

SETTING SAIL TO MID-LEVEL ADVISOR SUCCESS

Embracing the Real “*Unsung Heroes*” of NACADA

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YOUR PRESENTERS



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INSPIRATION FOR PANEL



Came from discussions with colleagues within advising and student affairs.



Desire to find more constructive ways to work through difficulties on the job when it come to vertical mobility.



Horizontal development seems to be one way to allow ourselves to grow professionally while also working towards new goals with our supervisors.



We are here to build a support network within our membership to find solutions to help mid-level practitioners in the field.



Past Region 2 Presentation on Mid-level (2018 and 2019), 2019 Annual Conference Panel and 2020 Region 4 Panel.

SETTING SEAL TO THE MID-LEVEL

- **Who are mid-level higher educators?**
 - Research says...
- **Challenges of mid-level educators**
 - Career Immobility
- **Benefits of mid-level educators**
 - Engage Others
- **Horizontal Career Growth**
 - Makeover Your Career
- **Mid-Level Engagement**
 - NACADA
- **Questions?**

ATTRITION FROM STUDENT AFFAIRS.... THOSE WHO EXITED

- Marshall, Gardner, Hughes & Lowery (2016)'s study surveyed current student affairs professionals focusing on their "intent to leave" to field; based on three decades of research
- 41.7% of professionals spent less than five years in the field before leaving
- 21.7% of professionals spent 8-10 years in the field before leaving
- The study looked at factors that contributed the professionals to leave the industry within a decade of service:
 - Excessive Hours and Burnout
 - Non-Competitive Salaries Leading to Alternative Career Options
 - Attractive Career Alternatives
 - Work-Life Conflict
 - Limited Opportunities
 - Role of the Supervisor and Institutional Fit
 - Lack of Challenge and Loss of Passion

JOB STRESS, BURNOUT, JOB SATISFACTION, TURNOVER ...

- Denney, Dietz, Malone, and Mullen (2018) examined burnout among student affairs professionals. They interviewed 789 practitioners including:
 - 453 Academic Advisors (57.4%)
 - 53 Academic Coordinators (6.7%)
 - 506 subjects worked in the niche areas of academic advising, academic coordination and related work

KEY RESEARCHERS ON MID-LEVEL ADMINISTRATIONS

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WHO ARE MID-LEVEL HIGHER EDUCATORS?

“Unsung Heroes of the Academy”

- Rosser (2000), said, “...unsung because their contributions to the academic enterprise are rarely recognized and professionals because of their commitment, training, and adherence to high standards of performance and excellence in their areas of expertise,” (p.5)
- Either academic or nonacademic support personnel
- Are not classified as faculty, considered non-exempt, non-contract group of administrators
 - Rarely have protection of tenure
 - Vulnerable to budget cuts
- Could be classified as administrators, professionals, technician or specialists
- Reports to top-level officer, administrator, dean

A BALANCING ACT ...

- Rosser (2000) said of mid-level higher educators, “maintains a balance between their supervisors’ direction and delegations and the needs and constraints of faculty, students and public who require their support and services” (p. 7).
- Frontline personnel
- Considered the “firing-line managers” who have the responsibility to:
 - Monitor and regulate policies and procedures
 - Rarely have the authority to change, adjust and develop the regulations they enforce

CHALLENGES OF MID-LEVEL HIGHER EDUCATORS

- **Johnsrud (1996) defined three sources of frustrations for midlevel administrator**
 - **The Midlevel Nature of Their Role**
 - **The Lack of Recognition**
 - **Their Limited Opportunity for Career Growth or Advancement**

MIDLEVEL ADMINISTRATORS WORK LIFE (JOHNSRUD, HECK, AND ROSSER, 2000)

Lack of Recognition

- Not feeling appreciated (Rhoades, 1995)
- Well-educated group, working hard in demanding roles and efforts go unrecognized (Johnsrud & Rosser, 1999)
- Rise of administrative services marked a lack of knowledge on the skills, background and expertise needed by professionals.
- Could be the result of poor supervisory skills among senior administration

Faculty vs. Administration

- During the 1970s and 1980s there a massive growth the number of administrative positions created vs. faculty roles
- 62% increase in midlevel administration (as cited in Grassmuck, 1990, 1991).
- Faculty resists accepting administration as part of their academic community (as cited in Austin and Gamson, 1983).
- “Faculty are more likely to criticize the increased numbers of administration than to give credit to those who spend much of their time directly interacting with students and external constituents,” (p. 39).

MIDLEVEL ADMINISTRATORS WORK LIFE (JOHNSRUD, HECK, AND ROSSER, 2000)

Limited Opportunity

- Promotion might mean a change institution. Administrators are not always able to remain at one institution for an entire career (as cited in Sagaria & Moore, 1983).
- Barrier between functional areas (i.e. students affairs, academic affairs) and types of institution)

Limited Opportunity

- Ill-defined career paths, multiple entrance points and lack of explicit criteria for determining mobility (as cited in Twombly, 1990).
- Lack of professional development opportunities for midlevel professionals (as cited McDade, 1990).

BENEFITS OF MID-LEVEL HIGHER EDUCATORS



Opportunity to help people



Opportunity to work with students



Ability to work in an academic environment

Collegiate education/learning environment



Reaching an advising professional level

Have experiences and credibility



Able to use prior professional experiences to enact change (positive or negative)

If you had a great/life changing experience, then you may be inspired to try to make the same impact on someone else

BENEFITS OF MID-LEVEL HIGHER EDUCATORS

We are experienced in our positions where we can work autonomously with little supervision or need for extra trainings

Can assist in the training of new advisors and professionals

- Have a functional area of expertise (i.e. Orientation, Peer Advising, Retention, Seminar Courses)
- Serve as role model/mentor to new talent

Leadership opportunities

- Institutional advising communities
- Committee work within school/college
- Regional/National/International work within NACADA and other higher educational associations

HORIZONTAL CAREER GROWTH

#HorizontalBranding

- As mid-level professional who might face challenges in moving vertically in our careers. Through thinking about our horizontal development, it can allow us to rebrand ourselves.
 - Does your office have functional areas that you might be able to take one of these new roles that will allow yourself to learn a new niche role in academic advising, student service, etc.
 - Does your office/department/institution have a professional development committee or advisor group? Allowing for colleagues from across campus to gather to learn more about the college/university.
 - Take inventory of your department/office and institution
 - Where are the holes?
 - Seek mentorship and council from supervisors and administrators

MAKEOVER YOUR CAREER

- Find passion project and pursue them.
- Become involved in mentoring (as a mentor for experienced advisors or a mentee for newer advisors).
- Become involved in NACADA; advising communities, conferences, subcommittees.
- Challenge your supervisor for ideas for growth.
- Build resume for a time when a position is available.
- Conduct informational interviews with people who hold positions in which you are interested.
- Collaborate/becoming involved with other “advising adjacent” offices.
- Look for advising positions at other institutions.
- Build Community- Communicate with other advisors who may be going/have gone through the same thing .

NACADA HEARS US!

- Past NACADA President, Amy Sannes wrote in her “Fridays with NACADA” address on May 25, 2018 about the need for professional development ideas.
 - Amy said, “One comment I have been hearing on a regular basis is ‘Is there more we can offer our mid-level experienced advisors?’”
 - NACADA’s Professional Development Committee and Sustainable Leadership Committee are looking to identify appropriate venues

MID-LEVEL REPRESENTATION IN NACADA

- 2019-2020 Region 2 Goal - to engage with mid-level advisors
- Presentations/Panels
 - 2018 New Jersey Drive-In
 - 2018 Region 2 Conference Presentation
 - 2019 Region 2 Conference Panel
 - 2019 Annual Conference Panel
 - 2020 Region 4 Conference
- Accepted as a Pre-Conference Workshop for the 2020 Region 2 Conference
- Accepted as a **“HOT TOPIC”** Roundtable for 2020 Annual Conference

MIDLEVEL ADMINISTRATION REPRESENTATION

- NACADA Administrator's Institute
 - New Admin/Mid-Level Track
- NACADA Advisor Training and Development Advising Community
- NACADA Advisor Well-Being and Retention Advising Community
- Other Higher Ed Associations
 - ACPA Donna M. Bourassa Mid-Level Management Institute (January)
 - NASPA Mid-Level Management Conference (Different Times)

CONTACT US!

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QUESTIONS?



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