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# Perceptions of Advisors Who Work with High-Achieving Students

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## Perceptions of Advisors Who Work with High-Achieving Students

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### BACKGROUND

Honors programs in higher education are designed to optimize high-achieving students' potential by addressing their particular academic and developmental needs and common characteristics. Gerrity, Lawrence, and Sedlacek suggested that high-achieving students can be "best served by course work, living environments, and activities that differ from the usual college offerings" (43). Schuman, in his handbook *Beginning in Honors*, noted:

An important point to keep in mind as regards honors advising is that honors students can be expected to have as many, and as complicated,

problems as other students. It is sometimes tempting to envision all honors students as especially well rounded, balanced, thoughtful, mature, and self-possessed. This vision does not seem particularly accurate or helpful despite its attractiveness and allure. (63)

Accordingly, specialized academic advising for honors students is an important component of maximizing their potential as well as addressing myriad needs of this population.

Many honors students place importance on success or appearing successful, including a concern for maintaining a perfect GPA. High-achieving students can be cautious about their choices, a characteristic that may stem from a fear of failure (Huggett). At the same time, honors students value being self-critical, and, more often than non-honors students, preparing for class, getting involved in various campus organizations and student groups, asking questions, and seeking academic discussions with professors (Achterberg; Cuevas; McDonald; Seifert et al.). Honors students tend to think critically, openly share their opinions, value contributions of others, demonstrate openness to new ideas, and place great importance on the social construction of knowledge (Kaczvinsky; Kem & Navan; Shushok).

Gerrity et al. identified a common characteristic of perfectionism in high-achieving students, who often put themselves under great pressure as well as feeling pressure from family, peers, faculty and staff, and society (McDonald). High-achieving students often report having higher expectations for themselves than other students (Achterberg; Kem & Navan), which can result in competition and comparisons with peers (Cooke et al.) and provoke stress and anxiety (McDonald; Spurrier). Honors students may hesitate to seek assistance in academic areas in which they are challenged in order to avoid the appearance of seeming unsuccessful (Gerrity et al.). They are future-oriented in their focus on careers, even upon entering college (Harding; Moon).

High-achieving students also demonstrate an affinity for campus and community involvement, commonly seeking leadership roles in student organizations related to their future career goals (Cuevas), but they generally will not sacrifice academics in favor of involvement (Pindar). They may feel behind if they are perceived as less involved or successful than their peers outside of the classroom (McDonald). Honors students may also become more concerned with the quantity than the quality of experiences in an effort to fill their résumés, resulting in over-commitment and difficulty balancing academic and extracurricular activities (McDonald).

This population can face interpersonal challenges as well. For example, Kem & Navan found that high-achieving students faced difficulty relating to others on campus, particularly non-honors students, potentially leading to perceived feelings of isolation and a sense that others do not understand them. Finally, they often expect advisors to be at their disposal, expecting immediate responses to communication and open-ended availability to meet along with the ability to address both academic and personal concerns (Gerity et al.).

## **THE CURRENT STUDY**

### **Purpose**

To better understand the needs of honors students, this study aims to describe the culture of advising high-achieving students through the lens of the academic advisors who work with them. Through this description, we hope to better situate honors advising within the greater field of academic advising. With limited research available on advising honors students, we aim to extend the literature in this area.

### **Method**

Our study was guided by the following two research questions:

1. How do honors advisors describe their work with high-achieving students?
2. How does the phenomenon of honors advising fit into the greater context of the academic advising profession?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by a phenomenological framework as described by Moustakas: to “reveal more fully the essences and meanings of human experience” (105). According to Patton, there is not one single approach or perspective in phenomenology, in which qualitative research can include, but is not limited to, transcendental, existential, and hermeneutic traditions. Champlin-Scharff encouraged academic advisors to consider the hermeneutic traditions in their work with students given its focus on meaning-making through a historical context. That same philosophy, as further detailed by van Manen, guides the research approach to this study.

## Participants

Following approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), participants were recruited via the email listservs of both the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and the NACADA Commission for Advising High Achieving Students, as well as a newsletter affiliated with Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA). Our study used Patton's criterion sampling to find faculty or professional staff affiliated with an honors program or college who spent a significant amount of time advising honors students in a variety of matters. Non-honors advisors who advised a significant load of honors students as part of their duties were also eligible to participate.

Twenty-eight academic advisors expressed an interest in participating in the study, with 22 completing the informed consent to participate in an interview. Of the participants, 19 (86.36%) reported as Caucasian, one (4.55%) as Hispanic/Latino, and one (4.55%) as Black or African American. One did not provide race/ethnicity. Seventeen (77.27%) identified as female while five (22.73%) identified as male. The 22 participants represented 6 honors colleges, 13 honors programs, and 3 other academic units across 20 different institutions in the United States. The size of the honors college, program, and other academic unit ranged from 14 to 2,200 honors students, with an average size of 694. Examples of job titles included associate professor, director, associate/assistant director, advisor/counselor, and student services coordinator.

## Data Collection

Each advisor participated in one individual, semi-structured phone interview. Interviews ranged from 19 to 57 minutes, with an average length of 37 minutes. Interviews took place by phone because it would have been too costly to conduct interviews across the United States in person, but they were recorded digitally for accuracy in transcription.

Interviews provided the primary data collection method because they gave an understanding of the "lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman 9). The protocol questions were developed to elicit in-depth descriptions of the participants' experiences advising honors students as well as the context of honors advising at each participant's institution. See Table 1.

## Data Analysis

Data were analyzed according to van Manen’s phenomenological approach in concert with Creswell’s process for analyzing phenomenological interviews. According to van Manen, there are five methods of analyzing text in the phenomenological tradition: (a) thematically, (b) analytically, (c) exemplificatively, (d) exegetically, and (e) existentially.

Our study analyzed the data thematically. Van Manen described the thematic approach as a way to “elaborate on an essential aspect of the phenomenon under study” (168). The systematic investigation of the phenomenon is supported by relevant anecdotes. Through this approach, themes across all participants’ interviews emerged speaking to the experience of advising honors students.

Van Manen’s approach was layered over Creswell’s recommendations for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data (185–190):

1. Organizing and preparing the data.
2. Reading through the data to get a sense of the participants’ experiences.
3. Coding and organizing the data into meaningful units.
4. Formulating data into themes.
5. Transforming themes into a descriptive narrative.
6. Interpreting and making meaning of data.

## Methods of Rigor

Lincoln and Guba described several methods to demonstrate the rigor of a study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this study, credibility was demonstrated through peer debriefing, where multiple authors analyzed data together. Transferability was demonstrated through

**TABLE 1. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

1. Tell me about your experience as an honors advisor.
2. Why would an honors student come to you for advising?
3. How would you describe your approach to honors advising?
4. How does honors advising fit into the bigger picture of academic advising at your institution?
5. How does honors advising fit into the bigger picture of academic advising at the national level?
6. Are there other aspects of honors advising that you wish to share?

the use of thick description, which includes crafting a detailed account of the experiences as developed through the interview process. Dependability and confirmability, the final methods of rigor used in this study, were established through an audit trail, a clear and detailed description of all of the research steps taken throughout the research process.

## **Limitations**

This study has several limitations, particularly related to participation. Participation was limited to academic advisors who had access to the NCHC or NACADA email listservs or the NASPA newsletter, and thus some potential participants were missed during the recruitment process. Also, participants did not represent every institutional type, so the experiences of advisors working at institutions such as two-year or community colleges or institutions outside of the United States were missed. The findings also represent the experiences of advisors only; the experiences of students who have participated in honors advising are beyond the scope of this study.

Given the significant variation in honors programs and colleges across the United States (England; Singell & Tang), each participant's experience advising honors students no doubt depends on the context of that individual's honors structure. As in all qualitative studies, transferability of the findings may be limited. Readers should determine applicability to their own situations.

## **FINDINGS**

The themes that emerged in our study address the many ways that academic advisors of honors students described their work, both directly with students (RQ1) and in the greater context of advising at their institutions (RQ2). The results include descriptions of various philosophical and practical approaches advisors use in working with honors students as well as the logistical functions they serve in their capacity as advisors. Finally, many participants described the differences they perceived in advising honors students versus non-honors students. The research questions addressed by each theme are included in parentheses.

### **Theme 1: Providing a One-Stop Shop (RQ1 and RQ2)**

Participants described a variety of reasons why honors students would see them for advising. In some cases, the advising relationship was long-term,

starting with recruitment in high school and ending at college graduation. Advisors often saw themselves as a “one-stop shop” for their students, a place where an advising appointment could be “however the student wants the appointment to be.” Some students might come in with a set agenda or a rigid checklist of questions, according to one participant, while other students might be more flexible, interested more in chatting with the advisor. Conversations might flow from study skills to scholarships to interview preparation to academic requirements.

Honors students frequently saw their advisors to discuss honors opportunities and program requirements. One participant asked her students how they were incorporating the honors experience into their lives. Nine participants mentioned a focus on addressing honors contracts, protocols, and various requirements with their students. Advisors met with their students on a regular basis to check their “progress . . . to fulfill specific honors requirements,” starting as early as their first semester in college. One participant was concerned that students might be misadvised about completing honors requirements: “Although it says plainly in black and white in the catalog if these honors classes fulfill these general education requirements, people don’t notice that.” He often checked his students’ course schedules to ensure they were completing requirements appropriately.

Aside from honors requirements, advisors frequently discussed course schedules with students, with ten of the participants mentioning advising about registration. The participants were clear, however, that they were “not here just to give a list of classes” and that they wanted to “get the class part done quickly.” Advisors expected that students had done their research about classes to take prior to their meetings so they could discuss other areas of interest. A participant commented that students could “very easily go through the catalog and just pick their classes with no trouble. . . . they can read the course plans just like I can.”

In many cases, advisors were looking ahead in the area of degree planning with students. Given that most honors students entered their institutions with incoming credits from Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual enrollment coursework (as many as 30–60 credits in the case of one participant), “pushing ahead” formed the basis of an important conversation. Only two participants mentioned discussing general education requirements with students. Instead, they spent a significant amount of time with students on degree planning and progress toward graduation.

In only six instances, participants mentioned that advising about students’ majors took place outside of the honors office. Even then, a participant



remarked that “students were still coming to us, even though they really should be seeing their major advisor.” Several advisors commented that they had to understand the nuances of all majors because their students would come to them with questions rather than to their major advisor. Aside from discussing major requirements and degree plans, students often came to honors advisors to deliberate double majors, minors, and combined degrees where they could receive a bachelor’s and graduate degree concurrently. Students also consulted honors advisors about changes of major, particularly when they were questioning their majors or were unhappy with their choice.

Writing an honors or senior thesis was also a topic of discussion. For some honors students, writing a thesis was a requirement; for others, it was strongly encouraged. Students inquired about thesis work even as early as orientation. Participants described helping students get started with thesis work by going “step-by-step so students feel confident” about the requirements and by looking up theses so students would have examples.

Finally, participants approached their students with the “assumption that they [would] prep for graduate school.” In working with honors students, advisors “investigated possibilities for the future” and discussed test preparation for the MCAT and GRE. One participant noted that she handled “a lot of post-grad advising” with her students.

## **Theme 2: Building Connections and Referral Networks (RQ1 and RQ2)**

Participants remarked that their meetings with honors students were “not necessarily going to be about academics.” Instead, advisors focused many conversations on campus resources and on referring students to various opportunities. One participant was determined that she have “as wide a reference as students do” so that she could link students to an expansive network of people and options. Participants were adamant about helping their students build connections, particularly to “challenging,” “interesting,” and “out-of-the-box” opportunities. For those students who might be nervous about making such connections, the advisor frequently helped the student set up a meeting or rehearse a conversation in advance.

Getting to know faculty and seeking out research projects were the two most common resources that participants mentioned. Seven discussed helping their students find faculty mentors or advisors, whether for academic advising, career guidance, or thesis mentoring. Nine communicated the importance of getting involved with undergraduate research, integrating research into their

academic plans, and taking their research “to a broader public.” Often the conversations about research began as early as the student’s first semester.

Ten of the participants either advised their students about or referred them to study abroad resources. In some cases, the honors requirements included an international component. One participant talked to students about “how to make the overseas experience make sense because of who they are and what their goals are.” Another made sure to look at his students’ study abroad photographs after their experiences as a means of supporting their activities.

While two participants mentioned referring their students to the career center, others worked directly with their students about career matters. Two advisors provided résumé assistance for their students while another said she did “a little bit of career advising.” Participants encouraged students to explore opportunities for work, shadowing, co-ops, and internships.

Participants regularly questioned their students about involvement in student activities provided by the honors program or by the institution at large. Advisors promoted campus activities by asking students “Are you getting involved? Are you coming to activities?” as well as asking how they wanted to get involved. Advisors also recommended volunteering and community service as worthwhile pursuits.

Students often used their advisors to seek resources for more personal concerns such as roommate issues and housing matters. Participants encouraged students to seek out campus tutoring, which could provide “for the best grade possible, and for the best understanding of your content,” when high-achieving students might otherwise shy away from it. Other participants referred students to counseling centers and financial aid as appropriate.

### **Theme 3: Indulging a Future Orientation (RQ1)**

Helping students plan, set goals, and make key decisions about their futures was a major focus of advising appointments, according to participants. The setting of goals—academic, career, or even life goals—was a common topic of conversation between fourteen of the participants and their students. One participant helped students develop long-term goals and then worked backward to plan how to achieve them while another used visual tools to help students picture their goals. Several participants met with their students on at least an annual basis to revisit goals and revise plans as needed.

Participants aimed to help students strike a balance between coursework and their longer-term goals. One participant focused on how to help students make the best use of their time when they entered the institution with 30–60 hours of incoming credit. One asked students “if the coursework that they’re taking is going to allow them to achieve those goals” while another pondered that “there’s a need to make sure that they understand that being career-focused, to be really successful in that, it’s a very different venture than they see it as.” Finding ways to integrate all interests, courses beyond the major, and long-term goals was a focus of several advisors.

Participants asked many questions designed to help students clarify their goals and develop action plans to achieve them. Advisors discussed when and why students needed to take advantage of opportunities. They asked clarifying questions to help students understand their options. They asked what students had accomplished to this point and what avenues they had gone through. They encouraged practical applications of the students’ ideas and helped brainstorm additional ideas. Advisors also helped students determine how they could leverage their strengths to accomplish their goals as well as how “best [to] position themselves to be competitive applicants” for a variety of positions.

Participants also asked more philosophical questions to help students think critically about decision-making with regard to their future. One participant said her focus was to “find what’s interesting to you about life and what are your interest areas and then trying to find something that will match that.” Similarly, another participant asked “What lens will make you into the kind of person you want to be?” when helping students develop their plans. Several participants commented that they wanted to help students “broaden” their focus, “make the most of their education,” and try new perspectives and approaches.

Many of the participants noted that goal setting and planning with honors students was different from working with non-honors students. One participant started long-term planning with her honors students from the very beginning, even at orientation. Another found that planning with honors students was more “careful” with “more complex issues.” Participants worked to help “bright folks figure out how to kind of take charge of their own intelligence” and looked for opportunities to help the “highest achieving students on campus challenge themselves in new ways.” Finally, one participant understood that honors students might be able to do “something different” with their plans and could do an “unusual combination of things.”

She focused on discussing possibilities with students to achieve more than the average student.

While helping students translate their goals into actions, many participants ultimately placed the onus on students to make decisions and expected students to take charge of their plans. Advisors provided tools for their students to “assist in making decisions for themselves” and taught them “how to find and use information appropriately” to aid in decision-making. Despite a tendency for students to “triple-check” with their advisors, participants were clear that their role was not to “spoon-feed” students, be the “answer man,” or “do it for them.” As one participant summarized, “As adults and as college students and as honors students, I’m going to trust that they can figure out how to do it for themselves.” Self-responsibility was emphasized in many appointments with students.

#### **Theme 4: Cultivating a Support System (RQ1)**

Participants described the extra layer of support they provided to their students through advising appointments. Nine of the participants discussed the types of environments they tried to create to help students feel more comfortable. One forged a “very protective environment” where students might be more willing to share difficult issues with her. A participant also attempted to create a “safe” environment for students, showing students that he was a resource who could help “in any way I can.” Participants developed a helpful space by “removing as many obstacles as possible” for students who were having difficulty navigating bureaucratic processes, and they developed a community atmosphere “where they’re all honors students together” and where students know that “they do matter.”

Many participants provided support to students regarding their academic concerns. One emphasized that students were “going to work here” and so should not be surprised by academic challenges. On the other hand, advisors wanted students to learn that academics were not the “end all” and often tried to push students to think beyond their grades. Participants questioned students about their lives outside of the classroom: how they spent their free time and with whom. Together they discussed roommate issues, challenges with parents, and involvement concerns.

Participants were particularly concerned about students’ ability to balance various responsibilities. As one participant found, advisors need to “always be mindful that these students are vulnerable to over-commitment.”

Other advisors helped students manage multiple activities, tried to “focus energy and enthusiasm more realistically,” and discussed the importance of balance in life. At the same time, advisors knew when to push students to do more or “raise the bar.” Another participant discovered that her role was to “nurture the passion” students shared with her.

At the same time, participants served as an initial resource when students approached them with personal concerns. As one observed, “I’m not sure if I’m seeing more students that have mental health concerns or if more students are comfortable talking to me about it.” Mental health and wellness check-ins were common during honors advising sessions. They aimed to “help students trying to navigate those life challenges” as well as to learn “how to make things less stressful for themselves because it’s not going to go away.”

### **Theme 5: Making Explicit Distinctions Between Honors and Non-Honors Advising (RQ2)**

Participants noted the special features of honors advising sessions, with particular emphasis on their time-intensive nature. Several participants observed that the needs of honors students were not necessarily the same as those of non-honors students. Because non-honors advisors did not always understand those needs, the work of honors advisors was especially important to assist their students.

One participant found that non-honors advisors, when advising honors students, did not understand students’ needs to the extent that the honors advisors did, although they “recognize that honors students are a different type of student.” Another participant agreed that he didn’t “expect [non-honors] advisors to show any special sensitivity to the needs of the honors students.” Many participants agreed that honors students had unique needs and talents and that they, as honors advisors, not only understood their students’ needs but could advise and mentor them to take advantage of their talents.

Several participants commented that non-honors advising took a “lowest common denominator approach,” “advised to the norm or middle of the pack,” or told students, “here are the opportunities, do this, see you soon.” Participants spent more time with honors students because they understood the individual needs each student had and wanted to provide breadth and depth to the students’ experiences.

Most advisors found that a major difference in honors advising sessions compared to advising non-honors students was the amount of time they

spent working with each student. Appointments were “time-consuming,” “intensive,” “complicated,” and “in-depth.” One advisor commented that “it can’t be efficient” from an organizational standpoint because honors advising appointments often were scheduled for longer periods of time than for other students.

Advisors felt not only that they needed more time with their students but that their students demanded that time. Honors students took advantage of the accessibility and availability of their advisors. As one participant put it, students discovered that he “will spend time with me.” Two participants believed that the amount of time they spent with honors students helped their institutions’ efforts with retention. As one of them commented, “If we could have more advising of the type that honors colleges and honors programs offer, our retention rates would be significantly higher. . . . I really think that’s the bottom line that more people would stay at universities if we could offer advising at this level.”

Several of the participants had experience advising non-honors students and contrasted their experiences. One noticed that the “general student often-times is thinking ‘I might want to co-op,’ but they’re not interested in anything else. You don’t have to go through the whole process with everything they may want to do”; honors students, however, wanted to talk about everything in-depth. Another participant said that he never got to know his non-honors students when he advised them and that it “felt like a factory” environment. By contrast, advisors of honors students focused on building a “strong community feeling” where they could “see them grow over four years.” Forming “personal connections” and developing continuity through their advising relationships with students were important to most participants.

## **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Through this study, academic advisors of honors students shared their perceptions and experiences of their roles, focusing on the dynamic relationship between advisor and honors student. Within a hermeneutic phenomenological framework, these experiences combine to form the essence (van Manen) of what it means to advise undergraduate honors students. This essence of honors advising adds an important component to understanding the unique needs of honors students in an academic setting and serves as the launching point for further discussion in both research and practice.

Participants employed a variety of techniques in advising honors students, as evidenced by the findings. Providing a one-stop shop, building connections

and referral networks, indulging a future orientation, and cultivating a support system all can be traced back to theoretical and philosophical academic advising approaches. Participants referenced many of these approaches in their descriptions of their work, including appreciative advising (Bloom, Hutson, & He), strengths-based approaches (Schreiner & Anderson), intrusive advising (Earl), developmental advising (Crookston), challenge and support (Sanford), and other student development-focused perspectives.

Overall, participants discussed the importance of individualized, specialized, and personalized advising appointments based on the needs of each student. One participant remarked that you “can’t put them all in one box” while another wanted to “let them kind of lead their own parade, lead their own team.” Understanding each student’s unique needs and interests was felt to be a sign of respect, and advisors needed to take such differences into account when working with honors students.

A focus on the “big picture” within a holistic approach was also very important in advising honors students. One participant wanted to help students “develop the best of their whole self” while another ensured that she was “taking all of the issues that the student is working around into consideration.” Another stated that the “goal is to do more than the typical ‘here’s your classes’ and sign up,” with students needing to see how their education fit together, not just the individual classes. Advisors saw their role as one that went beyond just discussing classes. One clarified that advisors “cannot separate advising from just the check mark of what class to take compared to all of the other things including internships, classes, research, service learning, and education abroad. . . . [I]t’s really forcing them to think beyond just the basics.” Integration of activities was an important component of honors advising.

Both Crookston and Lowenstein (“If Advising”) have distilled the nature of advising as teaching, either through a developmental (Crookston) or learning-centered (Lowenstein) lens. Advising as teaching encompasses much of a holistic honors advising approach while also demonstrating the perceived differences between honors and non-honors advising. Lowenstein (“If Advising”) in particular presents a compelling view of the academic advisor as a partner in student learning, where excellent advisors help students design meaningful connections throughout their education much as excellent teachers might do in a single course. He continues to describe excellent advisors as those who can pique the intellectual interests of their students through powerful conversations as well as those who have honed pedagogical skills of the sort faculty use in the classroom (Lowenstein, “Envisioning”).

If advising is teaching, is honors advising akin to honors teaching? Edman and Zubizarreta provide some insight into honors teaching. Edman found that honors faculty covered course material differently than they might in non-honors courses, focusing more in-depth on topics, creating more connections between them, and exploring a deeper understanding of the material. Rather than focusing solely on lecturing, honors faculty served more as educational guides or mentors in the classroom. Students also played a more active role in the classroom, taking greater responsibility for their education, teaching themselves and others through meaningful dialogue, and questioning content with greater sophistication. Zubizarreta also described honors teaching as “close intellectual mentoring” employing “individualized, constructivist approaches” (147).

Honors advising, then, if we follow the advising-as-teaching model, should focus on guiding and mentoring students across their entire honors curriculum. Honors students should play a more active role in their advising and planning and take responsibility for learning while consulting with their advisors about the nuanced complexities they face. Gerrity et al. and Cuevas noted the holistic and strengths-based approaches to honors advising while Jordan & Blevins discussed the coaching aspects of working with honors students. Advisors working with this population should be able to quickly adapt their advising approaches based on the needs of the student, understanding that those approaches may differ even when seeing the same student on subsequent occasions.

According to the results of our study, honors advising does indeed fit this model. Participants tailored their advising to the intricate needs of each individual student. Whether the student needed more holistic advising to focus on the big picture or very specific and intrusive advising to pinpoint a particular concern, participants recognized that an intentional, customized approach was best for honors students.

In line with Zubizarreta’s constructivist pedagogical approach, which calls attention to experiential and problem-based learning along with other active learning strategies in the honors classroom, participants in this study used their connections across campus and in the community to provide constructivist learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Participants also steered their honors students toward internships, undergraduate research, and global engagement in order to gain real-world experience, which Jordan & Blevins as well as McDonald identified as the kind of special mentoring and involvement that honors students need; thus, advisors must be familiar



with the high-impact, experiential practices on their campuses that honors students seek (Amar et al.; Cuevas; Robinson; Seifert et al.).

In the honors classroom, the instructor assumes that the student will want to dive more deeply into content and that students will come prepared with questions to learn more. Participants found that their students often arrived for advising prepared to discuss more than just their course schedule for the next semester. Their future-orientation, in particular, led to more in-depth discussions beyond a typical scheduling appointment. As in classrooms in which honors students want to appear successful through their grades, honors students want to appear successful in advising appointments by demonstrating their broad interests and long-range planning abilities.

The focus on success has a shadow side, identified by Hugget as caution in decision-making through fear of failure or by McDonald as over-commitment through fear of letting something drop. Jordan & Blevins explored the need for students to grieve over not being able to do everything they wanted to do, and assisting with that grieving process was a type of dialogue that many participants engaged in. The competing sides to success led participants to spend a significant amount of time serving as support systems to their honors students. Just as dialogue among students and between the student and instructor was, as noted by Edman, a feature in the honors classroom, dialogue was also a necessary component of honors advising according to our participants.

A final comparison between honors teaching and advising concerns the extensive dedication of resources to meeting student needs. Zubizarreta recognized the financial costs of teaching smaller, more personalized honors courses but questioned whether those costs were a drain on the institution or an investment in the intellectual capital of high-achieving students. Likewise, participants noted in their experiences that honors advising was much more time-intensive than non-honors advising. While some participants believed that the time spent could be seen as an inefficient use of resources, at the same time they believed, as did Zubizarreta, that the time spent was an investment in retention and in the future of these students beyond their undergraduate careers.

## **CONCLUSION**

The parallels between honors advising-as-teaching and honors teaching form the essence of advising undergraduate honors students. Honors advising

takes a constructivist approach, where the advisor challenges students to tackle complex, real-world problems both in and out of the classroom; mentors students while connecting them to opportunities for tackling these problems; and supports students through engaging dialogues about their goals and interests. The dedication of resources for such an approach should be seen as an investment in both the present and future of honors students. Further exploration of honors advising in this context can provide greater insight both for academic advisors and for honors faculty seeking to better understand the nature of this complex partnership.

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