NACADA Journal Authors: 20 Years of Contributions

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The Senior Editors have undertaken a follow-up study of the NACADA Journal *upon its 20th anniversary. This study of* Journal *authors has revealed that faculty members contribute considerably more articles to the* Journal *than do academic advisors or directors of advising programs. Other observations and recommendations are made to encourage future authorship.*

The *NACADA Journal* has served as the voice of the National Academic Advising Association since the founding of the organization. The history of the association, as well as the developing history of academic advising, may be found within its pages. As stated in an earlier study in which we analyzed the content of *Journal* articles over an 18-year period (Gordon & Grites, 1998, p. 6), "The professional journal of an organization reflects the body of established and emerging knowledge that is central to the organization's purpose and practices." From the content of our previous analysis of *Journal* content, we concluded that the *Journal* did "promote the understanding and knowledge of the importance of academic advising" (Gordon & Grites, 1998, p. 11). We also suggested that the *Journal* "can be only as good as the submissions from the clientele it serves" (Gordon & Grites, 1998, p. 12). Because in our previous study we did not examine the authors who have contributed to the *Journal*, we felt it appropriate to pursue this important topic on the *Journal's* 20th anniversary.

In a study of contributors to the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, Weinrach, Thomas, and Chan (2001) found that contributing authors were from many different academic disciplines. They concluded that this diversity should not be a concern but rather that the "acceptance of a manuscript in the *Journal* should be the extent to which the editor believes its publication would be meaningful to the *Journal's* readers" (Weinrach, Thomas, & Chan, 2001, p. 170). Because advising professionals come from many disciplines and fill advising needs at many levels, their variety of backgrounds and experiences should enrich and expand the content of the *NACADA Journal*, which should provide a repository for a wide range of research, conceptual, and innovative-practices articles.

Our primary purpose in preparing this review was to determine the types of personnel who were contributing to the *Journal* and who are thus "the speaking voice" of the association, and in fact, the profession. In addition, we hoped to identify shortcomings in substantive content areas and stimulate more contributions by those personnel who might be underrepresented or underutilized. Therefore, the following questions were addressed in this analysis: What types of advising professionals are writing for the *NACADA Journal*? Are certain topics addressed more frequently by authors of particular professional groups? For example, are full-time advisors writing mostly about practical applications of advising, such as advising techniques or course selection? Are advising coordinators or directors primarily writing about organizational models or computerized advising? What types of articles do faculty members and academic administrators publish? What types of institutions do the authors represent?

Method

We reviewed all the articles published in the *NACADA Journal* from 1981 through 2000. The articles were divided into two time periods: 1981–1990 and 1991–2000. During the first decade, 176 articles were published (55% of the total); 144 articles appeared in the latter 10 years (45% of the total). Five editors are associated with the first two decades of the *Journal*: Edward L. Jones (1981–1986), Edward J. Danis (1987–1989), Howard K. Schein (1990–1995), Michael L. Lynch (1996–1998), Joel S. Freund (1999–2000), and the current editor, Thomas J. Kerr.

Every article in this 20-year period was examined for the authors' types of position, the types of institutions they represented, and the major themes (as identified in the Gordon & Grites, 1998, article) about which the authors wrote. We also included an analysis of the institutions represented by the book reviewers. However, National Clearinghouse for Academic Advising reviews, reprints of the CAS Standards and NACADA Core Values, and articles specific to NACADA as an organization were not included in our analysis.

We named five position titles for the authors: academic advisor/counselor, director/coordinator of advising, faculty advisors or those with an academic title (e.g., dean, assistant dean, vice president), student affairs title (e.g., counselor, housing

personnel, career counselor), and other (e.g., campus minister, ACT personnel, graduate students, director of institutional research). Because several titles of post-1991 authors were unavailable, they are noted under the "unknown" category. To ensure that professions were not overrepresented in the sample, we devised a weighting scheme for single- and multiple-author articles. Each article was weighted 2.0, with full weight given to single-author articles. Multiple authors were assigned weights as follows: The first author was assigned a weight of 1.0 and all additional authors were assigned an equal share of 1.0, for a total of 2.0 points per article. Table 1 summarizes the weighted frequencies of the authors' professional titles. Because an analysis of the authors' gender was included in the previous study (Gordon & Grites, 1998), it was not included here. In addition, the title and institution analyses for Toolbox and Forum authors were conducted separately.

We also reviewed the types of institutions represented by *Journal* authors: major public universities (e.g., land grant), other public universities (e.g., regional campuses of major public universities and state colleges), major private universities (as determined primarily by enrollments), other private colleges, community colleges, and other types of organizations (e.g., ACT, CREP, state department of higher education). Table 2 indicates the institutional types represented by *Journal*

authors over the 20-year period. Only the institution of the first (lead) author was used in this analysis.

The authors who contributed to the Forum or Toolbox sections were analyzed by the same criteria as were authors of feature articles. The results of the Forum and Toolbox analysis are displayed in Table 3. The institutional types represented by Forum and Toolbox authors are shown in Table 4.

To provide consistency between this study and that of 1998 (Gordon & Grites, 1998) and to associate author with article types, we duplicated six of the seven major themes outlined in the previously published piece: general advising topics, administrative/organizational systems, student populations, developmental advising, retention, and professional development. Because our purpose was to examine the literature about academic advising (the profession) rather than NACADA (the professional association), those articles that would best be classified under "NACADA organization" were assigned to one of the other six themes (if applicable). Article themes were compared to the first author's title to determine if certain types of authors wrote feature articles about particular topics. The results are indicated in Table 5.

As shown in Table 6, the types of institutions represented by the book reviewers were also analyzed. Because reviewers' positions were not available and the content of the books reviewed was very diverse, we only examined institutional types.

Table 1 Weighted frequencies of professional titles of *NACADA Journal* authors

Author Title	Years		Total (%)
	1981–1990	1991–2000	
Academic advisor/counselor	39.0	11.1	50.1 (7.8)
Director/coordinator academic advising	92.0	28.1	120.1 (18.8)
Faculty/deans	144.0	161.8	305.8 (47.8)
Student affairs	31.0	25.7	56.7 (8.9)
Other (registrar, ACT, ERIC, campus minister)	46.0	55.3	101.3 (15.8)
Unknown	0.0	6.0	6.0 (0.9)

Table 2 Institution types associated with lead authors of *NACADA Journal* articles

Type of Institution	Years		Total (%)
	1981–1990	1991–2000	
Major public universities	77	53	130 (41)
Other public universities	45	44	89 (28)
Major private universities	20	3	23 (7)
Other private colleges	21	18	39 (12)
Community colleges	2	11	13 (4)
Other (e.g., ACT, ERIC, Big 10 Commissioner)	11	15	26 (8)

Table 3 Weighted frequencies of professional titles of Forum and Toolbox authors

	Years		
Author Title	1987–1990	1991–2000	Total (%)
Academic advisor/counselor	4	6	10 (12.50)
Director/coordinator academic advising	15	6	21 (26.25)
Faculty/deans	12	19	31 (38.75)
Student affairs	1	1	2 (2.50)
Other	10	4	14 (17.50)
Unknown	0	2	2 (2.50)

Notes. Forum articles were published in 1987–1990; Toolbox articles were first published in 1993.

Table 4 Institutions of Forum and Toolbox authors

	Years		
Institutional Types	1987–1990	1993–2000	Total (%)
Major public universities	10	17	27 (52)
Other public universities	7	11	18 (35)
Major private universities	1	0	1 (1)
Other private colleges	2	1	3 (6)
Community colleges	0	0	0 (0)
Other	1	2	3 (6)

Notes. Forum articles were published 1987–1990; Toolbox articles were first published in 1993.

Table 5 Tabulation of article themes and author title (first author only), 1981–1990; 1991–2001

	Titles					
Themes	Academic Advisor/ Counselor	Director/ Coordinator	Faculty/ Dean	Student Affairs Professional	Other	Unknown
General advising topics	5; 1	11; 6	23; 18	5; 3	4; 3	0; 0
Administration/organizational	5; 1	17; 3	18; 8	4; 1	5; 8	0; 0
Student populations	3; 2	12; 4	22; 32	1; 5	9; 7	0; 2
Developmental advising	0; 0	2; 2	3; 11	0; 2	0; 3	0; 0
Retention	1; 0	3; 0	1; 1	0; 0	0; 1	0; 0
Professional development	2; 0	7; 1	4; 13	4; 1	5; 4	0; 1

Table 6 Institutional types represented by book reviewers

	Years		
Institutional Types	1981–1990	1991–2000	Total (%)
Major public universities	33	182	215 (34.5)
Other public universities	25	190	215 (34.5)
Major private universities	8	27	35 (5.6)
Other private colleges	10	124	134 (21.5)
Community colleges	2	20	22 (3.5)
Other	1	1	2 (0.4)

Observations

This analysis of authors presents an interesting portrait of those who have contributed to the *Journal* in its first 20 years. The most frequent contributors, by a wide margin, during both decades have been faculty members. This may not seem surprising because faculty members have a more compelling incentive to write; it is expected of them and is part of the faculty reward systems at most institutions. However, the difference in the number of articles written by those directing or coordinating advising activities between the first and second decade is surprising.

Those who held the title of director or coordinator contributed more articles to the *Journal* (76%) in the first decade of publication than in the second decade (24%). This disparity was also apparent in the number of academic advisors or counselors who published between 1981 and 1990 (72%) than between 1991 and 2000 (28%). Student affairs authors were represented by a variety of titles from vice president for student affairs to orientation or retention directors. Their contributions represented 9% of all published articles. Although the number of articles contributed by "others" (16%) seems high, the figure reflects the diversity of *Journal* authorship.

The disparity in the collective number of articles written by directors of academic advising and academic advisor/counselors between the first and second decades is troublesome. Although editors did not keep track of rejected manuscripts, we must assume that the number of submissions from these two groups is diminishing. While the increasing number of faculty authors is encouraging, the lack of contributions from the people who are involved in daily academic advising is ironic, especially when one considers that NACADA membership largely consists of advisors, directors, and coordinators—not faculty.

One could argue that those immersed in full-time advising are too busy to reflect and write about their activities or that the reward system for engaging in research and publishing does not apply to advisors. In our previous article about the *Journal*, we noted, "Not all full-time advisors are interested in, have the academic skills, or feel they have time for research enterprises" (Gordon & Grites, 1998, p. 9). However, if the *Journal* is to be the voice of advising and represent the needs of its diverse constituency, then advisors and directors, who are intimately involved with advising practices, must be encouraged to share ideas. Because professional advisors and advising coordinators have much to offer, strategies to reverse this publishing inertia need to be examined.

What types of institutions did *Journal* authors represent in its first two decades? Most authors were from major public institutions, while authors from other public universities or colleges contributed the second largest number of articles. This result is not surprising because the number of public institutions is greater than private colleges and universities, both generally and within the NACADA membership. Because a few prolific authors, who were from major private universities, routinely contributed articles in the first decade, an inordinate number of authors appeared in this category during that period. The finding that few authors were from community colleges is disappointing; however, the contributions from community college authors increased in the second decade. Authors from many different types of organizations contributed to the *Journal*; ACT, the Big Ten, and ERIC were among those represented. Registrars and graduate students contributed nearly an equal number of articles, which were designated in the "other" category.

The titles of Forum and Toolbox authors and the types of institutions represented follow the same patterns as for feature articles. However, the disparity in the number of articles authored by faculty is not as great as with the feature pieces. These *Journal* sections were created to encourage front-line academic advisors to contribute more to the *Journal*. It is unfortunate that this attempt to invite advisors to submit more practice-oriented articles did not seem to work. We were especially surprised to find that community colleges were not represented at all in these new publication venues.

As discussed in our previous study of *Journal* content areas (Gordon & Grites, 1998), the variety of topics found in almost two decades of *Journal* issues reflects the broad subject matter associated with academic advising. In this analysis, to determine if any particular type of personnel favored writing about certain topics, we compared the position title of the first author to article themes. Faculty members tended to write across all themes, but 35% of their contributions involved student populations. Over time the number of articles about administrative and organizational topics, especially those written by directors and coordinators, diminished. The initial number of director and coordinator-authored articles might be attributed to their involvement when advising was being more emphasized and advising centers were being formed for the first time on many campuses.

The institutional types represented by book reviewers follow the same pattern established for articles; that is, contributors from major public universities and other public universities and colleges provided the most reviews. However, more book reviews than articles were contributed by those in private colleges and universities. Because book review writing requires less extensive research and is subject to a much shorter review process, the book review section is an attractive venue for many who wish to be published.

The difference in books reviewed between the two decades is striking: a 7:1 for 1981–1990; 1991–2000 (Table 6). As we pointed out in our previous article (Gordon & Grites, 1998, p. 8), "Over two-thirds more space was devoted to book reviews [*in the 1990s*] than in the earlier decade." The editorial board has recommended that the Book Review section of the *Journal* be restricted to 25 articles of no more than 400 words per review.

Discussion

Our analysis of authors' contributions over the first 20 years of the *Journal's* existence has exposed some interesting findings. The extremely high representation of faculty authors might be surprising to some, but all should be reassured to know that faculty members find the *Journal* a viable outlet for their writing efforts. However, a broader representation of advising personnel would better reflect the makeup of *Journal* readers and NACADA membership. Authors from (smaller) private institutions and community colleges need to be encouraged to submit manuscripts to the *Journal*.

Solicitation of professional development manuscripts may be warranted. Although many articles include aspects of professional development in the description of application and ideas, more articles that specifically focus on advisor development would be welcomed.

Recent *Journal* editors and NACADA members have expressed concern about the large number of book reviews published in the second decade. In addition, the *Journal* schedule has been delayed because of lack of publishable manuscripts. *Journal* editors have stated repeatedly that they have made extra efforts to assist writers in improving their manuscripts in methodological, conceptual, and practical areas. When an article has not been accepted for publication, editors have offered detailed suggestions on how the author can improve the manuscript. Are articles rejected because editors and the editorial board are biased or hold too high expectations? We believe not. The practice of

encouraging, assisting, and "educating" prospective authors should be continued. The quality of the *Journal* content has been maintained and should be preserved in the future.

The results of this study have confirmed the suspicions of members for many years: Academic advisors do not write about what they are doing, even though they have something of value to share. How to encourage advisors (and directors and coordinators) to submit more manuscripts to the *Journal* has been a longstanding dilemma facing the editors, and solutions are needed. Previous editors have been proactive in soliciting articles from a variety of writers; for example, *Journal* symposium speakers at the National Conferences and others with special interests have been invited to submit to the *Journal*. Current efforts are promising, but the members of NACADA must be responsible for submitting more manuscripts and encourage other professionals on their campuses to contribute their ideas and experiences to the *Journal*.

Full-scale research efforts are not required in all *Journal* articles accepted for publication. Academic advisors and directors/coordinators frequently write proposals for state, regional, or national conference presentations. With some additional effort, such proposals might be developed into *Journal* feature or Toolbox manuscripts. Many advisors and directors have completed doctoral dissertations, master's theses, and individual papers for coursework; these might be revised as manuscripts. A few previously published works may be reprinted (with publisher's permission) if the content is particularly appropriate for the *NACADA Journal*.

Because faculty members contribute most frequently to the *Journal*, advisors and directors should seek to collaborate with faculty more often. Advising center professionals that have responsibility for, and ready access to, many individual students and a wide variety of student populations need to capitalize on the research opportunities available to them.

The *Journal* continues to enrich and expand the knowledge base of its readers. The sharing of innovative practices is critical to advancing advising endeavors and indeed to speaking the voice of the Association and the profession.

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The Advisor's Toolbox

The Transitions Program: A Precollege Advising and Orientation Workshop for Students and Parents

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The authors describe the rationale behind, processes related to, and evaluation of The Transitions Program, a precollege advising and orientation program for students and parents. The program advisors educate participants about realistic college-life expectations and provide them with strategies for meeting the challenges and opportunities of the college transition. Students and parents responded separately to a questionnaire designed to sensitize them to college transition challenges. They were subsequently led by professional staff, faculty advisors, and students through a discussion of expected experiences. Survey results, discussion summaries, and suggestions for advisor follow-up activities are provided.

The summer before a student starts college is an important time to begin the college adjustment process. Precollege advising and orientation programs targeted at helping students develop realistic expectations for the pending transition can facilitate a constructive college-adjustment process. However, despite advocacy for parental involvement in precollege orientation programs (Kapraun & Heard, 1994; Terenzini et al., 1994; Whitaker & Roberts, 1990) and increasingly common parent components in on-campus orientation programs nationwide, published descriptions of programs are rare. In this paper, we describe a precollege program for prospective college students and their parents and provide suggestions for follow-up advising activities.

Theoretical and Empirical Rationale for the Program

Times of transition, such as the move from high school to college, are often met with emotional distress (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Paul & Kelleher, 1995). Prompted by such stress, individuals attempt to make sense of the pending change, to appraise the threat embodied by the new college situation, and to assess one's perceived ability to cope with the college transition (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Sometimes these complex cognitive processes promote action: collecting additional information about the college, reflecting on one's past experiences with change, or seeking out others who have experienced similar transitions or who have gone to college. The appraisal of the transition yields a set of expectations with which individuals confront the change. In ideal situations, the expectations represent a blend of optimism and realism: a sense of personal control and efficacy combined with a realistic appraisal of the challenges associated with the change. When met with the difficult reality of the stressful transition, individuals with this balanced approach are found to cope most effectively with the change (Brewin, MacCarthy, & Furnham, 1989; MacNair & Elliott, 1992).

Studies of student responses to the college transition reveal that a less than ideal match between expectations and experiences leads to a poor coping response. Precollege expectations often exceed college experiences. As a result, college students are confronted with a reality for which they are not prepared. This "matriculant myth" (Baker, McNeil, & Siryk, 1985) has been documented in 4 decades of research. The myth is pervasive among college students and is found in students from all school types regardless of student status (first-year, transfer), education history (private or public school attendance, SAT scores), and domain of college experience (academic, social). In the late 1980s, Robert Baker and his colleagues advanced significantly the study of the matriculant myth by shifting studies from the impersonal aspects of student expectations and experiences with various institutional characteristics to personal explorations of students' expectations of their own college adjustment experiences. Their efforts yielded a rich body of research that showed numerous associations between prematriculation self-expectations and the