

From the Editor

Every so often in the history of our profession, an introspective pause can be useful. Academic advisors tend to be task-oriented people, busy from dawn to dusk getting things done. And when we do kick back, reflecting on the nature of the profession is probably not high on the priority list.

As well, how much agreement would we come to if we were to reflect collectively. We are a diverse group. When I look at the various job titles of NACADA members, I am struck by the broad range of administrative houses we inhabit. And after talking with many members, I am even more struck by our truly eclectic backgrounds. We are a profession of people who have come together to perform a rather anomalous task that has an elusive and ethereal conceptual grounding.

One of the few concepts held in common by most academic advisors is the value of *developmental academic advising*, a phrase that has become part of the standard lexicon of the profession. Ever since *Developmental Academic Advising* (Winston, Miller, Ender, & Grites, 1984) was published, the developmental approach to advising has been NACADA's implicit standard. It sounds good, it feels good, and to all surface glances, it looks good.

But, despite having been almost universally accepted by the profession, this concept has not yet been scrutinized, both in theory and in practice, in ways that justify this acceptance. The research does not yet clearly support developmental advising as the clear winner in the advising sweepstakes; our practice does not indicate that the theories of developmental advising are effectively being put into practice; and institutional mission statements do not necessarily incorporate developmental concepts for advising operations.

It is time for introspection to occur!

The concept of developmental advising first appeared in our literature in an article by Burns Crookston (1972). Crookston developed the idea of a caring, student-centered approach to advising in which students and advisors become partners in the academic advising enterprise. In part, Crookston formed this idea in juxtaposition to the concept of prescriptive advising, the traditional approach that casts the advisor as an

authoritarian figure who directs students' actions.

In the same year Terry O'Banion (1972) introduced a discussion regarding which members of the academic community should be doing academic advising.

Crookston's and O'Banion's articles are among the most cited in the academic advising literature. These two articles—along with the too frequently overlooked "Academic Advising in Higher Education: A Developmental Approach for College Students of All Ages" (Shane, 1981)—are amongst the classics of our profession's literature. Twenty-two years later, however, do Crookston's and O'Banion's ideas still hold their own?

"Classics Revisited," the theme of a large section of this issue of the *NACADA Journal*, is the brainchild of Virginia Gordon and the other members of the *Journal's* Editorial Board. In revisiting these articles, we propose that discussion of our basic assumptions begin in a revitalized forum. We have initiated this forum by reprinting these two articles and by inviting a broad range of professionals to respond in light of where the profession stands 22 years later.

We want this forum to continue. You are invited to respond to the *NACADA Journal*, to *Academic Advising News*, through the ACADV network, and with your colleagues. We cannot afford to rely merely on our collective personal experience as the conceptual foundation of our profession. A solid theoretical base gives us the ability to grow, to incorporate new phenomena, and to work effectively with the increasingly diverse populations that need our help.

References

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