongly Agree* as their choice. Nineteen (37.3 percent) selected *Agree*. None of the respondents chose *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, or *Not Applicable*. One respondent did not select an answer but commented, "Sometimes I'm hard to find." The mean for this statement was 1.37 and the standard deviation was 0.48. The descriptor was *Strongly Agree*.

The fifth statement, item #14, was, "As an Advisor, I answer students' questions concisely." Fifty-three

respondents answered the question, with 21 (39.6 percent) selecting *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-nine (54.7 percent) indicated *Agree*, and three (5.7 percent) chose *Disagree*. None of the respondents chose *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this item was 1.66, with the standard deviation being 0.58. The descriptor for this item was *Agree*.

Item #15 asked advisors to respond to the statement, "As an Advisor, I provide a caring, open atmosphere." Fifty-three respondents answered the question. Twenty-six (49.1 percent) marked *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-seven (50.9 percent) selected *Agree*. No one chose *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this statement was 1.51. The standard deviation was 0.50. The descriptor was *Agree*, although *Strongly Agree* almost tied for that position.

The seventh statement, item #16, was, "As an Advisor, I am a good listener." Of the 53 respondents, 21 (39.6 percent) answered *Strongly Agree*. Thirty-one (58.5 percent) chose *Agree*, while one respondent (1.9 percent) marked *Disagree*. None of the respondents indicated *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable*. The mean for the question was 1.62, the standard deviation 0.52, and the descriptor was *Agree*.

Item #17, the last statement in the Approachability section, was, "As an Advisor, I provide full attention at meetings." Fifty-three advisors responded to this question,

with 23 (43.4 percent) choosing *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-eight (52.8 percent) selected *Agree*, and two (3.8 percent) chose *Disagree*. None of the respondents chose *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable*. The mean for the statement was 1.60. The standard deviation was 0.56, and the descriptor was *Agree*.

Table XI illustrates a descriptive analysis of general attributes of advisement practices of respondents by levels of agreement as perceived by them. Nine statements (items 18 through 26 on the questionnaire) were given to advisors were asked to respond by selecting *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, or *Not Applicable*. The responses, describing General Information attributes, are given below.

The first statement, item #18, said, "As an Advisor, I refer students to other persons for assistance when appropriate." Fifty-three advisors responded. Of these, 32 (60.4 percent) indicated *Strongly Agree*. Twenty (37.7 percent) selected *Agree*, and one (1.9 percent) marked *Disagree*. None of the respondents chose *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this question was 1.42 and the standard deviation 0.53. The descriptor was *Strongly Agree*.

Item #19 read, "As an Advisor, I provide accurate information regarding courses." Of the 53 respondents, 21 (39.6 percent) marked *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-nine (54.7

TABLE XI

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF GENERAL ATTRIBUTES OF ADVISEMENT PRACTICES OF
RESPONDENTS BY LEVELS OF AGREEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY THEM

General Information	Frequency Distribution					Total N (%)	Mean	S D.	Descriptor
	Strongly <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	Strongly <u>Disagree</u>	Not <u>Applicable</u>				
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)				
As an Advisor, I...									
...refer students to other persons for assistance when appropriate.	32 (60.4)	20 (37.7)	1 (1.9)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1 42	0 53	Str Agree
...provide accurate information regarding courses.	21 (39.6)	29 (54.7)	3 (5.7)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1 66	0 58	Agree
...help students understand university procedures.	14 (26.4)	36 (67.9)	3 (5.7)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1 79	0 53	Agree
...maintain accurate records of student progress.	20 (37.7)	31 (58.5)	2 (3.8)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1 66	0 55	Agree
...exhibit confidentiality concerning all personal and private matters.	42 (79.2)	11 (20.8)	-- --	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1 21	0 41	Str Agree
...provide accurate information regarding alternatives in students' programs of study.	21 (39.6)	30 (56.6)	1 (1.9)	-- --	1 (1.9)	53 (100.0)	1 62	0 52	Agree

TABLE XI (continued)

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF GENERAL ATTRIBUTES OF ADVISEMENT PRACTICES OF
RESPONDENTS BY LEVELS OF AGREEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY THEM

General Information	Frequency Distribution						Mean	S.D	Descriptor
	Strongly			Strongly	Not	Total			
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Applicable</u>	<u>Total</u>			
N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)				
As an Advisor, I..									
...provide students with information about career opportunities.	18 (33.9)	29 (54.7)	5 (9.5)	-- --	1 (1.9)	53 (100.0)	1.75	0.62	Agree
...explain requirements of students' majors to show relevance of courses and how they will affect the students' educational goals.	23 (43.4)	27 (50.9)	3 (5.7)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1.62	0.59	Agree
...help students plan several semesters of their total academic program.	19 (35.8)	25 (47.2)	9 (17.0)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1.81	0.70	Agree

percent) chose *Agree*, although one added, "This is difficult since they keep changing". (This comment was added to the next question as well.) Three of the respondents (5.7 percent) selected *Disagree*. No one chose *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable* as a response. The mean for this item was 1.66. The standard deviation was 0.58 and the descriptor was *Agree*.

The third statement, item #20, was, "As an Advisor, I help students understand university procedure." Fifty-three advisors responded, with 14 (26.4 percent) selecting *Strongly Agree*. Thirty-six (67.9 percent) chose *Agree* (see comment above). Three respondents (5.7 percent) marked *Disagree*. Neither *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable* were chosen. The mean for this statement was 1.79. The standard deviation was 0.53. The descriptor was *Agree*.

Advisors were asked in item #21 to respond to, "As an Advisor, I maintain accurate records of student progress." Twenty (37.7 percent) of the 53 respondents indicated that they *Strongly Agree* with the statement. Thirty-one (58.5 percent) marked *Agree*, and two (3.8 percent) chose *Disagree*. None of the respondents selected *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable*. The mean for the item was 1.66 and the standard deviation 0.55. The descriptor was *Agree*.

Item #22 said, "As an Advisor, I exhibit confidentiality concerning all personal and private matters." Of the 53 respondents, 42 (79.2 percent) marked *Strongly Agree*. Eleven (20.8 percent) indicated *Agree*, and

no one chose *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this statement was 1.21. The standard deviation was 0.41. The descriptor was obviously *Strongly Agree*.

The next statement, item #23, asked respondents to indicate their level of agreeance with the statement, "As an Advisor, I provide accurate information regarding alternatives in students' programs of study." Fifty-three respondents answered the question, with 21 (39.6 percent) choosing *Strongly Agree*. Thirty (56.6 percent) selected *Agree*. One respondent (1.9 percent) marked *Disagree*. None of the respondents chose *Strongly Disagree*. One respondent (1.9 percent) indicated that the statement was *Not Applicable*. The mean for the item was 1.62 and the standard deviation 0.52. The descriptor was *Agree*.

Item #24 said, "As an Advisor, I provide students with information about career opportunities." Again, 53 advisors responded to the question. Eighteen (33.9 percent) marked *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-nine (54.7 percent) chose *Agree*. Five of the respondents (9.5 percent) selected *Disagree*, and one (1.9 percent) indicated *Not Applicable*. *Strongly Disagree* was not chosen as an option. The mean for this statement was 1.75. The standard deviation was 0.62, and *Agree* was the descriptor.

The next item, #25, read, "As an Advisor I explain requirements of students' majors to show relevance of courses and how they will affect the student's educational

goals." Twenty-three (43.4 percent) of the 53 respondents chose *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-seven (50.9 percent) marked *Agree*, and three (5.7 percent) selected *Disagree*. None of the respondents chose *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this item was 1.62 and the standard deviation 0.59. The descriptor was *Agree*.

The last statement regarding General Information, item #26, said, "As an Advisor, I help students plan several semesters or their total academic program." Fifty-three advisors responded. Of these, 19 (35.8 percent) marked *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-five (47.2 percent) chose *Agree*, with one of these commenting, "When they want it." Nine (17.0 percent) selected *Disagree*. *Strongly Disagree* and *Not Applicable* were not chosen. The mean for the statement was 1.81, the standard deviation 0.70, and the descriptor *Agree*.

Table XII reports a descriptive analysis of counseling attributes of advisement practices of respondents by levels of agreement as perceived by the advisors. Questions 27 through 32 were utilized to elicit information regarding perceptions of counseling skills. Advisors were asked to indicate their level of agreeance with each statement by marking *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, or *Not Applicable*, as in the previous two sections. The responses are given below.

Item #27 asked advisors to respond to a statement which read, "As an Advisor, I am willing to talk about nonacademic

TABLE XII
 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF COUNSELING ATTRIBUTES OF ADVISEMENT PRACTICES
 OF RESPONDENTS BY LEVELS OF AGREEMENT
 AS PERCEIVED BY THEM

Counseling	Frequency Distribution						Total N (%)	Mean	S.D.	Descriptor
	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree		Not Applicable					
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)				
As an Advisor, I...										
. am willing to talk about nonacademic problems.	26 (49.1)	26 (49.1)	1 (1.8)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1.53	0.54	Agree	
.. am willing to provide encouragement when needed.	29 (54.7)	23 (43.5)	1 (1.8)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1.47	0.54	Str. Agree	
.. offer suggestions but encourage students to make decisions independently.	33 (62.4)	19 (35.8)	1 (1.8)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1.40	0.53	Str. Agree	
offer my own opinions when asked to do so	20 (37.7)	31 (58.5)	2 (3.8)	-- --	-- --	53 (100.0)	1.66	0.55	Agree	
suggest ways to improve study habits	19 (35.8)	27 (50.9)	6 (11.5)	1 (1.8)	-- --	53 (100.0)	1.79	0.71	Agree	
.. encourage students to participate in student organizations.	18 (36.0)	26 (52.0)	5 (10.0)	1 (2.0)	-- --	*50 (100.0)	1.78	0.71	Agree	

*N varies because not all respondents answered this question

problems." Of the 53 respondents, 26 (49.1 percent) selected *Strongly Agree*. Another 26 (49.1 percent) chose *Agree*. One respondent (1.8 percent) marked *Disagree*. None of the respondents chose *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable* for this statement. The mean for this statement was 1.53 and the standard deviation was 0.54. The descriptor was *Agree*, although *Strongly Agree* was very close.

The next statement, item #28, was, "As an Advisor, I am willing to provide encouragement when needed." Again, 53 advisors responded. Of these, 29 (54.7 percent) chose *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-three (43.5 percent) selected *Agree*, and one (1.8 percent) marked *Disagree*. *Strongly Disagree* and *Not Applicable* were not selected as answers. The mean for this item was 1.47. The standard deviation was 0.54, and the descriptor was *Strongly Agree*.

Statement #29 was, "As an Advisor, I offer suggestions but encourage students to make decisions independently." This item had 53 respondents, with 33 (62.4 percent) selecting *Strongly Agree*. Nineteen (35.8 percent) marked *Agree*. One respondent (1.8 percent) chose *Disagree*, and no one marked *Strongly Disagree* or *Not Applicable*. The mean for this statement was 1.40 and the standard deviation 0.53. The descriptor was *Strongly Agree*.

Item #30 of the questionnaire read, "As an Advisor, I offer my own opinions when asked to do so." Twenty (37.7 percent) of the 53 respondents selected *Strongly Agree*. Two of these added the comments, "Even when not asked," and "Not on some

personal issues." Thirty-one (58.5 percent) marked *Agree*. Two respondents (3.8 percent) chose *Disagree*. *Strongly Disagree* and *Not Applicable* were not chosen by anyone. The mean for this statement was 1.66, the standard deviation was 0.55 and the descriptor was *Agree*.

Item #31 asked the advisors to respond to, "As an Advisor, I suggest ways to improve study habits." There were 53 respondents for this statement. Nineteen (35.8 percent) chose *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-seven (50.9 percent) selected *Agree*. Six respondents (11.5 percent) marked *Disagree*, and one (1.8 percent) indicated *Strongly Disagree*. None of the respondents marked *Not Applicable*. The mean for this item was 1.79. The standard deviation was 0.71, and the descriptor was *Agree*.

The last item in this section, #32, was, "As an Advisor, I encourage students to participate in student organizations." Only 50 respondents answered this question. Of these, 18 (36.0 percent) indicated *Strongly Agree*. Twenty-six (52.0 percent) chose *Agree*. Five (10.0 percent) marked *Disagree*, and one of these commented, "I should, but I usually forget, or the subject doesn't come up." One respondent (2.0 percent) selected *Strongly Disagree*. None of the respondents marked *Not Applicable*. The mean for this item was 1.78 and the standard deviation was 0.71. The descriptor was *Agree*.

Item #33 on the questionnaire asked advisors to list one or more of the most common problems and/or reasons which

cause students to request their advice. Enrollment and Drop/Add were among the most frequently listed reasons for students to seek assistance. Other common problems cited were poor grades, financial problems, and a need for information regarding careers. The exact responses to this question are given in Appendix D.

The advisors were asked in item #34 to list the most frustrating aspects of their advisement responsibilities. There is obviously a desire for more recognition of advisement as a part the work load, and for credit to be given in the tenure-review process. Another often-mentioned problem was a lack of time to spend with individual students. Other frustrations included working with junior college transfers, inflexible option sheets, and students who wait until the last minute to request help. It was also found that many advisors would like to be updated more often regarding changes in university policies and procedures and in changes in courses. These responses, in their entirety, can be found in Appendix E.

Table XIII reports a comparison of the quality of advisement within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural resources to the remainder of the University as perceived by the respondents. Fifty-three advisors responded to this question. Of these, 44 (83.0 percent) selected *Better* as the level of quality. Four of the respondents (7.5 percent) chose *About the Same*, and five (9.5 percent) were *Uncertain*. None of the respondents chose

Worse as the level of quality in comparing advisement within the College of Agriculture to that of the remainder of the University.

TABLE XIII

COMPARISON OF THE QUALITY OF ADVISEMENT WITHIN THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE REMAINDER OF THE UNIVERSITY AS PERCEIVED BY THE RESPONDENTS

Levels of Quality	Frequency Distribution	
	N	%
Better	44	83.0
About the Same	4	7.5
Worse	--	--
Uncertain	5	9.5
Total	53	100.0

Table XIV shows the topics most frequently discussed in student conferences as ranked by respondents. The most often discussed topic, as ranked by advisors, was *Registration and Course Selection*, with a mean of 1.71 and a standard deviation of 1.76. The second most frequently discussed topic was *Academic Majors and Specializations Available*. This topic had a mean of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 1.67. *Academic Problems* ranked third, with a mean of 3.52 and a standard deviation of 1.65. This was

TABLE XIV
TOPICS MOST FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED IN STUDENT CONFERENCES
AS RANKED BY RESPONDENTS

Topic	Mean Rank	SD	Rank
Registration and course Selection	1.71	1.76	1
Academic majors and specializations available	3.28	1.67	2
Academic problems	3.52	1.35	3
Graduation requirements	3.71	1.65	4
Vocational/Career choices	4.66	1.72	5
Personal problems	5.77	1.52	6
Other	6.64	3.14	7
Student organization activities	6.74	1.54	8
University Student Services	7.19	1.25	9

followed by *Graduation Requirements*, which had a mean of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.65. Ranked fifth in the list was *Vocational/Career Choices*, with a mean of 4.66 and a standard deviation of 1.72. *Personal Problems* came next, and had a mean of 5.77 and a standard deviation of 1.52.

Other was ranked seventh overall, with a mean of 6.64 and a standard deviation of 3.14. Within the *Other* category, eight respondents listed the following topics:

Student jobs

Financial problems

What is going on in general

Need for financial assistance/scholarship monies

Teacher Education requirements

Study habits

Housing, Financial Aid, Parking, etc.

Their background and

Scholarships.

Student Organization Activities was ranked as number eight by the advisors, with a mean of 6.74 and a standard deviation of 1.54. The advisors ranked *University Student Services* as the least frequently discussed topic in student conferences. It had a mean of 7.19 and a standard deviation of 1.25.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present concise summaries of the following topics: purpose of the study; objectives of the study; scope of the study; and, major findings of the research. Conclusions and recommendations derived from detailed scrutiny of the findings are also presented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to characterize the qualities and/or attributes of undergraduate advisement as perceived by academic advisors within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University.

Objectives of the Study

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the following objectives were established:

1. To determine in which major department the faculty member is an advisor; whether or not they had choice with regard to advisement responsibilities; whether or not they enjoy advising students; and, whether or not they maintain regular office hours and/or allow students to make appointments;

2. To determine the approximate number of students they currently advise; the approximate number of advisees they consider to be reasonable; the approximate number of hours they spend each week advising students; and, approximately how often they meet with each student per semester;

3. To determine the level of agreeance, as perceived by the advisors, with regard to the following advisement attributes - Approachability, General Information, and Counseling;

4. To determine the most common problems and/or reasons which cause students to request advice as perceived by the advisors;

5. To determine the most frustrating aspect of advisement responsibilities as perceived by the advisors;

6. To obtain the advisors' perceptions with regard to how they believe the quality of advisement within the

College of Agriculture compares to the rest of the University; and,

7. To determine the most frequently discussed topic in student conferences as perceived by the advisors.

Assumptions of the Study

For the purpose of the study, the following assumptions were accepted by the researcher:

1. That the respondents indicated honest opinions and/or perceptions.

2. That the instrument administered would elicit accurate responses that would satisfy the objectives of the study.

3. That the *Departmental Student Advisors List* provided by the Associate Dean's Office for Academic Affairs included the names of all faculty with advisement responsibilities for the academic year 1991-92 and was all-inclusive, and that all the faculty named on the list did indeed have advisement responsibilities.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study included all 70 Academic Advisors within the College of Agriculture at OSU during the 1991-92 academic year. The list of 70 advisors was provided courtesy of the Associate Dean's Office for Academic Affairs, OSU.

The scope of this study was limited in that faculty assigned advisement responsibilities after the beginning of the Fall Semester 1991 were not included in the study.

Major Findings of the Study

Reported in Table XV are the major findings of the study. Of the 53 respondents, approximately one quarter (26.4 percent) was from the Agricultural Economics Department and another quarter (24.5 percent) was from the Animal Science Department. Horticulture/Landscape Architecture provided almost a fifth (18.8 percent) of the respondents, and approximately a tenth (11.3 percent) came from the Agricultural Education Department. The remaining respondents were from General Agriculture, Agronomy, Biochemistry, Entomology, and Forestry. This was a fairly even reflection of the College of Agriculture as a whole, with the exception being that no input was obtained from the Agricultural Communications or Agricultural Engineering Departments due to a lack of respondents.

An overwhelming majority (92.0 percent) of the respondents indicated that they would be an advisor if given the choice; furthermore, an even larger majority (96.1 percent) said that they enjoyed advising students.

Another large majority (94.3 percent) of the advisors indicated that they either had regular office hours or allowed students to make appointments.

TABLE XV
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RELATIVE TO SELECTED QUESTIONS

Summary of Responses	N*	%
Respondents' Department		
Agricultural Communication	--	--
Agricultural Economics	14	26.4
Agricultural Education	6	11.3
Agricultural Engineering	--	--
Agriculture (General)	3	5.7
Agronomy	3	5.7
Animal Science	13	24.5
Biochemistry	1	1.9
Entomology	1	1.9
Forestry	2	3.8
Horticulture/Landscape Architecture	10	18.8
Total	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>
 Whether or Not Respondents Would Choose To Be An Advisor if Given a Choice		
Yes	46	92.0
No	4	8.0
Total	<u>50</u>	<u>100.0</u>
 Whether or Not Respondents Enjoy Advising Students		
Yes	49	96.1
No	2	3.9
Total	<u>51</u>	<u>100.0</u>
 Whether or Not Respondents Have Regular Office Hours and/or Allow Students To Make Appointments		
Yes	50	94.3
No	3	5.7
Total	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>

TABLE XV (continued)

Summary of Responses	N	%
Approximate Number of Students Advised By Respondents		
1 to 10	12	22.6
11 to 20	17	32.1
21 to 30	16	30.2
31 to 40	7	13.2
41 to 50	--	--
51 or more	1	1.9
Total	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Approximate Number of Advisees Respondents Consider Reasonable		
1 to 10	5	9.6
11 to 20	32	61.5
21 to 30	12	23.2
31 to 40	2	3.8
41 to 50	1	1.9
51 or more	--	---
Total	<u>52</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Approximate Number of Hours Per Week Respondents Spend Advising Students		
5 or less	40	75.5
6 to 10	10	18.9
11 to 15	1	1.9
more than 15	2	3.7
Total	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Respondents' Perceived Extent of Time Spent Advising Students		
Adequate	38	74.5
Insufficient	10	19.6
Excessive	3	5.9
Total	<u>51</u>	<u>100.0</u>

TABLE XV (continued)

Summary of Responses	N	%
Comparison of the Quality of Advisement Within the College of Agriculture to the Remainder of the University by Respondents		
Better	44	83.0
About the Same	4	7.5
Worse	--	--
Uncertain	5	9.5
Total	<u>53</u>	<u>100.0</u>

*N varies because not all respondents answered each question.

Approximately one third of the advisors (32.1 percent) advise from 11 to 20 students, and another third (30.2 percent) advise from 21 to 30. More than 20 percent of the respondents indicated that they advise ten or fewer students, and only one indicated that they advise 51 or more.

Furthermore, a large majority (62.5 percent) of the respondents expressed that they consider 11 to 20 to be a reasonable number of advisees. Only three respondents considered more than 30 advisees to be a reasonable number.

Most of the respondents (75.5 percent) spend five hours or less per week advising students. Also, 74.5 percent of the respondents perceived this extent of time to be adequate, with 56.6 percent of the advisors meeting twice per semester, on the average, with each student they advise.

In comparing the quality of advisement within the College of Agriculture to that in the remainder of the University, it was obvious that as a rule, the respondents (83.0 percent) consider their advisement to be better than the remainder of the University. None of the respondents indicated that it was worse.

Table XVI illustrates the respondents' level of agreeance with various advisement attributes. The advisors indicated that they *Strongly Agree* that they are friendly and approachable; interested in students and what they say; willing to meet with students needing assistance, and that they keep appointments with students. They *Agree* that they answer students' questions concisely; provide a caring, open atmosphere; are good listeners; and provide full attention at meetings.

Furthermore, the respondents implied that they *Strongly Agree* that they refer students to other persons for assistance when appropriate and exhibit confidentiality concerning all personal and private matters. Also, they *Agree* that they provide accurate information regarding courses; help students understand university procedures; maintain accurate records of student progress; provide accurate information regarding alternatives in students' programs of study; provide students with information about career opportunities, explain requirements of students' majors to show relevance of courses and how they will affect

TABLE XVI

SUMMARY OF MEAN RESPONSES RELATIVE TO RESPONDENTS' AGREEMENT
WITH ADVISEMENT ATTRIBUTES

Response	Mean	Descriptor
APPROACHABILITY		
As an Advisor, I...		
...am friendly and approachable.	1.48	Str. Agree
...am interested in students and what they say.	1.42	Str. Agree
...am willing to meet with students needing assistance.	1.40	Str. Agree
...keep appointments with students.	1.37	Str. Agree
...answer students' questions concisely.	1.66	Agree
...provide a caring, open atmosphere.	1.51	Agree
...am a good listener.	1.62	Agree
...provide full attention at meetings.	1.60	Agree
GENERAL INFORMATION		
As an Advisor, I...		
...refer students to other persons for assistance when appropriate.	1.42	Str. Agree
...provide accurate information regarding courses.	1.66	Agree
...help students understand University procedures.	1.79	Agree
...maintain accurate records of student progress.	1.66	Agree
...exhibit confidentiality concerning all personal and private matters.	1.21	Str. Agree

TABLE XVI (continued)

Response	Mean	Descriptor
GENERAL INFORMATION, continued		
As an Advisor, I...		
...provide accurate information regarding alternatives in students' programs of study.	1.62	Agree
...provide students with information about career opportunities.	1.75	Agree
...explain requirements of students' majors to show relevance of courses and how they will affect students' educational goals.	1.62	Agree
...help students plan several semesters or their total academic program.	1.81	Agree
COUNSELING		
As an Advisor, I...		
...am willing to talk about nonacademic problems.	1.53	Agree
...am willing to provide encouragement when needed.	1.47	Str. Agree
...offer suggestions but encourage students to make decisions independently.	1.40	Str. Agree
...offer my own opinions when asked to do so.	1.66	Agree
...suggest ways to improve study habits.	1.79	Agree
...encourage students to participate in student organizations.	1.78	Agree

the students' educational goals; and, help students plan several semesters or their total academic program.

Finally, the advisors indicated that they *Strongly Agree* that they are willing to provide encouragement when needed and that they offer suggestions but encourage students to make decisions independently. Furthermore, they *Agree* that they are willing to talk about nonacademic problems; offer their own opinions when asked to do so; suggest ways to improve study habits; and, encourage students to participate in student organizations.

Table XVII ranks the most frequently discussed topics in student conferences as given by the respondents. *Registration and Course Selection* is the most frequently discussed, followed by *Academic Majors and Specializations Available* and then *Academic Problems*. The least frequently discussed topic was *University Student Services*.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were derived based on the major findings:

1. The advisors in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources generally enjoy advising students and would choose to be advisors even if it was not required of them;

TABLE XVII
SUMMARY OF TOPICS MOST FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED IN STUDENT
CONFERENCES AS RANKED BY RESPONDENTS

Topic	Mean	Rank
Registration and Course Selection	1.71	1
Academic Majors and Specializations Available	3.28	2
Academic Problems	3.52	3
Graduation Requirements	3.71	4
Vocational/Career Choices	4.66	5
Personal Problems	5.77	6
Other	6.64	7
Student Organization Activities	6.74	8
University Student Services	7.19	9

2. The vast majority of advisors in the College of Agriculture make a point to be readily available to their students, either through regular office hours or appointments;

3. The advisee load is not distributed evenly among advisors within the College of Agriculture; furthermore, almost half the advisors currently advise more students than is commonly considered to be a reasonable number; it was also concluded, based on qualitative responses, that

advisors would like to see more credit given for advisement responsibilities (i.e., regarding tenure/promotion);

4. Most of the advisors within the College of Agriculture spend five hours or less per week advising students, and many consider this amount of time to be adequate; however, several respondents indicated that this was not a sufficient amount of time to do a good job of advising. The discrepancy could very well be due to the uneven distribution of the advisee load;

5. The advisors primarily agree that they are easily approachable by students, provide general information needed by students, and exhibit counseling skills when working with students;

6. Students depend on advisors for guidance in many areas; some of the more common problems students seek help with include registration for classes, financial aid, academic problems, and career choices;

7. Frustration among advisors often results due to students expecting them to always be available to help, regardless of other duties; this problem is compounded by the lack of recognition/reward for the amount of time spent advising students. Also, many advisors would like to see students take more responsibility for their academic career;

8. Advisors within the College of Agriculture take their responsibilities to students seriously, and feel that the advisement there is better than that on the remainder of campus;

9. A wide variety of topics are discussed in student conferences, but the most frequent topics deal with registration and course selection; advisors rarely discuss University services; possibly because they are not kept up to date with what is available.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, advisors within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources perceive themselves to be quite effective in carrying out their advisement responsibilities. Some improvement is needed, however, and the following recommendations are presented:

1. The advisors within the College of Agriculture should be commended for their effectiveness in advising students;

2. All new faculty members (and returning faculty who wish to participate) should receive in-service training regarding advisement responsibilities;

3. The advisee load should be distributed more evenly among faculty members; furthermore, other aspects of the advisors' total work load (i.e., teaching and research) should be considered when determining the number of students they advise;

4. Credit should be given in the tenure review/promotion process with regard to the time and effort

put into advising students, just as it is for teaching and research; and,

5. Advisors should periodically receive updated information concerning changes in University policies and student services to better enable them to give students correct information.

Recommendations for Additional Research

The following recommendations are made with regard to additional research. The recommendations are judgements based on having conducted the study and on the examination of the findings of the study:

1. The findings of this study should be compared to those of a study being done concurrently, *Efficacy of Academic Advisement as Perceived by Undergraduate Students within the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Oklahoma State University*, in order to determine how closely the students' perceptions match those of the advisors; and

2. A similar study should be conducted University-wide in order to assess the quality of advisement in Colleges other than that of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

STATEMENT OF

APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Proposal Title QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE ADVISORS AND/OR ADVISEMENT PRACTICES
AS PERCEIVED BY ACADEMIC ADVISORS WITHIN THE OSU DIV OF AG SCIENCES AND NATURAL

Principal Investigator Dr E Finley & A Gibson Horne

Date April 13, 1992 IRB # AG-92-016

This application has been reviewed by the IRB and

Processed as Exempt Expedite Full Board Review
Renewal or Continuation

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s)

Approved Deferred for Revision
Approved with Provision Disapproved

Approval status subject to review by full Institutional Review Board at
next meeting, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reason for Deferral or
Disapproval

Signature: *Marcus L. Tiller* Date: April 13, 1992
Chair of Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

NAME
ADDRESS
CAMPUS

Dear -NAME-

It was determined by the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources' "Committee on Student Advisement, Counseling, and Retention" to be advantageous to conduct research (**Phase I**) in order to determine the "Efficacy of Academic Advisement as Perceived by Undergraduate Students Within the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources " As you are aware, that study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (AG-92-011) and you have been most helpful in the conduct of that initiative Your cooperation has been most appreciated

Now that **Phase I** has been initiated, we are in the process of conducting **Phase II**, *Characteristics of Effective Advisement Qualities and/or Attributes as Perceived by Academic Advisors within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Oklahoma State University (AG-92-016)* Therefore, we are requesting that you complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us in the self-addressed envelope provided The questionnaire should require approximately ten minutes (or less) of your time Furthermore, we would like to have the completed questionnaire returned to us within the week if at all possible.

Only the cumulative findings of both research efforts (**Phase I** and **Phase II**) will be reported. In other words, please be assured that your responses (as well as those of the students) will remain confidential and will be reported only in the totals for the College Furthermore, the findings will not be statified by Department for either research initiative Once again, only the totals will be reported, thereby adhering to our assurance of confidentiality Only those advisors identified on the *Departmental Student Advisors List, 1991-92 Academic Year*, are being included in the **Phase II** research initiative.

Should you have any questions or concerns pertaining to this research, please do not hesitate to contact us Furthermore, we want you to know how much we appreciate your taking time to respond to the questions asked. Your input is essential and we value your opinions Thanking you in advance for your attention to this request, we remain,

Sincerely,

Ann Gibson Horne
Graduate Student

Eddy Finley, Assoc Professor and
Member, Committee on Student
Advisement, Counseling, and Retention

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

ADVISEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS Please respond to the following questions and return this completed form to the Department of Agricultural Education in the enclosed envelope Thank you for your cooperation

- 1 In which department are you an adviser? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1) Agricultural Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> (8) Biochemistry
<input type="checkbox"/> (2) Agricultural Economics	<input type="checkbox"/> (9) Entomology
<input type="checkbox"/> (3) Agricultural Education	<input type="checkbox"/> (10) Forestry
<input type="checkbox"/> (4) Agricultural Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> (11) Horticulture/Landscape Architecture
<input type="checkbox"/> (5) Agriculture (General)	<input type="checkbox"/> (12) Pre-Veterinary Science
<input type="checkbox"/> (6) Agronomy	
<input type="checkbox"/> (7) Animal Science	

- 2 If you had the choice, would you choose to be an advisor? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1) Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> (2) No
----------------------------------	---------------------------------

- 3 Do you enjoy advising students? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1) Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> (2) No
----------------------------------	---------------------------------

- 4 Do you have regular office hours and/or allow students to make appointments? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1) Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> (2) No
----------------------------------	---------------------------------

- 5 How many students do you currently advise? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 to 40
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 41 to 50
<input type="checkbox"/> 21 to 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 51 or more

- 6 What do you consider to be a reasonable number of advisees? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 to 40
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 41 to 50
<input type="checkbox"/> 21 to 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 51 or more

- 7 Approximately how many hours per week do you spend advising students? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1) 5 or less
<input type="checkbox"/> (2) 6-10
<input type="checkbox"/> (3) 11-15
<input type="checkbox"/> (4) more than 15

- 8 Do you consider this amount of time to be . (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1) .Adequate
<input type="checkbox"/> (2) ..Insufficient
<input type="checkbox"/> (3) Excessive

- 9 How often, on the average, do you meet with each student you advise? (Check only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> (1) Four or more times per semester
<input type="checkbox"/> (2) Three times per semester
<input type="checkbox"/> (3) Twice per semester
<input type="checkbox"/> (4) Once per semester
<input type="checkbox"/> (5) Other (Please specify) _____

INSTRUCTIONS Please rate the following attributes according to your perceptions about your advisement experiences. Check (✓) the appropriate response to each question.

APPROACHABILITY		Strongly			Strongly	Not
		Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Applicable
As an advisor, I		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(0)
10	am friendly and approachable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	am interested in students and what they say	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	am willing to meet with students needing assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	keep appointments with students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	answer students' questions concisely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	provide a caring, open atmosphere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	am a good listener.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	provide full attention at meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GENERAL INFORMATION

As an advisor, I

18	refer students to other persons for assistance when appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	provide accurate information regarding courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	help students understand university procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	maintain accurate records of student progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS ON BACK

GENERAL INFORMATION, continued

As an advisor, I...		Strongly			Strongly	Not
		Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Applicable
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(0)
22	exhibit confidentiality concerning all personal and private matters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	provide accurate information regarding alternatives in students' programs of study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	provide students with information about career opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	explain requirements of students' major to show relevance of courses and how they will affect the students' educational goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	help students plan several semesters or their total academic program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As an advisor, I

- 27 am willing to talk about nonacademic problems
- 28 am willing to provide encouragement when needed
- 29 offer suggestions but encourage students to make decisions independently
- 30 offer my own opinions when asked to do so
- 31 suggest ways to improve study habits
- 32 encourage students to participate in student organizations

33 List one or more of the most common problems and/or reasons which cause students to request your advice

34 What are the most frustrating aspects of your advisement responsibilities? (Please list in order)

35 How do you think the quality of advisement within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources compares to the rest of the University? (Check only one)

- (1) Better
- (2) About the same
- (3) Worse
- (4) Uncertain

36 Rank the following topics, 1 through 9, as to how often they are discussed in student conferences (1 = most frequently discussed, 9 = least frequently discussed)

- _____ Registration and course selection
- _____ Academic majors and specializations available
- _____ Graduation requirements
- _____ Academic problems
- _____ Vocational/Career Choices
- _____ Personal Problems
- _____ University Student Services
- _____ Student Organization Activities
- _____ Other _____

Please offer any comments you feel pertinent to the study of the quality of advisement within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Your input is valuable, and appreciated very much!

APPENDIX D

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES TO
QUESTION #33

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

QUESTION #33

(The advisors were asked to list one or more of the most common problems and/or reasons which cause students to request their advice. Responses are given below.)

"Confusion within University requirements, procedures."

"Poor Academic performance."

"Academic problems, personal counseling needs, advice on career paths."

"Registering for classes."

"Academic problems in a specific course."

"Tutoring, problem solving advice, class schedule, student projects, personal problems."

"Need signature on trial study to follow the rules."

"Pre-enrollment, drop/add, graduation checklist."

"Grade problems, time to enroll."

"Problems with instructors or course material. Questions about career opportunities."

"Mostly scheduling and drop/add requests."

"Closed sections. Cancelled courses. Need for financial assistance. Need to get reinstated after poor academic performance."

"Graduation requirements, academic regulations."

"Courses, careers, and graduation."

"Academic performance, course selection."

"Plan of study and/or course recommendation."

"Need financial aid."

"Grades, money, and personal problems."

"Grade pressure/problems. Problems in satisfying teacher education requirements. Lack of discipline."

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES (continued)

"Enrollment. Dropping/Adding. Graduation check. Personal problems."

"Seen as a "progressive" faculty member."

"Registration, dropping courses, summer internships, job applications, letters of recommendation."

"Class sequencing for junior college transfers. Students failure to apply themselves and need help because of negligence. Students want you to do their thinking and planning."

"Poor grades, family problems."

"Grade problems."

"Poor performance (overall or class specific). Personal problems. Career choices."

"Class requirements."

"Questions on choice of careers. Can I get into vet school?"

"Course problems - TA's, profs, background info."

"Career goals/job search."

"Enrollment."

"Career opportunities. Change of study options/major. Doing poorly in courses."

"They do not know (or cannot decide) what elective course(s) to take."

"Poor grades."

"Change in option; either poor instructor or poor performance."

"Scheduling problems; career choices, work opportunities, change of major possibilities."

"Emphasis in their academic program (i.e. options, electives)."

"Career choices, application procedures for graduate study and jobs, elective course offerings."

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES (continued)

"Curriculum development, career choices, personal problems."

"Registration, problems with other students or faculty, uncertainty concerning career choice."

"Enrollment - choosing courses - particularly since many of our students are transfers and often take courses out of the "normal" sequence."

"Too much dependent on the advisor. They need to be conscious about their own track record in the first place."

"Selection of courses, drop/add, academic difficulties, eligibility for scholarships, graduation checks, information about majors in the department."

"Course dissatisfaction, job opportunities."

"Program of study development - interpretation of departmental and university requirements leaves too little chance for electives."

"Difficulty with a given course's content or methods of presentation."

"Mostly problems with a class."

APPENDIX E

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES TO
QUESTION #34

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

QUESTION #34

(The advisors were asked to list the most frustrating aspects of their advisement responsibilities. Responses follow.)

"I wish there had been an advisors' help session for new faculty. I still find that I have to ask our departmental advising coordinator too many questions about policies and procedures."

"Being required to advise students at any time, regardless of our commitments to other responsibilities."

"Many advisees wanting to enroll around the same time."

"Having to interrupt my activities to advise a new student
"on demand"."

"Proliferation of junior college programs in our fields and accompanying articulation problems."

"Students who wait to seek help until it is too late. I have several times called and even sent letters to students to avoid potential problems as they progress, but they often will not return calls and may or may not come in after written notification."

"Not enough time; insufficient knowledge on my part of courses taught; courses listed but not taught."

"Dealing with students who are not succeeding."

"Irresponsible, in my view, student attitudes."

"It requires a great deal of time to do the job well, and the "reward system" does not provide sufficient acceptance of this fact."

"Inability of students to see/accept advice regarding the bigger picture; students not seeking advice or help until it is too late."

"Closed sections of courses, inability to get students through general ed requirements in two years, too many levels of courses."

"Degree plans that do not provide any latitude for either the student's interests or change in option."

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES (continued)

"Unannounced interruptions."

"I'm not updated frequently enough on procedural changes. I do not know many instructors of required classes outside my department to assist students with course selection."

"Option sheets which provide no flexibility - change every year. Graduation checks for transfer students. Students who never take a personal interest in their education."

"Poor attitudes of about 70% of my advisees. Having to deal with problems directly associated with poor preparation of students at the high school and junior college levels."

"Graduation Checks."

"The time spent advising is NOT credited in the tenure-review process, therefore it is detrimental to one's career to spend much time advising."

"Conducting research, teaching, and trying to keep up with advising. Students don't always keep appointments. Poor students (academic) trying to get into vet school."

"Student retention and grades."

"Not feeling like I have enough time to spend on each student. Not being able to spend the time tracking good students. Spend too much time on problem advisees and too little with the good ones."

"I encourage students to call ahead for appointments - mostly to make sure I will be in. Frustrating when they show up and expect me to always be in and unoccupied."

"Finding open classes for those that enroll late; keeping records properly up-dated."

"Want help at the last minute. Drop courses and want a quick fix so graduation schedule can be kept. Students (some) don't want to take worthwhile courses and will evade as many as possible."

"Course not making or being changed."

"No major frustrations. Shortage of time causes minor problems."

"Misinformation of other advisors. Importance of advisement to administrators."

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES (continued)

"Being open and candid with a student involved in academic dishonesty cases. Being candid with a student who is appealing a grade. Telling a student he/she needs to get to work."

"Students who fail to utilize their talents. Lack of commitment on part of student; failure to accept responsibility for own actions. Complexity of teacher education requirements."

"Losing contact with students in critical problem times. Students come to me after situation is critical."

"Lack of time to advise like I would like to."

"Our open-door policy."

"Trying to keep up with rule changes. Being flexible enough to meet student demands to help on a walk-in basis - probably a self-imposed but expected burden."

"Constantly changing university policies. Lazy students. Inefficient procedures (such as extending enrollment over a long period, absence of specialization, absence of concise sources of info).

"Students who can't read an option sheet or course schedule. Keeping track of changes in requirements/prerequisites, etc. Too many different options."

"Career opportunities."

"Many students don't really care or don't want to be educated. They don't want to take courses other than in the narrow area they are interested in."

"Students who wait until the last minute and expect you to drop everything to help."

"Student reluctance to take charge of their academic career - to set goals and pursue them or just plain explore possibilities."

"Having sufficient time."

"I enjoy advising. However, I enjoy visiting with students whom are more prepared before seeing me. For example, what the graduation requirements are, what they like to take first, etc."

"Not enough knowledge about appropriate course substitutes."

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES (continued)

"Incompetence of other advisors. Gripping of other advisors. Other advisors who are too lazy to learn university rules and regulations."

"I have a line of students outside my office nearly every day. If I spend the time each requires, I would get no other work done. Yet the administration gives no allocation of FTE's to advising. So we have a basic problem of time allocation to meet student needs conflicting with meeting administration needs."

"Students who don't accept their share of the responsibility for scheduling and planning degree plans, etc. Time demand relative to time available."

"Not enough time per student to send out relative information to them, write letters to them; students who only show up when registration time approaches; difficult to keep up with changing university policies regarding requirements."

"Lack of student motivation/self-discipline in a few students; closed sections."

"Probation and suspension."

"Everchanging rules and regulations."

"Limited time."

APPENDIX F

GENERAL COMMENTS
REGARDING THE
STUDY

GENERAL COMMENTS

(Advisors were asked to offer any comments they felt pertinent to the study of the quality of advisement within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.)

"Faculty advisement is quite good and should continue. Again, the inability to schedule General Education requirements within the first two years (1000 - 2000 level courses) is problematic. It becomes more difficult in later years when major requirements conflict. It is probably due to our M-W-F schedule. If we moved to a M-T-TH or T-TH-F schedule it would give some relief."

"Too many students lack motivation to solve their own problems or to do their own planning. They are hopeful that they can take the easier course route and still get the best job opportunities. Somewhere along the line they have not been taught to be responsible or the negative results of being irresponsible. There are still some that come prepared to study and work for what they get and will plan ahead so that they can achieve their goals."

"As a whole the advisement in the College of Agriculture is excellent - compared to other colleges."

"In general the questions on this survey are very "leading" i.e. you know what answers you ought to give and they don't get at the issues."

"Phase I appears to have ignored graduate students with whom I spend most of my time!"

"Although I am listed as an advisor, I currently advise no undergraduates so I feel it inappropriate to respond to this survey. I might add one comment. Because most faculty in my department rightly consider student advisement as a career sacrifice, few actually advise or are willing to advise undergraduates."

VITA

Ann Gibson Horne

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF UNDERGRADUATE
ADVISEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY ACADEMIC ADVISORS
WITHIN THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND
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Personal Born in Blairsville, Georgia, November 9, 1965, the daughter of
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Educational Graduated from Union County High School, Blairsville,
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Professional Experience Counselor, State FFA-FHA Camp, Covington,
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UGA, Athens, Georgia, 1987-89, Agricultural Education Teacher,
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