

NACADA Letter to Conference Proposal Readers

Dear Proposal Readers,

First and foremost, thank you for being a contributing factor to the NACADA Annual Conference. Your work serves as a voice for all NACADA members across the globe which is a great responsibility. For this reason, it is imperative to share an incident and NACADA expectations before you begin this service.

Before last year's conference, a very good proposal was submitted detailing academic advisors' impact on racial relations on their campus and the devotion to being persons of color within all facets of an advising role. Disappointment set in when the proposal was not accepted. In addition, the feedback provided from readers was unclear and lacked healthy, constructive criticism for improvement. Looking for clarity, the submitters took their concerns to the NACADA Executive Office. The NACADA Executive Office determined proposal readers' remarks did not factor membership engagement and inclusion, misunderstood the power of the proposer's narrative, and miscalculated the assessment of the proposal's value.

To address these concerns, NACADA leadership wants to give proposal readers this charge:

1. **Think engagement and inclusion:** Look at the structure of the proposal. Does the proposal have a clear objective that will be beneficial to interested attendees? Does the proposal have relevance to current events and hot topics in academic advising and higher education? Does the proposal present a potential answer to a question that looms among advising professionals? Would this proposal give someone the opportunity to share their voice in a manner that could effectively benefit other people?
2. **Think narrative:** While a proposal's topic may not peak your interest, think about the person(s) on the other side of the proposal. Academic advising goes beyond retention, attrition, picking classes, and creating successful program initiatives. Academic advising is also about sharing stories and creating pathways to accomplish goals not only between the student-advisor relationships, but also from the interactions between all of us on the professional level. Be thoughtful with your feedback because you are reading into the story of another person(s).
3. **Think value:** In the words Dr. Peter L. Hagen, "Empirical evidence and data are not enough". The value of a proposal comes from the experience of the proposal writer. It is our duty to assign value by thinking about how one's experience could benefit other people; even if the experience does not directly benefit you, the proposal reader.

This is an invitation to serve the NACADA community. NACADA as an organization requests you to be open-minded, thoughtful, and thorough when reading your assigned proposals while providing healthy, positive feedback, and constructive criticism when necessary. We ask you to utilize resources for reading and commenting on proposals. When in doubt, please reach out to NACADA Executive Office for assistance.

Again, we thank you for your service and your commitment.

Very Best,