The Professionalization of Academic Advising: A Structured Literature Review

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Practitioners and scholars of academic advising have long grappled with the professional status of the field. To better understand the characteristics of professionalization and the obstacles that stand in the way of professionalizing the field, a structured review of the literature from 1980 to 2016 was conducted. Three characteristics of professionalization were discussed in the advising literature: issues with scholarship, expansion of graduate programs, and community. Obstacles to professionalization discovered through the review were the need to define the field further, role of the professional association, training and education required to perform the advising role, personal and occupational autonomy, and lack of a consistent administrative home for advising. Suggestions for future research are offered.

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How has the field of academic advising developed through the decades? Although some scholars trace the roots of academic advising to the beginning of higher education in the United States (Cate & Miller, 2015; Cook, 2009), the modern context for advising began to surface in the late 19th century, as institutions grew increasingly diverse with more fields of study and career options available for students. In the 1870s, Johns Hopkins University first allowed students to choose electives to supplement their major studies. The growing number of choices available to students during the 20th century made the advisor role more pronounced; however, until the 1970s, advising was practiced as a very prescriptive and authoritarian process; that is, students were told which classes to take (Cook, 2009). In 1972, seminal articles by Crookston and O'Banion inspired thinking about academic advising as a developmental process for students. In 1977, the National Academic Advising Association was established as a dedicated professional body to anchor and to continue development of the field. The National Academic Advising Association, renamed NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA) in 2012, continues to be the premier professional association for academic advising, and the *NACADA Journal* serves as the most important outlet for scholarly research.

This brief historical overview situates the field of academic advising within U.S. higher education, in general, but offers an acknowledgment that unique institutional histories mean that advising can fall under the auspices of either academic affairs or student affairs, complicating the pursuit of a unified direction for the field. Furthermore, like those in many other fields, practitioners of academic advising face barriers to professionalization, a process whereby an "occupation transforms itself through the development of formal qualifications based upon education, apprenticeship, and examinations, the emergence of regulatory bodies with powers to admit and discipline members, and some degree of monopoly rights" (Bullock & Trombley, 1999, p. 689).

Despite some early concerns regarding the professionalization of advising (Trombley & Holmes, 1981), most discourse about the field transpired after the turn of the 21st century. The perspectives expressed since 2000 have ranged from those based on the potential for academic advising as an academic discipline (Kuhn & Padak, 2008) or a field of inquiry (Habley, 2009) to a consideration of problematic comparisons of academic advising to other professional endeavors (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). In 2010, Shaffer, Zalewski, and Leveille penned the important article "The Professionalization of Academic Advising: Where Are We in 2010?" as an examination of the occupational evolution to a profession as seen through the lens of the sociological literature that examines how various occupations became professions. Specifically, Shaffer et al. built their thesis on the basis of Wilensky (1964), who had delineated four stages of professionalization: creating occupations, establishing schools, forming associations, and ratifying codes. Although academic advising had progressed through all four stages of professionalization by 2010, the authors noted an important anomaly: The chartering of

NACADA (Stage 3) predated the establishment of schools and a body of scholarly knowledge (Stage 2). Although nonsequential order was not unprecedented for some professions described in Wilensky's study, when professionalization is sought before the clear establishment of a scholarly base, Wilensky suggested that the results are not always favorable. Hence, Shaffer et al. urged scholars and practitioners to note the disparity between an active professional association guiding practice on every college campus and the lack of sufficient scholarship to deem academic advising an academic discipline, field of inquiry, or profession. Shaffer et al. also admonished that a standard knowledge base for the field should constitute the primary concern for those stakeholders working toward future professionalization.

In daring to suggest that academic advising had not met the sociological benchmarks to be considered a profession, Shaffer et al. (2010) spurred a debate about the future of the field and prompted conversations about areas that those in the field might wish to develop. Some advisors were offended, presuming that the authors had questioned their *professionalism* by suggesting that advising did not carry the status of a *profession*. In response to this reaction, Shaffer suggested that practitioners disassociate the defense of their (valuable) work from an honest assessment of the professional status of the field and the future trajectory of it (L. Shaffer, personal communication, October 7, 2014). Indeed, the behavior of the practitioners of any profession does not amount to an evaluation of whether an occupation constitutes a profession.

For decades, the professionalization literature has addressed the status of professions in society, the financial and social benefits that those belonging to a profession reap, and the roles professions play in the function and advancement of society (Moore, 1970). In the foregone conclusion, occupational groups and their practitioners gain much from being part of a field designated as a profession (Freidson, 1994).

Therefore, to avoid simple debates about whether an occupation is a profession, a futile exercise (Hughes, 1963), the discussion presented herein focuses on the process of professionalization and way professional status can better serve the members of advising and, by extension, students. Therefore, I present this systematic examination of the academic advising literature (designed as per Rocco, Plakhotnik, & Collins, 2018) published between 1980 and 2016 in the hope that the conceptualized professional status (whatever that is) can be understood more clearly. This review covers publications from the 1980s through 2016 because the *NACADA Journal* was established in 1981 and an important article appeared in the first issue that encapsulated the discussion of professionalizing the field at that time (Trombley & Holmes, 1981). This review was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. What characteristics of professionalization have been discussed in the literature of academic advising since 1980?

RQ2. What obstacles have impacted the development of academic advising as a distinctive and independent profession?

Method

Literature reviews present "a form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated" (Torraco, 2005, p. 356), and a structured literature review offers a method of gathering relevant literature on a topic in a systematic way (Rocco et al., 2018). Increased attention given to the methods used to gather the literature can reduce researcher bias and enhance reader confidence that all the literature meeting specified criteria and study parameters is included in the review and reported in the findings.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved four interrelated phases: database selection and search (Phase I), scanning of reference list articles selected in Phase I (Phase II), a Google Scholar "Cited by" search (Phase III), and additional database searches (Phase IV). The process of data collection was monitored by an experienced team of four researchers, comprising my major advisor and doctoral dissertation committee, during all four stages.

Phase I: Database selection and search. Prior to the search, a university librarian provided input on the most appropriate search terms and databases, and on the basis of those suggestions, ERIC (ProQuest) and Education Source were chosen as sources for the initial data search. The following delimitations were used in the search: full-text, scholarly journals, published between 1980 and 2016, and written in English. *Professionalization* was selected as the primary search term and was

Table 1. Search results by database

	Total Hits	Material Found	
		Eliminated	Accepted
Educational Source	48	44	4
ERIC ProQuest	3	1	2
Totals	51	45	6

combined with *academic advising*. The related terms *profession, professionalism,* and *profession* (which captures every permutation of the key term) were tested but produced irrelevant results. The search yielded 48 hits in Educational Source and three in ERIC ProQuest.

I read all 51 document titles for relevance to the research questions, paying special attention to keywords: *profession, professionalism, professionalization, fields, occupation,* and *academic advising*. From the 51 initial hits, 45 documents were eliminated for one of two reasons: Either the article was not published in a peer-reviewed journal or the content did not relate to the research questions. For example, although *professionalization* yielded some productive results, some manuscripts focused on issues of professional development and the continued professional learning of practitioners. These articles were excluded because they were not related to the discussion of professionalization of the field.

Because of the limited results, articles from sources not subject to peer review were added to those already identified. After review of the possible articles not subject to peer review, I selected six to include in the analysis: one book chapter, three conceptual pieces, and two empirical studies (one qualitative, one quantitative). Table 1 presents the number of hits for each combination of search terms per database and the number of manuscripts ultimately accepted. Because so few results were found during the first phase, I added three additional phases in an effort to find more research to analyze.

Phase II: Scanning of reference lists. During the second phase, I scanned all the reference sections of the six publications selected in Phase I for other relevant publications that might meet the criteria for inclusion. References featuring the terms *profession, discipline, field, professionalizing,* or *professionalization,* or similar terms, were marked for consideration. Publications that featured relevant research topics were added, and the references of these new selections were scanned with the same process and using the same parameters. Through Phase II, two conceptual papers, one interview, three book chapters, a journal editorial, and one empirical (qualitative) study—a total of 8 publications—were added to the sample for a subtotal of 14.

Phase III: Google Scholar. Google Scholar has a "Cited by" function that enables researchers to see the publications in which an already published article is cited. The titles of all the publications accepted in Phases I and II were put into Google Scholar, and accessing articles from the produced list, I scanned as in Phase II. I found three more publications—one empirical (quantitative) study and two practitioner pieces—through this process.

Phase IV: Further database search. To ensure that the scope of the search was sufficient, the search described in Phase I was repeated using seven social science databases not included in higher education databases: America: History and Life; Historical Abstracts; Humanities Source; a sociology database; Sociological Abstracts; a social science premium collection; and a social science database. Although no additional articles were added from this phase, I gained confidence that all the relevant literature had been accessed for the analysis.

Sample. The final sample consisted of 17 publications published between 1981 and 2016: 5 conceptual articles, 4 book chapters, 2 qualitative empirical studies, 2 quantitative empirical studies, 2 practitioner papers, and 2 journal editorials interviews. In Table 2, the two years with the most publications that met the study criteria are presented. Although scholarly discussions about professionalization of academic advising commenced in the early 1980s, few publications on the topic had been published.

Table 2. Years with most publications selected for the sample

Top Years	Number of Publications	Publication Citations
2000	4	Frost, 2000; Huggett, 2000; Kerr, 2000; Tuttle, 2000
2015	4	Aiken-Wisniewski, et al., 2015; Cate & Miller, 2015; Cunningham, 2015; Johnson et al., 2015

Data Organization

Records including citation information (publication title, author, year, and journal), the type of publication (e.g., empirical or practitioner piece), and the phase during which the publication was selected for analysis (Phase I, II, or III) were kept in an Excel document. In addition, separate Word documents were maintained for each field and included notes, descriptions of observations, commentary, and a listing of potential sorting categories. Each publication was printed, organized in chronological order, and assigned a reference number.

Data Analysis

I read and coded each article one at a time to uncover categories of the professionalization process. During the first round of reading, I made copious notes in the margins of the printed document and in the Word document listing potential codes, but I did no formal coding until the second reading; however, during this first reading, I recorded ongoing thoughts, possible relationships to ideas presented in different articles, discussion points, possible implications of the findings, areas suggested for future research, and questions that emerged during the process about the scholarly discussion that the work might inspire.

After I read all the publications once, I ensured the notes were typed and transferred into a Word document along with evidence from the publications. Thus, the data could easily be moved and manipulated for the creation of clusters of meaning (Patton, 2002) into a hierarchical order of categories and subcategories (Morse & Field, 1995). With the notes taken and observations documented, I read the articles a second time, and as I saw categories emerge, I defined codes with descriptions and distinctive features. I added relevant concepts or exemplary quotations to each set of codes and subcodes. During this second-read process, I revisited the data periodically to ensure that I had a full view and captured the nuance of the emergent categories and subcategories. Approaching the raw data, in this case articles selected from Phases I through III, gave me "a way of seeing" and "making sense" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4) of the phenomenon of the professionalization in academic advising.

Findings

Characteristics of Professionalization

The first research question asked, "What characteristics of professionalization have been discussed in the literature of academic advising since 1980?" Three categories emerged from the analysis to address RQ1: issues with scholarship, expanding graduate programs, and community.

Issues with scholarship. On the basis of a review of academic advising literature, issues with scholarship were identified as barriers to professionalization. These hindering concerns included defining the field of academic advising, articulating the knowledge base, and conducting necessary research to demonstrate effectiveness.

Defining the field. Statements articulating advising as an educative venture helping students to discover their passions, talents, and capabilities abound (Danis & Wall, 1987/2009; Huggett, 2000; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008; Trombley & Holmes, 1981), but ultimately, "the definitions of academic advising equal the numbers of postsecondary institutions" (Cate & Miller, 2015, p. 41). Articulation of one central and succinct, yet comprehensive, definition has proven a very difficult endeavor for scholars in the field. In 2005, NACADA charged a task force to create a definition for academic advising, and unable to craft such a statement, the group developed a *concept,* which describes the importance of an advising curriculum and the related pedagogy and learning outcomes (NACADA, 2006). Soon afterward, the idea of *advising is teaching* became popular among the advising community. Other analogues used to describe advising were offered that compared the practice to counseling, learning, mentoring, encouraging, advocating, educating, and having a friendship (e.g., Hemwall & Trachte, 2005; Lowenstein, 2005; Melander, 2005; Rawlins & Rawlins, 2005). Some previous NACADA presidents encouraged the field to move away from analogues as means of defining advising (as reported by Padak & Kuhn, 2009). The outpouring of comparisons and analogues led to the publication of a seminal article in the field: "Advising Is *Advising* [emphasis added]: Toward Defining the Practice and Scholarship of Academic Advising" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). The authors critiqued the advising is teaching paradigm because it captures only one aspect of academic advising. Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) examined the then-current body of literature in academic advising and suggested numerous ways

in which the literature base could be expanded to have an impact on the professionalization of the field.

Articulating the knowledge base. Many attempts have been made to define a specialized body of work in academic advising. Two seminal works in the early 1970s (Crookston, 1972/2009; O'Banion, 1972/2009) helped move the field to practice beyond prescriptive advice by describing an approach more aligned with a developmental perspective. However, reflecting on the state of the field in the mid 1990s, O'Banion (1994) opined that little had changed in the 20 years since he had written the article. At the turn of the century, Hemwall and Trachte (2005) questioned whether the developmental paradigm was the only way of approaching academic advising. Hence, the quest for a more-established body of specialized literature continued. Pointing to scholarship instead of practice, Habley (2009) and Kuhn and Padak (2008) independently offered a similar conclusion about the lack of specificity: Academic advising had not produced enough specialized knowledge to be considered an academic field of study or a discipline.

Habley (2009) examined academic advising as "a field of inquiry" (p. 76) through a content analysis of the *NACADA Journal,* the Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources, abstracts from conference presentations, and other journals, articles, and dissertations (using ERIC hits on *academic advising*). Hence, Habley concluded that the field had not made substantial progress since the early 1980s in laying claim to a sufficient knowledge base. Without research substantiating the effectiveness of advising, Habley explained that

> the case for the importance of academic advising can be neither built nor sustained. . . . Without the implementation of a plan to substantiate the claim that it makes a difference in the lives of students and thereby enhances institutional effectiveness, advising will most certainly remain a peripheral and clerical activity on many campuses. (p. 82)

Habley (2009) offered several recommendations. First, core graduate curricula should be developed as distinct from those of higher education and student affairs such that future scholars could be trained in a variety of research methodologies. Relatedly, the number of graduate programs focusing on academic advising needs to be expanded: If having a graduate credential is an important marker of professionalization for the field, then a single master's program at Kansas State University (K-State) cannot sustain an entire field. Finally, stakeholders in the field should be more intentional in fostering research collaborations between advising practitioners and faculty members.

Demonstrating effectiveness. Empirically demonstrating the effectiveness of academic advising is tied directly to professionalizing the field (Kerr, 2000; Padak & Kuhn, 2009; Trombley & Holmes, 1981). The value placed on advising also plays a role in its status as a profession (Kerr, 2000). In the 1980s, little research addressed the effectiveness of advising, and according to Habley (2009), by the 1990s, the situation had not much improved.

A landmark empirical study from the Center for Public Education revealed that students at 2- or 4-year institutions who met with academic advisors "either 'sometimes' or 'often'" improved their odds of persisting by 53% (Klepfer & Hull, 2012, p. 8). In addition, Klepfer and Hull (2012) found that meeting with college advisors prior to college enrollment was one of three indicators of future student success (math placement and AP credits were the other two predictors of success). By showing the impact of advising on student retention, these findings demonstrated to institutional stakeholders the fiscal value of advising. Those who work in the field know advising provides greater benefit to higher education and the institution than student retention, but showing a demonstrable impact on student persistence may increase resource allocation to advising. NACADA continues to make research and defining the knowledge base a priority (it is, in fact, the number one strategic goal of the association) through scholarly forums, publications advisory board, and the research committee, which awards research grants annually. Most important, the NACADA Research Center at K-State opened in 2017. Through "fairly aggressive benchmarks," the center is expected to "move forward NACADA's research agenda" (Sannes, 2017, para. 7).

Expanding graduate programs. The literature suggested the need for graduate training (Kerr, 2000) such that a graduate degree becomes necessary for academic advisors (Danis & Wall, 1987/2009; Padak & Kuhn, 2009) and that more graduate programs in academic advising are developed (Habley, 2009; Shaffer et al., 2010). In 2003, K-State began offering a graduate certificate

consisting of five courses, and in 2008, K-State started offering a master of science in academic advising, completely online, consisting of 30 credits and a capstone project. Although a few graduate certificate programs have since arisen across the United States (e.g., Sam Houston State University and Florida International University), "the dearth of other advising education programs illustrates that advising as a branch of learning is not yet acknowledged as a field of study, a discipline, or as a profession equivalent to others that characterize higher education" (Habley, 2009, p. 81).

Community. A professional community socializes new professionals and extends past geographical boundaries. Shared values and commitment from each professional are deemed important. Subcategories that characterize the academic advising community include the establishment of NACADA and the lack of a uniform administrative home for academic advising across colleges and universities.

Establishment of NACADA. The professionalization process for academic advising commenced with the establishment of NACADA in 1977 (Cook, 2009; Shaffer et al., 2010). Over time, the association grew to represent the international academic advising community and encompasses approximately 14,000 members (Michele Holiday, NACADA Executive Office, personal communication, October 17, 2018). Increasing numbers of individuals in the association worked hard to advance advising as a profession (Tuttle, 2000). In fact, NACADA has been tied so strongly to the academic advising field that, to many, NACADA and advising are inseparable. Although critical in his assessment of advising as an academic disciple, Habley (2009) pointed to the NACADA–academic advising connection:

> To avoid potential boredom with the repetitive use of *NACADA,* I have used it synonymously with the terms *academic advising* and *field of advising* throughout this article. Because no professional association so thoroughly represents a field of endeavor, *NACADA* cannot be adequately separated from either *academic advising* or *field of advising*. (p. 76)

Administrative home for academic advising. Until the 1970s, academic advising was done exclusively by faculty members; therefore, academic affairs had long been the natural home for advising (Cook, 2009). Beginning in the 1970s, people dedicated full time to advising were being hired, and the number continued to grow exponentially (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). However, at many places where full-time advisors are hired, advising is still housed in academic affairs (Cate & Miller, 2015; Kuhn & Padak, 2008). In a 2011 national survey, 57% of advisors reported to academic affairs, 21% to student affairs, 11% to both, 7% to enrollment management, and 2% to the registrar (Carlstrom, 2014). Until the field establishes clear professional boundaries and articulates fieldwide vision statements, advising also will be tethered to the larger goals of higher education and the particular institution where it is practiced.

Obstacles to Professionalization

Working toward professionalization, occupational groups encounter many obstacles from internal and external entities (Cooper, 2012). Some obstacles come from within the occupational group: the nature of the knowledge base (technical versus esoteric, theoretical, or conceptual) and the level of agreement about occupational purpose and function within the group. Other obstacles are external: bureaucracies that control the fates of occupational groups, knowledge bases that are reliant on other fields, occupational purposes or functions that are difficult to convey to the public, and insufficient support (e.g., financial resources and personnel) to move an occupational group from beyond the periphery (Cooper, 2012). Members of occupational groups need to navigate and negotiate these obstacles within and outside their groups to professionalize.

The second research question asked, "What obstacles have impacted the development of academic advising as a distinctive and independent profession?" From this review, five barriers to professionalization for academic advising emerged: the need to further define the field, the role of the professional association, the training and required education needed to perform the advising role, personal and occupational autonomy from other professional entities, and the lack of a consistent home for advising.

Need to further define the field. First, practitioners and scholars of academic advising have had great difficulty defining their work: "The field struggles to articulate its unique role in higher education" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 44) because "the advising community has not developed the language needed to describe the elements of

academic advising that make it unique both as a practice and as a field of study" (p. 49). The article by Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) was used as the common reading for the 2015 NACADA Annual Conference. During the discussion, some advisors noted that very little had changed and that the article defended advising to administration on the basis of the possibilities of it rather than its serving as a guide for practice. Marsha Miller, NACADA Executive Office representative to the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), noted that there still is very "little understanding of what academic advisors do in higher education at large and that a theory of advising needs to be developed" (as cited in Cunningham, 2015, para. 5). A recent *NACADA Journal* article documented frustrations with inconsistently defined practice with respect to titles, practitioner backgrounds, practice, recognition, and affirmation as reported in a survey of academic advisors (Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015). One study participant lamented the lack of public knowledge and acceptance of the field, envisioning a time when advisors could interact with people in a social setting without needing to explain (or defend) their role in higher education: "We don't get that recognition. So I think the profession is that name that you can mention at a cocktail party and everybody knows what you do" (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015, p. 66). Lack of recognition also can be demoralizing in the workplace: "A lot of times, a lot of things that we can provide input on, we aren't asked because we're not really professionals" (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015, p. 68).

Without defined functions that all academic advisors understand and practice—which could be conveyed to the various stakeholders—those in the field will continue struggling to become unified in a profession. Despite the availability of the *Concept of Academic Advising* (NACADA, 2006), the CAS Standards (CAS, 2018), and the Core Values of Academic Advising (NACADA, 2017a), the lack of clarity regarding role boundaries and responsibilities remains troubling and limits the field and the practitioners' and scholars' quest for a status consistent with professionalization (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015). This constraint has been partially addressed with the newly published advisor competencies (NACADA, 2017b), but future work might include outlining both appropriate responsibilities and inappropriate duties for an academic advisor in a way similar to that of the American School Counselor Association (2018). Future research should continue to clarify the roles of those working in the field. For instance, research on the essential features of academic advising might lead to a normative theory of advising (Himes, 2014; Lowenstein, 2014). Such a theory could become a framework to guide advising practice and advance the field toward professionalization.

Role of the professional association. Second, the tight-knit relationship between the interests of the field and of NACADA have complicated and thus prolonged the professionalization of academic advising. With a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, NACADA cannot lobby politically in ways that might bring recognition to advising or resources that might lead to professionalization of academic advising (Shaffer et al., 2010). Despite these encumbrances, NACADA could play a bigger role in practitioner self-regulation and the setting of professional standards for the field of academic advising (Adams, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2013). For example, endorsing a clear and comprehensive definition of academic advising and articulating the activities that constitute good academic advising would be helpful in standardizing advising practice.

Furthermore, NACADA is housed at a single university, K-State. This connection has served the field and the association well. For instance, because of support from K-State, NACADA has been able to retain a 501(c)(3) status, maintain an executive office without need to charge substantial membership fees, and plan and facilitate an annual conference of approximately 3,500 attendees. However, because of the enormous support it receives, NACADA lacks autonomy from K-State. Furthermore, despite the important role of professional associations in the professionalization of a field (Palea, 2012), too much reliance on a single professional association—especially one that is tied to a sponsoring university—can prevent a field from moving into directions not deemed important by the host institution. For example, if other universities offered master's and doctoral degree programs in academic advising, would NACADA be constrained in endorsing them? That is, would these efforts be deemed in competition with those offered through K-State? Would other programs receive visibility equal to that offered for initiatives at this single university? In considering the important role associations play in the professionalization of fields, future research should explore the way the relationship

between NACADA and K-State may affect professionalization.

Training and required education to perform advising. Two related obstacles make up the third obstacle to professionals: acquisition of training and the requisite education to perform the advising role. The delivery of professional development is further complicated by one of the blessings of the academic advising field: Practitioners come from a variety of fields and professional backgrounds and thus with inconsistent advising backgrounds and bases for practice (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015). Although I did not specifically examine the training and development literature for this review, anyone can easily find many calls for graduate training (Kerr, 2000) as a criterion for entry into the field (Danis & Wall, 1987/2009; Padak & Kuhn, 2009), and therefore, more graduate programs in academic advising are needed (Habley, 2009; Shaffer et al., 2010). The examined literature suggested that the currently broad field be focused on improved training and evaluation models and methods (Kerr, 2000; Padak & Kuhn, 2009) such that the evaluation of advisor performance follows (Kerr, 2000). Professional development must consist of informational, conceptual, relational (Habley, 1986), personal, and technological competencies (McClellan, 2007). Professional development that becomes strictly informational—as stressed in many programs (Habley & Morales, 1998)—threatens to *deprofessionalize* (Pavalko, 1988) the field of advising (Kerr, 2000).

When discussing professionalization, the issues related to training must be contrasted with those concerning education. According to models of professionalization, paraprofessionals are *trained* to do their jobs whereas professionals have been *educated* for their work (Abbott, 1988). In other words, professionals are characterized as having long tertiary periods of education, and their responsibilities cannot be learned on the job (Goode, 1957). In fact, the prerequisite of a graduate degree stands as the most significant difference between the qualification of those in professions and those in other occupations (Abbott, 1988; Goode, 1957; Hughes, 1963; Shaffer et al., 2010; Wilensky, 1964). Furthermore, if graduate education is a criterion for professionalization, one program is insufficient to professionalize a field. The curriculum and specialized body of knowledge need to be examined and established such that other programs can follow (Habley, 2009). In addition, scholars recommend that the field of study be further developed before more programs are established (Cate & Miller, 2015; Shaffer et al., 2010). Until a "defined curriculum [is] offered through graduate study at many institutions … *advisor* is no more than a job title and advising may never lay claim to being a discipline or a profession" (Habley, 2009, p. 82). Recently, K-State announced it is accepting applicants for a doctoral degree in academic advising to begin in 2020. This plan for a doctoral degree has certainly piqued the interest of many in the field, but until more graduate programs are undergirded by a substantive body of knowledge, those in the field will experience difficulty in claiming advising as a profession.

Personal and occupational professional autonomy. Fourth, professions are characterized by autonomy at both the occupational group and the individual practitioner levels. Academic advisors do not experience complete autonomy because advising falls under individual institutions of higher education; therefore, they answer to the upper-level administrators at those institutions, not necessarily past or current scholars or practitioners in the field of advising. NACADA cofounder and former president Toni Trombley stated that for "academic advising to become recognized as a profession … it has to stand on its own and not be a part of bundled or shared responsibilities of faculty or even those in student personnel who have a host of other responsibilities" (cited in Padak & Kuhn, 2009, pp. 64–65). This opinion may not be widely shared, because Trombley seems to refer to only academic advising performed by primary-role advisors. However, she does make clear that, to be recognized as engaging in professional activity, practitioners perform similar roles and enjoy a wide range of autonomy. Is academic advising "professional work" in which academic advisors, as "members of a profession have a high degree of control over their work, are actively involved in creating policy, and are equipped to evaluate the quality of work within a profession" (Huggett, 2000, p. 47)? The field is becoming more specialized, with more primary-role advisors, but the degree to which individual autonomy exists in practice still very much depends on institutional and departmental settings (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015).

Consistent administrative home for advising. The last obstacle to professionalization is finding a consistent administrative home for academic advising on diverse campuses: Advising can be housed under academic affairs or student affairs,

and on some campuses, advisors report through both administrative lines. Although it does not present an obstacle in all cases, the administrative position of advising affects the types of advising offered and consistency of practice, among other variances; for example, because some academic advisors are classified as primary-role advisors and some are primarily faculty members, uniting the advising community has become a difficult undertaking. This division, felt palpably on many campuses, counters efforts to professionalize advising. Developing a common, unifying purpose would give advisors "the language needed to describe both the practice of academic advising and its scholarly identity independent of other fields and professions" (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008, p. 44).

Concluding Remarks

The increased dialogue after 2015 might reflect a connection to (and engagement with) the seminal article of Shaffer et al. (2010). Academic advising has been practiced only recently in modern form. Therefore, in the future, researchers might review the progress and contributions of NACADA to the field of academic advising. More scholarship is needed to set consensus parameters before advising is considered a bona fide profession. Without a knowledge base or documentation of the effectiveness of advising, any claim for the importance of academic advising remains unsubstantiated, and advising may continue to be viewed as clerical in many places (Habley, 2009). Although significant efforts to professionalize academic advisors may be ongoing on some college campuses, the perceptions of academic advising by various stakeholders on campuses remains largely unknown. Scholarship is needed to generate theory to elucidate the tasks that constitute academic advising and those that do not; to study advisors, their practice, and their characteristics; to substantiate the claim that advising affects retention and persistence; and to encourage collaboration between faculty members and advisors on research topics about advising (McGillin, 2000). Because resource allocation advances the field, research needs to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of advising to stakeholders.

Through this review, a consideration of the characteristics of professionalization, as discussed in the academic advising literature, is presented in the context of the obstacles experienced by those striving to establish a profession. "For advising to enjoy self-jurisdiction, the field of advising must create a clear definition of the occupation, to include the responsibilities, procedures, scope of practice, and professional practices all advisers would follow" (Adams et al., 2013, para. 10). Clearer distinction of roles and responsibilities might circumvent confusion about responsibilities for practitioners and lead to great autonomy in advising practice.

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