

Tips for Institutions Preparing for a NACADA Consultant

These tips are provided to assist the institution with planning for your NACADA Consultants visit. Some items may not be applicable to all campuses. Please work with your specific consultant(s) if you have any questions regarding preparing for the visit.

1. Charge to Consultants:

- What is the specific charge from the institution/college? If a formal program review, what are the specific academic advising areas being reviewed (one department, one college, entire institution, multiple campus locations, etc.)?
- What are the specific areas of concern or areas of interest the college/institution specifically wants the consultants to address?
- If a program review, is the college/institution interested in possible reorganization or restructuring, or do recommendations need to be made utilizing current organizational structures?
- What are specific areas/topics the college/institution desires the consultants address while on campus, and (if requested) in the final written report?
- Are there any political or historical concerns taking place on campus with various groups, which could come up in conversation and/or disrupt the process?

2. Description of the Academic Advising Process and Organization in the College or Institution:

This could include but not limited to:

- Organizational structure of the college/institution and where academic advising fits into the organizational structure.
- Which individual or office at your institution is ultimately responsible for the academic advising program institution-wide?
- Who establishes academic advising policies and procedures at your college/institution?
 - Faculty Senate or body
 - Individual colleges/departments
 - Central administration
 - Other
- Which individuals are charged with providing academic advising at your institution:
 - Faculty
 - Professional Advisors/staff
 - Peer/Graduate Student advisors
 - Other
- How many academic advisors are there at your institution in any of the advisor types immediately above? Have the numbers of these types of advisors changed in recent years?
- What are academic advisor/advisee ratios at your institution or in each unit?
- Organization of the Advising Centers & Offices-- staff, administration, duties, etc.
- Advising Process that students go through during the undergraduate experiences -- including students who begin as freshmen, who transfer in, and who may only be doing certification courses for teaching
- Responsibilities of Advisees -- have these been clearly established, articulated, and distributed to all students as well as all constituencies in the college, i.e. administration, faculty, and staff - if so, how?
- Responsibilities of Advisors -- have these been clearly established, articulated, and distributed to all students as well as all constituencies in the college, i.e. administration, faculty, and staff - if so, how?
- How is technology utilized to support the academic advising process, including by advisors and for students?

3. Professional Development for Advising Staff:

Description of what training/professional development is provided for the staff -- including activities when advisor is initially hired and on-going activities during their career. Please include any in-house professional development as well as professional development opportunities outside the college and institution. Are there specific academic advisor learning outcomes associated with these activities?

4. Assessment:

Description of assessment process as well as any results and how those results have been used for improvements. This should include:

- Academic Advising Mission, Vision, and Goal Statements for the campus/institution; do these exist?
- Mission, Vision, and Goal statements for the advising units within each college if they exist.
- Expected Student Learning Outcomes for the Advisees.
- Measurements utilized to assess student learning outcomes; where measured, how measured, and when measured?
- Performance Evaluation process(es) for advisors and advising administrators.
- Examples of any student learning outcome measurements for assessment utilized and results.
- Is there an academic advising syllabi established for the institution and/or each advising unit?

5. Additional Items to Consider:

- Are there established academic advising position descriptions utilized when hiring new advisors?
- For institutions utilizing faculty advisors, is there a faculty handbook? What is the tenure and promotion criteria for advising? Is advising placed within the teaching mission of the institution?
- Are there institution, college and/or departmental advising policies documents, handbooks, web pages, etc.
- Is there an Institution-wide advising group such as an Academic Advising Council, etc.?
- Is there a college strategic plan? Is there an institution strategic plan?
- What are examples of college/institution support for advising programs – e.g. appropriate space, operating budgets, use of technology, etc.?
- Will a final wrap-up meeting be desired? Will college/institution wish to hear initial consultant comments and recommendations at the end of the consultant visit prior to leaving campus, or should these comments only be provided in a final written report?

6. Individuals (Stakeholders) the consultants will want to interview during campus visit:

The following is a suggested list of individuals and/or groups the institution will want to consider as participants in a consultant's visit to the institution. These individuals should be given a brief overview of the purpose of the consultant's visit prior to the meetings.

- Students (student leaders, student employees, general students who receive academic advising in areas being reviewed).
- College/institution administrators who are connected to academic advising processes, procedures, oversight, etc. (from specific unit administrators all the way up your organizational chart(s) who will have a stake in the outcomes of this consultant review).
- Campus units and agencies (non-advising) who are impacted directly by the academic advising programs at your college/institution.
- Academic Advisors representing all areas being reviewed.
- Advising support staff; individuals who represent front line contacts with students in person, on the phones, etc.
- College/department administration, chairs, faculty, etc. who have a stake in the outcomes of this consultant review.
- Technology support staff – individuals who create, maintain, and operate technology resources connected to academic advising processes and procedures.

7. Taking care of your consultants.

- Meals may be working meals (meeting with individuals/groups during meals is appropriate if desired), however breaks should be provided prior to and after the working meal meetings.
- If consultants will be meeting with various individuals at different locations, please plan appropriate travel time. If possible, it helps to have someone walking consultants to different meetings since consultants are not familiar with campus.
- Restroom breaks are appreciated every two hours or so.
- Access to coffee, water, other beverages is appreciated.
- Ability to connect to campus internet connections on lap tops, tablets, phones, etc. via campus guest connections would be appreciated.