

Your Story, Our Community: A Conversation on Understanding Our Professional Identity

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TODAY'S AGENDA

- Introductions
- Stories to consider
- An overview of the research
- Important take aways

A STORY...

- Meet Susan



TURN TO YOUR NEIGHBOR...

- Does her story sound familiar?
- Are there any parallels in your professional life?
- Are there any differences?



ANOTHER STORY...

Meet Mary

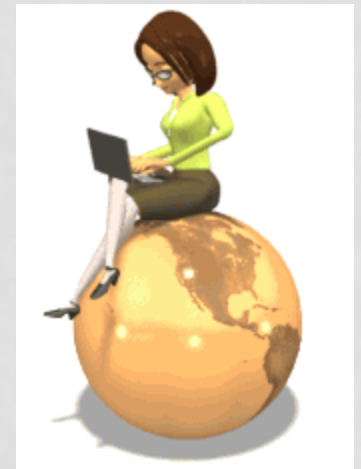


TURN TO YOUR OTHER NEIGHBOR

- What is the conversation internationalization on your campus?
- Who gets to participate?

RESEARCH

The Development of an International Student Advisor
A Grounded Theory Study





PROBLEM STATEMENT

The professional role of international student advisors has not been clearly defined or understood within U.S. higher education.



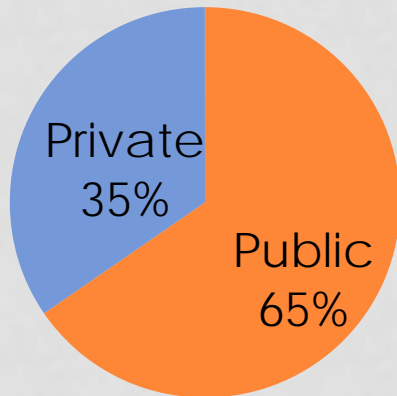
Give Voice!

Purpose

Construct a theory on the professional identity of international student advisors.

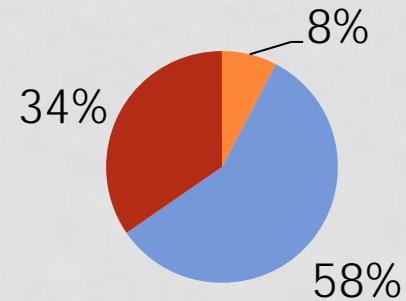
WHO WAS IN THE STUDY?

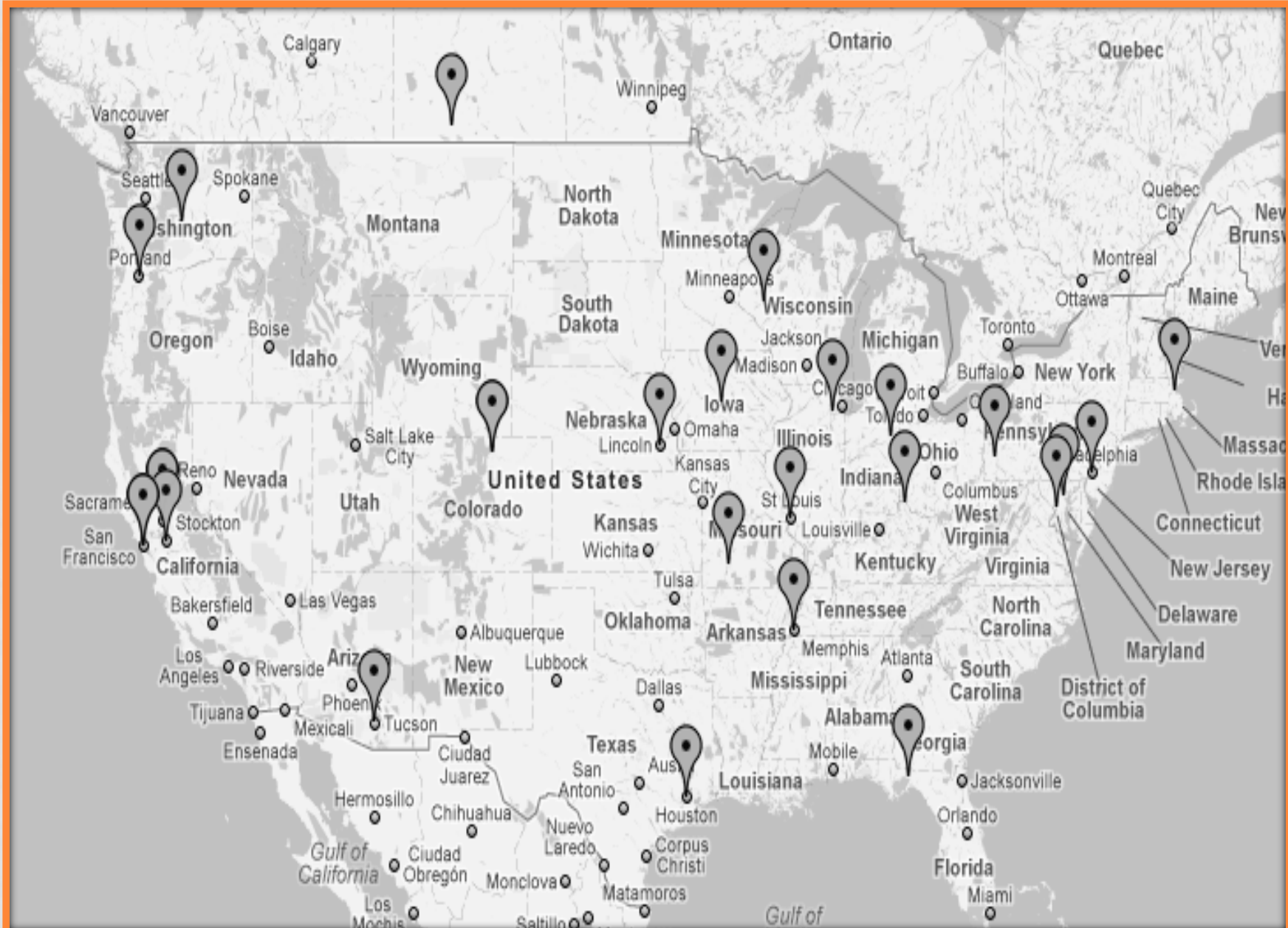
Institution Type



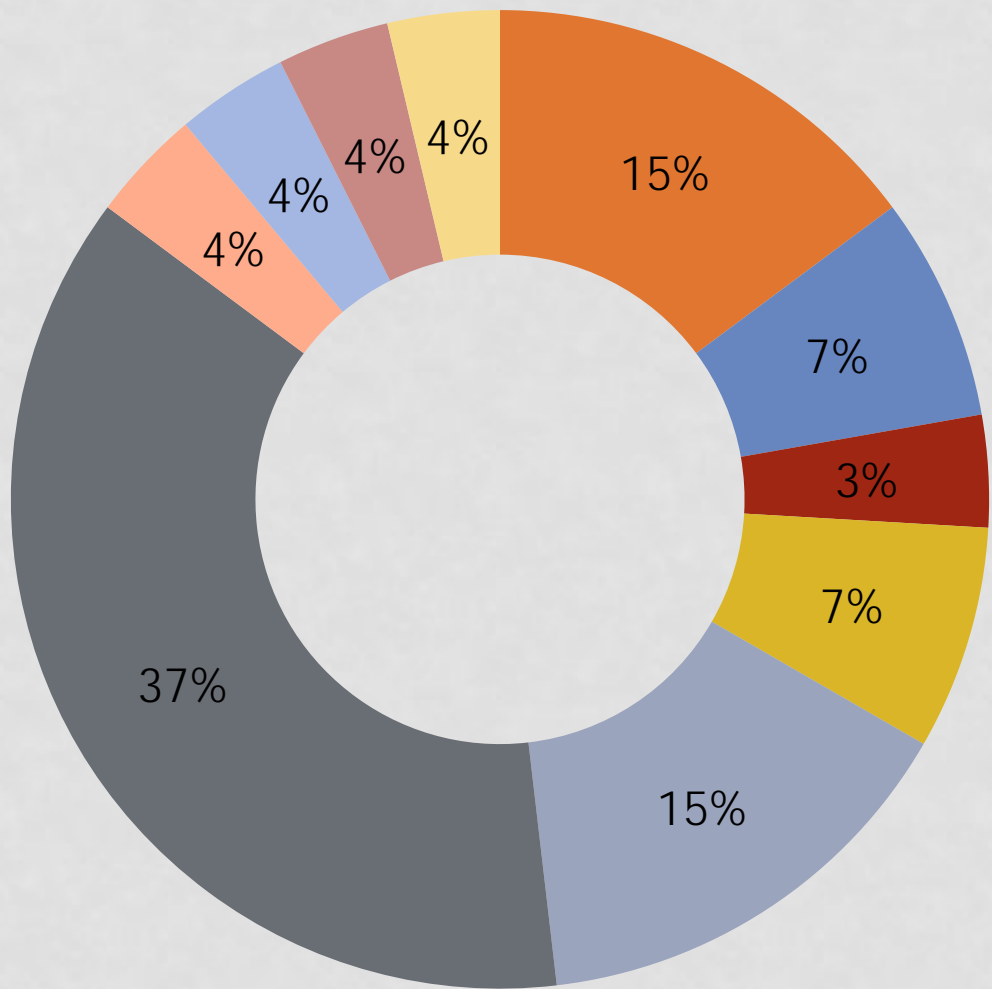
Carnegie Classification

- Baccalaureate
- Doctorate
- Masters

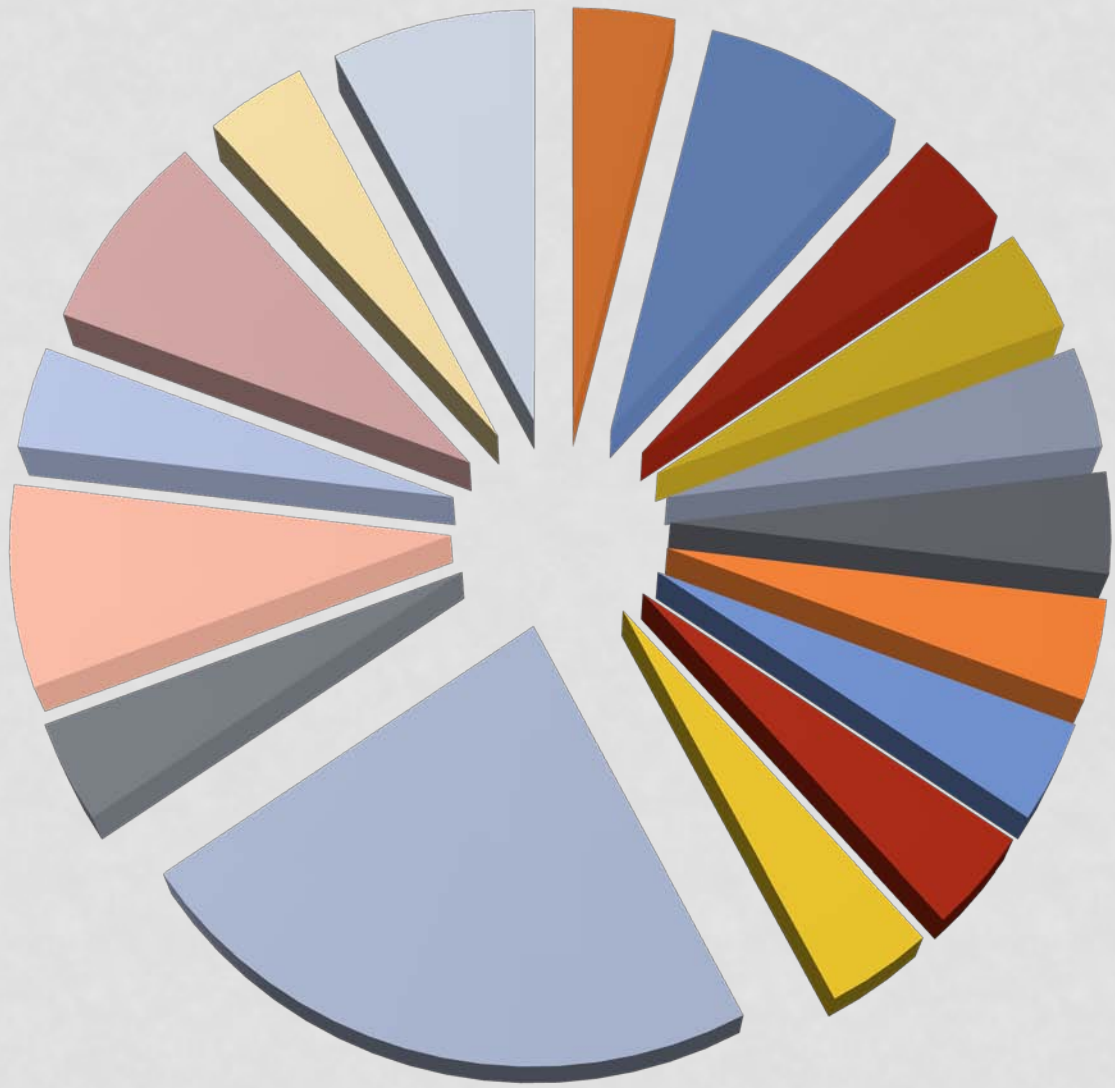




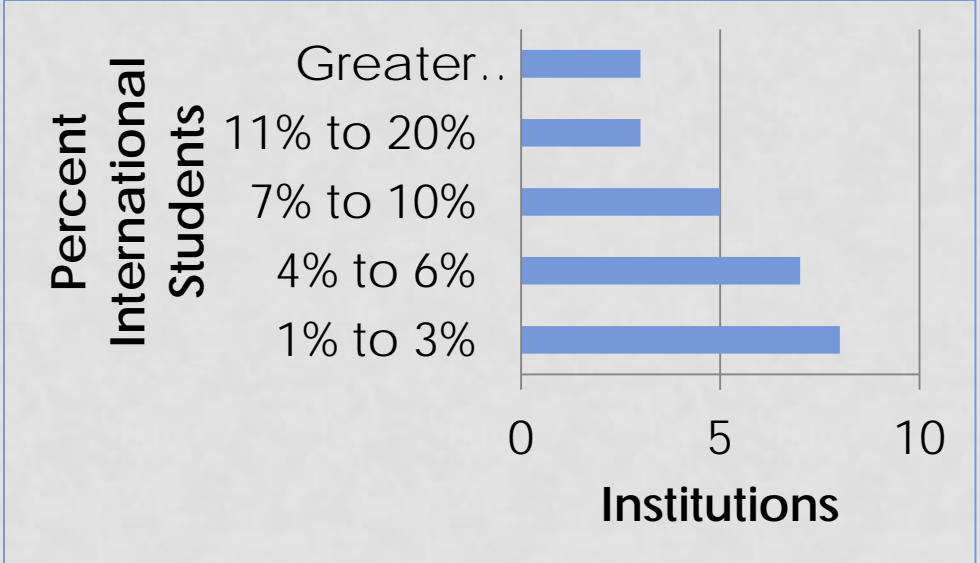
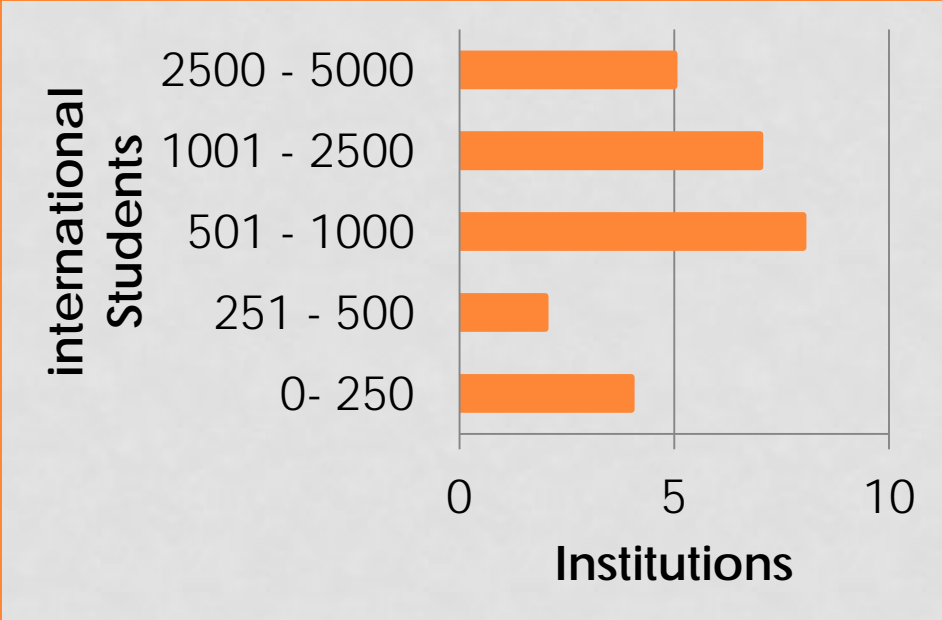
Participant Title



- Assistant Director
- Associate Director
- Immigration specialist & program coordinator
- International Faculty/scholar advisor
- International Student & Scholar Advisor
- International Student Advisor
- Manager
- Program Coordinator



- Center for GLocal Engagement
- Center for International Education
- Global Initiatives
- International Office
- International Admissions Office
- International Affairs
- International Education Services Office



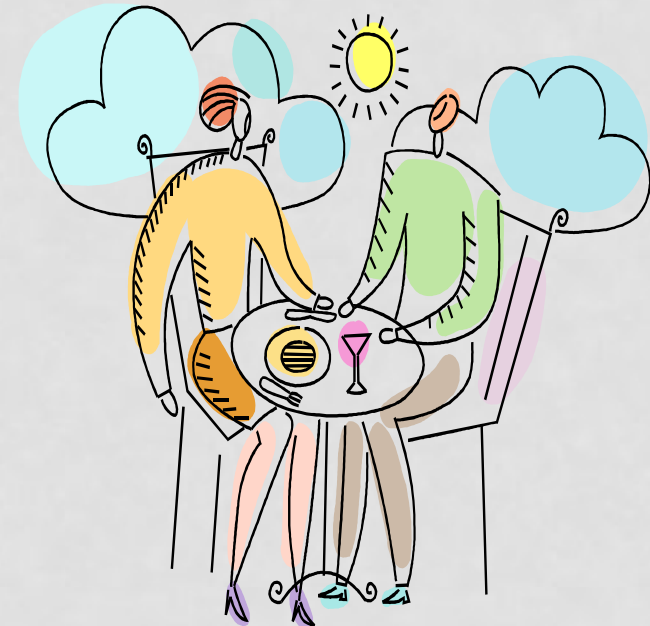
METHODOLOGY

Why grounded theory?

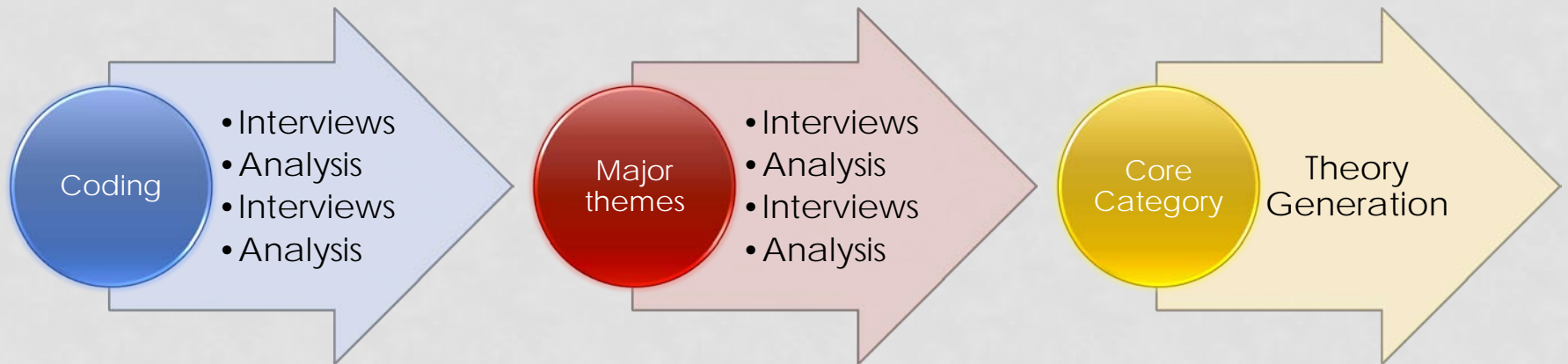
- ✓ Little is known about the area of study
- ✓ Generation of a theory with explanatory power
- ✓ Participants are active members in the research

“Grounded Theorists try to learn what our research participants lives are like.”

-Kathy Charmez (2006)



THE PROCESS

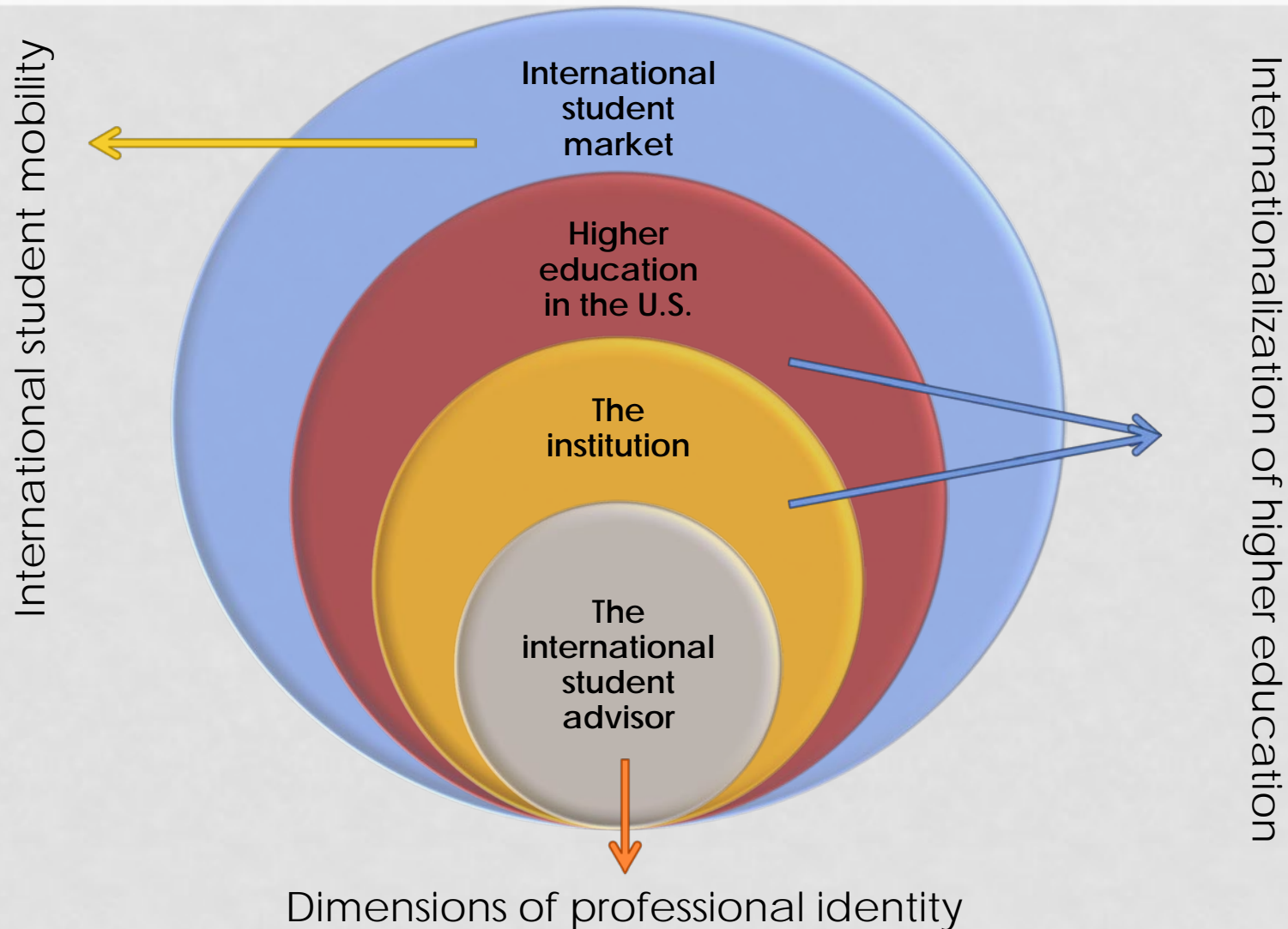




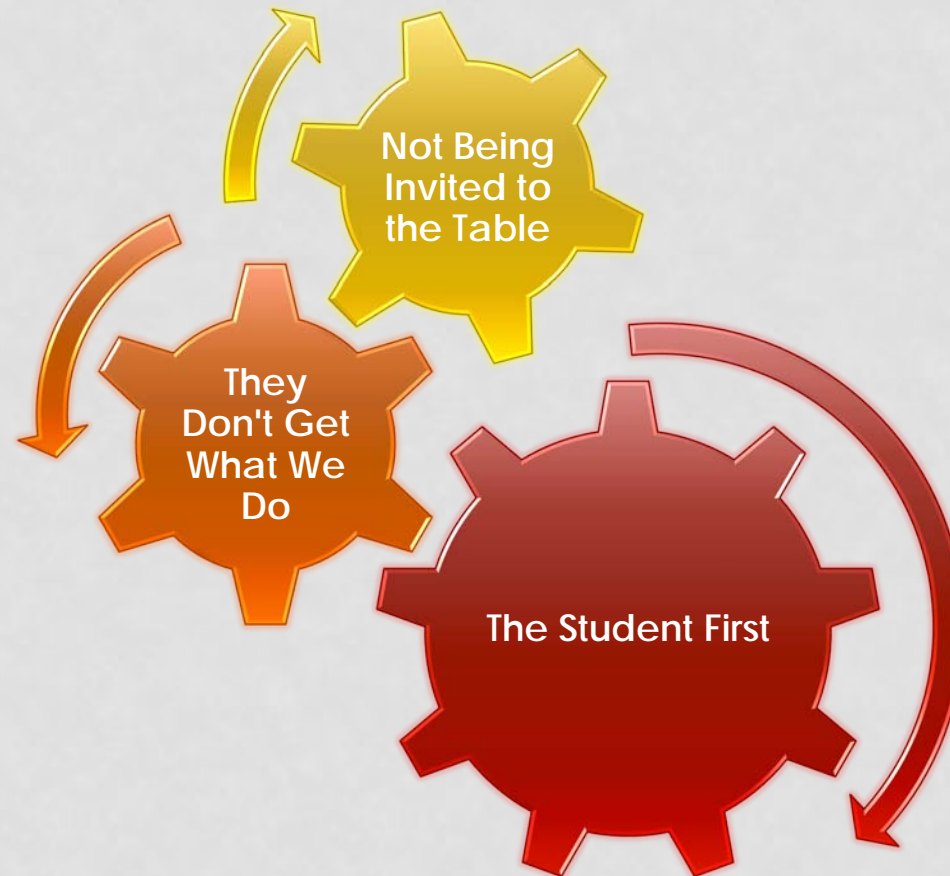
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What encompasses the lived experience of international student advisors amid the complex and changing landscape of U.S. higher education?
- What emergent concerns might be important in the experiences of individuals who are international student advisors?
- In what way have the personal constructs of professionalism and professional identity for international student advisors been developed?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



THREE MAJOR THEMES



THE STUDENT FIRST

- What I can do is make the lives of these brilliant people a little bit easier. They shouldn't be stressing...they should not have to worry. These people are amazing. I just feel really committed...this is our job. To take as many of the stresses away from them. (Jane, 2012)
- "I am here because I want to help" (Matilda, 2012).
- I think part of it is because I love to travel and lived in different countries. My main interest is in this field in general because I love to travel. I love to meet people from different countries. If I were working primarily with American students I wouldn't get the same depth. (Barbara, 2012)

NOT BEING INVITED TO THE TABLE

- I do think that we are not being a part of that [internationalization]...we are not being viewed as a cornerstone of it or even the backbone. If nothing else we bring these people here and some other people are taking the credit for that. (Renee, 2012)
- I definitely see and it [internationalization] is definitely becoming more part of the, you know, the primary mission of the university. So the President at the time, I think, had set that up within a year or two of when I started as one of his long-term goal lists. ...With our newer President that is one of his top core values for the institution and something that he really is trying to focus on of making that a central part of our mission moving forward. (Chris, 2012)

NOT BEING INVITED TO THE TABLE

- I just think there is a little bit of disenfranchisement because...not only am I a one-person office, I am generally made to feel alone in what I am doing. I have a couple of people that are my colleagues that I coordinate things with, but other than those people. I am kind of just swimming in the river. And I am by myself. (Samantha 2012)
- Working with international students is maybe not what any one calls internationalization. You know, I've said this for a while when we've talked about internationalization on our campus...especially. When we go to meetings or things on campus, people are always talking about internationalization. It's always about study abroad or all of these other outside things. We are always saying there are a lot of international students here. We should find ways to be able to integrate or use, not use in a bad way, integrate those students in a way that you are getting the kind of internationalization that you want...I mean they [international students] are here...they are here [emphasis]. I mean in a way the international students who are here are not considered a part of internationalization either. (Veronica, 2012)

THEY DON'T GET WHAT WE DO

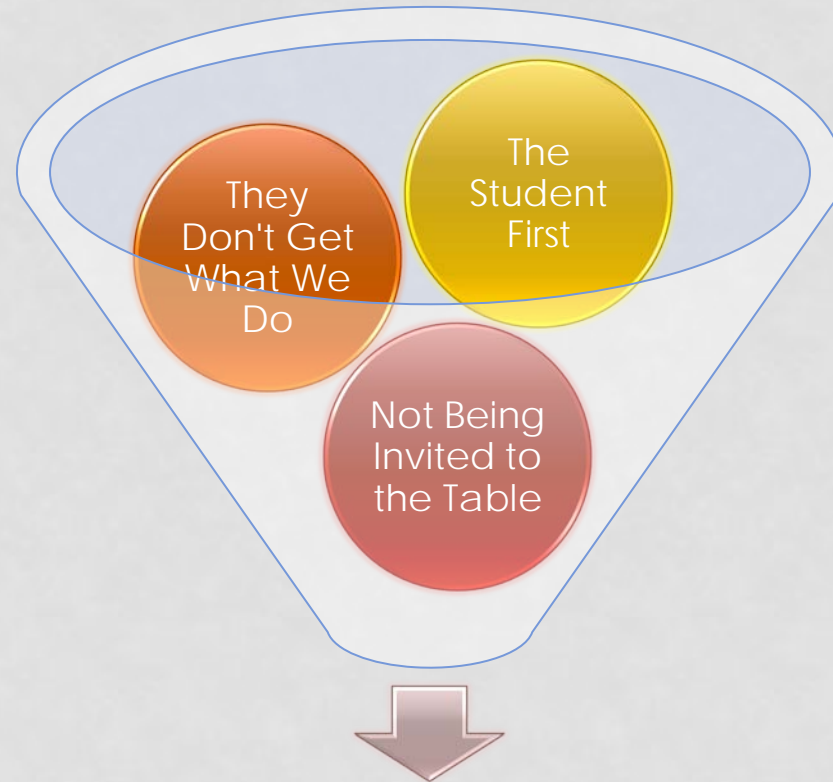
- Yes, one of our jobs is to be bridges. We can understand this body of legalese and we can tell them [senior leadership] what it really means. In the long run they are so much better for having spoken to us usually because we know how to stay legal and do it right. (Melissa, 2012)
- “If they [faculty] are internationalizing the curriculum they are more likely to go to the study abroad office and say ‘how can we start a program with your office’ ...not to really involve us (Barbara, 2012).



DEVELOPING THE THEORY

- The new theory conveyed in this study is based on an interpretive definition of theory. An interpretive understanding emphasizes using theory to understand, see patterns, and show connections ([Charmaz, 2006](#)).
- Theory, in this study, is defined as a way of understanding or making sense of the world in order to have the practical insight needed to guide action ([Fullan, 2008](#)).

THEORY ON THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISORS



The International Student Advisor as the International in Higher Education



ACTIONABLE SOLUTIONS

- For leaders:
 - Promote professional growth
- For International Student Advisors
 - Seek out and develop opportunities to connect with other international student advisors.
 - Create opportunities to be more visible on campus.

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Examine the role of international student advisors in other countries.
- Examine the experience of campus internationalization from the perspective of staff and how it compares to that of faculty.
- Examine the professionalism between international student advisors who participate in professional organizations and those who do not.
- Develop career paths and learning development plans to better support the enhancement of a professional identity.