Supporting Undeclared Students Facing Academic Probation

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Supporting Undeclared Students Facing Academic Probation

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With retention and attrition rates being a high priority at institutions, it is imperative that support personnel, such as academic advisors, help students maintain good academic standing in college. The purpose of this research study was to determine if mandatory interventions such as intrusive academic advising and a student success plan academically helped undeclared first- and second-year students facing academic probation. Guiding questions for this study included the following: (a) What are students' perceptions of intrusive academic advising? (b) To what extent did students who engaged in intrusive academic advising increase their GPA at final semester? and (c) What are students' perceptions of the student success plan contributing to their academic performance in the second half of the semester? This mixed methods study collected data from 10 first- and second-year undeclared students in the humanities and social sciences via qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative methods consisted of a semi-structured interview, student success plan, and weekly academic advising appointments. The quantitative methods consisted of two surveys issued at the halfway point of the study and at the completion of the study.

The major findings of the study indicated that (a) students perceived mandatory interventions to be beneficial, (b) college experiences and expectations differed for students, and (c) COVID-19 impacted students academically and non-academically throughout the fall 2020 semester. In addition to these findings, 50 percent of students improved their grade point average from mid-semester to final grades, resulting in good academic standing for the spring 2021 semester. Using these findings, the researcher formulated a set of recommendations to improve

academic advising for undeclared first- and second-year students facing academic probation. These included (a) strengthening the advisor/advisee relationship, (b) requiring academic advising appointments, (c) designing and implementing a student success plan, (d) creating first-year workshop courses, (e) developing an early warning system to alert students and advisors of academic progress and, (f) creating a peer mentoring program.

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Preface

First and foremost, thank you to my committee members for helping me through this process. Dr. Charlene Trovato, Dr. Maximilian Schuster, and Dr. Rubab Jafry O'Connor, I sincerely appreciate all of your support and guidance throughout this journey.

Secondly, thank you to my family. I would not be where I am today without the love and support from each and every one of you. To my dad – thank you for always being there for me. You are my biggest cheerleader in everything that I do. I could not have done this without your endless support and encouragement. To my mom – I wish you were here, but I know you were with me every step of the way.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Study

Academic advising plays an essential role in students' collegiate educational experience and can be seen as a beneficial resource. Research shows that advising is vital to students because it provides structure and helps students develop career and educational goals (Crockett, 1985; Light, 2001). Academic advising aims to accommodate all students so that they can make reasoned decisions as they set and enact their life goals (White, 2015). It is critical that academic advisors guide, support, and nurture the advisor and advisee relationship while providing consistent advising throughout a student's academic journey.

Academic advising is an invaluable asset throughout a student's academic career, but it may be even more valuable to students facing academic probation. Research shows academic advising to promote student retention, persistence, and success for students who are on academic probation (Darling, 2015; Kot, 2014; Swecker, Fifolt & Searby, 2013; Walters & Seyedian 2016). Trombly (2000) found that students on academic probation are considered more at risk of being academically suspended from an institution, so early academic advising interventions such as intrusive advising can be seen as beneficial.

Intrusive advising, or high involvement advising, is an advising approach that holds the student accountable for problem solving and decision making while identifying solutions and establishing agreements between the student and advisor for future success (Vander Schee, 2007). It is one of the most frequently used advising approaches that supports students on probation

(Higgins, 2003; King, 2005) and has a goal of helping students feel cared for by the institution (Varney, 2003).

In addition to an intrusive advising approach, how a student perceives the academic advising process as a whole is critical as students rely heavily on advisors to provide direction in major curricula, course selection, and progress towards graduation (Miller & Murray, 2005; Oliver, Ricard, Witt, Alvarado, & Hill, 2010). When a student's perception of an academic advisor is positive, this may lead to greater student confidence which can then motivate the student and increase the likelihood of persisting towards graduation (Bitz, 2010; Burt et al., 2013; Chandler & Potter, 2012). An intrusive advising model may often help to motivate students, improve retention, and improve academic achievement in the classroom (Schwebel et al., 2012).

1.2 Background of the Study

At a highly competitive private university in Southwestern Pennsylvania, students start their academic journey by being assigned to an academic advisor in a centralized advising center. The advising center is responsible for advising undeclared students until they declare a primary major in a department. The college consists of 10 different academic departments with various majors and minors. Once a student declares their major, they are assigned to a departmental advisor who assumes all advising responsibilities for that student. The advisor in the advising center then becomes a secondary advisor, who supports the student with general questions and/or college requirements outside of the major curriculum. Faculty and professional staff advisors make up the advisors in the departments, each with varying levels of experience, expertise, and educational backgrounds.

Many challenges have arisen when students transition between academic advisors after declaring their majors, with inconsistent support being one of the most common. One of the biggest challenges in the college is the lack of communication among the departments, advising center, and students. With multiple advisors and lack of clear communication, students can become confused and frustrated when deciding who they should be seeking for guidance, causing them to shy away from advising appointments completely. Students who feel confused or frustrated may not seek out the help of their academic advisors if they do not know where to begin, or even how to ask for help. This can be problematic for all students, but specifically for those students on or facing academic probation, who may need support the most.

For a student to be placed on academic probation, they must fall below the minimum academic threshold set forth by the college. The current probation policy states that in order to remain in good academic standing, a student must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average for upperclassmen and a 1.75 grade point average for first-year students (Institutional website, 2021). Although minimum GPA standards are established, the college lacks protocols for academic advisors and students to follow while navigating the probation period to help return the student to good academic standing.

Once a student is placed on academic probation, they have a total of two semesters to achieve the minimum academic threshold before being academically suspended for a year. Once suspended, students are unable to participate in any college activities; however, they are highly encouraged to take courses elsewhere for transfer credit, obtain employment, or seek necessary resources to prepare them for a successful transition back to college. Although most students take advantage of these outside opportunities and submit the appropriate paperwork to resume their

studies after serving the year suspension, some do not, directly impacting student retention rates in the college.

1.3 Problem of Practice

Every semester a group of undeclared students in the humanities and social sciences college gets placed on academic probation at the end of the semester due to not meeting the minimum grade threshold set forth by the college. Prior to COVID-19, the number of undeclared students getting placed on academic probation was on the rise. In fall 2019, the college saw the highest number of undeclared students on an academic action over the last five years. Due to the increase in the number of students being placed on academic probation, both students and academic advisors are now faced with the complexities of navigating the academic probation period to return students to good academic standing. Research shows that providing academic advising can help improve retention and attrition rates, in addition to helping the student be academically successful (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008; White, 2015). Academic advisors have the responsibility of providing consistent advising support to students; however, the support given to these students is inconsistent across the college. This results in students receiving various level of support with some students potentially receiving no support at all.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to determine if mandatory interventions such as intrusive academic advising and a student success plan help support undeclared first- and second-year students academically when facing academic probation. The humanities and social sciences college was specifically selected because of the current advising structure and protocols, or lack thereof, when a student is placed on academic probation. Due to the decentralized nature of the college, advisors have the freedom to advise students as they see fit as there is no consistency across the college in advising theories or best practices. This means that students could be receiving the support needed to return to good academic standing while other students may be receiving no support at all.

1.5 Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

As an academic advisor, it is not uncommon for me to see students who are experiencing academic difficulty also struggling with life outside of the classroom. As research shows, the first year of college is one of uncertainty and an adjustment period while acclimating to a new environment (Bernier, Larose & Whipple, 2005). Some students can navigate the complexity of what college brings, whereas others simply struggle to find their place and where they feel they fit in. Students who cannot find the support needed at the institution may begin looking elsewhere to finish their college education, which can directly impact the retention rates of the college.

Approximately 38 percent of students who leave their initial institution do so between their first and second year of college (Tinto, 2012). Reasons for students leaving their current institution

can include insufficient financial support, failure to adjust, academic difficulty, enduring uncertainty, lack of goal setting, isolationism, and lack of commitment (Tinto, 1993). Academic advising, while only one resource for retaining students, is viewed as a unique contributor to a student's educational journey. Advising is now seen as crucial if institutions are to achieve goals of persistence and timely graduation, in addition to the humane goals of student self-realization and growth (Thomas, 2017).

The impact of my study will not only benefit first- and second-year undeclared students in the college, but all students who may be in jeopardy of being placed on academic probation or other disciplinary action at the end of the semester. In addition, academic advisors will benefit as this study will help to provide more consistency in advising practices across the college and potentially the university.

2.0 Review of Supporting Knowledge

Academic advising plays an essential role in a student's collegiate educational experience and is seen as a beneficial resource to help promote student success. Research shows that advising is vital to students because it provides structure and helps students develop career and educational goals (Crockett, 1985; Light, 2001). Academic advising aims to support all students so that they can make reasoned decisions as they set and enact their life goals (White, 2015). It is critical that academic advisors guide, support, and nurture the advisor and advisee relationship while providing consistent advising throughout college for students to be academically successful.

Research shows academic advising to promote student retention, persistence, and success for students who are on academic probation (Darling, 2015; Kot, 2014; Swecker, Fifolt & Searby, 2013; Walters & Seyedian 2016). Although academic advising has been seen throughout literature to help institutions' retention rates, there are other factors that impact student retention. Some of these include student demographics such as socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, and first-generation college student status; a student's academic record consisting of high school GPA, ACT/SAT scores, and first semester GPA; and personal characteristics and behaviors such as academic motivation to complete a degree, study habits, and overall transition to college (Fenollar et al., 2007; Upcraft & Stephens, 2000; Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005).

To gain a deeper understanding of how academic advising impacts students on, or facing, academic probation, the literature review takes an in-depth look into three areas: academic advising, academic probation, and two advising theories consisting of developmental and intrusive advising. First, this chapter provides context by outlining the importance of academic advising in higher education, what academic advising entails, and the importance of both professional and

faculty advisors. Second, this chapter reviews academic probation, what may cause a student to be placed on probation, and some of the interventions that are used with students on academic probation. Finally, this chapter discusses the two advising approaches academic advisors commonly use when supporting students on academic probation, the effect advising may have on retention, and the strategies in helping return students to good academic standing or achieving above the minimum academic threshold.

2.1 Academic Advising

Academic advising is a campus-wide responsibility in which advisors, faculty, staff, and students work together to promote student success (Campbell & Nutt, 2008). Advising can be a valuable asset to all students in college and can be an advantageous resource for students who are on academic probation. With the help and support of an academic advisor, students can learn how to navigate their probation period to achieve good academic standing by the end of the semester.

2.1.1 What is Academic Advising?

There is no formal definition of academic advising due to the various roles it plays across departments and institutions; however, it can generally be defined as applying the knowledge of the field to empower students, the campus, and community members to successfully navigate academic interactions related to higher education (Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski, & Barkemeyer, 2018). Although the definition may vary across institutions, the principles of supporting, coaching, mentoring, and providing guidance to students is an integral part of all

advising structures (Allen et al., 2013; D'Alessio & Banerjee, 2016; Darling, 2015; Ellis, 2014). Academic advising can range from a structured process focusing on course and degree completion to providing students resources to navigate complex times (Campbell & McWilliams, 2016). Academic advising can help with student transitions at various points of their collegiate careers, which can be beneficial when providing support to overcome academic challenges that may arise in future semesters (Teasley & Buchanan, 2013).

2.1.2 Models of Advising

The lack of a common definition of advising allows administrators to use or create any model of advising structure appropriate for a specific student population (Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski, & Barkemeyer, 2018). Habley (1983) broke down academic advising structures into seven models that institutions still use today in different capacities. These models include: the faculty-only model, the supplementary model, the split-model, the dual model, the total intake model, the satellite model, and the self-contained model.

2.1.2.1 Faculty-only Model of Advising

The faculty-only model is described as students being assigned to a specific faculty member by some sort of qualification or academic characteristic. Qualifications are typically assigned based on a particular major or minor (Pardee, 2004). Students who are undeclared are generally assigned to faculty members in the liberal arts, faculty members who volunteer to advise undeclared students, or faculty members with lower caseloads of students (Habley, 1983). The faculty-only model is the model of choice at private institutions with 36 percent of two-year

institutions and 39 percent of four-year institutions using this specific model of advising (Pardee, 2004).

2.1.2.2 Supplementary Model of Advising

The supplementary model assigns students to faculty members for specific advising, such as major curriculum, while an advising office is used to provide general academic information (Habley, 1983). The supplementary model is the second-most popular advising structure at private institutions with 21percent at two-year institutions and 26 percent at four-year institutions (Pardee, 2004).

2.1.2.3 Split-model of Advising

The split-model incorporates an advising office on campus that advises only a certain group of students such as undeclared students, unprepared students, etc., while all other students are assigned to faculty advisors or other advising units (Habley & McCauley, 1987). The split-model is used at nearly half (46 percent) of public four-year colleges and universities (Pardee, 2004).

2.1.2.4 Dual Model of Advising

The dual model complements both the supplementary and split model of advising because a student has a faculty advisor who advises on a specific major, and an advisor in a designated advising office who advises on general education requirements, procedures, and policies. King (1993) found that the dual model may indicate an institution's belief in a faculty advising system, but, in reality, faculty may not be able to meet with the student physically or meet the unique needs of student constituencies, therefore resulting in a dual model with shared responsibilities.

2.1.2.5 Total Intake Model of Advising

The total intake model requires staff in an administrative unit to advise all students until a specific time period, or until certain requirements have been met. Once requirements are completed, students are then assigned to a faculty member (Habley, 1983). The complexity of requirements can vary at each institution, ranging from completing one semester of college to completing all general education requirements in a single advising office before transferring to a new advisor (Habley & McCauley, 1987).

2.1.2.6 Satellite Model of Advising

The satellite model is decentralized; each school, college, or division at the institution has its own established approach to advising students (Habley, 1983). This model is most commonly used with exploratory students who are undeclared. After declaring a major, students are then assigned to a specific departmental advisor (Habley & McCauley, 1987). The 2011 National Survey of Academic Advising conducted by American College Testing and NACADA found that satellite models are slowly but steadily declining across institutions due to their decentralized structure (Carlstrom & Miller, 2013).

2.1.2.7 Self-contained Model of Advising

The self-contained model allows a dean or director to advise all students throughout their collegiate careers and is the only one entirely centralized advising structure (Habley, 1983). The self-contained model is on the rise, with the percentage of institutions adopting this model at 14 percent in 2004 but increasing to 29 percent in 2011 (Carlstrom & Miller, 2013; Habley, 2004).

2.1.2.8 Structures of Advising Models

The structures are broken down further into three groups: centralized, decentralized, and shared (Pardee, 2004). Professional and faculty advisors who are housed in one academic or administrative unit make up centralized advising structures, decentralized structures are located in their respective departments, and shared advising structure refers to professional advisors meeting students in a central administrative unit such as an academic advising center, while other students are being advised in academic departments or by their major advisor (Pardee, 2004). No specific advising model is used at the majority of institutions; however, more than 50 percent of large institutions that utilize professional advisors choose the self-contained model. Private bachelor colleges use faculty-only models who utilize more faculty as advisors, and more public bachelor colleges and universities use a shared split-model that utilizes both faculty and professional advisors (Carlstrom & Miller, 2013).

Lynch (2002) surveyed 1,370 students on their satisfaction with their academic advisors using the data from the NACADA Academic Advising Survey in 2000 and found no significant differences between institutions using centralized models of advising compared to those using decentralized models of advising; however, students still indicated areas for improvement in advising at their specific institutions. Research consistently indicates that regardless of the advising model used, the key factor in the success of an advising model is how the model fits in with institutions' culture, goals, policies and procedures, and student needs (Habley & Morales, 1998).

In addition to the multiple advising structures that can be used throughout departments and institutions, there are also different types of advisors that can help assist students. Two of the most common types of advisors are faculty advisors and professional academic advisors. Research

concludes that there are positive and negative attributes associated with both types when supporting students on probation (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008).

2.1.3 Faculty Advisors

Faculty advisors are individuals whose primary responsibility at an institution is to teach and conduct research, with their focus on advising relating to the major curriculum or career opportunities related to a specific major (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008). Faculty interactions can improve students' development as critical thinkers, help students to gain confidence in their academic abilities, and help to embrace and foster a connection to the campus community (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Some faculty, however, view academic advising as a bothersome add-on to their already heavy workload. Therefore, how a faculty advisor perceives the advising role can greatly impact the amount of time and effort they put into advising their students (Wallace, 2011).

The advantages of having faculty advisors available to help support students is the knowledge that the faculty advisor has of the specific major requirements outlined in the curriculum and the knowledge needed to help students understand course material better in the classroom, directly affecting the outcome of students' grades (Habley & Morales, 1998). Reinarz (2000) describes faculty advisors as being able to understand course content and answer discipline-specific questions to help provide students with consistent and accurate information. In addition to advising, faculty have also been shown to act as mentors to students because of the relationship building that can occur inside the classroom by continued weekly meetings and consistent contact with the student (King & Kerr, 2005). Faculty advisors can build rapport with students inside the classroom as instructors and as advisors but can also experience challenges with the complexity of

their role at an institution due to their multiple responsibilities of teaching, researching, and publishing (Habley & Morales, 1998).

When faculty advisors have a large number of advisees, it can cause stress for the faculty member because of the amount of time that is needed to support students while managing other assignments on campus (Krush & Winn, 2010). According to Wallace (2011) the average caseload of 25 students is manageable and encouraging for full-time faculty; however, the number varies based on institution type and advising model. Research also shows that faculty may experience difficulty advising students in more complex student situations that occur outside of the classroom, including personal or social problems, due to the lack of skills and training they are provided (Reinarz, 2000). Training of faculty advisors on high-quality advising and providing the appropriate support and resources that faculty advisors can access is critical in providing the best advising possible for the student; however, data from the 2011 NACADA National Survey indicate that most faculty advisors do not receive the external and internal training and professional development opportunities needed to support students (Brown, 2008; King, 2000).

2.1.4 Professional Advisors

By the mid twentieth century, faculty members started to share advising responsibilities with professional advisors, who took over much of the advising responsibility from the faculty (Bloom & He, 2013; Habley & McCauley, 1987). In addition to faculty advisors, full-time professional academic advisors help to support students in various ways academically and non-academically. Professional advisors are individuals who have been hired to focus primarily on academic advising activities that promote the success of students. Professional advisors spend a majority of their time meeting with students on academic curriculum requirements for their major

interests, as well as helping students to navigate personal success strategies and learn how to deal and cope with developmental issues (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008).

The advantage of having professional advisors is their ability to focus on the student holistically, without having additional responsibilities that faculty advisors are assigned to such as research, publications, or instructing (Krush & Winn, 2010; Kuh et al., 2005). Professional advisors can also put more time into supporting an individual student with more frequent appointments throughout the academic year, unlike faculty advisors. However, researchers have found that professional advisors are less knowledgeable than faculty members regarding career opportunities and making referrals to various resources across campus (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008).

Although there are faculty and professional academic advisors, the main focus remains on helping students and setting them up for academic success. There is inconsistent literature on what type of advisor a student prefers since those preferences vary by student needs and the overall institutional structure. Habley (1994), for example, found few differences with overall student satisfaction between faculty and professional advisors in his Survey of Academic Advising, a seminal large-scale study consisting of over 40,000 student responses. Similarly, in a more recent study, Allard and Parashar (2013) found in their multi-method two-phased approach with 3,331 students surveyed at a mid-sized university that students rated their quality of advising very similarly between faculty and professional advisors; however, faculty advisors ranked higher than professional advisors in personalization, one of the key qualities students look for in advisors. The authors concluded their study by quoting a student in one of their focus groups:

Some advisors are a lot better than others. They seem to go out of their way for you. When they don't, you feel discouraged. So, having a good advisor that at least seems to care can make all the difference in a collegiate career.

One of the goals of academic advising is not only to provide support for the student academically, but to get to know them on a more personal level to better assist them in complex and challenging times. Regardless of the advising model, or whether a student is being advised by a faculty member or professional advisor, it is crucial for a student to take advantage of advising resources on campus to get the support needed to overcome academic and non-academic challenges that may arise throughout their collegiate careers.

2.2 Academic Probation

Academic probation is a tool used by numerous institutions to ensure students achieve minimum academic standards (Lindo, Sanders, & Oreopoulos, 2010). Academic probation acts as an academic warning for students whose academic performance falls below a minimum threshold set by the institution (Higgins, 2003). For most institutions, students are placed on academic probation if their grade point average falls below a 2.0 for the semester; however, each institution can vary based on university protocols. The goals of probation policies are to provide students with an opportunity to improve academic performance and, therefore, decrease the chance of departure (Moss & Yeaton, 2015). Academic probation policies help to alert underperforming students that the continuation of low grades, or not meeting the minimum academic standards set by the institution, could lead to suspension or dismissal. The policy can also serve the purpose of directing students to campus-based support services such as individual tutoring, group seminars,

or other resources to help return to good academic standing (Coleman & Freedman, 1996; Tovar & Simon, 2006; Yang, Yon, & Kim, 2013).

2.2.1 Possible Causes of Academic Probation and Academic Difficulty

Since research shows that students who are on academic probation are considered more likely to drop out of an institution due to academic difficulty (Cholewa & Ramaswami, 2015; Gauthier, 2016; Trombley, 2000), it is imperative for academic advisors to help determine what may be causing their difficulty and provide support to that student. Although academic difficulty is considered a primary reason for students underperforming, it is important to note that students are placed on academic probation for a variety of reasons, including academic and non-academic issues. James and Graham (2010) found that students facing more personal factors, including family or health issues, were more likely to be placed on academic probation than those dealing with academic factors such as lack of interest in pursuing education or transitioning to college. In addition, Holland (2005) found that students were placed on academic probation because of their inability to manage roles and responsibilities in their families and social lives. When first matriculating to college, first-year students can also face the added complexity of transitioning to a new environment in which they are learning to balance both social and academic priorities.

Research shows the first year of college is the most critical for students to successfully transition to a new college community both socially and academically (Goenner, Harris, & Pauls, 2013; Honkimaki & Kalman, 2012; Kuh et al., 2005; Palmer et al., 2009). Studies also show that positive peer relationships are an essential piece of the college transition process (Hicks & Heastie, 2008; Palmer et al., 2009; Renn & Arnold, 2003). O'Keefe (2013) found that having a minimum of one connection with a peer increases the student's sense of belonging to the institution. In

addition to connecting students with peers, academic advisors can also play a valuable role in helping students transition and feel more integrated into a college community as advisors are, at times, the first adult contact a student makes when matriculating to college (Smith, Dai, & Szelest, 2006). When a student creates a positive connection with an academic advisor, this can lead to an increase in retention, satisfaction with the institution, and overall success (Terenzini, 1993; Tinto, 1987). These connections, in addition to creating a sense of belonging to the institution, are critical in retaining students if they experience difficulties in adapting to the new college environment (Christie, Munro, & Fisher, 2004; Tinto, 2012).

In addition to students integrating socially into the college community, students also need to adjust to a new academic environment. Factors such as motivation and self-efficacy can influence academic achievement. Academic self-efficacy is defined as students' confidence that they can perform adequately in the university environment and is shown to be a key correlate of academic achievement (Chemers et al., 2001). Researchers have found a consistent relationship between motivation and academic achievement (Richardson et al., 2012) with academic self-efficacy being the strongest non-cognitive correlation with GPA (Robbins et al., 2004). Literature also shows that academic self-efficacy is a strong influential factor when looking at academic achievement among first-year college students GPA and can be a reliable indicator when predicting grades and overall student achievement (Fenollar, Roman, & Cuestas, 2007; Hseigh, Sullivan, & Guerra, 2007; Lent et al., 1987).

When adjusting to a new academic curriculum, students may also need to adjust academic habits from high school to be successful in college. Various academic, social, and personal situations such as poor academic preparation, inadequate time management skills, and lack of study skills are some of the many reasons that may cause a student to be placed on academic

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probation at the end of each semester (Seirup & Rose, 2011; Tover & Simon, 2006). Seidman (2005) found that students who may have had adequate academic skills in high school may not meet the academic demands of college. Due to the learning curve some students may experience, this could result in stress in the academic environment. Zajacova, Lynch, and Espenshade (2005) found academic stress to be an important factor in students' adjustment and directly related it to academic performance. Stress influences social integration, institutional commitment, and students' overall intent to reenroll in college (Isaak, Graves, & Mayers, 2006). Many social and academic factors influence how a student transitions academically and non-academically to a new college environment, which is why interventions need to be available to help support these complexities.

2.2.2 Academic Probation Interventions

To help support students who are on academic probation, many colleges and universities offer services to these students to work through what may be a difficult and challenging time (Bowman, Jang, Kivlighan, Schneider, & Ye, 2019). Although there are a variety of interventions, most fall under two categories: classroom and workshop settings or meetings with advisors and counselors (Kamphoff, Hutson, Amundsen, & Atwood, 2007). Both interventions can positively impact student performance should the student choose to participate; however, students who know they are up for dismissal may feel discouraged from taking advantage of any academic interventions, causing lower academic performance and increased attrition rates (Arcidiacono, Aucejo, & Spenner, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative for academic advisors to use proactive advising strategies such as intrusive advising when reaching out to students. It is also beneficial

to develop an academic success plan that is tailored to the specific needs of a student to help guide them on how to become academically successful.

Classroom and workshop interventions focus on skill acquisition (McGrath & Burd, 2012; Mellor, Brooks, Gray, & Jordan, 2015), whereas advising and counseling interventions involve working one-on-one with advisors, counselors, or mentors (Bowman et al., 2019). Different strategies such as supportive academic advising (Kirk-Kuwaye and Nishida, 2001; Molina and Abelman, 2000) and goal-setting interventions (Bowman et al., 2019) help to improve college grades and GPA; however, more research needs to be conducted on the long-term effects of academic probation interventions and GPA measurements. Regardless of the type of intervention, how the intervention is designed around student obligation, program focus, and format plays a key role when helping the student get back on track toward academic success (Molina & Abelman, 2000).

Students who are experiencing academic difficulty may be more reluctant to reach out to support personnel such as advisors, faculty, or student affairs liaisons when experiencing difficulty (Balduf, 2009; Wright, 2003). Isaak, Graves, and Mayers (2006) found that students who are in academic jeopardy have lower social skills, are less trusting, are more anxious in social situations, and can show great levels of social alienation compared to students who are not in academic jeopardy. With this knowledge, some institutions require interventions be put in place for these students to try to force participation and seek help.

Mandatory interventions include student success courses, otherwise known as First Year Experience (FYE) courses or first-year seminars; consistent academic advising meetings with an academic advisor; or mandatory counseling sessions with college-wide counselors. The overarching goal of mandatory interventions is to help students change current behavior and

promote academic success, assist with academic and career planning, connect students to university resources, and help them to improve and develop study skills (Kimbark, Peters, & Richardson, 2017).

Studies have shown positive correlations between students on academic probation and mandatory interventions. Yang, Yon, and Kim (2013) found that students who attended two mandatory counseling sessions with the counseling center on campus improved their GPAs over three consecutive semesters, while 43 percent of students stayed in the program for an additional five or more sessions after meeting the minimum requirement. Similarly, Coleman and Freedman (1996) developed a model of assistance for probationary students that focused on goal directedness, interpersonal problem solving, and social competence. The results indicated that students who took advantage of the seminars that focused on these competencies throughout the semester had higher GPAs than those who did not participate in the seminars. Contrary to these studies, Olson (1990) found in her study of community college probationary students that students who received extra advising and met with their academic advisor a minimum of four times during the semester did not perform any higher than students who did not receive advising. Overall, research indicates that although mandatory interventions play a crucial piece in the probation process, it may not always work with some students in helping increase their GPA.

Unlike mandatory interventions, voluntary interventions have also been used with students on academic probation; however, one of the biggest challenges with voluntary interventions is getting students to attend and participate in programming (Maroldo & Hobley, 2008). Multiple studies have concluded that voluntary programs were underutilized by students in contrast with mandatory interventions. Damashek (2003) found that only 10 to 25 percent of probationary students chose to join a support program, and of the ones who did, many did not complete the

requirements for the program. Bowman et al (2019) found similar results in their study, with only 67 percent of probation students completing the "mandatory" meeting with their advisor. Several factors can impact a probationary student's participation in voluntary interventions, such as lack of motivation, lack of concern, or general disinterest. Other probationary students tend to think professional guidance will not help them, so they attempt to resolve challenges on their own, with a majority of these students remaining on academic probation or getting academically suspended in a future semester (Damashek, 2003)

2.3 Advising Theories and Academic Probation

2.3.1 Developmental Theory of Advising

Developmental advising, or holistic advising, entails an advisor-advisee relationship that is more personal in nature than intrusive advising and supports students by forming and clarifying meaningful educational plans that are consistent with personal goals (Chickering, 1994; Creamer & Creamer, 1994; Crookston, 1972). Grites (2013) describes holistic advising as looking at the whole student intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, vocationally, morally, economically, and aesthetically. Developmental advising is a popular approach when advising students on academic probation since it helps students to find meaning in what they are doing and motivates them to overcome issues that initially placed them on probation (McCoy, 2018). Due to the open approach developmental advising uses, it may prove to be a relief for students who feel discouraged by standard probation emails and letters and allow students the opportunity to delve

deeper into issues than a more prescriptive advising approach would (Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001).

Developmental advising concentrates on finding different ways to engage students beyond their academics, focusing a lot on relationships with faculty, staff, peer advisors, mentors, and tutors (Colvin, 2007; Ender & Newton, 2000). Although advisors do not specifically reach out and require advising appointments, creating solid relationships proves to be beneficial in its own way with probationary students. Drake, Jordan, and Miller (2013) believe that there is a deep connection between academic advising and student success, with Rawlins and Rawlins (2005) supporting this claim and indicating that academic advisors should be friends with their advisees for students to be academically successful. However, Newman (1998) found that students who have a nonadaptive approach to their academics do not succeed with a developmental advising approach since they wait until a faculty member or advisor reaches out about their performance in the classroom, which may at times happen too late.

It is imperative for advisors to modify advising approaches based on what works best with a student; however, the literature provides mixed reviews on student perceptions of advising and how those perceptions factor into overall GPA. Stormes and Gold (2016) found no significant differences between advising models and students' GPAs at Humboldt State University. They found that the advising model did not affect whether students on probation returned to good standing. In contrast, Mottarella et al (2004) found that students value the relationship with their advisor rather than the method or model of advising, but the study did not include whether that impacted a student's overall academic performance.

2.3.2 Intrusive Theory of Advising

One of the most frequently cited advising approaches for advising probationary students is intrusive advising (Higgins, 2003; King, 2005). Intrusive advising, otherwise known as proactive advising or high involvement advising, is an advising approach that holds the student accountable for problem solving and decision making while identifying solutions and establishing agreements between the student and advisor for future success (Vander Schee, 2007). Intrusive advising is shown to help support students who are facing academic probation, or are currently on academic probation (Earl, 1988; Glennen & Baxley, 1985; Vowell & Karst, 1987).

The goal of intrusive advising is to help students feel cared for by the institution (Varney, 2003). Heisserer and Parette (2002) found that students who perceive someone cares about them at the institution are more likely to be academically successful than those who feel like they are uncared for. There is a strong relationship between a student needing to feel that they matter and that other peers, college personnel, faculty, staff, etc., care for them (Schlossberg, 1989). Academic advisors can show caring for individual students while taking on an intrusive approach in distinctive ways that start as early as orientation with different outreach efforts to students.

Academic advisors work with students in a proactive way to help improve their academic success. Once there is a supportive, working relationship between the advisor and the student, agreements can be made. Commonly established agreements associated with intrusive advising could include mandatory advising sessions with an advisor and other support groups on campus (Earl, 1988).

One of the earliest studies in the field was on training faculty members at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in an intrusive advising approach that required students to seek faculty member guidance (Glennen, 1975). Within the first two years of the program, students increased

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their academic performance, the university reduced the number of students on probation, and enrollment numbers increased by decreasing attrition from 45 percent to 6 percent. Contrary to this finding, Schwebel, Walburn, Jacobsen, Jerrolds, and Klyce (2008) conducted a four-year randomized longitudinal study of 501 students at the University of Alabama - Birmingham who were undeclared, pre-nursing, or psychology majors. The results showed an increase in the number of advising appointments that were made when academic advisors reached out to these students; however, the increase in appointments was not associated with student retention or their academic progress.

2.3.3 Intrusive Advising and Retention

Retention and persistence issues are a continuous concern for institutions, specifically with academic probation students (Cholewa & Ramaswami, 2015; Kiser & Hammer, 2016). Students on probation are more at risk than other populations of leaving the institution without any sort of intervention (Abelman & Molina, 2001; Vander Schee, 2007). Academic advising offers an effective strategy to retain students who are most likely to drop out, including probation and first-generation students (Glennen & Baxley, 1985; Schwebel et al., 2008; Vander Schee, 2007).

Intrusive advising as an intervention may act as a way to support students by increasing their skills for success (Abelman & Molina, 2001; Abelman & Molina, 2002; Molina & Abelman, 2000; Schwabel et al., 2012; Vander Schee, 2007; Varney, 2003). It may also help provide more personal interventions through high-impact activities such as in-person meetings and workshops and encourage student interactions and engagement with members of the institutional community (Varney, 2003). With an intrusive advising approach, students may be retained at a higher rate

due to proactive interventions that help engage the student in the campus community and make the student feel a sense of belonging to the institution.

2.3.4 Intrusive Advising and Academic Probation

Abelman and Molina (2001) conducted a study on intrusive advising and advisor outreach for students at-risk and on academic probation. The researchers randomly selected 210 sophomores and juniors in the Arts and Sciences at a mid-western urban institution who fell below a 2.0 GPA and broke them into three groups: non-intrusion, moderate intrusion, and full intrusion. The non-intrusion group received a letter from student services saying they were on probation; the moderate intrusion group received the same letter and a phone call from the Coordinator of the Academic Advising office going over the letter in more detail and talking through academic progress, progress towards graduation, outstanding requirements, and individual course responsibilities; and the full intrusion group received a customized letter that required them to meet with the Coordinator of Academic Advising to discuss their probationary status as well as a follow-up phone call to schedule the meeting. The in-person meeting consisted of a self-assessment as well as developing strategies moving forward. The results of the study indicated that the full intrusion group had the greatest improvement in GPA and were more likely to be retained at the university compared to students with less intrusive approaches. The study also concluded that the more intrusive the approach, the greater the long-term impact on academic performance. Other studies supported these findings and found that intrusive advising for probationary students with high levels of advisor involvement contributed to higher grade point averages and retention rates compared to low advisor involvement (Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001; Molina & Abelman, 2000).

Contrary to the aforementioned findings, Jesckhe, Johnson, and Williams (2001) conducted a three-year study at Purdue University where 126 nontraditional psychology students were assigned to either an intrusive advising group led by faculty advisors where advising appointments were required and initial outreach was done by the advisor, or to a prescriptive intrusive advising group led by faculty advisors where appointments were voluntary. Unlike previous research conducted, the study resulted in little difference in students' academic success with their GPA being similar across the two groups; however, the intrusive advising group reported greater advisor satisfaction overall.

Although intrusive advising requires a proactive approach when advising students, research shows that it may be more effective to remind students of advising appointments rather than require them, since such a requirement could hinder the advising relationship between the advisor and the student (Schwebel et al., 2008). Academic advising should be looked at as an opportunity, not a mandatory requirement in college, especially when working with students on, or facing, academic probation.

2.4 Conclusion

Academic advising is a valuable resource for all students in college, but it is even more invaluable to students who are on, or facing, academic probation. Academic probation acts as a warning to students that indicates that if their academics do not improve, they could be considered for suspension or dismissal from the university. Typically, the minimum threshold requirement is a 2.0 grade point average, but it can vary by institution (Moss & Yeaton, 2015). For a student to progress towards returning to good academic standing, institutions have come up with various

interventions, with intrusive advising being one of the most researched in helping and supporting students either to meet or exceed the minimum academic threshold.

Academic advising utilizes different advising models based on an institution's culture, goals, policies and procedures, and student needs (Habley & Morales, 1998). Centralized, decentralized, and shared models are used when advising students on academic probation; however, there is no specific model that proves to be more beneficial than others. Additionally, faculty and professional advisors tend to have mixed reviews when advising students on probation, with literature pointing to the advantages and challenges of each type of advisor.

Academic advising is conducted using a variety of approaches, with the two most researched being developmental and intrusive when working with probationary students. Although there is no single approach that is considered the correct way to advise students on probation, studies have shown a positive relationship between intrusive advising and GPA, retention rates, more advising appointments being scheduled and attended, lower attrition rates, increased levels of support, and an overall sense of being cared for at an institution. In addition to academic advising, there are other mandatory and involuntary interventions that help students to develop the skills needed to overcome future challenges and return to good academic standing.

Academic advising plays an essential role in a student's collegiate educational experience and can be a beneficial resource, specifically with students who are in jeopardy of being placed on academic probation or who are currently on academic probation. Academic advising can play a positive role when supporting all students, but an intrusive advising approach is invaluable when helping students on academic probation return to good academic standing since it provides the support and tools needed for an academically successful college career.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Statement of the Problem

In line with research findings, the retention rate for the humanities and social sciences college at the university where this study took place is the lowest from the first to second year. Every semester, a group of undeclared students is placed on academic probation due to not meeting the minimum grade threshold set forth by the college. In fall 2019, the number of undeclared students facing an academic action, which consists of academic probation, continued probation, suspension, or being dropped from the college was at 6 percent, or roughly 20 students. This was the highest number of undeclared students on an action in the past five years. Academic advisors have the responsibility of providing consistent advising support to all students, especially those students facing academic probation. However, the support given to these students by their academic advisors is inconsistent across the college. This causes some students to receive the support needed to return to good academic standing as soon as the following semester, whereas other students may receive no support at all, leading to possible suspension.

3.2 Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework for this research is intrusive advising. Intrusive advising involves intentional contact with a student with the goal of developing a caring and beneficial relationship (Varney, 2007). Intrusive advising is a combination of developmental and

prescriptive advising; however, the intrusive advising approach is more proactive in making the initial contact with the student to help offer support (Vander Schee, 2007; Varney, 2007). Since the intrusive advising approach can combine both developmental and prescriptive advising, it is important to note the differences between the two advising approaches.

Developmental advising focuses on the student holistically, not solely on academics. It recognizes the importance of interactions between the student and campus environment, focuses on the student as a whole, and works with the student at that person's life stage development (King, 2005). Developmental advising helps advisors get to know the student both in and out of the classroom and fosters the student-advisor relationship (Winston et al., 1984). Unlike developmental advising, prescriptive advising is focused on a student's academics. It limits advising sessions to academic matters such as course selection, process of registration, or explanations of degree curricula (Drake, 2011, p. 10). Prescriptive advising is typically known for a student coming to an advisor for a specific answer and does not typically promote an advising relationship (Barbuto et al., 2011). Heisserer and Parette (2002) found that the only variable that has a direct effect on student persistence is the relationship a student has with a member in the college community (p.72). Although this is imperative for all students, it may be more beneficial for students on, or facing, academic probation.

Intrusive advising has been discussed in studies that focus on college retention efforts and outreach strategies (Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Rosenbaum et al., 2016; Seltzer, 2016). Studies have found that in order to retain students, intrusive strategies such as advisors sharing information about curriculum requirements, campus culture, and university culture, may be beneficial (Levinstein, 2018; Torres & Hernandez, 2009; Varney, 2007). The research studies conducted previously allow for assumptions to be made on how students are retained by intrusive advising

efforts. However, the literature is limited on how effective intrusive advising appointments and tools are on academic performance, specifically for undeclared first- and second-year students facing academic probation. Table 1 provides a reference guide on the inquiry questions that guided this study, the data that was collected and analyzed, and the literature that supported the framework.

Table 1 Investigative Criteria for Framing Research Study

Research Questions	Data Collection	Literature Support	Data Analysis
What are students' perceptions of intrusive advising?	Qualtrics survey; Questions from semi-structured interview; Advising appointments	Abelman & Molina, 2001; Abelman & Molina, 2002; Molina & Abelman, 2000; Schwabel et al., 2012; Vander Schee, 2007; Varney, 2003	Descriptive statistics; Narrative thematic analysis
How many students who engaged in intrusive advising increased their GPA at final semester?	Qualtrics survey	Coleman & Freeman, 1996; Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001; Molina & Abelman, 2000; Yang, Yon, & Kim, 2013	Academic record in Student Services Suite
What are students' perceptions of the student success plan contributing to their academic performance in the second half of the semester?	Qualtrics survey; Student success plan	Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001; Molina & Abelman, 2000; Yang, Yon, & Kim, 2013; Varney, 2003	Academic record in Student Services Suite; Descriptive statistics

Intrusive advising has always been the advising approach that I use the most when working with students who are currently on academic probation, or who may be placed on academic probation. In my experience, students who are struggling academically are more reluctant to reach out to their academic advisor for help, whether it be they do not know how to, or they do not want to be seen as incompetent in handling the rigorous coursework. If students do reach out, it is

usually too late in the semester to make a true impact on their academic performance. By using an intrusive advising approach, academic advisors are taking on the responsibility of reaching out to the student to connect and engage earlier in the semester rather than leaving it up to the student to start the initial outreach.

From my own advising experience, I have found that students who are faced with academic probation, or currently on academic probation, seem to appreciate my outreach after seeing mid-semester grades to check in on how they feel they are performing academically up to that point in the semester. This is also a time when I chat with students regarding how they feel their college experience is thus far, which opens the door to more in-depth conversations of what could be happening outside the classroom. By using an intrusive advising approach of consistent outreach to students, in addition to establishing a solid professional relationship with the student, academic advisors can make a positive impact on a student both academically and non-academically, making the student feel more comfortable in their courses in addition to the college as a whole.

3.3 Research Setting

The research site for this study is a highly competitive private university located in Southwestern Pennsylvania. This prestigious institution offers undergraduate programs in the arts, sciences, business, humanities and social sciences, and engineering. The institution is known for its rigorous academics and competitive nature. The current study is focused specifically on a centralized advising center made up of four full-time staff advisors and approximately 280 undeclared students in the humanities and social sciences. The target population is undeclared first- and second year students who are advised by me, the primary academic advisor. In the

college, students have up to two years to declare their primary major after matriculation. In recent years, the advising center has noted a trend where students have been waiting until the end of their sophomore year to declare their major, when they get assigned a departmental advisor.

Academic advisors have very limited access to grades throughout the semester and can only see a student's mid-semester and final grades. Since mid-semester is the first-time academic advisors are able to view how a student is performing academically in their courses, there are many questions to be asked of the student regarding how they feel the semester is going and how their time is thus far at the university. To gather this information, I conducted semi-structured interviews with undeclared first- and second-year students who were facing academic probation based on their GPA at mid-semester, invited students to participate in weekly academic advising appointments, administered two quantitative surveys, and had the student complete a student success plan to gain a more in-depth understanding.

3.4 Inquiry Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are students' perceptions of intrusive advising?

2. How many students who engaged in intrusive advising increased their GPA at final semester?

3. What are students' perceptions of the student success plan contributing to their academic performance in the second half of the semester?

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3.5 Methodology

To accomplish the purpose of this inquiry, I used a mixed methods study of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Mixed methods research is a type of research in which both qualitative and quantitative research approaches are combined for the broad purpose of achieving breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p. 123). By using a mixed method research study, the end product may be superior to mono-methods studies (Johnson & Christensen, 2017).

Within a mixed methods study, triangulation may occur. Triangulation is a method used to increase the credibility and validity in research findings (Campbell & Friske, 1959). Concurrent triangulation refers to the single-phase timing in which both qualitative and quantitative methods are used with equal weight (Creswell et al., 2003). Concurrent triangulation occurred in this study due to the qualitative and quantitative methods being conducted within the six-week timeframe. The results from the data were analyzed after the completion of the study to help interpret results.

Interviews are the most commonly used data collection, with the semi-structured format being the most frequently used in qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured interviews are a common data collection method in qualitative research in which the quality of the interview influences the results of the study (Kallio et al., 2016). Due to the flexibility of semi-structured interviews, respondents can provide their answers using their own words in as much, or as little, detail as they like (Menter et al., 2013). In this study, the semi-structured interview was the most effective way to explore how a student was feeling about their time thus far at the university while attending weekly advising appointments. Due to the openness and rapport built prior to the interview between me and each student, more in-depth and personal

feelings were shared. The semi-structured interview helped to provide more context and in-depth information beyond the questions listed on the surveys.

Survey research can use qualitative research strategies, quantitative research strategies, or both (Ponto, 2015). In this study, both surveys administered to students used questionnaires, which provided quantitative data. Questionnaires are one of the most common data collection methods; they typically include a series of items reflecting the research aims (Ponto, 2015). The first survey given to students measured the student success plan as the research aim, whereas the second survey measured intrusive advising, specifically the academic advising appointments, as the research aim. Both of these surveys were collected via Qualtrics and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Some of the many benefits of collecting data through an online survey include collecting large amounts of data efficiently, economically, and within a relatively short time (Epidemiol, 2016).

"Mixed methods research offers great promise for practicing researchers who would like to see methodologies describe and develop techniques that are closer to what researchers actually use in practice" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 15). This study helped to look at how undeclared first- and second-year students viewed intrusive advising appointments while gathering valuable information on whether the tools they used contributed positively to their academic performance and overall GPA in the second half of the fall 2020 semester.

3.6 Data Collection

For this study, undeclared first- and second-year students who fell below the 2.25 GPA threshold for upperclassmen, or 2.0 GPA threshold for first-year students, were required to meet with me after mid-semester grades were posted in order to review and talk about their academic

performance. These students who were facing probation received an email from me requiring they set up an advising appointment within one week of receiving my email (see Appendix A for full email). This meeting occurred over Zoom, phone, or in-person. At that required meeting, students were invited to participate in weekly intrusive advising appointments with me throughout the remainder of the semester, approximately six weeks from October to December 2020. In addition to the weekly intrusive advising appointments, students were encouraged to complete a semi-structured interview, two quantitative surveys, and a student success plan.

3.7 Instruments

This study used the academic advising appointments, student success plan, semi-structured interview, and two surveys as instruments to collect data. The data was collected from the first advising appointment in October to after the completion of the final survey in December 2020. The instruments helped to measure my inquiry questions and determined if there was any impact on a student's academic performance and GPA from mid-semester to final grades.

3.7.1 Academic Advising Appointments

The day of the week and mode of the student advising appointment was decided on by the student; they selected either Zoom, phone, or in-person to meet with me. The options available for these appointments were outlined in my online scheduling system so that students could view my availability. I sent an email to each student the day prior to their scheduled appointment to remind them of their appointment the following day. Each advising appointment was scheduled

for a half hour in length, although extra time was allotted on my schedule in the case the appointment ran late. The advising session started with a verbal student reflection on how they were currently feeling about their week. This was a safe space where students could disclose things happening academically or non-academically from when we last met. Notes were taken as the student was reflecting.

Each advising session touched on some, if not all, of the following: student reflection of the prior week, utilization of any student resources, upcoming assignments/exams, planning for the week ahead, non-academic topics, student success plan goals, and summary of the meeting. Although these were not all covered within the allotted 30-minute appointment time, the basic layout of the six-week program included:

- Week 1: Introductory meeting to the intrusive advising process, student success plan given to student and filled out by second advising appointment.

- Week 2: Discussion of student success plan (see Appendix B for full plan).

- Week 3: First quantitative survey given to student on their perspective of student success plan (see Appendix C for full survey). Students were given the first 10 to 15 minutes of appointment to complete the survey.

- Week 4: Semi-structured interview with the student (see Appendix D for full interview questions).

- Week 5: Reflection on semester thus far/progress of goals.

- Week 6: Preparation of final exams.

After the sixth week, students were given the second survey (see Appendix E for full survey) to gather their perspectives of the intrusive academic advising appointments. Students were given two weeks to complete the survey. All data was stored in Qualtrics.

3.7.2 Student Success Plan

The student success plan is a writeable PDF document that was given to students during the first advising appointment. It allowed them to reflect on their academic performance in the first half of the semester as well as set both short- and long-term goals for the fall 2020 semester and beyond. The student success plan provided students the opportunity to learn more about resources available to them both on campus and virtually and encouraged students to begin thinking about how they were going to utilize these resources during the second half of the semester and in future semesters.

The student success plan was used during all advising appointments to help the advisor and the student uphold the standards that were agreed upon throughout the second half of the semester. This document helped to provide a visual and motivational tool for students when working towards the short- and long-term goals they had set for themselves. Students were told to have the student success plan completed for the second advising appointment so that we could go over the plan together to help clarify any questions and finalize next steps.

3.7.3 Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students in November 2020. The semi-structured interview was built into the fourth advising session to ensure that the student would be present. Students were sent an email prior to their weekly appointment to ensure they knew of the interview and to obtain verbal consent. Once a student knew their rights for volunteering for this interview, it was conducted over Zoom or phone and lasted 30 minutes to gather a more in-depth look at how a student was feeling about their experience at the university both academically and

non-academically thus far. Once the interviews concluded, the researcher made notes on participants' non-verbal and verbal communication. In the following weeks, the researcher wrote down student narratives and listened to the audio recordings of the interviews multiple times to take notes on items that might have been missed to get a full understanding of the student perspective.

3.7.4 Surveys

Two quantitative surveys were given to students throughout the six weeks to measure their perceptions of the student success plan and academic advising appointments. The survey regarding the student success plan was administered via email during the third advising session to ensure responsiveness. The student was allotted 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey at the start of the advising session. The survey consisted of six questions with Likert scale answers and measured individual aspects of the success plan including self-reflection, goal setting, utilization of resources, and overall satisfaction of the plan. The purpose for this survey was to gather a deeper understanding as to how students felt about the student success plan and whether this was a tool that contributed to their academic performance and overall GPA in the fall 2020 semester. The survey responses were recorded and stored in Qualtrics.

The second survey regarding the academic advising appointments was given to students via email after completing the last appointment. The survey consisted of 22 quantitative questions with both short answer and Likert scale answers that measured how the student felt the intrusive academic advising appointments contributed to their academic performance and overall GPA in the second half of the semester. The survey collected demographic data to obtain background characteristics of the students. The survey responses were recorded and stored in Qualtrics.

3.7.5 Sample and Data Sources

The sample of students were undeclared first- and second-year students in the humanities and social sciences college who were facing academic probation at the end of the fall 2020 semester. The students invited to participate in this study had below a 2.25 GPA for upperclassmen and 2.0 GPA for first-year students at mid-semester. This specific study follows the current college academic probation minimum thresholds, which consist of a 1.75 GPA for first-year students and a 2.0 GPA for upperclassmen.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred throughout the process in two ways: narrative thematic analysis with the semi-structured interview and quantitative analysis for the two surveys administered to students.

3.8.1 Narrative Thematic Analysis

Interview data was examined through narrative thematic analysis. Narrative thematic analysis is a form of qualitative research in which the stories themselves become the raw data. It is the content in the text that is the primary focus for themes and categories to emerge (Butina, 2015). My study utilized a general interview guide approach to gain the narrative of students, and the predetermined interview questions helped to keep consistency and structure in the interview. After the completion of the semi-structured interviews, initial observations were included in the

notes of the interview as well as first impressions, thoughts, and initial analysis. From there, coding of the text was analyzed, categories and themes emerged, and interpretation of the data began. How themes are related and linked are reported in the findings.

3.8.2 Quantitative Analysis

Two surveys were given to students throughout the six weeks of intrusive advising appointments. The first survey was given in the third week to measure students' perceptions of how the student success plan might have contributed to their academic performance in the second half of the semester. The second survey was given to students after completing the intrusive advising process to measure students' perceptions of the advising process. All of the data collected from the surveys were stored and analyzed in Qualtrics.

The first step in the process was to administer questions regarding the student success plan. Survey items 1 – 3 align with the specific components of the plan: student reflection, short- and long-term goals, and academic resources. Survey items 4 – 6 allowed the student to reflect on the student success plan and share any additional thoughts on their experience. In terms of alignment to inquiry questions, all survey items are aligned to research question three in the students' perception of how the student success plan contributed to their academic performance in the second half of the semester.

The second survey administered to students was sent after the completion of the six-week intrusive advising appointments. Survey items 1 – 5 and 19 – 22 incorporated demographic and logistical information. This demographic and logistical information are shared in the findings; however, no analysis is needed. In terms of alignment to inquiry questions, survey items 6 and 11 – 17 align with question one on measuring students' perceptions of intrusive academic advising.

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Survey items 7 – 10 align with question two measuring whether the students who engaged in intrusive academic advising increased their GPAs from mid-semester to final grades.

Descriptive statistics were used to share the findings of both surveys. Items are reported by how the student answered the six-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, moderately agree, or strongly agree. The analysis focused on the frequencies of responses in each survey which measures the latent variable of student perception that guided the inquiry questions. In addition, a comparative analysis was conducted within and across the two surveys to determine if there were any trends in different themes and reported in the findings.

3.8.3 Researcher's Reflexivity

According to Galletta and Cross (2013), a researcher must bring a level of reflexivity concerning what transpires during the interview between the researcher and participant. My background in academic advising over the past several years, specifically with undeclared students, is to be noted. I have firsthand knowledge and experience working closely with students who may be facing academic probation and other challenges in their first year of college, which may have impacted the interview.

4.0 Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an analysis of the data collected from two quantitative surveys on which students responded on a Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Both surveys allowed students to enter written responses for the final questions. In addition to the surveys, narrative thematic analysis was used to code the semi-structured interviews where the themes that emerged from the narratives are reported. Background information on the 10 students who participated are presented and then the data as it relates to each of the three inquiry questions that guided this study.

4.2 General Information about Advising Appointments

At mid-semester in the fall 2020 semester, 11 students fell under the 2.25 GPA or 2.0 GPA threshold, resulting in them receiving an email from me requiring an appointment to talk about their academic progress thus far, in addition to inviting them to participate in weekly meetings with me throughout the remaining six weeks of the semester. Of the 11 students eligible, 10 students participated in the weekly meetings. The student who did not participate met with me once for the required meeting and chose not to participate in any additional advising meetings for the remainder of the semester. Before each meeting, students were reminded of the appointment via email to help decrease the chances of not attending. Notes were taken during these meetings

and stored in the students' academic records. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all appointments took place over Zoom or on the phone to ensure safety of both me and the student from possible exposure.

4.3 Profile of Participants

Of the 10 students who participated in the study, 60 percent ($n = 6$) were first-year students and 40 percent ($n = 4$) were second-year students. All students were undeclared in the humanities and social sciences college and exploring different majors and minors within the university. The first-year students were in their first semester at the university, studying both in-person and remotely, with the exception of one student who was considered in their second semester of study. Of the four second-year students participating, one student had been academically suspended previously due to poor academic performance. All second-year students were considered to be in their third semester of study at the university.

Of the 10 participants, 70 percent ($n = 7$) were men, 20 percent ($n = 2$) were women, and 10 percent ($n = 1$) were gender variant/non-conforming. Eighty percent ($n = 8$) identified as White, 20 percent ($n = 2$) identified as Hispanic or Latinx, 30 percent identified as Asian ($n = 3$), 20 percent ($n = 2$) identified as Black or African American, and 10 percent ($n = 1$) identified as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Both the gender and racial/ethnic background are consistent with current enrollment trends in the college. Ninety percent ($n = 9$) reported not being a first-generation student, or the first person in their immediate family to attend college, and 10 percent ($n = 1$) preferred not to answer.

Regarding academic interests, all students were undeclared in their majors at the time of the survey; however, students were asked to list their intended major. Of the 10 students, 40 percent ($n = 4$) indicated being interested in a major in the statistics department, 20 percent ($n = 2$) in the economics department, 10 percent ($n = 1$) in the psychology department, 10 percent ($n = 1$) in the philosophy department, 10 percent ($n = 1$) undeclared with no current major interest, and 10 percent ($n = 1$) in transferring into the engineering college. Students took between 36 to 55 units, which is roughly equivalent to four or five full-semester courses. The majority of courses students selected for the fall semester fell within the humanities and social sciences at 40 percent ($n = 4$). In addition to humanities and social sciences courses, 30 percent ($n = 3$) took courses in engineering and the other 30 percent ($n = 3$) took courses in other areas, including mathematics and general education requirements. Sixty percent ($n = 6$) of students indicated that they took these courses for a major/minor they were interested in exploring, while 30 percent ($n = 3$) took courses for general education requirements, and 10 percent ($n = 1$) took them for both a major/minor interest in addition to general education requirements.

Table 2 Participant Profile

Pseudonym	Class Year	Gender	Race	First-Generation Status	Field of Study
Charlie	2	M	White	N	Statistics
Doug	1	M	White	N	Psychology
Jacob	2	M	White	N	Mechanical Engineering
Matthew	1	M	Asian	Prefer not to answer	Statistics
Nicole	1	W	Black/African American	N	Statistics
Paul	1	M	White	N	Economics
Steven	1	M	White	N	Undecided
Suzy	2	W	Asian	N	Statistics
Taylor	2	TGNC	American Indian/Alaska Native; Asian; Black/African American; Hispanic/Latinx; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; White	N	Philosophy
Tony	1	M	Hispanic/Latinx; White	N	Economics

4.4 Qualitative Results

The semi-structured interview took place during the fourth advising session. Out of the 10 students interviewed, nine of the students chose to Zoom for their interview, whereas one chose for the interview to be conducted over the phone. Student narrative responses are provided in addition to the themes that emerged from the interviews.

4.4.1 Student 1 – Charlie

Charlie is in his third semester and is currently undeclared but has an intended major of statistics. When asked about his experience prior to coming to college, he described it as being a "normal experience." He spoke specifically about college academics, for which he thought his high school did not prepare him. He elaborated:

> I thought high school was pretty easy. It felt like it was too easy to do well. I could get straight As without doing much at all, which definitely didn't help me or didn't prepare me well for the university.

Charlie felt that the courses he took in his first semester were difficult and was surprised to learn how rigorous they could be. He spoke of a specific example in his calculus course that led him to be quickly "humbled" by the rigor of courses offered at the university. He emphasized:

> I didn't even know what a difficult course was. I quickly found out... I was, uh, humbled pretty quickly with classes at the university. I had to find out how to study and learn how to understand things at a deep enough level to pass things and do well at the university.

When asked about the courses he has taken thus far at the university, he said the courses that he enjoys the most are computer science courses, which align with his major interests. The least are the calculus courses. He said:

> I think I've enjoyed the computer science courses the most even though they are the most difficult because I just think it's more fun to do the programming and just be able to go in and solve interesting problems. You're actually doing things that seem useful and apply things to projects you seem to be interested in. My least favorite has probably been just the basic calculus courses I've taken. It's just kind

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of the same thing again and again. You get assigned a 10-question problem set in

calculus II and they are usually just insanely difficult for no reason. You just do

that weekly again and again and it's not that fun.

Regarding his impression of the university supporting his success, he believes that there is a lot of

support available; however, it is up to the student to reach out to take advantage of them. He said:

Um, there are definitely things to do if you go and find help. There are the advising

people and counseling services. What is it called, academic tutoring? That's

another one, but that's just half of it. The other half with professors, it's kind of

like, in order to pass, passing has to be difficult. They just can't give these degrees

to anyone. It's kind of like you figure out how to do it or you fail but I guess that's

just what their job is to do.

He used the words "inconsistent, all over the place, and procrastination prone" to describe himself

as a student. He elaborated:

I don't know, I guess it's a pessimistic thing to say but I guess inconsistent. I'm

kind of all over the place, sometimes I do really well, and sometimes I fail things.

But yeah, I guess inconsistent is the word right now.

Regarding Charlie's feelings about his future at the university, he described himself as feeling

"okay" as long as he "gets it together" moving forward. He mentioned feeling a little more stressed

this semester due to working part-time in addition to being a full-time student. He said, "Um, I

definitely feel okay as long as I get it together going forward and I feel like at the end of the day

as long as you get your degree, you'll be okay. Yeah, so I feel okay."

4.4.2 Student 2 – Tony

Tony is in his first semester and is currently undeclared but has an intended major of economics. He described his high school experience as a "mixed bag" of experiences as he moved around a lot in life, attending five different schools prior to arriving at college. He emphasized:

> Um, it's a mixed bag for sure, I moved around a lot in my life. I've been to three, four, technically five different educational institutions. Either way I feel like I learned a lot and enjoyed my time in each of those places. When I finished high school, it was on the lower end. There were only 90 students total. Prior to that, I was in a larger school where there were 160 people per grade, and it had thousands of students, so it was much larger.

When asked about his college experience thus far, he could not provide a definitive answer due to it being "too early" to ask that type of question. He said:

> Um, I didn't get to step foot anywhere near the city or campus, so I'll have to leave that on hold. In terms of the digital space, I enjoy it a lot. It's a lot, I mean, there are so many things that you have available.

With Tony being an international student, he had not yet been on campus, which led him to only being able to answer on how he is perceiving his education remotely. Tony noted that he enjoyed the virtual aspect of what he has experienced thus far and appreciated what the university was doing for students like him who could not be physically located on campus.

When asked specifically about his courses, he said he wishes all classes were conducted the same way. He noted how he enjoyed some more than others due to teaching modality. He emphasized:

I think I'd enjoy all my classes if they were done in the same way. I enjoy my

microeconomics course, which is just the instructor sitting there talking to you and

having interactive polls every so often. He announces his office hours at the end

so if you have any doubts, you can talk to him. I enjoy that a lot. I mean I'd say

it's the ideal scenario for a virtual space. My least favorite is due to the context

surrounding the course which is calculus because the instructor uses a blackboard

and the amount of time he has to switch over to see if there are any questions... it

just isn't as immersive, right? So, I guess maybe that? My favorite course in terms

of subject matter is psychology only because of the teacher. He is very charismatic.

He does a hybrid course, so he talks to the Zoom class and the students on campus.

I don't know if that has anything to do with it, but I like it.

Regarding how the university is supporting his success, he reported that there seemed to be a lot

that is offered to students, but he has not been able to take advantage of the resources since he has

only been taking courses at the university for a few months. He said:

I checked out some of the links on the student success plan and, I mean, they have

a lot to offer. Whether it's through a course or a couple of guidelines to follow...

so overall, I think that's pretty good and I feel like it could help about anyone.

The words that he used to described himself as a student were "disciplined, curious, and

intelligent." He explained, "Um, as a student I would say disciplined, curious, I don't know... do

I have to think of more adjectives? I mean I don't want to float my boat, but I think I'm a pretty

intelligent person." When asked about his feelings about his future, he had a positive outlook. He

said:

I'm feeling a bit impatient as I'd like to be there. Um, excitement mostly, I don't know, small level of anxiousness just waiting to get there. You know, going to my room, having my things there. I wish I could just walk on campus.

4.4.3 Student 3 – Steven

Steven is in his first semester currently undeclared and is unsure of what he would like to major in. He described his high school experience as an overall good experience and felt like he did well academically. When speaking specifically about courses he had taken in high school, one that he struggled with most was math. He emphasized:

Uh, I mostly did pretty well in classes except for math classes because the homework was only for points on a random spot check and not consistent. Every year I would re-learn the lesson that you need to do the homework to practice and solidify the concepts but that would only sink in like three quarters of the way through the semester. So, I would always pull my grade up to passing by the end of the semester, but I would never start off the year with that lesson intact. I would go through the same cycle again and it was pretty annoying. But yeah, for all the social and humanities stuff, history, uh, writing, I did pretty well.

His time at the university thus far has been a struggle. He found himself to be more easily distracted and procrastinating on work due to remote learning. His procrastination led him to feeling stressed. He said, "It's been, I don't know, nice when it hasn't been stressful, but it's been stressful a decent amount of the time."

When asked about his courses, he did not have a strong opinion on which ones he enjoyed more than others, noting he felt "neutral" about all of them. He specifically mentioned that he

enjoyed the material that he is learning in all of his courses but does not like the way things are graded. He elaborated:

> Um, I don't know. I feel like I don't necessarily enjoy any of my classes so far in their entirety, but it's not like I don't enjoy any of the classes in their entirety. Which is surprising because I usually don't really like the math stuff but so far, like, calculus and statistics has been fine. To be fair, some of that is because I took AP calc and stats and didn't take the AP exam so I'm somewhat reviewing stuff that I already have some basis in. That's probably making it easier and less annoying. But for the most part, I enjoy the stuff I am learning but specific assignments or specific ways the rubrics are phrased are annoying and confusing... stuff like that.

Steven mentioned that in order to be successful in a course, he has to be able to feel a connection with what he is learning inside the classroom to something outside for it to make sense to him and to fully engage in the material. Regarding how the university is supporting his success, he noted there are a lot of resources, but he has yet to take advantage of any of them. He said:

> I'd say there are supporting resources but like, the onus was definitely on me to reach out to them and ask for them. It is a relatively reasonable expectation but specifically in my case, it didn't work out so well. I only started pursuing them at a point when I was pretty emotionally distraught. Uh, and that's sort of just the case in classes. Not specifically the college. Like the professors are far more understanding than I thought they would be, but I had to actively reach out to them and uh, explain, which was really terrifying to do the first couple of times because that's not really the expectation that I had from high school. You can give teachers excuses, but they aren't invested in seeing you succeed. They are just invested in

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you not failing too badly on standardized tests and stuff. Yeah, I don't know how
to explain it so that's sort of it, I guess.

Some of the words he used to describe himself as a student are "curious, a synthesizer, and an explorer." He elaborated:

I don't know, I forget the specific word for it. Um, just, I guess sort of curious. I enjoy synthesizing things and making connections between things from stuff that I learned from outside the classroom and other sources. It works for me pretty well for me where I have some amount of previous interest in the subject and make the connections to online discussions and whatever. It doesn't work as well for math and stuff where I don't have as much connected knowledge.

When asked about his future as a student at the university, he said he is hopeful and mildly overwhelmed by all the possibilities. He finished his interview by saying, "it's very scary to have as much opportunity as I do but you know, it's nice I guess."

4.4.4 Student 4 – Taylor

Taylor is in their third semester and is currently undeclared but has an intended major of philosophy. Taylor had a difficult time transitioning from high school to college due to the lack of structure they found in college compared to high school. They went to a boarding school where there was a set schedule and not much flexibility. The student lacked motivation and time management skills, which carried over to college both in and out of the classroom. They emphasized:

Um, so my high school experience... uh, it's definitely different from college because there is a lot more structure. I went to a boarding school and the routine

was the same. I did struggle a lot with time management in high school like I did

in freshman year. So, I did carry those from high school to college.

One of the biggest struggles they still deal with today is learning how to build a routine and

teaching themselves self-discipline to be successful in their academics. They elaborated:

Yeah, so my first year was very difficult. I really enjoyed being at the university

and I really enjoyed being in the city so that part of college was amazing. I did

have to learn how to build my own routines, structure my own time, and learn self-

discipline, so my freshman year was a bit difficult because I didn't learn how to do

any of that yet.

So far, their time at the university has been a "roller coaster ride." Their experience included being

suspended after their first year due to poor academic performance, specifically because of the rigor

of courses. Taylor said, "I took a year off and came back for my sophomore year feeling much

better prepared to kind of tackle college. I felt much more in tune with resources, so I feel like

that was a big difference between my first and second year."

While taking time off of school, they took courses elsewhere, worked part-time, and

became more knowledgeable of resources both academically and non-academically. Once they

resumed their studies, they began taking advantage of some of those resources and found them to

be generally helpful. They appreciated instructors being available to help both inside and outside

of the classroom. They noted:

I've found that being in touch with professors is very helpful. I've been really lucky

with having open professors who are always available outside of class, go the extra

mile with teaching, or be a little flexible when there has been trouble with my

coursework.

How the university is supporting their success is by the resources available. They have done a lot of "growing" while away from the university and have come to realize that they do not need to get an A in every course to be okay. They also went on to talk more about their experience with resources. They explained:

> So, what I think I appreciate the most about the university is we spend a lot of time talking about supporting our students and I think that's part of the psyche of the school. I remember during Orientation week being told that you're going to fail a class and it's okay, that's bound to happen. You don't need an A in every class to have had a successful college experience so I'm glad that's part of our consideration. There are times I've had conversations with other students where I feel the commitment isn't fully followed through though. I feel like these resources don't get to students who need them, or people don't know they are for them. It could also be people try to access them, but they are underfunded or understaffed.

When asked about courses, physics and calculus were the classes they were enjoying the most and philosophy the least. They noted that as ironic due to their current interest in philosophy. They said:

> So surprisingly, even though I have no mind for science or math, physics I'm enjoying the most. The last two semesters, I enjoyed my calculus courses the most. Odd coming from a humanities student, but the classes I've enjoyed the least tend to be philosophy classes where there are a lot of, I don't want to say reading and writing, but a lot of very small activities but consistently. So, what I mean is every day you're doing a lot of reading or writing but not a lot of deep analysis. It's more

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like we're going to read this thing and summarize it. So yeah, that's been my

experience so far.

The words they used to describe themselves were both positive and negative, which stem from their previous struggles. They elaborated, "On the positive side, I'm curious and discursive because I like to discuss things a lot. On the negative side, I'm disorganized and inconsistently motivated. Yeah, those are some words." When asked about their feelings as a student at the university, they provided a thoughtful answer including academics and non-academics. They noted:

> That is a good question. I feel like that's something you're always evaluating as
>
> you go through your college career. Um, one of the things that is interesting to me
>
> is I find myself steered towards a discipline that is not super available at the
>
> university. That's one thing that I am considering in the future, how do I steer
>
> myself in that direction? I'm also trying to find that balance between being a
>
> productive student and engaged in my classes but also finding ways to be engaged
>
> all over campus in different groups and in the city in general.

4.4.5 Student 5 – Matthew

Matthew is in his first semester at the university and is currently undeclared but has an intended major of statistics. When asked about his academic experience prior to college, he described it as not being academically strong. He elaborated:

> Um, so like, before high school I was generally never a good student. I remember
>
> in middle school failing a class in the sixth grade because I didn't really care at that
>
> point. I mean, eventually I got a hold of myself and by the eighth grade, uh, I got

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pretty high marks I guess in classes. I even got accepted into a special education

high school. But generally, my bad habits just suck. I didn't really have a study

plan, or a developed one, and still don't. So mostly I just tried to pay attention in

class and have some fun with friends in between and that was enough.

He noted that his time at the university so far has been challenging since the rigor of courses are a

lot more difficult than what he was used to in high school. Outside of academics, Matthew stated

that it can be lonely if a student does not try to reach out and connect with other people, even when

living on campus, all due to the pandemic. He said that even though he knew of other people on

campus, he was unable to hang out with them due to certain policies the university had in place

with COVID-19. He continued:

My RA is pretty helpful, and he definitely tries to bring us together to socially make

friends. It kind of forces everyone to be together virtually, but in a good way. It's

just that we're not really able to go out to other places on campus to see and meet

new people in-person.

When asked about his academics, the courses he is enjoying the most are computer science courses

due to his enjoyment of coding and the way instructors are finding ways to make assignments more

interactive. He said:

I guess the one that I'm enjoying least would be calculus because I guess I was a

bit unprepared for that course and didn't expect it to be as difficult as it was. The

most I would say is computer science, but it can be kind of intense sometimes.

How the university is supporting his success is similar to other students' responses; he

acknowledged that the university seems to offer a lot of resources, but it was too early in the

semester for him to take advantage of any of them. He emphasized:

Uh, well there are a lot of resources; I remember for a certain course, they had TAs

that were available. I know for other courses, it was a bit varied, uh, sometimes

they gave out other resources like supplemental instruction, which helped. Um, it's

still pretty early and I feel like I don't need them yet, but I'd say like there are a lot

of resources there if you want to access them but sometimes, uh, I think you can

get left out if you don't access them... which is kind of at the fault of the person.

The resources are there, you know, and you're just not using them. Um, but like,

it can be pretty easy to isolate yourself because that's just the easier thing to do.

When describing himself as a student, he used a quote, "it works 100 percent of the time, 50 percent

of the time." Matthew has a semi-positive outlook on his future as he can see himself remaining

a student at the university for the next three years, but he hopes to be able to "get back on track"

with everything soon. He elaborated:

I guess probably I'll declare my major by the end of freshman year, and I'll go on

from there. Um, I can see myself being here for the next three years. Yeah, I guess

I'm kind of excited for future courses since now it's general courses. It's mostly a

positive view for the more interesting courses I'll take later on.

4.4.6 Student 6 – Paul

Paul is in his first semester at the university and is currently undeclared but has an intended

major of economics. He went to a small high school relatively close to where the university is

located. He had small courses, so attending college courses with hundreds of students felt a little

overwhelming. He said, "Yeah so, I went to high school in the city, um, classes were fairly small

to some of the classes I have now, usually 15 to 20 people depending on the class. College is definitely different with more students."

Paul said that one of the biggest differences he noticed in the first half of the semester between high school and college is the amount of work that goes into each individual course. He said, "I feel like obviously the teachers are more lenient in high school than college. Definitely less of a workload. Less dense material you have to learn all at once compared to now."

So far, his time at the university has been difficult since he has a tendency to procrastinate on getting work done. He describes his experience as an extension of high school since he is still living at home the way he did in high school. He explained, "Truthfully, it's not as exciting as I'd hope it would be. Probably because I've been at home and stuff hasn't changed. I'm just not a fan of the online learning either." Academically, he is not a fan of remote learning due to the teaching modality. When asked about his courses, he said he is enjoying his economics class the most and calculus the least due to how it is being taught this semester. He said:

> Uh, I like my writing class, that is pretty cool. I also like my economics class. I
> don't really like my calculus course but really, how much does anyone like their
> calculus course? I don't hate math, but sometimes I get bored in that class because
> of how it's taught.

When asked how the university is supporting his success, he feels there are a lot of resources, but he just needs to take the first step and reach out for help. He explained, "I just signed up for a student success center workshop about procrastination and productivity. I mean, there are lot of different resources that come through my email that are available to students." He chose the words "hard worker, curious, and inquisitive" when describing himself as a student. He elaborated:

Aw, man, um, I don't know. It's a weird question. I um, I think, hard worker for

the most part whenever I'm able to buckle down. I think when I do buckle down,

I do pretty well. Inquisitive maybe, I think I like to ask a lot of questions about

things, so yeah.

His feelings about his future are excitement; he wants to learn more and keep making progress in

his potential major. He said, "Um, I'm excited. I'm excited to learn more and progress with

courses. I think it'll be cool, especially when we're actually able to go to school. Yeah, I'm

excited." Paul believes that everything will be fine for him academically once he is physically on

campus in the spring semester.

4.4.7 Student 7 – Nicole

Nicole is in her first semester at the university and is currently undeclared but has an

intended major of statistics. She described her high school as being far less challenging than

college. She explained, "Um, high school was not easy but less challenging than college has been

so far. I was an honor roll student in a lot of clubs. It was just good in comparison to what it is

right now." She went on to say that she was involved in a lot of clubs and organizations at her

high school, and she could balance both her academics and extracurriculars without a problem. At

the time of the interview, she was not involved in any extracurriculars and was struggling with the

four courses she was enrolled in. She explained:

I can honestly say I've been having a hard time and me, the student that I am, I

should be able to control, balance, or even get ahead of the challenges that I'm

facing but as of right now, it's just really hard, like I don't know if it's because of

COVID-19 and how it has impacted us and how we have to deal with it, but I can

honestly say it's just been harder than what I had expected.

When asked about her courses, the course she was enjoying the most was statistics, and the least

was physics. She noted, "My statistics class, which is the data and reasoning class, is what I'm

enjoying the most, and the worst is probably my physics class... well, not really physics

anymore, but it's between physics and bio." Nicole then went on to describe the difficulty that

she was experiencing in her courses this semester. She elaborated:

> I don't mean to blame it on my schedule, but I feel like I really did choose classes
>
> that I shouldn't have chosen as a freshman. And I felt like when I chose them, I
>
> had a lot on my plate, and I tend to struggle because there are just a lot of important
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> classes and they come with a large course load. I know myself so I know when I'm
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> motivated and sometimes, I'm not. I don't necessarily know what I'm doing but I
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> just know it needs to be completed. It's just that I have to balance so much other
>
> stuff. There's not much structure or guidance because we are online, and we can't
>
> really turn to anyone else because we're not in the same environment or atmosphere
>
> in general. I just think that's my main concern, well not my main concern because
>
> my grades are my main concern, but that's my main issue.

When asked how the university is supporting her success, she said that it is not supportive right

now. She believed that no one cared for her at the university, and she is left to figure things out

on her own. She noted:

> Um, I don't really think the university is supporting as of right now. I would have
>
> thought that when I first entered, it was supposed to be helping me or guiding me

in my success because of the school that it is. But as of now, I'm kind of uncertain

because I feel like I'm just struggling and, in the wind, right now.

Nicole then went on to elaborate about her experience of reaching out to one of her faculty

members:

I've tried reaching out to instructors but haven't had any luck. They say they want

to help me, but I don't feel that they do. Sometimes I feel like I don't know where

to turn because although resources are said to be available, it's overwhelming. I've

always been able to figure things out on my own, you know, so to ask for help is

something new to me.

The words she used to describe herself as a student were "competitive, hardworking, and multi-

talented," but, according to her, she has not been living up to those characteristics. Her feelings

about her future are undecided at the moment, but she is heavily debating on whether to transfer

as she is feeling really lonely and thinks she is only being looked at as a number by the university.

She said, "I'm kind of undecided, a lot... because I tend to question whether I want to stay there

often because of the loneliness I tend to feel."

4.4.8 Student 8 – Jacob

Jacob is in his third semester at the university and is currently undeclared but has an

intended major of mechanical engineering. He described his high school academic experience as

very similar to how the university conducts academics. His teachers were approachable as he feels

his college professors are. He elaborated:

Uh, my high school experiences have been very similar to how the university

conducts their academics. All the teachers are very helpful, they do care about the

student and they are willing to go the extra mile to ensure student success. One thing that is very different for me is the change in location. I feel like I haven't been away from home for a long period of time, which can be very distracting because I miss home but the school helps you to fit in. That's the one thing that the university does, it makes you want to fit in.

So far, his time at the university has been a great experience. Although the courses he is taking are challenging and take up a lot of time, he knows he wants to transfer at the end of the semester to the engineering college. He said:

I've had a great time and support in the college and uh, I like the college a lot. I am planning to transfer to the engineering college because that's where my interest is, but the humanities and social sciences itself is a great establishment. I really like it, nothing against it, but in the future, I do see myself shifting away from it. At the university, I had my hard share of classes but that helped me to determine what I like and what I don't like, so all around positive experience.

The courses that he is enjoying the most are his mechanical engineering courses, such as thermodynamics and statistics, because of how interactive they are. The class he is enjoying the least is physics due to the teaching style; he said that he is just trying to "make it through" that course this semester. He said:

For physics, I just don't like the material so that's the least. I like the English classes they offered at the college because the instructors were thorough. Math in my freshman year was kind of lacking but the work in general was very well thought out. The classes that I absolutely love are my intro to mechanical engineering course because it introduced me to a program which made me feel like

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an adult. So, I really like that. I also really like thermodynamic and statics and wish I could take them all year.

He indicated that the university is supporting his success is in a variety of ways. He liked how with the help of university resources such as academic advising, he was able to create goals for himself, which helped motivate him in previous semesters as well as this semester:

Uh, I think the university has really helped me you know, create goals for myself. It has really helped open my eyes and showed me how I'm not a kid anymore. I had to become an adult and make a life for myself but not too much of an adult because you still want to have that creative spark from childhood. I think the university is the perfect fit of implementing childhood and adulthood. It's all around positive. I also love the weekly meetings that we have because it keeps me on my toes. I like the advising emails in general because it helps me really be informed as to what's happening in the community.

The words Jacob used to describe himself are "procrastination prone, driven, motivated, focused, and curious." He elaborated:

As a student, uh okay, we'll start with procrastination prone, I'm going to be honest with that one. I'm driven. I set common goals I want to achieve, ones on the student success plan. I'm also motivated. My biggest weakness is procrastination; I'm in the middle of class thinking of something else and I'm like, I just can't do this right now and then I'm just on my phone.

His feelings about his future as a student are confident. He believes that the university gave him the confidence boost needed in establishing where he wants to go in the future both academically and non-academically. He emphasized:

My future right now, I'm feeling very confident in the transfer to engineering but it's normal to have those doubts in case I can't get in. I have some doubt, but more confidence. But yeah, I feel the university has given me that confidence beyond transferring to continue my aspirations and my work, if that makes sense. It has really helped me establish what I want which is really important.

4.4.9 Student 9 – Doug

Doug is in his second semester at the university and is currently undeclared but has an intended major of psychology. He described his high school experience as really easy to get through academically. He took the most difficult courses that were offered and was able to succeed in those without any problems. He elaborated:

Um, I think my high school was like really easy to get through the most difficult classes that were offered. So, like, it's a really small school and the classes are really small so at least with the AP kids in my experience, the teachers went even easier on us than they did with the regular class, so it wasn't really challenging.

When asked about his time so far at the university, the only way he could describe it was challenging. He said, "So far my time here has been challenging, a lot harder than high school." Regardless of how challenging Doug's time has been at the university, he enjoyed his courses more this semester and mentioned that it seems easier than his previous semester due to the courses he is taking towards his intended major of psychology. He noted, "This semester has been easier than previous ones because of the change in courses that I was taking." Doug mentioned feeling more confident overall in his academics.

When asked how the university is supporting his success, he said there are a lot of resources available. It was only after he got the courage to reach out to those resources that he realized people wanted to help him be successful and that he did not need to figure it all out on his own. He is thankful that everyone was pointing him in the right direction, but he needed to take on the onus of following through. He elaborated, "Once I reached out for help, there were a million resources available to me. Everyone was really good in pointing me in the right direction. I'm using Disability Resources and Counseling and Psychological Services as of right now, which help me."

The phrase Doug used to describe himself as a student is "middle of the road." He noted, "I'm not too exceptional but I'm not the worst." He is looking forward to taking more major related courses in the future and is excited about the remainder of his time at the university. He said:

> I'm feeling pretty good as of right now. There are a couple of classes in the program
> that I'm going to be taking that I'm a little worried about like calc and some of the
> advanced psych and stats courses, but I'm pretty excited about it overall.

4.4.10 Student 10 – Suzy

Suzy is in her third semester at the university and is currently undeclared but has an intended major of statistics. She described her high school experience as a relatively good experience overall:

> Um, I mean, I was pretty on top of stuff throughout. I kind of had a tendency to
> procrastinate but I've never not done anything. I scored pretty high in most courses.
> My school was large, around 700 students per grade.

When asked about her time so far at the university, she said that some semesters were better than others. She referred to her first semester going well and getting good grades. She took advantage of peer tutoring and academic coaching, which she believed helped her to be successful. She said:

> I mean everything was pretty good throughout the first semester and beginning of
> second semester when I was there. I had peer tutoring and supplemental instruction.
> I participated in more group tutoring for a course last semester which helped. Being
> on campus I was more on top of things. I slipped, like close to the end, a little
> before quarantine, so it's not completely bad. I think it was still pretty good.

The courses Suzy is enjoying the most are computer science and psychology with history being her least. She said:

> For some reason just history courses right now are my least favorite, I don't know
> why. But yeah, I liked computer science and psychology, but neither of them I'm
> taking this semester. I like stats courses in general at the university. The minis for
> English were pretty cool, too. For the most part, it was a really good class.

She described the university as being "good" when supporting her success as long as she took advantage of the resources. She elaborated:

> Yeah, there's a lot of opportunities, I'm just not taking enough of them. I don't
> really go to office hours. Peer tutoring helped when I was on campus, but I haven't
> done any while off campus. There is a lot of support, but I just don't lean on it, you
> know.

The word that she used to describe herself is a "self-directed learner." She elaborated on this by using remote learning as an example in which she listens to lectures live with the instructor but figures things out later for herself. She used the words "procrastinator, curious, and intelligent" in

addition to self-directed learner; she prides herself for the work she can get done when pressed up against deadlines but realizes that sometimes this is not the best technique. She explained:

> Um, I like self-learning. I listen to lectures and stuff, but I usually learn stuff when I work things out for myself later. Or like through a packet or something when I was in high school. I mean, I do have a tendency to procrastinate a little but then like when it's close to a deadline, I work at hyper efficiency speed so I kind of do a lot in one sitting. It's probably not a healthy thing to lean on moving forward.

Her feelings about her future as a student are positive overall. She said, "I really think I can just get back on track because I really like all of it, I like my major, so if I can just get back to it, it's an overall positive outlook."

4.5 College Experiences and Expectations Differ for Students

The interview findings revealed that students who are facing academic probation enter college at different levels academically. First-year students matriculate to college with personal experiences from high school that impact their outlook of college. Although most students see their future at the university as positive, more outreach needs to be done from the academic advisor as well as the university in general to ensure that these students are retained. Three broad themes emerged from the interview data: (a) preparation for college, (b) feelings of support, and (c) teaching modality due to COVID-19.

The following subthemes were identified within the broad themes: (a) resources and asking for help, (b) feelings of independence, (c) misaligned study skills and routine, (d) competing social and academic priorities, and (e) student motivation.

4.6 Preparation for College

The first theme that emerged from the interviews is related to preparation for college, specifically focusing on academics. Academic preparation was the theme most noted by students, which is to be expected considering grades and quantitative data are what the university, and students, define and measure as success. Students noted it was a "humbling" experience when they realized how difficult courses were from high school to college. Charlie elaborated:

I didn't even know what a difficult course was. I quickly found out... I was, uh, humbled pretty quickly with classes at the university. I had to find out how to study and learn how to understand things at a deep enough level to pass things and do well at the university.

High schools are preparing students at various levels academically, with some students indicating that their courses, even at the AP level, were too easy. Doug said:

Um, I think my high school was like really easy to get through the most difficult classes that were offered. So, like, it's a really small school and the classes are really small so at least with the AP kids in my experience, the teachers went even easier on us than they did with the regular class, so it wasn't really challenging.

Other students shared similar experiences of being academically successful in high school, indicating that they received high grades throughout their academic career. Suzy noted, "Um, I mean, I was pretty on top of stuff throughout. I kind of had a tendency to procrastinate but I've never not done anything. I scored pretty high in most courses." Steven also described his high school experience as being a "good experience overall" and did well in most courses. Charlie expressed how he felt high school was too easy to do well. He elaborated:

I thought high school was pretty easy. It felt like it was too easy to do well. I could

get straight As without doing much at all, which definitely didn't help me or didn't

prepare me well for the university.

Although most students indicated that they achieved high marks in high school, other students had a more challenging time prior to arriving at college. Nicole stated, "Um, high school was not easy but less challenging than college has been so far." Similarly, students such as Matthew struggled academically prior to high school. He noted, "Um, so like, before high school I was generally never a good student. I remember in middle school failing a class in the sixth grade because I didn't really care at that point."

From these interviews it is important to note that all students enter college prepared at different levels regardless of the courses they took in high school. Even though a student may have done well academically prior to college, that does not guarantee academic success in college. Academic advisors need to get to know each student to help find out what works best for their specific learning style.

4.6.1 Resources and Asking for Help

For students facing academic probation, it was a hard reality when they realized they could not get through courses, whether introductory or advanced, the same way they did in high school. Some students felt frustrated and defeated, which impacted their overall mental health. Nicole emphasized:

I can honestly say I've been having a hard time and me, the student that I am, I

should be able to control, balance, or even get ahead of the challenges that I'm

facing but as of right now, it's just really hard, like I don't know if it's because of

COVID-19 and how it has impacted us and how we have to deal with it, but I can

honestly say it's just been harder than what I have expected.

When students are not exposed to challenges in high school and then experience them in college, it can cause them to become unsettled both academically and non-academically. Some students learn new skills quickly in order to be successful, whereas other students may take a little longer to develop these skills. Steven shared a specific example from his high school of a time when he had to re-learn a difficult lesson. He said:

Every year I would re-learn the lesson that you need to do the homework to practice

and solidify the concepts, but that would only sink in like three quarters of the way

through the semester. So, I would always pull my grade up to passing by the end

of the semester, but I would never start off the year with that lesson intact. I would

go through the same cycle again and it was pretty annoying.

Advisors who know of students' study habits, or lack thereof, in high school can help guide them to develop new, more productive study habits in college. If academic advisors are not aware of what could be impacting student performance, this can result in students experiencing academic difficulty, which could lead to academic probation as early as their first semester.

In addition to academic advising, students acknowledged there are a lot of resources available at the university but that it is up to the individual student to take advantage of those resources. Almost all students interviewed noted in some capacity that they knew of the resources; however, student experiences differed with some finding them helpful and others not. Tony mentioned the student success plan when referring to resources:

I checked out some of the links on the student success plan and, I mean, they have

a lot to offer. Whether it's through a course or a couple of guidelines to follow...

so overall, I think that's pretty good and I feel like it could help about anyone.

Doug shared, "Once I reached out for help, there were a million resources available to me. Everyone was really good in pointing me in the right direction. I'm using Disability Resources and Counseling and Psychological Services as of right now, which help me." Similarly, Suzy mentioned taking advantage of peer tutoring and supplemental instruction. She said, "I mean everything was pretty good throughout the first semester and beginning of second semester when I was there. I had peer tutoring and supplemental instruction. I participated in more group tutoring for a course last semester which helped."

Taylor mentioned taking advantage of some resources, including professors, but expressed concern about some resources not reaching students who may need them, or resources being underfunded or understaffed. She noted, "I feel like these resources don't get to students who need them, or people don't know they are for them. It could also be people try to access them, but they are underfunded or understaffed."

It is the responsibility of the student, academic advisor, and the university to ensure students know of resources available to them. However, it is up to the student to take advantage of what is being offered. How a student interprets how successful a resource is to them academically or non-academically can determine whether they will continue to seek help or whether they isolate and try to figure things out on their own.

4.6.2 Feelings of Independence

Many students mentioned that they felt they could always manage things on their own without the help of additional support, creating a sense of independence. Because of this independence, students were hesitant to reach out for help, if they reached out at all. Matthew knew of resources that were available to him; however, he did not feel as though he needed them at the time. He explained:

> Uh, well there are a lot of resources; I remember for a certain course, they had TA's
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> that were available. I know for other courses, it was a bit varied, uh, sometimes
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> they gave out other resources like supplemental instruction, which helped. Um, it's
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> still pretty early and I feel like I don't need them yet, but I'd say, like, there are a
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> lot of resources there if you want to access them, but sometimes, uh, I think you
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> can get left out if you don't access them... which is kind of at the fault of the person.
>
> The resources are there, you know, and you're just not using them. Um, but like,
>
> it can be pretty easy to isolate yourself because that's just the easier thing to do.

Suzy shared a similar experience when she noted that resources were available but felt she did not have to lean on them for additional support. She said:

> Yeah, there's a lot of opportunities, I'm just not taking enough of them. I don't
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> really go to office hours. Peer tutoring helped when I was on campus, but I haven't
>
> done any while off campus. There is a lot of support, but I just don't lean on it, you
>
> know.

Similarly, students may avoid reaching out to resources until they feel they have no other option but to do so. Steven shared an experience in which he could not manage things on his own anymore and had to reach out to his instructors. He shared:

I'd say there are supporting resources but like, the onus was definitely on me to

reach out to them and ask for them. It is a relatively reasonable expectation, but

specifically in my case, it didn't work out so well. I only started pursuing them at

a point when I was pretty emotionally distraught. Uh, and that's sort of just the

case in classes. Not specifically the college. Like the professors are far more

understanding than I thought they would be, but I had to actively reach out to them

and, uh, explain, which was really terrifying to do the first couple of times because

that's not really the expectation that I had from high school.

Other students mentioned trying to reach out to resources that they found to be unhelpful. Nicole

shared an experience of reaching out to one of her instructors. She noted:

I've tried reaching out to instructors but haven't had any luck. They say they want

to help me, but I don't feel that they do. Sometimes I feel like I don't know where

to turn because although resources are said to be available, it's overwhelming. I've

always been able to figure things out on my own, you know, so to ask for help is

something new to me.

As seen from these interviews, students' experiences with resources vastly differ from one another

in addition to how a student feels when reaching out for additional support. When students reach

out for help and do not receive the support they thought they were going to, it may cause the

student to feel more isolated and reinforce navigating things on their own. It is important for

academic advisors to know which resources students have sought out, if any, to help encourage

initial outreach or help understand previous outreach attempts, to avoid feeling a sense of academic

isolation.

4.6.3 Misaligned Study Skills and Routine

Most of the students interviewed noted that they did well in high school, with little to no effort studying for courses. Several students mentioned how they are trying to develop the skills needed to be successful in college as they never had to study for a course extensively before. Matthew talked about his experience prior to college and spoke about some of the habits he has formed. He emphasized:

> But generally, my bad habits just suck. I didn't really have a study plan, or a
> developed one, and still don't. So mostly I just tried to pay attention in class and
> have some fun with friends in between and that was enough.

Steven also talked about underdeveloped study skills and alluded to it causing him stress. He said, "It's been, I don't know, nice when it hasn't been stressful, but it's been stressful a decent amount of the time." In addition to the lack of study skills and poor study habits, students mentioned the lack of structure and routine, which may have impacted their academic performance. Taylor said:

> Yeah, so my first year was very difficult. I really enjoyed being at the university
> and I really enjoyed being in the city, so that part of college was amazing. I did
> have to learn how to build my own routines, structure my own time, and learn self-
> discipline, so my freshman year was a bit difficult because I didn't learn how to do
> any of that yet.

Nicole also mentioned needing structure to help her perform better academically, especially given the remote nature of classes. She stated:

> I don't necessarily know what I'm doing, but I just know it needs to be completed.
> It's just that I have to balance so much other stuff. There's not much structure or
> guidance because we are online, and we can't really turn to anyone else because

we're not in the same environment or atmosphere in general. I just think that's my

main concern, well not my main concern because my grades are my main concern,

but that's my main issue.

As seen from the interviews, when students leave home for the first time and enter a new college community, there are a lot of things that need to be learned in order to be successful both inside and outside of the classroom. It is critical that students find a support system that can help them to navigate complex times. Students' needs to establish new skills and routines can be a challenge, so college personnel such as academic advisors, along with peers, can play a crucial role in helping a student adjust to the new demands of college academically and non-academically.

4.6.4 Competing Social and Academic Priorities

Most students mentioned how they were surprised at how different college was from high school in various ways. Students reported having a difficult time juggling their priorities and keeping academics at the forefront of their mind. Some students were trying to find the balance between making friends and doing well in their academics. Matthew spoke of his experience on campus:

My RA is pretty helpful, and he definitely tries to bring us together to socially make

friends. It kind of forces everyone to be together virtually, but in a good way. It's

just that we're not really able to go out to other places on campus to see and meet

new people in-person.

Taylor also mentioned trying to balance both academics and their social life; they want to succeed in the classroom while also being engaged throughout the community. They said, "I'm also trying

to find that balance between being a productive student and engaged in my classes but also finding ways to be engaged all over campus in different groups and in the city in general."

Students integrate to college with various expectations both socially and academically, which can leave the student feeling satisfied or unsatisfied depending on whether those expectations are met. Some students find their balance of socially and academically integrating immediately, whereas others take more time. It is important to help students feel a sense of belonging, especially in the first year, in order to retain these students. Jacob mentioned feeling homesick in his first semester but found the support needed to fit in. He explained:

> One thing that is very different for me is the change in location. I feel like I haven't been away from home for a long period of time, which can be very distracting because I miss home but the school helps you to fit in. That's the one thing that the university does, it makes you want to fit in.

Several students mentioned how they felt lonely, or isolated, due to COVID-19. Most of the students interviewed could not wait to be on campus in the spring semester so that they could meet new people and form new friendships. Suzy, Tony, and Paul all mentioned that physically being on campus will help them not only to meet new people, but they believe it will help to improve their academics. However, unlike most students, Nicole is still very undecided about her future whether she returns to campus or not. She said, "I'm kind of undecided, a lot... because I tend to question whether I want to stay there often because of the loneliness I tend to feel."

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities are operating in ways they never have before. Although residence halls are trying their best to engage students in socially distanced activities, students feel as though they are not getting the same experience as they would have in a traditional college setting. As seen throughout the interviews, students are reacting to their

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college experience in different ways, with some students feeling connected to peers and the college community whereas others are not. How connected a student feels to the university, in addition to their academic success, can play a major factor in future retention and attrition rates.

4.6.5 Student Motivation

Smith and Winterbottom (1969) found that students are placed on academic probation because of: (a) a lack of positive motivation, (b) expectations not being realistic, (c) discouragement, and (d) being dependent. Students showed these characteristics in a variety of ways throughout their interviews. The most prevalent theme to arise was a lack of positive motivation in addition to procrastination.

Charlie mentioned that he was just trying to get through college and obtain a degree from the university. He emphasized this when he stated, "I'm feeling okay about my future as a student as long as I get it together moving forward." He also mentioned, "As long as I get my degree, I will be okay." His primary concern now is getting a job and having financial security, not necessarily his GPA or the grades he receives in his courses. He noted that this was a difficult semester for him in general and, once he can fully focus on academics and not have other obligations due to COVID-19, he will be fine academically. Charlie went on to describe how he felt inconsistently motivated as a student when asked how he would describe himself:

I don't know, I guess it's a pessimistic thing to say but I guess inconsistent. I'm

kind of all over the place, sometimes I do really well, and sometimes I fail things.

But yeah, I guess inconsistent is the word right now.

Matthew felt similar in his interview on how he viewed himself as a student. He said, "It works 100 percent of the time, 50 percent of the time" meaning his motivation fluctuates consistently

with his academics. He mentioned that his motivation varies based on subject and material taught. In general, students will usually have a preference for some courses over others, which can help guide them towards their academic major interests. As advisors, is it important to know which subjects are stronger for students and which need improved upon so that schedules can be planned accordingly and appropriate courses suggested.

In addition to what could be considered a lack of positive motivation that students exhibit, most students mentioned procrastination as something they experience frequently. Jacob said, "My biggest weakness is procrastination; I'm in the middle of class thinking of something else and I'm like, I just can't do this right now and then I'm just on my phone." Similarly, Paul mentioned getting distracted more easily and procrastinating more often since he is currently living at home and participating in asynchronous courses. He noted, "Truthfully, it's not as exciting as I'd hoped it would be. Probably because I've been at home and stuff hasn't changed. I'm just not a fan of the online learning either." Students such as Suzy mentioned being prone to procrastination but still able to get work done. She exclaimed, "I kind of had a tendency to procrastinate, but I've never not done anything." She went on to say, "I mean, I do have a tendency to procrastinate a little but then like when it's close to a deadline, I work at hyper efficiency speed so I kind of do a lot in one sitting. It's probably not a healthy thing to lean on moving forward."

Students know they are exhibiting these qualities, which is helpful in taking ownership of them. It is important for academic advisors to know of these qualities so they can help provide support tailored specifically to each individual student. Although procrastination and academic motivation seem to be a predominant theme throughout the interviews, students facing academic probation can exhibit other characteristics as well. As seen throughout the interviews, both

positive and negative attributes were shared when students described themselves with the terms "procrastination prone, curious, and inconsistent" being the most commonly used.

4.7 Teaching Modality Due to COVID-19

Remote learning played a significant factor in how students felt they were performing academically in the first half of the semester. As noted in the interviews, some students expressed mixed emotions for online learning. The teaching modality of courses also played a factor into which courses students were enjoying more than others. Charlie added:

> I think I've enjoyed the computer science courses the most even though they are the most difficult because I just think it's more fun to do the programming and just be able to go in and solve interesting problems. You're actually doing things that seem useful and apply things to projects you seem to be interested in.

Similarly, Tony noted that he enjoyed his microeconomics course based on how the instructor taught:

> I think I'd enjoy all my classes if they were done in the same way. I enjoy my microeconomics course which is just the instructor sitting there talking to you and having interactive polls every so often. He announces his office hours at the end so if you have any doubts, you can talk to him. I enjoy that a lot. I mean I'd say it's the ideal scenario for a virtual space.

Of the courses taken, students commonly noted calculus as being their least enjoyable due to teaching modality and the content of the course. Charlie said:

My least favorite has probably been just the basic calculus courses. It's just kind

of the same thing again and again. You get assigned a 10-question problem set in

calculus II and they are usually just insanely difficult for no reason. You just do

that weekly again and again and it's not that fun.

Paul also mentioned calculus being his least favorite course. He elaborated, "I don't really like

my calculus course but really, how much does anyone like their calculus course? I don't hate

math, but sometimes I get bored in that class because of how it's taught." Students found it difficult

to follow along with instructors and solve problems virtually rather than in the classroom. They

also mentioned that the instructors teaching calculus courses did not make the course engaging,

causing difficulty when listening to lectures. Although other courses may have had students

feeling the same way, calculus was the most frequently mentioned in the interviews.

In addition to the virtual teaching modality, one student commented on how instructors

graded. Steven said, "But for the most part, I enjoy the stuff I am learning, but specific assignments

or specific ways the rubrics are phrased are annoying and confusing... stuff like that." Students

facing academic probation may have a difficult time adjusting to the new demands of college,

which can include how assignments are graded. It is important to note that how students are

introduced to course materials by the instructor, in addition to the required expectations, may be

impacting student performance or their general outlook on each of their courses.

Where students are physically located impacted academic performance. As noted in the

interviews, some students did not have a conducive environment to do well with remote learning.

Paul mentioned that he thought of his home environment as similar to high school and was not

enjoying college courses since he was in a similar position completing his coursework just months

prior. Similarly, Nicole is struggling with remote learning because she feels there is no structure

and no one to turn to in order to help support her academically since she is not in the same environment of her professors and peers. One student mentioned having to pick up a part-time job due to the impact COVID-19 had on his family, resulting in competing priorities at times.

In conclusion, remote learning is impacting students in a variety of ways both academically and non-academically. Teaching modalities can cause a student to feel connected with a course, or disengaged, simply by how interactive modules are. Geographical and physical location can cause some students stress due to competing priorities, whereas other students may be able to better manage the complexities of what they are facing in a remote environment.

4.8 Quantitative Data

To help answer the research questions used to guide this study, two quantitative surveys were given to students facing academic probation. One survey focused on the student success plan, and the other survey focused on the effectiveness of intrusive advising.

4.8.1 Research Question 1: What Are Students' Perceptions of Intrusive Advising?

To answer the question of students' perceptions of intrusive advising, students were asked to respond by answering on a six-point Likert scale survey ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the questions asked.

Intrusive advising was perceived by almost all students in the study to be beneficial. Ninety percent ($n = 9$) of respondents stated that intrusive advising appointments were beneficial. In addition, these advising appointments also aided students in feeling a sense of belonging to the

university. Ninety percent (*n* = 9) of respondents stated that they felt a sense of belonging after attending the advising appointments. Figure 1 presents a visual representation of the participants' responses with respect to advising appointments.
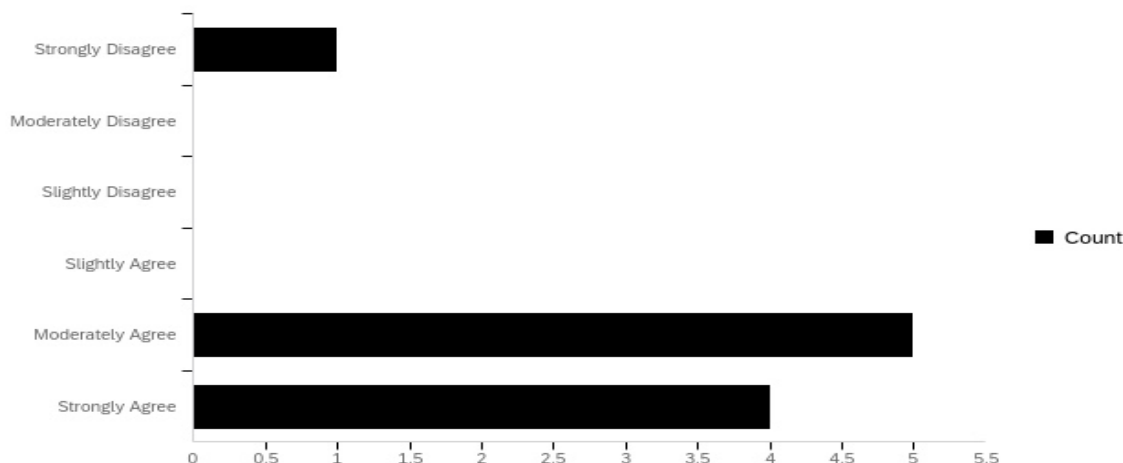

Figure 1 Students' Perceptions of Intrusive Academic Advising Appointments

Advising appointments made students want to stay enrolled at the university, as a majority of students were not considering leaving the university at this time. Seventy percent (*n* = 7) of respondents stated they were not considering leaving. The additional 30 percent (*n* = 3*)* of respondents indicated they were slightly or moderately considering leaving the university at this point in their academic career.

Students were able to share additional written responses about advising appointments, with one saying, "Advising appointments were helpful, I just did not start them/get a handle on things soon enough." Another student commented, "I enjoyed having an academic advisor as a resource throughout the second half of the semester because it helped to hold me accountable for my actions."

4.8.2 Research Question 2: How Many Students Who Engaged in Intrusive Advising

   Increased Their GPA at Final Semester?

   Intrusive advising was perceived by most students to contribute positively to their final grade point average (GPA). Seventy percent ($n = 7$) of respondents stated that intrusive advising positively impacted their final GPA for the semester. Of these respondents, 20 percent ($n = 2$) did not increase their GPA from mid-semester to final grades. Intrusive advising appointments conducted via Zoom also aided in contributing positively to their final GPA. Ninety percent ($n = 9$) of respondents thought Zoom appointments contributed positively.

   Of the 10 students who fell below the 2.25 or 2.0 GPA mark at mid-semester, 50 percent ($n = 5$) increased their GPA from mid-semester to final grades, resulting in good academic standing. Forty percent ($n = 4$) either had their GPA remain the same from mid-semester or decreased, resulting in academic probation. One student took a leave of absence at the end of the semester, resulting in withdrawing from all courses and not receiving a final GPA for the semester.

   Students reported that COVID-19 negatively impacted academic performance for the semester. Eighty percent ($n = 8$) of respondents reported COVID-19 playing a factor in their academic performance. One student commented, "The pandemic made things 5 times harder." Until the students went on Thanksgiving break, the university was offering a hybrid model of teaching. After Thanksgiving break, all students were required to take courses remotely.

4.8.3 What are Students' Perceptions of the Student Success Plan Contributing to Their Academic Performance in the Second Half of the Semester?

To answer the research question regarding students' perceptions of the student success plan, students were asked to respond on a six-point Likert scale survey ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In addition to the survey, the student success plan was reviewed during appointments, and themes emerged throughout.

The student success plan was perceived by all students in the study to be beneficial. One hundred percent ($n = 8$) of respondents found the student success plan to be beneficial in helping improve their academic performance in the second half of the semester. In addition, the student success plan aided in self-reflection of their academic performance in the first half of the semester. One hundred percent ($n = 8$) of respondents found the student success plan aided in self-reflection of their academic performance. Students added additional comments such as, "I think the student success plan was really useful for organizing my struggles with the previous semesters, as well as planning success strategies for this semester." Another student reported, "Having an external excuse to self-reflect was very helpful in clarifying the generally vague promises I was trying to make to myself about efficiency and habits." Figure 2 presents a visual representation of the participants' responses with respect to the student success plan being beneficial in helping improve academic performance in second half of the semester.
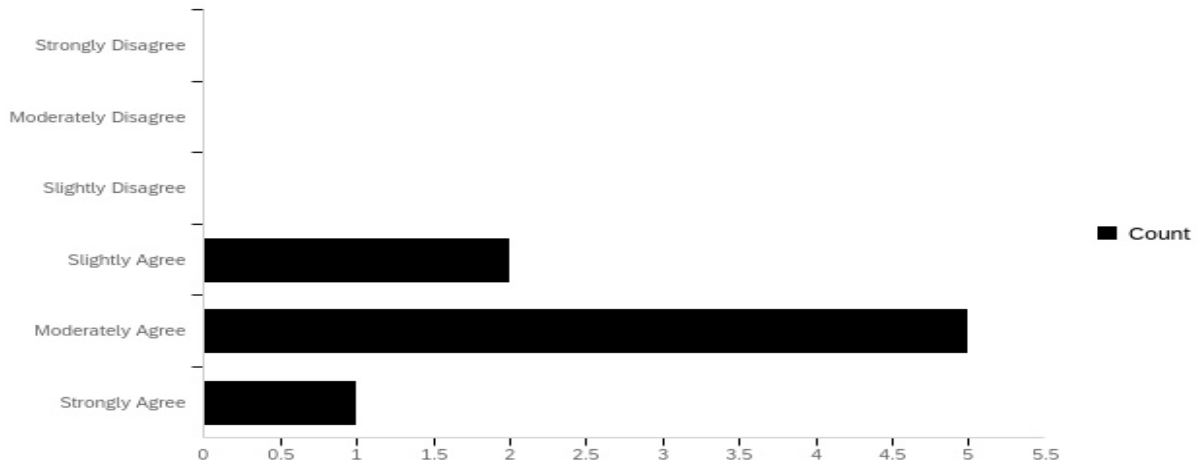
Figure 2 Students' Perceptions of the Student Success Plan

In addition to self-reflection, students perceived the student success plan to help set both short- and long-term goals. One hundred percent ($n = 8$) of respondents found that setting short- and long-term goals helped improve their academic performance. Students supported both short- and long-term goal setting, with one saying, "I think having to type down the things I needed to get done was helpful and it has allowed me to visualize a bit better what I need to do."

The student success plan helped students become more knowledgeable of academic and non-academic resources. One hundred percent ($n = 8$) of respondents found the student success plan helped them become more knowledgeable about resources available. One student reported, "Having a list of consolidated resources on the student success plan was particularly helpful as often these resources are listed disparately, and it can be hard to know what is available."

Three common themes that emerged from the reflection were: (a) being underprepared for remote learning, (b) lack of connection with peers, and (c) learning how to transition to a new community. More themes emerged in the goal setting process, including: (a) increase in grade point average by final grades, (b) organization/preparedness in the classroom, and (c) reaching out

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for help. These themes were supported in the results of the survey in addition to the responses from the semi-structured interview.

4.9 Summary of Findings

Results from this mixed-methods study revealed key findings across the qualitative and quantitative data, which helped to answer and support the research questions that initiated this study in addition to providing more context regarding how the data intersects.

4.9.1 Students Facing Academic Probation Benefit from Mandatory Interventions

As seen from the data, most students found their weekly advising appointments to be beneficial throughout the second half of the semester. The 10 students who chose to meet with me weekly attended every appointment. At the first mandated meeting, the same date and time were agreed upon by me and the student for advising appointments for the remaining six weeks. Unlike other support services at the university, I reached out to the student to offer advising appointments. The results from this study show students are reluctant to reach out for help for a variety of reasons. By taking the initial step of reaching out to the student, a barrier that students may have seen was broken down and allowed for fruitful conversations to take place.

The student success plan used in the advising appointments was a beneficial tool to the student in learning more about resources, setting short- and long-term goals, and reflecting on obstacles they may have faced during the first half of the semester. This also helped the student come up with tangible actions and not lose sight of the goals they set for themselves for the

semester and beyond. The student success plan, in addition to the advising appointments, helped some students to increase their GPA from mid-semester to final grades in addition to helping them feel more cared for by the university.

4.9.2 COVID-19 Impacted Students Differently

As seen from the data, COVID-19 impacted students academically and non-academically. Where students were geographically located in addition to the teaching modality of courses affected their performance. Students who participated in remote learning from home were given additional responsibilities of working part-time while being enrolled as full-time students. The time that students were spending attending to their responsibilities took away time they could have been using towards coursework.

The data collected from the semi-structured interview and quantitative survey showed that most students agreed that COVID-19 negatively impacted their academic performance. Students mentioned teaching modality as a way they felt engaged or disengaged in a class. Most students preferred to have more interactive courses compared to lecture courses as students found themselves more distracted when classes were in a lecture format. In addition to teaching modality, students noted that they were enjoying courses that were more geared towards their intended majors than general education courses.

4.9.3 Students Facing Academic Probation Can Affect Retention Rates

The results of this study correspond with the literature when examining grade point averages of students. Of the 10 students, five increased their GPA above the minimum academic

threshold set by the university to be considered in good academic standing, four students were placed on academic probation, and one student took a leave of absence that resulted in withdrawing from all courses and not receiving a GPA. Although most students indicated they did not plan on leaving the university at this point in their academic career, three students were considering it. Most students view their future at the university as positive; however, other students indicated they were semi-positive or undecided at the time of the study.

As seen from this study, students who are facing academic probation may affect retention rates due to poor academic performance in addition to non-academic issues such as not fitting into the college community or not finding their social support system. Students mentioned feelings of loneliness and isolation, along with not feeling cared for by the institution, which could impact their decision on whether this specific university is the right place for them.

5.0 Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine if intrusive advising impacted academic performance of first- and second-year undeclared students who were facing academic probation at mid-semester. This chapter includes a discussion of the major research findings in relation to the literature, implications for practice, implications for future research, and limitations of the study.

5.1 Findings and Discussion Related to the Research

5.1.1 Mandatory Interventions are Perceived as Beneficial

The findings in this study indicate that students found advising appointments to be beneficial. Ninety percent of students found advising appointments to be beneficial throughout the second half of the semester. In addition, 90 percent of students felt a sense of belonging to the university. The findings from this study align with previous literature in defining the goal of intrusive advising as helping students feel cared for by the institution (Varney, 2003). Intrusive advising as an intervention may act as a way of understanding the needs of students by increasing their skills for success (Abelman & Molina, 2001; Abelman & Molina, 2002; Molina & Abelman, 2000; Schwabel et al., 2012; Vander Schee, 2007; Varney, 2003). Studies have shown positive correlations between students on academic probation and mandatory interventions such as academic advising (Coleman & Freeman, 1996; Yang, Yon, & Kim, 2013).

From these findings, I am wondering if students are not attending advising appointments earlier in the semester because they do not want their advisor to get the wrong impression of them as a student. In my experience working with first-year students, most students think of an academic advisor as someone they go to when they are having academic difficulty. It could be that students do not engage with an academic advisor to avoid negative feelings associated with not performing well in the classroom. In addition, I am wondering if instructors are not communicating with academic advisors early enough when they see a student experience academic difficulty in their courses. Academic advisors only have access to mid-semester grades, so a student's academic performance is unknown until then. Mid-semester is too late for an academic advisor to first be informed of a student struggling and can cause missed opportunities for outreach in the first half of the semester.

5.1.2 Intrusive Advising and GPA

This study found that high levels of advisor involvement contributed positively to a student's overall grade point average. However, of the seven students who perceived intrusive advising appointments to contribute positively to their final GPA, 20 percent did not increase their GPA from mid-semester to final grades. Fifty percent of students improved their grade point average from mid-semester to final grades whereas 40 percent of students either had their GPA remain the same or decrease, resulting in academic probation. These findings may indicate that students overstated how intrusive advising appointments contributed to their academic performance in the second half of the semester. One student took a leave of absence for the fall semester but returned for the spring, resulting in no action being taken. All 10 students, regardless of their academic standing in the college, returned for the spring 2021 semester.

From these findings, I believe more outreach needs to be done by the advisor earlier in the semester to help increase GPA by final semester. In my experience as an academic advisor, students are more open and willing to attend academic advising appointments if I am reaching out to them early, expressing my concern for their academic performance rather than relying on the student to make the initial outreach. In addition, if a student is unresponsive to my outreach, this alerts me that there may be things occurring outside of the classroom that are impacting their academic performance, which I can then address by involving other resources on campus to help support the student.

Research has found that intrusive advising for probationary students with high levels of advisor involvement contributed to higher grade point averages and retention rates compared to low advisor involvement (Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001; Molina & Abelman, 2000). This study aligns with the literature in that high levels of advisor involvement contributed positively, or was perceived to contribute positively, to overall grade point average. With all students returning for the spring 2021 semester, this finding aligns with the literature that finds academic advising to be an effective strategy to retain students who are most likely to drop out, including probation and first-generation students (Glennen & Baxley, 1985; Schwebel et al., 2008; Vander Schee, 2007).

5.1.3 Student Success Plan

In addition to advising appointments, the student success plan as a mandatory tool was found to be beneficial in helping students succeed in three areas: self-reflection, goal setting, and becoming more knowledgeable of resources. Literature shows that different strategies such as supportive academic advising (Kirk-Kuwaye & Nishida, 2001; Molina & Abelman, 2000) and goal-setting interventions (Bowman et al., 2019) help to improve college grades and GPA. One

hundred percent of students agreed that the student success plan overall was beneficial in helping improve their academic performance in the second half of the semester.

These findings are beneficial for both the student and the academic advisor in helping students remain in good academic standing in the college. In my experience working with students on or facing academic probation, I found that students do not reflect deeply on how they got to their current academic standing. Most students simply ask what academic probation is, how it affects them, and set the one goal of being removed from probation by the end of the semester. The student success plan encouraged students to think of the obstacles they faced in the first half of the semester and how they tried to overcome those obstacles. This reflection also encouraged students to think about the resources that they used, or could have used, to help overcome or manage challenges. Having students reflect on their academic performance gave the academic advisor a starting point in the advising appointment to begin having a more in-depth conversation about what may have occurred in the first half of the semester and collaborate with students on what to do moving forward.

The student success plan helped to set both short- and long-term goals with students in the second half of the semester and beyond. This gave students the opportunity to think beyond the simplistic goal of getting off, or avoiding, academic probation. Setting goals helped in advising appointments because it gave the academic advisor a more concrete idea of what the student would like to achieve moving forward. This was really helpful to me as an advisor when working with these students on how to guide conversations and make realistic plans moving forward to help them reach these goals.

At the university, there are a lot of resources available to students, which most students are not aware of. The student success plan helped students to become more knowledgeable about

resources, which then helped in the discussion of how students were going to utilize these resources to achieve their short- and long-term goals. This was beneficial to the student in becoming more knowledgeable about resources and to me as the academic advisor as I got the opportunity to explain what the resources were and why the student should take advantage of them this semester and in upcoming semesters. As an advisor, I believe the student success plan is beneficial for first- and second-year undeclared students not only in improving academic performance but in helping the student learn more about themselves in an academic environment.

The overarching goals of mandatory interventions is to help students change current behavior and promote academic success, assist with academic and career planning, connect students to university resources, and improve and develop study skills (Kimbark, Peters, & Richardson, 2017). The results of this study align with the literature regarding student knowledge of academic resources available to them through both the student success plan and advising appointments. This study contributes to literature by providing a new perspective on how to help support students facing academic probation. The student success plan gave students more of a voice by reflecting on their past experiences and setting realistic goals moving forward. As an academic advisor, I was able to better guide students in the direction they wanted to go and tailor appointments to meet their specific needs. From these findings, I believe it may be beneficial to introduce the student success plan to all incoming first-year students and not just students who are facing academic probation to help advisors and students plan their upcoming semesters and years ahead.

5.1.4 Social Integration

The results of this study show that first-year students had a difficult time adjusting to college due to competing priorities socially and academically. Students noted having a difficult time finding the balance between their academics and finding a social network of peers. Students believed COVID-19 made social integration to the college more challenging due to the university's policies and procedures restricting in-person gatherings. Some students mentioned feeling isolated and lonely at home, while others felt the same way living on campus due to socially distanced guidelines. Contrary to previous research, this study did not find a link between students' academic motivation and experiences of social integration.

Literature shows that first-year students may experience difficulty in adjusting both socially and academically to a new college environment (Kember 2001; Tinto, 1993). Research has found that peer relationships and students' academic motivation are two areas that can help students in the first-year transition (Dennis et al. 2005; Donche et al. 2014; Wilson et al. 2014). Social integration is a well-researched topic within higher education with Tinto's model of student departure or student persistence at the forefront of the research (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Neuville et al. 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Severiens & Wolff, 2008; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1997). Social integration can be looked at as the interactions between the student and social system of their institution (Tinto, 1997). The results of this study align with literature in that first-year students had a difficult time adjusting to college and balancing competing priorities socially and academically.

Unlike previous research, this study did not find a link between students' academic motivation and experiences of social integration. Previous studies have found that peer group relationships can enhance sense of belonging, which can then influence students' academic

motives (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Meeuwisse et al. 2010; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Although students struggled with establishing peer group relationships, they still felt a sense of belonging to the college through weekly academic advising appointments. These advising appointments were positively linked to how students performed academically throughout the second half of the semester.

From these findings, it can be assumed that having consistent advising appointments can help students feel connected to the college even if peer group relationships may be lacking. Academic advisors can help students feel integrated to the college through weekly appointments focusing on academic and non-academic topics. In my advising experience, communication with students is key. In order to build a solid relationship with a student, advisors must build rapport with a student and present a welcoming environment. This study also supports the importance that academic advising plays in retention and attrition rates of the college. From these findings, I am wondering if group advising could help students feel even more connected to the college because they would not only be interacting with their advisor but other students in the college. It could be that group advising appointments could act as a common ground for peer relationships to naturally develop and take place.

This study contributes new knowledge to the importance of the academic advising role in helping students feel a sense of belonging to the college. Perhaps this study found strong alignment with students having difficulty socially integrating because of the impact COVID-19 had on their fall semester. With this knowledge, it is imperative that academic advisors find ways to connect with students to help them feel a part of the college community and avoid feelings of isolation that could lead to possible transfer to another institution.

5.1.5 Academic Motivation

Students' academic motivation in this study was looked at through the lens of what students reported in the interviews and student success plan. Most students stated that procrastination was their biggest challenge in becoming academically motivated in addition to not reaching out for help when needed. In my experience with students facing academic probation, procrastination is one of the biggest challenges students express, with more students reporting they were struggling with procrastination in the fall semester given remote learning. Students got distracted with asynchronous learning and put off assignments until the last minute, if they completed them at all. Perhaps the findings of this study could indicate a relationship between remote learning and student motivation. If students are not academically motivated in the classroom, they may be less inclined to reach out for academic support as well.

Previous studies have found that various academic, social, and personal situations such as poor academic preparation, inadequate time management skills, and lack of study skills may cause a student to be placed on academic probation at the end of each semester (Seirup & Rose, 2011; Tover & Simon, 2006). This study supports existing literature in that students reported procrastination as a key area for improvement. Students noted some form of procrastination in getting their work completed before deadlines and at times had to ask for extensions on assignments. Most students mentioned procrastination being a negative attribute; however, one student looked at this in a positive way when she explained that she worked well under pressure and against impending deadlines.

The findings from this study allude to students being academically motivated in different ways when completing assignments. Although most students reported procrastination as an obstacle, one student saw it as a motivation. As an academic advisor, it is important to know how

students are motivated in getting work done and offer insight on how to navigate challenges such as procrastination. In addition, advisors can help strategize with students to come up with new ways of being motivated both in and out of the classroom. It is up to the academic advisor to create a safe space for a student to feel comfortable self-disclosing and finding what works best for them to be academically successful.

In addition to procrastination, students reported having difficulty establishing routines in college due to poor time management skills. Tinto (1993) found that students on probation exhibit low motivation, poor time management skills, and experience uncertainty regarding educational and career goals. Students noted that they felt college had more freedom both academically and non-academically compared to their strict high school routines. Some students reported never having to build routines, structure their own time, or learn self-discipline prior to college, which negatively impacted their academic performance. Other students reported not attending lectures virtually and doing their work asynchronously since they were self-directed learners. From these findings, a relationship may exist between poor time management skills and a student's GPA.

This study aligns with previous literature in that social integration and academic motivation impact the first-year transition to college. However, this study differs from previous research studies due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students had more restrictions both socially and academically to navigate in the fall semester than what a typical semester pre-pandemic would entail. These restrictions included remote learning with very limited in-person instruction in addition to all activities from clubs and organizations taking place virtually. In my experience with first-year students, one of the things they are most excited about when entering college is meeting new people and developing friendships. Without that sense of excitement, students can feel lonely and isolated whether at home or on campus. From these findings, I believe advisors

making connections between upperclassmen and first-year students would help first-year students to feel more connected and engaged to the college. Such connections could help combat feelings of isolation.

5.1.6 Learning to Ask for Help is Challenging

The findings showed that students who are facing academic probation are hesitant to reach out for academic support. Some students noted at the time of their interviews that they did not need additional support, which led to a sense of being academically independent. Some students mentioned that reaching out for help was something that was new for them and they felt overwhelmed, which led to reluctance in seeking support.

Previous research has found that students who may have had adequate academic skills for high school may not meet the academic demands of college (Seidman, 2005). Melzer and Grant (2016) suggested that underprepared students are less confident regarding their academic abilities and do not reach out for academic assistance offered through campus resources. Other students facing probation tend to think professional guidance will not help them, so they attempt to resolve challenges on their own, with a majority of these students remaining on academic probation or getting academically suspended in a future semester (Damashek, 2003).

Melzer and Grant (2016) found that underprepared first-year students who face challenges as they begin their college experience do not take advantage of academic and non-academic resources. One student in the study had a negative experience with reaching out to faculty, which caused her to resort to figuring things out on her own and not seeking any additional help. Not only is this problematic for the student but also for faculty if students are feeling they are not getting the support needed to be academically successful. Flynn (2015) found that faculty expect

students to take responsibility and ask for help by seeking assistance through utilizing academic resources. From this study, when students' expectations are not being met when reaching out to resources, it can be assumed that students will be reluctant to reach out for help again in the future. Perhaps these findings show a disconnect between faculty and students' expectations when engaging with academic resources.

In my experience, students are hesitant to reach out to faculty if they are struggling in their courses because they do not want to look incompetent if they do not understand the material. Some students may believe that they will be judged by faculty rather than helped. I am wondering if faculty do more outreach to the student when they first may be experiencing academic difficulty, it will cause the student to feel more comfortable in seeking help. Perhaps if faculty reach out to the academic advisor, the advisor can help bridge the gap and make recommendations to the student to get the support the student may need.

These findings indicate that if academic advisors spent more time explaining not only how resources are beneficial to students but what to expect, students may be more inclined to seek help because they would be more knowledgeable. I also believe more faculty involvement outside of the classroom early in a student's academic career, such as during Orientation, could help break down the negative stigma that may be associated with reaching out for academic support.

5.1.7 Students Felt Underprepared Academically

This study found that students facing academic probation were not prepared academically when entering college. Students did not realize that they were underprepared until after they were enrolled in courses in which they then discovered how rigorous college study would be. Most students took the hardest courses they could in high school, in addition to taking Advanced

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Placement (AP) courses and exams. This allowed students to take more advanced courses starting in their first semester, as they were meeting the prerequisite of courses via AP exam scores or dual enrollment credit. Although AP courses and dual enrollment credit can benefit students in a variety of ways, it may not adequately prepare them for more advanced courses in their first semester. In my experience, most first-year students take advanced courses in their first semester if they have satisfied the prerequisites. It is only after students are enrolled in those advanced courses that they realize how difficult courses can be and either drop the course or earn a grade lower than they had expected. Perhaps students feel they are underprepared because the material they are learning in college does not come as easy as it did in high school. This could result in students thinking they are underprepared for college-level coursework since they now have to put more time and effort into their academics. I wonder if the expectations students set for themselves in achieving high letter grades impact their feelings on how well they feel their high school prepared them academically if those expectations are not met.

Research shows that first-year students have numerous expectations as they matriculate to college, which factor into their approach for academic work (Cole, 2017). Caboni and Adisu (2004) found that there is a tendency to overlook the importance of preparing high school seniors for college-level education since the focus is often placed on successful completion of the high school program. The findings in this study are relatively consistent with literature that finds some students facing academic probation were not prepared academically when entering college. This finding could indicate that there may be a discrepancy in how high schools are preparing students for highly competitive institutions compared to student performance. It may be that high schools are more concerned about graduating students rather than preparing them for the complexities they may face in higher level education.

5.2 Implications for Practice

5.2.1 Strengthen the Advisor/Advisee Relationship

One of the most fundamental skills an academic advisor must have is the ability to create rapport and build professional academic advising relationships with students. This is cited as one of the core competencies that National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) highlights. NACADA created the Academic Advising Core Competencies Model, which includes conceptual, informational, and relational foundational elements. The conceptual component provides the context for the delivery of academic advising, the informational component provides the substance of academic advising, and the relational component provides the skills that enable academic advisors to convey the concepts and information from the other two components to advisees (NACADA, 2017). Working with first-year students, it is crucial to build a professional working relationship so that the student feels comfortable talking to an academic advisor about academic and non-academic issues. Academic probation can be a sensitive topic for many students, so getting students to confide in their academic advisor is beneficial in helping the student get the support needed.

Intrusive advising can be seen as a difficult advising approach since it can be very direct and requires a lot of outreach from the academic advisor in getting students to attend and participate in advising appointments. Some first-year students think of academic advisors as an extension of their guidance counselor in high school, or they see academic advisors as only being able to help with academic things such as course selection; therefore, it is imperative that first-year advisors help students understand their role at the university as early as the first initial meeting. The most feasible and logical action would be for academic advisors to attend professional

development workshops both at the university and through professional organizations such as NACADA on how to become effective advisors.

5.2.2 Require Academic Advising Appointments

All students facing academic probation should be required to meet with their advisor weekly during the second half of the semester. Creating a space for more consistent meetings will hopefully help to develop the advisor/advisee relationship to get the student to feel more comfortable and connected to the college community. This will also help the advisor in supporting the student since they will know more of a student's academic strengths and weaknesses, which will aid in collaborating an effective plan moving forward.

5.2.3 Design and Implement a Student Success Plan

A student success plan helps students to reflect, set short- and long-term goals, and learn more about resources available to them. The student success plan should be given to students in the first meeting and used as a tool in advising appointments to help students think more deeply about their academic performance and create strategies moving forward. The plan should be referenced frequently during advising appointments to ensure the student is on track for the goals they set for themselves throughout the semester.

5.2.4 Create First-Year Workshop Courses

To help first-year students feel more adequately prepared for college, the advising center should offer a series of workshop courses throughout the first semester where they teach students the skills and techniques on how to be academically successful. These workshops may include study skill development, time management techniques, and how to reach out for help, among other proactive skills. It may also be beneficial to include information on the various majors, minors, and careers students can pursue in different departments. These workshops can include inviting different departments within the humanities and social sciences as well as resources from across campus to talk about majors and careers, as well as how to connect.

5.2.5 Develop an Early Warning System

An early warning system alerts both the academic advisor and student when they are falling behind in a course. The early warning system will not only alert both the student and advisor of their academic performance but also provide the opportunity for the advisor to connect with the student and encourage the use of additional resources. The early warning system may help in retention and attrition rates with all students across the college.

In addition, I would suggest the university allow academic advisors to have access to students' grades prior to mid-semester. If academic advisors were able to view grades earlier, more outreach could be done near the beginning of the semester, which would then allow students to become more knowledgeable and to connect with resources earlier. This could positively impact academic performance prior to the second half of the semester.

5.2.6 Create a Peer Mentoring Program

First-year students mentioned struggling with the transition from high school into college both academically and socially. By having a peer mentoring program, first-year students would be able to connect with upperclassmen to learn more about the college in general and also begin to establish a social network. By having a peer mentoring program, feelings of loneliness and isolation may subside and encourage a sense of belonging to the college. Peer mentors can help to introduce first-year students to different clubs and organizations on campus while providing personal experiences and advice on how to be successful in courses. Peer mentors would be a great resource for first-year students to ask questions and learn more about college life in general.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Although the literature review and data collected in this study reveal that mandatory interventions such as intrusive academic advising are seen as beneficial and help contribute positively to students' grade point averages, the study still has limitations that must be recognized. In addition to the limitations, suggestions are also made for future research.

5.3.1 Limitations

The first limitation was the study was restricted to one advisor in one academic department in a humanities and social sciences college, which limits the amount of data collected. The second limitation was that students may have overstated how intrusive advising appointments impacted

their final grade point average for the semester. The third limitation was the small sample population of undeclared first- and second-year students and is not inclusive of other student perspectives who may be facing academic probation in other colleges. The fourth limitation was the sample population was looking specifically at students who are facing academic probation, not currently on academic probation, or any other action in the college. The final limitation was the study took place during COVID-19, limiting advising appointments to only phone or Zoom.

5.3.2 Future Research

There are several implications for future research to be conducted based on the design and findings of this study. Since retention and attrition rates continue to be a high priority for colleges and universities, more research needs to be conducted to ensure all students, especially those facing academic probation, are retained.

One suggestion is to expand the study to include different departments in the humanities and social sciences. By conducting a study with multiple departments and advisors within the humanities and social sciences, more inclusive data could be collected to provide a more accurate reflection on how the college as a whole views intrusive academic advising. This would include collecting data from 10 different departments and include upperclassmen in the college who may be facing academic probation. This could then help determine what additional protocols need to be put in place at the college level for our students.

A second suggestion would be to gather more data from first- and second-year students, expanding the sample population to other colleges within the university. It would be valuable to see how first- and second-year students from the arts, sciences, business, and engineering colleges respond to intrusive academic advising across the university. It would also be advantageous to

compare first- and second-year students who are declared versus undeclared to determine if matriculating to the university as a declared major result in different responses.

A third suggestion would be to expand the timeline of the study. It would be beneficial for academic advisors to work with students already on academic probation from the beginning of the semester to determine if intrusive advising and the student success plan impacted their academic performance. A study could be conducted including students who are already on academic probation from the beginning of the semester compared to students facing academic probation at mid-semester to view students' perceptions of intrusive academic advising appointments to determine whether the frequency of appointments impact overall GPA.

A fourth suggestion would be to look more into admissions to see how students who are facing academic probation are admitted. The admissions office does not provide information regarding high school academics, socioeconomic status, first-generation status, etc. The only information that academic advisors receive is what the student feels comfortable disclosing. Since one of the major findings in this study was students' perceptions of being underprepared for college, it would be interesting to take a more in-depth look at admission rates for the college and university as a whole.

5.4 Conclusion

As seen in the literature and this study, academic advising has the potential to impact students' everyday lives in addition to supporting university retention initiatives. This study fills gaps in the literature and adds to the understanding of the impact mandatory interventions such as intrusive academic advising and the student success plan have on first- and second-year undeclared

students who are facing academic probation. Findings from this study illustrate how intrusive academic advising plays a critical role in student experience, retention, and academic success. My hope is that by doing this research, academic advisors will find new ways to reach out to their students who may be on, or facing, academic probation to help them achieve academic success.

Appendix A Student Email

Dear Student,

I hope this email finds you well. After reviewing your mid-semester grades, I am concerned about your performance in some of your courses. Therefore, you will be required to set up an advising appointment with me within a week of receiving this email. Please feel free to use my online scheduling system for a date and time most convenient for you. After the required meeting, I want to invite you to take part in weekly academic advising sessions with me throughout the remainder of the semester.

You will be encouraged to participate in the following:

- Student Success Plan - you will complete a Student Success Plan after the first meeting in which you will reflect on why you feel you're at your current state academically and set both short- and long-term goals. We will also discuss resources that are available on campus and virtually for you to take advantage of.

  o Throughout the second half of the semester, we will refer to this Student Success Plan to ensure you're meeting your goals set forth.

- Semi-structured interview - you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview on how your experience is thus far at the university. This will be audio recorded should you give consent.

- Qualtrics surveys - you will be asked to complete two surveys: one on the student success plan and the other on the academic advising process.

o   Both of these are very short in nature and won't take long to complete! I will be

sending more information about these surveys in addition to a consent form in a

couple of weeks.

I really hope you consider meeting with me so that we can work together to ensure your

academic success. Please know that I'm here to help you as much as I can! If you have any

questions at all, please let me know. Looking forward to chatting soon!

All the best,

Gina

Appendix B Student Success Plan

<u>Student Success Plan</u>

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Academic Advisor: _____

Semester: _____

Today's Date: _____

Describe the obstacles you felt most impacted your academic success in the first half of the semester:

Share some ways, if any, that you attempted to resolve these obstacles:

Considering the list below, as well as other resources available to you, please choose options you believe will benefit you this semester:

- Academic Advisors – Accountability help, Encouragement, Registration/course load assistance

- Academic Development – Academic Coaching, Tutoring, Excel/SI Groups

- Career and Professional Development (CPDC) – Resume/CV Help, Career Exploration, Mock Interviews

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) – Mental Health Support, Anxiety/Depression resources and assistance

- Disability Resources Office – Academic Accommodations, accessibility concerns

- Global Communication Center (GCC) – One on one communication tutoring: written, oral, and visual

- Handshake – Explore/apply to internship and job opportunities, connect with companies, learn about career options

- Headspace – Meditation and Relaxation app free to all students

- The HUB/Student Financial Services – Student records, billing/payments, financial aid

- University Health Services (UHS) – Primary medical care, health promotion, insurance services

- Other – Diversity & Inclusion, OIE, SLICE, URO, etc.

Please outline your personal and academic goals for the remainder of the semester, as well as steps you plan to take to improve your grade point average:

Goals for this semester:

Actions I will take:

Resources I will use:

Potential solutions to consider:

- I will attend study skills or time management workshops at Academic Development.

- I will cut down my hours working on other non-academic activities in order to leave more time for classes.

- I will commit to regular tutoring appointments each week.

- I will get to know my professor/TA and commit to meeting them in office hours.

- I will meet with a counselor from Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) or outside of the university.

- I will utilize the Career and Professional Development Center (CPDC) for career and major exploration.

- I will meet with someone in the Disability Resources Office for help.

- I will communicate regularly with my Academic Advisor about my academic progress.

In addition to the development of this plan and actions that will be carried out as a result, you are also required to meet with your academic advisor weekly for the remainder of the semester to discuss your academic progress.

I understand the contents of this Student Success Plan and agree to meet with my advisor to complete the specific action items outlined in this plan.

Student Signature: _____Date:_____

Advisor Signature: _____Date: _____

Your privacy is a top priority. If there is any information that may be too personal or you feel uncomfortable sharing, please make sure it is removed from this document prior to adding your signature above. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Appendix C Student Success Plan Survey

Q1 You are receiving this survey because of your participation in filling out the student success plan. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions of this survey, just your perspective. Your experience will help to improve the student success plan as well as the academic advising process in future semesters. This survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will remain confidential. Thank you in advance for your time!

Q2 Reflecting on my academic performance in my student success plan helped me improve my academic performance thus far in the second half of the semester.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose from one of the following options: (1)						

Q3 Setting both short- and long-term goals in my student success plan helped me improve my academic performance thus far in the second half of the semester.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)

Please
choose
from one
of the
following
options:
(1)

Q4 Becoming more knowledgeable of the academic resources available to me (both virtually and in-person) in my student success plan helped me improve my academic performance thus far in the second half of the semester.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose from one of the following options: (1)						

Q5 The student success plan as a whole helped me improve my academic performance thus far in the second half of the semester.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose from one of the following						

options:
(1)

Q6 Please share any additional thoughts on the Student Success Plan.

Q7 Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experience?

Q8 Thank you for your time!! :-)

Appendix D Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Describe your academic experiences as a student prior to coming to college.

2. Tell me about your time so far at the college.

3. What classes are you enjoying the most? The least?

4. What words would you use to describe yourself as a student?

5. Tell me your impressions of the college in supporting your success?

6. What are your feelings about your future as a student at this college?

Appendix E Final Advising Survey

Q1 Starting at mid-semester, you participated in weekly advising appointments with your academic advisor. You are receiving this survey because of your active participation. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions of this survey, just your perspective. Your experience will help to improve the academic advising process in future semesters. This survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will remain confidential. Thank you in advance for your time!

Q2 What is your Andrew ID?

Q3 What is your intended major and/or minor?

Q4 How many units were you registered for in the Fall 2020 semester?

Q5 The majority of my courses fell into which category?

○ Humanities and Social Sciences (1)

○ Business (2)

○ Engineering (3)

○ Performing Arts (4)

○ Computer Science (5)

○ Other (6) _____

Q6 I took these specific courses because

○ They were for a major/minor I was interested in exploring (1)

○ They counted as General Education requirements (2)

○ They looked like fun electives (3)

○ Other (4) _____

Q7 The advising appointments with my academic advisor were beneficial to me throughout the second half of the semester.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the						

following:
(1)

Q8 The advising appointments with my academic advisor contributed positively to my final GPA for the semester.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the following: (1)						

Q9 Zoom advising appointments contributed positively to my final GPA for the semester.

	I didn't participate in a Zoom advising appointment (1)	Strongly Disagree (2)	Moderately Disagree (3)	Slightly Disagree (4)	Slightly Agree (5)	Moderately Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
Please choose one of the following: (1)							

Q10 In-person advising appointments contributed positively to my final GPA for the semester.

	I didn't participate in an in-person advising appointment (1)	Strongly Disagree (2)	Moderately Disagree (3)	Slightly Disagree (4)	Slightly Agree (5)	Moderately Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
Please choose one of the following: (1)							

Q11 Phone advising appointments contributed positively to my final GPA for the semester.

	I didn't participate in a phone advising appointment (1)	Strongly Disagree (2)	Moderately Disagree (3)	Slightly Disagree (4)	Slightly Agree (5)	Moderately Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
Please choose one of the following: (1)							

Q12 Attending advising appointments made me feel a sense of belonging to the college.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the following: (1)						

Q14 Attending advising appointments helped prepare me to declare my primary major.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the following: (1)						

Q15 Attending advising appointments helped me learn more about resources available to

me.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the following: (1)						

Q16 I felt the time commitment of academic advising appointments was overwhelming.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the following: (1)						

Q17 COVID-19 negatively impacted my academic performance.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the following: (1)						

Q18 I felt like I spent the right amount of time in advising appointments.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the following: (1)						

Q19 At this point in my academic career, I am considering leaving the university.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Slightly Agree (4)	Moderately Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
Please choose one of the following: (1)						

Q20 Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experience?

Q21 Please select one or more of the following races:

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (1)

☐ Asian (2)

☐ Black or African American (3)

☐ Hispanic or Latinx (4)

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (5)

☐ White (6)

Q22 What is your preferred gender identity?

☐ Man (1)

☐ Woman (2)

☐ Transgender Male (3)

☐ Transgender Female (4)

☐ Gender Variant/Non-conforming (5)

☐ A gender identity not listed above (6)

☐ Prefer not to answer (7)

Q23 If you wish to disclose your sexual identity, you can do that in the space here:

Q24 Are you the first person in your immediate family to attend college?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Prefer not to answer (3)

○

Q25 Thank you so much for your time. Have a wonderful break!

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