Redefining the Mid-Level: How Can We Retain Academic Advisors?

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Overview

In higher education, mid-level practitioners face challenges that affect them both personally and professionally. Some academic advisors seek advancement to the top, while others are happy in their roles as “helping professionals.” In 2016, a study by Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, & Lowery found the industry lost 41.7% of student affairs practitioners with between one to five years and 21.7% left after eight to ten years. When promotions are unavailable to this group, it can be difficult to find appreciation in their jobs. It’s the discovery of alternative pathways that might best afford mid-level academic advisors the best opportunities to aid in their professional development. Join us for a webinar, sponsored by NACADA’s Advisor Training and Development Community, that will (1) review research relevant to the topic, (2) discuss career pathways within the niche of academic advising, (3) explore new ways to explore and enrich your own #HorizontalBranding, and (4) begin planning your revised career pathway.

NACADA Core Competencies of Academic Advising that will be addressed:
Conceptual 1: The history and role of academic advising in higher education.
Conceptual 4: Academic advising approaches and strategies
Relational 6: Facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal-setting.

Post-webinar Activity Suggestions

Consider these questions:
- What’s been your career path in academic advising?
- What opportunities are you curious about?
- How can you build connections and skills in an area of interest?
References


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Outline
- Research on Mid-Level Advisors
  - Why are we losing professionals?
- Challenges of Mid-Level Advisors
  - Morale and satisfaction issues
- Career Trajectory for Mid-Level Advisors
  - Career Ladders
- Benefits for Mid-Level Advisors
  - Horizontal Branding
- Engagement Opportunities for Mid-Level Advisors
  - Getting involved in NACADA
- Questions/Answers

“Unsung Heroes of the Academy”
(Rosser, 2000, p. 5)

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).

Attrition of Mid-Level Professionals
Marshall, Gardner, Hughes & Lowery (2016) study:
41.7% spent one to five years in field before leaving
(p. 152)

Burnout and Mid-Level Advisors
Denney, Dietz, Malone, and Mullen (2018) examined burnout among student affairs professionals. They interviewed 789 practitioners including:
- 453 Academic Advisors (57.4%)
- 56 Academic Coordinators (6.7%)
Challenges

- Mid-Level Nature of Roles
- Lack of Recognition
- Limited Opportunity for Career Growth or Advancement

Midlevel Nature of Roles

- Frustration
- Rarely involved in decision making policies
- Possesses great wealth of knowledge

Lack of Recognition

- Not feeling appreciated (Rhoades, 1995)
- Well educated group, working hard in demanding roles but efforts go unrecognized (Johnsrud & Rosser, 1999)
- Lack of knowledge on the skills, background and expertise needed by professionals (Rosser, 2004)
- Lack of trust and autonomy (Johnsrud, 1996)

Limited Opportunity

- Lack of career growth
- Upward mobility is complex in higher education
- Necessity to gain skills for more challenging roles (Shermeshiem, 2002)
- Equity in professional development opportunities (Shermeshiem, 2002)
- Frustration leads to separation

Recognition

- Physiological – food, water and shelter
- Safety – health, financial stability, and personal security
- Belonging – friends, family, social group
Provide Recognition

Thank you!

Career Pathways

- Ladder
- Lattice
- Career Customization
- Opportunities
- Challenges

Photo from thetimchannel
Benko, C., 2019
Giannosa, J., 2019

Career Pathways

- Curiosity
- Flexibility
- Persistence
- Optimism
- Risk-taking

Career Pathways

What's been your career path in academic advising?
What opportunities are you curious about?
How can you build connections and skills in an area of interest?
Default OR Design?

Benefits of Mid-Level Professionals
- More experience within role
- Assist in training or professional development opportunities
- Take on leadership roles

Getting Involved in the #NACADAfamily
- Local
- Regional
- Global
- What’s Your Passion?

Go Local
- Connect on Social Media
  - twitter.com/nacada
  - facebook.com/NACADA
- Contact Your State/District/Commonwealth Liaison
- Host a Drive-In
- Create a Networking Event
Regions Rock

- Awards
- Regional Conferences
- Mentoring
- Steering Committees
  - Subcommittees

Global Growth

- Awards
- Conferences
- Emerging Leaders
- Institutes
- Scholarship
- Advising Communities

What’s Your Passion?

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