

## From the Editor

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Probably no other single component of higher education involves individuals from such a wide variety of professional roles and disciplines as does academic advising. Thus the *NACADA Journal* is blessed with a diversity of authorship and readership enjoyed by few other professional journals. A new volume year offers an opportunity to provide you a profile of the *Journal* from the perspectives of the review process, submissions, and selectivity.

The time from initial submission to publication can be lengthy. The process often takes 18 to 24 months or longer with most manuscripts undergoing multiple revisions and reviews. Once received, manuscripts are reviewed by the editor and a review panel composed of three or more members of the Editorial Board. Each member of the review panel evaluates manuscripts on the following criteria: appropriateness for the *NACADA Journal*; significance; quality of the literature review; clarity; readability; and research design, analysis and conclusions if appropriate. Reviewers then make one of four recommendations as to the disposition of the manuscript: accept as is, accept with minor revision, reconsider after major revision, or reject. As noted, revisions and multiple reviews are the norm; and too often authors give up on the process and do not revise and resubmit, even though the requested revisions may not be serious in nature. This is unfortunate. Nearly all manuscripts returned for minor revision and one-half or more of those returned for major revision are likely candidates for eventual publication if the authors persevere.

One of the responsibilities of a journal editor is to take the collective opinions and suggestions of the reviewers, add his or her own, and distill these into coherent suggestions which provide guidance to authors as they make decisions on revision and resubmission. Seldom does one find consensus among all of the reviewers. However, upon examination of author-initiated submissions to the *Journal* for 1993 through 1995, certain qualities and characteristics can be identified which distinguish those rejected, those recommended for revision, and between those recommended for minor and major revision. For these three years, 83 author-initiated submissions were received by the *Journal*. The manuscripts were almost evenly divided between nondata-based and data-based articles. Invited manuscripts and conference presentations which were subsequently printed are excluded from this count.

Of the 83 manuscripts, eight (10%) were accepted for publication following initial review.

Twenty manuscripts (24%) were rejected following initial review and received no further consideration. Of the remaining 55 manuscripts, 16 were returned to the authors for minor revision and 39 were returned for major revision. Of those returned for minor revision, 10 have thus far been published and 1 remains under active revision. Ten of those returned for major revision have since been published and five remain under active revision. To date, 28 (34%) have been published. Given those that remain in active revision, the eventual publication rate could reach 40%.

Few manuscripts are rejected as being inappropriate for the *NACADA Journal*. The most frequent reasons for initial rejection are the failure of the manuscript to make any significant contribution to the profession of academic advising or, in the case of research articles, a flaw in the research design or analysis cannot be corrected. Significance is frequently judged in terms of expanding the profession's knowledge base. The restatement of that previously reported or the presentation of research findings of questionable validity fails to significantly contribute to academic advising. Prospective authors can usually avoid problems of appropriateness and significance by contacting the editor when formulating their initial ideas for a manuscript. Serious design and analysis problems can be avoided by early consultation with the editor or campus colleagues who have expertise in research design, evaluation, statistics, and so forth.

The quality and thoroughness of the literature review, the validity of the authors' conclusions, and the general clarity and readability of the manuscript are seldom the basis for initial rejection. These are, however, frequent reasons for requested revisions. The degree of seriousness usually determines whether the requested revisions are considered minor or major. Literature reviews must be thorough and current. The omission of pertinent citations is problematic. The need for valid conclusions, clarity, and readability is obvious. If these concerns are not addressed in the revision process, the second review frequently leads to rejection. As noted, requested revisions can be minor or constitute nearly a total rewrite of the manuscript. Revising a manuscript can be an arduous task, but it need not be insurmountable. Most reviewers provide specific comments as to how their concerns can be addressed. Also, authors should not overlook willing colleagues who have editing skills and experience in professional writing.

In closing, the journey from idea to publication can be a long one. One of the nice things about the academic advising profession and this journal is that there are so many who are willing to “walk awhile” with you. For those attending the upcoming national conference in Washington, D.C., a first step could be to take advantage of one or more of the numerous preconference workshops and conference sessions

designed to assist participants in developing their research, writing, and publishing skills. A successful journey will culminate in a sense of both professional and personal pride. The profession of academic advising will be better because of your efforts.

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