

REGIONAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Advisors from all over the northeast converged at Foxwoods/MGM Grand in Connecticut for professional development and networking at the Region One conference March 21st-23rd.

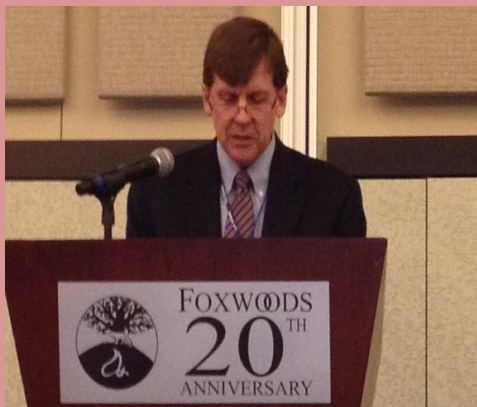
Keynote speaker Steven Jarvi, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Student Academic Life in the College of Arts and Sciences at Boston University addressed advisors with a presentation titled "Brain Surgery or Academic Advising? I chose the more challenging path."

Congratulations to Kevin Piskadlo, Melissa Jenkins and Henrietta Genfi from Bentley College! They will once again represent Region One at the national conference in Nashville after being voted the Best of Region for their presentation "Everything is Great! Now, Let's Ruin It! - Working with Self-Sabotaging Students".

Region One was not the only conference in town, for an amusing and insightful look into how advising compares to roofing, see the guest column by Avery Horowitz on page 3.



The 2012 Region 1 conference had a record-breaking 430 people in attendance.



Keynote speaker Steven Jarvi, Ph.D. addresses conference attendees.



- * 430 people attended the conference, shattering previous records.
- * 80 pre-conference, concurrent, and poster sessions were presented.
- * 10 boxes of school supplies were donated to New London High School, New London, CT.

AWARD WINNERS

Regional scholarship recipients and Advising Excellence Award Winners were recognized during the conference. Pictured at right: Rendesia Scott– State University of New York at New Paltz, Kelly Nemeth– University of Connecticut, Melissa Jenkins– Bentley University, MaryAnne Purtill– Plymouth State University. Not pictured: Carol White - Eastern Connecticut State University

See a complete list of recipients on page 2.





Registration Co-Chairs Erik Colon - Binghamton University and Laurie Nelson - Brandeis University

GET INVOLVED!

Are you passionate about professional development? Are your organizational skills off-the-chart awesome? Are assessment and evaluation favored words in your vocabulary? Do you want to collaborate with fabulous folks from around the region (like those pictured on this page)? Have you always wanted to experience the thrill of conference planning? If you answered yes (or even maybe) to any of these questions, consider joining the Region One conference committee. Contact Region Chair Terri Downing (downingt@franklinpierce.edu) or Conference Chair Steve Viveiros (sviveiros@bridgew.edu) for information.

REGION ONE GIVING

In 2011 Region One began a new conference tradition of giving by encouraging conference attendees to bring donations of non-perishable foods for the Vermont Food Bank. This year, the conference collected donations of school supplies and other items to be donated to New London High School in New London, CT. According to Site Chair Ann Traynor, ten large boxes of supplies were collected and donated.

2012 Scholarship recipients:

Advising Administrator:

Ethel Hill

Graduate Students:

Stacy Straaberg Finfrock

Ana Fraden

Adriana Ghan

Jessica Hollstein

Whitney Kangas

New Advisors:

Joanna Chang

Jennifer Hart

Brandon Huggon

Vincent McCann

Kristen O'Neill

Rachel Puopolo

Danielle Robert-Massey

Presenters:

Jessica Petriello

Justin Rahn

Caroline White



Site Chair Ann Traynor welcomes conference attendees

Visit the Region One website
http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Regional_Divisions/region1/index.htm

ADVISING AND ROOFING

There are different approaches to advisement; developmental probably being the best known, at least to NACADA members. But since I personally don't think anything happens by chance and since the regional conference of NACADA was meeting at the same time and place as the North/East Roofing Contractors Association (NERCA), maybe it's time to consider the relevance of "roofing advisement," or at least what we can learn about academic advisement from our friendly neighborhood roofer.

Like developmental advising, "roofing advisement" means different things to different people.

a) Given the state of our economy (I'm an economist by training), the most basic message is that advisors need to help students put a "roof over their heads". For many current students, that obviously includes financial aid, part-time jobs, childcare, etc. But for advisors, maybe it also means giving our students a reality check. Encourage students to lower expectations and choose majors and careers that can literally help put a roof over their heads. [When I worked in an engineering college, a recession meant students switching from the glamorous electrical engineering major to the more mundane mechanical engineering – a field where there always seemed to be jobs.]

b) Guys up on the roof face many challenges. Falling off would, I guess, be the biggest one (especially for me - I'm afraid of heights). In advisement, one could think of the concept in terms of having a back-up plan - a safety rope or net so that if first choices don't happen, there is a back-up plan. Dealing with students who are aiming for a career in the health sciences, but who can't seem to pass biology is one of the toughest tasks we face as advisors.

c) Going up on the roof also means being prepared, both in terms of training and tools. Many/most of us would argue that too many of our students are missing that preparation. I'm sure there are lots of college instructors (and maybe advisors as well) who complain about what high schools are turning out - unprepared students. Advising them is certainly an additional challenge. Students in a rush often fight pre-requisites, another type of necessary preparation for academic success.

d) Tools - - the right (rubber soled?) shoes, the right equipment for working on a roofing project. Lately we seem to come across students who can't afford the necessary texts. Especially, for incoming and/or weak students, purchasing the text 2-3 weeks late almost guarantees the student will fall off the roof, and fail the course.

e) Roofing can be a productive, lucrative profession. But try to explain to a roofer why he should study not just OSHA regulations (one of the other conference's day long roofing

sessions), but also English, history and literature. I think that's another issue many academic advisors fight on a daily basis - certainly with students, and sometimes with technical department chairs, as well.

f) I would venture that the first time up on the roof is somewhat scary - even for a roofer. For those of us who went to college and graduate school and stayed to be advisors, it's important to remember those first days on campus and freshman classes - a student's first time on the roof -- and how scary it was. If an advisor can't relate to that fright (spoken or unspoken) it is that much harder to help a student. While true for all students, it is probably doubly so for first generation college students and those with special needs.

g) New roofers, all new employees, and students greatly benefit from orientation sessions. As advisors, we both need to be major players at orientation and do more to encourage our students to not just attend, but actively participate in orientation sessions. The same goes for 'freshman foundations' types of courses.

h) At their roofing workshops and certainly in the product exhibition hall, roofers were exposed to the latest technology. But they were also told, I suspect, that good roofing is both art and science – not just technology. I think the same message was offered at the NACADA workshops. There is great new technology out there that we as advisors should take advantage of. But there's also the art – the human touch – that we lose sight of at our own peril.

i) Doing roofing work is subject to the elements - you can't really fix a leaking roof in the rain, and certainly not in a hurricane. Very often that is true for students as well. They need first to come in out of the storm, and then advisors can try to help them. Sometimes a class must be dropped - or even a semester sacrificed because the elements are too harsh- never easy to sell to students.

j) Finally, NERCA's roofing theme was "New Beginnings." That is very much of a theme for advisement. New beginnings for students coming to college with weak high school records; new beginnings for adult learners returning to college; new beginnings in using the great new technology that's out there; and new beginnings for advisors changing career paths. College in general and advisement in particular is really a lot about new beginnings. New beginnings should be exciting, and we, as advisors, should be conveying some of that excitement to our advisees.

So while advisors from NACADA's Region One gathered in Foxwoods for our own conference (and hopefully didn't wander into roofing sessions by mistake), the two professions, in some sense, really have much in common. We preach to our advisees that there are all kinds of learning modalities and opportunities - maybe thinking of the roofing analogy is a good one for advisors. [If not, we can always learn to play poker from some of those sharp roofers.]