AN EXPLORATION TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF HOLISTIC ADVISING
ON FIRST-GENERATION UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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in
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Amber Morley
Spring 2016
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ON FIRST-GENERATION UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Amber Morley

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Pascarella (2014) stated that nearly 30% of students entering four-year colleges and 50% of students entering community colleges are identifying as first-generation students. Given the increasing number of first-generation students, it is clear that there is a need to determine how best to serve this population. Research by Murthy and White (2013) determined that while academic advising has traditionally focused on academic requirements of a degree or program (i.e. scheduling and program requirements), holistic advising also takes into consideration a students’ social, personal, financial, cultural and ethnic issues. Placing a focus on holistic advising, seven students and seven advisors were interviewed to examine how holistic practices ultimately impacts student success. Additionally, students completed a survey to determine demographic information. Ultimately, the research implies that there is a disconnect between the
advisors and the students. While the advisors believe they are connecting with the students regarding their first-generation status, the students do not feel a connection with the advisors. The research also shows that the students desire the institution to provide more programs, services, and hire more staff who directly relate to their cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic experiences.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

First-generation college students are an increasing population within college and university campuses, however many of these students face challenges foreign to their second-generation peers. Cultural influences, family obligations, financial stresses, personal concerns of preparedness, and lack of mentorship are all factors that can influence students’ decisions and success within college. Creating relationships with on-campus mentors and involving themselves in clubs and organizations are some of the suggested ways for first-generation students to acclimate to their new college or university surroundings. As outlined in this study, when on-campus advisors understand the personal issues of students they can better acknowledge the factors that impact first-generation students. Ultimately this will provide them with an overall more beneficial advising experience.

Background

As one study pointed out, “understanding how students in a particular stage or level of development establish meaning in their lives can provide insights to advisors which allow them ‘to explain conditions in students’ lives that are often confusing and that sometimes block effective planning and learning” (Creamer, 2000, p. 21). Creamer and Creamer (1994) supported this by theorizing that understanding student encounters at various stages of development can assist an advisor’s focus within student advising sessions. Holistic advising focuses on how such developmental stages, conditions, and themes can be blended with advising into on since discipline.
Hamline University’s academic advising website (n.d.) states that Holistic Advising focuses on the “whole student” including the following:

1. Students’ concerns about their own academic preparedness, fears, inadequacies, challenges.
2. Personal stresses of college life, living in a residential hall, family issues, loneliness
3. Financial difficulties, questioning the value of college education.
4. Time constraints encompassing classroom and homework time, work, family/child care, social obligations and relationships, need for self-discovery.

Traditional advising encourages students to take courses, build a network, and graduate in a timely manner. Within this context, advisors and administration frequently do not consider the external factors that influence decisions or successes of a first-generation student. By incorporating Holistic Advising into advising practices, advisors are able to learn, know, and then consider external factors influencing a student's academic and career choices.

Statement of the Problem

First-generation students are an increasing part of university populations. However, many universities still do not understand the unique challenges that these students face in the world of higher education. First-generation students more commonly struggle with financial issues, tend to be older with additional responsibilities such as full-time employment or a family, belong to a cultural or ethnic minority, and are less likely to have taken college preparatory courses (D’Amico, 1998). But what does this mean for those advising these students? And how are their relationships or need for relationships with staff different than that of their second-generation student peers?
Many colleges have created departments and programs, such as bridge programs or TRIO, to assist first-generation students; however, there is still work to be done. Universities need to actively understand why these students need additional assistance and how they can better assist first-generation students. By enforcing holistic advising, or whole student advising, advisors, program coordinators, and higher education administration, can better understand the daily factors that influence a first-generation student’s academic and career choices.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify whether holistic advising is being practiced and what impact holistic advising has on first-generation students and their success. This definition of “success” can differ from student to student but all revolves around the student’s decisions about their academics and eventual vocation. To understand this, the study was divided into several parts. First, the study consisted of interviews with selected staff members on campus, including: academic advising, career advising, and other on-campus programs. These interviews aim to determine how staff feel about holistic advising, if the concept is being practiced, and how it can be amended to more successfully serve this population. Second, the researcher conducted interviews with first-generation students. This will help to gain knowledge about advising experiences and how this has enhanced or hindered the academic and career explorations and decisions of each student. Lastly, the study included a survey to collect quantitative information about the students who were interviewed.

Currently, there are several programs and departments on the California State University, Chico campus that advise first-generation students in various capacities. Ultimately, there were two main goals to the study.
1. To bring to light the unique needs of this student population.

2. To better understand how students can be advised to insure success.

**Definition of Terms**

- **AVID**: Advancing Via Individual Determination. A program that “develops learning, study and academic behavioral skills that are essential to success in rigorous coursework. It acts as a catalyst for schools to develop a culture of college readiness for all students” (AVID, 2014, para. 3). The program has a specific interest in at-risk students.

- **EPT**: English Placement Test (CSU, 2015)

- **ELM**: Entry Level Mathematics exam (CSU, 2015)

- **First-generation students**: Students who come from families that did not receive a college education. Family members never enrolled in college courses and the student is the first generation of their family to attend college. (College Board, 2015).

- **First-year Programs**: Programs that “aims to assist entering students’ successful transition to college life…program emphasizes academic and civic engagement and social well-being” (Chico State, 2014, para. 1). The program can include items such as courses specific for first-year students, events on campus, mentoring programs, research programs, etc.

- **Holistic Advising**: An advising process that focuses on the whole student, requiring advisors to communication with students and take into consideration factors such as student academic concerns, personal stresses, finances, time constraints, and other factors that influence a student’ academic and career decisions. (Hamline University, n.d.).
• **Impacted School:** “when the number of applications received from fully qualified applicants during the initial filing period exceeds the number of available spaces” (CSU, 2014, para. 1).

• **Local Admission Area:** “CSU campuses which are designated as impacted at the upper division transfer level or which have impacted programs may consider the local admissions area as one of the factors in admission. Students who earn the AA-T or AS-T degree at a California Community College will be granted priority admission consideration if they apply to a local California State University that has designated the community college granting the degree as within its local admission area” (California Community Colleges, 2015, para. 1). Local admission areas are typically counties surrounding the area of the college or university.

• **Merit-based Aid:** “grants, scholarships and discounts that a college awards to an admitted student without regard to financial need. Merit aid may be based on academic or athletic achievements, special talents such as music, where the student lives or other demographic characteristics” (Merit Aid, 2015, para. 1).

• **Need-based Aid:** Aid that is “awarded based on the student's economic situation” (Merit Aid, 2015, para. 1).

• **Normal School:** A school for the training and education of future teachers (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

• **Rigorous Curriculum:** Coursework beyond the required English, math, and science courses including Precalculus, Physics, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses (College Readiness, 2007).
• **TRIO:** “Federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds” (US Department of Education, 2015, para. 1).

• **Sample of Convenience:** A sample of people who were selected based upon their convenience and proximity to the researcher in addition to meeting the requirements of the study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Retention of First-Generation Students

Though research on first-generation students has increased in recent years, it is still unknown how to guarantee higher retention and graduation rates for this population. Currently nearly 30% of students who are entering four-year colleges and 50% of students who are entering community colleges are classified as first-generation students. With these increasing populations it is clear that there is a need to identify retention factors within higher education (Pascarella, 2004). While most higher education institutions claim a commitment to increasing resources and retention rates for first-generation students, the actual higher education budgets have decreased as the needs are increased. As a result, many colleges are struggling to find methods of support for their students. Nading et al. (2006) explained that “when institutions start to focus on total enrollment, understanding what influences retention and graduation rates may become increasingly important” (p.472). Research by Bean (2005) argued that although items such as budgets and total enrollment are an increasing concern, student retention should be a main concern and is most influenced and determined by the following factors:

1. The fit of the institution- has the student academically and socially integrated into campus life and culture?
2. The intention of the student to graduate upon starting at the institution.
3. The psychological process- what is the perception of the institution by student?
4. Academics- are they challenging and relevant to the student’s interests and needs?
5. Bureaucratic factors- what is the relationship between the student and the resources available at the institution?

6. Social factors- does the student have an opportunity to connect with other students on campus? Has the student taken advantage of these opportunities?

7. Background of student- academics, socioeconomics, educational levels of parents, etc.

8. External factors- employment, housing, etc.

9. Finances- does the student have the financial support that he/she requires to complete their college education? (p. 215-243).

Researchers such as Tinto (1988) and Richardson and Skinner (1992) claim that the most beneficial programs for retention integrate students into the mainstream culture of a college. This can be through both academic and social elements. Astin (1977, 1985) expanded on this stating that there is a correlation between student involvement and retention. These authors believe that integration can and should include interaction with campus faculty and staff, as well as students, both inside and outside of the classroom. Although the reasons are unknown, Tinto noted that typically first-generation students are hesitant to seek out help from faculty or campus resources.

To improve student retention, universities have placed a special interest in transitional programs. These program integrate first-generation students into their new college environment and assisting the students within their academics. Habley & Mc Claahan (2004) reported that the retention programs with the greatest success rates fall into one of three categories:

- **Academic advising:** including advising interventions with selected student populations, increased advising staff, academic advising center, integration of academic advising with
first-year transition programs and centers that combine advising and counseling with career/life planning

- **First-year programs:** including freshman seminar/university 101 for credit, non-credit freshman seminar/university 101, learning communities, and integration of academic advising with first-year programs

- **Learning support:** including supplemental instructions, a comprehensive learning assistance center/lab, reading center/lab, summer bridge program, and tutoring program (p. 6).

Habley & McClanahan (2004) concluded that the most successful programs in the state of California have been with the California State University system and TRIO. This program additionally includes the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and Summer Bridge programs. EOP, is a retention program that provides additional services to students who identify as low-com, first-generation, or educationally disadvantaged. Similarly, the Summer Bridge program is a supporting program that provides a residential program during the summer prior to the start of college. Habley & McClanahan stated that these programs aim to prepare high-risk disadvantaged students for the intensity of college level courses. Both programs define high-risk disadvantaged students as “those who score in the lower quartile of the EPT and ELM exams or whose high school transcripts indicate that their academic preparation needs strengthening” (p. 23). The Summer Bridge program offers students courses in math, science, and writing. While enrolled in the program, students are also given early access to academic advising and workshops, along with other on-campus activities. Studies have shown that students who participate in these programs benefit from the one-on-one attention and instruction, ability to make early connections with fellow students, faculty and staff, as well as the additional access to
campus resources prior to the start of the school year. Since first-generation students are more likely to require remedial courses, programs such as Summer Bridge are especially beneficial since the program allows for students to complete their remedial courses before the start of the school year (California State University, 2012).

Nading et al. (2006) found that first-generation students, sometimes also called high-risk students, have a high percentage of ethnic minority students. Minority students are also most affected by the first year of their college experience. The research shows that “while the programs in place for ethnic minority students are likely to assist in academic success, minority students have not yet achieved equity in retention and graduation” (p. 472). The studies also point out that financial aid is a key factor in determining retention rates for ethnic minority first-generation students. This places importance on the demand for need-based aid rather than merit based which can often more-so fund those who typically can already afford their college education. Nading et al. (2006) also suggests that employing more minority faculty and staff will allow for students to feel more comfortable approaching staff when in need of assistance academically, financially, or otherwise.

Issues of Transition and Enrollment for First-Generation Students

Access to higher education is becoming increasingly important within today’s economy. By the year 2020, the United States may experience a shortage of almost 14 million employees who are lacking college-level skills (Zuekle, 2008). However, this needed access is also extremely difficult for families that identify as low-income and students who identify as first-generation. Because of issues such as this, it is important to examine the factors that are influencing and causing students to delay or forgo a college education.
Family and Culture

Studies have indicated that the family is one of the greatest influences on the future aspirations of a student’s education (McDonough, 1997; Jun & Colyar, 2001; Plank & Jordan, 2001; Gandara, 2002). Although there are several contributing factors, first-generation college students often experience an increasing tension between their new life and their old life. Students’ families frequently report difficulty adjusting as the students develop their own ideas, styles, political views and beliefs which may differ from that of their family. London (1996) compared this to the struggle to belong to two different worlds.

Those students who lack support from their family may also lack the verbal support needed in their transition to a four-year university. This support can include college visits, attending financial aid workshops, completing applications, meeting with advisors, etc. (National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, 2007). Studies have shown that it is also not uncommon for families to provide the most resources and encouragement to a single child who demonstrates the highest promise or ability (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989). However, even low-income, first-generation students who fit into this category may still have limited support regarding the academic or financial preparation for a four-year college.

Finances and Financial Aid

Students who identify as first-generation are more likely to face financial challenges when funding an education beyond high school since statistically this population comes from low-income households. Unfortunately, findings by College Board (1999) found that “the share of family income required to pay college costs has increased for many families, but it has gone up the most for those on the bottom rungs of the economic ladder” (p.5). Because
finances are a concern among the first-generation population, many students often feel guilty for attending college. This can also lead students to feeling pressure or obligation to work and support their families while in classes.

With financial aid being a barrier to education, an increasing number of students are indicating that financial aid is a major influence on college attendance. King (1996) pointed out that the students who reported as first-generation, low-income, and holding expectations to receive financial aid in some form, were more likely to apply to, and pursue, college. The current average cost of attending a California State University is rising to nearly $23,000 per year, causing more students to work full-time while attending classes part-time (Chen, 2005). Since much of university financial aid is merit-based rather than need-based, Braunstein, McGrath and Pescatrice (1999) found that the probability for a first-generation student to enroll in a four-year university increases “between 1.1% and 2.5% for every $1,000” of financial aid dispersed or offered.

**Peer Opinions and Attitudes**

Researchers have shown that although a family has a significant influence on a student’s educational decisions, so does the student’s relationship with his or her peers. This means a student’s value of education can be largely based upon the values and definitions within his or her peer or social group (MacLeod, 1995). Programs in high schools or community colleges such as AVID, clubs, and community involvement organizations create identity for the student and strengthen a common bond with their peers. We can assume that if a student associates with a social or peer group who is academically oriented then the student will place a higher value on academics as well. Antonio (2004) illustrated this by stating since “students who have best friends with relatively high levels of intellectual self-confidence tend to be more self-
confident intellectually after two years of college compare to students with less confident friendship groups” (p. 457).

**Preparation for College**

Researchers have learned that college entrance or college placement exams are taken less often by students who identify as first-generation students. Those who do take the test often struggle more than students whose parents went to college. It was found that 40% of first-generation students scored in the lowest quartile compared to 15% of students who have one or more parent who attended college (Warburton, Bugarin, Nunez, 2001). Because of issues such as this, Conley (2008, p.24) argued that “the likelihood that students will make a successful transition to the college environment is often a function of their readiness- the degree to which previous educational and personal experiences have equipped them for the expectations and demands they will encounter in college.”

Since preparedness is an issue for college transition, researchers suggest that academic preparation begin in junior high school. This includes providing students with information such as college requirements no later than the eighth grade (McDonough, 1997). This practice will allow students to explore majors and careers long before they begin at a community college or four-year university. However, preparation must stretch beyond academic preparation. Students must also prepare emotionally and culturally for what they will encounter either at a community college or after the transition to a four-year university. Conley (2007) found that lack of preparation for emotional changes will result in low self-esteem about their academic abilities. This lack of preparation can also result in issues with substance abuse. Conley also believed that students can have difficulty in adjusting to what is culturally accepted within a collegiate environment. For example, finding that “a ‘B’ average in high school may now reflect
knowledge and skills equivalent to something more like a ‘C’ average” (p. 10). Since only 9% of first-generation students complete what is considered “rigorous curriculum” (i.e. calculus and advanced placement courses or tests) it can be concluded that students who take heavier course loads will more easily adjust to the academic and cultural demands of higher education (Adelman, 1999).

Demographics and Challenges of First-Generation Higher Education Students

Though study results vary, Darling & Smith (n.d.) reported that by the year 2003, between 31-45% of four-year college students identified as a part of the first-generation student population. While credit for increased enrollment is unknown, there are still common challenges in the demographics of this student population. One of the largest challenges include the lack of preparedness for college level academics including entrance exams, a lack of support from family, and friends who do not share their experiences of desiring to enroll in college (Ishitani, 2003; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Ting, 1998; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001).

Table 1 (Engle & Tinto, 2008), displays the percentage differences between low-income, first-generation college students, low-income or first-generation college students, and those students who do not identify in either category in areas that have been proven to influence the challenges of first-generation college students. As suggested, first-generation students are most typically female, of minority ethnicity, non-native English speakers, from a single parent household, or have child dependents.
Table 1
Percentage Difference Between Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Low-Income, First-Generation</th>
<th>Low-Income or First-Generation only</th>
<th>Not Low-Income and Not First-Generation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age When First Enrolled</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Female</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Disability</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Non-Native English</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Disability</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Have Dependents</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Single Parents</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% High School Equivalency</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Financially Independent</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Once students begin their education at a four-year college it is shown that they often experience a different set of challenges than the rest of the student population. Researchers explain that once admitted and attending a four-year college, first-generation students typically have a GPA lower than their peers during the first year of their college education. This also leads to this population being more likely to drop out of school within the first year. Additional challenges include lowered self-esteem, lowered expectations from faculty, and increased difficulties in transition due to cultural differences from their peers and campus faculty. This population of students, unlike their second-generation peers, are more likely to work full-time while attending classes part-time (Chen, 2005; London 1989, 1992; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak & Terenzini, 2004; Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Somers et al., 2004).

Engle & Tinto (2008) and Bridges et al. (2006) explained that first-generation students are more susceptible to factors that can provide the risk of students leaving a college or university without a degree. These factors are known as “risk factors” and include delaying entry
to college, being a single parent, graduating with a GED, or being financially independent from family members. The researchers claim that the first-generation student is more likely to experience these risk factors than their second-generation peers. This population is additionally three times less likely to graduate with a degree within four years.

Figure 1 (Engle & Tinto, p. 9), demonstrates the risk factors of the first-generation student population in the 2003-2004 school year. As stated below, the average number of risk factors possessed by students who identify as first-generation, low-income, or both is three while their peers who identify in none of the categories have zero risk factors on average.

Figure 1

Risk Factors of 2003-2004 Undergraduate Students

Research by Darling & Smith (n.d.) concluded that these risk factors are also influenced by additional factors unique to the first-generation college student demographic. The
researchers show that first-generation college students are more likely to come from rural or agricultural communities or small towns, which can result in a limited access to information about college and preparation for college academics. Bridges et al. (2006) emphasized that reading and language arts stands as the leading area of academic deficiency for first-generation students. Bridges et al. shows that in 2006 only “21% of African American high school graduates, 33% of Hispanic graduates, and 33% of students from families with an annual income below $30,000 had college level reading skills” (p. 18). This idea is corroborated by the fact that more than 2/5 of Hispanic students “have parents whose highest level of education was less than high school” (p. 19). The researcher also points out that first-generation students also possess significantly less developed time management skills, thus widening the gap of skill level in higher education.

Engle & Tinto (2008) further claim that first-generation college students are also more likely to attend a community college prior to transferring to a four-year college (75% versus 54% of their peers). This is attributed to several factors of the first-generation student demographic including the priorities of this population of students. Bridges et al. (2006) research shows that one of the main goals of the first-generation student is to be financially “well off.” This means that a choice of school is influenced by financial aid, ability to live at home while attending school, and cost of living in the area, rather than the academics within an institution.

Because of the priorities of the first-generation student population, there is a significant difference in selection of major and degree attainment between first-generation students and their second-generation peers. Engle & Tinto (2008) reported that first-generation students are more likely to obtain an associate’s degree rather than a bachelor’s degree due to the accelerated training associated with vocational degrees. However, there are noted trends in the
selection of majors for the first-generation student. The two charts below (p. 18-19), demonstrate the trends in first-generation student major selection within the first and final years of college. Overall, the research has shown that first-generation students are 15% less likely to stay in a math or science major than their peers. This has been attributed to the need for more first-generation students to take remedial courses prior to beginning major or college level courses. Engle & Tinto concluded that first-generation students are less likely to begin college as an undeclared major and are more likely than their peers to major in vocational fields, health, business, and the social sciences. They have also concluded that first-generation students who major in the humanities are most likely to drop out of college, while students who major in the social sciences are mostly like to obtain a degree within six years.

Figures 2 and 3 (Engle & Tinto, 2008) express the change in major declaration between first and final years of enrollment of the first-generation college student.
Figure 2

First-Generation: Major During First Year

![Bar chart showing distribution of majors during the first year.](chart1)

Figure 3

First-Generation: Majors During Final Semester

![Bar chart showing distribution of majors during the final semester.](chart2)
Differences between Research 1 and Regional Comprehensive Four-year Intuitions

There are three collegiate systems in the state of California that students attend when considering a four-year university: California State University (CSU) system, University of California (UC) system, or private school system. These systems do not include trade schools or vocational training programs. While private schools are privately funded and generally have smaller class sizes, CSU or UC campuses are funded by the state of California as well as tuition and revenue paid by enrolled students (Governors’ Budget Summary, 2014).

Although general funding is similar between the CSU and UC systems, there are other fundamental differences between the two institutions. A UC campus is considered a Research 1 institution. This means that the university is engaged in extensive research. A CSU campus is considered a Regional Comprehensive university. This means that these campuses are typically undergraduate campuses with a few graduate degree programs but rarely offer a doctoral program (Carnegie, 2010; Olwell, 2011). CSU campuses also tend to be “commuter schools” with little residency and majority of students identifying as working adults or re-entry students. Generally, these campuses also originally classified as “normal schools,” which was once named for teacher education (Olwell, 2011).

There are nine University of California (UC) campuses that offer undergraduate degrees, with the primary focus being related to research and doctoral or professional degrees. Additionally, there are 23 California State University (CSU) campuses which focus more on a practical base of education- allowing students to be career ready upon graduation. UC students typically pay around $12,000 per year for their undergraduate education, while CSU students pay
closer to $7,000 in tuition. Tuition costs can vary from school to school and do not include the cost of living, books, or supplies (College Confidential, 2013). UC and CSU campuses also operate on very different schedules, with the UC system operating on a quarter schedule and most CSU campuses operating on a semester schedule (Assist, 2015).

Along with differences in general cost of attendance and institutional focus, CSU and UC campuses also vary in requirements for transfer admission. For example, a student wishing to transfer from Butte College to CSU, Chico for a B.S. degree in Animal Science is able to complete courses in general education, major required sciences, and major elective courses through articulation agreements between the two colleges. However, the same student will need to take more courses to transfer from Butte College to UC Davis with the same major. This is due to the fact that UC courses are often broken into two sections and will not be able to take courses that directly apply to his/her major topic (Assist, 2015).

Effective Practices Catering to First-Generation Students

Research by the Pell Institute has demonstrated that there are many theories regarding which methods or practices will be effective for first-generation students. Though the research and success rates may vary from state to state (depending on budgets, student demographics, languages, etc.), the Pell Institute (2009) would suggest that the following methods have been proven to be most successful for the first-generation student transfer population.

Articulation agreements

While improvements have been made to articulation agreements with websites such as Assist.org, there are still many students who transfer from a community college into a
four-year university but lose units. This is mainly because of misunderstanding the agreement between the two institutions. An articulation agreement is a generated checklist of courses that are to be taken at a community college to guarantee transfer admission to a four-year university if completed with a strong GPA. These agreements can be typically between one community college and one university or a community college and several universities within a state. Articulation agreements are also made between a community college and an out-of-state university, however, these agreements are more difficult to navigate for community college students since there is not a consistent database of the requirements for out-of-state transfers. These course lists find comparable courses at community college that can be transferred to a four-year university for general education or lower-division credit within a major or minor (Assist, 2015).

The Pell Institute (2009) suggested that articulation agreements between community colleges and four-year universities can be improved by simply improving communication between the two institutions. This will insure that the courses students are completing will in fact meet the general education or major transfer requirements without the need to repeat courses.

**Dual Enrollment**

Though the concept of dual enrollment is most commonly seen within high schools, the same agreements are arising among community colleges and four-year universities. Dual enrollment is the act of being enrolled in courses within two separate institutions, often at two different levels of education (Pell Institute, 2009). The Pell Institute (2009) stated that dual enrollment programs allow high school students to be exposed to college level coursework and therefore introduce students to a college environment at a younger age. The research claimed
“that early exposure can be critical in ensuring a successful transition to college, particularly for low-income and first-generation students who are unfamiliar with higher education and what it will take to earn a baccalaureate degree” (p.2). While these programs are most popular in the state of Texas (most high school students are highly encouraged if not required to participate in dual enrollment), these programs are growing in popularity in California as well.

Many community colleges have developed dual enrollment programs that allow students to take courses at a four-year university while being enrolled in their final semester at a community college. This unique opportunity can allow for students to enter a community college or four-year university with up to 12 transferrable courses which can be of great advantage, both academically and socially, once a student transfers to a four-year university (Pell Institute, 2006). Santa Barbara City College (SBCC), for example, has a dual enrollment (also referred to as cross enrollment) agreement with the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) where SBCC students can enroll in one course per quarter at UCSB for only $31 per unit if students meet dual enrollment requirements (SBCC, 2014). Butte College and California State University, Chico have a similar requirement, where students enrolled at Butte College can take up to one course per semester at Chico State while paying reduced tuition (Butte, 2014).

Student Success Courses and Learning Communities

Research by the Pell Institute (2009) explained the recent implementation of specialized seminars for freshman students to help them more properly orient to their new college surroundings. Such seminars include courses or conversations on academic program planning, study skills, financial aid, career and academic advising, etc. The Pell Institute suggested that these courses have positive impact in the understanding, orientation, and
graduation rates of first-generation freshman students, and the same services should be available to first-generation transfer students.

Similar results have been found with the implementation of learning communities or educational cohorts. These groups allow for transfer students to engage in both academic and social activities in their new environment. Such activities help to develop relationships that many transfer students would not otherwise have the opportunity to develop during their transfer year. Research also showed that cohorts provide a more stimulating academic environment than a traditional course that creates opportunities for intellectual interactions and mutual inquiry (Pell Institute, 2006).

Developmental Coursework and Education Initiatives

When researching first-generation students, there is a large interest in the need for developmental coursework and education within community colleges and four-year universities. Developmental coursework refers to courses that are designed to strengthen areas of weakness within a student’s academic knowledge. These courses are most typically in the area of mathematics, language arts, or writing. Research done by the Pell Institute (2006) emphasized that universities within the state of Texas often examine and redesign their curriculum or course offerings to better suit the development of their current students which will aid them in a successful transfer. For example, many universities are:

Concerned with making the format, structure, and content of developmental coursework more accessible and effective. For instance, a number of the colleges break down developmental courses into tailored, manageable modules based on skills assessments. Some build in required, targeted academic support such as lab work or one-on-one faculty tutoring (p. 43).

The Pell Institute supported the constant development and reassessment of curriculum. This would allow students to develop skills are necessary when transferring to a four-year institution.
This will be beneficial not only in academics but also in the amount of time that it will take to transfer, while also strengthening weaker areas of academic knowledge. Research states that allowing for students to participate in developmental coursework through application of real-world situations, relevant interests or cultural concepts, collaborative team work, and integration of technology will also increase the probability of student transfer and academic success.

**Institutional Financial Aid**

Because so many first-generation students come from low-income households, it is important to consider how financial aid can be effectively developed to assist this community of students. Many government institutions have already begun to shift their recognition of this scenario, however many are still awarding financial aid purely based upon merit, rather than need. The Pell Institute (2009) and the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (ACSFA) (2006), agree that shifting financial aid awards to be more accurate to student need will reduce student reliance on loans. This shift must also come with awareness and active understanding that tuition increases must also be limited since student financial aid often funds housing, transportation, childcare, and other necessary items throughout a college education.

Research by the ACSFA found that community college students who identify with the low-income student population are only half as likely to transfer to a four-year university due to the increase in the general cost of attendance. Since this population is more likely to attend school part-time due to the need for employment outside of their education, this factor also decreases the student eligibly for financial aid from a four-year university (ACSFA, 2006; Pell Institute, 2009).
Effective Institutional Leadership

A study by the Pell Institute (2009) stated that colleges can promote success for low-income, first-generation college students through five main areas: focusing on the first year, monitoring student progress, providing additional support for students, increasing student engagement, and creating a culture of success (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Though this implies focus on the first-year of a student’s college education, the remainder of the factors can be applied to ensuring the success of transfer students as well.

Because of the rate of student attrition (approximately 50% between a student’s freshman and sophomore years of college), it is important to place emphasis on the areas creating such an issue among college campuses for this specific population of students. Though many categories affect such a rate social engagement with faculty, the experience of negative attitudes of institutions, and under challenging students are most easily changed (Hanover, 2011). Rates can also be affected by the lack of student engagement and acceptance into their new academic and social culture. Because there are so many programs that closely guide freshmen throughout their first year of college, it is critical that a version of the same programs is developed to ensure the success of transfer students as well. Research recognizes that many groups of students would benefit from additional guidance however, the current graduation track rates only 27% of first-generation college students completing their degree within four years, therefore additional guidance is clearly needed (DeAngelo, Franke, Hurtado, Pryor, & Tran, S., 2011). By providing first-generation students who are transitioning into a four-year university with a effective institutional leadership such as a faculty mentor, a research or community project, and leadership training, students can continue to be engaged and receive the additional close-knit relationships with members of their new campus. These relationships are proven to promote success for this
population in particular. Gary Rhoades (2012), a professor at the University of Arizona, believed that

Faculty are the linchpins to student success. They are at the center of student success not just as individual pieceworkers in increasingly large classrooms, but as a collective, engaged in various departmental and organizational initiatives to enhance student achievement (p.19).

With the implementation of effective institutional leadership, first-generation students can develop influential relationships within their college or university. These relationships can provide students with resources that would continue to heighten student interest in higher education and their own academic success through academic challenges and engagements. This is particularly important for the population of first-generation students since institutional leadership can increase academic achievement and the likelihood that students will continue to return after each year of college to eventually finish their degree (Coles, 2011).

While research emphasizes the importance of leadership within the institution, the Pell Institute (2006) extended this by explaining the need for first-generation college students of any position to see faculty within their institution that are of racial and ethnic minority. The Pell Institute states that hiring staff of minority populations will allow for students to have an individual to seek out during the process of transferring. The research continues to prove that diversity among faculty and staff will also promote dialogs on diversity among student populations. The research also demonstrates that a university that employs a diverse faculty of educational leaders is more likely to promote programs that have a strong focus on retention and graduation success of transfer students.

**Holistic Advising**

While traditional advising focused mainly on course schedules and graduation requirements, Holistic Advising takes into account “students’ personal, social, financial,
emotional, developmental, cultural and ethnic issues” (Murthy & White, 2013, para. 3). These factors can influence a student’s academic and career success, requiring advising staff to advise the whole student, rather than just the immediate need. According to Murthy & White (2013) the following are the key components to successful holistic advising:

1. Recognize that advising is a cultural and culture-bound activity.
2. Respect diverse points of view by demonstrating sensitivity to differences in culture and gender.
3. Communicate in a clear and unambiguous manner with advisees.
4. Enable advisees to participate actively in advising process by challenging them with new, more demanding ideas or choices and encouraging them to ask questions to clarify these ideas and explore these choices.
5. Respect the confidentiality of communication with the student.
6. Help advisees evaluate and reevaluate their progress towards personal, educational and career goals.
7. Provide tasks to be completed before the next advising meeting that will require the advisee to use information-gathering, decision making and problem-solving skills.
8. Use institutional technology (e.g., degree audit reports) to augment advising, recommend interactive software (e.g., SIGI PLUS) that can help advisees clarify goals, and identify career options and communicate with advisees via e-mail.
9. Help students explore career goals and choose programs, courses and co-curricular activities that support these goals.
10. Assist students in consideration of their life goals by helping them relate their experiences, interests, skills and values to career paths and the nature and purpose of higher education.

11. Support the institution’s educational philosophy and policies.

12. Model the tenets of the university and demonstrate enthusiasm and knowledge about the goals and purposes of higher education.

13. Have accurate information about the policies, procedures, resources and programs of students’ departments.

14. Provide timely feedback, reinforce the learning that has taken place, and applaud student successes.

15. Participate in professional development that focuses on the educational issues that influence advising and the student population served.

16. Provide materials to advisees and refer them to others when referral is an appropriate response.

However, Murthy & White (2013) also explained that there are additional advising considerations for transfer students or those who are considered non-traditional students. These factors include considering the sacrifices the students are making to actually attend school, understanding the whole life of the student, understanding their work outside of school, and having the ability to plan further in advance so that students can better prepare for the steps in their academic programs.
O’Banion Model

The O’Banion Model outlines a five-element advising process based on a linear progression, creating an interactive partnership between the student and the advisor (O’Banion, 1972).

Table 2

O’Banion Model

1. Exploration of Life Goals
   ↓
2. Exploration of Vocational Goals
   ↓
3. Exploration of Program Choice
   ↓
4. Exploration of Course Choice
   ↓
5. Exploration of Scheduling Options

This model first begins with the exploration of life goals and incorporates relationships between other offices outside of advising throughout the remaining four stages. These stages are composed of exploration of vocational goals, exploration of program choice, exploration of course choice, and exploration of scheduling options. The first two stages of the model more closely rely on assistance of a professionally trained advisor. Once the student has completed the first two stages of the model, he or she is ready to extend into the third through fifth stages, which incorporate the need for academic advisors.
The O'Banion model is based upon the idea that every academic institution should provide advising through a variety of departments and professional staff. It is believed that ultimately this would allow students to make educated decisions regarding their future. There have been several revisions to this model which now student exploration throughout each level of advising rather than just in stages three to five. These revisions are believed to encourage students to participate in deeper self-exploration and choose courses or a major that is in line with their personal results (Burton & Wellington, 1998).

Questions to be Answered

Though the volume of research regarding higher education retention has increased, there is still need to understand more about the specific needs of first-generation students and how to increase their rates of success. Because of the need for research in this area, it is the hopes of the researcher that the following questions will be answered:

1. What impact does holistic advising have on first-generation students?
2. How do students feel that holistic advising is enhancing or would enhance their academic and career development or success?
3. How does University staff implement holistic advising in their daily practices?
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Demographics of the Research Site:
California State University, Chico

California State University, Chico (CSU, Chico) is a rural university 90 miles north of California’s capitol, Sacramento and two miles from the Sierra Nevada foothills. The city is home to Bidwell Park, one of the largest municipal parks in the United States. Approximately 95% of the CSU, Chico student population comes from California, while the area including and surrounding Butte County contributes to approximately 32.7% of the student population. Northern California contributes to approximately 21.2% of students, with 41.2% coming from the Central and Southern California areas combined. CSU, Chico has a small percentage of students who identify as out-of-state or international students (4.9%) (CSU, Chico Public Affairs, 2014).

CSU, Chico is home to approximately 16,000 undergraduate students and 1,200 graduate students, with approximately 1,100 students identifying as first-generation college freshmen. The mean age of students is 23 years old, with the mean age of an undergraduate student being 22 years old. CSU, Chico is made up of approximately 53% female students and 47% male students. Refer to Figure 4 below for further breakdown of student identification.
CSU, Chico Student Ethnicity

(CSU, Chico Public Affairs, 2014).

CSU, Chico is home to over 225 student organizations and services that range from counseling and wellness services, a student health center, an accessibility and resource center to a career center, academic advising, an honor’s program, and a veteran’s affairs center. Among the vast organizations and services available to students, there are also several varieties of Greek life organizations, an 800-acre student-run farm, and the Orion. The Orion is a campus-run newspaper, which has won 11 National Peacemaker awards and is considered one to the top college newspapers in the country (CSU, Chico Public Affairs, 2014). CSU, Chico is also “ranked number three in the nation for sending students abroad for a full academic year” (CSU, Chico Study Abroad, 2015)
According to the 2014 Chico Facts, released by the Department of Public Affairs, CSU Chico, has 38 Bachelor of Arts programs, 31 Bachelor of Science programs, and 105 minors. The university also has 28 Master level degrees, 29 certificate programs, an honors program, and 15 Educational Credential Programs. The largest reported majors at CSU, Chico are Business Administration, Psychology, and Pre-Nursing, while the majority of Bachelor degrees granted in the 2013-2014 academic school year were in Business Administration, Liberal Studies (focusing in elementary school education), and Psychology (CSU, Chico Public Affairs, 2014). Currently, there are several departments on-campus that have their own advising programs such as the College of Business and Liberal Studies. There are also many departments that enforce mandatory advising for their students such as the College of Communication and Education, while others do not.

As previously stated, the purpose of this study is to determine how holistic advising influences first-generation students, how students feel that holistic advising is enhancing, or would enhance, their academic and career success, and how university staff implement holistic advising in their daily practices.

Study Methodology

The objective of this study was to ask a group of seven first-generation students to reflect on their experiences with holistic advising, its perceived benefits, and how it has influenced their decisions on their vocational choices. The study also asked seven advising staff members how holistic advising is integrated into their daily practices and how they perceived the practice to benefit students. This study used triangulated methods including both qualitative and quantitative data. Surveys and interviews were conducted electronically via email.
Participants

First-generation students of diverse genders, ages and majors were recruited to participate in the study. Advising staff members of various departments were also recruited to participate. Both student and staff member participants were recruited using a sample of convenience. Participants were recruited from the researchers’ courses, employment, and social groups. A more detailed description of research participants can be found in Appendix E.

Instruments

Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the researcher began the two phases of the study. The first phase of data collection involved administering a survey and email interviewing first generation students. Following university IRB procedures, students received an informed consent letter and complete the survey and email interview questions online. The second phase of data collection involved email interviewing staff members who actively advise students. Following university IRB procedures, the advisors received an informed consent letter and completed the email interview questions online.

The consent letter introduced the researcher, the purpose of the survey, and the concept of Holistic Advising. Assurances were made that participation was voluntary and there would not be any penalty for not participating.

Survey Tool

The survey was administered to seven first-generation students and included 17 questions and additional sub-questions. Such questions included inquiry of student demographics, types of advisors the student has met with, their transition to Chico State, and advising concerns. Student were not required to answer every survey question if they felt
uncomfortable or if the question did not pertain to them. Students also completed a 17 question email interview that inquired about the students’ association with programs on-campus, advisor knowledge, success and hindrances of success, and student expectations. Example questions include:

- Do you feel that advisors at Chico State were particularly knowledgeable of the challenges that you face as a first-generation student?
- Do you feel that advisors at Chico State were particularly interested in challenges that you face as a first-generation student?

(See Appendix B).

The seven advisors and staff members completed an email interview consisting of four questions which included inquiry of the type of advising they do, the type of students they typically meet with, and factors that can increase their advising capabilities. Example questions include:

- Do you feel that having knowledge of a student’s personal challenges, culture, personal stresses, financial situations, and academic and career influences would enhance your abilities to better advise students, in particular first-generation students? If so, why?
- How often are you aware of such factors when advising students?

(See Appendix A).

Interview questions were open-ended to allow participants to provide the researcher with detailed responses specific to the participant’s experiences.
Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted informed by the literature on holistic advising and first-generation students’ needs and expectations. This analysis allowed for the researcher to determine common themes within the groups of interviews. A coding sheet was used to incorporate categories that correspond to the literature in these two areas (See Appendix C). The interview submissions were analyzed for the categories and themes for holistic advising and first-generation student needs. Holistic advising themes included: personal stresses, academic preparedness, financial difficulties, time constraints, cultural/ethnic inclusion, developmental readiness, and other. First-generation student needs themes included: encouragement, network development, academics, institution perception and fit, on-campus resources, and other. It was the hopes of the researcher that these themes would assist in learning about the impact of holistic advising on first-generation students as well as how students felt advising was enhancing their success. Staff interview submissions were analyzed for categories and themes based on holistic advising, which included: knowledge of holistic factors, application of holistic practices, and other. The researcher hoped that these themes would assist in learning how holistic advising is implemented by advising staff.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will include a presentation of the results and discussion of findings. The analysis related to the interview and survey results will consider and report the entire spectrum of responses.

Limitations of study

As with all personal reflection and opinion, each individual’s interpretation of variables such as advising experiences and advising practices may not compare or equal the experiences of another student or staff member. The study represents a small number of those employed as staff members or enrolled in the institution. The study demonstrates the opinion of these staff members, all of whom are female. However, the study should show an accurate interpretation of experiences for those that participated in this research. Furthermore the following limitations are acknowledged during the course of this study:

- All staff members interviewed are female, therefore there is not a male advising presence throughout the study.
- Seven advisors were interviewed covering six different departments; however there are several departments that are not accounted for throughout the study.
- Seven students were interviewed, however there are nearly 18,000 students enrolled at the institution. This sample represents a small portion of one population. Some opinions, thoughts and experiences are not represented throughout the study.
• Majority of the interviews were conducted via email. Although this provided opportunity for accuracy while transcribing, it was less effective when connecting with students for follow-up questions.

• There was not equal representation of students who attended each type of advisor that was interviewed. While all students had attended academic, career and major advising, the students did not have a direct relationship with the programs or program advisors that were represented within this study. Having a student representative from each program would allow the researcher to more accurately see the connection between staff and student for this particular program and their advising techniques.

Presentation of Results and Findings

Of the seven advisors interviewed, two were major advisors, two were career advisors, one was an academic advisor, and two were specific campus program advisors. All advisors had direct experience advising first-generation college students, however not all advisors worked exclusively with this population of students. Of the advisors interviewed, all were female and none disclosed their racial or ethnic association or identity. All of the advisors had been in their current advising role or an advising role with a similar department for at least three years.

The interviews were initially analyzed for knowledge of holistic factors, application of holistic practices, and other. The “other” category became a key component in identifying the types of advising that each advisor practices (i.e. major advising, academic advising, career advising, program advising), who the advisor works with, and any other noteworthy items about the advisor’s overall practices. Upon review of the coding sheets three main themes emerged from the advisor’s responses. These main themes were importance of first
meetings, understanding each student, and goals for the future. The researcher referred to the literature to better understand the categories and themes that emerged, as well as the responses that were provided by the advisors that were interviewed. Examples of the themes that emerged are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Advisor Interview Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial review</th>
<th>Secondary Review</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Application of Holistic Factors</td>
<td>The Importance of First Meetings</td>
<td>“I want to help the students gain the confidence to seek out help and gain connections on and off campus.” “I ask students about their family, inspirations, hopes, and dreams. It allows students to feel more welcome and understood in my office.” “I use a more intake procedure during our first meetings. Sometimes we don’t even talk about school. I want to build a relationship with the students and make sure they trust me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Each Student</td>
<td></td>
<td>“There is no single type of student to which we can apply a blanket approach to advising. We must constantly acknowledge the individual characteristic of each student and advise them accordingly.” “I understand that everyone has their challenges. Sometimes school has to come second and grades suffer.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals for the Future</td>
<td></td>
<td>“I want students to understand that your major doesn’t always determine who you are or what</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Importance of First Meetings

The first meetings proved to be the most commonly referred to theme within the three options. All of the advisors who were interviewed discussed the importance of the first meeting that they have with students. Supporting the previously mentioned work of Gary Rhoades (2012) and the Pell Institute (2006), it was demonstrated throughout the interviews that the main goal of the first meetings is to establish a connection and build trust with the student. One major advisor stated the importance of this by saying: “I ask students about their family, inspirations, hopes, and dreams. It allows students to feel more welcome and understood in my office.”

It was also discussed that these first meetings are the best way to learn more about the student including their background, finances, academic and personal stresses, etc. prior to advising the student on their academics or their career. Although the notion of understanding the student’s background within the first meeting additionally falls into the theme of understanding the population, it was determined by several advisors as an important factor to discover within the first meeting to better advise the students in future meetings. One major advisor expanded on this by saying, “developing trust and a positive relationship will allow for the student to feel more comfortable with sharing their experiences and dilemmas in their academic experiences with myself and other advisors.”

All of the advisors additionally discussed how developing a relationship with a student is a very important step in building the student’s trust in academic staff and developing
the confidence to approach staff member for assistance- all of which are critical in the additional themes that were presented in the analysis of the advisor interviews.

Understanding Each Student

During the analysis of advisor interviews, understanding the population became an easily apparent second theme. Given the work of Engle & Tinto (2008) and Bridges et al. (2006), and the understanding that first-generation students are more susceptible to risk factors, all interviewed advisors placed an emphasis on understanding the population. This understanding included several holistic factors such as person stresses, career goals, family and cultural impact, and mental health. All advisors also mentioned that the students that they meet with come from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds with a broad range of socioeconomic statuses, creating various needs within their academic experience. Additionally, a special emphasis was placed on understanding the language that was used when advising students. It was generally understood that since not every student has parents that it can be inappropriate to ask about family in a traditional sense and that it would be better suited to ask about influential adults in a student’s life. It also emphasized that understanding the complexity of the various identities and cultures of a student gives insights to the challenges of each individual, allowing the advisors to recommend appropriate tools and resources on a college campus or within the community. One major advisor stated during her interview:

“Personal and life stresses, academic strengths and weaknesses, career goals and career exposure all have an impact on advisement and how we, as professionals, should advise students.”
She went on to explain that this also included advising on how many classes a student should take each semester. This input is based on what the student felt they could handle within their range of personal stresses and challenges.

Another program advisor who works primarily with students from the foster care system discussed that it is often most important to understand the day-to-day challenges of a student. For her, this often means teaching students how to open a bank account or how to find an apartment. While a major advisor found that for her, online first-generation students have different needs than students who are attending classes in person. She found that online students require more assistance than on campus or traditional students since they more often have responsibilities outside of the classroom including a family, a full-time job, or are making additional sacrifices to receive a college education. Overall, a career advisor stated:

“There isn’t a way to help students without understanding their background. People are so complex so we need to know the ‘why.’ A student’s background doesn’t always describe how someone will deal with college and their experiences on a campus or being away from home.”

Most importantly, a program advisor stated that she believes “there is no single type of student to which we can apply a blanketed approach of advising. We must constantly acknowledge individual characteristics of each student and advise them accordingly.”

Goals for the Future

The final theme of “goals for the future” became apparent in two ways. This thematic category encompassed both the advisor’s goals for the student in their academics and career as well as goals for future advising sessions. Within this area, there was a common understanding
among advisors that it is important for students to understand that rarely a major is the sole determinate for a person’s career choice, however the student’s exposure to electives and prerequisite courses do generally assist students with their career exploration. The two career advisors that were interviewed more specifically addressed this by stating:

“There is a pressure to pick the right major, but really students should be open to all of the possibilities. I hope that I can build relationships with students and introduce them to other faculty and staff on campus. When students meet new professionals on campus they are exposed to new information and connections. This helps students to gain confidence and establish themselves within their academics and educational goals- ultimately it will give students a well-rounded academic experience.”

It was apparent from all interviews that establishing the confidence of first-generation students was important to their success both on and on-campus. One career advisor also noted that reflection is a key component to the development in confidence.

“A good resume or good grades doesn’t always allow for confidence when exploring careers. The development of a resume does however develop confidence. The development of a resume is powerful, reflective, and allows students to see the value in what they have to offer.”

Advisors also noted that it was important that students understand the reality of their future academic and vocational careers. Although major selection does not solely guarantee employment, a degree is a step towards a student’s career. Students must explore and prepare themselves outside of the classroom for their future past graduation stating:
“It is important that college students understand that college is not a training program for an occupation. Getting a degree doesn’t immediately mean that you will get a job. Sometimes this is hardest for first-generation college students to understand since they are the first ones to experience the job hunt after college. They often have different pressures to get what their parents didn’t have. Sometimes this means studying something that they don’t love or aren’t necessary successful with.”

One career advisor made an additional point that it is important for students to take responsibility for their futures while accepting advising from campus staff. Though Murthy & White (2013) support the role of an advisor within a first-generation student’s education, advisors also hold a concern for what it means to advise too much.

“I don’t want to helicopter the students too much through the process. I want them to gain the confidence to seek out help and gain connections that they feel are beneficial. I’m here to offer support and point the students in the right direction, but students need to be willing to do some of the work too.”

Student Survey Results

In order to collect additional information about the seven students that were interviewed, a brief survey was conducted. The survey showed that the age of the students interviewed ranged from 18 to 24, with the mean age being 22.6 years old. All of the students reported that they are single, do not have children, and are attending school full-time. Figures 5-7 show additional demographics discovered during the survey process, including ethnicity of students, gender of students, and year in school. The survey showed that majority of the students surveyed identified as Hispanic/Latino, female, and were currently a senior in school.
**Ethnicity of Students Interviewed**

- Hispanic/Latino: 3
- White: 2
- Multiple Ethnicities: 2

**Gender of Students Interviewed**

- Female: 4
- Male: 2
- Transgender: 1
Four of the seven students who were surveyed attended a college or university prior to attending Chico State, with two students attending a community college, one attending a different four-year college or university, and one who attended both a community college and a four-year university. Two of the four students lived at home while attending additional colleges or universities, while the other two students lived away from home. The researcher felt that it was important to understand the students’ current living arrangements as well as their demographic information. Of the students surveyed, five of the seven students are living off-campus and away from home. Those five students also reported that they all currently have or have had roommates while attending Chico State, with one student reporting that they now live alone. The researcher further stressed it was important to understand the students’ work arrangements in relation to their academic and advising experiences. Figure 8 demonstrates the number of hours the students reported to be working while attending Chico State, with the majority of students surveyed working between 11 and 30 hours per week.
The students reported that of the seven students, only four students were working on campus, and only two of the seven students are working in areas relevant to their career interests.

This study focused mainly on advising experiences of students. Consequently, the researcher included survey questions regarding the nature of the students’ advising visits. All of the students who attended a college or university prior to Chico State reported that they met with an advisor for academic concerns prior to their transfer or admission. All seven of the students reported that they have met with at least one type of advisor since starting classes at Chico State. Figure 8 details the reasons that the students reported for meeting with an advisor, with the most common reasons being for concerns with academic preparedness and general academic concerns.
Lastly, students were surveyed to determine the ease of their academic and social transitions into Chico State. Of the seven students who were surveyed, five reported answers. Figures 10 and 11 further demonstrate the students’ transition ratings with academic transitions being reported as “somewhat easy” and social transitions being reported equally as “very easy” and “neither easy nor difficult.”
The interviews of students were initially analyzed for 12 specific factors. These factors consisted of all factors noted by Bean (2005), Murthy and White (2015), and Hamline University (n.d.), along with the category of other. The “other” category became a key component in identifying key characteristics of each student such as noted socioeconomic status,
citizenship, if the student was a transfer student, and semester start date. Three main categories of responses emerged from the data review. These included suggestions for the institution, advising experiences, and comments for future students. The researcher referred to the literature to better understand the categories that emerged and the responses that were provided by the students that were interviewed. Examples of the themes that emerged are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5
Student Interview Themes

| Suggestions for the Institution                                      | · “There should be more information in various languages for parents. It would allow students and their families to feel more comfortable.”
|                                                                       | · “I wish there was a mentor through someone’s entire college experience rather than having to navigate different departments. I think one advisor would be beneficial for retention rates and student satisfaction rather than having four or five.”
|                                                                       | · “There should be a first-generation student specific orientation. I know that this population won’t be around forever but it would be great since a lot of parents do not know how to support their children while in college.”
| Advising Experiences                                                | · “I wish advisors would ask about course load and try to understand how much students have to balance to make their college career successful – grades, volunteer hours, jobs, everything.”
|                                                                       | · “Advisors are more concerned about getting through their first meeting than helping me understand and map my academic career.”
|                                                                       | · “I felt like advisors did not have concerns or interests about my heritage, culture, socioeconomic
status, or first-generation student status.”  
- “Sometimes I really felt rushed through appointments.”

<table>
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<th>Comments for Future Students</th>
<th>Suggestions for the Institution</th>
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| • “Take initiative and build relationships with staff and students. Becoming more involved is the best advice for anyone in a new environment.”  
• “Being involved in campus at whatever capacity helps you develop a sense of ownership over your campus and your experience.”  
| Though it was not anticipated, this was the most common category of the student interviews. Based upon their own experiences, all of the students had very detailed suggestions regarding improvements or new additions that the institution should put into place. All suggestions were to better assist students, in particular first-generation students. However, within this category there were two subthemes that emerged: mentorship and advising programs and orientation.  

It was common within the interviews for students to make suggestions for programs to be developed to better serve students. All of these suggested programs revolved around advising and mentorship. Specifically, students noted how at any one point a student may need see several advisors including career, academic, major, minor, and general education and how this can be challenging given student schedules and department schedules, as well as at times confusing and stressful for students.  

“I wish there was a mentor or advisor program where a student is partnered with an advisor throughout their entire college experience rather than having to navigate different
departments to get answers and help. I think having just one advisor would be more beneficial for retention rates and student satisfaction rather than having four or five advisors.”

Additionally, it was noted that it would be ideal if a student was matched with an advisor based on more than just their last name or major.

“I wish advisors would be better matched with the students. It would be so great if an advisor had been assigned to me who was my ethnicity or was also first-generation or even my personality. I don’t know if it is possible, but it would be great to have that similarity right away. I would feel so much for comfortable talking with them and we wouldn’t waste time getting to that point of comfort.”

The second category focused on orientation. Several of the interviewees expressed concern or disappointment in the orientations or lack of orientations that they received. It was noted by several students specifically that the institution was lacking a detailed orientation for first-generation transfer students at the point of their entry. One student noted:

“There isn’t a system to help transfers before their first semester at four-year colleges. I had little-to-no help preparing for my transition.”

While others emphasized:

“If you are starting school in the spring you don’t receive help. There isn’t a formal orientation or welcome for you. It’s hard enough starting at a new school but when you have to figure out everything on your own it makes it even harder. I didn’t even have to see an advisor before I registered.”
“I felt like the orientation was more of a highlight of the school’s strengths rather than focusing on advising or helping me get acquainted with the school.”

Additionally, several students noted that it would be helpful if the orientations that do exist would also provide information in native languages of the students and their families. They believed that this would help the students feel more welcome and make their families feel more able to ask questions about the college experience and its requirements.

Advising Experiences

The second category that emerged was the category of advising experiences. Throughout the interview process the students noted several ways in which advising services can improve for all students, especially first-generation students. Students noted most frequently that they were unhappy with their overall advising experiences and expressed that they mostly did not feel supported by the advising staff.

“Advisors are more concerned about getting through their first meeting than helping me understand and map my academic career.”

“I felt like advisors did not have concerns or interests about my heritage, culture, socioeconomic status, or first-generation student status.”

“Sometimes I really felt rushed through appointments, like I was just another students to check off the list. It would be nice if they could really spend some time with you, especially the first time you meet with them.”
“I wish advisors would ask about course load and try to understand how much students have to balance to make their college career successful – grades, volunteer hours, jobs, everything.”

The seven students who were interviewed felt disconnected with regard to the information they were provided. This was especially evident for transfer students.

“I wasn’t told about BlackBoard or how to use it. I walked into my classes on my first day and it was like everyone was speaking a different language. Everyone knew how to post items, already had their syllabus printed, and knew all of this information that was on BlackBoard. I wish there was a training for transfer students.”

The students within this category commonly provided statements concerning the relationship between student and advisor. Following the research of Gary Rhoades (2012) and Pell Institute (2006), students extended the belief that faculty and staff members are an important component in their success and relationship to the institution. One student highlighted this by saying:

“I’m poor, brown, Trans, queer, and raised in Mexico. The world wasn’t ready for me. Everything is a challenge when you don’t feel represented in the people who are supposed to guide you through your four years in college. I am less likely to go to you for advice if I don’t see one of my struggles in you. Even if they have the information, for some reason I will not be comfortable going to them…I feel like advisors are knowledgeable but don’t always understand. Knowing and understanding are very different things and only one allows for me to relate and trust you.”
This student also believed that having more diverse staff members would allow for more students to feel comfortable seeing an advisor.

“It’s always more comfortable when some looks like me or my community.”

Although many of the statements made by students were critical of advising staff and programs, there were however notes of how advising and other on-campus programs have positively influenced the student’s academic and professional career. One student in particular believed that much of their success in college can be credited to staff members in a particular on-campus program.

“They gave me a place to ask questions and people would sit down with me for an hour if I needed to talk. They were there for my personal issues that affected my academic work, and they understand how there were both related. They helped me though my personal issues and always framed it in a way to champion my academics.”

Another student credited the exposure to campus staff with the development of skills relevant to their chosen career.

“I worked with five different on-campus programs and organizations. All of them allowed me to develop relevant skills for my career. I want to work in advising and help other students with are first-generation or are first-generation American. There are so many resources on campus, but the only problem is that no one knows about them. Working with these organizations and programs have allowed me to know about these resources and recommend them to other students in need.”
Comments for Future Students

The final category that emerged from student comments relates to their messages for future students. Though this was the smallest of the categories, the students made a point to note how they were able to better acclimate to the campus and the institution on their own. The researcher felt that this was important to note in this section of the research. Student notes included:

“Take initiative and build relationships with staff and students. Becoming more involved is the best advice for anyone in a new environment.”

“Being involved in campus at whatever capacity helps you develop a sense of ownership over your campus and your experience. I got involved on campus and eventually met my mentor through my club position. She is the one who I go to when I have questions about my career and grad school. I can’t imagine college without her.”

“I didn’t find a place for me on campus until I found my internship. I believe that there is a place for everyone, you just have to find it.”

Discussion of Findings

The analyzed interviews of various on-campus advisors assisted the researcher in answering the research question “how does University staff implement holistic advising in their daily practices?” The interview analysis shows that of the advisors who were interviewed all demonstrated an interest in the holistic factors that influence a first-generation student’s education. This included personal stresses, financial responsibilities, family obligations, academic preparedness, and cultural influences. All of the advisors showed concern with connecting students to the appropriate resources on campus and ensuring student comfort in their
new college environment prior to beginning academic, career, or program advising. All advisors provided information that demonstrated they followed a model similar to the previously discussed O'Banion model. This approach allowed students to understand their life goals and vocational goals prior to selecting the program or appropriate courses. The advisors also encouraged communication with one another to connect the students to the best and most appropriate information for their individual situation.

The analyzed interviews of students, along with the survey, assisted the researcher in answering the research questions: “how do students feel that holistic advising is enhancing or would enhance their academic and career development or success?” and “what impact does holistic advising have on first-generation students?” All students who were interviewed stated that students felt that holistic advising would greatly benefit their academic careers and success. Stating,

“I think that understanding these circumstances, or factors, helps students tremendously. You feel so much more understood when your challenges are relatable or known by the person who is giving you academic or career advice.”

Students also noted that having an advisor that understands their individual challenges, struggles, interests, and culture, allows the students to be more comfortable, feel accepted, and more willing to seek out advising.

It was quite interesting to find the advisors and students to be disconnected. The two sets of interviews contained some genuine discrepancies. First, the advisors placed a strong emphasis on the first meeting with students, stating that this was the most important meeting where they work to make students feel comfortable and to get to know their challenges and
background. In contrast, students felt that first meetings often felt rushed and that the advisors did not care to know or ask about their personal lives or struggles. The students reported that they felt as if they were “just another appointment” and rushed out before any real progress was made.

Second, although advisors want to understand each population of students, the students reported that at times they have difficulty opening up to an advisor who is different from them—racially, culturally, by gender, etc. Third, advisors noted that they are concerned with the concept of “helicoptering” students too much while in advising sessions. However, from the interviews it can be concluded that students often interpret this as the advisors demonstrating a lack of support. The various departments seem to be disconnected since the student often has to visit multiple advisors to receive a single answer. The students made a total of 20 negative comments about their advising experiences in the interviews, and only provided five positive comments.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The summary, conclusions, and recommendations will be addressed in this chapter. The research questions at the center of this study were: What impact does holistic advising have on first-generation students? How do students feel that holistic advising is enhancing or would enhance their academic and career development or success? And how do university staff members implement holistic advising in their daily practices? The responses from the student interviews and surveys, as well as advisor interviews analyzed and considered. All interviews and surveys were conducted with current Chico State staff members, as well as current students and recent graduates. Because of students and staff schedules, the researcher conducted all interviews and surveys through email, then coded appropriately. Student and staff participants were all selected by convenience sampling.

Overall, the research showed that the students feel that holistic advising would be extremely helpful and impactful on their academic success. Students stated that they would feel more comfortable speaking with someone who understands them as a whole and has an invested interest in their current academic status. Students expressed the importance in finding a relatable mentor within their college career, especially as a first-generation student. Students also stated that the concept of holistic advising would allow them to be exposed to more appropriate programs and services on their college campus, ultimately better assisting them within their academic success.
Research showed that advising staff felt that they were actively connecting with students and utilizing holistic advising within their practices. Staff noted the importance of the first-meeting with a student. During the meeting, the advisor establishes trust, and importance in gaining an understanding of the student’s current academic, financial, emotional situation. Staff members indicated that understanding these factors allows them to connect students with the proper resources on campus and within the community.

Conclusions

The interviews of staff and students provided the researcher with valuable information to determine the association of holistic advising with student success. Overall, the interviews demonstrated that four out of the seven students felt that advisors did not understand or make effort to become knowledgeable about holistic factors. However, one student noted that it was actually the lack of diversity that made them feel this way most. Advising staff noted the importance of first appointments and getting to know the students, however, three students specifically noted that they felt rushed throughout their first advising appointments and disconnected with the advisors. Also, students felt a need for the institution to provide more detailed orientations and trainings for students with a special emphasis on first-generation students.

Recommendations for California State University, Chico

It is the recommendation of the researcher, given the results of the student and staff interviews, that the following educational modification be implemented. First, it was noted by all seven students that there is a need for an orientation for first-generation students. The students expressed that this orientation would be particularly beneficial for parents to be present
and would allow for a comfortable venue for parents and students to gather information and ask questions that they may be too self-conscious to ask in typical orientations. It was also noted that it would be beneficial for all orientations to have documents in several languages to allow for students and their families to gather information more easily. The students additionally believe that such orientations should be offered both fall and spring semesters. Given the number of first-generation college students, as well as the number of first-generation students who transfer to a four-year college, I would agree with the students and recommend that a first-generation orientation be implemented for the fall and spring semesters.

Second, as previously stated, four of the seven students felt that advisors did not understand or make an effort to become knowledgeable about holistic factors. Though advising staff noted the importance of first appointments and getting to know the students, three students specifically noted that they felt rushed throughout their first advising appointments and disconnected with the advisors. It is the recommendation of the researcher that the institution create a school-wide survey regarding advising practices to understand how students and advisors can better connect. An alternate means to this would be assembling a panel of students to create open dialogue between students and advisors to discuss best practices and student needs.

Finally, students expressed concern for the lack of diversity within advising and program staff. According to their interviews, this made them feel as though they could not relate to their assigned advisors or discuss their personal challenges with them. It is the recommendation of the researcher to continue to institution’s efforts to hire a more diverse faculty and staff. Supporting the research of the Pell Institute (2006), a more diverse staff will
allow for students to develop trusting relationships with staff members and therefore are more likely to succeed in their education.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The following are recommendations by the researcher for further research on this or branching topics. First, because the interviews pooled only a small sample of the actual student and advisor population, it would be recommended that the interviews be conducted with a larger population. This would allow for the researcher to gather a more encompassing population and opinion.

Second, it would be ideal to conduct the research long-term. The researcher believes it would be beneficial to begin the study with students within their freshman year and conduct a check-in with them throughout their semesters until graduation. This would allow the researcher to examine the developing relationship of a student and their advisor, as well as how the various programs and services on campus are utilized. This would be particularly interesting since some students do not see the value in certain advising services until their final semesters at a college or university.

Finally, because of the small student population, the researcher was not able to gain access to and interview students who utilized every advising service noted within the research. It would be recommended that in future studies that the researcher be sure to represent every advising capacity with a student who has used the program or service. This will allow the researcher to better compare the advisors interpretation of the advising sessions, services, and practices with how the student is interpreting their experiences.
REFERENCES


Advisor Interview Guide

I am looking to interview Chico State staff who regularly advise students in various capacities. I would like to ask you some questions to gather information about the types of advising you practice, how this influences and assists in student choices, as well as your views on holistic advising. The entire process should take less than an hour and will consist of a brief interview. If you are uncomfortable at any time, feel free to skip a question. Also, feel free to ask for clarification. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am just looking to learn more about your practices as advisors.

1. Tell me about the type of advising you do.
2. What type of students do you typically meet with?
3. Do you feel that having knowledge of a student’s personal challenge, culture, personal stresses, financial situations, and academic and career influences would enhance your abilities to better advise students, in particular first-generation students? If so, why?
4. How often are you aware of such factors when advising students?
APPENDIX B
I am looking to interview students who are first-generation university students as a part of my Masters thesis research. This means that these students are the first in their family (excluding brothers and sisters) to attend college. These students may have also attended a community college prior to a four-year university. I would like to ask you some questions to gather information about your experience with advising. The entire experience should take less than an hour and will include a brief questionnaire and interview. If you are uncomfortable at any time feel free to skip a question. Also, feel free to ask for clarification. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am just looking to learn more about your experiences.

1. What were your expectations for advising as you entered Chico State?
2. Please explain how your expectations compared to reality.
3. Did you encounter any surprises? If so, please describe them.
4. Do (Did) you meet with an advisor regularly? What kind of advisor?
5. Tell me about the advising programs and services that were offered or presented to you?
6. How many of these programs and services did you utilize?
7. Which ones were, in your opinion, the most beneficial? Which ones were the least?
8. Please describe any additional experiences you encountered (Academically, personally, socially) that you feel have helped you succeed.
9. Please describe any helps or hindrances to your advising experience.
10. Tell me about any particular challenges you faced.
11. Did you find anything (or anyone) particularly helpful in helping you make academic and career decisions?
12. Please describe anything that you feel could have been done to better assist you.
13. Is there anything that you wish your advisors would have asked about or known about while assisting you?
14. Was there anything else you wish you would have known prior to meeting an advisor?
15. Imagine that Chico State is beginning a new advising program specifically for first-generation students, if there was one thing you could suggest for the program what would it be?
16. Do you feel that advisors at Chico State were particularly knowledgeable of the challenges that you face as a first-generation student?
17. Do you feel that advisors at Chico State were particularly interested in challenges that you face as a first-generation student?
18. How do you feel that having an advisor who understands your culture, personal stresses, financial situations, academic and career influences would enhance your abilities for college and career success?
APPENDIX C
## Interview Coding Sheets

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<th>Personal Stresses</th>
<th>Academic Preparedness</th>
<th>Financial Difficulties</th>
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<th>Cultural/Ethnic Inclusion</th>
<th>Developmental Readiness</th>
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<td>College life, family, loneliness, personal adjustments, etc.</td>
<td>Concerns, fears, inadequacies, challenges</td>
<td>Questioning the value of education, does the student have the support needed to complete their education?</td>
<td>Balancing homework &amp; work, family, children, social obligations, relationships, need for self-discovery (could be a subcategory of personal stresses).</td>
<td>Factors that limit student’s social and academic success due to cultural/ethnic differences.</td>
<td>Factors influencing readiness to live away from home, attend and be successful in a college campus, and create a new professional/social network.</td>
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<td>Exploration of interests and opportunities</td>
<td>Connected with relevant persons in career and social</td>
<td>Challenging and relevant to career goals, tutoring and assistance</td>
<td>Does the institution fit the student’s needs? Does the student have a positive perception of</td>
<td>Student connection to resources on-campus, relevance of resources, academic and</td>
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<td>Knowledge of Holistic Factors</td>
<td>Application of Holistic Practices</td>
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<td>Understanding of how knowledge of factors enhance advising abilities and practice.</td>
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<td>Noteworthy items not accounted by other categories</td>
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APPENDIX D
Student survey

Age _________

Ethnic group/race:
☐ American Indian
☐ Asian
☐ Black/African American
☐ Hispanic/Latino
☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
☐ White
☐ Decline to State
☐ Nonresident/Alien

Gender
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Transgender
☐ Other
☐ Decline to state

Marital Status
☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ Other

Number of Children_____

Major:_________________________

Did you attend a community college: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what community college did you transfer from? ________________________________

Did you live away from home while going to community college? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you living away from home while attending Chico State? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, are you living: ☐ on campus ☐ off campus?

If off campus, do you have roommates? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, did you know them prior to transferring?
How would you characterize your enrollment at Chico State:
☐ Full time (12 units or more)
☐ Less than full time (less than 12 units)

How many hours did you work for pay on average per week while going to community college?
☐ Zero
☐ 1-10
☐ 11-20
☐ 21-30
☐ 31-40
☐ More than 40 hours

How many hours do you work for pay on average per week while attending Chico State?
☐ Zero
☐ 1-10
☐ 11-20
☐ 21-30
☐ 31-40
☐ More than 40 hours

Will you be working on or off campus?
☐ On-campus
☐ Off campus

Is your current job related to your future career goals?

If you attended community college, did you meet with an advisor at your community college?
☐ Yes: college, career, both, other: _______________
☐ No

Did your advisor show concern or interest in any of the following? (check all that apply)
☐ academic concerns
☐ academic preparedness
☐ career or vocational selection
☐ career or vocational preparation
☐ networking
☐ finances
☐ cultural influences or interests
☐ personal stresses (e.g. work, family, outside obligations, relationships, etc.)
☐ mental health
☐ time constraints (e.g. social obligations, work, family, relationships, etc.)
☐ Other: _______________________
Have you met with an advisor at Chico State
☐ Yes: college, career, both, EOP, CCLC, other:__________________
☐ No

Did you advisor show concern or interest in any of the following? (check all that apply)
☐ academic concerns
☐ academic preparedness
☐ career or vocational selection
☐ career or vocational preparation
☐ networking
☐ finances
☐ cultural influences or interests
☐ personal stresses (e.g. work, family, outside obligations, relationships, etc.)
☐ mental health
☐ time constraints (e.g. social obligations, work, family, relationships, etc.)
☐ Other:_____________________

Academically, how would you describe your transition from your previous school/college to Chico State:
☐ Very easy
☐ Somewhat easy
☐ Neither easy nor difficult
☐ Somewhat difficult
☐ Very difficult

Socially, how would you describe your transition from your previous school/college to Chico State:
☐ Very easy
☐ Somewhat easy
☐ Neither easy nor difficult
☐ Somewhat difficult
☐ Very difficult
### Survey results

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<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Did you attend CC/College prior</th>
<th>Which one</th>
<th>Did you live away from home?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>24</td>
<td>American Indian, White, Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sustainable Manufacturing (Senior)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Communication (MA)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Vanguard University</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>hispanic/latino</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Criminal Justice (Freshman)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>single</td>
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<td>Communication Studies (Senior)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>Organizational Communication- Public Affairs (ALUM)</td>
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<td>San Jose State, West Valley CC</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>sociology/women's studies (Senior)</td>
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<td>na</td>
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<tr>
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<td>female</td>
<td>single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>psychology (ALUM)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>butte college</td>
<td>no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you living away from home now?</td>
<td>on or off campus</td>
<td>roommates?</td>
<td>did you know them prior</td>
<td>enrollment time</td>
<td>Working hours before chico</td>
<td>Working hours at Chico</td>
<td>on or off campus</td>
<td>related to career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
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<td>yes</td>
<td>off-campus</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>full-time</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>11-20.</td>
<td>on-campus</td>
<td>no</td>
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<tr>
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<td>yes</td>
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<td>21-30</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>off-campus</td>
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<td>na</td>
<td>full-time</td>
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<td>1-10.</td>
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<td>not sure</td>
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<tr>
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<td>full-time</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>11-20.</td>
<td>on-campus</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>yes/no</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>21-30</td>
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<td>21-30</td>
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<td>Concerns</td>
<td>Did You Meet with an Advisor at Chico</td>
<td>Academic Concerns</td>
<td>Academic Transition</td>
<td>Social Transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>academic preparedness, networking, time contraints</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
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<td>very easy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>yes</td>
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<td>very easy</td>
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<td>academic concerns</td>
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<td>very difficult</td>
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<td>neither easy nor difficult</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>yes</td>
<td>academic concerns, academic preparedness, finances, personal stresses</td>
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<td>na</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academic concerns</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>academic concerns</td>
<td>somewhat easy</td>
<td>neither easy nor difficult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


California State University, Chico
Chico, California 95929-0875
Office of Graduate Studies
530-898-6880
Fax: 530-898-3342
www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies

October 5, 2015

Amber Morley
648 W. 2nd Ave, Apt. H
Chico, CA 95926

Dear Amber Morley,

As the Chair of the Campus Institutional Review Board, I have determined that your research proposal entitled "An Exploration to Determine the Importance of Holistic Advising for First-Generation University Student Success." is exempt from full committee review. This clearance allows you to proceed with your study.

I do ask that you notify our office should there be any further modifications to, or complications arising from or within, the study. In addition, should this project continue longer than the authorized date, you will need to apply for an extension from our office. When your data collection is complete, you will need to turn in the attached Post Data Collection Report for final approval. Students should be aware that failure to comply with any HSRC requirements will delay graduation. If you should have any questions regarding this clearance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Mahoney, Ph.D., Chair
Human Subjects in Research Committee

Attachment: Post Data Collection Report

cc: Charles G. Zartman, (222)
HUMAN SUBJECTS IN REVIEW COMMITTEE
Post Data Collection Questionnaire

Under Federal law relating to the protection of Human Subjects, this report is to be completed by each Principal Investigator at the end of data collection.

Please return to: Marshia Osborne, HSRC Assistant Office of Graduate Studies
Student Services Center (SSC), Room 460
CSU, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0875

Or Fax to: Marshia Osborne, 530-898-3342

Name: Amber Morley Chico State Portal ID# 003724047
Phone(s) 925-917-2856 Email: amorley7@gmail.com
Faculty Advisor name (if student): Dr. Charles Zartman 530-898-4049

College/Department: Social Science

Title of Project: An Exploratory to Determine the Impact Holistic Advising in First-Generation University Students

Date application was approved (mo/yr.): 10/15 Date collection complete (mo/yr.): 01/10

How many subjects were recruited? 17 How many subjects actually completed the project? 14

*HARM—Did subjects have severe reactions or extreme emotional response? NO

If yes, please attach a detailed explanation:

Your signature: ____________________________ Date: 2/10/10

*Final clearance will not be granted without a complete answer to this question.

Approved By: ____________________________ Date: 2/10/10

John Mahoney, Chair

*************************************************************************************************

VERY IMPORTANT: If you will or have used this research in your project or thesis you are required to provide a copy of this form (with John Mahoney’s signature in place) to your graduate committee.

Do you want a photo copy of this form emailed to you? ____________________________

If yes, provide email address: ____________________________
APPENDIX G
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Name of Study:
An Exploration to Determine the Importance of Holistic Advising for First-Generation University Student Success.

The Department of Social Science at California State University, Chico supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, California State University, Chico, or the services that you may receive.

The purpose of this research study is to examine how the concept of holistic advising is influencing the experiences and success of first-generation university students. Holistic advising can be defined as the advising of the “whole student”. It requires advisors to communicate with students and take into consideration factors such as student academic concerns, personal stresses, finances, time constraints, and other factors that influence a student’ academic and career decisions.

The research study is designed to investigate how holistic advising influences first-generation students success through staff understanding of culture, student finances, and influences on academic and vocational choices. Amber Morley, a graduate student at California State University, Chico, is conducting the study. Participation in the study involves the completion of a 45 minute interview. Interviews conducted in-person will be audiotaped by the researcher and later transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. All other interviews will be conducted via email or mail. In-person interviews will be conducted at a setting that is mutually agreeable to the participant and the researcher.

There are no risks or discomforts that are anticipated from your participation in this study. Possible risks or discomforts include a possible emotional response when answering questions during the interview.

The anticipated benefit of participation is the opportunity to discuss feelings, perceptions, and suggestions related to the concept of holistic advising for a first-generation student.

The information gathered during this study will remain confidential in a locked drawer during this project. Only the researcher, Dr. Charles Zartman, Lee Walker, and Dr. Stephanie Hamel will have access to the study data and information. Your name will not be recorded at any time. All tapes and notes that were used to complete this study will be destroyed after the completion of the study. The results of the research will be published in the form of a graduate paper and may be published in a professional journal or presented at a professional meeting.

Participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty. Each participant is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time without prejudice from this institution.
QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions and requests for assistance should be directed to Marsha Osborne, HSRC assistant, at 530-898-5413. Student Services Center (SSC), Room 460 or John Mahoney, Ph.D. Chair, HSRC, at jmahoney@csuchico.edu.

PARTICIPATION CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may contact Amber Morley by calling (925) 917-2856 or emailing amorley7@gmail.com or contacting Dr. Charles Zartman at czartman@csuchico.edu (530) 898-4069.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

____________________________________       ___________________________
Type/Print Participant’s Name                   Date

________________________________________
Participant’s Signature

Researcher Contact Information:

Amber Morley                                   Dr. Charles Zartman
Principle Investigator                         Faculty Supervisor
Social Science Department                     School of Education
Butte 611                                      Tehama 217
California State University, Chico             California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929                                Chico, CA 95929
(530) 898-5688                                 (530) 898-4069
INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. My name is Amber Morley and I am a graduate student at California State University, Chico focusing on Career and Life Planning. I too was a first-generation student to Chico State and I am very interested in learning about how holistic or "whole student" advising influences the success and experiences of first-generation students. It is my goal to be able to assist university staff in understanding the benefit of this type of advising and how a deeper understanding of the student will aid in their decision making and college success. This includes how being a first-generation student influences academic and vocational choices, financial stresses, academic and social preparedness, and cultural perceptions. Your contribution to this study is vital in the effort to gain understanding of the needs of first-generation students and how universities can better serve your fellow students. Please know that your contribution in this study is voluntary and there are no consequences at all if you decide not to participate or want to discontinue your participation in the study.

How will the study take place?
This study will take place over a series of interviews for the purpose of determining the importance of holistic advising for first-generation students vocational choices. I will be recording all accounts through written and audio notes during face-to-face interviews. Email interviews will serve as written notes for the purpose of this study.

What will I be asked to do?
I will be asking you to provide me with information about your experiences with advising on campus (if you are a student) or information about your advising practices (if you are a staff member) to assist in my data analysis. I may collect your contributions written via email or through face-to-face interviews. During the interview process I will not be attributing any specific comments to a person’s name.

Who will see my contribution?
Your name and identifying characteristics will remain confidential and will not be included in any papers or documents produced from this study. I will make every effort to insure your privacy. A final report of this study will be published to meet graduation requirements established by California State University, Chico and may be published in academic publications.

I’m interested in participating. What do I do now?
If you are still willing to be part of this study, please reply to this message and confirm what secure email address you like for me to use when corresponding with you for the duration of the study. I may only be contacting you to clarify a contribution you have made to the study or to deliver the final report. Your reply will be considered your agreement to take part in this study. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me at (925) 917-2856 or
amorley7@gmail.com or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Charles Zartman, at czartman@csuchico.edu.

Thank you for your time and interest in participating. If you have any question for me at this point, please feel free to ask them now or as they come up during the study.