<center>**Research Prospectus**</center>

What we Know

Academic coaching in higher education is a student-centered, goal-oriented form of support that emphasizes self-regulation, motivation, and strategy development rather than direct instruction (Campbell & Mogashana, 2024). Coaches help students set goals, develop time-management and study skills, monitor progress, and navigate institutional requirements. Academic coaching differs from traditional academic advising or mentoring because the coach's role is less directive and more collaborative, emphasizing empowerment and student agency (Robinson, 2015). The Coaching in Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) defines coaching as a tailored connection that nurtures students' autonomy, self-awareness, development, and perseverance as they progress on their academic journey (CHEC, 2023). A collaborative partnership with an academic coach focuses on clarifying academic, personal, and professional goals through structured, guided approaches (Mogashana et al., 2023). This approach involves reflective questioning, formal self-assessment, strategy sharing, and the co-creation of tangible plans (Robinson, 2015).

Previous literature has shown a positive relationship between academic coaching and academic performance, particularly among students who are academically at risk (e.g., Capstick et al., 2019; Minglin, 2019; Singhani et al., 2022). For example, a study using quasi-experimental methods (i.e., not a true experiment with random assignment to the intervention) found that students with GPAs between 1.0 and 2.0 who participated in academic coaching reported increases in GPA of approximately 0.4 points during the semester they received coaching, compared with peers who did not receive academic coaching (Alzen et al., 2021). The same study also found that students who received academic coaching were more likely to persist into the next semester and to take more credits. Academic coaching has also been linked to higher persistence, retention, and degree completion. For example, research conducted by Bettinger and Baker suggested long-term (i.e., 24-month) retention benefits associated with receiving academic coaching, compared with peers who did not receive it (2014). That same study found that students who received academic coaching were more likely to complete their degree within the standard timeframe compared with peers who did not receive academic coaching. The students who received academic coaching had a collective graduation rate that was approximately 13 percent higher than their peers who did not receive academic coaching (2014).

Gaps in the Literature

Several important gaps in the existing literature require attention in postsecondary education research. First, the literature reflects diverse definitions and models of academic coaching (Campbell & Mogashana). Some models emphasize academic skills and training, while others include personal development, retention planning, and/or motivational aspects. This ambiguity and heterogeneity in definitions, models, and approaches can make it difficult to

evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of academic coaching when considering investments in student supports. There has also been limited use of longitudinal approaches examining cohort effects and long-term outcomes associated with academic coaching models. Some studies track students across multiple academic terms; however, there is a distinct lack of long-term longitudinal studies that follow multiple cohorts from enrollment through graduation to explore the effects of academic coaching. Several studies have also relied on smaller samples, which lowers the generalizability of the core findings. While theories such as self-efficacy and self-regulated learning are often invoked, empirical work testing mediators of coaching effects (e.g., changes in motivation and study habits) remains underdeveloped. Understanding how and for whom coaching works would help refine program design. Finally, there is limited evidence on how coaching effects vary by demographic factors (e.g., race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status) or academic background. Some research suggests that full-time non-traditional-age students may benefit differently from traditional students, but more comprehensive subgroup analyses are needed.

Aims

This proposed project aims to examine the outcomes associated with academic coaching at Cleveland State University. Using longitudinal methods, these associations will be explored across multiple enrollment cohorts within the university population. This project will address and fill multiple of the aforementioned gaps in the existing literature.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the project:

RQ1: *Are there college-level differences in academic coaching effectiveness?*

RQ2: *Are there program/major-level differences in academic coaching effectiveness?*

RQ3: *Are there differences in university trends since the university-wide implementation of the academic coaching program?*

RQ4: *What relationships exist between perceived campus climate and student outcomes?*

RQ5: *Does academic coaching moderate those relationships, if they exist?*

RQ6: *Do any student-specific characteristics (e.g., gender identity, age, etc.) influence the effectiveness of academic coaching?*

Variables of Interest

Multiple student outcomes will be evaluated throughout the research project. These outcomes include academic performance, student persistence, academic progress, academic coaching utilization and adherence, and perceived campus climate. Additionally, behavioral and

social outcomes will be analyzed, including student satisfaction, institutional integration, and subjective feelings of loneliness and belonging.

Analytic Approach

Multiple quantitative analyses will be used, including logistic regression, linear regression, multilevel modeling, ANOVA, and growth curve modeling. If appropriate university data are available, quasi-experimental methods will be used to assess the effectiveness of the implementation and the fidelity of the graduation coaching program.

Proposed Timeline

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Initial IRB Proposal	▓											
Baseline Analysis (Fall25 Data)	▓											
IRB Modification			▓									
Administer Campus Climate Survey			▓		▓		▓		▓		▓	
University Data Collection			▓		▓		▓		▓		▓	
Presentation at national conference						▓				▓		
Funder Annual Report				▓				▓				▓
Peer-Reviewed Manuscript Submission							▓				▓	

Note: Q1 = January to March; Q2 = April to June; Q3 = July to September; Q4 = October to December.

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