Research Committee Notes


Research Committee chair Janet Schulenberg called the meeting to order with a challenge from the Administrative Division that all Committees must set goals, delineate outcomes, and measure progress toward their goals. Janet reviewed the Committee’s charge, goals, and outcomes. It was noted that the Committee’s charge was revised two years ago and the Committee’s goals are drawn from that charge. The Committee’s goals include:

1. Communicate the value of scholarly inquiry, promote its use in enhancing advising practice, and support efforts to conduct new research.
2. Encourage scholarly inquiry that addresses contemporary and emerging issues in academic advising and higher education from a wide variety of perspectives and methodologies.
3. Promote conditions that empower advisors as contributors of knowledge.

Janet reviewed the Committee’s activities over the last year and noted that all activities tie back to the Committee’s measurable goals. The hardest goal to measure is within charge area three: promote conditions that empower advisors as contributors of knowledge.

Sub-committee reports.

The work of the following sub-committees support goal 1: communicate the value of scholarly inquiry, promote its use in enhancing advising practice, and support efforts to conduct new research.

Conference speaker: Wendy reported on this year’s effort to match the conference theme. Marcia Baxter Magolda was the definitive choice; she will speak Saturday morning. Sharon reported that next year’s conference theme is “Success Elevated: Greatest Advising on Earth;” Sharon is the conference chair. Possible keynote topics were discussed including “what creates good advising?”

Wendy explained the process. Look for dynamic speaker, who understands audience, narrow list, give to Rhonda. No central clearinghouse for Higher Ed speakers which makes the job more difficult. Bob knows of a LinkedIn I need a speaker group; he is willing to be on the sub-committee.

Common Reading: Sharon discussed the Common Reading in terms of what will happen this year and next. Next year’s topic could revolve around Advising as Teaching. Thoughts were that besides the NACADA Journal, the sub-committee could look at an About Campus article. It was noted that student success = retention on many campuses.

**Tying sub-committee work to the goals of the Committee:** Janet instructed all sub-committees to look at how they help the Committee meet our goals. We “engage members, offer support, provide direct support of research.” The last two sub-committees discussions illustrate this. The Committee’s efforts should grab advisors who never thought that research had anything to do with practice. That is a challenge both for the conference speaker and common reading. What can we do for those who don’t attend conference. Can we post video? Ask speaker to allow it?

What else can we be doing to help the average member recognize that research impacts practice. Language matters. Why should research nerds pick the conference speaker? How can we demystify research and make it practitioner orientated? Sharon suggested that the research grant listing include all who are doing the research, not just the PI. Discussion revolved around how we can start at the grass roots level with concurrent presentations on action research. The Committee does a preconference workshop on how to construct research. Bob talked about efforts to present on research methodology at Region 9 that then became an article for the NACADA Journal. He suggested that the Writing for NACADA session should have more of a research slant.

Janet suggested that more of the sub-committees should work together. The Common Reading should take their lead from the speaker sub-committee. It was suggested that the Faculty Advising Commission (incoming chair Bob Hurt) may want to jointly sponsor a Webinar with the Research Committee.

**Research Committee Goal 2:** Encourage scholarly inquiry that addresses contemporary and emerging issues in academic advising and higher education from a wide variety of perspectives and methodologies.

The following activities offer support to members seeking to become contributing scholars: Research agenda, research registry listserv. They do similar things in different ways.

**Research agenda:** Wendy reported on the last year’s conference session conducted by Jenny and herself regarding generation of critical questions in advising. Wendy distributed a draft of topics generated at the session for Committee input; please send all comments to Wendy by the end of October. This project is based on the former AAHE assessment list. Wendy and Jenny will put the list into consistent language and publicize it through the Committee’s website. The idea is to promote research collaboration.

Wendy suggested that the Committee could do a series of vod-casts to be posted in Clearinghouse/Committe research section. It was noted that the Research Agenda guides our priorities from the selection of research grants to our discussions to our choice of conference speakers and thus supports multiple Committee goals.

**Research Committee Goal 3:** Promote conditions that empower advisors as contributors of knowledge.

**Research registry listserv** connects novice researchers with more experienced researchers. The listserv changed the discussion from a 1-1 match to a discussion followed by more than 250 researchers on the
listserv. The sub-committee needs a systematic agenda and should model good list conversations. There could be a sub-committee mentor from each region. Some potential topics include applying for a grant (which can be daunting) and writing an article based upon completed research. Can we attach the research agenda to registry? There was discussion of the use of the social media portion of the new CMS. Twitter? Could the Committee connect with Tech Commission whose “ask me?” T-shirts make them visible. Could there be a research tweet chat? Blog posts in research but must be kept up; this is not an EO project, the Committee should take ownership.

Pre-conference workshop provides support to individuals who are interested in starting their own research. Peter discussed that the preconference workshop’s content basically is the first two hours of the Research Symposium. In the workshop critical friends help craft research questions. This year’s workshop is this afternoon from 3:15-5:15 in Governor Chamber B & C. There are 23 registered for the workshop which is an improvement over the five or so who would attend a few years ago. The workshop/concurrent session model could be proposed by Committee members at the regional level; Committee members interested in doing a concurrent session or workshop on research at their region should attend today’s workshop. Committee members should also look at proposing a Common Reading at the region level. Drafting procedures for submitting a Common Reading at regional conferences was a task added to the Common Reading sub-committee.

Research Symposium. Kathleen reported on the Symposium and the recent evaluation completed by past participants. The Committee has offered the Symposium six times. The question leading to the evaluation was “what kind of impact has the Symposium had?”

Kathleen shared an overview of results and will craft a more formal report of evaluation results to share with the Committee and the Executive Office. Themes that emerged from the evaluation included need for research mentorship, time to research, and instructions on how to research. The evaluation had a 34% response rate. Participants saw that most areas of the current Symposium curriculum are valuable. It was noted that the lowest level of support from respondents was for accountability partners (the follow up portion of the Symposium) and the lit review exercise.

Sixteen respondents met their research goals. The biggest challenge noted by respondents was time available for research and lack of administrative support for research activity. Two areas the Committee should explore are how participants can get administrative support for research time and how to write the results of the study. The latter could be pursued in partnership with the NACADA Journal’s Editorial Board. Good ideas have come out of discussion by the sub-committee with the Executive Office. The trick is to keep moving forward.

Research grants. Janet shared examples of the variety of feedback offered by grant reviewers noting that the more substantial reviewer comments are, the more helpful it is to the sub-committee chair. The Committee funded five projects this year including several that are from new theoretical perspectives. Due to the increased quality and quantity of proposals submitted, the Finance Committee and Board have approved a permanent increase of grant funds from $15,000 to $25,000. There was
discussion regarding what it would take to award seed grants; the lack of IRB approval for these grants was seen as an issue with the inclusion of these kinds of grants.

**Survey guidelines:** Marsha explained Charlie’s request for an ad hoc sub-committee to review NACADA sponsored survey requests. The current survey guidelines were drafted when the Executive Office received, on average, three all-member survey requests per year. (Note: NACADA allows up to four all-member (or all-commission) surveys each year to help avoid survey burn out). All-member survey requests for this academic year have already topped ten. The Executive Office has asked the Research Committee to make revision suggestions so that surveys chosen for sponsorship will be the most likely to produce research that will make a difference to the profession.

**Moving forward:** Janet thanked all of the sub-committee members for their work and all Committee members for their suggestions. It was requested that the Committee meeting time for next year be extended to two hours so sub-committees could meet and begin work on their projects.

Janet asked for volunteers for the 2012-2013 subcommittees. Volunteers include:

Survey: Bob (chair), Ryan. Target completion date: December 1.
Student Research award: Giselle, Shannon, Peter Hagen
Grant readers: Leigh, Sarah, Shannon, Sharon, Peter, Julie (?), Janet
Workshop & Symposium: Kathleen, Paulette, Janice, Shannon, Ryan
Research Registry and agenda: Anna, Jenny, Leigh
Speaker: Ryan (chair), Bob, Sarah, Jenny, Gieselle & Sharon.
Common Reading: Janice, Paulette, Luiza, Sharon (who cannot be chair)

Incoming chair Wendy Troxel will sit on all committees.

Janet official “passed the torch” to Wendy. In behalf of the Committee, Wendy thanked Janet for her leadership over the last two years. Meeting adjourned.

Meeting notes by Marsha Miller