

**Kristopher Klann, University of Florida, kris.klann@gmail.com**

Having the chance to attend the NACADA National Conference was one of the most rewarding and educational opportunities that I have had in my short time as an academic advisor. Attending the conference afforded me the chance to meet advisors from around the country; to discuss some of the common issues that we face; and to learn about some of the best practices that are being implemented to deal with some of these common issues. Being able to make these connections and learn about these different practices will allow me to not only grow as an advisor, but also allow me to better serve the needs of my students.

Something that I picked up on right away while at the National Conference is the large number of occasions there are to network and meet advisors from around the country. NACADA does a great job of developing events for these interactions to take place, whether it was through the new member workshops, the early morning breakfasts, or the regional socials, the lengths to which NACADA clearly goes to, to foster these types of interactions was noticeable and greatly appreciated. Personally, I also made an effort to meet new advisors in each of the workshops and interest group meetings that I attended. This is a great chance to meet advisors who have similar interest as you, and most likely deal with similar issues as you, and is something that I strongly encourage all attendees to take advantage of, because it is a great way to improve your daily practice, and to build your professional network.

One of the most memorable experiences I had at the National Conference was attending the Region IV meeting. I greatly enjoyed this part of the conference because it not only gave me a chance to meet other advisors local to me, but it also showed me NACADA at the grass roots level. Getting the chance to listen to the individuals from Mississippi State University talk about the upcoming regional conference in Starkville, and the enthusiasm that they had about it was just amazing. Sitting in the Florida state meeting and seeing the number of people from around the state who were interested in hosting and attending drive-in conferences, and seeing the number of people who were interested in attending the pre-regional conference research symposium, were all things that I took away from the Region IV meeting that showed me that NACADA is alive and strong not only at the national level but also at the regional and state levels as well.

Another memorable experience that I took away from this year's National Conference was the constant discussion on infusing research back into to NACADA and academic advising. Seeing Jenny Bloom mention research in several workshops, and hearing individuals discuss the research symposium to be held in Starkville, showed me that the talk about research is not superficial but is an initiative that is gaining momentum within NACADA. This is extremely exciting because as a graduate student, we are constantly bombarded with the message of how important it is to keep up with the current research in our field, and to infuse that research into our daily practices. Witnessing NACADA take steps to update the research regarding academic advising, is very exciting for the future of advising.

Of course, I cannot discuss my experiences at the National Conference without mentioning the workshops that I attended. As previously mentioned, these are a great opportunity to network with other advisors, but they also allowed me to learn about things that will help me improve my daily advising. Whether it was a workshop discussing exploratory students, students interested in business careers, or helping probation students succeed, I gained a wealth of knowledge at this year's National Conference that I can share with other advisors in my office, so as to improve the quality of service we provide to our students.

Attending this year's National Conference was a great opportunity, and one that I greatly appreciate Region IV helping me obtain. I strongly encourage all academic advisors, whether you are a graduate student or a veteran in the field, to take advantage of the resources available through NACADA..