

MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

Name:

Alanna Bitzel

Institution:

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)

Institution Location:

Las Vegas, Nevada

Years Advising: **13**

Years in NACADA: **6**

Tell us about your journey to your first NACADA leadership position.

I kind of fell into my first NACADA leadership position. At the end of 2021, I responded to an email calling for applicants to the Advising Student Athletes Steering Committee. At the time, I was working in Athletics Student Services at The University of Texas at Austin. I was interested in networking with advisors outside my institution and becoming more involved in the field at large, so, I thought, what better way to do those things than to serve on the Steering Committee. I submitted a statement of interest and joined in 2022. My initial expectation was that I would use my time on the Steering Committee to learn more about NACADA, the Advising Community, and leadership in the organization; however, later that year, the then-Chair of the Community stepped down, and the Chair spot became vacant. I volunteered to step into the role, jumping headfirst into NACADA leadership, which is, honestly, how I have approached leadership in other organizations. I very much enjoy learning by doing, and I have always felt confident in my ability to pick up what I need to know along the way. And I knew I had the organizational skills, background experience in athletics, and, importantly, bandwidth to commit to the role. After completing the term, I was elected to a full term starting in 2023. There was much I did not know going into the position and could only learn once I was actually Chair, but I had many great resources, including my EO liaison, Division Reps, Cluster Rep, fellow ACD Chairs, and Steering Committee members, on which to rely. I was (and continue to be) so grateful to them for their insights and support.

How did you build your NACADA network of people?

Simply put, by being proactive and curious about others. In 2022, new to Advising Student Athletes and relatively new to the organization, I quickly recognized the need to get to know people. I began by meeting 1:1 with my Steering Committee members; they had been appointed under the previous Chair and several had been involved with NACADA for years. They would suggest members to me to meet or researchers to follow, and I would reach out to those folks. When the Steering Committee and I began coordinating virtual Community events, I prioritized collaboration with other Communities and reached out to leaders in those Communities. I contacted presenters of virtual events I attended. I made a point to respond to every email I received from a member with questions about the Community or interest in getting more involved. At Conferences, I introduced myself to those presenting on topics related to my Community and exchanged contact information; put out attendance sheets at meetings and presentations that I conducted; and followed up with attendees after the Conference with emails or LinkedIn connection requests. Ultimately, though, for me it's not just about building but maintaining a solid network, and continually nurturing relationships, which requires effort and follow-through. I value people, their stories, the perspectives they bring to interactions; to me, the effort is worth it. I am now looking ahead and considering my next leadership positions in the organization, so I've recently reached out to different Administrative Division and Region leaders to learn more about their individual journeys in higher education and involvement with NACADA. I believe this Leadership Journey series offers something similar to what I have personally sought out, so I am excited for this initiative!

What is your favorite NACADA memory?

A favorite memory for me was the Advising Student Athletes Community Meeting at the 2023 Orlando Annual Conference. The room was packed to the gills, full of energy and enthusiasm as members shared their experiences, questions, and interests. I was encouraged to see such active engagement, and it highlighted for me the benefit and service that NACADA offers professionals looking to connect.

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD:

2024

- Upcoming: Publications Advisory Board Member, Oct 2024 – Oct 2026
- 2025 Annual Conference Planning Committee Concurrent Sessions Co-Chair, Aug 2024 – Present
- 2024 NACADA Global Awards Reader/Evaluator, Jun 2024
- Advising Student Athletes Community Mentor, Jan 2024 – May 2024

2023

- Advising Student Athletes eTutorial Review Team Member, Oct 2023 – Present
- 2024 Region 4 and Region 7 Conference Proposal Reader, Sep 2023 – Oct 2023
- 2023 NACADA Global Awards-ACD Service Award Subcommittee Chair, May 2023 – Jun 2023
- Handbook of Career Advising Review Team Lead, Apr 2023 – Jan 2024
- Hispanic and Latine Student Success Steering Committee Member, 2023

2022

- Advising Student Athletes Steering Committee Member, Jan 2022 – Sep 2022
- Advising Student Athletes Community Chair, Sep 2022 – Present

2014

- NACADA Outstanding New Advisor Award Recipient, 2014