

Experienced Academic Advisor Professional Development Needs Survey

Executive Summary of Results

On November 28, 2005, the "Experienced Academic Advisor Professional Development Needs Survey" was sent to 2718 NACADA members who indicated (on their membership application) that they had three or more years of advising experience. Members could respond to the survey through December 11, 2005. Members not responding were sent two email reminders regarding the survey.

Demographics: 611 (22.5%) members responded to the survey. 32% of respondents indicated that they had more than 15 years of advising experience. 45% of respondents were in attendance in Las Vegas. Only 22% of respondents had attended **no** NACADA sponsored event in the last two years. Lack of budget and lack of time were the two most cited reasons for non-attendance.

Those attending NACADA sponsored events indicated that it was very important to their attendance that NACADA:

- 1) offered sessions related to the student population(s) they serve (414 respondents)
- 2) offered sessions related to advising as a profession (319)
- 3) provided networking opportunities (278)
- 4) helped members find cutting-edge programming (230)

NACADA professional development opportunities met members expectations "better than anticipated" in the following areas:

- 1) Conference location (198)
- 2) Sessions related to the student population advised (186)
- 3) Sessions related to advising as a profession (177)
- 4) Networking with colleagues and NACADA leadership (158)
- 5) Keynote speakers (130)

373 (61% of respondents) indicated that they felt validated by their attendance at NACADA sponsored events. 368 (60%) felt better prepared to apply new techniques and ideas to their advising, and 351 (57%) indicated that they left NACADA events refreshed. 224 (37%) indicated that they felt capable of influencing others at their institutions regarding advising related issues. A summary of write-in remarks from this question is listed below.

NACADA members appear satisfied that the value of attending NACADA events has remained constant or increased over the years. The area with the largest percent disagreeing with the statement was Regional conferences where 10% of those responding to the question indicated disagreement.

NACADA members indicate that it is frequently true that

- They share knowledge gained from attending NACADA professional development events (61%)
- Knowledge learned from NACADA professional development events enhances their skills as an advisor (50.5%)
- They share knowledge gained with their supervisors (47.6%)

Write-in Comments:

Question 8. Summary of write-in comments for question: after attending a NACADA sponsored event I feel...:

Topics:

- Like the ability to network with colleagues and/or want more opportunities (12)
- Appreciate they can garner new ideas (8)
- Need strategies to implement ideas on reluctant campuses (7)
- Want more sessions with cutting edge ideas and research (7)
- Feel validated (6)
- Need "mid-level" sessions (5)
- Conferences need to stay affordable (5)

Sample comments:

- The sheer number of attendees makes it very difficult for a lone attendee to connect. It would be really helpful to be able to sign up for a discussion group where there is actual discussion, not just 'being talked at,' in order to network better and meet people. At this point, I have great ideas and no place to apply them. I go from room to room, sit and listen, and move on. How does that help me connect or grow as I move ahead in my career?
- Was disappointed that so much of the conference seemed to be geared to new professionals
- I always find that I am not the only one with the problems. I hear others express their needs and concerns, which are also my needs and concerns.
- The main benefit was getting new ideas and sharing with others in the field.
- I find the presentations at NACADA are not always "advanced" enough for my needs. i.e., I have experienced so much of advising that I need an advising seminar for people who have been in the profession 20 or more years.
- Concurrent sessions are too often show and tell based on what someone has done on their campus, but the programs are not based on the application of scholarship to the activity.
- I wish that there were more sessions that address actual practices -- i.e. here's what we do, here's what works, here's what didn't, this is what prompted us to implement this, etc
- Close and affordable with a lot of work relevant session topics decide it every time.
- Encouraged to pursue new programming, but frustrated by an unwilling administration to move forward and progress.
- Disappointed in my school's reaction to my attendance/involvement/new ideas that I brought back.....Extremely large "gap" exists between academic advisors and administrative decision-makers.....and the "gap" is widening as full-time advisors are eliminated or replaced by part-time or graduate assistants.
- I am always inspired by the national conference. I always learn something new; and feel supported in my personal philosophy regarding academic and career advising. I've managed to get faculty advisors to the conference and they are now encouraging their colleagues to attend. They too are learning to be better advisors. NACADA is doing a fabulous job for all of us in advising. Thank you!
- I'm always surprised and excited that I feel refreshed and re-energized, as this can be such a burn-out field. Yet I always come back to work ready to go again.
- It is difficult if the decision makers and coworkers do not buy into the "new" information.

Question 11. Summary of comments for write-in question: specific professional development needs

- More opportunities to network with others who share my specific interests (34)
- NACADA is doing a good job fulfilling professional development needs (24)
- Information on how to implement ideas on my campus (14)
- Scholarships for all NACADA sponsored professional development (13)
- Information on student issues (Millennials, at risk, adult learner, mental health, etc.) (13)
- Opportunities closer to home (12)
- More advanced topics (11)
- More on new, cutting edge theories/topics (9)
- Online mini courses and workshops (8)

Sample comments:

- Networking opportunities: wished there had been an "ice breaker" of sorts at the start of the Vegas conference to allow us to meet with others in common interest (i.e. technology, allied health professions, urban schools, etc.)
- NACADA conferences seem too busy with concurrent sessions that there is little time or venue for having meaningful conversations among colleagues regarding issues we share, whether advising administration or other issues.
- workshops on how to present effectively needs of counseling/advising center (funding, physical space, etc.) to higher administration
- NACADA is wonderful! I think the main thing would be to help us convince our institutions how critical good academic advising is!
- I'm really not sure what more you can do. There is a LOT that you do already, especially for the newer advisors. The web resources are fabulous and I use them quite often. Thanks for all you do!
- NACADA meets my needs for professional development. Thank you!
- I would like to bring NACADA speakers to campus, but can't afford it at this time. Are their grants/funds available to help defray the costs?
- I would like to see an advanced Summer Advising Institute for those of us who attended, but are not yet administrators. This advanced training would be useful in fine-tuning skills and improving processes at the advisor level.
- I would just like to have more options closer to home; we have no PD here and would welcome the chance to have more. My university is unable to financially support any trips to conferences out of province.
- Online mini-courses related to advisement on advanced topics would be helpful.
- Providing a few teleconference opportunities throughout the year would be useful to those who do not have the budget or time to travel.
- Perhaps a pre- post-conference workshop for senior advisors to discuss advising philosophy, changes in the profession, or changes in the organization. A track at national conferences for presentations geared to long-term advisors.
- At national conference there needs to be real discussion sessions where more experienced advisors can share and discuss issues. Many things billed as round table/discussion are really presentations.

The statistical report for this survey is available at

<https://surveys.ksu.edu/Survey/PublicReport?offeringId=45178>. Note: This link shows the statistics generated by the survey software. A summary of write-in comments does not appear on the link but was listed above. Please note that the number of N/R responses listed on the link reflects the number of respondents who actually clicked N/R; the percentage listed for N/R reflects the number who clicked N/R PLUS those who did not answer the question. A copy of the entire report, including all comments, is available upon request from Marsha Miller at miller@ksu.edu.

