

## Chapter 3

# INSTITUTIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

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*In this chapter, demographic information about institutions, as reported by survey participants, create useful comparisons about the advising practices found at institutions, but not about individual advisors, faculty members, or administrators. Information was not collected about respondents because institutional advising practices, not individual practitioners, were the focus of this NACADA publication. Specifically, featured data include advising situation, NACADA region, institutional type and size, academic calendar, the extent that advising is mandatory, and advising personnel (“who advises”).*

## General Institutional Demographics

Most of the analyses were conducted with a sample of 770 participants, but a sample of 795 participants was used for comparing different advising situations. No meaningful differences in demographic characteristics were found between the two samples.

*Advising situation* refers to the perspective respondents used to answer survey questions. The majority of respondents shared information about advising from the perspective of their whole institution (Table 3.1). One fourth answered from the perspective of a particular college, school, or division within the institution, and the fewest respondents answered based on their experiences in a specific academic department.

Respondents represented institutions from all NACADA regions (Table 3.1). The most respondents came from NACADA Region 5 (Great Lakes, 16.2% and 16.4% per sample, respectively), while the fewest work in Region 9 (Pacific, 5.8% and 6.2% per sample, respectively) (Table 3.1). The percentage of institutions per region and the rank order of the samples compare to the percentages and order of the NACADA membership as measured in Spring 2011 (NACADA, n.d.) when the survey was administered.

The survey listed 12 institutional type categories (Table 3.1), divided by public, private, and proprietary. Those 3 categories were further classified by the highest degree granted (i.e., 2-year associate or certificate, bachelor, master, or doctorate). Relatively few respondents were from proprietary schools (0.3 to 1.6%) and private 2-year institutions (2.0 to 2.1%). Therefore, all 4 proprietary institutions were collapsed into a single category labeled *proprietary*, and private 2-year institutions were combined with public 2-year institutions and labeled *2-year* (Table 3.2). The results presented do not distinguish between proprietary institutions that differ in terms of the highest degree offered, and responses of participants from public 2-year institutions heavily influenced the results related to 2-year colleges. These data indicate a need for follow-up surveys with larger samples of proprietary and private 2-year institutions.

The largest number of respondents came from 2-year institutions (31.0%), and the fewest were from proprietary institutions (3.1%). The rank order for the sample compare to the order of the NACADA membership as measured in Spring 2011 (NACADA, n.d.).

The survey listed 11 institutional sizes, ranging from “less than 500” students to “36,000 or more” students (Table 3.1). These categories were combined into 3 sizes of institution, which were designated throughout the publication to make comparisons (Table 3.3): small (fewer than 5,999 students), medium (6,000 to 23,999 students), and large (24,000 or more students). Over one half of the sample represented small institutions, one third were from medium institutions, and one tenth work at large institutions.

Nearly 9 out of 10 institutions in the sample use the semester system (Table 3.1). Approximately 2 of 5 institutions required mandatory advising for all students, 1 out of 3 did not dictate mandatory advising, and fewer than 1 out of 4 required advising for some students (Table 3.1). Furthermore, respondents from 3 out of 5 institutions indicated the use of both full-time professional advisors and full-time faculty members to advise undergraduates. One out of 5 respondents indicated their institutions use full-time professional advisors but not full-time faculty members (“full-time professional advisors”), and another two tenths use full-time faculty members (“full-time faculty advisors”) but not full-time professional advisors (Table 3.1).

## **Institutional Characteristics Used to Compare Responses**

In chapters 4 through 15, size, institutional type, mandatory advising policies, and advising personnel are used to disaggregate the survey data. For example, in chapter 7 (Faculty Advising), the

average number of undergraduates advised by faculty members is reported separately for small, medium, and large institutions.

When comparing responses, readers should remember that the data may overlap across the traits of analysis. For example, certain types of institutions typically enroll a specific number of students: 50.0% of large but 1.6% of small institutions in the sample are classified as public doctorate universities. Therefore, some differences found between large and small institutions may also reflect unique characteristics of doctoral universities as compared to other institutional types. Tables 3.4 to 3.9 present information to provide some clarification on data with overlap. In the future, researchers can also take a closer look at these characteristics.

## **Size and Institutional Type**

Table 3.4a shows the composition of each size of institution by institutional type. Notable patterns include a) the sample of small institutions was comprised by a larger percentage of private master and private bachelor institutions than were found among medium and large institutions; b) the sample of medium institutions was comprised of a larger percentage of public master institutions than either large or small institutions and a greater percentage of public doctorate universities than found among small colleges and universities; and c) the sample of large institutions was comprised of the greatest percentage of public doctorate universities.

Table 3.4b shows the composition of each institutional type by size of institution. Public doctorate institutions differed the most from other institutional types in institutional size profile. Notable patterns from the sample include a) private bachelor, private master, public bachelor, and proprietary institutions fell mostly into the small institution category; b) public doctorate institutions had the lowest percentage of respondents from small institutions, but the largest percentage of those from medium and large colleges and universities; and c) private bachelor and private master institutions had the lowest percentage of respondents from medium institutions.

## **Size and Mandatory Advising**

Table 3.5a shows the composition of each institutional size by mandatory advising category. Notable patterns seen within the sample include a) a greater percentage of small institutions mandated advising, but a smaller percentage of small colleges and universities, compared to either medium and large institutions, mandated advising for some students; b) responses from those at medium institutions were split equally across mandatory advising categories; c) the lowest percentage of respondents indicating that advising is mandatory came from larger institutions; and d) a higher percentage of respondents from large institutions, compared to those from smaller colleges and universities, also indicated that advising is not mandatory on their campuses.

Table 3.5b shows the composition of mandatory advising categories by institutional size. Institutions where advising is mandatory for some students notably differed from the other two mandatory advising categories in terms of institutional size. Notable patterns from the sample include a) institutions where advising is either mandatory or not mandatory consisted of at least 50% small colleges and universities, with the highest percentage of respondents coming from small institutions that mandate advising; b) colleges and universities where advising is mandatory had the lowest percentage of respondents who work at large institutions; and c) institutions where advising is mandatory for some students had the highest percentage of respondents from medium colleges and universities.

## **Mandatory Advising and Institutional Type**

Table 3.6a shows the composition of each mandatory advising category by institutional type. The composition of institutions where advising is mandatory differed from the other two mandatory advising categories in terms of institutional type. Notable patterns in the sample include a) a relatively equal degree of institutional types (with the exception of public bachelor and proprietary) among those colleges and universities that practiced mandatory advising; b) institutions with mandatory advising also had a relatively greater percentage of private bachelor colleges and universities and a relatively lower percentage of 2-year colleges than institutions with other mandatory advising policies; and c) colleges and universities where

advising is mandatory for some students were comprised of a higher percentage of public doctoral universities than institutions with other policies concerning mandatory advising.

Table 3.6b shows the composition of each institutional type by mandatory advising category. According to data from the sample, a) compared to other types of institutions, private bachelor institutions were most likely to mandate advising; b) 2-year institutions, followed by public doctorate and proprietary institutions, were least likely to mandate advising; c) 50% of 2-year and proprietary institutions did not mandate advising; d) public doctorate institutions, followed by 2-year institutions, were most likely to mandate advising for some students; and e) more than other institutions, public doctorate universities had the most equitable percentages of respondents from the three mandatory advising categories.

## **Advising Personnel and Size of Institution**

Chapter 4 presents information about advising personnel broken down by institutional size and type as well as mandatory advising. Therefore, please see chapter 4 for tables as noted.

Table 4.7 shows the composition of each institutional size by each advising personnel (“who advises”) category. Notable patterns include a) for all institutional sizes the majority of respondents (56 to 65%) came from institutions utilizing both full-time professional advisors and faculty members to advise undergraduates; b) a greater percentage of small colleges and universities than medium or large institutions use full-time faculty members to advise students; and c) a smaller percentage of small schools, compared to their larger counterparts, use full-time professional advisors.

Table 3.7 shows the composition of each personnel (“who advises”) category by size of institution. The sample institutions where full-time faculty members advise notably differed in institutional size profile from institutions that use either professional advisors or both professional and faculty advisors. The most notable finding indicates that institutions with full-time faculty advisors were comprised of the greatest percentage of small colleges and universities and the smallest percentage of large universities.

## **Advising Personnel and Institutional Type**

Table 4.8 shows the composition of each institutional type by advising personnel category. According to survey responses, proprietary institutions, followed by private bachelor colleges and

universities, had profiles of personnel that notably differed from those of other types of institutions. Proprietary institutions had the largest percentage of respondents who work at colleges and universities that use full-time professional advisors; in fact, proprietary colleges and universities are the only institutional type in which a majority of personnel who advise undergraduates were classified by respondents as full-time professional advisors. Proprietary institutions were the least likely to use full-time faculty members to advise. The proprietary category had the lowest percentage of institutions that use both full-time professional and full-time faculty members to advise. Private bachelor colleges and universities, followed by private master institutions, had the greatest percentage of respondents from institutions that use full-time faculty members to advise students.

Table 3.8 shows the composition of each personnel category by institutional type. Compared to those in other personnel categories, the sample institutions in which full-time faculty members advise students differed the most in terms of institutional type. The most notable result shows that institutions where full-time faculty members advise undergraduates were comprised of the largest percentage of private bachelor and private master colleges and universities, but the smallest percentage of public doctorate universities.

## **Advising Personnel and Mandatory Advising**

Table 4.9 shows the composition of each mandatory advising category by advising personnel. The majority of respondents for all three mandatory advising categories came from institutions where both full-time professional advisors and faculty members advise students. Notable patterns for sample institutions include a) colleges and universities where advising is mandatory for some students were most likely to use both full-time professional and faculty advisors; b) institutions where advising is mandatory were most likely to use only full-time faculty advisors; and c) institutions where advising is not mandatory had the greatest percentage of full-time professional advisors.

Table 3.9 shows the composition of personnel categories by mandatory advising. Compared to those in other advising personnel categories, the sample institutions using full-time faculty members to advise students differed the most in the composition of mandatory advising policies. At institutions where full-time faculty members advise students, the percentage invoking mandatory advising was highest; in

fact, it was the only personnel category in which more than one half of respondents indicated that advising is mandated for students. Respondents from institutions with full-time faculty advisors were least likely to indicate that advising is mandatory for only some students. Compared to respondents from institutions where both full-time professional advisors and faculty members advise, a greater percentage from institutions with full-time professional advisors reported that advising is not mandatory; however, compared to those that use full-time faculty advisors, a greater percentage of institutions employing both types of advisors did not mandate advising.

## **Reference**

National Academic Advising Association. (n.d.). *NACADA regional demographics as of Feb 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Portals/0/Events/Conferences/Conference%20Statistics/DemographicsbyRegionasofFeb2011-3.pdf>