

Campus media advisers credentials:

Is there a doctor in the newsroom?

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Abstract

This study looks at campus media programs nationwide, focusing on the roles of campus media advisers and skills instructors and their credentials and relationships with award-winning program. Data show a strong majority of advisers leading award-winning programs have 15+ years working in professional media. Additionally, non-terminal degree holders teach 67 percent of skills classes related to campus media participation. But, the literature indicates university administrations often sacrifice professional media experience for doctorates in advertising for new hires. As survey responses and prior research indicate, increasing numbers of advisers compose their own job descriptions; data collected in this new line of research has potential to alter administrative definitions and classifications of adviser and skills instructor positions.

Introduction

Journalism and mass communication programs continuously face pressure from their administrations to hire candidates with Ph.D.s for positions that emphasize advising college media or teaching media production skills. Hiring Ph.D.s with significant professional media experience in addition to teaching and research experience is preferred, but requiring professional experience is not always a priority in hiring (Downes and Jirari 2002). A focus on academic credentials may not be the most appropriate guide for students' education. In addition, as this study shows, teaching assignments for skills-based courses tend to favor those with intensive professional experience.

While campus media advisers are the primary focus of this study, the authors realize advisers are not the only faculty or staff on a college campus who contribute to students' education. Therefore, this study also considers those department members associated with teaching courses who would contribute to student skills needed to be successful in media.

How does the primary focus on academic credentials and secondary focus on professional experience during the hiring process affect student media outlets and the skills courses that provide the hands-on application of practices in the field? This study considers the hiring practices for campus media advisers and skills-based course instructors to see who actually provides students the practical knowledge needed to be successful with a review of the literature examining position announcements. The study examines campus media

advisers through surveying several national campus media organizations and attempts to capture a snapshot of advisers, their colleagues who teach skills classes, their institutions and their role as team leaders for student media. The research also analyzes student media competitions and uses the results to create a database of programs according to media awards earned. Examination of a sample of these schools offers a picture of personnel who guide programs that are the most competitive at the national level.

Recent surveys indicate advisers hold a variety of titles, ranging from media manager to director of broadcasting to newspaper adviser, and more. This study's results, consistent with prior literature (Kopenhaver 2009) indicate their educational and professional background covers a broad spectrum, ranging from relevant professional experience in a newsroom to book publishing, to less relevant experience, such as school library employment or IT management.

A question arises as to required credentials of adviser and/or skills instructor. What best serves students: a candidate with significant professional experience and a bachelor's/master's degree or a candidate with a terminal degree and little or no experience in the field, but a track record of published research and scholarship? The literature examining position announcements suggests this dichotomy: terminal degree OR professional media experience.

But, the literature and data proving either opinion is scarce. Optimally, candidates are at the top of their field in both areas. While this paper will not try to definitively answer this question, it does look at the current state of credentials for advisers and skills instructors who lead the most successful programs, providing insight into what that answer may be. To that end, this paper builds on the work of College Media Advisers, Journalism Association of Community Colleges, California College Media Association and other college media groups that routinely survey their membership to track changes in advising roles and responsibilities, working conditions, media operations, campus demographics, and more. To date, no study has linked the relationship between adviser and skills course instructor credentials and award-winning programs. The authors believe a review of award winners over time would indicate consistency in excellence, as judged against the students' peers. Correlating these results with adviser/skills instructor information would offer valuable insight as to adviser credentials, structure and other factors that contribute to student success in campus media.

As the world of college media evolves, it is essential to advance new lines of research into how college media does what it does, and an essential first step must be to examine the leadership. It is important to use these results to assess the relationship between leadership credentials and successful student media programs. The study also seeks to provide chairs and search committees evidence of any relationships so these qualifications may be included in job searches and in the search pool.

Literature Review

Several studies look at hiring trends in journalism and mass communications during the past 30 years. In 1993, Defleur's content analysis of 541 position announcements also included a look at government data and survey of administrators across the United States. He created a comprehensive overview of hiring trends that Merskin and Huberlie used as

a foundation in their 1995 examination of position advertisements in journalism and mass communication.

Both of these studies provided guidance for Downes and Jirari in their 2002 study of hiring trends in communications disciplines. They found that 60 percent of ads examined “required” a Ph.D. and another 22 percent “preferred it.” Just 37 percent of the ads required or preferred “professional experience.”

In her 2009 study of hiring trends in journalism and mass communication, Du found that even for highly technical programs such as new media, only 32.6 percent required professional experience and another 13 percent listed it as “desirable.” Du also found 45.7 percent required a Ph.D.; an additional 12 percent preferred it and another 12 percent considered ABDs. Almost 70 percent of position announcements in journalism and mass communication were seeking Ph.D.s.

The most recent comprehensive study of advising appears to come from College Media Advisers (Kopehaver 2009). Sample size is 277, or 30.2 percent of that group’s membership in fall 2008. Nearly half (47.6 percent) of advisers are not in tenure-track positions and of the remainder in tenure-track, only 38.9 percent are being granted tenure. A majority of advisers hold professional media experience (91 percent, with half of study respondents reporting nine or more years) and more than half have earned master’s degrees, with 25 percent holding doctorates.

The study also found that advisers reported a tremendous variety of job titles with publications/media director being the most common at 28.3 percent, followed by publications/media adviser (26.4 percent, a decrease of 4 percent since 2005), general managers (15.8 percent), media supervisors/coordinators (8.7 percent) and editorial advisers (5.9 percent).

With more advisers watching their student media come under the aegis of Student Affairs departments as opposed to remaining independent or under the umbrella of an academic department, more advisers are writing their own job descriptions and working under 12-month contracts compared to the last survey published in 2005 (Kopenhaver and Spielberg 2005).

The above numbers represent results from just one group. What this survey of College Media Advisers membership reveals is diversity in media adviser positions and student media structures on college campuses. One reason for this diversity may be that, while a considerable part of the workload and appointment, academic administrations offer a variable approach toward structure as well as evaluation of media advising positions (Kopenhaver and Spielberg 2005). Perhaps, as Ilkka and Tolstedt (2000) suggest, the structural identity leaves media advising less valued:

Perhaps the reason for the ‘lower status’ of advising as academic work is in part due to the lack of any clearly documented location and/or value for advising within the evaluative criteria used to assess faculty for merit, retention, tenure, and promotion (p. 4).

The variance in advising structure confirms the value of national organizations that unite advisers and offer resources to assist in keeping skills and knowledge current with conferences, workshops, events and contests for their student staffs. Such organizations also can provide tremendous support when advisers or their student media have to battle uncooperative administrations – ones that seeks to censor, censure, or silence the adviser or student

journalists (Austin 2011).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Although the literature and recent content analysis of hiring announcements indicate a Ph.D. is “required” and professional experience “preferred,” the make-up of current faculties and adviser ranks is unclear. Therefore, the following research question is presented:

RQ1: Who makes up a majority of campus media advisers: those with master’s degrees or less but with relevant professional experience, or Ph.D.s with or without professional experience?

Given Kopenhaver’s finding that 25 percent of advisers held Ph.D.s, the following hypothesis is presented:

H1: Advisers will be more likely to have been hired with a master’s degree and then have earned terminal degrees during their academic careers.

Following the lead of Kopenhaver, and Ilkka and Tolstedt, the academic home of student media programs should be determined. This is represented as:

RQ2: Are award-winning programs more likely to be housed within academic departments or located in nonacademic departments?

The following hypothesis is presented based on the authors’ years of experience in a variety of academic settings:

H2: Award-winning programs are more likely to be housed within academic departments.

Again following in Kopenhaver’s footsteps and expanding the work to include a link between award-winning programs and credentials of advisers and skills course instructors, the following is presented:

RQ3: Are award-winning student media programs more likely to be advised by instructors with bachelor’s/master’s degrees or by Ph.D.s or other terminal degree holders with or without professional experience?

RQ4: Are skills courses in award-winning programs (determined by contests administered through national media organizations) more likely to be taught by instructors with bachelor’s/master’s degrees or by Ph.D.s or other terminal degree holders with or without professional experience?

Finally, based on Kopenhaver’s earlier work as well as literature indicating a dichotomy in master’s/doctorate level credentials in the mass communication instructor pool, with a clear dividing line marking those with relevant professional experience and those without, and the authors’ experience as advisers and skills instructors, the following are hypothesized:

H3: Award-winning programs are more likely to be advised by bachelor’s/master’s degree holders than by Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s.

H4: Media skills classes are more likely to be taught by bachelor’s/master’s degree holders than by Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s.

Methods

This research comprises three distinct phases:

- 1) A national survey of student media advisers used to profile the current population

- 2) An analysis of five years of student media competitions to determine the most successful college media programs
- 3) A comparative analysis of the top programs as determined by phase two, looking at location of student media and adviser and skills instructor credentials.

For this research study, “advanced degree” is defined as Ph.D., Ed.D., terminal degree, master’s degrees and JD. “Professional experience” is defined as relevant work within a recognized media institution outside of internship positions.

Survey

To answer RQ1 and RQ2, the first phase included a 12-question survey administered to five campus media membership groups. The groups were chosen to include all types of student media as well as all types of institutions: College Media Advisers (now College Media Association), Society for Collegiate Journalists, National Broadcasting Society Alpha Epsilon Rho, College Broadcasters Inc. and Broadcast Education Association.

The survey was administered spring 2011 to four of the groups through the listserv available to advisers. The listserv subscribers received a series of three emails with a link to an online survey created on SurveyMonkey. The series of messages averaged a time span of just over two weeks and occurred just before each group’s national conference. The fifth group, Society for Collegiate Journalists, was surveyed, but outside this sequence.

As the survey sample was universal, the reliability of the survey instrument did not require testing beyond a small sample to verify clarity in wording. The 12 survey questions were designed to elicit information on the advisers’ education and professional background, demographic information and size and type of institution. After a visual inspection of the data, frequencies were run on all questions as well as crosstabs on specific questions to determine trends, relationships and significance levels.

Competitions

To answer RQ3, the second phase of the research identified successful programs using national student media competition results as the determining factor. To this end, the authors gathered contest results from College Broadcasters Inc, Associated Collegiate Press, National Broadcasting Society, Broadcast Education Association, and College Media Advisers – either from the national offices or through the groups’ contest pages on their websites. The Society of Collegiate Journalists’ national awards are not a sponsored media production competition – the campus chapters appear to present those honors – and thus, analysis of that group’s awards was not included. The Best of Collegiate Design, sponsored by College Media Advisers, also was excluded from the analysis, as five years of data were not available. While most of the organizations provided comprehensive results that included students’ names as well as school affiliation, one student media group listed results by organization only (e.g., WCUB-TV or The Southwestern Sun) requiring extensive research to identify the relevant information.

For this research study, five years of competition results from the five media organizations’ competitions (one per organization) were compiled, culling those awards given for non-broadcast media categories such as screenplays, best chapter awards, non-broadcast production and other categories not necessarily affiliated with any student media group.

For each media organization competition, number of awards won and number of first place awards over a five-year period were determined for every college or university with winning projects. The top award winners were then calculated, defined as at least five awards over five years. This definition would indicate a pattern of consistent excellence beyond a time period in which a few star students could dominate a particular competition or category. The calculation yielded a dataset of 98 programs winning at least five awards over five years.

Results for the five organizations' competitions were then combined, along with an indication as to the number of different competitions in which a college or university had won awards. For example, Marshall University garnered 149 awards while entering productions over a five-year period in three different media organization competitions (BEA, CBI and NBS). Inclusion of the number of competitions somewhat negates the duplication one single project may present: winning awards in three different organizations' competitions in the same year. The authors, when determining ranking of the top schools, used the number of organizations whose competitions garnered awards as a deciding factor in a numerical tie for number of awards, placing the school with fewer competitions entered above those with more.

Results from the five competitions were then collated into one list showing the grand total of awards achieved over the past five years, as well as the number of organizations' competitions entered [Table 1].

The tabulation generated a natural dividing point at 21 institutions for which data was gathered [Table 1]. This sample subset offered a significant snapshot of the most successful student media programs as determined by student media competitions of national membership organizations.

Comparative Analysis

Phase three of the research involved analyzing faculty and advisers for the top 21 schools. The different media organizations' membership directories contained far less information about their members, the media they advise and their home institutions than anticipated; therefore, to answer RQ4, the authors set out to gather needed information from each of the 21 programs, which proved extraordinarily challenging.

Data gathered for this phase of analysis include the number of faculty and their specific degrees, the hiring policy for tenure-track positions and whether a non-Ph.D. could attain tenure, along with adviser and education credentials of those likely to teach skills-intensive courses. Many institutions employ more than one adviser for their campus media; therefore status and credentials for each adviser were included in the analysis. For those faculty who failed to identify teaching interests in biographical profiles, the authors examined successive semesters during the study period to determine assignments for skills-intensive courses.

Biographical information was gathered through institution information, phone and Web-based directories and online press releases announcing contest awards, new hires, events, meetings and other notices. As a last resort, the authors consulted class pages, Facebook and LinkedIn profiles.

Much additional information was gathered through phone interviews with program and

*Table 1: Top Award Winners: College Media***# OF TOTAL AWARDS**

#	School	Grand Total for all 5	# of organizations
1	Marshall University	149	3
2	University of North Carolina	137	4
3	Arizona State University	58	2
4	West Texas A & M University	56	2
5	University of Miami	52	2
6	Ithaca College	52	3
7	University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh	48	3
8	Monmouth University	43	2
9	University of Minnesota	43	2
10	Indiana University	37	2
11	Brigham Young University – Provo	37	3
12	University of Florida	35	1
13	Colorado State University	34	3
14	Columbia College – Chicago	31	3
15	University of Oklahoma	30	5
16	Michigan State University	29	2
17	Rider University	28	1
18	Western Illinois University	28	1
19	Central Michigan University	28	4
20	Savannah College of Art and Design	27	3
21	Weber State University	24	1
22	Rowan University	23	3
23	Texas State University – San Marcos	21	3
24	University of South Dakota	21	3
25	University of Texas – Austin	21	3
26	Appalachian State University	19	2
27	Elon University	19	2
28	Emerson College	19	2
29	University of Oregon	19	3
30	Illinois State University	18	4
31	University of Illinois	17	2

department support staff, particularly as some course listings posted names not included in department listings or in university directories and not all institutions publish information for instructors whose appointment is less than full-time. These instructors could be graduate assistants, lecturers, online instructors or adjuncts. In some cases, a query, “why is X an instructor and not an adjunct?” led to the answer: “oh, that must be a mistake,” suggests that not all information gathered electronically is 100 percent accurate or up-to-date. Additionally, professionals in residence, we found, tended not to offer academic credentials on bio pages, emphasizing instead professional credentials. Thus, phone interviews became essential to data collection. All the information was tabulated and a percentage calculated for each institution [Table 2].

Terracina-Hartman & Nulph: Campus media adviser credentials

Table 2: Adviser and Skills Instructor Credentials

#	School	Ph.D./ JD Skills Class	MFA Skills Class	MA/MS/ MBA Skills Class	BA/BS/ Spec. Skills Class	Total Skills Class profs	Percent Ph.D. of Total	Percent Masters and others	Advisor Ph.D.	Advisor MA/MS /MFA/ BA/BS	Location
1	Marshall University	4	1	6	1	12	33.3%	66.7%	2	1	Dept.
2	University of North Carolina	12	1	12	2	27	44.4%	55.6%	0	2	Ind. Student Media
3	Arizona State University	6	1	9	6	22	27.3%	72.7%	0	2	Media
4	West Texas A & M University	4	0	13	0	17	23.5%	76.5%	2	3	Dept.
5	University of Miami	4	0	13	0	17	23.5%	76.5%	2	3	Dept.
6	Ithaca College	5	1	10	1	17	29.4%	70.6%	2	4	Dept.
7	University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh	1	1	5	2	9	11.1%	88.9%	0	3	Dept.
8	Monmouth University	3	2	7	1	13	23.1%	76.9%	3	3	Dept.
9	Minnesota State University	3	2	3	2	10	30.0%	70.0%	2	4	Dept. Student Affairs
10	Indiana University	4	1	10	3	18	22.2%	77.8%	1	1	Dept. Student Affairs
11	Brigham Young University – Provo	6	0	11	0	17	35.3%	64.7%	2	2	Ind.
12	University of Florida	4	1	2	2	9	44.4%	55.6%	1	1	Dept. Ind./Dept.
13	Colorado State University	3	0	6	1	10	30.0%	70.0%	1	1	Ind./Dept.
14	Columbia College – Chicago	5	3	4	4	12	41.7%	58.3%	4	4	Ind./Dept.
15	University of Oklahoma	2	1	4	3	10	20.0%	80.0%	3	3	Dept. Student Media
16	Oklahoma State University	6	0	7	6	19	31.6%	68.4%	2	2	Ind./Dept.
17	Michigan State University	6	2	4	3	15	40.0%	60.0%	2	2	Ind./Dept.
18	Rider University	11	1	1	0	13	84.6%	15.4%	1	2	Dept.
19	Western Illinois University	6	1	5	1	13	46.2%	53.8%	2	2	Dept.
20	Central Michigan University	6	1	5	1	13	46.2%	53.8%	2	2	Dept.
21	Savannah College of Art and Design	4	3	7	0	14	28.6%	71.4%	3	3	Dept.
22	Weber State University	3	8	8	4	23	13.0%	87.0%	4	4	Market
23	University	2	0	2	1	5	40.0%	60.0%	1	2	Dept.
Total		100	27	135	43	305	32.8%	67.2%	10	51	

Results

The survey yielded a response rate of N = 297 for the five groups solicited for the online survey [Table 3] :

Organization	# Active Members	#Response	Response Percentage	Messages Bounced
BEA	172	68	40%	0
CHI	159	31	20%	5
CMA	616	117	19%	0
NBS/AERho	109	33	32%	5
SCJ	140	43	35%	17
Totals	1196	292	29%	27
ACP	5	5		
N=		297		

For Associated Collegiate Press, ACP, a collector was opened, which included the link sent to several advisers, petitioning access to the membership listserv. N = 5, with those responses likely coming from those petitioned. Total survey population is 297, or 29 percent.

Judging by results of one question that asked respondents to indicate membership in the various groups, overlap is possible. Also, comments from some potential respondents questioned whether they should actually complete the survey, as their title does not include “adviser,” such as Director of Student Media or General Manager. It is likely others with the same question merely chose not to respond. It also must be noted that some advisers hold two roles simultaneously in their hiring contract, either by working overload, being paid through a stipend or working directly under a student media corporation; thus, they may have checked “full-time” and “part-time” under employment status, which sees N surpassing 297 for some responses.

In terms of educational credentials – now and at time of hire – as well as years of professional media experience: as indicated below, the survey results revealed significant movement toward terminal degrees from time of hire to present [Table 4]. Less than 1 percent of respondents reported “ABD” status at time of hire, so this was collapsed into “master of arts degree.”

Table 4: Educational Credentials

Education Credentials: When Hired vs Present Day			
Degree Held	When Hired	Present Day	Percent Change
Bachelors	66	37	-44%
MA	125	94	-25%
MS	42	42	0%
MFA	3	9	200%
MBA	6	7	17%
Ed.D.	2	10	400%
Ph.D.	48	86	79%

Breaking it down by degree, most notable is the increase in number of advisers who hold a doctorate, a jump of 79 percent or Ed.D., an increase of 400 percent, and drastic decrease in the advisers who hold a only a bachelor’s degree.

Advisers with professional media experience reported a substantial number of years experience with 79 noting more than 15 years and another 86 with 10 – 15 years [Table 5].

Advisers also reported great longevity in their positions with 108 reporting more than 15 years, 48 with 10.5 – 15 years and another 55 with 6.5 – 10 academic years spent serving in advising positions.

Table 5: Years of Experience

Years of Professional Experience					
Years	0 - 3	3 - 6	6 - 10	10 - 15	15 +
# of Advisers	31	42	53	86	79
Academic Years in Advising Positions					
Years	0 - 3	3.5 - 6	6.5 - 10	10.5 - 15	15+
# of Advisers	42	40	55	48	108

The longevity of advisers mirrors age range: the highest percentage is 50+ at 58 percent, with 32 percent over 55, followed by 45 — 50 and 30 – 35 at 3 percent each. One respondent was reported at 27 years old. This data seem to indicate adviser ranks are filled with older, experienced academics who have a significant number of years advising as well as years of experience. Since gaining experience usually involves a career outside of academia, these data and survey results indicate a significant number of advisers worked in media careers prior to joining academia.

A comparative analysis of the top programs examined how student media affiliate to their campus institution. Of these top 21, 13 say campus media are part of curriculum, two are located within the Student Affairs or Marketing departments, five are a private corporation and / or completely independent of the college or university and one is nonprofit. Thus, H2 appears to be supported. While some institutions group their campus media into a “student media corporation,” a trend is visible as to how the different entities are treated, located and funded. A student newspaper, for example, is more easily independent as the key equipment needs (e.g., a printing press, delivery) can be contracted out. Conversely, campus radio, because of needs for equipment, a license, transmitter, tower, etc., likely has some partner, either through the university or through the department with funding from student fees (a one-time grant or ongoing). Student television is least likely to be completely independent of a university, primarily because of its need for studio space and equipment, and is most likely, according to results, to receive funding from student fees.

But with 13 of the top 21 programs housed within an academic department, a trend of excellence must be acknowledged that suggests a correlation with a location in Journalism & Mass Communication curriculum [Table 2].

Data analysis of academic rank for advisers and professors who teach skills courses showed that of the 21 schools researched, 100 held a Ph.D., 27 an MFA, 135 an MA/MS/or MBA degree and 43 a BA/BS degree or were classified as a specialist with indeterminate academic credentials. Ph.D.s teach 32.8 percent of skills courses in successful programs, while non-terminal-degreed professors teach 67.2 percent (it is noted that some universities and colleges do recognize the MFA and MBA as terminal degrees). Of advisers for whom academic credentials could be determined, 10 hold Ph.D.s while 51 hold non-terminal degrees. Thus, these results appear to support H3 and H4. Approximately 200 of 293 (68 percent) respondents indicated their institutions are four-year with master’s and / or master’s with doctoral programs.

Data Analysis

Survey results appear to answer RQ1. To further confirm results for RQ1 support H1, chi square tests of independence were run. Significant results were found for current higher education credentials ($\chi^2(1) = 22x.80, p < .05$) as compared to credentials at time of hire, supporting H1.

On the question of where student media are housed (within Journalism / Mass Communication departments, independent, within Student Affairs, nonprofit or other) data analysis results of top 21 award winners answered RQ2. To further confirm support of H2, which states award-winning programs are more likely to be housed within academic departments, a phone survey was conducted, confirming that 13 of the top 21 programs (or 62 percent)

are located within the relevant curriculum / departments of the university institution. Likewise, on the question of RQ3, the results could be seen to lend support for H3 and H4. H3 states: Award-winning programs are more likely to be advised by bachelor's/master's degree holders than by Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s., while H4 proposes: Media skills classes are more likely to be taught by bachelor's/master's degree holders than by Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s. The data analysis of award-winning programs identified the top 21 programs according to participation in contests conducted by organizations within the study parameters. To further confirm, crosstabs and chi-square tests of independence were conducted. A significant interaction was found ($\chi^2(1) = 11.229, p < .05$).

To further examine the results, a comparison of present level of education and length of time in advising position was conducted. The following results are reported by degree as significant for frequency of co-occurrence: master's degree and 10.5 to 15 and 15+ academic years ($N = 156$ advisers, 143 at the master's degree level). A crosstabs comparison of age and degree at present day offered significant results. A chi-square was conducted with the following results confirmed as significant for the above-mentioned two lengths of time in position categories:

- Bachelor's degree $\chi^2(1) = 23.07, p < .05$
- Master of Arts $\chi^2(1) = 17.228, p < .05$
- Master of Science $\chi^2(1) = 13.177, p < .05$
- MFA $\chi^2(1) = 8.690, p < .05$
- Ed.D. $\chi^2(1) = 22.439, p < .05$
- Ph.D. $\chi^2(1) = 11.219, p < .05$

Discussion

The findings of this three-part research study may be but a snapshot of advisers and skills instructors who lead and educate campus media groups and the complexity of the Mass Communications/Journalism/Student Life departments and / or the campuses associated with them. But what these results do is confirm a distinct majority of institutions depend on instructors with bachelor's/master's level with professional media experience for advisory roles and teaching the majority of skills courses—results that support the importance of requiring professional experience and not just the terminal degree as part of the hiring criteria.

Kopenhaver's 2005 and 2008 surveys of College Media Advisers indicated longevity in the membership; this study's survey results are similar. The value of this research study then becomes clear when looking at the decline of advisers who are in tenure-track positions and who are attaining tenure as well as with the predominant age group of advisers responding to this survey (50+).

As the Du and Downes and Jihari studies on hiring trends have indicated and as the longevity of current advisers shows, the trend towards hiring Ph.D.s with little or no regard to professional experience is not adding significantly to the adviser ranks; thus, the nature of advising positions might see significant structural changes within the next decade. If adviser positions continue the trend of locating in administrative departments, then the dichotomy now indicated in the literature and in the survey results may persist: position announcements will emphasize academic credentials; advisers will earn a terminal degree

post-hire; and the faculty with relevant professional experience and master's degrees will dominate the teaching assignments for skills-intensive classes. Viewing results of the top award-winning programs, the value of this study's findings for administrators is clear: while academic credentials are important, consideration of professional experience may be just as important for positions that involve working with campus media or instructing skills courses.

The results of this study could guide administrators in choosing advisers and structuring campus media groups, as well as streamlining media practices. It also could help advisers achieve stability in their positions as more and more are composing their own job descriptions (Kopenhaver 2009).

A few study design choices must be noted. A survey instrument directed to advisers may not sufficiently capture the complexity of each individual campus media group's structure. Judging by comments submitted from some participants, some lack the title of "Adviser," being labeled instead as "engineer" or "general manager," yet these people are the staff who work with student journalists daily. On paper, "adviser" can be a figurehead who holds the doctorate and is an administrator managing budgets and curriculum, but does not engage the students regularly in their media production. Yet, as this person is adviser of record on all advising organizations and on the media group's staffbox, this person received a survey invitation. Therefore, the picture of the education component of doctoral holders could skew the results.

The list of five national student media organizations used for this research is not deemed an exhaustive list. Organizations were chosen to provide a thorough mix of large and small institutions and in some cases, the study was designed based upon data availability during the study time period. But, as this study is the first to link adviser credentials and student media performance, it is a launch point with which to begin this new line of research.

As information for certain schools may not be exact, the authors employed the most exhaustive data collection methods available to present as complete a picture as possible. But there is a marked absence in standard organization for student media at the campus level. For the most complete picture the best option would be to survey the departments, beginning at the national conferences, but perhaps also on site to gather information from all involved, as it is indeed possible that not one single person possesses all information necessary to develop a complete picture of each department's structure.

As campus media organizations tend to be insular with products and productions the only visibility, the personnel and adviser involved in production tend to stay low profile unless attracting the ire of the administration or bookkeeper. National membership groups tend to offer campus media advisers and their students an opportunity for professionalism, scholarship, an enhanced skill set (Kopenhaver 2009), as well as resources and support when they are under fire (Tolstedt 1994).

Further studies

The results of this research study revealed data patterns relevant to advisers, practitioners, scholars and administrators. The survey instrument asked the Ph.D. and Ed.D. respondents to list the subjects of their degrees; a supplemental survey would ask how and why they chose to pursue the degree and their areas of study. Having listened to a debate

at a recent CMA conference about how yet another state system was forcing all faculty to earn the doctorate or lose their positions, the authors feel it would be an interesting line of analysis to see the results and how/if the students benefited from that degree completion. The authors also would like to catalog the range and types of professional media experience of the advisers and hope to continue pursuing this line of research with a longitudinal approach not only to track the changes in adviser ranks, but also in the structure of adviser positions and campus media. Tracking changes in campus media may help institutions anticipate and manage the hiring for and structure of campus media adviser positions.

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