

Voices from the Leadership of Academic Advising

Gary Padak, Kent State University

Terry Kuhn, Kent State University

In this article, we present the results of interviews with past presidents of NACADA (the National ACademic ADvising Association), who responded to nine questions about the strengths, achievements, challenges, and obstacles faced during their presidencies. The presidents also had an opportunity to discuss a critical incident, people who were helpful, and the possible future for advisors and the association. The academic advising association grew out of a need felt by administrators and advisors throughout the country. These interviews suggest that NACADA has flourished because it was the right idea at the right time and headed by selfless leaders who championed its cause.

KEY WORDS: advising profession, history of advising, NACADA

Introduction

We contacted all former NACADA presidents by E-mail and asked them to participate in a telephone interview during which they would respond to the following nine questions:

1. What strengths did the NACADA organization have during your presidency?
2. What was NACADA's greatest achievement during your presidency?
3. What issues, weaknesses, failures, or challenges did the NACADA organization have during your presidency? How did you deal with them? How successful were you?
4. Were there any policy, political, procedural, or people obstacles to the progress and success of NACADA during your presidency? Can you describe them?
5. Can you describe one critical incident that happened during your tenure in office?
6. Were there people who were particularly helpful in assisting you with your presidential responsibilities? Who were they and how did they help?
7. In what ways has NACADA fulfilled the future you envisioned while you were president?
8. What must NACADA do to assure recognition of academic advisors as professionals in higher education?

9. What advice would you give to future presidents of NACADA?

All of the presidents agreed to participate, and we arranged specific dates and times for the telephone interviews, which were tape recorded. After the interviews were transcribed, we gave each past president an opportunity to correct any misstatements, add remembered items, or delete information that was considered inappropriate for publication. The Kent State University Human Subjects Review Board approved this research protocol. Table 1 shows a list of the presidents through 2007 and their years in office.

We read through all of the transcripts and identified important and recurrent ideas. In this article, we have included the salient ideas voiced by several of the presidents with parsimonious quotes to illustrate each point. Readers can get a sense of the task faced by each president, how the challenges changed over the life of the association, as well as the joys and rewards reaped from serving as President of the National Academic Advising Association.

Findings

What strengths did the NACADA organization have during your presidency?

The 1977 nascency and subsequent evolution of NACADA was accomplished by individuals characterized as cooperative, enthusiastic, organized, committed, energetic, dedicated, inclusive, focused, reflective, reflexive, engaging, and nice. From the beginning these leaders were committed to improving the process of advising with less emphasis on advisors. They accomplished this purpose by offering conferences, workshops, and publications. In this way, the primary purpose of NACADA has always been to improve the process of advising rather than to improve the welfare of advisors. In chronological order of service, the following statements were made by former presidents (initials identify the speaker; see Table 1 for a cross-reference to identities).

[tt] The strength of this embryonic organization was the wonderful, cooperative spirit of the attendees, who took on assignments and tasks to develop bylaws and establish procedures even as they lived

Table 1. NACADA Presidents: 1979–2008

Year	President
1979	Toni Trombley (tt)
1980	Toni Trombley
1981	Thomas J. Grites (tg)
1982	Thomas J. Grites
1983	Virginia Gordon (vg)
1984	Charles W. Connell (cc)
1985	Charles W. Connell
1986	Wesley R. Habley (wh)
1987	Wesley R. Habley
1988	Gary L. Kramer (gk)
1989	Gary L. Kramer
1990	Carol C. Ryan (cr)
1991	Carol C. Ryan
1992	Margaret C. “Peggy” King (pk)
1993	Margaret C. “Peggy” King
1994	Thomas J. Kerr (tk)
1995	Thomas J. Kerr
1996	Michael E. McCauley (mm)
1997	Michael E. McCauley
1998	Nancy S. King
1999	Nancy S. King (nk)
2000	Manuel “Buddy” Ramos (br)
2001	Manuel “Buddy” Ramos
2002	Elizabeth “Betsy” McCalla-Wriggins (bmw)
2003	Ruth Darling (rd)
2004	Eric R. White (ew)
2005	Jo Anne Huber (jh)
2006	Susan Campbell (sc)
2007	Jennifer Bloom (jb)

through them. To them it didn’t matter how organized we were in the beginning, they just wanted to join the effort. For me, I just wanted to get it off the ground, to get it started, and have it become a full-fledged organization, and then let somebody else have the opportunity for leadership.

[tg] Enthusiasm. When I took over as the second president of NACADA we had conducted four national conferences, so we had that success already built, and we saw ourselves as the bridge between academic and student affairs.

[vg] Well, by 1983 we were becoming a little bit more organized. We had established some bylaws and established an annual national conference that drew more members so that we were able to attract some nationally known speakers.

[cc] The first high watermark was getting the national membership up over 1,000. That gave the association viability and provided a critical mass for every annual conference. It gave us diversity in

programs and membership.

[wh] NACADA had a vibrant committed core of volunteer leaders who had exceptional camaraderie with each other. There was much lively discourse and much disagreement, but when push came to shove, the board coalesced and got behind decisions.

[gk] The organization was focused on its primary purpose, which was to provide a venue for quality academic practices through conferences, workshops, and publications. We also had a consultant’s bureau to help colleges and universities who were looking for some help from experts in the field of advising. The Clearinghouse provided good documents and assessment tools for campus advising programs. The CAS [*Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education*] advising standards threaded through the questions we were considering.

[cr] You knew the members, and when you went to a conference there was a lot of wonderful interchange that was really very special. We were very inclusive in terms of ethnicity, and we worked hard to see that it was represented on the board and in the membership. Except for a couple of us, everyone among the founding mothers and fathers were young, and it was just a lot of fun and there was a lot of energy.

[pk] It was really good people, a lot of energy, and a real commitment to the organization. The Executive Office opened a year or two before I became president, so that was a real plus.

[mm] The whole association was involved in leadership positions, and members were playing an active role.

[nk] Our strengths were that we had increasing membership, the visibility of NACADA was heightened nationally, and we were updating the strategic plans and formulating a vision to carry us into the 21st century.

[br] The people who were the members.

[bmw] Dedication of the members who volunteered, some with an ongoing and continuing commitment and those who volunteered for one-time events. A second strength was the dedication of the staff in the Executive Office who were always open to new ideas.

[rd] We had a strong history to build on as we implemented a new organizational structure. With a clear purpose to improve academic advising we went from a strong structure to an even better structure.

[ew] Increasing membership numbers through retention and recruitment of advisors. NACADA was a solid organization on the move that was meeting a need and that had people who resonated

with it. It had a very focused mission and it didn't get blindsided and sidetracked with ancillary kinds of things. It was basically all about advising.

[jh] Phenomenal growth record.

[sc] Number of members; increased attention to academic advising on campuses; the number of people who were willing to offer their expertise and engage in the activities of NACADA; a solid executive office with people who had focused responsibilities for initiatives. It is a reflective and reflexive organization.

[jb] Our members are loyal to the organization, willing to step up the plate when asked to take on leadership duties, and wonderfully engaging, nice people.

What was NACADA's greatest achievement during your presidency?

Regarding the last 30 years, all of the presidents spoke to the phenomenal growth record achieved by the association. One of the first high watermarks was the national membership reaching over 1,000 people. When membership surpassed 1,000, the association gained visibility across the country and provided a critical mass for the support of annual conferences and an executive office.

The following list of 19 items is representative, but not inclusive, of all points made by the presidents. All the presidents stated that their responses to this question represent issues that came to fruition during their presidency, but they did not necessarily take credit for initiating, fostering, or bringing them to culmination. All of these achievements strengthened and improved the association.

1. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was established with initial incorporation in Vermont and later in Kansas.
2. Annual national conferences were hosted.
3. The *NACADA Journal* was established.
4. Awards were given for advising, programs, and research.
5. Leadership positions were codified with purpose, procedures, and expectations for each.
6. Ten functioning regions were solidified within the United States and Canada.
7. An executive office was formed in Manhattan, Kansas.
8. Commissions replaced institutional-type representation.
9. A NACADA Internet Café was offered at the national conference.

10. The NACADA Choir debuted at the national conference.
11. Interactions with the Association of Admission and College Registrar Officers, the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE), and the American Council on Education (ACE) increased visibility.
12. A national teleconference on academic advising was presented.
13. The first handbook on academic advising was published.
14. Task forces on faculty advising and diversity were created.
15. As the association increased its membership, a new structure was needed such that strategic directions for NACADA remained the focus of leadership while the operational details were left to the newly formed Executive Office.
16. An increased emphasis on advising theory was placed in the conceptualization of research studies and advising practice.
17. The NACADA Foundation was established.
18. Visibility was enhanced through a close working relationship with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).
19. Internationalization was increased through conferences in the United Kingdom.

[tt] We established NACADA.

[tg] Some really significant things happened, although I can't take credit for them; they just happened during that time. The second, third, and fourth conferences established and validated the organization. I volunteered to be the conference chair for the second and subsequently the third and the fourth conferences because I wanted to maintain that momentum. The *NACADA Journal* began under Ed Jones's leadership. We got *academic advising* as a descriptor in the ERIC system. We joined CAS and started working on the CAS Standards. We started a couple of awards and granted the first research award. We also began having mid-year board meetings to do organizational work and take some of the burden off at the time of the conference.

[vg] We prepared a binder for each board member that contained NACADA's history, bylaws, policies, and descriptions for each position with the purpose, procedures, and expectations for each position. We created a minority concerns committee, established a consultant bureau, and increased the number of newsletters we sent out.

[cc] We had the first conference out west, and while we were concerned that the conference location was away from the base of our membership, it proved to be a success and achieved stability and visibility at a truly national level.

[wh] We developed the first scholarship for graduate study, gave the first research grants, made an effective transition from the founding *Journal* editor to the second *Journal* editor, and solidified 10 functioning regions. We also set in motion the conversation that led to the Executive Office.

[gk] We finalized the arrangements for the Executive Office being at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas.

[cr] Because our incorporation expired in Vermont, we had to reincorporate, and we did that in Kansas because by this time a decision had been made to establish the Executive Office there. We had to redo all of our bylaws with a board that was huge. We managed to reapprove every single article in one meeting, and we implemented the first Executive Office.

[pk] We started moving to commissions and eliminating the institutional-type representation.

[mm] The release of the NACADA training video . . . provided a needed training piece and also generated significant funding for NACADA.

[nk] We achieved an all-time high membership and participation in the national conference. For the first time we had a NACADA Internet Café and debuted the NACADA Choir. We increased NACADA's national visibility by having joint round tables and connections with AACRO, AAHE, and ACE. We produced the first national teleconference on academic advising, and in 1998 we contracted with Jossey-Bass to produce the first *Handbook on Academic Advising* [Gordon & Habley, 2000], which was the first real definitive handbook on advising.

[br] We created a faculty taskforce whose sole purpose was to develop strategies to reach out to faculty and involve them in academic advising through NACADA. We also developed a task force to look at diversity and ways we could increase and make our membership more reflective of advisors in the field.

[bmw] I feel like the most important achievement during my presidency was facilitating the transition from the old structure to the new structure. I was the last president under the old structure and the first president under the new structure. Under the old structure we had a large unwieldy board made up of the executive committee, all of the regional representatives, all of the commissions, and all of the committee chairs. It often got caught up in operational details and lacked focus on

NACADA's strategic directions.

[rd] The greatest achievement during my presidency was making the transition happen and getting the leadership in place to carry forward the work of NACADA.

[ew] The statement of core values was updated and the concept of academic advising paper was developed. The Las Vegas conference had the largest attendance ever and was a milestone. The Peter Hagen, theory issue of the *NACADA Journal*, visibility, transfer student monograph . . . , first recipient of a graduate certificate in academic advising at K-State, membership growth, and the establishment of the expertise database. We established the NACADA Foundation to provide funding for off-budget projects.

[jh] Many things came to fruition during my presidency, but I don't necessarily take credit for all of those things. I did try to target what we call "the next generation of academic advisors." It included a breakfast, an interest group, and emphasis in the regional organizations. There is a listserv and they share information, providing a much needed mechanism for new advisors. We also continued the visibility efforts such as the initiative with the NCAA and external international relationships with the United Kingdom.

[sc] NACADA's greatest achievement during my presidency was that it held together and solidified its new structure. It internationalized its worldwide presence with a joint conference in Scotland.

[jb] We were able to begin the dialogue on the importance of research to the future of the field and the organization. A second achievement was that the Board of Directors passed 47 policies that will help govern how the board operates in the future.

What issues, weaknesses, failures, or challenges did the NACADA organization have during your presidency? How did you deal with them? How successful were you?

The biggest challenge for presidents over the years was the management of the various organizational transitions while keeping all of NACADA's conferences, publication processes, workshops, and institutions running at a high quality level. Initially, the lack of a central office meant that all communication was done by volunteers with whatever staff and resources were available to them on their own campuses. Keeping the organization personalized despite significant growth while reducing reliance on an all-volunteer leadership team proved arduous tasks. Specifically, presidents noted the difficulty in conducting a meeting with a board

made up of scores of members. They wanted to establish a board made up of individuals with a direct connection to academic advising on campuses. They saw this board as the visionary agent for NACADA that would chart its strategic direction while the Executive Office handled operational details. Several presidents discussed the formidable job of aligning the new governance structure and bylaws while operating programs, often amidst serious challenges to the means by which the change was being accomplished.

[tg] We had a need to offer more regionally based activities, to have regional conferences; however, I did not see the viability at that time because NACADA was a new organization, advisors were not funded that well, and I thought the national conference might suffer.

[vg] The biggest weakness was the lack of a central office to support all of the officer and member volunteers. Also, there was no E-mail back then and communication was either by phone or it was slow.

[cc] While there was always a core of committed people, its weakness was trying to keep the core together while building on it. We weren't able to grow the core as quickly or as strongly as would have been desirable.

[wh] We had the challenge of keeping the organization personalized in light of real significant growth. A second challenge was reducing the reliance on an all-volunteer army. Maintaining the vitality of the association as it went through growth spurts and changes was a third challenge.

[cr] We had no central storage of historical materials, no way to disseminate material, and we were growing fast.

[mm] The greatest challenge was to conduct a reasonable meeting with a board of essentially 45 individuals, which I managed by requiring written reports and sending information in advance of each meeting.

[nk] The biggest challenge was simply the large size of the board of directors. With growth of the organization, more and more responsibility was being put on the board, which was responsible not only for setting the vision and the big view, but it was also involved in a lot of very small details of running the association. So trying to do business with what I felt was on unwieldy size was my biggest challenge.

[br] We had an unwieldy board and needed to find a way to become more efficient. We needed a board that was more strategically focused than operationally focused. We had to look at the way we were

organized and come back with recommendations for new organizational structures. Our goal was to have a board that was more strategic and less operational. It occurred to us that the board should be the visionary agent for NACADA and the Executive Office should take care of operational stuff.

[bmw] The major challenge to me was managing the transition, and the major part of that was to take the conceptual piece, which was how we had envisioned the organization to work, and translating it into operational activities. The board had to focus on strategic planning issues and no longer deal with operational issues.

[rd] Organizational change was the biggest issue with which we had to deal.

[ew] The transition to the new board and council structure and to the one-year presidency was the biggest challenge. We went from a very large board with virtually everybody a voting member to a much more streamlined approach. Some people felt like the organization was losing some of its grass roots, and it was a challenge to deal with this resistance.

[jh] There was resistance that was quite critical of NACADA's new organizational structure, particularly in discussions involving a vision and strategic plan for NACADA.

[sc] Most of the challenge was in aligning the new governance structure and our bylaws in the midst of constant challenges being made from within to that very structure.

[jb] Our new challenge was bringing the new strategic plan to life with members who work full-time and only meet together once a year at the annual conference.

Were there any policy, political, procedural, or people obstacles to the progress and success of NACADA during your presidency? Can you describe them?

The presidents mentioned obstacles often encountered when organizations realize that they must make changes in the ways they function. The operation of the association was beginning to be too much of a burden on volunteers operating from their campus offices. At the same time, the large, unwieldy board experienced difficulty in making decisions. Discussions could center on personal agendas or be unduly influenced by individuals with superior oratorical skill. On one hand, the board was composed of too many people, and on the other hand, the core leadership was comprised of a relatively small, committed, and resourceful number of people who established an incredible foundation for the association. A change in orga-

nizational structure was needed to expand opportunities for leadership participation.

[tg] Lack of a central office to handle details of the organization. It was beginning to be too much of a burden on volunteers in their campus offices to be able to operate that disjointedly in terms of geographics. The beginning of a type of central office support began when Kansas State University managed the third annual conference, and except for the fifth conference, they have been doing the conference management ever since.

[vg] Concerns were expressed at a board meeting over minority affairs. Some board members tended to dominate the discussion, and board members would compete for places to hold the national conferences. It was a big relief when Kansas State took over conference management.

[cc] I guess you would have to say the absence of a central national organizational office in support of the annual conference was a weakness in those days. Also, trying to make sure that we were focused on the agenda of the organization and not personal agendas was an important issue.

[wh] We were already beginning to feel that it was difficult to come to conclusions and make decisions with a board that was as large as the one we had.

[gk] We were struggling with the quality and timely publication of the *Journal* and trying to get the word out through the *Journal* so that NACADA would become a legitimate credible organization in the eyes of the key leaders across the country. There were policy, political, procedural, and people challenges involved in and around the assessment task force and the establishment of the Executive Office.

[cr] No obstacles and people were extremely supportive.

[pk] I had a good board and they worked well together.

[mm] That's water over the dam. We have come a long way in the last 12 years and to go back and revisit that would be a waste of time.

[nk] When you deal with people there are always political issues. During the 6 years I was on the board, NACADA began to make a turn from an organization that had been pretty much run by a handful of people. There had been a small group of real leaders in NACADA, and so we made that turn to expanding the opportunities for leadership and involvement. On the one hand, the board was unwieldy because it had so many people on it, and then on the other, the core leadership was a relatively small, committed, and resourceful number of people who established an incredible foundation for the association. Overall organization structure change

was a good thing that we did to expand opportunities for leadership participation.

[br] I did not think the task force recommendation that to be a board member you needed to be involved in academic advising on a campus was in NACADA's best interests, although it passed over my objection. We engaged in many healthy discussions about this issue.

[bmw] The biggest issues were people and political, and they were related to issues of power and control, which took a disproportionate amount of time compared to all the other kinds of things that we needed to do.

[rd] The challenges and issues really had to do with people who resist change, and by resisting, put up barriers or become difficult. This is pretty typical of any association or organization that goes through change. I am convinced that the new structure gives more members the opportunity to develop their leadership within NACADA and to have a voice.

[ew] There really weren't many obstacles, and believe me, a year goes by really fast.

[jh] The biggest challenge was that there was a small group of board members who thought that the governance would never change and that it would always be the way it had been and very much wanted it to go back to the way it was when the board was very large and run by an executive committee with little relationship to the grass roots of the organization. When I was president, these people had the majority on the board; that's what made it more difficult for me to get agendas moving for things like developing a strategic plan.

[sc] We had to move forward in the face of resistance to the new structure and new bylaws from some board members.

[jb] There are always political, procedural, and people obstacles whenever you are leading a group of 10,000-plus members. Our board did a great job of staying focused on doing what was best for the organization.

Can you describe one critical incident that happened during your tenure in office?

The following short list of incidents and issues were critical for the association (see the presidents' comments that follow the list for more elucidation of the situations):

- Toni Trombley getting funding from the University of Vermont;
- whether or not to hold the 1982 national conference in San Jose, California;
- whether or not to provide a stipend for the

NACADA Journal editor;

- the establishment of the Executive Office and reconciling the dual reporting line to the NACADA Board and to Kansas State University;
- the Disneyland injunction against NACADA in 1990 for infringement of copyright over the printing of Disneyland logos on t-shirts and programs;
- signing the Jossey-Bass contract for the first *Handbook on Academic Advising* (Gordon & Habley, 2000);
- whether or not to go forward with the Ottawa conference so soon after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center;
- the appearance before the Board of Mike Holden, Dean of Education at Kansas State University, to explain and answer questions about the relationship of the NACADA Executive Office to NACADA and to Kansas State University.

[tt] To me, the critical incident was to get funding from my university to hold the first conference.

[vg] None during my presidency, but there were acrimonious exchanges earlier and some sharp discussions over minority issues.

[cc] Leading up to the San Jose conference in 1982, there was a division of opinion about whether we should risk going to California and straying from areas of the country in which we had more of a critical mass of members (East and Midwest). While the conference attendance was down that year, overall membership went up, and I think it turned out to be a successful conference.

[wh] During my presidency, the *Journal* editor was overwhelmed with responsibility and stated to the board that NACADA should provide a stipend for the position. When the board voted “no,” he said he didn’t want to be the *Journal* editor anymore and walked out of the room. I simply said to him “I’m sorry you feel that way” and went on with the meeting. Within a half hour after the meeting, he calmed down and apologized and came to the next session of the board. In many respects it was critical because it underscored the notion that we were still an all-volunteer army and that we did not pay people to do the work of the association.

[gk] The establishment of the Executive Office was a critical incident in the history of NACADA. We needed relief for volunteers tracking endless details in the management of national conferences.

[cr] We were excited about having our annual conference at Disneyland and we had the Disneyland

logo printed on some t-shirts [and] on our programs. I got a call in my office in Minneapolis–St. Paul from a Disneyland attorney who said that we could not use the logo because it had been leased to the Mars Bars people. She told me to cease and desist! So we had to reprint all our programs and all our funny t-shirts that we had for the board.

[nk] Signing the Jossey-Bass contract for the *Handbook* [Gordon & Habley, 2000], which signaled that NACADA was playing on a much larger stage in higher education. The book helped establish NACADA as the leader in this country and internationally in the academic advising field.

[br] The Ottawa conference occurred in October, following the 9/11/01 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York. We had to decide whether or not to hold the conference—and outside the United States! I remember arriving in Ottawa and seeing streets closed around our hotel with armed guards because we were very close to the Castile and even yet having armed guards on our floor up where the president’s suite and facilities were located. A second critical incident was my receiving an E-mail from a faculty member who attended the 2000 conference in Orlando who was incensed by some people who were poking fun at faculty who do advising and what their disinterest is. I shared this letter with the board and we established a task force on the role of faculty in advising.

[bmw] The membership had voted that the people holding association leadership positions must be actively engaged in academic advising on a day-to-day basis. While regular members could vote and hold office in the association, associate members could hold an appointed position but could not vote or run for elected office. Unfortunate reactions from a small but committed number of people to enforcement of this provision of the bylaws created much angst for me as president.

[rd] The most critical incident for me was dealing with resistance to the structural and bylaws changes.

[jh] The discussion centering on NACADA’s relationship with Kansas State had to be underlined by visits from Mike Holden, the Dean of Education at Kansas State, who would explain the contract that NACADA negotiated with Kansas State. At issue was to whom does the Executive Director report? He was able to clarify Kansas State’s role and the benefits NACADA has with the relationship.

[sc] Bobbie Flaherty’s decision to retire as Executive Director created a critical incident. We had to decide how to pursue stable leadership in the Executive Office and the ticklish part was that all

of the Executive Office staff are Kansas State University employees. We had to decide how to address the tension arising from the fidelity of reporting lines to both NACADA and Kansas State. We decided to pursue a national search.

[jb] Trips to Kansas State University to meet with Dean Holden were crucial, and we laid the foundation for and signed a 10-year agreement between NACADA and Kansas State.

Were there people who were particularly helpful in assisting you with your presidential responsibilities? Who were they, and how did they help?

Numerous presidents were named as being particularly helpful to their successors. Roberta “Bobbie” Flaherty was also mentioned frequently, first as conference manager and then in her role as NACADA’s Executive Director.

[tt] The folks on the steering committee. They were very, very dedicated and they deserve equal recognition.

[tg] Everybody on the Board of Directors was helpful in their own ways. Virginia Gordon agreed to chair the next annual conference and Mike McCauley was the membership chair. So, maintaining that momentum and the strength of the national conference being in the hands of Mike and Virginia probably were the two most important individuals that I counted on.

[vg] We had a lot of strong people on the board at that time, and they were all helpful.

[cc] The members of the board, many of whom have become presidents, all pitched in one way or another and were helpful. Wes Habley, Tom Grites, Virginia Gordon, Peggy King, and Mike McCauley stand out in my memory as people who played a particular helpful role.

[wh] The whole executive committee were volunteers who provided leadership to the association, and the ACT folks provided outside support.

[gk] Carol Ryan, Buddy Ramos, Wes Habley, Peggy King, J. D. Beatty, Howard Schein, George Steele, Virginia Gordon, Tom Kerr. Most of the people I’ve mentioned are or have been president—and the staff at Kansas State.

[cr] Gary Kramer, Wes Habley, Peggy King, Virginia Gordon, and J. D. Beatty.

[pk] Bobbie Flaherty, Carol Ryan, Tom Kerr, Wes Habley, and some of the founding members.

[mm] Tom Kerr, Bobbie Flaherty, Wes Habley.

[nk] Nancy Barnes, Bobbie Flaherty, Betsy McCalla-Wriggins.

[br] Peggy King, Tom Kerr, Wes Habley, Gary Kramer

[bmw] My husband, Bobbie Flaherty, Ruth Darling. None of this could have been done without help from everyone on the board.

[rd] The Executive Office staff: Bobbie Flaherty, Charlie Nutt, the council and the Board of Directors.

[ew] Bobbie Flaherty, Ruth Darling.

[jh] Past presidents, Virginia Gordon, Ruth Darling, Eric White, Betsy McCalla-Wriggins, Bobbie Flaherty, Charlie Nutt, Jane Jacobson (vice president).

[sc] Bobbie Flaherty, Charlie Nutt, Nancy Walburn [vice president], Nancy King, Ruth Darling, Jo Anne Huber, Jayne Drake, Rich Robbins, Tom Grites.

[jb] The council and the entire leadership team did an amazing job. Phil Christman, my colleague, and Steve Sanderson, my husband, provided support throughout my year as president.

In what ways has NACADA fulfilled the future you envisioned while you were president?

All of the presidents have been pleased with the progress that NACADA has made since its inception. Some of the presidents still longed for fulfillment of aspirations they continue to hold, and all felt good about the distance the organization has moved since 1977. Notable among the positives were NACADA’s growth in prestige, influence, programming, publications, awards, and members. The national Executive Office, freshness of annual meetings, the *NACADA Journal*, and vital regional structures also garnered favorable comment. Yet-to-be-fulfilled visions include more faculty involvement, more members and officers from private and 2-year colleges, and elevation of advising beyond the paradigms of advising as counseling, customer service, or teaching: They feel that the field of advising should not need a metaphorical reference.

[tg] The growth has just kept coming in terms of programming, publications, awards, and members. We have created a solid professional and financial foundation. I guess I was concerned about solidifying the sustainability of the association in our effort to improve academic advising. This has grown out of continued commitment and enthusiasm and new ideas.

[vg] The national [*Executive*] office was important to me because I knew we couldn’t grow without the type of services and organization that advisors needed that could not be delivered with volunteer help only.

[cc] The growth of the organization has surpassed my expectations. It has maintained the freshness of the annual meetings. The *Journal* has become and

maintains itself as a true scholarly publication.

[wh] I would never have guessed that we would be at 10,000 members, and I did envision a vital and viable regional structure and a supportive executive office. And while I envisioned an association that continued to be representative of a variety of constituencies that deliver academic advising, I believe that the association has become an association of professional advisors from 4-year public institutions. Having more members and officers from private and 2-year colleges and more faculty members is still an unrealized aspect of my vision.

[gk] The *Journal* has come a 100 miles in the right direction; the Executive Office is phenomenal; the institutes, the on-line course and certificate program, the Clearinghouse, CAS Standards, and the task forces have far exceeded in every way imaginable the role that NACADA now plays in the world. I would still hope for more faculty involvement in NACADA.

[cr] Campuses are becoming more cognizant of academic advising because of NACADA's influences like the *Journal*, advising surveys, [and] tools for measurement of advising systems.

[pk] NACADA has moved academic advising to another level where it's recognized on campuses and where people realize its importance.

[mm] There are more and more higher education practitioners who are recognizing NACADA as the voice of academic advising in the United States. If there were one thing that we need to do yet, it is to elevate academic advising to a level where advisors are more influential in campus-wide program decisions.

[nk] NACADA has exceeded my expectations. It has grown not only in size, but also in stature and significance, and part of that significance is seeing advising as part of the institutional teaching mission.

[br] The organization is growing, the conferences are growing, and initiatives like the faculty task force, the diversity task force, and the new organizational structure promise to foster continued achievements.

[bmw] NACADA has significantly exceeded any vision I could have had. Membership, number and variety of programs, and services have all grown and improved.

[rd] The *Journal's* direction has become stabilized within NACADA, as has the Executive Office. That office has taken several straws off the proverbial camel's back as it serves the needs of the membership. The Executive Office looks to the president and the board for strategic direction as it implements operational details.

[ew] NACADA has been successfully moving away from two paradigms (advising as counseling and advising as customer service) and is moving to a new paradigm of advising as teaching. I hope we reach a point where we will not need to use a metaphor to describe academic advising.

[jh] I feel very good about NACADA's achievements and direction. The growth is continuing, the external relationships have just taken off, and the emerging leaders have come full circle.

[sc] I turned over an association that was better than it was when I started, particularly in terms of its organizational foundation and that was our goal, and in doing so we calmed roiling waters.

What must NACADA do to assure recognition of academic advisors as professionals in higher education?

In responding to the question of how to assure recognition of academic advisors as professionals in higher education, presidents repeatedly noted that academic advisors and the association must act in a professional manner.

- NACADA needs to stay the course and keep operating as in the past while maintaining the quality of its people, programs, and publications.
- Academic advisors need to have master's degrees for initial appointment.
- NACADA needs to publish research about the theory and practice of academic advising.
- Advisors must make an impact on presidents and provosts of universities and colleges by documenting with hard data and facts their important roles and the reasons they are important to retention, student success, and graduation.
- NACADA needs to help identify career ladders for academic advisors.
- Good developmental training for academic advisors, good evaluation of individual advisors and advising programs, and recognition and awards based on those evaluations are important for NACADA to maintain its progress and improve.
- NACADA needs to provide national publicity about recipients of advising awards and recognitions.

[tt] It is quite plausible that for academic advising to become recognized as a profession that it has to stand on its own and not be a part of bundled or shared responsibilities of faculty or even those in student personnel who have a host of other respon-

sibilities. NACADA has to make an impact at the top, with presidents and provosts of universities and colleges throughout the country. Academic advising has to be seen on an even plane with research and teaching and service. It has to be the fourth dimension in the evaluation process, and until it's looked at as an integral part of the evaluation of faculty for promotion and tenure I don't think it will be important.

[tg] We need to keep doing what we are doing. What we have been doing both as an association and as individuals on campuses has validated our existence. As long as we maintain the quality of what we are doing (people, programs, publications) we will continue toward that goal.

[vg] We're doing a lot and I think we need to continue what we are doing. We need to continue concentrating on special programs for faculty advisors too. And we need to remember who the people in the trenches are.

[cc] We started the national recognition programs; we worked on professional development programs and doing workshops to talk with advisors who wanted to know if there was life after being an academic advisor. For example, what would be the pathway to different levels of administration if advisors wanted to work at a level beyond a centralized advising center? Many career advisors and counselors face a sort of glass ceiling because they don't have PhDs and they are not affiliated with a traditional academic field. Many advisors see the rungs being chopped off of the career ladder for them. They can get burned out and the rungless ladders let them fall; that is a challenge and I think NACADA has to rise to the top of the challenge because it's the only national organization that will be able to [do] so.

[wh] NACADA needs to be far more assertive in taking our messages to those who make decisions. We've done an excellent job taking our messages to our own people and underscoring those with the resources so that members of NACADA understand, but I think we have not done as good a job with those who allocate resources and make decision about advising.

[gk] We need to continue the promotion of good educational practices in academic advising.

[cr] We've got to continue the national surveys, seminars, meetings to help administrators understand the key roles that advisors play, the consultant bureau. I would not emphasize advisor certification or advising materials, which are now pretty available on Web sites. We should consider that advising faculty may not be major players in the future of academic advising.

[pk] NACADA needs to document what advisors do and its value to students and institutions. Such research will keep elevating advising. It needs to keep doing what it is doing.

[mm] Advisors have to get into the next higher level of decision making so that their needs are factored into the future that is created by innovation and change. They have got to work in the committees and structures of NACADA and of their own institutions. Are they even represented on such committees on their campuses?

[nk] We need to push for consideration of advising in promotion and tenure decision, and we need to provide credentialing because higher education puts a lot of stock in degrees, and so opening up the potential for full-time advisors to get the credentials to make this a true profession is a very good thing. And we need to continue to look for career ladders for advisors. Some institutions have instituted a senior advisors classification.

[br] Institutions need to have really good developmental training for academic advisors, they need to have really good evaluation of individual advisors and advising programs, and they need to develop recognition and rewards based on those evaluations. In my job I work with decision makers on campuses throughout the country, and advising is nowhere on the radar. Advisors and their needs are not being represented as campus decisions are being made.

[bmw] We need more research to show the impact that academic advising has on retention, student success, and graduation. Decision makers need hard data and facts, even more so than the anecdotal stories we are wont to offer. Accountability and dollars and cents are what it's all about.

[rd] We need to extend the practice of academic advising within higher education. We need to enact by making clear what we are doing and what we want to be. And we need to enhance the profession through research and contributing to the body of knowledge about advising.

[ew] We have to act like professionals by having a *Journal* with good material in it, books on theory and practice, master's degrees as a minimum for employment, increased provost and presidential awareness of academic advising, notices of advising awards printed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, information letters sent to new presidents about NACADA with offers of assistance, white papers about huge advising rosters and effectiveness, studies of the changing role of faculty responsibilities, outreach to other professional organizations (be

on program, have a booth, etc.).

[jhb] NACADA should promote members' participation or national recognitions by notifying their own campuses and publishing them nationally in the *Chronicle*. It should also work with other associations like the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

[sc] NACADA needs to develop relationships with other professional associations such as NASPA [Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education], Association of State Colleges and Universities, American College Personnel Association (also known as the College Student Educators International), and a number of others. NACADA should target some with whom to develop partnerships. In this way we will build the profile of academic advising and the importance of academic advising on campuses.

[jb] To ensure that advisors get recognized, I believe that we have to be able to prove our value. We do that by strengthening the quantity and quality of research on academic advising.

What advice would you give to future presidents of NACADA?

Each president has the advantage of historical perspective in describing how their efforts contributed to the development of NACADA. These perspectives have also enabled them to reflect on how NACADA involvement contributed personal worth to their lives. The past presidents offered the following advice:

[tg] The president is the spokesperson for the association, a liaison who reaches out to other professional associations and maintains good strong relationships with organizations active in higher education. NACADA presidents need to be available as much as their campus responsibilities will allow. They need to be receptive to new ideas from members, to focus on students, and to search for new ideas to promote through the association.

[vg] We need to keep providing development opportunities for both professional academic advisors and faculty advisors.

[cc] Future presidents should try to retain the core values of the organization and maintain camaraderie within the board. It is important to keep the key elements of the organization vital and refresh them from time to time. The presidency of NACADA is not just an honorific position, it is a working job and you have to work at it in order for the organization to be successful. Each president has to take on a new role and have a vision and not be a mere caretaker. The leadership and energy of

past presidents has made NACADA what it is today.

[wh] New presidents should recognize that they're custodians of a marvelous treasure, that they are captains of a huge ship that cannot change its course in a 1-year presidency by more than one or two degrees. I would caution presidents who come in with a huge agenda for change to recognize that change is good but also to recognize that the traditions and continuity of the association is more important than any one individual's mark on the association as president. New presidents need to be supportive of the initiatives taken by their predecessors and putting into motion things that will not reach fruition until successors take over.

[gk] New presidents should keep the good things going. And by good things I mean the *Journal*, the qualitative research, the reaching out to faculty and other advisors on the campuses to help them improve their practices.

[cr] Every president has their own set of areas that they have to address particular to their time. As we've grown, we've become more complex. It's wonderful to be able to fall back on the Executive Office and not be writing your own minutes and other things. NACADA is a very powerful force and I hope the organization can continue to represent the various facets of advising on campus, not just the professional advisors, and not just the faculty advisors, but faculty, professional, and administrative folks together. It's unusual for an academic organization to have that variety and I think that makes us richer.

[pk] New presidents need to recognize the value of the people who've gone before even as they work to involve new folks. I would also hope that new presidents continue to monitor the opportunities that people from 2-year and private colleges have to achieve leadership positions in NACADA. Future presidents also need to evaluate the impact of the 1-year presidency on the ability to function and carry out programs.

[mm] New presidents need to evaluate the impact of the new structure on the representativeness of the leadership vis-à-vis the membership. For instance, it seems that in an organization with over 10,000 members coming from a variety of institutional types and advising activities that there should be more than just a few individuals qualified to run for executive level positions.

[nk] New presidents should enjoy the experience but don't get too caught up in the minutia and keep in the back of their minds that this is an incredible opportunity to have an impact. Another piece of advice is to concentrate on developing relation-

ships that make you more effective as a leader in your tenure rather than getting caught up in policies and politics. Remember that being president is like teaching; it's just an expanded classroom.

[br] I think that new presidents need to drive home the value of advising and the impact that having good advising programs can have on retention, on persistence, and on matriculation on our campuses.

[bmw] The first thing new presidents should do is to check their egos at the door. Remember, it [is] not about you. Try to build consensus. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Remember that there are multiple ways to achieve a goal. Always get feedback from those impacted by an issue. And the last one is to do what is right—what is best for the association and the profession.

[rd] Raise the level of discourse about academic advising. Figure out a way to be a player at the table of higher education.

[ew] Keep your eyes on the budget and finances. Keep your eyes on the relationship of NACADA to K-State [*Kansas State University*]. What is our relationship and should it continue the way it is? Make sure the power players in higher education know that we exist. They should also insure that NACADA has good publications, good training materials, and good everything. Remember that it is easy to get sidetracked on politics, on personalities, on your own little pet project. The way the presidency is now conceived, the president is the one who directs the executive director to do the work. The flow of the relationship between the board and the president and the executive director is very, very critical to see that the right work gets done. It is the president's job to assure there is a productive working relationship between the board and the Executive Office.

[jh] It was helpful to have worked in several capacities in NACADA leadership positions before becoming president. I was aware of NACADA's history, why it shifted structure, how that structure is intended to function as compared to the earlier structure. Always remember that it is important to know where you are headed, and that's why the strategic plan is so important and why the board needs to plan and not just react. Finally, remember that "it" is not about now; "it" is about the future.

[sc] Keep building on what has gone before. Then figure out or identify the one or two things that are the most important to the organization, to you, and to your vice president; then focus on those that can make a difference. And be yourself. Don't try to be somebody you are not. Be authentic. Be

transparent. Be open to change. And have fun!

[jb] Enjoy every minute of your presidency. It was such an honor to give back to an organization that has given so much to me.

Summary

All of NACADA's presidents spoke with pride, satisfaction, and appreciation about their involvement with NACADA. They all commented on a) the need for an association; b) its growth in size, programs, and publications; and c) the ever-changing management structure that evolved. NACADA has fulfilled the need for an authoritative, national voice for academic advising that could enunciate values and vision. Over the past 30 years, NACADA has grown in membership, conferences and programs, publications, and national and international cooperation. The structure transcended from volunteer to professional, from personalities to formalized roles, from disparate locations to a national office, from focus on operational details to a vision for the future, and from individuals' ideas to a formal organizational structure. NACADA's evolution during the past 3 decades is due, in large part, to the efforts of its past presidents. The current and future members of NACADA are fortunate to inherit an association built through the commitment, wisdom, and dedication of these past presidents.

Reference

Gordon, V.N., & Habley, W.R. (Eds.). (2000). *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Authors' Notes

Terry Kuhn (tkuhn@kent.edu) was Professor of Music and Vice Provost when he retired from Kent State University in 2003. His faculty advising load averaged 30 undergraduate and graduate students. Dr. Kuhn directed dissertations, edited 2 music journals, coauthored 3 books, wrote chapters for 6 books, and published 15 adjudicated research articles. He co-edited the NACADA Journal for 6 years.

Gary M. Padak (gpadak@kent.edu) is Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Kent State University where he has served since 1985 in a variety of instructional and administrative roles. His work with students ranges from regularly teaching and advising first-year students to directing doctoral dissertations. Dr. Padak is currently co-editor of the NACADA Journal and has been principal investigator or team member for 30 federal and state of Ohio grants totaling over \$15 million since 1989.