

From the Co-Editors: Voices from the Field at the 2008 National Conference

A session designed to tap voices from the field to foster and build a research agenda for academic advising was presented at the 2008 NACADA National Conference in Chicago. The presenters included Jennifer Bloom from the University of South Carolina, Terry Kuhn from Kent State University, Jeffrey McClellan from Frostburg State University, Gary Padak from Kent State University, and Sarah Naylor from the University of North Carolina. These presenters believe that every academic advisor is a potential researcher and that every researcher can profit from collaboration with a practicing advisor. At the conference, they promoted the notion that academic advisors should incorporate research and theory as they engage in their practice.

In a preliminary discussion, the presenters offered several reasons for conducting research:

- to discover solutions to practical problems,
- to share findings with other professionals,
- to add to the existing body of knowledge about advising,
- to advocate for academic advising,
- to use methods that identify causes and effects, and
- to develop or refine advising theory.

While all or some of these reasons may account for any one researcher's rationale, the presenters considered them all important. Moreover, they believe that practically all researchers feel the thrill of the chase when searching and finding answers to perplexing issues.

Session attendees were asked to identify one or two possible research questions they would like to answer. Diane Arnzen (St. Louis University), Bryan Bain (University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh), Katie Beres (St. Louis University), Miranda Carlton-Carew (Arizona State University), Yvonne Carranza (University of Texas–El Paso), Delonam Chappell (Fairfield University), Chris Cuccia (St. John's University), Heather Doyle (Lakehead University), Joyce Ellenwood (Bethune-Cookman University), Brooke Harrington (University of California–San Diego), Brian Hinterscher (University of Southern Indiana), Nancy G. Howell (University of Southern Alabama), Laura Hutt (Capella University), Danielle Johnson (State University of New York–Buffalo), Marie Lindhorst (Pennsylvania State University), Rob

Longwell–Grice (University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee), Susan McCaffrey (Temple University), Gabrielle McDermott (Columbia College–Illinois), Marsha Miller (NACADA Executive Office), Debbie Nakashima (Hawaii Pacific University), Dorothy Plantz (Howard Community College), Avi Rozenzweig (University of California–Berkeley), Janet Schulenberg (Pennsylvania State University), Georgiana Spear (University of Kansas), Erin Weston (Georgia College & State University), and Elyse Winning (Western Michigan University) provided suggestions. Some typical research questions submitted by these individuals at the 2008 session in Chicago included the following:

- What factors influence undecided students in selecting their majors?
- How can students be encouraged to set goals, and what do students consider success?
- What is the impact of appreciative advising on a Historically Black College and University population?
- What is the retention rate of students who participate in a first-year-experience program?
- In what ways does the delivery of an academic advising plan in a first-year-experience program impact student retention?
- Does appreciative advising in a probation workshop help students more than students who get only the workshop?
- Do subject-matter learning communities build stronger relationships with faculty members and advisors than are experienced by the general population?
- Do subject-matter learning communities result in higher retention rates than course help sessions or nonsubject-matter-based learning communities?
- How do Latino/Hispanic families contribute to students' perception of higher education?
- What is the impact of coming out on students' academic performance?
- What are the implications of coming out for the academic advisor?
- Do family influences have more impact on Latino or Latina students?
- What benefits, if any, can be gained by adding an interdisciplinary emphasis to existing PhD programs?

- What are international institutions doing in academic advising? To what degree do they conform to the Council for the Advancement of Higher Education standards?
- What are student expectations of academic advisors?

A detailed summary of potentially worthwhile research topics was compiled in a similar session in 2003. It can be found in Padak, Kuhn, Gordon, Steele, and Robbins (2005).

We hope that sessions like these will foster more

and better academic advising research. We also hope they will promote NACADA's goal to infuse research throughout the association through a synthesis of advising practice, research, and theory.

Terry Kuhn

Gary Padak

Reference

- Padak, G., Kuhn, T., Gordon, V., Steele, G., & Robbins, R. (2005). From the Co-editors: Research ideas from academic advising practitioners. *NACADA Journal*, 25(1), 6–10.