Investigating Effective Student Education Planning Services in the California Community Colleges

by

Cynthia Rico

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of

San Diego State University

In Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Educational Leadership

May 14th, 2014
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

Dissertation of

Dr. Cynthia Rico

Investigating Effective Student Education Planning Services in the California

Community Colleges

Marilee Andrele
Marilee Bresciani-Ludvik, Chair
Department of Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education

Frank Harris III
Department of Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education

Jill Baker
San Diego Mesa College Office of Institutional Effectiveness

May 14, 2014
Approval Date
Copyright © 2014

by

Cynthia Rico
ABSTRACT

In 2009, the American Graduation Initiative was announced charging postsecondary institutions with graduating a higher proportion of college students by 2020. This initiative, which has become known as the completion agenda, has emerged as the single most important goal for community colleges. In 2011, California Community Colleges’ Board of Governors enacted a process of reform by appointing the Student Success Task Force. The task force issued twenty-two formal recommendations. In 2011, several of the recommendations were enacted under California legislation, SB 1456, which mandated that student education plans be part of a trio of services identified as the Student Success and Support Program.

Given the challenge of increased enrollments, fiscal constraints, and limited human and technological resources, colleges have been seeking practices to bring to scale student education planning services. The purpose of this study was to explore counselors’ and academic advisors’ perceptions of effective student education planning practices, with the goal of identifying effective practices currently in place statewide. The methodology included a survey designed in consultation with the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. The survey was distributed to counseling department chairs or their designees at the state’s 112 community colleges. The findings revealed that there were no significant differences between effectiveness ratings of comprehensive and abbreviated education plans delivered face-to-face or online and no significant differences between effectiveness ratings of comprehensive and abbreviated education plans delivered by counselors and those delivered by other personnel.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................ iv

LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................ ix

LIST OF FIGURES .............................................................................................................. x

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................. xi

CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................... 1

Problem Statement ........................................................................................................ 4

Purpose of the Study ..................................................................................................... 5

Significance of the Study ............................................................................................... 6

Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 7

Hypotheses .................................................................................................................... 7

Methodology and Information Collection .................................................................... 7

Definition of Terms ....................................................................................................... 8

Conceptual Framework ............................................................................................... 10

Delimitations ............................................................................................................... 10

Limitations .................................................................................................................. 10

Organization of the Study ........................................................................................... 11

CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................... 12

History and Evolution of Academic Advising and Counseling .................................. 15

Academic Advising and Counseling ........................................................................... 18

Brief Description of Academic Advising Theory ....................................................... 21

Delivery Methods of Academic Advising and Counseling and Personnel ................. 25

Face-to-Face Advising Models ............................................................................. 28

Individual Advising ................................................................................................... 28
Summary ..................................................................................................................... 56

CHAPTER 4—FINDINGS ........................................................................................... 57

Descriptive Statistics ................................................................................................... 59

Findings Related to the Research Questions and Hypotheses of this Study .......... 68

Analysis of Open-Ended Questions ....................................................................... 72

Benefits of Face-to-Face Delivery of Student Education Planning ....................... 72

Check for understanding. ................................................................................ 73

Immediacy ........................................................................................................ 73

Meeting student needs ...................................................................................... 74

Challenges of Face-to-Face Delivery of Education Planning .................................. 74

The complexity of delivery. ............................................................................. 75

Time constraints .................................................................................................. 76

High demand .......................................................................................................... 76

Benefits of Online Delivery of Student Education Planning ................................... 77

Accessibility ........................................................................................................ 77

Convenience .......................................................................................................... 77

Hybrid modality ...................................................................................................... 78

Profile of online and non-online students ............................................................. 78

Challenges of Online Delivery of Student Education Plans .................................... 79

Miscommunication. ............................................................................................. 80

Lack of accuracy and constant updating of the online module. ............................. 80

Lack of time .......................................................................................................... 81

Summary .................................................................................................................. 81

CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION ...................................................................................... 84

Analysis of Research Questions ............................................................................. 85
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Comparison of Sample and Population College Characteristics ................. 60
Table 2. Profile of Participating Colleges by Multiple Descriptors............................ 61
Table 3. Rate of Effectiveness of Individuals Who Assist in Creating an Abbreviated Education Plan .................................................................................................................. 63
Table 4. Rate of Effectiveness of Individuals Who Assist in Creating a Comprehensive Education Plan .............................................................................................................. 63
Table 5. The Length of Time to Complete an Abbreviated and Comprehensive Education Plan Face-to-Face and in Groups................................................................. 64
Table 6. The Average Size for an Abbreviated and Comprehensive Student Education Plan Group Session ........................................................................................................ 64
Table 7. Number of Colleges Using the Software for Delivering Education Plans Online................................................................................................................................. 64
Table 8. Scale for Extent of Use of Various Service Delivery Modalities for Abbreviated Education Plans .......................................................................................................... 66
Table 9. Scale for Extent of Use of Various Service Delivery Modalities for a Comprehensive Education Plan ................................................................................................. 67
Table 10. Frequency of Online Education Planning Usage for Comprehensive and Abbreviated Student Education Plans.................................................................................. 70
LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE

Figure 1. Benefits of face-to-face delivery of student education plans. ......................... 92
Figure 2. Challenges of face-to-face delivery of student education plans. ..................... 93
Figure 3. Benefits of online delivery of student education plans. .................................. 101
Figure 4. Challenges of online delivery of the student education plan. .......................... 103
Figure 5. Modality, Activity and Personnel Continuum............................................... 110
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to give my sincere thanks to my dissertation committee, Dr. Marilee Bresciani-Ludvik, Dr. Frank Harris and Dr. Jill Baker. In addition, my thanks to Dr. Wood, who can put statistics in English. Their guidance, mentoring, teaching and patience made this journey a life changing experience.

To the Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges for their support and guidance in allowing me to carry on this work which initiated with them, especially Dr. Linda Michalowski, Dr. Debra Sheldon and Sonia Ortiz-Mercado, who is now at CSU Sacramento. Their dedication, passion and tireless collaboration with those who directly work with students, helps us help students to reach their educational goals. It is this spirit that I am most appreciative and admire.

This dissertation was accomplished by the encouragement of my cohort colleagues, a number of California community college counselors, who help inform, pilot and completed the survey. In particular, to my colleagues at San Diego Mesa College, who consistently encourage my work and me, personally. I ran into a personal challenge in my dissertation journey, which seemed monumental at the time, however; they pulled me through.

I am additionally appreciative to Bri, Trina and Tony. Bri, for crunching the numbers, Trina for willing to help put this whole dissertation together and to Tony for your unwavering belief that I could do this, and all the small tasks you were willing to help, seemed small to you, but they were gigantic to me.
I am blessed to have the support of my mom, and dad, Margaret and Carlos Rico, my brothers Carlos Jr. and Teddy and my sister Tina Rico-Parker, who unconditionally gave me all they could to see that I complete this work.

Lastly, some people talk about having angels on earth, I know I have several. To one of my angels, Jill, you stayed with me from beginning, middle and to the end, I received an added bonus, never expecting it…a lifelong friendship.
I dedicate this dissertation to my world, Naayieli, Margarita and Xochitl.
CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION

For thirty years, community colleges have faced increasing national pressure to account for student learning and development. Efforts began in 1983 with studies such as “A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform,” which helped to realize greater institutional accountability, in part, through legislation. In 2009, President Obama announced his American Graduation Initiative, which charges the nation’s postsecondary institutions with graduating the highest proportion of college students in the world by 2020 (Carey, 2009; Kanter, 2011; Mullin, 2010). In an effort to improve persistence, completion, and limit educational costs to students, well-endowed foundations have contributed substantial funding to initiatives that call for colleges to structure pathways to graduation (Complete College America, 2011; Lumina Foundation for Education, 2010). Referred to as the completion agenda, these initiatives contribute to what has emerged as the “single most important goal” for community colleges (O’Banion, 2010).

The completion agenda represents one demand among many on the community college system, which must also respond to community needs. The community college must deliver effective and increased workforce training and basic skills education while ensuring associate and certificate completion and four-year college transfer (Achieving the Dream, 2008; Dougherty, Hare, & Natow, 2009; Dougherty & Hong, 2005; Lumina Foundation for Education, 2010).

The double impact of increasing enrollment and budget cuts has further challenged community colleges. Due to an open-access philosophy supported by policymakers (Mullin, 2010), California community college enrollment has significantly
increased while budgets have significantly decreased. An analysis of IPEDs data over ten years has found that in 2001, public two-year associate-degree colleges enrolled 6 million students while by 2010; they enrolled 7.8 million students (Bradley, 2011). These increases have occurred despite cuts to community college budgets. For example, the California governor’s proposed General Fund appropriation for higher education in 2012-2013 equaled 9.4 billion, which was 21 percent lower than 2007-2008 appropriations (Legislative Analyst’s Office [LAO], 2012).

Despite these obstacles, California community colleges are working to reform their systems to meet the completion challenge, as are other postsecondary institutions around the nation. To this end, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors enacted a process of reform in 2011 when it appointed a task force and gave it 12 months to complete a strategic planning process and formally recommend reforms. The task force was composed of twenty participants including community college faculty, students, staff, administrators, researchers and community members. It reviewed current college system policies and best practices for promoting success with the intent of developing strategies that could be brought to scale while ensuring equity for the diverse student population served by the State’s community colleges (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012). Twenty-two formal recommendations for change, several of which addressed student services practices that directly improve student success, resulted from the task force’s discussion and review. In particular, the task force cited the importance of counseling and academic advising and the completion of a student education plan as key success factors (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012).
Of the Student Success Task Force’s twenty-two recommendations, a third relate to education planning, counseling, and academic advising. The following are the seven recommendations from the report that make references to the education plans: (a) require students to participate in diagnostic assessment, orientation and the development of an education plan; (b) develop and use technology applications to better guide students in educational processes; (c) require students to declare a program of study early in their academic careers; (d) adopt system-wide enrollment priorities that…encourage students to identify their education objects and follow prescribed path most likely to lead to success; (e) require students to begin addressing basic skills needs in their first year and provide resources and options for them to attain the competencies needed to succeed in college-level work as part of their education plan; (f) offer courses that align with their student education plan; (g) invest in a student support initiative, which improves and expands core student support services such as diagnostic assessment, orientation and education planning.

For many California community college students, obtaining an education plan requires that they meet with an academic advisor or counselor who then develop education plans based on their interactions with students. In the face-to-face process of developing an education plan, course scheduling, career planning, and life planning also take place since the ultimate goal of developing the education plan is to inform students about the relevance and impact of college decisions on their futures, guide them through the decision making process, and assist them by clarifying career and personal goals, values, and objectives (Cooper, n.d.; Gordon, Habley, Grites, & Associates, 2008; Nelson, 2006).
While all California community colleges offer counseling and academic advising including education plan development, the manner in which education planning services are delivered varies significantly in process and effectiveness. A goal of this research was to identify these counseling and advising delivery models and examine the processes, technological practices, and online approaches used to facilitate students’ creation of their education plans. This study then intended to create a baseline of current practices and identify their effectiveness and efficiency as perceived by college personnel. With this research, colleges can later investigate, pilot, and/or adopt the delivery models most likely to improve students’ completion rates, including their successful transfer to four-year programs. The literature review in chapter 2 presents various delivery models and includes several studies that highlight the importance of counseling and academic advising as contributing factors to student success.

Problem Statement

The 2011 Student Success Task Force proposed twenty-two recommendations of which seven had some reference to the requirement of an education plan and mandated that all community college students must complete an education plan. The task force proposal was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown in September of 2012 as California Senate Bill 1456 (Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012) or the Student Success Act of 2012. SB 1456 mandated that education plans be part of a trio of services identified as the new matriculation process. These three services include (a) student assessment; (b) provision of orientation; (c) facilitation of the completion of an education plan (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012).
Implementing the education plan mandate of SB 1456 presents a significant problem to California community colleges, given the volume of students who must receive these mandated services, the limited capacity of human resources, and limits to available technology. This is a classic case of supply outpacing a new and overwhelming demand (Brock, 2010; California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012; Cooper, n.d.). Assessing human resource capacity and technology, evaluating needs, and addressing deficiencies, require a meaningful and rigorous understanding of what is currently being done throughout the state to deliver education plan services. The State currently lacks a baseline or central repository for education plan delivery models, each of which includes a unique set of practices and processes delivered face-to-face or via technology. Further, there is no baseline for the types of personnel delivering these services or the content or context of the services. Lack of data regarding education plan delivery may impede efforts to design new systems to meet mandates. Thus, it is important that California’s education leadership compiles and interprets comprehensive data regarding these services.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore counselors’ and academic advisors’ perception of effective student education planning practices. This research was intended to provide a timely baseline of available education planning services within the California Community College system, given the mandates of SB 1456 and the new Title 5 California Code that take effect in fall of 2014. In addition, this study may assist the Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges (CCCCO) and the system colleges in identifying effective practices currently employed. California community
colleges’ counseling departments are likewise expected to benefit by being able to examine models of delivery as they seek solutions to bring to scale education plans for all students.

**Significance of the Study**

According to the SB 1456, each California community college must submit a Student Success and Support Program Plan (SSSP) by October 2014 that outlines college strategies for delivering the student success services of orientation, assessment, and education planning to all enrolled students. This dissertation research was designed to accomplish three goals in support of these requirements. First, it may inform California colleges and the Chancellor’s Office about current models of education planning delivery. These models may in turn be adopted by other colleges and included in their SSSP Plans. Second, it addresses four questions concerning the delivery of education planning services: (a) How can service delivery of student education planning be brought to scale?; (b) How does a college balance quality and quantity?; (c) What education planning practices in the State of California can be replicated at other colleges?; (d) What education planning services do counselors and advisors perceive as effective? Third, it may help inform the work of a State Chancellor’s grant-funded initiative for the design of an electronic education planning delivery system. This comprehensive system will be available for use by all 112 California Community Colleges and students which will be designed to provide exploration, planning and degree audit capabilities (CCCCO, 2014).
Research Questions

The specific research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What student education planning delivery methods are considered most effective in creating student-implemented education plans?

2. Who is considered to provide the most effective service in facilitating students’ education planning?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed and tested in response to the research questions:

1. There are no significant differences in frequency (p<.05) between the reported use of online education planning for abbreviated and comprehensive education plans.

2. There are no significant differences (p<.05) between effectiveness ratings of face-to-face and online comprehensive and abbreviated education plans.

3. There are no significant differences (p<.05) between effectiveness ratings of comprehensive and abbreviated education plans delivered by counselors versus those delivered by other personnel.

Methodology and Information Collection

To gather the quantitative data necessary to address the research questions, surveys designed in consultation with the Student Services division of the California Community College State Chancellor’s Office were sent electronically to the 112 California community college counseling chairs or their designees using individual e-mail addresses. The Chancellor’s Office informed the counselors via statewide listserve
about their support for this research. The researcher then analyzed survey data to identify and categorize education planning services, processes, and best practices. A test pilot of this survey was conducted; results of this pilot are highlighted in Chapter 3.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used throughout this study and defined in the context of their use.

*Counseling and Academic Advising:* Academic advising and counseling are processes that assist students in assessing, planning, and implementing their immediate and long-range academic goals (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges [ASCCC], 1997). In some institutions, personal counseling is coupled with academic advising. In those instances, counselors assist students with personal, family, or other social concerns when they relate to students’ education (ASCCC, 1997).

*Academic Advisors or Paraprofessionals:* are personnel who are typically employed to supplement academic advising and counseling and individuals who do not meet the minimum qualifications for Counselors set by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

*Student Education Plan:* During education planning sessions, counselors or advisors produce education plans for students using a wide variety of professional resources. For example, counselors may consider multiple facets of student goals and plan accordingly, recommend course sequencing, make student support referrals, gather information about auxiliary requirements to meet a student’s educational goals, plan for and prioritize the requirements of multiple transfer institutions, make distinctions regarding catalog rights, use professional knowledge of programs, and evaluate
transcripts from other institutions (ASCCC, 2012). Education planning also provides an estimated timeline for student goal completion.

*Abbreviated Education Plan:* Abbreviated student education plans are designed to meet the immediate needs of students for whom a comprehensive plan is not appropriate; they provide planning for one or two semesters (California Code of Regulations, section § 55524, 2013).

*Comprehensive Education Plan:* Comprehensive education plans take into account students’ interests, skills, career goals, educational goals, majors, potential for transfer, and the steps students need to take to complete identified courses of study. The comprehensive plan then helps students achieve their courses of study by delineating, for example, educational goal or course of study requirements for majors, transfer, certificates, and programs. In formulating these plans, counselors or advisors consider factors including applicable course prerequisites or co-requisites, the need for basic skills instruction, placement assessments, and the need for other support and instructional services, as appropriate. Comprehensive student education plan is tailored to meet the individual needs and interests of students and may include other elements to satisfy participation requirements for programs such as EOPS, DSPS, CalWORKs, veteran’s education benefits, athletics, and others (California Code of Regulations, section § 55524, 2013).

*Technology:* Technology includes those mechanisms of delivery, which are completed solely via computer and those that are hybrid, or accomplished largely via computer but with some, often minimal, counselor/advisor aid.
*Face-to-Face:* Face-to-face counseling and advising are counseling delivery modalities which rely on the physical presence of a counselor.

**Conceptual Framework**

Given the State of California’s mandate to provide student education plans to every student attending a California community college, community colleges must investigate the prolific academic advising delivery models that are used in other states. Prolific academic advising delivery includes the use of paraprofessionals and technological solutions to bring student education planning services to scale. The study survey findings have the potential to inform practitioners about counselors’ and advisors’ perceptions of current and effective practices for delivering education planning services and the personnel classifications that best deliver them.

**Delimitations**

Delimiting this study, research data came only from the California community colleges. While the literature review considers counseling and academic advising services in two-year and four-year institutions, the study that followed focused only on identifying current practices used in California public two-year institutions and may not apply to other community colleges, four-year colleges, or private institutions.

**Limitations**

This study had two limitations that should be considered when evaluating the findings and determining the extent to which the results are generalizable to other institutions and statewide policy. First, the limitations of this study related to the perspective of one individual of the college who had operational knowledge of campus counseling, academic advising and education planning services and not the perspective of
all who are employed in the general counseling department of the respondent’s college. Respondent were asked to provide their perspective on effective student education planning services and their perspective on the effectiveness on those who may assist in the facilitating of the student education plans. Second, the community colleges in this study were all in California; therefore, it cannot be assumed that the responses would be indicative of the services of community colleges outside of California due to the uniqueness of the California community college system.

**Organization of the Study**

This dissertation follows a traditional five-chapter model to guide readers through the problem, research, and study conclusions. Chapter 2 examines research studies and regulations relevant to California and considers the effectiveness of counseling and academic advising on student success. Chapter 3 outlines research methodologies, data collection strategies, the research questions, and the protocol used. Chapter 4 reports the survey findings. Last, Chapter 5 presents the findings and discussion, recommendations for practice and further research.
CHAPTER 2—LITERATURE REVIEW

College success results from more than subject mastery and academic skills acquisition (Karp, 2011). Students must also learn to maneuver community college and transfer institution systems with ambiguous and unfamiliar regulations and processes. As a result, students often lack clearly structured routes to college completion (Brock, 2010; Karp, 2011; McClenney & Oriano, 2012; Tinto, 1993). Numerous studies have identified that academic advising provided by counselors and academic advisors guides students through this complex maze to gain success and degree completion (Campbell & Nutt, 2008; Cooper, n.d.; Gordon et al., 2008; Helfgot, 1995; Karp, 2011; Kuh, 2008; McClenney & Waiwaiola, 2005; O’Banion, 2012; Orozco, Alvarez, & Gutkin, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Venezia, Bracco, & Nodine, 2010). Students are guided toward student success, in particular, through the student education plan (Cooper, n.d.; California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012; Karp, 2011).

Research has found that requiring students to complete education plans early in their community college enrollment can improve their chances for success (Cooper, n.d.; Venezia et al., 2010; California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012). Most documented successes are from those students who, in their first semester, complete an education plan and ultimately seek an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year institution, or career preparation. These goals can improve their chances of retention, persistence and completion (Lumina Foundation for Education, 2005).

Education plans can incorporate myriad elements such as a semester-by-semester outlines and career and life planning components related to majors, fields of study, and pathways to transfer institutions and graduate schools. In fact, studies support the need
for both course and career/life planning as education plan components. One such study conducted by University of Texas at Austin’s Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) concluded that “while academic planning certainly includes course selection, community college students need advising that helps them set and maintain long-term goals.” “This type of advising and planning centers on creating a clear path from where they are now to their ultimate educational goals” (CCCSE, 2012, p.11). While ninety-one percent of student respondents (376,899 of 414,646) recognized the importance of academic advising/planning as a somewhat or very important service, only thirty-eight percent of respondents entering college for the first time reported that an advisor helped them set academic goals and create long-range plans in practice (CCCSE, 2012).

The key role played by counselors and academic advisors is described in the literature. Hunter and White (2004) emphasized that under the guidance of an academic advisors and [counselors] students can clarify the purposes of their college attendance, achieve vital personal connection with mentors, plan for the future, determine their role and responsibilities in a democratic society, and come to understand how they can achieve their potential. (p. 21)

Karp and Stacey (2013) found that “college advisors integrate academic and career counseling by guiding students through an exploration of their strengths, skills and interests…[and] work with students to develop an academic plan that will help them progress toward the professional goals they have identified” (p. 1). Both studies closely link the relationship between academic advising and counseling to long-range goal
setting and the global goals of a community college education; however, students also need to capably navigate a complex tangle of regulations and processes to reach these larger goals.

California recently launched efforts to streamline students’ navigation of the community college system by increasing efforts to support counseling, academic advising and education planning. SB 1456, The Student Success Act of 2012, states that its purpose is to increase California community college access and success by providing effective core matriculation services including orientation, assessment and placement, counseling and education planning, and academic interventions. The bill mandates that a new funding model be created to support these services and a report be generated to track their impacts on student equity. In particular and most salient to this study are those responsibilities specified in the Student Success Act §78212.a.2.C.iii, and §78212.a.2.C.iv (California Legislative Information, 2012), which call for the following:

(iii): The provision of information, guided by sound counseling principles and practices, using a broad array of delivery mechanisms, including technology-based strategies to serve a continuum of student’s needs and abilities that will enable students to make informed choices.

(iv): The development of an education plan leading to a course of study and guidance on course selection that is related to a student’s academic and career goals.

Provisions iii and iv of SB 1456 stipulate that all California community college students must seek counseling and complete education plans and that institutions must provide each of these as codified in this law. This bill incorporates many ideas endorsed
by the Student Success Task Force which encouraged colleges to look for efficient and 
effective means of delivering counseling, advising, and education plan services in a 
manner that could be brought to scale. SB 1456 likewise challenges community colleges 
to seek innovative advising and counseling delivery using technology.

To provide a framework for the study and to address the complexities of delivering education planning services, this literature review covers the following topics: (a) a brief review of the historical evolution of academic advising and counseling, (b) concepts of counseling versus advising, (c) a brief description of academic advising theory, (d) research related to various delivery methods of academic advising and counseling, (e) research related to personnel, (f) findings related to how technological solutions have assisted with academic advising and counseling at two community colleges across the nation.

**History and Evolution of Academic Advising and Counseling**

Early research related to academic advising and counseling focused on their delivery in four-year institutions. Even today, there remains a dearth of research related to advising services at community colleges. The models of four-year institutions are valuable to study, however, because they have shaped the history and evolution of academic advising and counseling at the community college.

Beginning as early as 1636 with the founding of Harvard College, the earliest form of academic advising was delivered by instructional faculty members who focused on advising students about their courses of study (Cook, 2009; Frost, 2000). Advising topics ranged from institutional, departmental, and external requirements to students’ ideas about their intellectual interests and vocational goals (Frost, 2000). Colleges once
offering “classical curricul[a] that emphasized ideas or the life of the mind,” however, soon became institutions interested in granting liberal arts degrees which included greater course selection (Frost, 2000, p. 5). The addition of electives in the 1870’s expanded concepts of academic advising and brought about the need for advisors to guide students (Kuhn, 2008). In the late nineteenth century, more demand was placed on the faculty and new faculty roles were formed, leading to the development of the academic advisor (Kuhn, 2008).

Just as the nature, expectations, demographics, and outcomes of colleges and universities have expanded, the expectations of policy makers and the public have changed. This has been demonstrated recently by legislative initiatives related to the retention and success of a more diverse student population (Cook, 2009). Despite these recent concerns, however, community colleges have provided opportunities for transfer and terminal education to an even more diverse student population since the early 20th century (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

The social movement of the 1960s brought about growth in the number of higher education institutions and an expanded student population that paralleled the growing baby boomer population (Brock, 2010; Frost, 2000; Gordon, 1992). This new era shaped institutions of higher education and their students in significant ways. As Helfgot (1995) noted, O’Banion (1989) characterized the 1960s in terms of the emergence of the humanistic psychology movement. “This movement launched encounter groups, sensitivity trainings, T-groups, and human potential seminars. In doing so,” it assisted students in becoming more fully developed human beings” (Helfgot, 1995, p. 46). The humanistic psychology movement simultaneously spurred the emergence of a new
approach to counseling and advising that incorporated the whole person in the delivery of counseling services. The new student population manifested by the 1970’s, “grew notably more diverse and presented a new need: to acclimate this group into the culture and process of higher education, including advisement of course selection” (Cook, 2009, p. 22).

Kuhn (2008) advanced Frost’s (2000) characterization of counseling and advising from the 1970’s to the present as a “defined and examined activity.” This began, in part, when practitioners first analyzed counseling and advising processes at other institutions (Kuhn, 2008). In 1977, organizations such as the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) began offering conferences where research by Crookston (1972) and O’Banion (1972) was presented to demonstrate how counseling and advising were delivered at institutions across the nation. In particular, the concepts of developmental and prescriptive advising, still active today, were examined and advanced. Campbell and Nutt (2008) observed that “effective developmental academic advising supports the social and intellectual growth that occurs during the college experience” (p. 2). Affirming the professional basis of counseling and advising practices, they further noted, “developmental academic advising is inextricably linked to the education mission of the institution and is considered, recognized and rewarded as a form of teaching” (p. 2). With this, the focus upon “person,” journey, place, and knowledge emerged. According to this paradigm, the whole person is developed. Academic counseling, then, was understood to provide more than road maps for specific majors but journeys to self-actualization.
Like community college students and the colleges themselves, community college counseling is not static; it is a function that evolves and changes over time (Helfgot, 1995; Gordon et al., 2008). As Cook (2009) reflected, “Academic advising and counseling parallels with the history of higher education” (p. 1). The changes in funding, students, faculty, institutions, workforce training, and programs have all affected the ways students have been advised and counseled (Cook, 2009). In keeping with this theme of evolution, the concepts of academic advising and counseling will be addressed in the next section. These practices have notable differences, yet in practice are often considered one and the same. The next section briefly addresses these concepts.

**Academic Advising and Counseling**

King (2002) states, “the issue of advising versus counseling is often a community college issue” (p. 1). As such, the California community college system is not unique in navigating this dynamic. King (2002) characterizes counselors and full-time advisors as offering similar service models. For example, both counselors and full-time advisors are generally knowledgeable of student development theory, particularly effective in personal and career development, and professionally informed to make off-and on-campus referrals. Unlike other states, California requires its advisors and counselors to possess field-related degrees (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). Specifically, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors requires that counseling faculty hold master's degrees in counseling, rehabilitation counseling, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, guidance counseling, educational counseling, social work, career development, marriage and family therapy, marriage, family and child counseling, or the equivalent (CCCCCO, 2012). Academic advisers and counselors foster relations with the advisee; therefore,
advisors and counselors should have knowledge of applicable counseling theory and possess good communication and problem-solving skills (Fox, 2008).

According to King (1993), counselors who focus on psychological and career counseling, as opposed to academic advisors who focus on primarily on course selection and patterning designed to meet students’ educational goals, predominate on two-year campuses. Despite their distinct professional attributes and the various roles they can play, for the purposes of this study the terms “academic advising” and “counseling” are used interchangeably to signify the means by which students are assisted in assessing, planning, and implementing their immediate and long-range academic goals (ASCCC, 1997). The reason for this interchangeable use of terms relates to practice. Several California community colleges use these terms synonymously to refer to the action of assisting students with education planning. A few California community colleges even use the terms “advisor” and “counselor” interchangeably when identifying personnel who assist with education planning.

Kuhn, Gordon and Webber (2006) likewise find that the terms advising and counseling are used interchangeably, and they also find that the terms are ambiguous. In an attempt to make the distinction clearer, the authors propose a continuum to clarify the differences:

At one end of the advising-counseling continuum, academic advising is conceived as a collaborative process in which advisors help students to develop and realize their educational, career and personal goals. At the other end of the continuum, counseling helps students overcome personal problems from the past and present that interfere with their academic success. (Kuhn et al., 2006, p. 24)
To identify the work of the advisor, the NACADA Task Force undertook the comprehensive and complex task of defining academic advising (NACADA, 2003). This resulted in a compilation of multiple definitions and paved the way for NACADA to develop a “Concept of Academic Advising” (NACADA, 2003, p. 1). These definitions, gathered from two- and four-year institutions, revealed the following commonalities. According to NACADA (2003), academic advising occurs when: (a) a relationship is formed between advisor and advisee, (b) students are assisted in identifying their educational goals/academic plans, (c) advising is an interactive process, (d) guidance is provided to clarify personal and career goals, (e) a written plan, commonly referred to as the student education plan, is formulated as part of this process.

Kuhn et al. (2006) argued for a somewhat broader definition, finding that academic advising occurs in, “situations in which an institutional representative gives insight or direction to a college student about an academic, social or personal matter. The nature of this direction might be to inform, suggest, counsel, discipline, coach, mentor or even teach,” (p. 3).

In some institutions, academic advising is coupled with personal counseling. In these cases, counselors assist students with personal, family, or other social concerns related to their education (ASCCC, 1997). During these sessions, counselors may assist students in exploring values and relating them to career or major choices, in seeking solutions to interpersonal problems, or in pursuing personal development related to their education. Generally, this session includes discussion related to course selection, degree requirements, and other task-oriented activities.

The following section briefly introduces several theories applied in counseling
and academic advising and further explains the reasons institutions choose to couple academic advising with personal counseling.

**Brief Description of Academic Advising Theory**

Community colleges often couple academic advising and personal counseling, and in doing so they may be applying developmental advising theory. “Developmental advising focuses on the needs of the student in determining how the advising interaction shall transpire” (Gordon et al., 2008, p. 19; Hagen & Jordan, 2008). As Crookston (1972) argued, developmental advising is “concerned not only with a specific personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student’s rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness, and problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluating skills” (Crookston as cited in Hagen & Jordan, 2008, p. 19). Colleges may choose to cultivate this development by providing students with advisors who can respond to the broadest array of need including academic advising and personal counseling. Widely practiced, developmental advising theory is most successfully applied when institutions recognize “sustained one-on-one interaction between the student and the advisor is necessary, not merely in the first semester but throughout the college career” (Karp & Stacey, 2013, p. 1).

Terry O’Banion (2012) identified five steps of developmental advising, which he referred to as “the process of academic advising” (O’Banion, 2012, p. 44). Developmental academic advising includes: (a) an exploration of life goals, which requires students to ask themselves who they are, where they want to be, and what differences they want to make, (b) an exploration of vocational goals, which requires students to extend life goals into the world of work and explore how they want to earn a
living and contribute to society, (c) program selection, which requires students to choose a major or field of study after completing an evaluation of both life and vocational goals, (d) course selection, which requires students to choose courses appropriate to their fields of study and educational goals, and (e) course schedule selection, which requires students to schedule their courses to best meet their personal needs and work schedules. In all, developmental advising facilitates a holistic student-centered process through which students identify and understand their personal preferences, attributes, and goals; articulate their educational aspirations; and intentionally identify how to achieve those goals. For Crookston (1972), the investigation of personal and vocational decisions teaches students “to develop skills in connecting self-knowledge to decision-making” (Karp and Stacey, 2013, p. 1). Karp and Stacey (2013) concluded that the developmental approach “ultimately constitutes a form of teaching” (p. 1).

Williams (2007) cited Creamer (2000) to illustrate three theory clusters important to the practice of academic advising: psychosocial theories, cognitive development theories, and typological theories. These theory clusters are important to counseling and advising practice because “no one theory is likely to explain the whole of academic advising” (Hagen & Jordan, 2008, p. 20). Through their education and training, counselors and academic advisors have likely learned several of these advising theories and, through practice, developed their own personal academic advising approaches. Williams (2007) cited Hendey (1999) in arguing that, though there are many broad theories, it is important to have some understanding of the three clusters since they serve as a foundation for counselors and academic advisors. Given the diversity of community college students who vary by age, life-stage, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and
motivation for attending college, having working knowledge of the three theory clusters can enhance counseling and academic advising (Hagen & Jordan, 2008; Williams, 2007). Brief descriptions of these theories follow.

First, the psychosocial-identity formation theory cluster focuses on students’ developmental stages and the responsibilities and issues they face during different periods in their lives. This theory is characterized by its examination of tasks performed in a chronological sequence (Hagen & Jordan, 2008; Williams, 2007). “The focus is on developmental tasks, transitions, and identity formation” (Hagen & Jordan, 2008, p. 20). The researchers most identified with psychosocial theories of development include Erikson, Chikering and Resissier, Levinson, Marcia, and Josselson (Hagen & Jordan, 2008; Williams, 2007). Williams (2007) claimed that understanding psychosocial identity development theories can help counselors aid students by identifying students’ levels of development and then guiding them to “develop within and beyond their particular stage” (p. 2). Williams (2007) joined Creamer (2000) in arguing that “understanding … students in a particular state or level of development … can provide insights to advisors which allow them to ‘explain conditions in students’ lives that are often confusing and that sometimes block effective planning and learning” (Creamer as cited in Williams, 2007, p. 2).

Second, the cognitive-development theory cluster examines “how individuals perceive and interpret their life experiences” (Hagen & Jordan, 2008, p. 24). The researchers most identified with this theory cluster are Koholberg, Perry, Cross, and Cass (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). This theory cluster explores how people make meaning out of their experiences. Williams (2007) noted that as cognitive structures vary from person to
person, people may have different perspectives of similar events. Understanding this theory can give counselors and advisors insights into varied students comments and inquiries related to similar circumstances.

Third, the typology theory cluster marks “differences between personality types and [examines] how individuals relate to or adapt to their educational and work environments” (Williams, 2007, p. 3). Typology theory researchers base their work on Carl Jung’s (1960) theory of personality types, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator “emphasizes how people gather information and how they use that information to make decisions” (Hagen & Jordan, 2008, p. 26). An understanding of this theory, which is also related to learning theory, can assist counselors and advisors in identifying student preferences related to teaching style and course selection (Williams, 2007).

In general, understanding developmental advising theories can enhance counseling and academic advising processes. Williams advanced Crookston’s (1994) finding that the advising process, grounded in student and advisor engagement, can support the creation of students’ plans for personal growth and self-fulfillment. Given the current California legislation mandating that counseling or academic advising must be offered to all students and that the creation of a student education plan will be a condition of priority registration, understanding the breadth and depth of counseling practices is paramount to understanding not only community college students but also the mandated task at hand. Can developmental academic advising and counseling be sustained when brought to scale to include all students? This is a challenge for practitioners and represents a major culture change. Possible solutions can be found in new configurations
of service which may include different modalities of delivery, new and expanded uses of technology, and different staffing models that can sustain the developmental outcomes.

**Delivery Methods of Academic Advising and Counseling and Personnel**

In 1983, seven organizational models of advising and five delivery systems found in both four-year and two-year institutions were identified by Wes Habley (1983) and researched by the American College Testing Programs (ACT) (King, 1993). In addition to delivery systems, ACT found that student characteristics impact delivery models. ACT found that “underprepared, undecided, socioeconomically diverse, first generation, nontraditional, and commuter students need a more centralized and intrusive advising system than [those at] an institution whose students fall at the other end of the spectrum” (King, 1993, p. 47).

The seven organization models described by Habley (1983) include: (a) the faculty-only model, in which students are assigned to an instructional faculty member for advising, (b) the supplementary model, in which instructional faculty provide general academic information and students are then supported by other academic offices, (c) the split model, in which undeclared/underprepared students are advised in advising offices while those students who have declared majors are assigned to academic units or instructional advisors, (d) the dual model, in which each student has two advisors, consisting of an instructional faculty member who advises them on issues related to the major and an advisor from the advising office who offers information on general requirements, procedures and policies, (e) the total intake model, in which students are advised up to a specific point in time or until specific requirements are met and are then assigned to instructional faculty advisors, (f) the satellite model, in which each division,
school, and college within the institution has its respective advising, (g) the self-contained model, in which advising for all students up to the point of departure is provided by a centralized unit.

Predominant in community college is the self-contained advising model which has its beginnings in the guidance offices common in K-12 education at the time community colleges were founded (Kuhn as cited in Gordon et al., 2008; King, 1993). In accordance with this model, all advising including assessment, orientation, and education planning is provided by staff in a centralized unit (King, 1993; Kuhn, 2008). At many institutions, students who have reached their educational goal and completed their coursework are again directed to counseling centers to petition for graduation and ensure they have met all requirements for graduation. Community college advising models have evolved to the point where, in addition to professional counselors, many delivery models include paraprofessionals, academic advisors, instructional faculty, and classified staff who provide comprehensive advising services, once the sole purview of the community college counselor.

The literature indicates that academic advising and counseling services may vary by college, and they do so for several reasons. First, as King (1993) argued, college mission plays an important role in determining suitable advising models. Colleges need to consider whether they are public, private, or proprietary; whether they have a selective admission process or their admission is open-access; and whether the degree and certificate programs they offer warrant particular advising services. Second, student characteristics may dictate how services are delivered (Campbell & Nutt, 2008; CCCSE, 2012; Gordon et al., 2008; Helfgot, 1995; King, 1993). For example, colleges with large
numbers of underprepared, undecided, first generation, and nontraditional students may 
find “intrusive” or hand-on advising the best delivery model. Third, college priorities, 
college budgets, “collective bargaining agreements and the extent to which effective 
advising is evaluated, recognized and rewarded” influence which personnel perform 
advising services (King, 1993, p. 48). Fourth, legislation and other mandates dictate or 
influence how the colleges choose to incorporate policies and procedures (Campbell & 
Nutt, 2008; Gordon et al., 2008; Helfgot, 1995; King, 1993).

When asked if there is an ideal advising model and delivery system for 
community colleges, King (1993) stated that the ideal would encompass “the total-intake 
format [face-to-face, individual] in which there is a centralized advising office with a 
full-time director and staffed by full-time advisors or counselors and part-time faculty 
and paraprofessionals or peers” (p. 53). This total in-take format might also include 
“intrusive advising” or hands-on advising for at-risk students. The Center for Community 
College Student Engagement reports that this delivery model represents a best practice 
for community college student success (CCCSE, 2012).

Advising delivery can be divided into two general categories: (a) purely face-to-
face advising models which include individual advising, group advising, intrusive 
advising, academic (success) coaching, faculty advising, and peer (academic) mentoring;
(b) technologically mediated advising models which include hybrid advising and online 
advising. These modes of delivery are described below.
Face-to-Face Advising Models

Face-to-face delivery models involve the physical presence of students and a counselor, academic advisor, faculty member, coach, or peer advisor during advising sessions (Wagner, 2001).

**Individual Advising.** Individual advising by professional counselors or advisors is the most personal form of face-to-face advising and has been the primary model of student advising in community colleges. According to Habley (1994), face-to-face delivery is the only structured activity on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution. This opportunity proves valuable as it is linked to increased retention. Kuhn (2008) found that “students who met with their academic advisor at least twice during the current academic year tended to engage more frequently in the range of educationally purposed activities” as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (2007) with engagement being a key factor in retaining students (Tinto, 1993).

Although this intensive, personalized modality may be most prominent and ideal, not all community college students experience it. Karp and Stacey (2013) noted that “due to financial constraints, most community colleges have high student-advisor ratios…and as a result, student interactions with advisors are often rushed and infrequent” (p. 2). This finding bears significance to this study. In California and across the nation, colleges have faced steep budget cuts in recent years. This has resulted in increasing student-counselor and advisor ratios. Despite these challenges, colleges seek to maintain some level of face-to-face service given its link to student retention and
success. This dissertation questions whether the attributes of personalized, face-to-face counseling can be achieved using other delivery methods and brought to scale.

**Group advising.** Group advising, which is,
typically used as a supplement rather than as a replacement for individual advising, holds similar promise. A group meeting involving particular majors, for example, can help newer students understand what lies ahead and help them learn from more experienced students. (Reynolds, 2010, p. 2)

King (2008) pointed out several circumstances in which institutions offer group advising, which is facilitated by professional counselors or advisors: (a) when there are more students to be served than available counselors and academic advisors to serve them, (b) when reaching certain populations of students with time constraints (i.e. student athletes, evening students, students working full time), (c) when it is necessary to provide important information at one time (King, 2008). Advising groups may also cluster students according to their transfer interests. If students are interested in attending a California State University (CSU), for example, group advising workshops focusing on CSU transfer requirements can be offered. Group advising is a means of bringing to scale the major benefits of human interaction, which is the cornerstone of the more costly one-on-one delivery model. For this reason, it is considered a fundamental modality that could be employed by more many colleges.

**Intrusive advising.** The intrusive advising model provides the benefits of one-on-one counseling with more frequent interaction between professional counselors or advisors and students, leading to more successful interventions. Intrusive advising best serves those students most in need of direct intervention and is a best-practice model for
high-risk students (CCCSE, 2012; Karp, 2011; MDRC, 2009; McClenney & Oriano, 2012; Varney 2012). According to one definition, high-risk students are those currently on academic probation or those assessed as academically unprepared for college work (Gordon et al., 2008; Karp, 2011; King, 1993; MDRC, 2009; Varney, 2012). In addition to serving at-risk students, intrusive advising has also been used for first-year students to ensure their first-year college journeys are positive and result in successful outcomes. To provide intrusive advising, some colleges reduce the student-to-counselor ratio by assigning teams of advisors and counselors to groups of at-risk students or they may structure caseloads so students meet with their counselors or advisors more frequently but only as needed (Varney, 2102; MDRC, 2009). According to Varney (2012), intrusive advising involves:

(a) [using] deliberate intervention to enhance student motivation, (b) using strategies to show interest and involvement with students, (c) [using] intensive advising designed to increase the probability of student success, (d) working to educate students on all options, and (e) approaching students before situations develop. (p. 1)

Intrusive advising is a proactive strategy that enables practitioners to approach students while there is still opportunity to redirect their decision-making.

**Academic advisors model.** The roles and responsibilities of an academic advisor can include the advisement of course selection and detailing of academic requirements. The advisor may have knowledge of graduation requirements to include general education, and major requirements and provide degree audits. The advisor may review and interpret assessment and/or placement tests including multiple measures. They could
assist in informing students about institutional policies and procedures and may be the first campus personnel that assist students with enrollment procedures (McMahan, 2008; Kuhn et al., 2006). Kuhn et al. (2006) state, “advisors are the institutionalized frontline of … support and assistance” (p. 24). Academic advising at this “fundamental level is described as informational and explanatory and progress through development and advising phases” (Kuhn et al., 2006, p. 24). Finally, advisors are not trained as counselors who work with students who face personal challenges, transitional issues and help students overcome challenges that impede their educational success (Kuhn et al, 2006).

**Academic (success or achievement) coaching.** Academic coaches offer one-on-one, in-person advising to students, which typically begins with students’ first enrollment and can continue through college completion. Neuhauser and Weber (2011) explained that success coaches “interact closely with students and faculty to provide prompt feedback and support on academic and personal matters, and in turn foster active student engagement in the learning and development process” (p. 43). Coaches have the ability to assist students before they become at-risk academically and are able to help advocate for and assist students in navigating college systems. Because coaches meet with students on a weekly basis, colleges have seen students’ retention and success improve. Given this success, colleges have even contracted with coaching companies such as InsideTrack to “work regularly one-on-one with the student to map out a plan for college success and provide guidance along the way” (Hayes, 2012, p. 15). Coaches additionally advise students in areas of study-skills building, goal setting, critical thinking and action planning (Farrell, 2007; Hayes, 2012; Jeffries, 2010).
Faculty advising. According to this model, instructional faculty advise students within their disciplines; however, students whose majors are undeclared or undecided are often assigned to counselors or liberal arts coordinators until they have declared their majors. (King, 2008). This model of advising is typically associated with four-year institutions. As quoted in Gordon et al. (2008), Habley (1994) stated, “faculty advising remains a central part of most of [four-year higher education] institutions, and almost all faculty members are expected to advise as part of their faculty status” (p. 253). Research has shown that faculty contact, both formal and informal, is critical to student engagement, satisfaction, learning, and retention (CCCSE, 2010; Hemwall, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Hemwall (2008) noted, however, that advising often competes with the primary faculty roles of teaching and conducting research in four-year universities. Faculty advisors also often experience a lack of support and training related to advising. Given community colleges’ open access mission, student diversity, and multitude of student educational goals, and the complexities of transfer, community colleges may have chosen not to follow the four-year model but have instead favored the use of dedicated counselors and advisors for education planning.

Peer/mentor advising. Peer mentoring or advising programs allow peer advisors to “maintain regular and ongoing contact with their mentees throughout the term” (Hemwall, 2008, p. 25). Peer advising supplements advising services on campus. It has the advantages of being versatile and compatible with advising services already offered; is designed to be “sensitive to student needs;” and has the “ability to extend the range and scope of advising to times and venues when advising is not usually available” (Koring,
Peer advising can be administered for certain curricular and support programs and can involve informal or formal contact. Peer advising sessions may respond to instructor recommendations, classroom dynamics or conflicts, college life experiences, and matters that students may not wish to explore with other advisor or counselors (Rosenthal & Shinebarger, 2010). Aside from this versatility, peer advisors have the added advantage of being much more cost effective, offering advising services that can be brought to scale. From the perspective of the peer advisor, “those serving as peer advisors benefit from the leadership development included in such programs” (Koring, 2005, p. 1).

**Technologically—Mediated Advising Models**

Technologically-mediated advising combines face-to-face delivery with some form of advising technology or relies entirely on technology to accomplish advising goals. Both can contribute to bringing advising services to scale.

**Hybrid advising.** The hybrid model relies on a blend of technology-based and face-to-face delivery modalities to meet advising and counseling goals. This model has grown prolifically as colleges have incorporated student databases, computerized registration systems, degree audit systems, career online searches, early warning systems, video streaming, chat functions, and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Skype) to communicate with students (Helfgot, 1995; Hornak, Akeks, & Jeffs, 2010; Pasquini, 2013). The hybrid model addresses the changes in practices and the expectations of a generation defined as digitally native. It distinguishes between what students can independently accomplish online and what they can best accomplish through direct human interaction. Some counseling departments have created web pages of frequently
asked questions, for example, to which students can be referred to find transfer, major, career, and other information otherwise discussed during advising sessions. Webpage referrals, for example, would be used in tandem with face-to-face delivery to enhance advising and counseling sessions. The hybrid model is scalable, cost effective, and supports sound advising practice.

**Online advising.** Online advising is fully mediated by technology that students can access independently. The literature reports that online advising is becoming increasingly commonplace in higher education, driven by students seeking self-service at any time during the day or night wherever the student is physically located (Herndon, 2011; Karp, 2013; Kramer, 2002). Several reported benefits of online advising include its potential to: (a) reduce costs and streamline advising services by disseminating information efficiently and as students need it, (b) free up counselors and academic advisors, who may then see students better able to benefit from individual interaction and interventions, (c) increase counselors’ and advisors’ capacity for education planning, (d) increase students’ ability to revisit and revise plans more frequently (Karp, 2013; Kramer, 2002). Technologic mediation may also be referred to as “self-service technology” or SST. Herndon (2011) joins Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2009) in defining self-service technology as any technology that allows customers to produce services without direct involvement of human resources.

**Practitioners**

Community college counselors have traditionally been the primary personnel delivering counseling and academic advising. However, the evolution of advising models, roles, and objectives requires a reconsideration of the personnel delivering
advising services. Gay (1977), quoted in Cohen and Brawer (2003), questioned “whether or not some of the tasks necessary to the services now rendered [by counselors constitute a] wise use of the skills and talents of counselors and other specialists of student affairs” (p. 204). In a 2012 memorandum from WestEd and the RP Group to the CCCCO, the question of using paraprofessionals and instructional faculty for advising was addressed. The memorandum discussed the potential roles of peer advisors, classified staff, instructional faculty, and seasonal personnel, particularly those who would support online advising during key periods, in supporting counseling services. The authors conducted a thorough literature review and differentiated those tasks that can be performed by paraprofessionals and instructional faculty from those requiring the skill set of a counselor. In summarizing the overall effectiveness of services provided, the authors stated,

none of the studies reviewed noted any negative consequences of using different providers for such support services as orientation, advising, and counseling, but all of the programs studied seemed to focus on ensuring that non-counselors only take on assignments that are within their skill sets. (WestED & The RP Group, 2012, p. 4)

This validates the consideration currently underway by many colleges to implement a triage approach to counseling services.

The advising modes, practices, and providers described above offer an overview of advising components colleges can combine to suit their needs. Indeed, identifying and deploying the best mix of modalities, practices, and personnel are crucial to the success of individual colleges. Colleges must select advising models to best meet the needs of
their students while accomplishing college objectives, responding to external pressures, and working within their own financial constraints. Colleges seek models most likely to be cost effective and scalable. The risks are significant, however. Colleges may select the wrong combination of services and personnel to meet the external demands of funding and public policy only to fail students who required other modalities (Karp, 2013). The following section seeks to address the issue of these forces.

**Forces Driving Increased Technological Delivery of Academic Advising and Counseling and Education Planning**

In Advancing Student Success in the California Community Colleges: Recommendations of the California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012), the California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force recommended that community colleges develop and use centralized and integrated technology accessible through institutional web portals to better guide students towards completion. The premise of this recommendation is that those students who are more self-guided and technologically knowledgeable would benefit from having academic information at their fingertips and accessible at any time from any location. There is an assumption that as students’ use of social media, texting, and the Internet becomes more ubiquitous, students will want more online academic advising and counseling services (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012). Pasquini (2013) found that the need for connectivity and digital access is being seen in postsecondary institutions at increasing levels. A study by Rosario (2012) focusing on generational differences in technology among community college students indicated that millennial students, who graduated from high school in
2000, and Net Generation students, who grew up with computers, the Internet, smartphones, and interactive video games, feel that technology is important to their education. Students are currently being asked in their courses to search online for learning material and to correspond with fellow students around the globe. As technology use is expanded in the classroom, these technological methods should also be available for advising (Helfgot, 1995; Multari, 2004; Pasquini, 2013).

Exploring technology delivery options becomes more pressing as student services’ funding is reduced. The pressure of funding reduction was experienced as far back as the 1990s when Helfgot (1995) highlighted several working assumptions regarding counseling in a two-year college. He argued, “the age of unlimited growth and seemingly unlimited resources is over … increasing numbers of students [finishing high school] will mean that existing community colleges will see enrollment growth” (Helfgot, 1995, p. 48). He found that colleges would accommodate these students to the best of their abilities given their limited resources and staffing capacity; however, to accomplish this, he suggested that colleges would need to heavily rely on technology. He further added, “this approach is in part a response to economics and in part a statement of faith in the power of technology” (Helfgot, 1995, p. 48). Similar discussions related to budget reductions, increasing enrollments, and the needs of diverse students took place during the year that the Student Success Task Force conducted its work. Concerns about financial constraints and the need for technology-based solutions influenced much of the Task Force’s final document and the resulting Student Success Act of 2012. Assuring the Task Force, Multari (2004) observed that “commercial software firms recognized potential markets in education and have created products, websites and software for
college interchanges” (p. 2). In short, he argued, industry will meet the need.

In 1983, Friedlander published an article focusing on the use of computers to enhance academic advising. His premise stated that by incorporating computer technology, colleges could increase their effectiveness in helping students with their education plans, in alerting students who experience difficulty in courses, and in providing follow-up on the progress students were making towards their educational goals. Lastly, he suggested that using technology could increase accuracy in advising since “a computer program can match degree requirements” (Friedlander, 1983, p. 53).

The Community College Research Center recently published a brief that demonstrated out-of-classroom services improve student outcomes and persistence and provided strategies for accomplishing these (Karp, 2011). One best-practice recommendation advised community colleges to

Redesign advising and counseling so that it is streamlined and personalized:

Students need access to good information, but current counseling structures and college budgets cannot support frequent individual advising sessions

... Technology might also be used to create efficient yet personal information sources. ... But since research indicates that students need a “human touch” (CCCSE, 2010); Venezia, Bracco, & Nodine, 2010), too much reliance on technology for advising may be counterproductive, and innovations should be implemented thoughtfully. (Karp, 2011, p. 3)

Here, Karp (2011) implied that technology may be a way to provide efficient and effective counseling and advising. She suggested, for example, having an interactive website where students could be directed for general information thus relieving
counselors from course scheduling activities and allowing them to work with students who are more in need of individualized services.

Given current forces driving the increased use of technology, two early-adopter colleges have successfully redesigned advising and counseling service delivery through technology use: Virginia Community College System and Valencia Community College. These may serve as national models for providing comprehensive self-service academic advising through online technology.

**Virginia Community College System**

To provide cost-efficient student services, career planning in particular, the Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System sought federal funding to support the development of the Virginia Education Wizard, a one-stop career and college planning tool that provides self-service to current and potential students (Herndon, 2011). “In carrying out the project, an advisory committee was formed that identified five major areas, with three dealing directly with advising: career planning, academic planning in the form of selecting a major or program, and transfer planning” (Herndon, 2011, p. 20). In March 2009, this new technology was unveiled to the community on the college website. “The findings of early analysis report that the technology has served more students with fewer resources; however, there is no data to show the correlation of using this SST [self-service technology] and increased student success” (Herndon, 2011, p. 26). Early reports of Virginia Community College System’s approach to providing self-service college planning has yet to show that the Wizard system meets the goals of this project. To date however, the Wizard system is prominently visible on the home page of Virginia’s Community Colleges System website.
Valencia Community College

A recent study conducted at Florida’s Valencia Community College (2009) focused on how the college could create strategies and environments to increase student engagement at the point of initial enrollment (Shugart & Romano, 2008). The study looked at several strategies which formed a new trilogy of systems. “The trilogy of interest is a system called LifeMap, a developmental advising model that promotes social and academic integration, education and career planning, and acquisition of student and life skills” (Shugart & Romano, 2008, p. 33). What makes this model of interest is that the delivery of LifeMap is accomplished both face-to-face and via the College web portal. “Early indicators of this study find that student retention from term-to-term grew during these reforms from 66 percent to more than 80 percent” (Shugart & Romano, 2008, p. 37). This demonstrates that essential practices can be integrated into online platforms to guide students through the same types of self-discovery that can be accomplished through traditional modalities such as one-on-one advising. It is crucial to assure that the online platform is designed to be consistent with the culture, practices, and demographics of the college, however.

The implications of budget reductions and the need to scale-up education planning services have raised questions related to service delivery, personnel, and the changing roles of counseling and academic advising. While there have been a variety of views regarding the role counseling and counselors play in two-year colleges, the importance of the counseling function to community college students has rarely been questioned (Helfgot, 1995).
Summary

California’s struggles are no different from those of community colleges across the nation; however, recent California legislation requires its community colleges to implement practices proven to improve student persistence, success, and completion. With shrinking financial support and growing student need, a strategic use of resources is essential to effectively delivering these services. Of particular importance to this study is the facilitation of the student education plan, which has been validated as a crucial factor in achieving student success and completion. To date, this service has been delivered primarily by counselors in a centralized location, often employing a face-to-face delivery model. With so many colleges in California working to meet the student success timeline, an effective first step has been to identify what practices are in place, what modalities deliver them, and who (which personnel classifications) provide them. This baseline would support the next steps of design. Chapter 3 provides the methodology for identifying this baseline and assessing perceptions of effectiveness.
CHAPTER 3—METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this survey research was to explore counselors’ and advisors’ perceptions of effective education planning practices. Education planning includes but is not limited to the following: (a) considering and planning for multiple layers of student goals; (b) recommending course sequencing; (c) making student support referrals; (d) providing information about auxiliary requirements to meet students’ educational goals; (e) assisting students in planning for and prioritizing multiple transfer institutions; (f) determining catalog rights; (g) offering a professional knowledge of programs; (h) evaluating transcripts from other institutions (ASCCC, Spring 2012). Education plans record this planning and provide estimated timelines to goal achievement.

There are several potential benefits of this research. First, the findings will likely inform the CCCCO and system colleges about effective practices currently employed. Second, the findings may assist in the efforts to comply with new state mandates. Last, as an added benefit, compiling and assessing these data will form a baseline to assist colleges statewide in identifying potential practices, processes, and alternative education planning delivery models that can be brought to scale. Attention was given to several differing institutional characteristics, such as student headcount; locality (urban, suburban, or rural); and counselor-to-student ratio as defined by student headcount. It should be noted that the design is not experimental in nature and does not imply causality.

This quantitative study was precipitated by two actions: first, California’s adoption of Senate Bill 1456 in 2012 and second, the state’s mandate of new reporting requirements. SB 1456 requires that critical student services such as counseling and
student advising be provided to students enrolled in the 112 California community
colleges. To accomplish this, SB 1456 calls for colleges to “identify a broad array of
service delivery mechanisms that can effectively reach a greater number of students”
(Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012). The second action requires that
colleges submit a Student Success Plan by October 17, 2014, demonstrating that each
community college has implemented activities compliant with SB 1456.

This chapter describes the methodology employed for this study, which sought to
compile and assess student education planning services offered by California’s
community colleges. It includes the research design, research questions, instrumentation,
study site location, sample population, provisions for maintaining confidentiality, data
collection, data analysis, and the content validity of this study.

**Research Design**

In an informal discussion that included the researcher, the Dean of Student
Services for the CCCCO, and the Vice Chancellor of Student Services also affiliated with
the CCCCO, the need to learn how colleges are implementing student education planning
services and the effectiveness of those education planning services emerged as
priorities. In this discussion, the Dean referenced a preliminary survey distributed in the
fall of 2012 by the CCCCO’s Student Services division which investigated counseling
and advising strategies that system colleges were using to promote student success. The
results were to be used to better inform policy discussions regarding SB 1456. SB 1456,
which was signed by Governor Brown in September of 2012, mandates that student
education plans be part of a trio of services identified as the new matriculation
process. These services include: (a) student assessment, (b) provision of orientation, and
(c) facilitation of the completion of an education plan (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012).

The preliminary survey targeted California community college chief student services officers (CSSOs) and focused on the following four areas of student services: (a) pre-enrollment services, (b) orientation, (c) student success workshops, and (d) follow-up (See Appendix A for the Chancellor’s Office Survey). Although preliminary survey dissemination and data collection were completed, data were not analyzed due to personnel and time constraints in the CCCCO. Both the Dean and the Vice Chancellor emphasized that the Chancellor’s Office would need to continue gathering baseline data and to continue identifying practices found most effective by colleges and counseling faculty. At this meeting, the Vice Chancellor offered to support the researcher’s proposal to administer a more focused survey on education planning services to counseling faculty department chairs statewide. The Vice Chancellor granted permission for the researcher to revise the preliminary survey to focus upon student education plans, practices, and effectiveness. In addition, the Chancellor’s Office committed to supporting the research by sending out e-mails to its California Community Colleges Counselor and CSSO listservs to encourage study participation. A confirmation of the Chancellor’s Office support of this survey study is included in Appendix B (Email to Vice Chancellor of Student Services, CCCCO).

This study was intended to explore counselors’ and advisors’ perceptions of effective student education planning practices by administering a statewide survey that would assure broad participation and minimize the potential for sampling error (Creswell, 2003; Dillman, 2007). An online survey was chosen to collect data because it could be
readily disseminated and responses were likely to be returned more rapidly (Creswell, 2003). By design, the survey was primarily structured to gather effectiveness data related to student education planning services, processes, and practices and to permit analysis of demographics and outcomes. The open-ended inquiry portion of the survey addressed practitioners’ perceptions of the effectiveness of various modes of education plan delivery. The open-ended responses were then coded using the constant comparative method, which led to themes, which emerged from the field (Merriam, 1998). Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the quantitative portions of the survey; Excel database software was used to manage the recording, coding and theming of open-ended responses from the survey.

Research Questions

The research questions that initiated this study were prompted by SB 1456, which mandates that all California Community Colleges promote and improve student success, in part, by ensuring that all enrolled students complete an education plan (Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012). Survey data shared by the counseling department chairs or their designees were to provide insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of current education planning delivery services. The specific research questions were as follows:

1. What delivery methods of student education planning services are considered to be the most effective in creating student implemented education plans?
2. Who is considered to provide the most effective service of facilitating students’ education planning?
Hypotheses

From the research questions, the following hypotheses were developed and tested. Hypotheses one and two align with research question one; hypothesis three aligns with research question two.

1. There are no significant differences (p<.05) between the reported frequency of use of online education planning modality for abbreviated education plans and for comprehensive education plans.

2. There are no significant differences (p<.05) between effectiveness ratings of face-to-face and online comprehensive and abbreviated education plans.

3. There are no significant differences (p<.05) between effectiveness ratings of comprehensive and abbreviated education plans delivered by counselors and those delivered by other personnel.

Instrumentation

With the permission of the Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges Vice Chancellor of Student Services, the final survey instrument revised the original Chancellor’s Office survey to focus solely on education planning services, the personnel providing those services, and the perceived effectiveness of services. In addition, open-ended questions were added to address participants’ perceptions of service delivery effectiveness. Before the survey was launched online, the Vice Chancellor’s staff participated in a review of the revised survey questions.

The researcher made a concerted effort to incorporate as many questions as possible from the CCCC’s original survey, particularly those related to education planning services to meet the intent of this study. Nonetheless, the design of the survey
proved to be challenging for several reasons. First, after the preliminary survey was administered by the Chancellor’s Office, new Title 5 regulations made distinctions between two types of education plans, abbreviated and comprehensive plans. The revised survey needed to reflect this changes. Second, the original survey did not ask respondents for their perceptions of education plan delivery service effectiveness, nor did the original survey include questions regarding personnel who facilitate education planning. These questions needed to be developed and added. Third, the revised survey’s language had to be general enough so counseling chairs systemwide could recognize the nomenclature used to describe services and service delivery personnel, as these differ from campus to campus. At the same time, the revised survey language had to be specific enough to ensure that responses were accurate and meaningful.

Once fully revised, the final survey was delivered through the online tool, Qualtrics, which allowed all California Community Colleges respondents easy access to the survey instrument. The survey tool also offered flexibility in survey design, confidential data collection, rapid feedback, and a variety of reporting schematics (Creswell, 2008). The researcher’s affiliated institution, San Diego State University (SDSU), offers access to this software, so the researcher was able to use it free-of-charge.

The survey itself included thirty questions. Each open-ended question was limited to 700 characters, and respondents completed the survey in an average of 30 minutes (See Appendix C for the Effective Student Education Planning Survey). The quantitative sections included questions focused on personnel staffing levels, general counseling and advising services, modalities of service delivery in general counseling and
advising, general education services in the delivery of education planning services, types of personnel who facilitate education planning, including the extent and perceived effectiveness of various personnel by title, and general institution demographics. The survey concluded with four individual opened-ended questions regarding practitioners’ perceptions of education planning effectiveness on their campuses.

Those questions which asked participants to respond to the extent to which a particular education planning service modality (e.g., face-to-face, large group, completely online) was used by their institutions responded with a “one” if that service is not used at all or with a “six” if the service is used several times a week at their institution. Respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of different modalities, with “one” indicating that a particular mode was not applicable and a “seven” indicating that it was very effective. Effectiveness was defined as the degree or extent to which the intended outcome (or goal/objective) of the service provided is achieved and this definition was provided to respondents.

**Site Selection and Sample Selection**

The California Community College system is one of the largest higher education systems in the nation. It comprises 112 colleges in 72 districts and enrolls a student population of 2.4 million students. To receive state aid, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges requires that all colleges, at a minimum, provide adequate academic, career, and personal counseling and to assist students in the development of education plans (CCCCO, n.d.). Given this condition and the scope of the present research, this study used a single-state sample design, sending an electronic
survey to all 112 California community college counseling department chairs or their
designees via respondents’ college e-mail addresses (Creswell, 2008).

Even though student education planning services at most California community
colleges are not centralized, this survey was only sent to general counseling and not to
those departments that also facilitate education planning services, such as the Disabled
Students Program and Services (DSPS) and the Educational Opportunity Program and
Services (EOPS). This would seem to reflect a study limitation since the results were
only reported from the perspective of counseling department chairs. However, the goal
of this study was to learn about the processes, practices, and effectiveness of education
planning from departments that do not limit access to the general student body. Unlike
general counseling departments, support programs like DSPS and EOPS can only
administer services such as education planning to those students who meet the mandated
eligibility requirements of the California Legislative Code.

In preparing to distribute the survey, the researcher collected e-mail addresses for
all state counseling department chairs by searching each of the 112 California community
college websites for appropriate contact names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses or
by directly calling counseling departments for this information. Department chairs, who
directly provide education planning services, were chosen as primary respondents for two
reasons. First, as practitioners, their input related to department operations and practices
represented first-hand information. Second, as department leaders, they were most likely
to be informed about developing practices in the delivery of education planning services.
The survey asked responders to identify their position or title, so this is known for data
analyses purposes. In cases where the chair or designee was unavailable, a request was
made that the survey be forwarded to the Dean of Matriculation or the CSSO. The contact compilation process was completed in December, 2013.

**Maintaining Confidentiality**

Maintaining confidentiality is essential to securing participants’ candid and accurate reflections about service effectiveness (Creswell, 2003). The means by which confidentiality would be protected in this study were disclosed to participants through a written cover letter delivered electronically. (See Appendix D, Consent Form). The researcher was the only individual with access to the password protected software program, Qualtrics, through which the survey was delivered. Participants were assured that no identifying information could be linked to their responses. Respondents were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that participation would have no bearing on their community college employment. Participants had the option of forwarding the questionnaire to a designee as indicated in the instructions. Findings will be reported in aggregate form to the Chancellor’s Office and to the colleges statewide. According to an agreement with the Vice Chancellor of Student Services at the State Chancellor’s Office, this researcher was to be responsible for securing the raw data. To accomplish this, data were kept on the researcher’s password-protected laptop computer and secured in a locked file cabinet at the researcher’s home.

**Data Collection Strategies**

In February of 2014, the researcher sent a cover letter alerting participants to the forthcoming survey. This cover letter, found in Appendix E (Recruitment Notifications), explained the purpose of the research, emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, detailed the consent process, and explained how confidentiality would be maintained.
Subsequent to this introductory e-mail, three further notifications followed. On the same date, two e-mails from the Chancellor’s Office were sent to the Counselor and CSSO state listservs expressing the Office’s support of the research, its benefit to the current challenge of delivering education plans to scale, and their encouragement to complete the survey. This e-mail was sent out the week of January 29, 2014. The researcher drafted the Chancellor’s Office e-mail. (See Appendix F, E-mail sent by Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges).

A week later, another e-mail was sent by the researcher restating the purpose of the survey and inviting each chair to participate. A direct link to the survey, including consent information was provided at this time. One week later, a third e-mail was sent by the researcher, thanking counseling department chairs or their designees for their participation and inviting those who had not already done so to please complete the survey. A final e-mail was sent four weeks later to the counseling department chairs or their designees expressing the importance of their participation and providing the date on which the survey would no longer be available. The survey was closed five days later. The three follow-up e-mails can be found in Appendix E, “Recruitment Notifications.”

The researcher employed a quantitative research approach that relied on a combination of descriptive data evaluation, analysis of variance, and t-tests to analyze data.

The descriptive data collected consisted of: (a) institution size (number of students), (b) institution location designation (urban, suburban, rural or town), (c) the types and frequency of services and modalities for delivering those services, (d) the
classification of personnel delivering education planning services and their full-time/part-time status, and (e) the technology used in delivering services. Open-ended survey questions collected perceptions of delivery-mode and personnel effectiveness. The researcher employed a constant comparative methodology (Merriam, 1998) to analyze the data, code it, analyze for emerging themes, and then determine frequencies of themes within these perceptions. The open-ended responses were hand-coded in order for the researcher to engage with the data holistically, which was possible due to the amount of data being analyzed. This was followed by collapsing the codes, which then led to the emergence of overarching themes and subthemes. Demographic data from the college profile information was used to provide a respondent profile, which the researcher then compared to the entire California Community College system to ensure representativeness.

Analysis Parameters

Survey responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16. Three parameters were applied in analyzing the one-ended responses. They centered on the frequency with which education planning modes are used, the effectiveness of specific modalities, and education planning providers by job classification.

The first parameter sought to identify whether there are significant differences in the reported use of distinct service delivery modalities through which both comprehensive and abbreviated education plans are developed. The parameter further looked at differences in the use of all modalities to complete comprehensive (as opposed to) abbreviated education plans. A two-tailed dependent samples t-test was used to
determine whether the utilization ratings for online education planning modalities differed significantly for abbreviated and comprehensive education plans by comparing the utilization scores by each service delivery modality.

The second parameter sought to determine whether there are significant differences in the reported effectiveness of distinct service delivery modalities through which both comprehensive and abbreviated education plans are developed. In comparing effectiveness ratings between the comprehensive and abbreviated education plans, dependent samples $t$-test were used to determine whether ratings of face-to-face and online education planning effectiveness differed significantly between comprehensive and abbreviated education plans.

The third parameter sought to determine whether there are significant differences in professionals’ (e.g., academic advisors, counselors) effectiveness in delivering comprehensive and abbreviated education plans. By comparing effectiveness scores on the question which asks for respondents’ perceptions of professionals who deliver abbreviated plans and comprehensive plans for each classification (e.g., counselors, academic advisors, faculty advisors), a dependent samples $t$-test was used.

Frequencies were then calculated for many of the survey questions regarding academic advising and counseling services and education planning practices to analyze the differences according to categories. This analysis provided a summary of practices according to type and identified which practices and processes were more effective according to stated demographics, and self-reported levels of effectiveness.

Coding was used to analyze open-ended survey questions (Merriam, 1998) for repeated topics given the research questions. This process entailed initial coding of
responses using the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998) and then further analysis of the codes to determine themes. The frequencies were established based upon the number of times a theme occurred within the response. The rank order of themes was established, enabling the research to identify those most commonly occurring. Relationships between codes, where appropriate, were then noted and recorded to further analyze effectiveness.

The researcher expected that survey design would result in missing data (e.g., some questions would require specific answers related to cost, for example, which may be unknown to the participant) and would be classified as missing completely at random (MCAR). The MCAR classification suggests that missing information has no relation to other variables. Data missing completely at random was omitted.

Content Validity

Content Validity is achieved when items on a survey (or a test) represent all possible items the survey is intended to assess (Salkind, 2011). In other words, the items included on a survey must “measure the content they are intended to measure” (Creswell, 2008, p. 28). To establish content validity for this survey research, during development, the survey was sent for evaluation by the researcher to a chief student services officer (CSSO) and a counselor who participated in writing the Title 5 guidelines related to education planning services. Feedback from the CSSO and the counselor resulted in some survey revisions, including the renaming of several counseling and advising services; a correction to the identification of personnel; additions to service delivery modalities; and suggested wording of questions to clarify what was being asked. Additionally, the State Chancellor’s Office suggested that some questions be
reframed. Throughout this process, however, the intent of the questions remained the same.

Subsequent to editing, the survey was piloted to ten counseling faculty members who were not department chairs but were located within the California community college system. The researcher requested that those piloting the survey provide feedback about any survey questions requiring clarification and note how long it took them to complete the survey. As a result, the counselors suggested that the researcher: (a) include an advisory at the onset of the survey indicating that respondents would need to include information about instructional assistants and other personnel who facilitate education planning and will need to provide information from their institution’s demographics, (b) in questions that asked whether colleges have personnel serving in various staffing classifications, provide respondents with an option of “not applicable”, (c) refine the nomenclature of personnel and no longer use the term "adjunct" to signify those classifications that are not faculty, (d) in response to, “Please indicate which of the following counseling and advising services your college is currently providing,” add the options of “yes” or “no”, (e) rectify spacing issues. Those who piloted the survey noted that it took 30 to 35 minutes to complete.

Researcher’s Positionality

The researcher completed her professional training in the State of California, completing a Master’s in Education, Counseling. This researcher has served as a California community college counselor for the past 20 years and is familiar with the dynamics of student education planning. The researcher was a member of the Student Success Task Force and is currently a member of the Chancellor’s Office of the
California Community Colleges Educational Planning Initiative Steering Committee. However, at the time of the study, this researcher was not aware of the multiple delivery modalities currently used throughout the state.

**Summary**

This chapter outlines methodology for this quantitative research. The design of the survey instrument was in consultation with the Dean of Student Services and the Vice Chancellor of Student Services located in the Chancellor's Office of the California Community College. With their support, they agreed to send e-mails supporting participation of this survey via their listservs to the Chief Student Service Officer’s and California Community College Counselors. Collection methods ensured the anonymity and voluntary participation of respondents during data collection and analysis processes. A systematic approach to data collection and analysis was used to ensure quality and trustworthiness.

Chapter 4 will present the findings of the descriptive questions, the analysis of the three research hypotheses aligned with the research questions and the frequencies of topics from the open-end questions.
CHAPTER 4—FINDINGS

The purpose of this survey research was to explore California community college counselors’ and advisors’ perceptions of effective student education plan practices. A goal of this research was to identify the various delivery models and processes in the community college setting in California, including any technological practices or online approaches currently being used to facilitate students’ creation of their education plans. The literature review identified various modalities for delivering academic advising and counseling services and the benefits of delivering education plans for student success.

There are several outcomes of this research. First, the findings will likely inform the Chancellor’s Office and California Community Colleges about effective practices currently employed. Second, the findings may also assist in the effort to comply with new state mandates. Lastly as an added benefit, describing baseline practices can assist colleges statewide in identifying potential effective practices, processes, and alternative education planning delivery models which can be brought to scale.

This chapter is organized in five separate sections. The first section provides a series of descriptive statistics that yield details about the characteristics of the community colleges represented in the findings. The second section contains additional descriptive statistics, which relate to the service delivery of education plans. The third section chapter highlights the results of statistical analysis that were used to address the two research questions of this study. The fourth section presents the frequencies of responses by themes from the four open-ended responses. This chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.
To gather the quantitative data necessary to address the research questions, surveys were sent to the publicly accessible e-mail addresses of the 112 California community college counseling department chairs (or designee) by the researcher. The researcher sought the support of the CCCCO. (See Appendix A, for the Chancellor’s Office Survey for their support of this research). As such, the California Community College Chancellor’s Office informed counselors and CSSOs via their statewide listservs of their support for this research. The survey was designed in consultation with the division of Student Services at the Chancellor’s Office. The survey results will be shared in aggregate format with the Chancellor’s Office and colleges statewide.

The survey consisted of 30 questions. The quantitative sections included general institutional demographic questions; inquired in to the number of personnel who assist with the delivery of academic advising, counseling, and education plans; posed questions regarding available general counseling and advising services; inquired into the various service delivery models used for general counseling and advising; asked focused questions about general education planning services, and the perceived extent of use and effectiveness of these service in delivering student education plans. Several of the questions 2-8, related to matters outside the scope of this study, but were included to develop a baseline of academic and counseling services available statewide. The survey concluded with four individual open-ended questions regarding counselors’ and advisors’ (or designees’) perceptions of student education planning effectiveness on their campuses.
The following section presents descriptive demographic statistics that provide context for the kinds of institutions represented in the study, and the personnel available in the counseling departments.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Of the 112 potential survey respondents, 65 surveys were initiated; however, only 44 surveys were fully completed. Thus, the response rate was 39%. Table 1 provides institutional demographics which include the size of institutions based on full-time headcount for the academic year 2013-2014, the location of the institution to define population size colleges serve, and whether colleges are part of a single or multi-college district. Additionally, the table is presented in a side-by-side format that presents the sample of college data in comparison to the California Community College system as a whole. The data indicate that the sample included representation from each demographic criterion provided, and is most in alignment with statewide percentages for suburban location, while being slightly overrepresented for town. The highest number of responses came from urban colleges. The sample is proportionate with statewide percentages in terms of single versus multi-college district status.

The survey was sent to one professional at each campus who had the option of forwarding the survey to a designee. To take the professional affiliation of respondents, the survey asked them to provide their work titles. A variety of titles were provided, which the researcher grouped into three classifications of faculty leader, counselor/professor, and administration. Twenty four respondents were categorized as faculty leaders, 7 as counselor/professors, and 1 as an administrator.
Table 1

Comparison of Sample and Population College Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Location (IPEDS)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-College District</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-College District</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Size (by Headcount)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A secondary purpose for this survey was to assist in providing a baseline of education planning services available in the California community college system. Accordingly, this section will identify and report the findings of these descriptive data. The results were also considered in order to identify any potentially effective practices in the delivery of education planning. These would then inform the Chancellor’s Office and colleges statewide of viable education planning services options. The initial survey inquired about the number of full-time and part-time counseling department employees, who may assist in the delivery of academic advising and counseling. This information provided important insight related to whether counseling departments rely primarily on counselors or other practitioners in the delivery of academic advising and counseling services. Table 2 provides an anonymous profile of each college participating in the study, including institution descriptors such as personnel by type of service.
Table 2

Profile of Participating Colleges by Multiple Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Counselors</th>
<th>Academic Advisors</th>
<th>Instructional Advisors</th>
<th>Peer Advisors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Multi</td>
<td></td>
<td># F/T</td>
<td># P/T</td>
<td># F/T</td>
<td># P/T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To gather data related to respondents’ perceptions of the effectiveness of abbreviated and comprehensive education plan services provided by each level of service provider. One question addressed provider effectiveness in delivering abbreviated education plan services, the other in delivering comprehensive plans. Table 3 and Table 4 show that counselors were considered the most effective providers of both types of plans. Thirty-five respondents ranking counselors as effective or highly effective for abbreviated plans, and 36 respondents rating counselors as effective or highly effective for comprehensive plans. No counselors were rated lower than effective for either plan. Six respondents rated academic advisors as effective or highly effective for abbreviated plans, and four respondents rated them as effective or highly effective for delivering comprehensive plans. Two respondents ranked academic advisors as ineffective or not effective at all for delivering abbreviated or comprehensive plans. Additionally, respondents rated faculty advisors, paraprofessionals, classified staff, student peer advisors, and student generated planning as effective in delivering both plans; however, some respondents rated them as ineffective or not effective at all. Some colleges are using personnel other than counselors to effectively facilitate student education plans; although not as extensively as counselors or with the same uniform high level of effectiveness as counselors.

Building from the previous question, Table 5 reflects the responses which asked respondents to report the amount of time to deliver abbreviated and comprehensive education plans by group workshops; the next question inquires the average group composition of a student education planning session. Respondents indicated that group sizes were larger overall for abbreviated plans, with groups ranging from 11-30 students.
Table 3

Rate of Effectiveness of Individuals Who Assist in Creating an Abbreviated Education Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Classification</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Not Effective at All</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advisors</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Advisors</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified Staff</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Peer</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Develop on Own</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sample N=44.

Table 4

Rate of Effectiveness of Individuals Who Assist in Creating a Comprehensive Education Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Classification</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Not Effective at All</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advisors</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Advisors</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified Staff</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Peer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Develop on Own</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sample N=44.

Group size for comprehensive plans were primarily 11-20 students, and occurred at a lower incidence than the abbreviated group plans. Table 6 reflects the outcome to this question. Table 7 reports the number of colleges using technology and indicates the software colleges have adopted. Specifically, this question asks whether colleges use online computer-based software solutions to deliver independently accessible student education planning. When summing the number of colleges using some kind of
Table 5

The Length of Time to Complete an Abbreviated and Comprehensive Education Plan

Face-to-Face and in Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ed Plan Type and Modality</th>
<th>15 to 20 Minutes</th>
<th>21 to 30 Minutes</th>
<th>31 to 45 Minutes</th>
<th>46 to 60 Minutes</th>
<th>&gt;1 hour</th>
<th>No Appts</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Sample N=44.

Table 6

The Average Size for an Abbreviated and Comprehensive Student Education Plan Group

Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ed Plan Type</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>1-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>51+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Sample N=44.

Table 7

Number of Colleges Using the Software for Delivering Education Plans Online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software Type</th>
<th>Number of Colleges Using Software</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module or Add-on to Banner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module or Add-on to Datatel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module or Add-on to Peoplesoft</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand-alone Module</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Developed Solution</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Developed Solution</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Office Document - Shared</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My edu.com</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Works</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online-Elucian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Other: Academic Review; Counseling Website; WebAdvisor (older Datatel version); Degree Works starting in April; Peoplesoft in near future; Students can access a copy, but not modify the education plan.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
education planning software, 30 colleges have such capabilities. Software ranged from add-on modules to proprietary Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Systems and degree audit systems to locally developed systems, with no individual product arising with a majority.

The final descriptive questions focused on the rate service use by modality. Respondents were given 11 choices to rate. The predominant choices emphasized a variety of face-to-face and on-campus interactions over technological modalities. Table 8 represents the results of the responses indicating the frequency of use for abbreviated student education plans, which ranges from not applicable to several times a week. The most prominent indication is that face-to-face, on-campus interactions was most frequently used.

Of the 33 respondents to the face-to-face, one-on-one, on-campus service delivery model, two indicated that the modality was not applicable, and 77 percent of those for whom it was applicable indicated that they used it several times a week, which was the highest frequency option provided. Of the 32 respondents to the face-to-face, group session, on-campus service delivery model, six indicated that the modality was not applicable, and 42% of those for whom it was applicable indicated that they used it several times a week. Of the 32 respondents to the drop-in, face-to-face, on-campus service delivery model, seven indicated that the modality was not applicable, and 56% of those for whom it was applicable indicated that they used it several times a week.

Responses for online or technological delivery models for abbreviated plans were considerably fewer in number, but all were used primarily several times a week. Of the
Table 8

*Scale for Extent of Use of Various Service Delivery Modalities for Abbreviated Education Plans*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Delivery Interaction</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Once/Semester</th>
<th>Once/Month</th>
<th>Few/Month</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Several/Week</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-Campus</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-on-One Interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Setting</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, In-person</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Arena-Style”</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campuswide Events</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group, In-person</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in (Immediate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technological Modalities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with an Employee</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sample N=44.

31 respondents to online web portal interaction with an employee, 23 indicated that the modality was not applicable, and seven out of eight of those using the modality used it several times per week. Four respondents indicated that they used the independent web portal modality several times a week, and two respondents indicated that they used a hybrid model several times a week.

Table 9 represents the results of the responses indicating the frequency of use for comprehensive student education plans, which also ranges from not applicable to several times a week. The most prominent indication is that face-to-face, on-campus interactions were most frequently used, even more so than with abbreviated plan. Of the 34
Table 9

*Scale for Extent of Use of Various Service Delivery Modalities for a Comprehensive Education Plan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Delivery Interaction</th>
<th>On-Campus</th>
<th>Face-to-Face</th>
<th>One-on-One Interaction</th>
<th>Face-to-Face Group Setting</th>
<th>Large, in-person “Arena-Style”</th>
<th>Campuswide Events</th>
<th>Small Group, In-person Classroom</th>
<th>Drop-in (Immediate)</th>
<th>Orientation Presentation</th>
<th>Technological Modalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Once/Semester</td>
<td>Once/Month</td>
<td>Few/Month</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Several/Week</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>Number of Responses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-on-One Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face Group Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, in-person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Arena-Style”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campuswide Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group, In-person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in (Immediate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological Modalities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with an Employee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Sample N=44.*

respondents to the face-to-face, one-on-one, on-campus service delivery model for comprehensive student education plans, none indicated that the modality was not applicable, and 85 percent indicated that they used it several times a week. Of the 21 respondents to the face-to-face, group session, on-campus service delivery model, 16 indicated that the modality was not applicable, and 100% of those for whom it was applicable indicated that they used it either once a month or once a semester. Of the 33 respondents to the drop-in, face-to-face, on-campus service delivery model, 22 indicated that the modality was not applicable, and 36 percent of those for whom it was applicable.
indicated that they used it several times a week. The frequency for drop-in modality is considerably less than for abbreviated plans.

Responses for use of online or technological delivery models for comprehensive plans were considerably fewer in number, but all were used primarily several times a week. Of the 30 respondents to online web portal interaction with an employee, 24 indicated that the modality was not applicable, and five out six of those using the modality used it several times per week. Three respondents indicated that they used the independent web portal modality several times a week, and one respondent indicated that they used a hybrid model several times a week. These frequencies were consistent with abbreviated plan modality frequencies.

Presenting the descriptive statistics associated with the education planning process provided a context to the findings of the three hypotheses, which are presented in the next section. Lastly, the descriptive statistics, which reported the frequencies of the responses also assisted in the rationale for the subsequent findings. In addition, unrelated to the study, these data are being provided in table format in order to assist the CCCC with establishing a baseline of practices.

Findings Related to the Research Questions and Hypotheses of this Study

The study identified two questions as a means to assess the effectiveness of education planning services in the California community colleges. The findings related to each research question are presented in this section and are as follows:

Research Question One: What delivery methods of student education planning services are considered to be the most effective in creating student implemented education plans?
Research Question Two: Who is considered to provide the most effective service of facilitating students’ education planning?

As a reminder of the context for these research questions, under the new legislation identified as SB 1456, colleges are mandated to offer education planning services to all enrolled students in two formats identified as abbreviated and comprehensive education plans. First, the abbreviated student education plans are one to two terms in length and are designed to meet the immediate needs of students for whom a comprehensive plan is not appropriate, (California Code of Regulations, section § 55524, 2013). Second, the comprehensive student education plans take into account a student’s interests, skills, career and education goals, major, potential transfer institutions, and the steps the student needs to take on their educational path to complete their identified course of study. The comprehensive plan helps the student achieve their course of study, (California Code of Regulations, section § 55524, 2013).

The survey was designed so respondents could rate the extent of use and effectiveness in their campus delivery of abbreviated and comprehensive education plans. To inform the research questions, there were three hypotheses developed and tested. The first two hypotheses align with research question number one, what delivery methods of education planning services are considered to be the most effective in creating student implemented education plans?

1. There are no significant differences (p<.05) between the reported frequency of use of online education planning modality for abbreviated education plans and for comprehensive education plans.
2. There are no significant differences (p<.05) between effectiveness ratings of face-to-face and online comprehensive and abbreviated education plans.

In testing the first hypothesis, a two-tailed dependent samples t-test was used to determine whether the utilization ratings for online education planning modalities differed significantly for abbreviated and comprehensive education plans by comparing the utilization scores by each service delivery modality. In the case of online modality, interaction with employee, there was no significant difference in the scores for abbreviated plan ($M=2.27, SD=2.16$) and comprehensive plan ($M=2.03, SD=1.97$) conditions; $t=-1.26, p = .269$. In the case of online modality, independent, there was no significant difference in the scores for abbreviated plan ($M=1.79, SD=1.80$) and comprehensive plan ($M=1.59, SD=1.57$) conditions; $t=-.633, p = .532$. In the case of online modality, hybrid, there was no significant difference in the scores for abbreviated plan ($M=1.56, SD=1.63$) and comprehensive plan ($M=1.26, SD=1.02$) conditions; $t=1.189, p = .245$. Given the $p$ values, the researcher must fail to reject the null hypothesis. Table 10 demonstrates the results of the data analysis revealed that there were no significant differences between the reported frequency of use of online education planning for abbreviated education plans and for comprehensive education plans.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Education Plan Modality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (Abbreviated)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean (Comprehensive)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with an Employee</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Independently</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.189</td>
<td>.245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=Number of responses.*
The second hypothesis was to determine whether there are significant differences in reported effectiveness of face-to-face and online education planning between comprehensive and abbreviated education plans. In reviewing the data for questions measuring perceived levels of effectiveness of face-to-face and online delivery of student education plans, it was determined that the sample size for those actually using online delivery of services was too small to make conclusions regarding significance. A total of 10 respondents indicated levels of effectiveness for online delivery of both abbreviated and comprehensive student education plans.

The third hypothesis aligned with the second research question, who is considered to provide the most effective service of facilitating students’ education planning?

3. There are no significant differences (p<.05) between effectiveness rating of comprehensive and abbreviated education plans delivered by counselors and those delivered by other personnel.

By comparing effectiveness scores on the question which asks for respondents’ perceptions of professionals who deliver abbreviated plans and comprehensive plans for each classification (e.g., counselors, academic advisors, faculty advisors), it was determined that the sample size for effectiveness of personnel other than counselors was too small to make conclusions regarding significance. A total of 35 respondents indicated levels of effectiveness for counselors in the delivery of both abbreviated and comprehensive student education plans, while 6 respondents indicated levels of effectiveness for academic advisors. Small numbers were also provided for faculty advisors and classified staff delivering student education plans.
In reviewing the data for questions measuring perceived levels of effectiveness of various personnel delivering student education plans, it was determined that the sample size was too small to make conclusions regarding significance.

**Analysis of Open-Ended Questions**

Thirty participants responded to the four open-ended questions embedded within the questionnaire. These questions addressed the perceived benefits and challenges of face-to-face and online delivery of student education plans. The questions were:

1. What are the benefits of face-to-face delivery of student education planning?
2. What are the challenges of face-to-face delivery of student education planning?
3. What are the benefits of online delivery of student education planning?
4. What are the challenges of online delivery of student education planning?

Each question was coded individually using constant comparative methodology (Merriam, 1998). Responses were then categorized and counted within each question. The themes that had the highest frequencies were then reported and are as follows.

**Benefits of Face-to-Face Delivery of Student Education Planning**

The most frequent response to question one indicated positive benefits of face-to-face delivery of student education planning and addressed the nature of a holistic, comprehensive counseling experience that occurs during face-to-face delivery. Respondents described the importance of the interactive experience as one of clarifying and exploring the student’s career interests and educational goals, placement results, and personal situation as it relates to college success and completion. The face-to-face delivery of services emerged as an interactive and diagnostic experience with the
counselor serving as guide. This type of service delivery was cited as important for first generation college students and other groups at risk, and specifically implicated equity and access for all students.

There were three other subthemes that were identified and are relational to the theme of holistic, comprehensive counseling experience and were as follows.

**Check for understanding.** Checking for understanding included the practice of being able to assess whether the student understood what was being discussed and the next steps that would be required following the counseling session, which could include conducting more research on careers or seeking out off- or on-campus resources, or ensuring that the student enroll in appropriate courses for the following term. Within the face-to-face modality, counselors perceived the opportunity to query the student throughout the session to assess understanding and act upon the student’s response when indicated. One respondent stated: “Checking for understanding is a critical component of an effective counselor-student interaction, particularly with students who are first generation.” Another stated, “It is easier to check for understanding and to involve the student [in face-to-face sessions]. Group counseling does not work on our campus because so many students have multiple challenges, are first-generation college students, and [have] very different interests.”

**Immediacy.** Immediacy was described in the face-to-face delivery to be important, in that the counselor could observe the student, adjust the interaction when necessary, and immediately answer questions or clarify next steps. The face-to-face process of facilitating an education plan was not interrupted or misdirected, and the student did not lose time in completing the education plan. The frequency of responses
that mentioned the opportunity for immediate interaction was directly relational to the frequency of the opportunity to check for understanding. Respondents cited several benefits of immediacy including the need to visually observe the student and read his or her body language, direct the conversation to what needs to be clarified, or direct the conversation to next steps in the education planning process. One respondent stated: “More personalized questions can be answered immediately; counselors can detect issues from body language and facial expressions.”

**Meeting student needs.** Meeting student needs addresses the outcome of the counseling session, whether it was effective and why it was effective. One respondent stated that “students are most comfortable with this form of counseling.” Another respondent stated that the face-to-face delivery is “customized to student goals and needs”. More specifically, it “can help students be less anxious; they may be most comfortable with this mode, particularly if it is one-on-one.” It is “most effective as far as students understanding what it is that we are trying to convey.” The perception was that it is best for students.

**Challenges of Face-to-Face Delivery of Education Planning**

Limited staffing and funding resources were the most frequently referenced challenges in response to the second open-end question. Delivering comprehensive, holistic services one-on-one may be highly effective, as discussed in the benefits section, but it is also very expensive in terms of human resource costs. Consistently, participants stated that there were not enough counselors to serve all of their students. One respondent summarized the perceived challenge: “large case load due to understaffing, need for more full time counselors, training for part time counselors.”
Another respondent elaborated on the impact of the work and the staffing levels,

“The biggest challenges are: not enough counselors for all the students that we have; problems with inputting information to create electronic ed plans; often not enough time to create a comprehensive ed plan.”

Other themes emerged within question two and were considered as subthemes as several were interrelated. These themes were best categorized as (a) The complexity of delivery, (b) time constraints, (c) high demand, and (d) students unprepared to write the education plan. A brief summary of these themes follows.

**The complexity of delivery.** The topic of the complexity of delivery addressed the nature of what constitutes delivery of the student education plan. The most significant benefit of face-to-face delivery of student education planning was perceived as enabling a holistic experience with integrated assessment and delivery of comprehensive services. As described in the benefits analysis, this entails delivery of complex services in the area of career and educational goal setting, and in assessing and supporting the student with personal matters related to completing his or her goal. Counselors felt pressure to deliver these complex services, and yet students can have unrealistic expectations of what the counselor can do for them, which creates added pressure. There are big stakes with the new legislation, stressed by several respondents, including one who cited the pressure of “trying to make sure everyone gets [a student education plan] that meets the SSSP law.” Another respondent further described the pressure: “sometimes students have assumptions that we can ‘tell’ them exactly everything they need but it is impossible with all the information needed.”
**Time constraints.** The subtheme of time constraints interconnects with the subtheme of limited resources, in particular human resources, and with the complexity of delivering student education plans. Concisely, one respondent stated: “the challenge of face-to-face plans is that they take up time.” However, challenges went beyond the modality to the complexity of what must be completed in a set half-hour or one-hour appointment. One respondent summarized:

> Time limitations make it challenging to cover everything that should be covered and often additional forms need to be completed for change of major, or change of address or to lift a hold or to repeat a course and so on.

Respondents frequently cited that there was insufficient time to adequately cover all of the necessary components of creating a student education plan, which may include defining educational goals and career goals; explaining the process for transfer; discussing course selections; and reviewing any academic and personal challenges, which students may want to discuss in the process of developing an education plan. The work of the counseling/advising staff is perceived as becoming increasingly complicated and there is not enough time in a single appointment to complete the planning process.

**High demand.** High demand for services emerged as a challenge, and was defined in terms of the mandate of the new legislation, the number of students seeking those plans, and challenges of anticipating when to schedule for the greatest influx of counseling appointment requests. One participant responded: “not enough time, too many students waiting to be able to spend the time needed [to complete the student education plan].” Another respondent succinctly stated: “the number of students needed to serve is enormous.” In response to such pressure, one respondent stated that the college had
moved to group sessions to accommodate the demand and yet still provided face-to-face services. In addition to sheer volume, one respondent addressed the issue of scheduling: “The challenge is to provide services to meet student demand as it ebbs and flows over the semester.” All of this creates a constant pressure to deliver.

**Benefits of Online Delivery of Student Education Planning**

The themes that emerged when respondents discussed the benefits of online delivery of the student education plan were different from those of face-to-face delivery. With the concept of online delivery, respondents perceived opportunities specific to student needs and preferences. There were two themes that were equal in the frequency with which they were reported; these are accessibility and convenience. Other subthemes emerged and include hybrid modality, and profile of online and non-online students.

**Accessibility.** In the case of accessibility, respondents addressed access in terms of students enrolled in online programs and not living in the area being able to complete their student education plans online, just as they do their course work. Veterans were included within this group, as several respondents indicated that they serve a large veteran and active duty military population. One respondent summarized the need: “students not in town can understand what courses they need to complete their goal, especially veterans.” Other students cited as benefitting from this access are those who live outside of the immediate service area, but not necessarily enrolled in online courses, and those students having transportation problems.

**Convenience.** Convenience addressed those students who would choose to conduct their student education planning online and were not necessarily distance education students or fitting into the categories described within accessibility.
Convenience addresses those students who prefer online services for a variety of reasons, including those who may want to explore various tools associated with the work of creating a student education plan at their own pace. One respondent stated that “once templates are developed, this service could speed up the process of teaching student ed planning,” while another stated that “some students can develop their own plans with minimal help/support.” Another noted that it “allows students to have access to a counselor without having to come into the Counseling Center.” Convenience addresses those students who could attend on-campus student education planning, but prefer to plan online for a variety of reasons.

**Hybrid modality.** Another theme to emerge as a benefit of the online delivery model was the ability to provide a hybrid model: online services as preparation for face-to-face delivery. One respondent stated that online planning “allows the student a way to ‘start’ their own plan, learn the requirements and how to correctly sequence courses.” Another respondent reported offering both the abbreviated and comprehensive student education plans online; however, prior to finalization of the full comprehensive plan, the student must meet with a counselor. The respondent added: “the benefit is that the online education plan provides the student the opportunity to explore and then meet with a counselor to make major/course choices and lock them.” Even one respondent who did not observe stand-alone online modality benefits stated that, “they can be used as a tool to supplement face-to-face counseling.”

**Profile of online and non-online students.** Another theme that emerged was profile of online student and non-online student. Online student characteristics were identified as those students who are either all online, partially online, or prefer to conduct
exploratory activities such as student education plan preparation online. Respondents indicated that it encompasses someone who is more comfortable or equally comfortable in the online environment, as opposed to the face-to-face environment. One respondent summarized this profile, stating: “For those students who are more independent and self-directed, online delivery can be very effective and convenient.” However, the final sentence in this quote introduces the non-online student profile: “Unfortunately, this does not describe the majority of our students,” which leads to the perceived characteristics of the non-online student. The non-online student is perceived as needing a more personal interaction, particularly first generation students and those students more at risk.

**Challenges of Online Delivery of Student Education Plans**

The overarching theme emerging for challenges of delivering online student education plans was the inability to replicate the benefits of face-to-face delivery in an online platform. This challenge emerged as the theme of limitations of the online environment.

The theme of limitations of the online environment addressed the complexity of transferring the process of facilitating a holistic, comprehensive student education plan from face-to-face interaction to online interaction. One respondent summarized concerns:

At community colleges [that] employ these systems without counselor interaction - they will never work for transfer requirements that are infinite in number and variety and completely out of the control of the community college; [online systems/modules] routinely fail to provide accurate information; they account poorly (if at all) for catalog requirements; they require continuous updating and maintenance; they do not provide comprehensive information and are nowhere
close to providing any kind of counseling; they are perceived as a solution by many who lack the understanding of what a student education plan truly entails.

Limitations are also perceived with students who are undecided regarding major course of study and may continually change their plan, lack of personal interaction with a counselor, especially for students who may not be aware of options, and continued interaction via email from students trying to clarify process and options. One respondent wrote: “It cannot be one size fits all… our students need individual attention.”

As with the previous open-ended responses, subthemes emerged, including miscommunication, lack of accuracy, and the need for constant updating of the online module. The last subtheme is lack of time, which was also a challenge for the face-to-face modality. A brief summary of how the respondents defined the themes follows.

**Miscommunication.** Miscommunication was perceived as a major challenge to effectiveness of the online modality. Respondents cited that since there are a multitude of requirements and choices that are dependent upon choosing the appropriate career/major, and the lack of opportunity to check that the student understands these intricacies or to immediately interact with the student during the process can lead to miscommunication. Respondents perceived a higher margin of error in communication with this modality than with face-to-face delivery. An implication for the student as a result of miscommunication is to the possibility of misinformed decisions that can delay progress and achievement of the educational goal.

**Lack of accuracy and constant updating of the online module.** The subtheme of constant updating of the online module reflected the relentless pressure and importance of keeping online information current within the constantly changing landscape of
graduation and transfer requirements. Respondents indicated that the volume and complexity of regulations, rules, and procedures are enormous, and that by sheer number and frequency of change are vulnerable to inaccuracy. One respondent stated, “They will never work for transfer requirements that are infinite in number and variety and completely out of the control of the community college; they routinely fail to provide accurate information…they require continuous updating and maintenance.”

**Lack of time.** The subtheme of lack of time emerged as a challenge to online delivery, as it did with face-to-face service delivery. Given the high demand of students seeking education planning services and the time constraints placed upon personnel when working with students, lack of time is an issue regardless of modality. For example, the back-and-forth generation of emails to clarify questions is cumbersome, as are the repeated interactions needed to change or correct what was input either by mistake or due to misinformation. Depending upon how online delivery is operationalized on campuses, it can be very time-consuming for counselors. Respondents indicated that online is not a panacea; it is a tool.

**Summary**

The primary purpose of this survey research was to identify practices and perceptions regarding student education plan delivery modalities and the personnel classifications of those delivering the plans. Two research questions informed the study:

Research Question One: What delivery methods of student education planning services are considered to be the most effective in creating student implemented education plans?
Research Question Two: Who is considered to provide the most effective service of facilitating students’ education planning?

In response to Research Question One, hypothesis testing found that there was no significant difference between perceived ratings of effectiveness between online and face-to-face delivery of either the abbreviated or comprehensive student education plans. The sample size for online effectiveness was too small to draw any significance. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Nonetheless, the reported frequencies both in the descriptive statistics and in the open-ended responses demonstrated that the face-to-face modality was the most used and rated as the most effective as perceived by respondents. Similarly, caution is advised to assume that online delivery of education plans is the least effective. Given the small sample size, reporting the use of online delivery and the rates of effectiveness is inconclusive to deem that online delivery of education plans is ineffective. In fact, there were a high number of responses that cited the benefits of online delivery labeled as accessibility and convenience. The nature of the benefits and challenges were different for the two modalities, with one describing the benefits of a face-to-face holistic, interactive comprehensive counseling session addressing the whole student, and the other addressing online accessibility and convenience of technology as a choice. The concept of a hybrid model with mixed modalities was cited several times, integrating the use of the two modalities.

In response to Research Question Two, hypothesis testing found that there was no significant difference between perceived ratings of effectiveness between abbreviated and comprehensive student education plans delivered by counselors and those delivered by other personnel. The sample size for personnel other than counselors was too small to
draw any significance. Thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Review of the descriptive data reveals that more counselors are delivering student education plans than are other personnel in general counseling; however, other personnel are delivering plans, as academic advisors were reported as delivering abbreviated plans and some comprehensive plans. Levels of effectiveness of personnel delivering services were reported in a consistent manner, with counselors rated primarily as very effective and academic advisors as primarily effective to very effective.

Findings indicate that there are options available and rated as effective that are not restricted to exclusively face-to-face modality and counselor delivered. Descriptive data and analysis indicate that there was no significant difference between perceived effectiveness for the two modalities or personnel delivering the services. In addition, survey data and the open-ended response cited the emergence of a hybrid modality utilizing both online and face-to-face modalities, possibly using different personnel for different portions of the process.

Chapter 5 will provide a comprehensive discussion to the findings given the analysis of the testing of the hypothesis, the frequency of the descriptive statistics, and the frequency of specific topics from the open-ended questions. Included in this chapter is a section discussion of the limitation of the present study, recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 5—DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore counselors’ and advisors’ perceptions of effective student education plan practices. The survey also included questions to assist in providing a baseline of available student education planning services in the California community college system. The findings have the potential to assist the Chancellor’s Office and colleges statewide in identifying effective practices currently employed.

Previous chapters included the background of the study, a literature review providing a framework for the study and addressing the complexities of delivering student education planning services, the methodology for the collection of the survey results and how the findings were to be analyzed. In Chapter 4, the findings of the survey were presented and provide the discussions and recommendation as a result of the findings.

The conceptual framework guiding the study will assist in providing a lens into the discussion to follow. As a reminder, the conceptual framework postulates that given the State of California’s mandate to provide student education plans to every student attending a California community college, community colleges must investigate prolific academic advising delivery models that are used in some other states. These prolific delivery models provided the conceptual framework for this study. Prolific academic advising delivery includes the use of paraprofessionals and technological solutions to bring education planning services to scale.

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section addresses the findings of the two research questions resulting from the quantitative portion and open-ended questions. The second section presents the limitations to the survey. The third
section discusses the implications to the limitations of the present research study and the last section will focus on recommendations.

**Analysis of Research Questions**

Each of the study’s research questions addressed specific components of the delivery of student education plans. The research questions are discussed in terms of these components, the findings, and how it relates to the literature.

**Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 asked, “What student education planning delivery methods are considered most effective in creating student-implemented education plans?” This question sought to explore counselors’ and advisors’ perceptions of effectiveness of two issues: (a) what was currently employed in delivering education plans, in particular, by the delivery model of face-to-face and online, (b) the frequency of use though a combination of face to face and online delivery models, (c) if there was a difference in effectiveness when assisting to facilitate an abbreviated education plan or a comprehensive education plan given the choices presented in the survey. Where the survey measured the extent of use, respondents were given six choices ranging from not applicable, once a semester, once a month, a few times a month, weekly, and several times a week. Where the survey measured the extent of effectiveness, respondents could choose from seven choices ranging from not applicable to not effective at all, ineffective, somewhat ineffective, somewhat effective, effective, or very effective.

There were two questions that inquired about the extent of use that focused on the delivery of education plans and one question that focused on the extent of use in the
delivery of general counseling and advising. The latter question was to help inform the Chancellor’s Office and is outside the scope of this study.

Thus, focusing on the two separate questions, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the listed modalities of service delivery were used at their colleges in the delivery of: (1) abbreviated education plans, and (2) comprehensive education plans. The modality choices included: (a) face-to-face, one-to-one interaction; (b) face-to-face, group setting, (c) large, in-person “arena style” meetings; (d) campus-wide events; (e) small group, in person; (f) classroom setting; (g) drop-in immediate service; (h) orientation presentation; (i) online, including student web portal (completely online but interacting with an employee; (j) online, including student web portal (completely online but working independently); and (k) online, including student web portal (hybrid).

The prevalent education planning delivery method reported by college counselors and advisors was through face-to-face, one-on-one interactions. This modality was used at the highest level recorded for delivering both comprehensive and abbreviated student education plans. The second most prevalent delivery method reported for abbreviated plans was for face-to-face group sessions.

In comparison, only a small number of colleges were delivering abbreviated and comprehensive education plans online, including student web portal (completely online but working independently). The importance in highlighting the frequency of use between face-to-face, one-on-one delivery and online delivery was to demonstrate the preferred practice of service delivery, as well as to illustrate the slow, but emerging momentum of other delivery models employed at several California community colleges.
Furthermore, the literature provided a historical perspective to possible reasons why colleges have preferred the face-to-face modality over online. As illustrated by Kuhn (2008) and King (1993), the predominant organization model in the delivery of academic advising and counseling is the self-contained advising model, which has its beginnings in the guidance offices common in k-12 education. The self-contained model entails advising for all students up to the point of departure and is provided by a centralized unit. Consistent with the self-contained model, most California community colleges deliver the core student support services encompassing assessment, orientation, and education planning or advising in centralized counseling centers or departments. Also supporting this organization model is the fact that the community colleges inception was created by the California legislature back in 1907 in order for high schools to create a system to offer postgraduate courses of study (California State Political Code, 1907). In 1921, the Governor and legislature created the Board of Governors for the Community Colleges to oversee the community colleges and formally established the community college district system (California State Political Code, 1907).

Similarly, the delivery of counseling and advising infers that much has not changed to the present and the findings support what King (1993) describes as an ideal advising model and delivery system for community colleges, which would encompass “the total-intake format [face-to-face, individual]” (p.53). This model is “in which there is a centralized advising office with a full-time director and staffed by full-time advisors or counselors and part-time faculty and paraprofessionals or peers” (King, 1993, p. 53). Thus, the results reported by the respondents on the extent of use supports the total-intake format described by King (1993).
When reviewing the 10 modality choices for the questions on the extent of use and extent of effectiveness, those choices could be categorized by overarching similarities into two responses: (a) on-campus, personal interaction; (b) online, technological modalities. The first seven modality choices entailed some kind of personal interaction and are delivered on campus. The last three choices had minimal to no campus personal interaction and could be done online. Thus, findings demonstrate colleges’ preferences for on-campus, personnel interaction modalities.

By comparison, the infrequent use of counseling and academic advising and education plan delivery solely online could be attributed to the fact that it does not have the historical presence of the face-to-face model. As technology has evolved, there is support and documented literature on the use of online technologies supporting the delivering of counseling and academic advising. Friedlander’s (1983) premise states that by incorporating computer technology, the college could increase its effectiveness in helping students with their education plans, alerting students who experience difficulty in courses, and providing follow-up on the progress students were making towards their education goals. Also supporting the trend in the use of technology in academic advising and counseling, Helfgot (1995) and Multari (2004) found efficiencies in the potential of emerging technologies and industry’s ability to leverage them to meet the needs of academic advising and counseling, aligning with Friedlander (1983). For California community colleges, the trend of adopting technological solutions has not been widespread as supported by both the quantitative answers; where respondents signified this option as “not applicable” to their colleges and the open-ended responses, where face-to-face was still perceived as the prevalent modality.
Similarly, this is not to say that technology is not a viable option, it is for the moment in that a handful of California community colleges are employing the use of online solutions. Illustrating this point, one question on the survey asked respondents if their college uses an online computer-based solution to deliver student education planning which students can access independently. Respondents had the option to select from eleven choices and the opportunity to list another computer-based solution if it was not listed. The range of technological solutions presently employed and software that is currently available on the market was reported by respondents as broad and extensive, including those with student education planning capabilities.

**Perceptions of Effectiveness of Face-to-Face, One-on-One Interaction**

Effectiveness was defined as the degree or extent to which the intended outcome for the goal/objective of the service provided was achieved. When asked about the extent to which the modality of services was effective in the delivery of abbreviated and comprehensive education plans, again the highest response was in the category of face-to-face, one-on-one interaction. Most respondents indicated their perception of effectiveness as very effective for delivery of both abbreviated and comprehensive education plans. This perception of effectiveness was also supported in the open-ended responses.

Respondents were asked four open-ended questions. The first asking what are the benefits of face-to-face delivery of student education plans and the second question asked what are the challenges of face-to-face delivery of student education plans. The most frequent theme emerging regarding the benefits of face-to-face delivery of student education plans was that the delivery allowed the opportunity to explore the whole person
or more holistic approach which goes beyond the act of choosing courses. As summarized by one respondent:

… The student education plan is far more than a degree audit or list of courses. It is specific not only for each student's educational goal, but also his/her personal circumstances, attributes, and abilities, and must also account for appropriate alternate opportunities that a skilled counselor with proper training is in the best position to identify.

Subthemes emerging that relate to the issue of this holistic approach to student education planning and the benefits of face-to-face one-on-one interaction. These subthemes include checking for understanding, immediacy, and meeting student needs.

Face-to-face delivery allows for counselors to check for understanding and is immediate. For example, having the student present in an education planning appointment, the academic advisor and counselor can ask follow-up and clarifying questions if needed, thus ensuring that the student understands the information presented and the necessary steps to proceed. Another example cited was immediacy, which allowed academic advisors and counselors to check for understanding not only by asking questions, but by reading students’ non-verbal cues, and if necessary, further probing of the student could be done. As stated by several respondents, the first expressed “More personalized questions can be answered immediately; counselors can detect issues from body language and facial expressions.” The second respondent expressed that: “[You] can get depth and richness that [you] can't get any other way by reading non-verbal cues and having opportunity to probe and follow-up with questions.”
The final subtheme regarding the benefits of face-to-face delivery of student education plans was the perception that this delivery modality was best for meeting student needs. This subtheme addressed the outcome of the counseling session, whether it was effective and why it was effective. One respondent stated, “students are most comfortable with this form of counseling.” Another respondent stated that the face-to-face delivery is “customized to student goals and needs.” More specifically, it “can help students be less anxious; they may be most comfortable with this mode, particularly if it is one-on-one.” It is “most effective as far as students understanding what it is that we are trying to convey.” One final comment about the perceived benefit was by differencing the benefit of face-to-face from online delivery, which introduced the concept of how the two modalities could be used together:

Although computer systems and online tools are useful to supplement the process, in no way can they replicate the experience a student can expect to have with a community college counselor.

The inclusion of how online tools might be used in a hybrid delivery system is important in that it bridges the gap between exclusively face-to-face or exclusively online delivery options.

Figure 1 summarizes the benefits of face-to-face delivery of student education plans and illustrates the interconnectedness of each part. The figure is a graphical representation of the themes as they relate to each other. The most frequently occurring theme for this modality, holistic experience with integrated delivery of comprehensive services is placed in the middle, as the three subthemes all point back to it. Checking for understanding and immediacy of interaction both occur during the process of the face-to-
Figure 1. Benefits of face-to-face delivery of student education plans.  
face one-on-one delivery of the holistic process. It is during this interactive meeting that 
the counselor is able to dig deeper and ensure that the student knows what to do and is 
ready for next steps. The outer circle encompasses the other three themes and subthemes, 
as those practices were perceived as the best method for meeting student needs. 

What the respondents briefly describe were components that are associated to the 
advising theory identified as developmental advising. This developmental advising as 
declared in the literature by Crookston (1972), is “concerned not only with a specific 
personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student’s rational processes, 
environmental and interpersonal interaction, behavioral awareness, and program-solving 
decision making and evaluating skills” (Hagen & Jordan, 2008, p. 19). Additionally, the 
literature supports that developmental advising is most successfully applied when 
institutions recognize “sustained one-on-one interaction between the student and the 
advisor is necessary, not merely in the first semester but throughout the college career” 
(Karp & Stacey, 2013, p.1).
Be it that the face-to-face, one-on-one interaction was the most frequently reported as most effective in comparison to the other modalities, respondents also reported its challenges. The second open ended question solicited responses regarding the challenge and most frequent themes and subthemes that arose were: (a) limited resources in terms of staffing and funding, (b) complexity of delivery, (c) students unprepared for creating the education plan, (d) time constraints, and (e) high demand for services. Figure 2 illustrates these five topics and their interconnectedness. What follows is the discussion of those frequent themes and subthemes.

Figure 2. Challenges of face-to-face delivery of student education plans.

The topic of limited resources, both in terms of financial and human resources, was in fact one tenant of the problem statement of this study and existed prior to SB 1456. Given that the law now mandates that all students must have an education plan, the lack of human capacity to bring to scale education planning has become more of a pressing issue. This challenge of fiscal constraints and high student to counselor ratio was supported in the literature. Karp and Stacey, (2013) noted that “due to financial
constraints, most community colleges have high student-advisor ratios…and as a result, student interactions with advisors are often rushed and infrequent” (p. 2). Lastly, though this delivery service was highly effective according to respondents, it can also be very expensive in terms of human resource cost.

The complexity or a challenge of face-to-face delivery, as identified by the respondents in their answers regarding the benefits, includes those students arriving for appointments not being prepared to create an education plan. Being that the most significant benefit of face-to-face delivery of student education planning was perceived as enabling a holistic experience with integrated assessment and delivery of comprehensive services, sometimes students do not come prepared to talk about their goals. One respondent explained:

Students often have not spent adequate time thinking about what they want to do as a career [or] college major and resist career assessments and career classes that would help them make sound choices.

Another respondent noted that some students are “still not prepared to answer questions pertaining to their ed plans.” One respondent added that students often come “not having all of the necessary documentation.” In short, one participant said: “students need to be better prepared before they meet with counselors.”

The subtheme of time constraints was attributed to the limited staffing and being that the delivery of face-to-face student plan is complex, it also takes time. Respondents perceived the pressure to deliver student education planning services, and yet perceived insufficient time to facilitate adequate coverage of all the necessary components of an education plan. One respondent summarized it:
Time limitations make it challenging to cover everything that should be covered and often additional forms need to be completed for change of major, or change of address or to lift a hold or to repeat a course and so on.

Corroborating counselors’ and academic advisors’ responses, the survey inquired about the time it took to complete abbreviated and comprehensive education plans in several modalities. It was assumed that respondents would choose to answer this question based upon either what they perceived as the most effective or how their respective counseling departments operate. Findings indicated that most colleges were delivering abbreviated education plan in a period between 15 minutes to 30 minutes in length. In the delivery of comprehensive education plans, most colleges reported a longer length of time, ranging from 31 to 60 minutes.

The possible rationale for the time difference between the abbreviated education plan and the comprehensive education plan is the sole definition in SB 1456 regulations which distinguish the components of an abbreviated and comprehensive education, which was presented earlier in the chapters.

The last subtheme to emerge was the high demand which also aligns with the themes and subthemes of limited resources, delivery complexity and time constraints. Anticipating when to schedule education planning appointments posed a challenge, as now colleges will have to decide when and how to facilitate the abbreviated education plan and when to provide the comprehensive plan. One respondent expressed this anxiety: “not enough time, too many students waiting to be able to spend the time needed.” Another respondent succinctly stated: “the number of students needed to serve is enormous”.

Given this pressure, one college stated that the college had moved to group sessions to accommodate the demand and still provide face-to-face services. This practice of conducting group advising to meet the demand was noted in the literature. King (2008) pointed out several circumstances in which institutions offer group advising: (a) when there are more students to be served than available counselors and academic advisors to serve them; (b) when reaching certain populations of students with time constraints; and (c) when it is necessary to provide important information at one time (King, 2008).

Being that the use of group advising was a current service modality in the California community colleges, respondents also had the opportunity to rate the use of this modality and its effectiveness. Respondents indicated that the use of group session for abbreviated education planning was more applied versus offering group counseling for comprehensive education plans. In viewing the variable of small group, in-person modality, six colleges reported providing this services several times a week and three reported that this modality is used weekly. In addition when delivering abbreviated planning session in a large arena style meeting, four colleges reported offering this service modality several times a week.

Descriptive data indicated that it was more common in practice to use small group sessions for abbreviated student education plans more so than for comprehensive student education plans. Only four colleges reported offering small group, in-person delivery of this service modality. In addition, when asked if they offer large arena style modality for comprehensive plans, only three colleges reported this service is offered several times a week.
Figure 2 provides a graphical presentation of the themes and subthemes emerging from the question regarding challenges of face-to-face delivery of student education plans. The graphic uses the larger circle to encompass the overarching theme of limited resources in terms of staffing and funding. It was directly related to the benefit of face-to-face delivery, in that it addressed insufficient resources to provide holistic comprehensive services. Within this larger circle, three subthemes are included, which are related to limited resources. Time constraints and workload clearly relate to limited human resources. High demand for services also affects the supply and demand portion of the relationship; as again, there are more needs than there are resources. Complexity of content delivered extends to both human resources and other resources as well, depending upon what is being delivered. Separate from the primary theme, but still affecting the outcome of the interaction, is the subtheme of students arriving for their counseling appointments unprepared to engage in student education planning. This action also impacts the system by creating more effort in follow-up visits, changes to major, and other related actions.

**Perceptions of Effectiveness of Online Delivery of Education Plans**

The remaining two of the four open-ended questions included in the survey asked respondents to: (a) describe the benefits of online delivery of student education plans; and (b) describe the challenges of online delivery of student education plans. Respondents provided their perceived rate of effectiveness for online delivery in the quantitative portion of the survey. This section ties in the open-ended responses and the quantitative findings of the survey pertaining to online delivery of education plans.
When respondents were asked the extent of effectiveness of the online modalities of delivery of education plans, choices included: (a) student web portal, interacting with an employee; (b) student web portal, independently; (c) student web portal, hybrid model for the delivery of abbreviated and comprehensive education plans, the results must be reviewed with caution. As previously mentioned above, the use of technology is not proverbial nor does it have the historical presence of the use of face-to-face service delivery modalities. Given the small rate of response, this proved to be a limitation of this research. However, the few colleges using online delivery viewed the effectiveness of delivery of abbreviated education plans and comprehensive education plans about equal.

The open-ended responses did elaborate on the perceived effectiveness. When asked about the benefits of online delivery of education plans two overlapping themes were frequently cited, accessibility and convenience. Additionally, in citing the benefits on online delivery, respondents also described the student who would also benefit from this modality, which will be discussed later.

The literature aligned with topics of accessibility and convenience which reported that online advising is becoming increasingly commonplace in higher education, driven by students seeking self-service at any time during the day or night wherever the student is physically located (Herndon, 2011; Karp & Stacey, 2013; Kramer, 2002). Moreover, reported benefits of online advising include its potential to: (a) reduce costs and streamline advising services by disseminating information efficiently and as students need it; (b) free up counselors and academic advisors, who may then see students better able to benefit from individual interaction and interventions; (c) increase counselors’ and
advisors’ capacity for education planning; and d) increase students’ ability to revisit and revise plans more frequently (Karp & Stacey, 2013; Kramer, 2002). As such, respondents viewed accessibility as the ability for online delivery to serve those students not living in the area of their college and those students enrolled in online programs of studies. The theme of accessibility was also attributed to veterans, as well as active duty personnel who are not near the college.

Convenience was attributed to those students who prefer online services, those students who want to explore choices and options, and for those students who need minimal help or support. Convenience also addressed those students wanting to access a counselor without coming to campus, which the hybrid model would support. Respondents stated that a benefit of the hybrid model: “the benefit is that the online education plan provides the student the opportunity to explore and then meet with a counselor to make major course choices and lock them.”

Given these responses, it can be assumed that there is a relationship between the use of online service delivery, effectiveness of online academic advising, and the profile of those students who most benefit from this delivery service. Unfortunately there are few studies that support the effectiveness of online delivery of student education planning for community colleges and define the population of who bests would benefit from this service modality. The literature provides the assumption that as students’ use of social media, texting, and the Internet becomes more commonplace, this will translate to students wanting more online academic advising and counseling services (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012). Pasquini (2013) summarized
that the need for connectivity and digital access is being seen in postsecondary institutions at increasing levels.

Included in the discussion of the benefits of online services was the “profile of online student” and “profile of non-online student.” Online student characteristics were identified as those who enrolled only in online courses, partially online, or preferred to conduct exploratory activities such student education plan preparation online. It encompasses someone who is more comfortable or equally comfortable in the online environment, as opposed to the face-to-face environment. One respondent summarized this profile stating: “For those students who are more independent and self-directed, online delivery can be very effective and convenient.” However, the final sentence in this quote introduces the other profile: “Unfortunately, this does not describe the majority of our students,” which leads to the perceived characteristics of the non-online student. The non-online student was perceived as needing a more personal interaction, particularly first generation students and those students more at risk. The perceived needs of the non-online student are elaborated upon in the challenges discussion. Basic skills students, English language learners, and rural students are included with those perceived at risk for success with an online student education plan.

Figure 3 illustrates the relationships of the themes and subthemes emerging from the question regarding benefits of online delivery of student education plans. The two themes that emerged with the most frequency were accessibility and convenience. Accessibility is presented in the all-encompassing circle that surrounds convenience, and within convenience are the subthemes of profile of the online student and the emergence of the hybrid modality. They are nested. Accessibility assures that no one is excluded
Figure 3. Benefits of online delivery of student education plans.

because of location or other factors, while convenience is a preference of how a student may choose to interact. Hybrid modality offers the option of the combination of face-to-face and online delivery as a choice of convenience. Profile of the online student is placed within the center of convenience and accessibility, as it describes the characteristics of such a student. Profile of the non-online student is placed outside of the concentric circles, as this student is not necessarily drawn to the online environment, or perhaps it is a student who needs more direct support and attention, but even this group could benefit from the hybrid model, if properly created, which the figure maps to.

The last open-ended question inquired about the perceived challenges of online education planning delivery. Communication, accuracy, limitations of an online environment, workload, impersonal and the need to constant update the online module for to ensure accurate information, were the most cited themes. The overarching perceived challenge was the limitations of an online environment, not being able to transfer the components of what makes up the developmental advising theory. As noted earlier the
developmental advising theory considers a comprehensive holistic perspective of the person. One respondent summarized these concerns:

At community colleges [that] employ these systems without counselor interaction - they will never work for transfer requirements that are infinite in number and variety and completely out of the control of the community college; [online systems/modules] routinely fail to provide accurate information; they account poorly (if at all) for catalog requirements; they require continuous updating and maintenance; they do not provide comprehensive information and are nowhere close to providing any kind of counseling; they are perceived as a solution by many who lack the understanding of what a student education plan truly entails.

This statement noted several challenges, including the issue of the inability of the online systems to “provid[e] any kind of counseling.” The practice of coupling academic advising and counseling is noted in the literature. According to King (1993), counselors who focus on psychological and career counseling, as opposed to academic advisors, who focus primarily on course selection and patterning designed to meet students’ educational goals predominate on two-year campuses.

Hence, related to the lack of transferring developmental advising theory is the emergence of the other perceived challenges such as miscommunication, lack of accuracy and the modality as characterized as impersonal were also expressed. The absence of the ability to check for understanding either through follow-up or probing questions or absence of ability to read non-verbal cues may have influenced respondents’ perspective of effectiveness of the online modality. Respondents indicated that workload was an issue for online delivery, as they did with face-to-face delivery, but for different reasons.
One respondent stated that the online delivery can lead to “often unnecessary and time-consuming exchanges that expand versus being controlled in a face-to-face setting.” In addition, the need to constantly update the content of the module was cited.

Figure 4 illustrates the themes and subthemes arising from question four, focusing on the challenges of online delivery of student education plans. The most frequently occurring theme was limitations of the online environment, addressing the complexity of transforming face-to-face practices into online modality. This theme is placed in the all-encompassing circle that surrounds all of the subthemes. Each of the subthemes relates to the challenges of trying to replicate online what occurs face-to-face. Given miscommunication, constant updating of the content, lack of accuracy, and the impersonal nature online interactions are systemic concerns that respondents seek to avoid.

*Figure 4. Challenges of online delivery of the student education plan.*
In the end, the quantitative data and the open-ended responses should be taken cautiously as the number of colleges using online or technological solutions who are part of this study are minimal and findings should not be generalized as to the entire system.

**Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 asked, “Who is considered to provide the most effective service of facilitating students’ education plans?” The goal of this research question was to investigate academic advisors’ and counselors’ perceptions of effectiveness on those individuals who are tasked with facilitating student’s abbreviated and comprehensive education plans. By comparing effectiveness scores of respondents’ perceptions of professionals who deliver abbreviated plans and comprehensive plans for each classification (e.g., counselors, academic advisors, faculty advisors), it was determined that the sample size for effectiveness of personnel other than counselors was too small to make conclusions regarding significance. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis based upon sample size.

Just as in research question one, the tested hypothesis resulted in no significance, nonetheless, the descriptive data did provide a glimpse of current service delivery, which could recommend further implications for practice.

A large number of respondents perceived that counselors are *very effective* in the delivery of abbreviated and comprehensive education plans as opposed to other personnel delivering plans. Correspondingly, respondents also reported that far more counselors were delivering both abbreviated and comprehensive student education plans than any other personnel classification offered. This finding was to be expected given the California education legislation. Nonetheless, of special attention, the findings indicated
that colleges used other personnel, as such, represent a break from the norm in which counselors being the only professionals responsible in the delivery of academic advising and counseling, and the delivery of education plans.

The survey purposefully allowed for a range of personnel choices as the literature supported the practice of various personnel supporting academic advising, particularly in the delivery of education plans. Specifically, other states do not require a specific degree in order to practice advising and counseling (Hagen & Jordan, 2008). Other states have included a variety of personnel to include academic advisors, faculty advisors, peer advisors, and academic or success coaches. To learn if several of the California community colleges employ other personnel aside from professionals codified in California Education legislation who facilitate academic advising and counseling, a survey question asked the number of personnel employed who may be facilitating academic advising and counseling.

The conceptual framework informing this study postulated that given that most colleges employ a prolific delivery model of academic advising, California may be the only State that does not embrace this model. Although the results cannot be widely generalized to the 112 California community colleges, there is some indication that California does not use a prolific academic advising model consistent with those used by other states. Other states have defined an organizational model where academic advising departments are solely responsible for course selection and education planning and have identified a separate office to delivery counseling services, which encompasses career and personal counseling. The literature did stress the past evolution of and need for counseling models to continuously evolve (Helfgot, 1995). This would suggest the need
to evaluate advising models, roles, and objectives require a reconsideration of the personnel delivering advising services. Gay (1977), quoted in Cohen and Brawer (2003), questioned “whether or not some of the tasks necessary to the services now rendered [by counselors constitute a] wise use of the skills and talents of counselors and other specialists of student affairs” (p. 204). In a memorandum from WestEd and the RP Group (2012) to the CCCCO, the question of using paraprofessionals and instructional faculty for advising was addressed. The memorandum discussed the potential roles of peer advisors, classified staff, instructional faculty, and seasonal personnel, particularly those who would support online advising during key periods, in supporting counseling services. The authors conducted a thorough literature review and differentiated those tasks that can be performed by paraprofessionals and instructional faculty from those requiring the skill set of a counselor. In summarizing the overall effectiveness of services provided, the authors stated,

none of the studies reviewed noted any negative consequences of using different providers for such support services as orientation, advising, and counseling, but all of the programs studied seemed to focus on ensuring that non-counselors only take on assignments that are within their skill sets. (WestEd & The RP Group, 2012, p. 4)

**Recommendations for Practice**

Based on the open-ended responses and the findings from the survey, there are valuable insights into potential practices general counseling departments may seek to implement. This study revealed implications for practice for bringing to scale education planning services as mandated by legislation. This may help inform the CCCCO as they
design and implement a statewide online education planning portal that will be made available to all 112 California community colleges. As such, the following recommendations are presented:

**First Recommendation for Practice**

Colleges should consider a continuum of academic advising and counseling delivery models in the delivery of student education plans. When considering the juxtaposition of face-to-face versus online delivery of student education plans, a continuum concept emerged, with face-to-face delivery at one end and online delivery at the other. On one end of the continuum, there is the nurturing environment and process of delivering a holistic, comprehensive student education plan. It is replete with opportunities to check for understanding, to read non-verbal cues, and listen to student questions in order to provide immediate interaction and resolution of questions or misunderstanding. It provides the opportunity to not only work with the student on comprehensive planning, including career and educational goal setting, but also with personal issues related to reaching the goal.

On the other end of the continuum is online delivery of student education plans. It provides access for online students and for students who cannot easily come to campus. It provides convenience for those students who prefer and therefore choose online modalities, including those students who meet the profile of an online student. It opens doors for many with both access and convenience.

In the middle of the continuum is hybrid delivery of student education plans, incorporating practices and processes of both face-to-face and online modalities, and in some cases addressing the challenges cited for both modalities. Students can explore
career and educational goals within an online interactive module, they can begin to build a sequence of courses necessary to achieve the goal selected, and they can meet face-to-face with a counselor to discuss it all. The online preparation was described as an online queuing mechanism to assure that students are in fact prepared when they meet with the counselor.

Challenges do not disappear in the continuum model. Workload will still be an issue until there are adequate human resources, but it is described as somewhat mitigated with the efficiencies and effectiveness of aligning the two modalities within the continuum. Miscommunication, inaccuracy, and constant uploading of changing requirements will continue to need attention, but are somewhat mitigated with counselors informing the online portion of the hybrid model to assure accuracy.

In addition, in support of the continuum model, colleges could take the following steps: (a) conduct a thorough literature review of effective practices for online interactions, including those studies that have disaggregated practices and outcomes by gender, age, and ethnicity to help identify which practices would be most beneficial for the college’s student demographics; (b) pilot a program based upon these findings; and (c) assess student performance, perceptions of effectiveness, and their recommendations for future improvements.

**Second Recommendation for Practice**

The study demonstrated evidence of other personnel assisting in the delivery of advising and education planning services, as such, colleges should consider a continuum of using personnel to leverage education planning services.

The findings indicated the use of several different personnel classifications: (a)
academic advisors also considered paraprofessionals, who are not trained as counselors to provide personal or crisis counseling, (b) faculty or instructional advisors, and (c) peer mentors. Though the question of effectiveness regarding the use of these personnel in the delivery of education planning is not conclusive, the literature briefly highlighted positive mechanisms of using these three personnel classifications. For example, academic advisors provided assistance to the enrollment processes, course selections and information dissemination of policies and procedures (McMahan, 2008). The literature suggests that counselors can concentrate on working with students on personal issues that may impede their educational progress or to completion. Another example is that instructional advisors can assist students by advising them within their disciplines and may have the ability to advising student a pathway of discipline to career options. Lastly, the assistance of peer mentors has been described as versatile and compatible to advising services as an enhancement to what is already in existence (Koring, 2005). It also has the advantage of being “sensitive to students’ needs”, and the ability to extend the range and scope of advising to times and venues when advising is not usually available (Koring, 2005). This description of the possible usage of personnel also provides a plan for colleges to triage services, based on the needs of the students and the potential to serve more students, hence to meet the mandates of SB 1456.

Figure 5 demonstrates a continuum for how colleges can triage modality, activity, and personnel in the delivery of student education planning services. The three continuums demonstrate varying degrees of opportunity for colleges to bring to scale student education planning services.
Third Recommendation for Practice

Colleges should consider the challenges of face-to-face and online delivery of student education plans presented in Figures 2 and 4 when designing and drafting strategies to bring to scale education planning services. Figure 2 illustrated the challenges inherent in delivering the face-to-face holistic, comprehensive support services that respondents rated as the most effective delivery model. This is a contradiction; the best delivery model is also fraught with challenges. Figure 4 illustrated the challenges inherent in delivering online student education plans, which are not as much related to the benefits of online delivery as they are to the same challenges expressed for face-to-face delivery. Complexity of content to be delivered is inherent in both models because it is ingrained in the nature of delivering a student education plan, which is inherently intricate and complex. Time is an issue for both modalities, as are unprepared students.
Colleges should consider these challenges when scaling delivery of student education plans regardless of modality. Efforts to design and create systems should begin by first addressing the challenges and then mitigating them.

**Fourth Recommendation for Practice**

Funding for professional development and training focused on technological solutions should be provided by the state legislature in order to deliver upon the mandates of SB 1456. Suggested professional development could be learning how other community colleges outside the state of California are effectively conducting academic advising and counseling. A second area of professional development would be comprehensive dissemination of information on the statewide initiative to create a single online student education plan software that can be used by all colleges. A third area of professional development could be related to proven techniques for triage of modalities, activities, and personnel in meeting student needs.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

There are several recommendations for further research after reviewing the findings and based on the discussion.

**First Recommendation for Further Research**

It is recommended that a new research design, a mixed methods study, be conducted. This would allow for (a) a survey to identify practices currently in place and (b) interviews to identify how these practices are perceived on multiple levels and possible means of scaling services. This will provide the “what” and the “why” of delivering student education plans face-to-face, online, and at a scale that can reach all
students. This type of comprehensive study would address the concerns for the small sample size.

Second Recommendation for Further Research

It is recommended to administer a similar survey to other support services programs such as the Educational Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) and Disabled Student Program and Services (DSPS) in the California community college system that facilitate student education plans aside from general counseling departments. This study set a delimitation of only surveying perceptions of effectiveness of academic advisors and counselors who are located in the general counseling departments or centers. Academic advising and counseling, and education planning services are also offered in other student support programs such as the DSPS and EOPS. Unlike general counseling departments, several support programs like DSPS and EOPS can only administer services to those students who meet the mandated eligibility requirements of the California Legislative Code. Given this, a similar survey could be administered to these two programs to learn if the delivery of student education plans are similar or different from general counseling departments and to augment this baseline survey providing a more comprehensive representation of how services are delivered at each campus.

Third Recommendation for Further Research

The third recommendation for future research is to survey students to learn which students can best be served through face-to-face modality or online modality in the delivery of student education plans. Potential questions that could be researched are: (a) What student education planning delivery method, face-to-face or online, do students prefer, and why; (b) What kinds of student education planning services would students
prefer to receive either face-to-face or online (e.g. career advising, course selection, personal counseling, transfer advising, associate or certificate advising); (c) Which technological delivery method would student’s prefer to facilitate a student education plan fully online (self-service), hybrid (partially online and face-to-face), fully online (with some online interaction)? A related phenomenological study would be to inquire whether completion of the student education plan fully online (self-service) or completion of a student education plan face-to-face leads to earlier completion of students’ educational goals. Additionally, a quasi-experimental methodology where a test groups only received education planning online and another group received education planning face-to-face.

**Fourth Recommendation for Further Research**

Another limitation was that this survey did not inquire about the roles, duties, and minimum qualifications of any of the personnel aside from counselors that are specified in the California education code. The addition of open-ended responses to the aforementioned characteristics could have provided insights into other perceptions such as (a) the reason why the reported level of effectiveness between personnel classification varied, (b) the reason for the over reliance on counselors, and (c) perceived benefits and challenges of the using other personnel in the delivery of education planning services.

**Summary**

Given the advent of SB 1456 to take effect fall of 2014 in the California community college system, one of the most pressing mandates for the colleges to meet is ensuring that all students complete an education plan. Colleges are under pressure in designing, implementing and evaluating student education practices that will meet the
mandate. Thus, to assist in informing colleges statewide and the CCCCO about best practices, this study invited counselors and academic advisors (or designees) to rate the effectiveness of education planning delivery modalities and effectiveness of services offered by various personnel. In addition, this research served as the initiation of supporting a baseline report of current student education planning services available in the California community colleges.

After administering a survey to the 112 California community college counseling chairs or their designees and testing the three hypothesis that aligned with the research question the findings revealed the following: For hypotheses one and two it was reported that there was no significant difference between perceived ratings of effectiveness between online and face-to-face delivery of either the abbreviated or comprehensive student education plans. The sample size for online effectiveness was too small to draw any significance. For hypothesis three, testing found that there was no significant difference between perceived ratings of effectiveness between abbreviated and comprehensive student education plans delivered by counselors and those delivered by other personnel. The sample size for personnel other than counselors was too small to draw any significance.

Nonetheless, given the limitation of sample size there were some important perceived insights shared by the respondents that can be beneficial to colleges as they plan on how to bring to scale education plans. The recommendations presented were for colleges to consider three continuums when it comes to the delivery of education plans. First, colleges should consider a continuum in the delivery of education plans through various modalities which on one end of the spectrum is to offer face-to-face education
plans and on the other end offer only online education plans and in between to offer
group education planning sessions (classroom included) and through hybrid modalities.
Second, colleges should consider a continuum for activities required for the student
education plan to which may be served by any one of the services presented in the first
continuum of service delivery modalities. Lastly, colleges should consider an additional
continuum of personnel who can help in the delivery of education plans so then those
students who may need more intensive assistance, through the assistance of a counselor,
may better serve the student.

A further recommendation for practice is the infusion of funding in support of
professional development, training, and support and dissemination of the statewide online
student education planning system currently under development.

In recommending future research there are four: (a) to conduct a mixed methods
study to fully capture the breadth of the topic and address sample size considerations; (b)
to administer a similar survey to other support services programs such as EOPS and
DSPS in the California community college system that facilitate student education plans
aside from general counseling departments; (c) to survey students to find out which
students can best be served through face-to-face modality or online modality in the
delivery of student education plans; and (d) to survey about the roles, duties, and
minimum qualifications of any of the personnel aside from counselors that are specified
in the California education code.
REFERENCES


California Code of Regulations, Title 5, § 55524 (2013).


California Community College Chancellor’s Office [CCCCO]. (2014). Goals: 


Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE]. (2010). *The heart of student success: Teaching learning, and college completion (2010 CCCSE findings).* Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program.

Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE]. (2012). *A matter of degrees: Promising practices for community college student success (A first look).* Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program.


Karp, M. M. (2011, April). *Toward a new understanding on non-academic student support: Four mechanisms for improving student outcomes in the community*


The Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act, Senate Bill 1456, (2012).


WestEd & The RP Group. (2012). Question 2: Using paraprofessionals and instructional faculty for advising [Memo to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office].

APPENDIX A

CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

1. Introduction

We are conducting a survey of chief student services officers (CSSOs) to learn about counseling and advising service strategies and processes that colleges are using to promote student success. The results of this survey will be used to better inform state policy discussions as the system implements SB 1456, the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012. The results will also be used to improve training and technical support, and to share the identified promising practices with colleges statewide. Please be assured that your responses will not be used for monitoring compliance. The topics addressed include pre-enrollment, orientation, counseling, education planning, student success workshops and follow-up. The survey most likely will need to be completed by a Dean or other individual responsible for counseling offices on your campus. Please submit a single response to the survey for your college. Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this important work.

2. Contact Information

*Please provide the contact information for the person to whom we can address any questions about responses to this survey.

| First Name: | [ ] |
| Last Name: | [ ] |
| Email: | [ ] |
| Phone number: | [ ] |
| Position and/or Title: | [ ] |

3. Pre-Enrollment

Does your college offer priority enrollment for new students who participate in assessment, orientation, and/or develop an education plan?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Comments: [ ]

Does your college offer priority enrollment for graduating high school seniors who complete assessment, orientation and/or education plan?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please specify any special conditions, if any for HS seniors to obtain priority: [ ]

Is a continuing student’s completion of some or all of the core matriculation components (assessment, orientation, student education planning) a condition for enrolling in coursework at the college?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes
If yes, which components are required?
- [ ] Orientation
- [ ] Assessment
- [ ] Student Education Plan
- [ ] Other (please specify)

5. Student Orientation

For students enrolling in credit courses, please indicate the student groups your college exempts from orientation. (Check all that apply.)
- [ ] Completed an A.A. or A.S. Degree
- [ ] Completed a Bachelor's Degree or higher
- [ ] Undecided education goal
- [ ] Taking 6 units or less
- [ ] Taking personal enrichment coursework only
- [ ] Taking professional development coursework only (Please describe below how you identify these students.)
- [ ] Has previous college credits
- [ ] Is non-degree seeking
- [ ] None. No groups exempt.
- [ ] Other (please specify)

For which student group(s) is orientation mandatory at your college? (Check all that apply.)
- [ ] Orientation is not mandatory for any groups
- [ ] First-time students with no prior coursework at any college
- [ ] Students who are new to the college
- [ ] Students who have declared a degree, certificate or transfer goal
- [ ] Full-time students
- [ ] Students receiving financial aid
- [ ] Basic skills students
- [ ] Other (please specify)

If your college has mandatory orientation, how have you implemented this?
What methods does your campus use to provide orientation to students? 
(Mark all that apply)

- Outreach presentations
- Large, in-person "arena" meetings or campus wide events, or tours
- Small group, in person -campus orientation
- Online, interactive orientation
- Online non-interactive orientation
- Video based non-interactive orientation
- Full-term Orientation courses available for credit as part of a student’s schedule
- Partial-term Orientation courses available for credit as part of a student’s schedule
- Full-term Orientation courses available as part of a non-credit student’s schedule
- Part-term Orientation courses available as part of a non-credit student’s schedule
- Other – Please specify

What is the most likely method that students at your college will receive orientation? 
(Please rank in order with 1 being the most likely and 9 being the least likely. If you college does not offer orientation using a method shown, leave it blank.)

- Outreach presentations
- Large, in-person "arena" meetings or campus wide events, or tours
- Small group, in person -campus orientation
- Online, interactive orientation
- Online non-interactive orientation
- Video based non-interactive orientation
- Full-term Orientation courses available for credit as part of a student’s schedule
- Partial-term Orientation courses available for credit as part of a student’s schedule
- Full-term Orientation courses available as part of a non-credit student’s schedule
- Part-term Orientation courses available as part of a non-credit student’s schedule
- Other – Specify above in Question # 9
CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

Do you have an innovative practice or model that is currently in place or being developed for providing orientation that you want to share? If yes, please describe:

6. Counseling and Advising

For which of the following areas, if any, does your institution have a systematic process in place where entering students are able to receive counseling/advising services by the end of their first term?
(Mark all that apply)

☐ Developing a course schedule
☐ Inquiring about work-life-school balance and choosing an appropriate course load
☐ Establishing an overall education goal(s) (such as a college certificate, associate degree and/or transfer)
☐ Declaring a major
☐ Creating a written education plan for attained overall educational goals
☐ Applying for and obtaining financial aid
☐ Not applicable; our college does not have a process where entering students are able to see a counselor or advisor by the end of their first term.
☐ Other (please specify)

What proportion of entering students at your college are able to see a counselor by the end of their first term?

How do you support students in identifying an educational goal and declaring a specific program or major?

☐ One-on-One counseling appointments
☐ Group workshops
☐ Career Exploration classes
☐ Visits to 4-year colleges
☐ Student Success Courses or workshops
☐ Other (Please specify)

-
CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

Identify the specific group(s) of entering students for whom counseling is mandatory.
(Mark all that apply)

- All first-time students (full- AND part-time)
- First-time, full-time students
- Basic skills students
- Students on academic or progress probation/suspension
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds (low-income, first-generation, in programs such as TRIO, EOPS, CalWORKs, etc.)
- No specific group of students
- Not applicable; counseling is not mandatory for any students
- Other (Please specify)

In which of the following modalities are counseling services provided at your college?
(Mark all that apply)

- Face-to-face, one-on-one interaction
- Face-to-face, group setting
- Email
- Online chat and/or instant messaging
- Webinars
- Blended face-to-face and online interaction
- Computer-assisted methods (such as surveys, automated tutorials)
- Social networking technologies (through Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.)
- Other (Please specify)

What type of software or system does your campus use to schedule counseling appointments?

- The Scheduling and Reporting System (SARS)
- Other (please specify)
### CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

**Does your college offer students drop-in counseling?**

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes

Comments

---

### 7. Student Education Planning

**Please provide a list of the students your college exempts from student education planning:**

- [ ] Completed an A.A. or A.S. Degree
- [ ] Completed a Bachelor's degree or higher
- [ ] Taking 6 units or less
- [ ] Taking personal enrichment coursework only
- [ ] Taking professional development coursework only
- [ ] Has previous college credits
- [ ] Is non-degree seeking
- [ ] None. No groups exempt.
- [ ] Other (please specify):

Identify the specific group(s) of entering students for whom education planning is mandatory at your college.  
*(Mark all that apply)*

- [ ] All first-time students (full- and part-time)
- [ ] First-time, full-time students
- [ ] First-time students with an undeclared goal
- [ ] First-time students with a declared goal and major
- [ ] Basic skills students
- [ ] Students on academic probation/suspension
- [ ] Students from disadvantaged backgrounds (low-income, first-generation, in programs such as TRIO, EOPS, CalWORKs, etc.)
- [ ] Student Veterans
- [ ] Student Athletes
- [ ] Not applicable; education planning is not mandatory for any students
- [ ] Other (Please specify):

Comments
CCS Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

In general, what elements does your college include in its student education plans?

☐ Student contact and ID information
☐ Education goal
☐ Career goal
☐ Major or course of study
☐ Recommended course sequencing
☐ Prerequisites
☐ Referrals to student services and supports
☐ Auxiliary requirements for goals such as AP test scores, minimum GPAs, deadlines, etc.
☐ Catalog rights
☐ Veteran status
☐ Athlete status
☐ EOPS/CARE status
☐ CalWORKS status
☐ DSPS status
☐ Financial Aid status
☐ Transcript evaluations from other colleges

Other (please specify)

Is the student education plan for first time students at your college different than an education plan for continuing students?

☐ No
☐ Yes

If yes, how so?


CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

Which groups of students are most likely to receive an initial education plan covering one or two terms? (Mark all that apply)

- All first-time students (full- and part-time)
- First-time, full-time students
- First-time students with an undeclared goal
- First-time students with a declared goal and major
- Basic skills students
- Students on academic probation/suspension
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds (low-income, first-generation, in programs such as TRIO, ECOPS, CalWORKs, etc.)
- Student veterans
- Student athletes
- Not applicable; education planning is not mandatory for any students
- Other (Please specify)

When are first time students at your college most likely to receive an initial education plan covering up to two terms?

- Prior to the start of the first term
- During the first term
- At the beginning of the second term
- Other (Please specify)
**CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey**

For students who receive an initial education plan through a face-to-face appointment with a counselor, how long of an appointment do students receive?

- [ ] 15 minutes
- [ ] 30 minutes
- [ ] 45 minutes
- [ ] 1 hour
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

Which groups of students are most likely to receive a comprehensive education plan that is comprised of a sequence of courses covering multiple terms for completing a college certificate or degree and/or for transfer to a 4-year college or university?

(Mark all that apply)

- [ ] No specific group of students
- [ ] All first-time students (full- and part-time)
- [ ] First-time, full-time students
- [ ] First-time students with an undeclared goal
- [ ] First-time students with a declared goal and major
- [ ] Continuing students
- [ ] Basic skills students
- [ ] Students on academic probation/suspension
- [ ] Students from disadvantaged backgrounds (low-income, first-generation, in programs such as TRIO, EOPS, CalWORKs, etc.) Please specify:
  - [ ] Student veterans
  - [ ] Student athletes
  - [ ] Other (Please specify)
CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

When are continuing students at your college most likely to receive a comprehensive education plan as described above?

☐ Prior to or during the first term
☐ During the second term
☐ After specific unit accumulation; (please specify)
☐ Upon declaration of major
☐ Upon change of major
☐ Most students are not likely to receive a comprehensive student education plan
☐ Other (Please specify)

In what setting are students most likely to receive assistance in developing an education plan?

(Select only one)

☐ Face-to-face, one-on-one interaction with a counselor or advisor
☐ Face-to-face, group setting
☐ Email
☐ Online chat and/or instant messaging
☐ Webinars
☐ Blended face-to-face and online interaction
☐ Computer-assisted methods (such as surveys, automated tutorials)
☐ Online education planning tool or system
☐ Social networking technologies (through Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.)
☐ Other (Please specify)

Approximately what percentage of non-exempt students on your campus have current education plans (either initial or comprehensive)?

Who helps students create an education plan on your campus?

(Mark all that apply)

☐ Counselors
☐ Faculty advisors (instructional faculty)
☐ Administrators
☐ Paraprofessionals/classified staff
☐ Student peer advisors
☐ Students develop their own
☐ Other (Please describe)
8. Student Education Planning and Technology

Does your college use a computer-based software program or application to support student education planning?

☐ No
☐ Yes

If yes, what is the name of the software or program?

How effective is the software or online application in helping students plan their educations?

Please check the box(es) that best describe(s) the technology platform that is the basis of the student education planning solution at your college.

(Mark all that apply)

☐ Module or add-on to Banner
☐ Module or add-on to Datatel
☐ Module or add-on to PeopleSoft
☐ Campus developed solution
☐ Microsoft Office Document that is shared
☐ Online solution such as MyEdu.com
☐ Not applicable, our college does not currently use a technology-based SEP solution.
☐ Other (Please specify)

If your campus has a computer-based education planning solution, what are its best features?
CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

What are the features that are missing?

If your campus has a computer-based student education planning solution, how much would you estimate the college spent in one-time startup costs for the solution? (Estimates are fine. Actual figures are not necessary.)

What are the annual, ongoing costs for the solution?

The Technology, Research and Information Services Division (TRIS) of the Chancellor's Office is conducting a pilot in partnership with MyEdu (http://www.myedu.com). TRIS is currently seeking six additional colleges that are interested in participating in the pilot. The CCC MyEdu pilot is a free service that supports colleges by offering online an interactive environment for students to explore degree and certificate programs, plan course schedules over multiple semesters and explore career choices. It has features for faculty, counselors and administrators to interact with students on their plans. Colleges that are interested in participating would receive free support from MyEdu staff who would tailor the MyEdu environment to the college needs. MyEdu staff would work with designated faculty, counselors, advisors, matriculation officers, A&R, career services and/or orientation staff to provide related tools to support student success. The benefits of pilot involvement include:

* Free service to college students, staff and administrators
* Feedback & Direction
* Campus Visits & Hands On Implementation from MyEdu

Would your college be interested in learning more about the pilot?

☐ No
☐ Yes
☐ Not Sure. Can you send more information?
9. Student Success Workshops

Does your campus provide some type of student success workshop or course?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Is it mandatory for certain types of students?

☐ No
☐ Yes
☐ N/A - the college does not provide student success courses

If yes, please indicate for which type of students it is mandatory
(Mark all that apply)

☐ All first-time students (full- and part-time)
☐ First-time, full-time students
☐ First-time students with an undeclared goal
☐ First-time students with a declared goal and major
☐ Continuing students
☐ Basic skills students
☐ Students on academic probation/suspension
☐ Students from disadvantaged backgrounds (low-income, first-generation, in programs such as TRIO, EOPS, CalWORKs, etc.) Please specify:

☐ Student Veterans
☐ Student Athletes
☐ No specific group of students
☐ Other (Please specify)

☐
### CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey

**How long is the student success workshop or course?**

- [ ] A day or less
- [ ] A week or less
- [ ] Partial term module
- [ ] Full-term
- [ ] Other (please specify)


**Do student receive units for completing the workshop or course?**

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes

If yes, are they degree applicable?

**What services and/or topics are included in the workshop or course?**

*(Mark all that apply)*

- [ ] Orientation
- [ ] Assessment
- [ ] Counseling and advising
- [ ] Identifying an education goal
- [ ] Student education planning
- [ ] Early alert and follow-up
- [ ] Study skills
- [ ] Career exploration
- [ ] Personal responsibility and advocacy
- [ ] Habits of mind, personal strategies and skills to support success
- [ ] Teamwork
- [ ] Other (please describe)


10. Follow-up

What methods or intervention does your college use with students who are on, or at risk of academic progress probation or facing dismissal? (Mark all that apply)

- Student appointment with counselor
- Student appointment with student services administrators or staff
- Student appointment with academic dean or administrator
- Student appointment with faculty members
- Peer-to-peer mentoring assigned
- Email or text message sent to student through Electronic Alert system
- Letter sent to student
- Required student participation in specific workshop or class
- Other (Please specify)

Has your institution implemented a systematic student follow-up process for early alert, academic warning or probation? (i.e., a process whereby the college contacts students who are struggling academically in an effort to get them the assistance they need)

- No
- Yes

If Yes, please specify

What works well with your follow-up process?

What are some of the challenges your college faces in implementing an early alert or student follow-up process?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCC Student Success Counseling Practices Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. Final Thoughts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you have any other innovative practices for increasing student success on your campus that you would like to share?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. Thank You</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for completing this survey. Your input is essential to ensure we are able implement student success initiatives in a thoughtful and comprehensive way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will distribute the results of this survey through updates at upcoming CSSO meetings and through CSSO and other appropriate list serve. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Debra Sheldon at <a href="mailto:dsheldon@ococo.edu">dsheldon@ococo.edu</a> or Sonia Ortiz-Mercado at <a href="mailto:sortiz@ococo.edu">sortiz@ococo.edu</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you again for you help.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hi Cynthia,

I did a quick review and inserted some suggested edits, comments and questions in the attached. This is well done but I am concerned that it is very long and would take a significant amount of time for someone to answer, especially because there are quite a few questions that ask for narrative responses. I would recommend giving that some further thought.

Linda

---Original Message-----
From: Cynthia Rico [mailto:crico@sdccd.edu]
Sent: Friday, August 16, 2013 12:26 PM
To: Michalowski, Linda
Cc: Sheldon, Debra; Spano, Jeff
Subject: Survery on Educational Planning (Dissertation)

Hello Linda:

Hi Cynthia,

Congratulations on your progress so far. We are happy to work with you and look forward to your results!
1) I don't see any problem at all with you keeping the raw data. Yes, we would be glad to review and comment on your survey.
2) I would be glad to get an email to the Counselor list and any other supporting lists that would be helpful. And if you are in a position to share your list of Counseling Chairs we would welcome that information. If not, we understand.

Linda
I hope you are well. I understand how short handed your division is at this time and the incredible amount of work. --Hope to make this quick.

As you know, I am at SDSU completing my Ed.D. My dissertation is a survey study of all 112 California community colleges, for the purpose of creating a baseline of the available education planning services, how those services are being delivered, who is delivering those services, and if the colleges are using any technology for these services. Before Sonia left she gave me a survey that was sent out by your office, as well as the results and a review of literature regarding Matriculation Services. I have modified that survey as my study will only focus on counseling and advising, and education planning services.

I come to you to ask several follow-up questions:

1) When Sonia provided the survey to me, I agreed to provide the results to the Chancellor's Office. I have a request, however, regarding my IRB; I must keep the raw data that I collect. I can provide the results, but I need to keep the actual data. Is this acceptable to you? Also, if you would like to review the modified survey, I would be happy to provide it to you, and would appreciate your feedback.

2) Also, I appreciate your willingness to send out the survey on your listserv, but I need to reach the counseling chairs, and it is my understanding that your office does not have that current list. I am compiling it now and will contact them directly. However, I would still like your support. It would be helpful if your office could send out a message regarding the Chancellor's Office support of this research and encouraging the Counseling Chairs to complete the survey through your Counselor listserv. This would improve participation. As part of my IRB conditions, I would draft the e-mail, of course, sharing the draft with you.

I hope to send you a draft of the questionnaire by the coming week, I will not be using SurveyMonkey, but will be using Qualtrics, as it allows more options in survey design. If you like to talk, I am available any time. I can be reached at (619) 922-6694.

I truly appreciate your time,
Cynthia Rico
crico@sdccd.edu
APPENDIX C
Effective Student Education Planning Survey

Staffing Levels

Informed Consent Form

Introduction

This study is to explore through counselors’ and advisors’ perception of effective education plan practices in the California Community Colleges.

Procedures

The questionnaire consists of 30 questions and will take approximately 30 minutes or less. Questions are designed to gather a baseline of available educational planning services and to collect Counseling Department Chair (or designee) perceptions of effective educational plan practices. This questionnaire will be conducted with an online Qualtrics-created survey.

Risks/Discomforts

Risks are minimal for involvement in this study. However, if the questions do not pertain to college practices or do not want to provide your perspective, you may move to the next question.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, the California Chancellor’s Office and your college will learn how colleges in the state are delivering educational planning services and which practices are more effective. Added benefit is this information can assist in efforts to meet Enrollment Priorities and new Title 5 regulations of the Student Success Act.

Confidentiality

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be coded, and no one other than the primary investigator and dissertation committee listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Compensation

There is no direct compensation.

Participation

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to you or college status. If you desire to withdraw, please close your internet browser and notify the principal investigator at the email: circ@sdccd.edu. You may also forward this survey link to a designee, Dean of Matriculation or Vice President of Student Services. Or, if you prefer, inform the principal investigator as you leave.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Cynthia Rico, at 619-922-6684, crico@sdccd.edu.

If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact the Chair of the Dissertation committee—Dr. Marlee Bresciani at 619 594-5318, mbresciani@mail.sdsu.edu. Or contact Ian Diego in the Institutional Review Board, 619-594-5222.

The following questions will ask about the total number of personnel and hours worked per week for part-timers. Please note: that Instructional Advisors refer to faculty members from your instruction or academic affairs division who advise students. Academic or Success Coaches refer to consultants contacted by the college to meet individually with students regarding academic and/or personal life planning in order to identify and reach their educational/career goals.

In terms of staffing, please indicate the total number of personnel in the following classifications:

- Full-Time Tenured/Tenure Track Counselors
- Full-Time Academic Advisors
- Full-Time Instructional Advisors
- Full-Time Academic (Success) Coaches
- Part-Time Counselors
- Part-Time Academic Advisors
- Part-Time Peer Advisors
- Part-Time Instructional Advisors
- Part-Time Academic (Success) Coaches
- Other Personnel (please specify)
For part-time personnel, please indicate the average hours worked per week for the following classifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>1-14 Hours</th>
<th>15-25 Hours</th>
<th>26 or More Hours</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Counselors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Academic Advisors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Peer Advisors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Instructional Advisors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Academic Coaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Personnel (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Counseling and Advising Services

Please indicate the kinds of services your college provides? (mark all that apply)

- Academic Advising
- Academic Counseling
- Personal Counseling
- Career Counseling
- Transfer Advising
- Veterans Advising
- Veterans Counseling
- International Student Advising
- International Student Counseling
- Online Counseling
- Athletic Counseling
- Crisis Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Financial Aid Advising
- Financial Aid Counseling
- Special Populations (e.g. Parent, Umoja, MESA) Please specify below
- Other - Please specify

If your campus uses any online, email, chat, telephone (via technology) to deliver services, what kinds of information are given or services provided through these delivery modalities? Mark all that apply.

- Only Academic Information (no student information)
- Only Academic Information, student educational information also discussed
- Academic and Personal Counseling (Advising)
- No Personal Counseling/Advising
- Financial Aid Information (no student information)
- Financial Aid Information, student information also discussed
- Career Counseling (no student information)
- Career Counseling, student information also discussed
- Transfer Advising (no student information)
- Transfer Advising, student information also discussed
- Crisis Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Other - Please specify

Modality of Service Delivery in General Counseling and Advising Services
Using the scales below, please first indicate the extent to which this modality of service delivery used at your college and then indicate the extent to which you find the modality effective for delivering General Counseling and Advising services selected in the previous question.

Scale for extent to which service is used.

Face to Face, One on One Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Use</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Once this semester</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>A few times a month</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Several Times a Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Scale for extent the service is effective.

(Nota: Effectiveness is defined as the degree or extent to which the intended outcome (or goal/objective) of the service provided is achieved.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Not Effective At All</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat Ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, One on One Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, Group Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Setting (e.g., Student Success Course)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online (Completely online but interacting with an employee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online (Hybrid, includes working face to face with an employer and completing tasks online)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online (Completely online and working independently)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype or Video based communication (face to face virtual communication)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please indicate here)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click to write Statement 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your college offers just-in-time immediate services such as drop-in counseling or advising, express counseling walk-in, quick questions, or counter counseling, what is the average, what is the average time set for this service?

- 1 to 10 minutes
- 11 to 15 minutes
- 16 to 20 minutes
- 21 minutes or more
- Do not offer this type of service

What information is provided during this drop-in session? Mark all that apply.

- Answering of quick questions
- Signing petitions
- Prerequisite Clearance
- 1-2 Semester course advising
- Other, please specify

### Educational Planning Services

Where can students on your campus request to have an educational plan completed? (Mark all that apply)

- General Counseling Department
- Advising Center
- EOPS
- DSPS
- Transfer Center
- Veterans Office
- Online
- Other, please specify
Modality of Service Delivery for Abbreviated Student Education Planning

Using the scales below, please first indicate the extent to which this modality of service delivery used at your college and then indicate the extent to which you find the modality effective for delivering student educational planning services.

New Title 5 regulations define abbreviated education plan as: education plans which are one to two terms in length designed to meet the immediate needs of student for whom a comprehensive plan is not appropriate.

Scale for extent the service is effective. (Note: Effectiveness is defined as the degree or extent to which the intended outcome (or goal/objective) of the service provided is achieved.)

Scale for extent to which service is used for ABBREVIATED EDUCATIONAL PLANNING.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Use</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Once this semester</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>A few times a month</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Several Times a Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, One-on-One Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, Group Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, in-person “arena style” meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Wide Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group, in person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in Immediate service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online, including Student WebPortal (completely online but interacting with an employee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online, including Student WebPortal (completely online but working independently)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please indicate here)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modality of Service Delivery for Abbreviated Student Education Planning

Using the scales below, please first indicate the extent to which this modality of service delivery used at your college and then indicate the extent to which you find the modality effective for delivering student educational planning services.

New Title 5 regulations define abbreviated education plan as: education plans which are one to two terms in length designed to meet the immediate needs of student for whom a comprehensive plan is not appropriate.

Scale for extent the service is effective. (Note: Effectiveness is defined as the degree or extent to which the intended outcome (or goal/objective) of the service provided is achieved.)

Scale for extent to which service is effective for ABBREVIATED EDUCATIONAL PLANNING.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Use</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Not Effective All</th>
<th>Somewhat Ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, One-on-One Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, Group Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, in-person “arena style” meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Wide Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group, in person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in Immediate service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online, including Student WebPortal (completely online but interacting with an employee)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online, including Student WebPortal (completely online but working independently)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please indicate here)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which categories of students does your college identify for needing abbreviated (inadequate) education plans covering one to two terms? Mark all that apply.

- All new applicants at the beginning of each term
- Financial Aid Students
- TRIO Students
- Students on academic or progress probation
## Modality of Service Used for Comprehensive Student Education Planning

Using the tables below, please first indicate the extent to which this modality of service delivery used at your college and then indicate the extent to which you find the modality effective for delivering student educational planning services.

New Title 5 regulations define comprehensive education plans as: education plans which take into account a student's interests, skills, career and education goals, major, potential transfer institutions, and the steps a student needs to take on their educational path to complete their identified course of study.

Scale for extent to which service is used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Use</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Once this semester</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>A few times a month</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Several Times a Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, One on One Interaction</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, Group Setting</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, in-person &quot;arena style&quot; meetings</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Wide Events</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group, in person</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom setting</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in immediate service</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation presentation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online, including Student WebPortal (completely online but interacting with an employee)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online, including Student WebPortal (completely online but working independently)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please indicate here)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale for extent the service is effective. (Note: Effectiveness is defined as the degree or extent to which the intended outcome (or goal/objective) of the service provided is achieved.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Not Effective (At all)</th>
<th>Somewhat Ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, One on One Interaction</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face, Group Setting</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, in-person &quot;arena style&quot; meetings</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Wide Events</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group, in person</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom setting</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in immediate service</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation presentation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online, including Student WebPortal (completely online but interacting with an employee)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online, including Student WebPortal (completely online but working independently)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please indicate here)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please indicate here)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which categories of students does your college identify for needing abbreviated education plans covering one to two terms? Mark all that
apply.

- All new applicants at the beginning of each term
- Student Veterans
- Student Athletes
- International Students
- Financial Aid Students
- EOPS Student, Cabr
- DSPS students

When are continuing students at your college most likely to receive a comprehensive education plan. Mark all that apply.

- During the second on term
- After meeting 15 units
- Upon declaration of a major
- Most students are not likely to receive a comprehensive student education plan
- Other-please specify

Please indicate which of the students your college exempts from educational planning. Mark all that apply.

- Completed an Associate Degree
- Completed a Bachelor’s Degree
- Taking 6 or less units
- Taking personal enrichment courses only
- Has previous college credits
- Is not degree seeking
- A concurrent high school student
- None, no one is exempt
- Other-please specify

In general, which elements does your college included in its abbreviated and comprehensive student education plans? Mark all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviated</th>
<th>Comprehensive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student contact and ID information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer major</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment scores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major or course of study (all your college)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended course sequencing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to student services and supports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary requirements for goals such as minimum GPA, AP test scores, deadlines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athlete status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOPS/CARE status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CalWorks status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSPS status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcript evaluations from other colleges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate how long an abbreviated and comprehensive educational plan takes to be completed in the following modalities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviated student plans (one-on-one, face to face)</th>
<th>15 to 20 Minutes</th>
<th>21 to 30 Minutes</th>
<th>31 to 45 minutes</th>
<th>46 to 60 minutes</th>
<th>More than 1 hour</th>
<th>No Appointments Given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviated student plans (in group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive student plans (one-on-one, face to face)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive student plans (in group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the average size of a group in an abbreviated and comprehensive student education plan group session?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviated plans</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>1 to 10</th>
<th>11 to 20</th>
<th>21 to 30</th>
<th>31 to 40</th>
<th>41 to 50</th>
<th>51 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate who helps create an abbreviated student educational plan and a comprehensive student education plan on your campus. Mark all that apply. In addition, please rate the level of effectiveness for each position that delivers each type of plan.

(Note: effectiveness is defined as the degree or extent to which the intended outcome (or goal/objective) of the service provided is achieved.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviated Plan</th>
<th>Not Applicable (they do not perform this function)</th>
<th>Not Effective at all</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advisors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Advisors (Instructional Faculty)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Peer Advisors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Develop their Own</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Plan</th>
<th>Not Applicable (they do not perform this function)</th>
<th>Not Effective at all</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does your college use an online computer-based software solution to deliver student education planning which students can access independently?

- [ ] Not Applicable. We do not use a software (SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION)
- [ ] Module or add-on to Banner
- [ ] Module or add-on to Catarail
- [ ] Module or add-on to PeopleSoft
- [ ] Office document that is shared
- [ ] Online solution - Ellucian
- [ ] Online solution - MyEdu.com
- [ ] Online solution - Degree Works
- [ ] Other, please specify

Please provide the position or title of the person completing this survey
Please indicate the size of your college using annual unduplicated headcount

- Small (less than 3,000)
- Medium (2,000 to 5,999)
- Large (10,000+)

Is your college a single or multi-campus district

- Single
- Multicampus

Please indicate what best describes the location of your college

- Urban: inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population ranging from less than 100,000 to one of more than 250,000
- Suburban: inside a principal city and inside an urbanized area
- Town: inside an urban cluster that ranges in distance of less than 10 miles to more than 35 miles from an urbanized area
- Rural: ranges in distance form less than 5 miles to more than 25 miles from an urbanized area

Please provide your perceptions of the benefits of face to face delivery of student education plans

Please provide your perceptions of the challenges of face to face delivery of student education plans

Please describe the benefits (if any) of online delivery of student education plans

Please describe the challenges (if any) of online delivery of student education plans
APPENDIX D

Consent Inform

This is linked with Survey in Qualtrics Software

Introduction

This study is to explore through counselors and advisors perception of effective education plan practices in the California Community Colleges.

Procedures

The questionnaire consists of 30 questions and will take approximately 30 minutes or less. Questions are designed to gather a baseline of available education planning services as well as to learn from Counseling Department Chairs (or designees) perceptions of effective education plan practices. This questionnaire will be conducted with an online Qualtrics-created survey.

Risks/Discomforts

Risks are minimal for involvement in this study. However, if the questions do not pertain to your college practices, or do not want to provide your perspective you may move to the next questions.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, the California Chancellor’s office and your college will learn how colleges in the state are delivering education planning services and which practices are more effective. Added benefit is this information can assist in efforts to meet Enrollment Priorities and the new Title 5 regulations of the Student Success Act.

Confidentiality

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than the primary investigator and dissertation committee listed below will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-Compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Compensation
There is no direct compensation

Participation

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to you or college status. If you desire to withdraw, please close your internet browser and notify the principle investigator at this e-mail: crico@sdccd.edu. You may also forward this survey link to a designee, Dean of Matriculation or Vice President of Student Services, or it your prefer, inform the principal investigator as you leave.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact, Cynthia Rico, at (619) 922-6694, crico@sdccd.edu.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact the Chair of Dissertation committee Dr. Marilee Bresciani at (619) 594-8318, mbrescia@mail.sdsu.edu. Or, contact San Diego State’s Institutional Review Board (619) 594-6222.
APPENDIX E

Recruitment Notifications

First Email Contact with Counseling Department Chair for Survey

On Monday (January 29, 2014) this email was sent to all Counseling Department Chairs (or designees) in the California Community Colleges. Each email was addressed to the individual Counseling Chair or designee, rather than being a Distribution List.

The Subject Line will read: Effective Student Education Planning Survey

The content of the email will read:
Dear (first name, e.g. Diane, or Professor Jones),
I am a full time Counselor/Professor at San Diego Mesa College and in the Doctoral program at San Diego State University in the Postsecondary Educational Leadership Program. As partial fulfillment for my dissertation, I am conducting survey research to identify your perception of the most effective services, processes, and practices in the delivery of Education Plans as part of the student matriculation process. With the advent of SB1456, and Title 5 changes in enrollment priorities, there is a state mandate to assure that all California Community College students create a Student Education Plan. This increase in services will be challenging to achieve by the fall 2014 deadline. With five years of reduced state funding, many colleges are working at limited staffing levels, which impedes timely achievement of this goal. Many colleges are looking to leverage effective practices that can be brought to scale.

The outcomes of this study are for use in assisting the Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges and colleges statewide in their efforts to build effective education planning delivery methods and practices. I am contacting you because of your position as a leader in counseling services. Given your experience with these services, your input is critical. I would greatly appreciate your assistance.

In a week, I will be sending you another email, with a link to the survey, and I hope that you will take the time to complete it. It is anonymous and no identifying information can be linked to your response. Your participation is voluntary. Your choice to participate or not, has no bearing on your community college. Answering the survey should take only about 30 minutes to complete.

Findings from the survey will be made available to the Chancellor’s Office and to Counseling Chairs or designees statewide. I want to thank you in advance for your participation in this survey. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate
to contact me by email at crico@sdccd.edu or phone (619) 922-6694. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at SDSU (619 -594-6622) if you have questions for them.

Thank you,

Cynthia Rico

**Second Email Contact with Counseling Department Chair for Survey**

On Monday subsequent to the primary e-mail (February 11, 2014), this email was sent to all Counseling Department Chairs or designee. Each email was addressed to the individual Counseling Chair, rather than being a Distribution List.

The Subject Line will read: Survey Link: Effective Student Education Planning Survey

The content of the email will read:

Dear (first name, e.g. Diane, or Professor Jones),

Earlier last week I contacted you about a survey that I am administering to Counseling Department Chairs or designees as part of my dissertation at San Diego State University. I am conducting survey research to identify your perception of the most effective services, processes, and practices in the delivery of Education Plans. The survey is anonymous and should take only about 30 minutes to complete. I know this is a busy time for you, but I hope that you can participate. Your opinions and practices are essential to setting a baseline of education planning services available throughout the State. The link to the survey is: xxxxxxxxx. By linking to this site you are giving consent to participate in the survey. As stated in the previous email, your participation is voluntary. It is confidential and no identifying information can be linked to your response. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me by email at crico@sdccd.edu or phone (619-922-6694) and I will get right back to you. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at SDSU (619 -594-6622) if you have questions for them.

Thank you so much for your participation in this study,

Cynthia Rico

**Third Email Contact with Counseling Department Chair for Survey**

On Monday subsequent of the second e-mail sent on (February 17, 2014), this email was sent to all the Counseling Department Chairs or designee. Each email was addressed to the individual Counseling Chair, rather than being a Distribution List.
The Subject Line will read: Thank You and Follow Up: Effective Student Education Planning Survey

The content of the email will read:

Dear (first name, e.g. Diane, or Professor Jones),
I hope that you had the opportunity to complete the survey that I sent to you last week, and if so, I want to thank you for your participation. If you did not get the chance to complete the survey, I am including the link again. Your opinions and practices are important to understanding student education planning services. The survey should take just 30 minutes to complete.

The survey can be accessed at: xxxxxxxxxxxx. By linking to this site you are giving consent to participate in the survey. The survey will be used as part of my dissertation at San Diego State University. As stated in the previous email, your participation is voluntary. It is confidential and no identifying information can be linked to your response. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me by email at crico@sdccd.edu or phone (619-922-6694) and I will get right back to you. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at SDSU (619-594-6622) if you have questions for them.

Thank you so much for your participation in this study,

Cynthia Rico

Fourth Email Contact with Counseling Department Chair for Survey

On Monday subsequent of the third e-mail sent on (February 25, 2014), this email was sent to all Counseling Department Chairs or designee. Each email was addressed to the individual Counseling Chair, rather than being a Distribution List.

The Subject Line will read: Final Follow Up on Thank You and Follow Up: Effective Student Education Planning Survey

The content of the email will read:

Dear (first name, e.g. Diane, or Professor Jones),
If you have already completed the online survey that I emailed to you last week, I want to thank you for your time and consideration. If you did not get a chance to complete the survey, I am including the link again. The survey will be taken down on Friday night, February 28, 2014.

The survey should take just 30 minutes to complete. The survey can be accessed at: xxxxxxxxxxxx. By linking to this site you are giving consent to participate in the survey. The survey will be used as part of my dissertation at San Diego State
University. Your opinions and practices are important to understanding student education planning services. As stated in the previous email, your participation is voluntary. It is confidential and no identifying information can be linked to your response. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me by email at crico@sdccd.edu or phone (619-922-6694) and I will get right back to you. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at SDSU (619 -594-6622) if you have questions for them.

And again thank you,

Cynthia Rico
E-mail sent by the Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges

Dear Counselors,

In the coming week your department Counseling Chair or designee will be receiving an e-mail inviting their participation in a survey intended to identify your perception of the most effective services, processes, and practices in the delivery of Education Plans. The individual conducting the survey is Cynthia Rico, Counselor/Professor at San Diego Mesa College and a doctoral student in the Postsecondary Educational Leadership Program at San Diego State University.

With the advent of SB1456, and Title 5 changes in enrollment priorities, there is a state mandate to assure that all California Community College students create a Student Education Plan. This increase in services will be challenging to achieve by the 2014 deadline.

The Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges encourages your participation in completing this survey. Findings will inform our office as we support the California Community Colleges in their efforts to build effective practices in delivery of student education plans.

We want to thank you in advance for your participation in this survey. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Cynthia Rico by email crico@sdccd.edu. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at SDSU (619-594-6622) if you have questions for them.

E-mail sent by the Chancellor’s office of the California Community Colleges

Dear Chief Student Services Officers,

In the coming week your department Counseling Chair or designee will be receiving an e-mail inviting their participation in a survey intended to identify your perception of the most effective services, processes, and practices in the delivery of Education Plans. The individual conducting the survey is Cynthia Rico, Counselor/Professor at San Diego Mesa College and a doctoral student in the Postsecondary Educational Leadership Program at San Diego State University.
With the advent of SB1456, and Title 5 changes in enrollment priorities, there is a state mandate to assure that all California Community College students create a Student Education Plan. This increase in services will be challenging to achieve by the 2014 deadline.

The Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges encourages your participation in completing this survey. Findings will inform our office as we support the California Community Colleges in their efforts to build effective practices in delivery of student education plans.

We want to thank you in advance for your participation in this survey. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Cynthia Rico by email crico@sdccd.edu. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at SDSU (619-594-6622) if you have questions for them.