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EFFECTS OF STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENT STAFF MEMBERS
ON STUDENT MEDIA ADVISERS' BURNOUT LEVELS

Tabitha Y. Gilliland

Effects of Strong Relationships with Student Staff Members
on Student Media Advisers' Burnout Levels

A thesis
Presented to
the College of Graduate Studies
Austin Peay State University
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Communication

Tabitha Y. Gilliland

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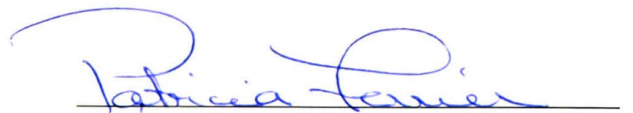
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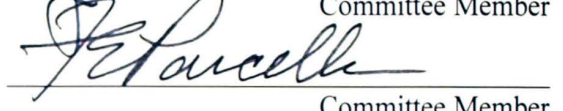
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ABSTRACT

TABITHA Y. GILLILAND. Effects of Strong Relationships with Student Staff Members on Student Media Advisers' Burnout Levels (under the direction of DR. PATRICIA FERRIER).

While research has shown that college and university student media advisers' burnout levels are not generally high, burnout of any sort has negative impacts on individuals and organizations. Many student publications advisers spend a great deal of time with their student staff members, and it was hypothesized that those who report strong relationships with those students will measure lower on the Maslach Burnout Inventory than advisers who do not. An online survey measured burnout and student relationship levels of 167 student media advisers. While respondents measured low in burnout, with low to moderate emotional exhaustion, low depersonalization and high personal accomplishment, those who reported strong relationships with student staff members measured lower on the burnout scale than those who did not report strong relationships. The study concludes that strong relationships with student staff members are not an all-encompassing cure for adviser burnout, but the correlation provides evidence that the student relationship could be one important key to helping advisers combat burnout.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Advising student publications at colleges and universities around the country can mean facing myriad troubles: censorship through threats of limited funding, loss of jobs (Boggs, 2002; Lehmert, 2002), prior review (Maternowski, 2009), and theft (“Student Newspapers Hit by Theft,” 2009); lawsuits against student newspapers (“‘Butt Licking’ Title,” 1998; “Hofstra Newspaper Sued,” 1996); schools declining open records requests (Waananen, 2009); prominent campus figures refusing to interview (Bohler, 2008); readers protesting (“Law Professor Calls Sex Column,” 2009); students in distress (Robert, 2005); and much more.

Concerns about struggles of such magnitude can weigh advisers down, especially when combined with the day-to-day demands of advising student media. A problem called job burnout can creep in, poisoning the adviser’s motivation and sapping his concern for the students. Burnout is a challenge for professionals everywhere, and advisers are not immune, though research has shown high levels of burnout are not widespread (Filak & Reinardy, 2009). However, the important role of an adviser suggests even moderate levels of burnout are worth examining.

Among the more typical responsibilities, student media advisers provide support, nurturing, and stability for student staff members. Advisers can foster great publications by respecting student work, learning, and decision-making (Brandon, 2008). The adviser is a constant in the newsroom, and he or she can set the tone of the newsroom’s culture

— so a healthy adviser can mean a healthy student newspaper, magazine, radio station, Web site, yearbook, or other media outlet.

This study will explore burnout, its impact among student publications advisers and the correlations with strong relationships with student staff members for the purpose of arming advisers with tools for warding off burnout and its serious consequences.

Confucius is credited with saying “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life” (Thinkexist.com, n.d.). Nice idea, but a quick sampling of America’s workforce suggests that many employees have not yet found the jobs they love — or perhaps that the jobs they love, contrary to Confucius’ wisdom, have transformed into work. From 2008 to 2009, Americans’ job satisfaction declined (Page, 2010), and with the grim job market forecast to remain lethargic for a while longer (Wiseman, 2010), the increasingly unhappy workforce is unlikely to find relief anytime soon. Perhaps the solution for employees for whom “work” was once a joy, though, is not finding new jobs they love. The solution may involve understanding — and fighting off — the epidemic problem of burnout.

Burnout is an issue throughout healthcare, education and ministry professions (Malugani, n.d.) and the student publications advising niche is no different. However, the job of advising student publications is not shown to trigger more burnout than many related fields (Reinardy, Maksl, & Filak, 2009; Filak, 2009; Brewer & McMahan, 2003; Reinardy, 2008; Reinardy, 2006; Azeem & Nazir, 2008; Ghorpade, Lackritz & Singh, 2007; Kanervo & Ferrier, 1998; Tumkaya, 2007). Because studies indicate that strong relationships have the power to diminish burnout symptoms (Carroll, Ford & Wade, 2003), this study sought to examine the value of relationships to student media advisers.

Specifically, student media advisers' burnout levels and the qualities of their relationships with student staff members were explored to learn whether meaningful relationships with students help advisers ward off burnout. Additionally, the study examined whether the adviser's gender, the number of publications and students an adviser oversees and time away from family are factors in burnout.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Among workers everywhere, a common problem is burnout, “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do ‘people-work’ of some kind” (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). It is physical, emotional, spiritual, interpersonal, and intellectual exhaustion (Paine, 1982). Carroll and White (1982) went so far as to suggest the equation for burnout begins with a worker who is inadequate at managing stress and meeting needs and whose job is in a stressful and “need-frustrating” workplace. Add in personal struggles and environmental issues — those at work, at home, and elsewhere — and burnout can set in (Carroll & White, 1982).

In 1975, Freudenberger was one of the first scholars to write about burnout after having experienced “emotional depletion and a loss of motivation and commitment” and seeing others struggle with it in the health care agency where he worked. The term “burnout” came to be commonly used to describe the difficulty of the relationship between a worker and the souring of his or her job, but the topic of study was initially considered “pop psychology” or “a fashionable buzz term” among many research scholars (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Pood & Jellicorse, 1984). Scholars’ primary criticism was that burnout research was incongruent with other workplace research, which was based on scholarly theory, because it was based on data about employees’ experiences. In its purest form, research is conducted to develop or refine a theory, a formal collection of concepts, generalizations, and principals that offer explanations for how an aspect of the world operates. Basing research on theory provides a valuable tie to a larger concept and to other researchers, takes research beyond the purely descriptive

level and gives purpose to the work (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). In time, theoretical models and quantitative research quieted the disapproval of burnout research (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

A reader comment (Burnout, 1984) printed in the October 1984 edition of the Association for Communication Administration Bulletin shows some indication that this relatively new idea was taking hold: “Although there are many people who feel that burnout is only a new buzz word, it may prove useful to look for these symptoms whenever a bad day seems overpowering,” the reader wrote, referring to Freudenberger’s (1980) list of burnout symptoms: “exhaustion, detachment, boredom, cynicism, impatience, irritability, a sense of omnipotence, feeling unappreciated, paranoia, disorientation, psychosomatic complaints, depression, and denial of feelings” (Lipson & Koehler (1986) explained that the presence of both omnipotence and impotence in dealing with patients’ problems causes emotional highs and lows that contribute to burnout). Paine (1982) explained that media hype and the sentiment that burnout and job stress are nothing new and nothing to waste time studying had left the topic a bit “shopworn” — but he added that dismissing the topic would carry grave consequences.

In time, scholarship on the topic of burnout quieted criticisms. Maslach and Jackson made strides on the topic when they created the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), and use of the MBI since its creation in 1981 has been widespread and continues to be used widely nearly 30 years later. The MBI examines the three dimensions of burnout — emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment — into which Maslach and Jackson (1981) categorized burnout’s various symptoms.

Employees exhibit emotional exhaustion, the first component of burnout, when they feel they can no longer “give of themselves at a psychological level” (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Individuals experiencing burnout feel overextended and physically and emotionally drained (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Some workers plagued by emotional exhaustion may sense a loss of concern, interest, trust, and spirit (Maslach, 1982).

The second component of burnout, depersonalization, is the development of “negative, cynical attitudes and feelings” toward the individuals a worker serves; in Maslach and Jackson’s (1981) studies of human services personnel, the recipients of these attitudes and feelings were clients; for most student media advisers, the recipients would be students. This is the interpersonal component of burnout, and it is a coping mechanism to “avoid intense emotional arousal that could interfere with functioning effectively on the job” (p. 400). Workers who experience this feel negative, unsympathetic, and greatly unconcerned about those they serve and attempt to lessen the demands of their work by considering those people “impersonal objects of one’s work” (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). This dimension of burnout may be marked by a loss of idealism (Maslach, 1982).

The third dimension of burnout is negative self-evaluation, especially pertaining to one’s work, categorized as personal accomplishment by Maslach and Jackson (1981). An individual may feel he or she does not accomplish anything worthwhile, for instance, when experiencing the personal accomplishment component of burnout. This dimension of burnout has also been described as “depression, low morale, reduced productivity or capability and an inability to cope” (Maslach, 1982).

Scholars disagree on the order in which burnout components take root.

Exhaustion and depersonalization share a strong relationship throughout burnout research in a variety of organization and occupation types. Combining those two components with tremendous, unrelenting demands at work can easily wear down an individual's sense of efficacy, therefore leading to negative personal accomplishment (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Overall, though, Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) suggest the worker's sense of negative personal accomplishment stems more from inadequate resources, while exhaustion and depersonalization stem from "work overload and social conflict."

In contrast, Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli and Buunk (2001b) compare established burnout component models by Leiter and Maslach (1988), Golembiewski, Munzenrider, and Stevenson (1986), and Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli, and Buunk (2001a) and find their own model to be the most accurate. This model proposed personal accomplishment as the starting point of the burnout process, whereas Leiter and Maslach (1988) suggested it as the end point and Golembiewski, Munzenrider, and Stevenson (1986) proposed it as the mediator between the other two components, exhaustion and depersonalization (Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli, & Buunk, 2001b).

Whatever the order of burnout's dimensions, scholars agree that the occurrence of burnout can bear consequences like a decrease in quality of care provided by the burned-out worker and an increase in job turnover, absenteeism, low morale, drug and alcohol abuse, and illness (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Ray, 1991). Carroll and White (1982) propose that the decrease in quality of care is first and foremost among burnout's consequences in the workplace — and it can occur even when obvious signs indicate the

organization is maintaining the quality or level of service or even improving. Other indications of burned-out employees include increases in: competition and distrust between departments; authority conflicts; organizational decision-making being conducted by an elite group without input from lower-level employees; poor communications; formal, proper interactions replacing friendly, informal contacts; disrespect and distrust between workers and management leading to a push for policy-making on their respective “rights, responsibilities and relationships”; tardiness; managers spending more time away from the workplace and less time interacting with staff; absenteeism; staff turnover; accidents in the workplace; theft by employees; drug or alcohol abuse by employees on the job; and problems between the organization and other organizations, bodies, and communities (Carroll & White, 1982). Clearly, the impact of burnout in individuals, organizations, and society is so negative that burnout is worth examining if it is to be contained and perhaps eliminated.

Burnout among Advisers

While their jobs can weigh advisers down, the pressure was not causing widespread burnout among 244 college journalism advisers Filak and Reinardy (2009) surveyed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Despite moderate rates of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, advisers reported high levels of personal accomplishment in their jobs. Female advisers reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion than men, but they still fell within the moderate range. Overall, the data indicated the advisers who participated in the survey had learned to cope and were satisfied in their work (Filak & Reinardy, 2009). In another study, college journalism advisers also reported extremely high levels of job satisfaction (Filak, 2009).

In a study of college media advisers' high school counterparts, 563 high school journalism advisers reported moderate levels of emotional exhaustion and low levels of both depersonalization and personal accomplishment (Reinardy, Maksl, & Filak, 2009). High school journalism advisers also reported extremely high levels of job satisfaction (Filak, 2009). As Nagy (2006) explained in a personal account, even the most enthusiastic advisers are not immune to burnout.

High school teachers who provide hands-on, practical instruction are technical and industrial instructors. In one study, they reported average levels of burnout on all three dimensions (Brewer & McMahan, 2003). In general, burnout has been frequently used to describe teachers (Farber, 2000).

Professional journalists reported moderate levels of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment with high levels of depersonalization, with women ranking higher than men on all three components (Reinardy, 2008). In another study, though, professional sports journalists reported moderate emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and high levels of personal accomplishment (Reinardy, 2006).

In another related realm, teaching in higher education can lead to burnout (Azeem & Nazir, 2008; Ghorpade, Lackritz & Singh, 2007; Kanervo & Ferrier, 1998; Tumkaya, 2007), and Barnes, Agago and Coombs (1998) established that time commitment frustrations and the lack of a sense of community at the institution were the two main factors prompting faculty members to consider a departure from academia. In a study of online course instructors, the group ranked average on emotional exhaustion, high on depersonalization, and low on personal accomplishment (Hogan & McKnight, 2007). Another group who works with students at the college and university level is athletic

coaches, who, in an earlier study, did not report high levels of burnout (though females did report higher burnout than males) (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984).

Workplace Relationships and Burnout

Many studies have shown correlations between burnout and possible contributing or mitigating factors. Scholars suggest that problematic relationships in the workplace correlate with burnout (Becker, Halbesleben, & O'Hair, 2005; Carroll, Ford & Wade, 2003; Fritz & Omdahl, 2006), and strong, positive communication relationships yield more positive results in the workplace and less burnout (Carroll, Ford & Wade, 2003), though the topic is under-explored (Fritz & Omdahl, 2006). Fritz and Omdahl (2006) found that in demanding situations, supportive relationships provide the energy and inspiration to manage the demands.

While research has indicated the state of relationships with supervisors — as opposed to relationships with peers — plays the most significant role in an employee's burnout levels (Fritz & Omdahl, 2006), the unique environment of student media organizations leaves advisers spending significant amounts of time with students, more so than their faculty colleagues. Furthermore, the tone of the newsroom is an equalizer of sorts and has been for decades. As Breed's seminal work explained in 1955, it is a "friendly, first-namish place" where editors and executives engage in discussions and work together pleasantly with staffers.

Among the more typical responsibilities, student publications advisers provide support, nurturing, and stability for staff members and sustain relationships with editors. This factor is worth examining more closely because it could play a role in decreasing

burnout levels among college journalism advisers and prevent qualified, dedicated, high-achieving advisers from leaving the field.

This study proposes that the satisfaction of strong, meaningful relationships with students on the publication staffs may be a key to helping advisers ward off burnout. It examines advisers' levels of relationships with students and any correlation with the advisers' levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

For the purposes of this research, an operational definition of the adviser-student relationship has been established as the bond formed through interactions in a professional environment and within the confines of traditional teacher-student relational boundaries.

Measuring the correlations between adviser burnout and relationships with students is important because burnout can increase adviser turnover rates and lead to a host of other problems for student media and the advisers themselves; additionally, conflict at home and work can contribute negatively to the amount and quality of work that advisers can accomplish (Reinardy, 2006). Learning about these correlations between relationships and burnout and their impacts on particular groups like women (Reinardy, 2008) could yield benefits specifically for female advisers.

The purpose of this study was to provide more data on advisers and burnout in an effort to arm advisers with more tools for warding off burnout and its serious consequences.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Through a survey of college media advisers using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and questions exploring their relationships with students, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: Advisers who enjoy strong relationships with student staff members will report lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher levels of personal accomplishment than advisers who do not report strong relationships with student staff members.

Hypothesis 2: Female advisers who enjoy strong relationships with student staff members will report higher levels of personal accomplishment than their male colleagues who also enjoy strong relationships with students.

Hypothesis 3: Advisers who oversee two or fewer publications and/or a total of 39 or fewer students as their full-time jobs will report lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher levels of personal accomplishment than advisers who oversee three or more publications and/or a total of 40 or more students.

Hypothesis 4: Advisers who take seven or more hours per week away from family above their 40-hour work week to spend advising will report higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than those who take six or fewer hours per week away from family. Seven was chosen as the number of hours for this hypothesis because the advising job is rarely a five-days-per-week job — the seven-hour figure accounts for one hour per day, including weekend days.

This study sampled members of the national College Media Advisers organization via e-mail. In the e-mails, recipients were asked to take the online survey if they advise or have in the past advised one or more student publications. After the initial e-mail, reminder e-mails were sent at the one- and two-week marks. An e-mail was also sent to the CMA listserv at the two-week mark to request responses. The online survey was open from March 1 to March 21, 2010.

The survey first gathered demographic information — age and gender (see the appendix for the full survey). Participants were also asked to indicate whether they currently advised student media or did so in the past, how many publications they advised, how many students they worked with, whether advising was their full-time job, and whether they were considered staff, faculty or something else. Additionally, the survey asked questions about the number of hours they were directed to spend advising, the number they actually spent advising, how they would otherwise spend that time if not advising, and what percent of the day they spent with students.

The next portion of the survey was the Maslach Burnout Inventory, modified to replace “recipients” with “students” in each statement (Evers, Tomic & Brouwers, 2005; Wilkerson, 2009). Divided into three sections, the inventory features nine statements on emotional exhaustion, eight on personal accomplishment, and five on depersonalization. The emotional exhaustion section includes statements like “I feel emotionally drained from my work,” “Working with people directly puts too much stress on me,” and “I feel I’m working too hard on my job.” The personal accomplishment section includes statements like “I can easily understand how my students feel about things,” “I feel I’m positively influencing other people’s lives through my work,” and “I feel very energetic.”

Depersonalization statements include “I’ve become more callous toward people since I took this job,” “I don’t really care what happens to some students,” and “I feel students blame me for some of their problems.” Participants were asked to indicate the frequency rate at which they experience the feelings described in each statement on a Likert-type scale, from 0 (“Never”) to 6 (“Daily”).

In the third section of the survey, participants were asked to classify their relationships with students as weak, between weak and average, average, between average and strong, and strong. Next, respondents were asked to indicate the frequency at which they experience feelings like “I make a difference in my students’ lives,” “I feel close to my students,” and “I spend time with students outside work.” It was clarified that each mention of “students” was referring to student publications staff members.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The CMA member list included 794 members. E-mail addresses were not listed for 22 members, but attempts to find addresses for those members were successful for all but two. Of the 792 e-mail addresses, 64 e-mails were returned undeliverable. The total sample was 728 individuals, and the total number to complete the survey was 167, a 22.9 percent response rate. This rate is less than some recent studies (Filak, 2009; Reinardy & Filak, 2009; Reinardy, Maksl & Filak, 2009). Twenty-two respondents began but did not finish the survey, and their responses were removed from the data.

Participants in this survey ranged in age, with the largest group of respondents, 45 (27.3 percent) selecting the option “56 or older.” The second largest group, 27 respondents (16.4 percent) was 31 to 35 years old. The smallest group, with one respondent, was 25 or younger. Seventy-one respondents (43 percent) were female, while 94 (57 percent) were male. Two did not answer the age question, and two declined to indicate gender.

A majority of respondents — 151 (92.1 percent) — indicated they advised one or more student publications at a college or university, while 11 (6.7 percent) indicated they had done so in the past (see Table 1). Three respondents did not answer this question. Most respondents — 53.7 percent — advised one student publication, while 24.4 percent advised 2; 11.6 percent, 3; 4.3 percent, 4; and 6.1 percent, 5 or more. Three did not answer this question.

Table 1

Number of publications respondents advised

Answer Options	Response	Response Count
	Percent	
One	53.7%	88
Two	24.4%	40
Three	11.6%	19
Four	4.3%	7
Five or more	6.1%	10

The largest number of respondents, 40 (24.5 percent), worked with 10 to 19 students in their advising roles (See Table 2); 22.7 percent worked with 20 to 29; and 17.8 percent worked with 70 or more. Three other responses, 30 to 39, 1 to 9, and 40 to 49 ranked close together with 9.8, 8 and 8 percents respectively, while 50 to 59 and 60 to 69 ranked close together with 4.9 and 4.3 percents respectively. Four participants did not answer this question.

Most respondents — 67.8 percent — said advising is not a full-time job for them because they also teach; 29.5 percent indicated that advising is their full-time job, while 2.7 percent said they also work outside the university (see Table 3). Twenty-eight respondents, or 19 percent, indicated “other” for this answer. Their explanations ran the gamut from also working in Communications, Student Affairs, Student Life, or the Career Center to fulfilling business and advertising roles for the student media. Twenty-one skipped this question. More than half of the respondents — 86 (52.1 percent) identified themselves as faculty at their schools; 33.9 percent were considered staff; 14.5 percent, both staff and faculty (see Table 4). Two skipped this question.

Table 2

Number of students with whom respondents worked in media advising roles

Answer Options	Response	Response Count
	Percent	
1 to 9	8.0%	13
10 to 19	24.5%	40
20 to 29	22.7%	37
30 to 39	9.8%	16
40 to 49	8.0%	13
50 to 59	4.9%	8
60 to 69	4.3%	7
70 or more	17.8%	29

Table 3

Respondents' answers to 'Is advising your full-time job?'

Answer Options	Response	Response Count
	Percent	
No, I also teach.	67.8%	99
No, I also work outside the university.	2.7%	4
Yes.	29.5%	43
Other (please explain)		28

Table 4

Respondents' roles at their schools

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Staff	33.9%	56
Faculty	52.1%	86
Both staff and faculty (please explain)	14.5%	24

Table 5

Number of hours job descriptions directed respondents to spend advising

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
10	32.4%	34
20	32.4%	34
30	8.6%	9
40	28.6%	30
Other (please specify)		65

Job descriptions directed 32.4 percent of respondents to spend 10 hours advising and the same percent to spend 20 hours advising (see Table 5). Job descriptions directed 28.6 percent to advise 40 hours and 8.6 percent, 30 hours. Many advisers explained that they did not have job descriptions, that their job descriptions did not specify a number of hours, or that they received credit, release, or overload hours for advising. Additionally, others indicated that they volunteer as advisers of the publications, which in some of the respondents' cases are considered student organizations. This question may not be valid,

as many job descriptions do not specify a number of hours and since 62 participants did not answer the question.

Most advisers — 19.4 percent — said they spent 10 to 12 extra hours advising over what their job descriptions dictated, but 4 to 6 hours and 7 to 9 hours were close behind with 18 and 18.7 percents respectively (see Table 6). Spending no additional hours above the job description's requirements ranked fourth, with 17.3 percent of respondents selecting this option. Twenty-eight respondents did not answer this question, and since the prior question about job descriptions may be invalid, this one is questionable as well.

Table 6

Number of hours respondents spent advising over the numbers their job descriptions dictate

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
None	17.3%	24
1 to 3	12.9%	18
4 to 6	18.0%	25
7 to 9	18.7%	26
10 to 12	19.4%	27
13 or more	13.7%	19

Most respondents — 51.3 percent — indicated that if they didn't spend extra time advising, they would spend that time completing other work (see Table 7). Time with family was ranked second, with 27.6 percent, and "other" came in third with 12.8

percent. Several advisers indicated they would spend their time on all of the above (family, friends, recreational activities, other work), and others indicated they would spend the time staying current in the field. Recreational activities, with 5.8 percent, and time with friends, 2.6 percent, came in last. Eleven did not answer this question.

Table 7

How respondents would spend extra time if they did not spend it advising

Answer Options	Response	Response Count
	Percent	
With family	27.6%	43
With friends	2.6%	4
Recreational activities	5.8%	9
Completing other work	51.3%	80
Other (please specify)	12.8%	20

The percentage of time most respondents said they spent with students at work was 50 to 75, with 39.9 percent of participants selecting this option (see Table 8). Ranking second was 76 to 100 with 30.1 percent of respondents; then 26 to 50, 20.9 percent of respondents; and 0 to 25, 9.2 percent. Four declined to answer.

Table 8

Percentage of time at work respondents spent with students

Answer Options	Response	Response Count
	Percent	
0 to 25	9.2%	15
26 to 50	20.9%	34
50 to 75	39.9%	65
76 to 100	30.1%	49
Feel free to explain		22

Burnout

In the Maslach Burnout Inventory portion of the survey, the three sets of questions addressed emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The MBI distinguishes scores of 16 or less as low emotional exhaustion, 17 to 26, moderate, and 27 or more, high. For depersonalization, 8 points or less is low, 9 to 13 is moderate, and 14 or more is high. Personal accomplishment is rated low for 37 points or more, moderate for 31 to 36, and high for 30 or less (see Table 9) (Filak & Reinardy, 2009).

Table 9

Score scale of Maslach Burnout Inventory

Burnout Dimension	Low	Moderate	High
Emotional Exhaustion	16 or less	17 to 26	27 or more
Depersonalization	8 or less	9 to 13	14 or more
Personal accomplishment	37 or more	31 to 36	30 or less

An equal number of participants in this survey ranked low and moderate in emotional exhaustion, with 68 respondents falling into the 16-or-less range and another 68 falling into the 17-to-26 range. Fourteen respondents showed high levels in this component of burnout.

The advisers rated low on the depersonalization scale, with 137 falling into the 8-or-less range. Twenty-seven advisers ranked between 9 and 13, which is moderate. No respondents rated high in depersonalization.

In personal accomplishment, most respondents ranked highly, with 138 falling into the 30-or-less range. Twenty-six advisers fell in the moderate range of 31 to 26. No respondents rated low in personal accomplishment. Tables 10, 11, and 12 show the number of responses for each statement in the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Table 10

Number of responses for each emotional exhaustion statement

Answer Options	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A	Rating	Response
									Average	Count
I feel emotionally drained from my work.	6	30	25	32	37	20	13	1	4.08	164
I feel used up at the end of the workday.	6	32	35	16	34	24	15	1	4.06	163
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	22	47	37	22	19	10	7	1	3.16	165
Working with people all day is really a strain for me.	48	65	27	13	5	5	1	1	2.27	165
I feel burned out from my work.	26	54	27	16	20	11	9	1	3.12	164
I feel frustrated by my job.	21	44	30	14	24	19	11	1	3.47	164
I feel I'm working too hard on my job.	19	38	28	27	19	22	9	1	3.56	163
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.	57	74	22	6	1	3	1	1	1.98	165
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.	84	48	10	10	4	4	1	1	1.87	162

Note: Respondents were asked to select the frequency rate at which they experienced the feelings described in each statement. The scale was from 0 ("Never") to 6 ("Daily")

Table 11

Number of responses for each depersonalization statement

Answer Options	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal "objects."	89	48	14	4	3	5	0	1	1.77	164
I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.	90	42	12	6	11	2	0	1	1.85	164
I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.	93	42	7	8	7	2	2	1	1.81	162
I don't really care what happens to some students.	96	48	9	4	2	2	1	1	1.63	163
I feel students blame me for some of their problems.	50	41	24	17	11	16	3	1	2.74	163

Note: Respondents were asked to select the frequency rate at which they experienced the feelings described in each statement. The scale was from 0 ("Never") to 6 ("Daily").

Table 12

Number of responses for each personal accomplishment statement

Answer Options	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/ A	Rating Average	Response Count
I can easily understand										
how my students feel about	0	3	6	14	36	62	42	1	5.68	164
things.										
I deal very effectively with										
the problems of my	0	0	5	15	39	73	32	1	5.68	165
students.										
I feel I'm positively										
influencing other people's	1	0	4	12	12	68	67	1	6.09	165
lives through my work.										
I feel very energetic.	0	9	13	37	46	42	16	1	4.90	164
I can easily create a										
relaxed atmosphere with	0	1	3	16	28	59	56	1	5.90	164
my students.										
I feel exhilarated after										
working closely with my	0	1	5	21	33	70	33	1	5.63	164
students.										
I have accomplished many										
worthwhile things in this	0	3	1	15	23	64	55	1	5.92	162
job.										
In my work, I deal with										
emotional problems very	0	2	2	24	37	69	28	1	5.56	163
calmly.										

Note. Respondents were asked to select the frequency rate at which they experienced the feelings described in each statement. The scale was from 0 ("Never") to 6 ("Daily").

Student Relationships

The section of the survey intended to gauge the strength of advisers' relationships with students began with the question "How would you classify your relationships with most of the student publications staff members?" Eighty-eight respondents, or 54 percent, selected "between average and strong," while 34.4 percent of respondents chose "strong." Eight percent chose "average," and 3.7 percent chose "weak." Four declined to answer this question.

Next, respondents were asked to rate the frequency at which they experience the feelings or situations described in the set of statements on a Likert-type scale, from 0 ("Never") to 6 ("Daily"). Respondents were informed that any mention of "students" referred to their student publications staff members. Four did not answer this question. Table 13 shows the number of responses for each statement in this section.

Table 13

Number of responses for each student relationship statement

Answer Options	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
I feel I make a										
difference in	0	1	2	13	26	76	45	0	5.90	163
students' lives.										
I feel close to my										
students.	1	3	4	18	35	58	44	0	5.66	163
Students talk to										
me about matters	0	5	8	20	25	52	52	1	5.65	163
unrelated to work.										
I enjoy spending										
time with	0	1	1	8	23	64	65	1	6.12	163
students.										
Students enjoy										
spending time	0	3	5	16	33	68	37	1	5.66	163
with me.										
Students seek out										
my attention.	1	4	5	13	27	51	61	1	5.83	163

Note: Respondents were asked to select the frequency rate at which they experienced the feelings described in each statement. The scale was from 0 ("Never") to 6 ("Daily").

Hypotheses

To analyze the survey results, Microsoft Excel and the statistical software R were utilized. Two-sample t tests were used to analyze all hypotheses, and mean substitution was used for the missing values.

Hypothesis 1 suggested that advisers who enjoyed strong relationships with student staff members would report lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher levels of personal accomplishment than advisers who did not report strong relationships with student staff members. For the statistical analysis, it was determined that selections of 0 to 1 on six statements in this question would signify weak relationships with student staff members; 2 to 4, moderate; and 5 to 6, strong. Each participant's responses were averaged for the six statements, and those whose averages fell in the 5 to 6 level were classified as enjoying strong relationships with student staff members.

Results showed that advisers who enjoyed strong relationships with student staff members did in fact report lower levels of emotional exhaustion ($t = -2.625, p = 0.005$) and depersonalization ($t = -4.182, p = 0.0000234$), as well as higher levels of personal accomplishment ($t = 6.468, p < 0.001$). Therefore, the results supported Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that female advisers who enjoyed strong relationships with student staff members would report higher levels of personal accomplishment than their male colleagues who also enjoyed strong relationships with students. Female respondents who enjoyed strong relationships with student staff members did not show higher levels of personal accomplishment ($t = 0.495, p = 0.311$) in this survey. As a result, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that advisers who oversaw two or fewer publications and/or a total of 39 or fewer students as their full-time jobs — as opposed to splitting their time between roles of adviser and professor, for instance — would report lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher levels of personal

accomplishment than advisers who oversaw three or more publications and/or a total of 40 or more students. Advisers who oversaw two or fewer publications and/or a total of 39 or fewer students as their full-time jobs did in fact show lower levels of depersonalization ($t = -2.387, p = 0.009$). However, they did not report lower levels of emotional exhaustion ($t = -0.403, p = 0.344$) or higher levels of personal accomplishment ($t = 0.017, p = 0.493$). Hypothesis 3, then, was not fully supported.

Hypothesis 4 addressed time away from family. This hypothesis proposed that advisers who took seven or more hours per week above their 40-hour work week away from family to advise would report higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than those who did not take seven or more hours per week away from family. Respondents who took seven or more hours per week away from family above their 40-hour work week did not report higher levels of emotional exhaustion ($t = 0.014, p = 0.495$) or depersonalization ($t = -0.520, p = 0.698$). Consequently, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

While this study provided a snapshot of student newspaper advisers, a greater response rate could have yielded an even bigger representation of advisers, their levels of burnout and their relationships with student staff members. The time constraints of this project may have played a role in limiting the number of responses since the researcher had time to leave the survey open for only 20 days. The survey may have come at a busy time for some advisers who were otherwise willing to participate — the annual Spring College Media Convention took place during the survey's open period, and so did many schools' spring breaks.

Furthermore, some questions were less valuable to the research than originally planned. First, the age question offered "56 or older" as the final option, and 45 participants chose that selection, 18 more than any other option. More options for older participants would have yielded more accurate demographic results.

Additionally, the two questions about how many hours advisers' job descriptions directed them to spend advising were not as useful as planned because many respondents' job descriptions do not offer specific instructions on how many hours to spend on the various responsibilities. A better question would have asked participants to specify how many hours during a 40-hour work week they believe they are responsible for devoting to advising. A follow-up question could have asked advisers how many hours over that number they typically spend advising per week.

Still, the questions gathered valuable qualitative responses. Several respondents indicated they work far more than a 40-hour work week. One wrote:

I typically put in 10-13 hour-days in the office with my students. And I take things home most nights and weekends. I also work during the summer hiring, training, answering e-mails, working with the editor for the fall and dealing with business (bills, etc). But I'm on a 9-month faculty contract and beg for a summer stipend.

Other advisers indicated that they spend no extra time advising. One wrote:

I no longer spend extra time advising. My students are not particularly motivated to do really good journalism. When I do spend the extra time, I end up frustrated that they don't go the extra step. I have a lot of other responsibilities, and I put more into those.

Despite the limitations, this study provided a closer look at a key component of advisers' jobs — students — and how that component impacts advisers' burnout levels.

The respondents in the study reported low levels of burnout, with low to moderate emotional exhaustion, low depersonalization and high personal accomplishment. A recent survey of college media advisers reported similar results, with moderate emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and high personal accomplishment (Filak & Reinardy, 2009). Similarly, another survey by Filak (2009) showed extremely high levels of job satisfaction among college and high school media advisers.

In light of advisers' low burnout levels, it is no surprise that in this survey:

- 74.2 percent of respondents agreed on a high level with the statement “I feel I make a difference in students' lives”

- 79.2 percent agreed on a high level with “I enjoy spending time with students”
- 81.6 percent agreed on a high level with “Working with students is my favorite part of my job”

The affirmation of Hypothesis 1, which suggested that advisers who share strong relationships with their student staff members would report less burnout than those who do not have strong relationships with their students, confirms the basis of this research: Meaningful relationships with students is one valuable key to help advisers prevent, or perhaps diminish, burnout. Furthermore, qualitative data gathered in the form of participant comments largely supports this conclusion — “Working with students is the rewarding part of the job,” “I’ve been supported with driven, hard-working students who strive to build a team-oriented atmosphere with one another — that is what compels me to return: to support student effort,” and “Working with students is the joy; the rest is really draining,” for example.

This supported hypothesis indicates, then, that burned-out advisers may be wise to turn to the students around them for help reversing the effects of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment. Past research is clear on the fact that strong relationships can help individuals diminish burnout (Carroll, Ford & Wade, 2003), and the data from this study offers further support for this idea.

The results of Hypothesis 2, founded on studies that showed differences between burnout levels in men and women (Caccese & Mayerberg, 1984; Filak & Reinardy, 2009; Reinardy, 2008) suggest that differences between male and female advisers on personal

achievement levels may correlate with factors other than workplace relationships, such as those with student staff members.

Hypothesis 3, which suggested advisers who oversaw one or two publications and/or 39 or fewer students as their full-time jobs would report less burnout in all three categories, was not supported. Yet the results suggest a correlation between lower levels of depersonalization and overseeing fewer publications and/or students.

Depersonalization is the development of “negative, cynical attitudes and feelings” (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) toward the individuals a worker serves, and this study suggests that fewer publications and/or student staff members could mean an adviser will be less likely to experience the onslaught of negativity and cynicism when working with student staff members. While it seems obvious that cutting back on the amount of work and/or people for which one is responsible correlates with less negativity toward the individuals one serves, it is valuable to support the idea with data. As a result, advisers who find themselves caring less for their student staff members could attempt to cut back where possible.

Hypothesis 4, which tested for correlations between two burnout components and time away from family, was rejected. Still, the results are informative. Perhaps time away from family is not as great a stressor as time not devoted to “completing other work.” This option was the top choice (80 of 156 responses) to the question “If you did not have to spend that extra time advising, how would you likely spend that time?” In light of this information, advisers feeling stressed may want to closely examine the sources of their stress—whether it is a lack of time to complete work, a lack of time with family, or

something else — and devote more time to the top stress-inducing areas and, in the end, ward off potential burnout.

The comment sections in this survey gathered valuable qualitative data that underscores the idea that many advisers value their relationships with student staff members. Respondents also validated the operational definition of relationship as being guarded by professional boundaries. One explained: “I will spend time with students outside of work at work-related social events (my radio station puts on concerts), but we don’t ‘hang out.’” Others explained some of the boundaries they maintain in their relationships with students:

I see former students in a social setting, and I’ll go see my current students if they are performing somewhere. But I try to separate social life with current students. Although if they are having a gathering in an appropriate place, I’ll join them if invited.

I work long hours in the newsroom but the only time I really spend with students outside work is when we go to conferences. Drinking is always a concern — I don’t go to staff parties where there will be alcohol, and there is always alcohol. I do host students at my home twice a year (editor training and Christmas party).

I’m social at work, and I think my students enjoy hanging out with me there. And while I make myself available at all hours — all my students have my cell number and I receive calls at all hours — I think my students know that I prefer to keep my private life a few degrees removed from theirs.

I'm good at what I do. That may sound arrogant, but I relate to students because I treat them like adults, and I go out of my way to find them freelance work and internships, and I help them with non-school-related stuff. It's rewarding. Then again, I want to keep my distance. I don't drink with my students, and I don't seek out their friendship. It's apparently a big deal to alumni that I only hug staffers upon and after their graduation — and some have asked for that hug still wearing their gowns.

Additionally, the comments by participants revealed that many advisers were unequivocal about their struggles. In fact, for many respondents, the student staff members provided relief from the troubles they faced: "My job-related stress and burnout is 10 percent students and 90 percent the other stuff (bureaucracy, etc.) that comes up. I feel like the classroom is my 'safe zone' where no one can bother me"; "I find that the students give me energy, and it is only those times when I have to deal with the administrative politics that my job becomes wearing"; "My newspaper advising duties are, in fact, a welcome relief from frustrations in the other parts of my duties as a faculty member"; "My problems advising have little to do with the students and everything to do with administration"; "Working with the students is the part that never gets me burned out!"; and "I feel like I have a very good relationship with the students. In fact, working with students is the best part of my job. Concern about the future of the print industry and budget issues is the most difficult." Other respondents echoed their sentiments:

Despite the big responsibility, headaches from university administration who don't understand what an adviser is and what a student publication is, I've been

supported with driven, hard-working students who strive to build a team-oriented atmosphere with one another — that is what compels me to return: to support student effort. Despite this, it does take its toll ... I applaud and admire those who have advised publications for numerous years!

Working with students is the rewarding part of the job. Working with faculty, on the other hand, is frustrating and even at times demeaning. It's a sad fact that professors with two years of actual experience but with a Ph.D. think they know more about journalism than someone with 25 years of front-line newspaper experience. Combine that with the competitive academic atmosphere, and what we end up dealing with is professors who are clamoring not to do what is best for the student but what will get them the most acclaim.

The burnout comes and goes — I had a really bad case this summer, but a new project came along and has invigorated me and my staff. My burnout is cyclical, and it is usually caused by politics in my department, not students.

I don't have a problem most years with any of [the statements about personal accomplishment]. Occasionally a narcissistic editor makes my job unpleasant — maybe one year out of four on the average. Most of the time I work with talented, responsible, and caring students, who make my job worthwhile.

Several advisers expressed disgust with work that takes time away from students.

One wrote:

I spend more time filling out reports and doing paperwork than is wise, but I don't have a choice. Annual reports. Three-year comprehensive reports. Assessment. Committee reports. Reports, reports, reports. Accreditation teams have decided that advisers of national award-winning student media can do a better job of teaching by spending hundreds of hours completing reports. Someone needs to expose this obsession with reports for what it really is: mindless, soul-killing, time-wasting idiocy designed to satisfy arrogant accreditation teams who know absolutely nothing about teaching or advising student media. I would rather spend time helping students.

Several respondents discussed their struggles with the campus community:

"Working in student publications often puts me at odds with my university's administration, which means I have to work in a somewhat hostile environment. It is a stress that no one else on campus seems to relate to," one said. Another: "Students are responsible for school media content, but advisers are often held accountable for their work as well as their interviewing methods, etc."

Economic issues — both salaries and campus media budgets — plague some advisers, including these:

I love the advising aspect of my job, because I work with some amazingly talented individuals. But juggling that with trying to bring in the revenue to support four student mediums is more challenging than I'd expected it would be. In light of current economic woes and the resulting budget cuts, supervisors expect me to perform at a higher level, yet continue to give more responsibility with no additional compensation. In fact, we've all taken a 4.6 percent pay cut —

and I understand why the state has implemented pay cuts across the board and I'm sympathetic to all colleagues and state workers. However, as far as my stress levels are concerned, it's like the perfect storm — it's all coalescing into a level of frustration and fear that has been affecting my health negatively for the past year.

I gave a relatively positive response to the statement "I feel I'm working too hard on my job" primarily because of my low pay. There are times when I'm clearly putting more time and effort into my work than my salary justifies.

The job is difficult to me only because I want the best possible opportunities for my students. With shortage of time and money that isn't possible. At my college, space is non-existent or limited for my newspaper staff and technology issues also come into play.

I love advising even though my work is draining and I am exhausted at the end of each day. My school's administrators do not value my work and yet they want me to do more of it with fewer resources, which keeps me at near burnout state much of the time.

Another explored how work encroaches on other aspects of life:

I have little time for office work, as I am always helping my newspaper students or doing something for newspaper like advertising, etc. As faculty I am also expected to take part in other campus committees, and if anything suffers, it's usually me, my personal life, and family.

On the topic of student relationships, some advisers who also teach indicated that they view — and form relationships with — their student media staff members in a different way than they do their classroom pupils. In fact, several distinguished the differences between the two groups of students:

It's not that I don't care what happens to them; I hope they all succeed, but I don't form close personal bonds with the majority of them. That is mainly restricted to the newspaper staff, whom I see every day.

One distinguished these differences in reference to the depersonalization statement "I feel students blame me for some of their problems":

Some students are hard to love! They haven't grown up yet. So some will blame me. But that happens more often in my teaching duties and much less often in my advising duties. I much prefer advising to teaching in the classroom.

While several advisers were partial to their advisees over their pupils in the classroom, the newsroom is not free of problems with student staff members. Some respondents described the advisees who are less enjoyable to work with: "Some students — one in 150 or so — are not pleasant to work with. It happens"; "I do indeed write off some students. If they're not going to try, I'm not going to try for them"; "When students have little or no respect for learning and the people who facilitate it, why should I care very much about what becomes of them? I care on a macro level," and "I expect the staff to do the work. Occasionally there are some who do the minimum or do well in putting out the paper but miss deadlines and don't build the staff." Additional respondents weighed in on this topic:

Generally, I feel I have a good relationship with my students and enjoy working with them. But there are always a few who have no real interest in journalism, and while I care what happens to them in a broad sense, I realize they won't ever work in the profession and therefore they need to find their faculty-mentor relationship elsewhere. I try to spend my emotional energy on the students who want to go into this field and have the raw materials to do so.

If some students absolutely refuse to follow sound advice and fail as a result of that refusal, well, my pity for those students is indeed limited. And if they choose to blame me, well, OK. They will either one day feel differently, or they won't. I don't get bogged down in that. I'm comfortable with myself and the job I do.

One respondent explored the problem of the overall workload: "I frequently feel like I work harder than other colleagues. I frequently feel like I put in many more hours than other colleagues. I frequently feel resentful of my workload compared to my colleagues."

In the face of their struggles, some advisers indicated they had found solutions to their stress: "When I get home at the end of a long day, I search for the good bits and leave the rest (as much as I can) behind — although I know my supervisors view it the opposite way!" and "Some days I feel I'm at the end of my rope, but I do what the saying says, 'When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on!'" A few other advisers opened up about their experiences with stress and burnout:

I was facing total exhaustion and burnout last year when I taught a large required course for journalism majors that had a heavy work and grading load plus

advising the daily paper and 24-7 Web site. However, things are much better this year as I've gotten out from under the required course and now teach one elective each semester that is based in the newsroom — fall was newsroom management; spring is advanced reporting. I'm much, much happier and less stressed now. And I think the courses better serve students working at the newspaper/Web site — so I can serve my two masters at once.

If you had asked me during the preceding three to five years, almost all of my responses would have been much closer to the end of my rope. Last year I became exhausted and had to deal with a number of health problems. I am feeling better, but still not at my best. Through this experience I decided there is no point in working myself to death on behalf of people who don't care particularly much about me or what I'm doing. I have to detach and take care of myself, and I am. I feel guilty fairly frequently that I don't want to go an extra mile. If a student is really on the ball and interested, I will go as far as the student wants. If the students aren't engaged or even willing to learn, I don't have it in me to sacrifice myself for them.

In the student relationship section of the survey, 64 advisers made comments to explain their selections, and many of their responses provide support for the value of the adviser-student staff member relationship. Many explained that they were closer with their student editors than with the less-involved staff members. Several conveyed that they and their staffs have tight bonds: "They are like my adopted children; we have a very collaborative work environment. They trust me to give them good advice, and I trust

them to put out a good product. (Most semesters.),” one adviser wrote. Two more shared similar accounts:

My staff and I are like family: dysfunctional but respectful. I love them all, and for most, they soon realize they are stuck with me for life. I attend weddings, hold new babies, do letters of recommendation for years to come.

They’re like family. I chat daily with many of them, and usually about things other than journalism. We talk about life. We talk about goals. And we talk about what ultimately will make them happy and yet still provide a living. But this is the stuff I like talking about, perhaps because it’s the stuff that I’d hope most sane humans ponder.

Trust was a common theme for respondents who made comments: “It’s a matter of trust. I trust them and, consequently, they trust me,” one said. Another wrote simply: “We’re a team.”

Respondents who made comments were divided on several issues, including spending time with students outside work: “I feel spending time with students away from publications work is part of my job. It helps me develop the relationships that are crucial to the adviser role,” one said. Another: “Although I would probably get along very well with some of my students outside of work, I do not keep personal relationships with my students. My EIC is an exception.” Others explained:

While I have a very good working relationship with my students and take the time to listen to issues related to their lives outside the newspaper, I believe it is inappropriate to socialize with students outside work. The only exception to this is

that I will attend a wedding or a shower for a student if invited. Recently, I attended a funeral service for a student whose mother had died.

The only time I see them outside of work is when we travel to media conferences, and each semester I take my editors to lunch to thank them for their work.

Otherwise I keep it strictly in the classroom. I never accept Facebook friend requests, etc.

Many students stay in touch with me after graduation, and I do see them for dinner or drinks and will become Facebook friends with them if they want to. Current board members can contact me 24/7. But in general, as long as we have a professional relationship, I try to keep it boundaried. I do go out with them to their Christmas dinner and their end-of-year dinner. I also host a meeting every June at my house where the new editorial board meets for the first time. The new editor runs the meeting and sets the agenda for the coming year.

One adviser shared how she is in constant contact with students:

I'm "at work" even when I'm at home. I work seven days a week even though I'm only on campus four days per week. When I'm on campus, unless I am in a meeting with other faculty, I am with students. When I'm not on campus, I am in contact with students via text, chat, Google Wave, e-mail and phone.

Some advisers indicated they spend lots of time with their students, perhaps in part due to the proximity of their offices to the newsroom. One explained:

My office is within the student publications suite. My staff is in and out of my office all day long, and I spend many hours in the newsroom or production room with them. I have an online class, so I'm in contact with students at various times of the day or night and weekends. I seldom have a free moment or privacy ... except for 6:30 to 8 a.m. I arrive early for my alone time, but still have some students/staff who call or come in early.

Some survey respondents had nothing but praise for their jobs. One wrote, "I love my job! I have a great teaching schedule, wonderful staffs that want to be creative and good support from the administration." Several who expressed how much they enjoyed their jobs contrasted them with their professional journalism experiences: "I love my job. After two decades with constant deadlines, this is very low stress"; and "I like my job. Advising a student weekly is less stressful than editing a pro weekly, which I've done before. Every job has its stressors. I don't think this one breaks into the Top 50." Others added:

I previously worked as a newspaper reporter. Though the hours are long being an adviser, and occasionally I do feel frustrated with the amount of work or extra hours I put in, I honestly wouldn't trade this job for the world. I feel so much happier as an adviser than I ever did as a newspaper reporter. Even with the extra hours I put in, I know I'm doing it for the students, rather than for a corporation, like I felt when I worked at a newspaper.

It's hard at times. But when I compare it to my former career — a community newspaper editor/publisher who worked for two of the most demanding ogres

who ever owned any company of any kind — every day I go to work today is like a day off.

Future research

The discoveries of this research confirm that the topic of advisers' burnout levels compared with their relationships with student staff members is valid and should be examined further. Future study could cross-examine the data this survey revealed since hypotheses did not address social networking, university staff versus faculty burnout levels and time spent with students outside work. Qualitative research on the adviser-student relationship could be a key component of future studies since observation and interviews could unearth a wealth of information that surveys cannot extract. Additionally, future studies could examine the amount of time spent with students and whether it impacts burnout. Berg (1994) suggested that too much student contact can be taxing and push advisers and educators toward burnout.

Furthermore, study of the differences between male and female burnout levels, especially concerning personal achievement, among advisers could be useful. A comparison of advisers' burnout levels in relation to family time and time completing other work could also be valuable. Finally, because some advisers in this study explained that dealing with college and university administration and fellow faculty members caused them more angst than dealing with students, a study could measure and compare advisers' burnout levels on the Maslach Burnout Inventory when "students," "administrators" and "other faculty members" were used as recipients in three different measurements rather than "clients."

In conclusion, the study sheds light on one of the problems some advisers face, at least on a moderate level, and suggests one possible solution: strong, meaningful relationships with student staff members. While this is not a comprehensive, all-encompassing cure for burnout, the student relationship could be one key to helping advisers combat emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and boost personal accomplishment and, in the end, avoid burnout's serious consequences for the individual, the organization and the students.

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APPENDIX

The Survey

THE SURVEY

Student Publications Advisers[Exit this survey](#)**1. Introduction**

This study involves research on student publications advisers, burnout and the student-adviser relationship. The purpose is to shed light on some of the possible causes of burnout for student publications advisers. This online survey should take approximately 15 to 25 minutes and will include several pages of questions for you to answer. If you feel uncomfortable participating or answering certain questions, please proceed to the next question or exit the survey by closing the browser window. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will not be used in this research. Your responses will remain anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and will help enhance the research on the advising field. Refusal to participate at any point during the survey will involve no penalty. By clicking the "Next" button below, you confirm that you are age 18 or older, you understand this survey and agree to participate. If you have questions about this research or your rights as a research subject, please contact Tabitha Gilliland at gillilandt@apsu.edu or Dr. Patricia Ferrier, faculty advisor, at ferrierp@apsu.edu. Please feel free to contact the APSU Institutional Review Board chair, Dr. Charles Grah, at grahc@apsu.edu, (931) 221-7231 or P.O. Box 4537, Clarksville TN 37044.

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Student Publications Advisers[Exit this survey](#)**2. General questions****1. What is your age?**

- ☐ 25 or younger
- ☐ 26 to 30
- ☐ 31 to 35
- ☐ 36 to 40
- ☐ 41 to 45
- ☐ 46 to 50
- ☐ 51 to 55
- ☐ 56 or older

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. Please select the option that best describes you.

- ☐ I currently advise one or more student publications at a college or university.
- ☐ I have in the past advised one or more student publications at a college or university. (If you select this option, please answer the questions in this survey about your past experience advising).
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4. How many publications do you advise?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two
- ☐ Three

- ☐ Four
- ☐ Five or more

5. With how many students do you work in your advising role?

- ☐ 1 to 9
- ☐ 10 to 19
- ☐ 20 to 29
- ☐ 30 to 39
- ☐ 40 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 59
- ☐ 60 to 69
- ☐ 70 or more

6. Is advising your full-time job?

- ☐ No, I also teach.
- ☐ No, I also work outside the university.
- ☐ Yes.

Other (please explain)

7. At your school, which are you considered?

- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Faculty
- ☐ Both staff and faculty (please explain)

8. Approximately how many hours does your job description direct you to spend advising?

☐ 10

☐ 20

☐ 30

☐ 40

Other (please specify)

9. How many hours do you typically spend advising above the number that your job description states you should spend advising?

☐ None

☐ 1 to 3

☐ 4 to 6

☐ 7 to 9

☐ 10 to 12

☐ 13 or more

Feel free to explain

10. If you did not have to spend that extra time advising, how would you likely spend that time?

- ☐ With family
- ☐ With friends
- ☐ Recreational activities
- ☐ Completing other work
- ☐ Other (please specify)

11. What percent of your time at work do you typically spend with students?

- ☐ 0 to 25
- ☐ 26 to 50
- ☐ 50 to 75
- ☐ 76 to 100

Feel free to explain

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Student Publications Advisers

3. Burnout questions

[Exit this survey](#)

1. Please select the frequency rate at which you experience the feelings described in each statement.

	0 — Never	1	2	3	4	5	6 — Daily	N/A
I feel emotionally drained from my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel used up at the end of the workday.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with people all day is really a strain for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel burned out from my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel frustrated by my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I'm working too hard on my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Feel free to explain

2. Please select the frequency rate at which you experience the feelings described in each statement.

since I took this job.
I worry that this job is
hardening me
emotionally.
I don't really care what
happens to some
students.
I feel students blame me
for some of their
problems.

Feel free to explain

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Student Publications Advisers


4. Student relationship questions

Exit this survey

1. How would you classify your relationships with most of the student publications staff members?

- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Between weak and average
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Between average and strong
- ☐ Strong

Feel free to explain



2. Please select the frequency rate at which you experience the feelings or situations described in each statement. Each mention of "students" refers to your student publication staff members.

	0 — Never	1	2	3	4	5	6 — Daily	N/A
I feel I make a difference in students' lives.								
I feel close to my students.								
Students talk to me about matters unrelated to work.								
I enjoy spending time with students.								

Students enjoy spending time with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students seek out my attention.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with students is my favorite part of my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend time with students outside work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel free to explain								

3. Please select the frequency rate at which you experience the feelings or situations described in each statement. Each mention of "students" refers to your student publication staff members.

	0 — Never	1	2	3	4	5	6 — Daily	N/A
I discuss my personal matters with students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I discuss my personal beliefs with students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tell students about my family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tell students about my friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I host students at my home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I drink alcohol with students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tell students about my life outside work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students are part of my life outside work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I engage in social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I engage in social								

networking with my
students.

I engage in social

networking with my
colleagues.

Other (please specify)

Prev

Done