# First-Year Community College Students' Perceptions of and Attitudes Toward Intrusive Academic Advising

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*For this study, we analyzed the relationship between intrusive academic advising and community college student success. Utilizing a qualitative, single-case study design, we conducted interviews with 12 students who participated in an intrusive advising program at a large, urban community college in Texas. Analysis of the interview data revealed the benefits, limitations, and contributions to success of intrusive advising. This study addresses a notable gap in the extant literature, as few researchers have published empirical examinations on the impact of intrusive academic advising within the community college context. The findings can be used to improve the delivery of academic advising and student support services at community colleges.*

In today's academic climate, qualifying student success as a major challenge for community colleges requires little effort. Calls from state and national governments to increase the number of college graduates produced through higher education institutions increase the obstacles for educators and students alike. The State of Texas placed an emphasis on college degree completion through the establishment of the Closing the Gaps initiative (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000). Because over one half of postsecondary students in Texas are enrolled in a community college, students in 2-year programs need to graduate as part of the initiative goals. At the national level, President Obama set a goal for the United States to lead the world in the proportion of college graduates by 2020 (Obama, 2009). The White House vision for degree completion is shared by more than a dozen national groups, including The Lumina Foundation (Goal 2025), Achieving the Dream, and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Completion by Design, among others (American Association of Community Colleges, n.d.).

Despite endeavors to increase the rates of degree completion, finding solutions to longstanding challenges to student persistence remain. According to research in retention and degree completion, academic advising programs are emerging as a promising means to increase graduation rates (Habley & McClanahan, 2004; McClenney & Waiwaiole, 2005; Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2006). Advising approaches employed at higher education institutions vary. Some institutions promote a prescriptive style of advising through which student inquiries are addressed in an authoritative way, but others encourage a developmental approach by which advisors and students work together to address issues related to student success (Lowenstein, 1999). Through an intrusive approach, advisors encourage student involvement in the advising process, and in some cases, the institution requires advising as a condition of continued student enrollment (Backhus, 1989; Earl, 1988, Varney, 2013). The impact of intrusive (also called *proactive*) advising on community college student success is addressed by our study.

As policy makers attempt to identify best practices, the replication of successful intrusive advising approaches across U.S. higher education institutions could serve as a key strategy in reaching degree attainment goals and continuing to increase success for students into their future. As community college stakeholders continue to demand that resources be shifted from access and toward retention and completion, many administrators and educators recognize the value in enhancing their advising programs and models. This study helps identify the aspects of advising, specifically those of intrusive advising, which promotes student success. This study may also provide a resource for community college leaders interested in evaluating advising programs in a qualitative manner.

Several researchers have connected academic advising and student success. Tinto (1975) described a landmark model of student attrition that addresses the factors that affect a student's decision to remain enrolled in or drop out of college. Tinto noted that academic advising facilitates persistence within this model. Based on interviews with students and college personnel, Light (2001) concluded that "good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience" (p. 81). Based on qualitative findings from surveys of collegiate administrators and students, Ruffalo Noel Levitz (2006) reported advising as a retention tool. In a review of attrition and retention studies, Cuseo (2002) linked academic advising with student success and argued that strengthening academic advising programs exerts a positive effect on student success. Furthermore, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) noted that "research consistently indicates that academic advising can play a role in students' decisions to persist and in their chances of graduating" (p. 404). More recently, numerous studies have confirmed the critical role of effective academic advising in improving student retention (e.g., Bahr, 2008; Chiteng Kot, 2014; Kolenovic, Linderman, & Karp, 2013).

Much of the established research on student success has focused on 4-year institution environments, including Tinto's (1975) student attrition model. Looking at data between 1990 and 2003, Townsend, Donaldson, and Wilson (2004) found that 8% of published research articles focused on community college students. While many of the same constructs may apply, some clear differences characterize university and community college populations. For example, as Cohen and Brawer (1996) explained, community colleges typically enroll a higher percentage of nontraditional, minority, underprepared, and part-time students as well as those from low socioeconomic status than do typical universities.

Addressing Tinto's (1975) student attrition model, Bean and Metzner (1985) found that nontraditional students are affected to a greater degree by the external environment and to a lesser extent by social integration than are traditional students. Subsequent research is mixed regarding the relevance of social integration for community college and nontraditional student success (Borglum & Kubala, 2000; Karp, Hughes, & O'Gara, 2011). Differences extend to academic advising programs between 4-year environments and community colleges, and according to the Community College Research Center (CCRC) (2013), community college advising is often characterized by (a) high student–advisor ratios, which results in rushed advising sessions; (b) fragmented uncomprehensive efforts scattered across the campus; (c) no assigned advisors, resulting in conflicting information and long waiting periods for advising; and (d) an emphasis on first-semester students with little follow-up for students after they complete enrollment. Describing additional deleterious advising practices, Orozco, Alvarez, and Gutkin (2010) found that students perceived a relationship with a supportive advisor as important, but few reported developing such a relationship with an advisor.

Although an accepted unified theory of academic advising has yet to emerge in the field (Creamer, 2000), several approaches to academic advising are commonly used across the higher education community; they include prescriptive, developmental, and intrusive advising, among others. Advisors using a prescriptive approach address issues or questions in an authoritarian, one-way format not part of a holistic advising approach (Lowenstein, 1999). Crookston (1972/1994/2009) provided a basis for developmental advising as the shared responsibility between the student and academic advisor working together toward student achievement of academic goals.

Glennen and Baxley (1985) argued that advisors should not assume that students know when to visit an advisor or the best questions to ask, but they suggested that students should be required to make advising appointments throughout their college career. This approach, historically referred to as *intrusive advising* has recently been called *proactive advising* (Varney, 2013). Earl (1988) explained that through the intrusive model, advisors address key variables of student attrition before they transpire, rather than as a reactive process; Earl described the process as a combination of the positive aspects of prescriptive, collaborative, and developmental advising offered in an aggressive and proactive outreach to students.

Earl (1988) further established a theoretical foundation for proactive advising based on the following principles:

- academic and social integration as strong factors in persistence,
- student learning to overcome challenges with orientation to the college experience, and

- orientation that relies not on student motivation but provided intrusively based on student needs.

In addition, Earl explained the advantages of intrusive advising, reporting that a candid and direct advisor–advisee relationship is established early when the student is most likely highly motivated and receptive to intervention. Proactive advising compels students to respond to issues in academic planning. Earl suggested that a negative reaction to proactive advising is considered progress as it signals the student was successfully prompted to make a conscious decision about his or her academic future. Intrusive advising allows for the transitioning from a focus on course selection for the upcoming term to engagement in academic planning and related advances throughout the student's academic career.

More specifically, several studies have attributed the intrusive advising approach to student success outcomes. Backhus (1989) linked intrusive advising to persistence and retention at Emporia State University. Upcraft and Kramer (1995) suggested that underprepared first-year students may neither self-identify issues that put them at risk nor seek assistance, and intrusive advising can help students who do not see the reason or remain unmotivated to seek support. Multiple studies have made a connection between intrusive academic advising by the faculty and increased student retention (Ryan, 2013; Smith, 2007). In two separate studies, Abelman and Molina (2000) and Jones (2013) found benefits to increasing intrusiveness levels within an advising program. Rajecki and Lauer (2007) found that an exploratory intrusive advising program at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis correlated with an increase in student satisfaction with course and career advising. Jeschke, Johnson, and Williams (2001) found that students who participated in intrusive advising reported higher levels of satisfaction and feeling connected to the department, but the study participants were not more academically successful than students who received prescriptive advising.

Through this study, we analyzed the relationship between intrusive academic advising and community college student success by identifying the impact of an intrusive advising program on student success at a large, urban community college. In addition, we looked at the strengths and areas of opportunity as reported by students who partici-

pated in the program. The following research questions guided this study:

**RQ1.** What do students who participated in the intrusive advising program identify as beneficial aspects of the experience?

**RQ2.** What do students identify as areas for improvement in the intrusive advising they experienced?

**RQ3.** In what ways, if any, do students indicate that intrusive advising has contributed to their academic success?

## Methods

We utilized a qualitative analysis based primarily on in-depth student interviews to address the research questions posed in this study. Qualitative inquiry offers an appropriate choice when researchers seek better understanding of social relationships (Carspecken, 1996). We employed a case study framework to best describe the context of academic advising. Because the assessed program is considered typical of proactive advising, we chose a single-case study design (as per Yin, 2009).

### Case Description

The site for this case study is a large and diverse Texas community college with a Fall 2013 credit enrollment of more than 50,000 students. For the purposes of this study, we refer to it as Texas State Community College (TSCC). At TSCC, academic advisors are employed to specifically work within the intrusive advising program with students enrolling into their first semester at TSCC (they previously earned fewer than 12 college-level course credits). In this study, we refer to the model as the Intrusive Advising Program (IAP).

The IAP is structured with prescribed activities. Key to the program, students are required to meet with their assigned advisor twice during the semester of enrollment in a student success course (once before and once after the midpoint of the semester). The primary objectives of the IAP include reviewing and discussing the student's program of study and career choice, creating a long-term academic plan by plotting out a schedule for completing all degree requirements, reading and using the electronic degree

**Table 1.** Participant characteristics summary

| Interviewee (pseudonym) | Ethnicity | Age (years) | 1st Generation | Sex | Pursued Major | Course Load |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adrian | Hispanic | <24 | No | M | Hotel/Rest Management | Part |
| Alex | Hispanic | <24 | No | M | Microbiology | Full |
| Amber | Black | 24+ | No | F | Undecided | Full |
| Ana | Hispanic | <24 | No | F | Nursing | Full |
| Carlos | Hispanic | <24 | No | M | Mechanical Engineering | Part |
| Drew | White | <24 | No | M | Computer Science | Full |
| Felicia | Black | <24 | No | F | Pre-Medical | Full |
| Isabel | Hispanic | <24 | No | F | Business Administration | Full |
| Kim | White | <24 | No | F | Health Science | Full |
| Marques | Black | 24+ | No | M | Liberal Arts | Part |
| Nnamdi | Black | <24 | No | M | Petroleum Engineering | Full |

audit report and the course planner tool, and discussing important items on the academic calendar. To facilitate these goals, students are expected to complete a learning and study strategies inventory, a new student questionnaire, and a career exploration assessment designed to help them build a foundation for related discussions with their assigned advisors. Advisors track student completion of advising sessions in the internal TSCC student system through the use of a checklist. If a student does not complete both required sessions, a hold is placed on her or his record, which prevents future enrollment until the program requirements have been satisfied.

**Participants**

For this study, we conducted in-depth interviews of first-time college students who participated in the IAP during the Fall 2013 semester. Of this population, students who met the following criteria during the Fall 2013 semester were asked to participate in the study: completion of both required advising sessions with the assigned academic advisor, status as a new TSCC student with fewer than 12 college-level credits prior to the Fall 2013 semester, enrollment in and successful completion of a student success course during the Fall 2013 semester, and engagement in a degree program designed for transfer to a university (i.e., associate of arts or science).

We conducted in-person interviews with eligible students chosen from a list provided by the institution. We sorted the entries by phone number and selected students based on the numerical order of their preferred phone numbers on the list. The first 12 students who agreed to participate served as the interview population.

Table 1 provides an overview of individual participant characteristics (pseudonyms were chosen for each student to protect participant identity).

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Carspecken's (1996) work on critical ethnography guided the interview and data collection process. We developed an interview protocol based, in large part, on Earl's (1988) theoretical foundation for intrusive advising (Appendix). Interviews were conducted in a conference room at the TSCC campus, which was the most convenient location for participating students. The interviewer (Donaldson) audio recorded each student interview and also took detailed written notes. Both written and audio recorded notes were used for preparing the transcription for the final analysis. To increase the trustworthiness of the interview analysis, Donaldson checked for consistency in like responses throughout each interview.

Donaldson (of our research team) conducted thematic analysis by coding the interview data (as per Carspecken, 1996). Initially, low-level coding, which involves combining like responses under groups that require little abstraction, was completed in an objective manner. In the second phase of the analysis, high-level coding responses were grouped together based on more abstraction than included in the initial step. Both high- and low-level codes may share the same coding category, and as similar codes emerged, subcodes were formed. Codes were then further organized in a hierarchical manner to create a few large categories or themes. For triangulation, each of us offered peer research review to solidify the final

themes. Also for triangulation, we analyzed the rich data set obtained from the advising syllabus established for the IAP by TSCC, which included the stated learning objectives of the program: Students are expected to learn how to use the information in and features of their student accounts to create academic plans, demonstrate sound decision making in formulating career goals and scheduling appropriate courses, familiarize themselves with campus policies and procedures, and access campus resources and services that facilitate making academic progress toward their academic and career goals.

## Results

Several major themes emerged from the thematic analysis and describe the benefits and limitations of the IAP. The results also offer information on the contributions of intrusive advising to student success.

### Benefits of Intrusive Advising

Students consistently mentioned particular IAP components that they found helpful. Through the proactive nature of the IAP, students, who may have failed to recognize the need for advising or to overcome inertia in seeking it, may have avoided negative outcomes of their potential inaction.

**Being required to participate in advising.** The participants expressed unanimous agreement that they benefited from academic advising in their first semester of college. Specifically, they reported that mandatory advising encouraged them to participate in degree planning early, so that they did not delay creating a long-term view toward their goals.

Also, because advising was required, students did not need to overcome motivational barriers in seeking out support. For example, Ana said, "If it wasn't required, I don't think I would have even came, honestly. So I'm kinda glad it was required because I'd still be lost." Alex, aware of his Asperger's diagnosis, reported that the required advising encouraged him to seek out advising despite not being typically motivated to seek support: "I liked it, uh, because normally me, I'm not really one to seek out help. I tend to, like, keep things more to myself." Students also explained that IAP participation as a graded activity in the success course benefited them.

**Having an assigned advisor.** In addition to unanimous support for mandated advising, each student also reported that an assigned, specific academic advisor provided a personalized experi-

ence that allowed them to build a consistent relationship with a single person at the college.

They appreciated that they did not need to restart the process each time they visited the advising office. For example, Alex liked having an assigned advisor because "it's not like talking to a stranger. You're talking to someone who has something in common with you. You get the feeling that they truly understand where you're coming from."

**Participating in degree-planning activities.** All 12 students discussed the positive aspects of the degree planning activities, which included reviewing required courses, developing a plan for future course registration, completing an electronic course planner tool, learning transfer requirements, and participating in major and career exploration. The length of course planning varied—from plotting out courses for the upcoming semester to each semester of the degree program.

Amber described the experience with degree and course planning typical of several other students:

> It was really helpful because he gave me the sheet . . . the entire, like, plan, the layout. And he's like, "within your two years here," or whatever, "you need to take these classes." So, and you know, he circled them; he's like, "You don't want to take too much at one time, so you might take, you know, a math and like a history class and then take something that's a little bit easier like a fine arts or something like that."

Several students also indicated usage of the electronic course planner.

**Opportunity for individualized support.** Many students reported receiving individualized support through the IAP. They described the freedom to ask questions and receive answers, focusing on topics based on their interests, and advisor availability when needed.

Some students reported that the scheduled advising appointments gave them the opportunity to ask specific questions related to various topics and received answers from their advisors. Similar to their thoughts on an assigned advisor, they felt this question-and-answer exchange contributed to the personalized experience because students could control some of the topics discussed. For example, Kim noted that "whenever I had questions, [my advisor] was very helpful with

helping me figure out the steps I needed to take to correct any issues I might have."

## Limitations of the Intrusive Advising Model

Specific areas of limitation for the IAP experience also emerged from the thematic analysis. Areas for advising improvement include creating greater student autonomy, increased mastery of planning skills, and better perceptions of the advising mandate. Increased advisor availability and help with the student transition may generate more productive and efficient advising sessions.

**Negative connotation of required advising.** Most of the students interviewed expressed initial hesitation about completing the required advising program or reported holding a somewhat negative perception of being required to participate. One student openly discussed the negative connotation, which he felt likely unavoidable.

According to Drew, required advising adversely affects motivation: "Since I have to do this, like, I gotta take my time to do this for them, you know. It's hard to see it as being for you, or something that's important for you, when someone else is just telling you to do it." Although the negative connotation of required advising may prove difficult to ameliorate, we suggest that any resentment about the requirement may be offset by the positive motivation to participate.

**Limited use of available advising tools.** To address specific student concerns and enhance the quality of the advising experience, academic advisors operating as part of the IAP can access several tools, including a career assessment survey, a new student questionnaire, an electronic course planner tool, and a learning and study strategies inventory. The advisor is expected to review each of these learning vehicles with the student; however, the thematic analysis revealed that few students mentioned any of these tools.

Although some students mentioned accessing the electronic course planner tool, only a couple of students reported an in-depth use and others relied exclusively on a paper degree plan. Even fewer students mentioned the other available tools, and no one reported that the questionnaires were a central part of advising discussions.

**Lack of self-sufficiency in course selection.** Although assistance with developing a long-term educational plan remained a key of the IAP, several students clearly expressed uncertainty on courses to take in the upcoming semester. When asked, few students responded confidently, and some explained that they would need to visit with an advisor again before registering.

Adrian, for example, seemed to have a plan but needed reassurance that his plan was correctly devised, "I just want to check out that this is what I need because the degree plan—it just plans it all out for us—but I just want to double-check to make sure that I did it right, or, that I'm on the right track." With concerns similar to those of Adrian, Amber gave some thought to future course registration, but acknowledged uncertainty about the number of classes she needed: "whether to take one class or two classes and what exactly, what classes I should take. That's my questions at this point, like, 'What I should take?'" Several students reported a need for additional support determining the appropriate sequence of courses to be completed within their degree plan.

**Need for increased advisor availability.** Some students mentioned difficulty meeting with their assigned advisor due to the advisor's limited availability. The respondents discussed a need for both evening and weekend appointments, and they recognized that advisors were often unavailable due to other appointments created by a large caseload of students.

Availability created an important concern because completion of the advising sessions is required before future enrollment is permitted. In addition, some student success courses include completion of the IAP as part of the course grade.

**Need for additional support with new student transition.** During the interview, students were asked to describe their memories about being a new college student during the enrollment process and throughout their first semester. According to the thematic analysis, several expressed common first-year experiences. Students reported difficulty navigating several aspects of the transition during and after enrollment that fall under the purview of an IAP advisor.

One of the primary goals of intrusive advising, as reported by Earl (1988), involves assisting students with orientation to the college environment. TSCC specifically targeted the IAP for the first semester of enrollment so that advisors could help students with acclimation to college. The students reported needing help understanding teaching methods, classrooms, and expectations of professors; adjusting socially; and achieving a work–school balance. Marques made a powerful statement that typifies the struggle many working community college students face: "I'm not about

to change my job just to fit my school. You know what I'm saying?"

## Contributions to Student Success

Although not specified as targeted goals of the IAP, several ancillary outcomes, beyond those anticipated, are worthy of mention. The guidance may improve success-related behaviors in later semesters.

**Developed pathway toward educational goal.** One of the most commonly reported student success factors was attributed to the IAP: the development of a pathway or plan for completing an educational goal at the college or for transferring to a university. Many students declared a better understanding of their degree plan and the courses needed to complete it than when they first enrolled. Isabel's story typifies the way students felt toward degree planning before and after engaging in the IAP:

> Oh yeah, at first I was really, I was concerned with what I had to take, because I had no idea what I had to take in order to transfer my credits over. So when we did meet with our advisor, she gave me a lot of papers saying these are all of our classes here. This is all what you have to take. And then she gave me another sheet to actually write it down—Semester 1 and Semester 2—and to see it visually, to see it myself. And I feel like that helped me out a lot to see what I'm gonna take here and to look at the paper of classes and requirements I need and transfer them over to what semester I want to take them as a visual thing.

**Increased confidence in degree planning.** Related to developing a pathway to educational goals, assurance in the degree plan was cited by students who had completed the IAP. Not only did they feel a pathway was developed but they also reported more confidence in planning future courses.

Drew described his feelings after participating in the program, "I'm very confident. I almost don't have any other options but to pick the right courses because I have the degree plan." This finding, taking into account the limitation of self-sufficiency in course selection found in the result, suggests that although most students felt confident in their ability, they did not express it in their responses to questions about course planning.

Confidence, in this case, did not necessarily translate into ability.

**Increasing help-seeking behaviors.** Many students reported that they would likely seek additional assistance from an advisor in the future. This type of help-seeking behavior is viewed positively in the perspective of Earl's (1988) theoretical foundation for intrusive advising. Earl placed heavy focus on removing the role of individual student motivation to seek out assistance with orientation to college by providing advising support before it was needed.

After completion of the IAP, many students seemed motivated to seek help with enrollment-related issues even when not mandated by the IAP. Ana provided a clear example of help-seeking behavior when she explained that "if I can't figure out how to put my [class schedule together] I'll end up coming back to advising." Adrian reported that he had already scheduled follow-up appointments with his previously assigned advisor to answer additional questions.

## Discussion

In this study, we assessed attitudes and perceptions of students who participated in the IAP to determine the strengths and areas for needed improvement within the program. We also wanted to see the degree to which the IAP affected student success. However, we did not seek to establish a direct, quantitative, causal link between participation in the IAP and student success metrics. Although appropriate qualitative inquiry leads to understanding on the extent of and the reason for program success, it does not allow for a formal summative evaluation of the program or the intrusive advising model.

The results of the analysis revealed four major themes: benefits of intrusive advising, limitations of the intrusive advising model, characteristics of effective academic advisors, and the ancillary contributions of intrusive advising to student success. These findings lead to implications for institutional policy and practice as well as student success.

Key to Earl's (1988) theoretical foundation on intrusive advising, orientation to the college experience is considered improved through proactive advising, and the students interviewed in this study agreed they benefited from the mandated advising of the IAP. Furthermore, Earl's theoretical foundation implies that advising should be proactively provided based on student needs; however, this supposition raises several questions, including

how is need determined and which should be targeted? Advisors and other educators must consider the needs of incoming individuals and help them in the orientation process. According to our study, some students need more assistance in areas outside of degree planning, while others face the transition to college successfully without specific advising support. The CCRC (2013) recommended that colleges offer strategic, sustainable, and personal advising. For example, students identified as high-need upon entry to college should receive more intensive or ongoing advising, and students not meeting the high-need criteria should receive targeted advising at key milestones.

Earl (1988) argued that academic and social integration comprises strong factors of persistence. Tinto (1975) also suggested integration, or lack thereof, as a primary catalyst in persistence or attrition. Others have also suggested that social integration does not necessarily predict success for nontraditional students (Bean & Metzner, 1985). More recently, Karp et al. (2011) found support for academic and social integration at community colleges while Borglum and Kubala (2000) did not reach similar findings. While the debate continues regarding the importance of academic and social integration in student success, we found little support for intrusive advising as a catalyst for fostering academic or social integration within the institution. However, that little emerged from the analysis suggests that academic advisors within the intrusive advising model may not have encouraged or even discussed academic or social engagement. The lack of connection to academic and social integration, in this particular case, may relate more to the emphasis placed by advisors than to the intrusive advising as described by Earl.

To enhance social and academic integration through proactive advising approaches, advisors must specifically incorporate strategies that extend beyond degree planning. Karp et al. (2011) found that social integration is found in concert with academic integration because of interactions with students via study groups, in classroom assignments, and through other academically based groupings. The relationships formed initially for a class assignment or preparation for a test often extend beyond the classroom. Therefore, advisors can foster academic and social integration by encouraging students to develop peer study groups and interact with others during class-based activities. Advising leadership at community colleges should look at available best practices and benchmarks for academic and social integration

and consider ways advisors may help connect students to the college.

An underlying foundation to our study, Earl's (1988) contention that assistance with new student transition, including orientation to the college environment, should not rely on student motivation but should be proactively provided based on student needs. Our findings support Earl's view. The students interviewed overwhelmingly agreed that academic advising should be required for new students entering into college. Many of those interviewed reported that without the mandated participation in the IAP they would not have sought advising support or they knew of others who would not seek help if they relied solely on their own motivation. These findings support McClenney's (2012) statement that students "don't do optional" (slide 45). In other words, among those who acknowledge the benefits, some students will not participate in academic advising because they lack the motivation to seek out assistance.

Advising accessible only by individuals who seek support will not reach all who need it. For example, new first-generation students entering a community college may not self-identify issues or seek assistance on their own (Upcraft & Kramer, 1995). As a result, first-generation students who enter unknowledgeable about the college environment may benefit from a proactive or mandated advising experience as a means to demystify the experience early and better the chances for a well-adjusted transition. Community college administrators may consider ways in which current advising programs can be altered to increase outreach by advisors to students rather than expecting students to approach the advising office.

A somewhat conflicting implication emerges regarding student motivation for advising. While requiring participation in academic advising promotes the likelihood that students will attend an advising session—thereby reducing the role of motivation in seeking support with the orientation to college process—the negative connotation associated with required advising may demotivate full engagement in the advising process. Institution representatives employing a required or interactive advising model need to communicate the personal advantages of participation in the advising program early in the initial contact stage. Advisors and program administrators should explain to students the benefits of the program instead of solely focusing on the consequences of not participating.

Community colleges that implement proactive advising programs should address several key

factors during the development stage. With increased performance expectations and funding requirements, advising administrators must plan in advance for assessing and evaluating the outcomes of such programs. Although we did not specifically conduct a comprehensive program evaluation, the findings that emerged from the thematic analysis provided limited support for two of the stated learning objectives from the syllabus and little to no support for the other objectives. This outcome highlights the importance for the careful design of intrusive advising programs to reach established student-success goals. Evaluation and assessment programs determine, in a formative and summative manner, whether or not the advising program is making a significant impact related to expected outcomes and whether these outcomes are affecting key performance metrics.

Because many community colleges do not employ robust advising units (CCRC, 2013), some administrators may express concerns about the financial implications of implementing an intrusive advising program; they must carefully identify the goals and expected outcomes of any initiative. Many community colleges are faced with growing student populations but little extra funding to expand the academic advising staff (CCRC, 2013), which leads to advising caseloads that may potentially make intrusive advising untenable. A successful proactive advising program requires advisors with both the time and ability to give individualized attention to advisees, and administrators must consider ways advising services can be restructured to ensure reasonable caseload levels for advisors; to maintain a proactive program, they may need to hire additional advisors, or they may need to determine the students at risk for an unsuccessful orientation to college and provide intrusive advising only to this subset population.

The findings of this study raise several questions for further exploration by advising researchers. We did not include the voices of academic advisors and advising administrators, and future researchers should compare student perceptions of intrusive advising with the viewpoints expressed by academic advisors and advising administrators. Additionally, interview data originated from a single point in time, rather than longitudinally, reveal a snapshot of student perception; therefore, a study is needed to identify a more complete theoretical model and explanations for the way and extent that proactive advising plays into student success. Despite the value of qualitative inquiry in understanding the mechanisms of effective programs through the lens of participant perception, quantitative inquiry helps connect data on student success metrics, such as persistence, graduation, and goal completion; for example, researchers could use data sets from community colleges offering intrusive advising programs to assess relationships between participation in program and student success metrics.

As community colleges meet the demand for producing degree completers, even during a time of reduced state funding, state and college administrators would benefit from research that identifies best practices related to student success. As some may implement proactive academic advising, they need to understand the ways students benefit and the ways to implement the practice into existing or revised support student structures. Because many community college administrators face significant limitations for using new funds or redirecting current funds for retention programs, more studies on program effectiveness will allow planners to develop and assess outcomes that accomplish and reflect progress toward increased completion rates.

Through this study, we add to the current literature on student perceptions of intrusive advising, which administrators may use to create programs at large, urban community colleges. Future research can help to better understand intrusive advising and communicate the positive aspects of this advising approach to community college administrators aiming to enhance advising services and student success. Also, research can help to better assess the utilization of the intrusive advising approach at 2-year colleges by quantifying the outcomes at 2-year institutions using some form of this approach.

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**Appendix.** Interview protocol

**Theoretical Foundation**:

Earl (1988) establishes a theoretical foundation for advising that is based on the following principles:

- academic and social integration are strong factors in persistence;
- students can be taught to overcome challenges with orientation to the college experience;
- orientation should not rely on student motivation, but should be intrusively provided based on needs.

**Introduction**

- Welcome, introduction, thank for participation.
- Describe interview process and expected flow.
- Clearly describe focus of interview and the First-Year Advising Program [IAP].

**Background questions (interview background questionnaire)**

1. How do you identify yourself racially/ethnically?
2. What is your age?
3. Are you the first in your family to attend college?
4. What program of study (degree plan) are you planning to pursue?
5. Do you generally carry a full-time or part-time course load?

**Topic Domain: Overcoming Challenges with College Experience Orientation**

*Theoretical Foundation:* Students can be taught to overcome challenges with orientation to the college experience (Earl, 1988).
*Covert Categories:* Connection with resources, awareness of resources, navigating enrollment/registration processes, academic calendar, overcoming new student challenges, connection with IAP
*Lead-Off Question:*

1. Describe your experience as a new college student with becoming familiar with the [TSCC] college experience.

*Follow-Up Questions:*

1. Did your assigned advisor specifically refer/encourage you to participate in student support services or campus resources at [TSCC]? If yes, please describe the conversations that took place and which resources you were referred to.
2. Do you feel that the First-Year Advising Program [IAP] has played a role in helping connect you with resources at [TSCC]? Please explain why or why not.
3. Do you feel that the First-Year Advising Program [IAP] has helped you to overcome challenges associated with being a new college student? If so, how and what [were the] challenges?

**Topic Domain: Student Orientation Motivation**

*Theoretical Foundation:* Orientation should not rely on student motivation, but should be intrusively provided based on needs (Earl, 1988).
*Covert Categories:* Orientation level prior to intrusive advising, orientation level after intrusive advising, motivation for self-help
*Lead-Off Question:*

1. Consider that you are facing a challenge related to being a new student at [TSCC]. Describe how you would have approached this problem had you not been assigned advisor as part of the First-Year Advising Program [IAP].

*Follow-Up Questions:*

2. Did your assigned advisor help you to address a challenge related to being a student that you may not have otherwise been able to address on your own? If so, please describe the challenge and how your advisor helped to assist you.
3. Do you feel that the First-Year Advising Program [IAP] helped you to address challenges of being a new student that you would not have otherwise sought assistance for? Please explain.

**Topic Domain: Academic Integration**

*Theoretical Foundation:* Academic and social integration are strong factors in persistence (Earl, 1988).

**Appendix.** Interview protocol (cont.)

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*Covert Categories:* Academic activities, career/degree planning, connection between academic integration and IAP, counseling, financial aid
*Lead-Off Question:*

1. Describe the types of academic activities you participated in, if any, outside of the classroom.

*Follow-Up Questions:*

2. Did your assigned advisor encourage or refer you to participate in [TSCC] academic activities outside of the classroom (such as tutoring, writing labs, career planning)? If so, please describe the conversation that took place and what activities were recommended.
3. Do you feel that the First-Year Advising Program [IAP] has played a role in helping you to academically integrate into [TSCC]? Please explain.

**Topic Domain: Social Integration**

*Theoretical Foundation:* Academic and social integration are strong factors in persistence (Earl, 1988).

*Covert Categories:* Relationship with advisor, social integration encouragement by advisor, integration into institution
*Lead-Off Question:*

1. Describe the types of social activities you participated in, if any, as a student at [TSCC].

*Follow-Up Questions:*

2. Describe the relationship you had with your academic advisor. [Was it a strong or weak relationship? Is it an example of social integration?]
3. Did your assigned advisor help encourage you to participate in extracurricular/social activities? If so, please describe the conversation that took place and what types of extracurricular activities were referred.
4. Do you feel that the First-Year Advising Program [IAP] has played a role in helping you to integrate into the [TSCC] community socially? Please explain.

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