Editor Observations about the NACADA Journal’s First 25 Years

Terry Kuhn, Kent State University

From tape-recorded telephone interviews with each of the former NACADA Journal editors, I transcribed and analyzed their observations to create a history of the first 25 years of the NACADA Journal. Editors were asked to comment on the definition of a research journal, primary audience of the Journal as well as challenges, strengths, weaknesses, and obstacles they had faced. They were also asked for any advice they might offer for current and future editors.

KEY WORDS: academic advising profession, academic advising research, history of NACADA

Relative emphasis: practice, research, theory

Introduction and Methodology

In recognition of the completion of the NACADA Journal’s 25th year of publication, I designed this article to address several questions about the NACADA Journal’s history. The results are based on the experiences and memories of its editors. Other accounts have reflected on the history of the Journal (Beatty, 1991; Gordon & Grites, 1998, 2001), and several of the editors have used the From the Editor column to comment on the state of the Journal (see listing in Sources Consulted). At the outset I attempted to tap some of the subjective aspects of the job as well as the descriptive ones such as those portrayed in the Gordon and Grites (1998) article. In moving beyond description and working toward the inductive development of a picture that emerges after interview discussions and analyses of transcripts, I attempted to create a rich description of the history of the NACADA Journal.

As a current co-editor of the Journal, I have firsthand knowledge of the issues, challenges, and decisions that must be made to bring an issue to the membership. Some would say this insider experience biases my knowledge gathering and makes my perspective unique in a way that is not generalizable or factual. While I admit I may bring bias to the case, I would also argue that my background and position make me a particularly keen observer—one who can more fully understand the complexities buried in a simple statement and who can induce more meaning from the words of the transcripts than can an outside researcher. If you, the reader, cannot accept this research paradigm, then you should stop reading at this point and spend your time in more productive activities. However, if you believe that my knowledge, beliefs, and skills can function as a magnifying glass for your own understanding, then continue to read.

As a check on my own observations, I asked each of the former NACADA Journal editors to verify the accuracy of their transcription. I also asked some former NACADA presidents and the executive director to read and comment on the penultimate draft.

Each editor brings his own knowledge, beliefs, and skills to the office of editor. The knowledge, beliefs, and skills of each editor form the gateway, or the paradigm, through which manuscript submissions must pass before they are published. A complete description of an editorial paradigm would characterize its ontology (the qualities that the editor believes constitute the nature of the Journal’s publication reality), epistemology (the information that can be known about that reality and the relationship of the editor to the information he knows), methodology (the means by which the editor acquires knowledge), and products (articles in the Journal). While a study of that paradigm is waiting to be conducted, my premise is slightly less ambitious in that through my own study, I have tapped on the experiences and memories of former editors to tell the history of the NACADA Journal. Even though I did not probe the philosophical depths of the past editors, those realms are reflected through former editors’ answers to 10 questions. See Table 1.

I tried to frame and ask the questions in a manner that would not prompt or lead the response. I designed question number 10 to be open ended and to allow the former editors to identify and expound on topics they felt were important.

After obtaining approval from the Kent State University Human Subjects Review Board for this study, I sent an E-mail message to all former editors of the NACADA Journal. In the E-mail, I explained the purpose of the study and solicited the editors’ participation. All agreed to participate and telephone interviews were scheduled. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The tran-

\(^{1}\) Masculine pronouns are used because all NACADA Journal editors to date have been male; however, readers should not infer that all future editors are expected to be male.
Editors’ Observations

In the results section of this article, I have chosen to present selected quotes from the interviews. While the quotes allow the editors to speak for themselves, there was great unanimity throughout the commentary.

What Does It Mean to be a Research Journal?

The editors’ answers to the first and second questions shed particular light on their editorial paradigms. All editors thought that a research journal is a publication that displays the results of scholarly inquiry. Such journals “call for research by the author” [EJ, ED], “have a strong quantitative bent” [HS], “provide data-driven answers to questions” [HS], “are built around a research question or research hypothesis” [ML], “include some theory articles” [JF], or “provide an outlet for the work of a discipline” [GP]. “In short, research journals publish the results of quantitative and/or qualitative content-based scholarly inquiry” [TLK].

GP expounded on the definition as follows:

To be a research journal means that people are involved in that discipline in curiosity and inquiry, and are trying to figure out, maybe from theoretical perspectives and practical perspectives, how things work in their disciplines, how ideas get translated into practice, and how ideas and hypotheses and theories get generated and explained. A research journal provides an opportunity to express those ideas to the broader audience of the profession or discipline, and to those who are outside of the profession or discipline.

Several of the editors suggested that the NACADA Journal should follow the lead of premier journals in social science. Specifically, they felt that quantitative studies designed to answer questions that probed at professional assumptions should be published [HS, ML, JF, TK].

Is the NACADA Journal a Research Journal?

The editors all held a strong belief that the NACADA Journal makes a substantive statement about the appropriateness of the academic advising profession to be a developing field in higher education. They saw the Journal as “the window through which many academic advisors view academic advising” [ML]. In HS’s words, “The Journal does

Table 2 Terms of NACADA Journal editors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor (Initials)</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>First Issue</th>
<th>No. of Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edward L. Jones (EJ)</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward J. Danis (ED)</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>7 (1)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard K. Schein (HS)</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>10 (1)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael L. Lynch (ML)</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>16 (1)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel S. Freund (JF)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>19 (1)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas J. Kerr (TK)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>20 (2)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry L. Kuhn (TLK)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>24 (1)</td>
<td>3</td>
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and Gary M. Padak (GP)*

Note. * Appointed as co-editors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor (Initials)</th>
<th>Editorial Initiatives</th>
<th>Editorial Purposes (Journal volume &amp; issue cited)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edward Jones (EJ)</td>
<td>Following the 1979 planning meeting, proposed and produced the refereed <em>NACADA Journal</em> by garnering grant funds to cover all production costs. Based on his previous experience as an author and self-publisher, EJ did everything: editing, copy editing, designing the cover, selecting the font, printing, and mailing.</td>
<td>Inform members about good advising practice. Give credibility and stature to a fledgling organization. Emphasis on the process of advising rather than on advisors in an effort to affect the view of advising as a professional discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Danis (ED)</td>
<td>Assumed editorial and production responsibilities with no grant funding and no support infrastructure from NACADA, which at that time was a volunteer organization. Adopted the APA style guide, and added abstracts for each article. Established the Advising Forum as a regular feature to address practical advising issues. In 1987, conducted the first regional conference Writing for the <em>NACADA Journal</em> workshop in Chicago. Produced issues on time.</td>
<td>Stated that if NACADA aspires to be an inseparable component of academe, then “it must adhere to the value system of the academy, which includes broader and more philosophical thinking, research, and publication” 8(2). Provide an inviting, friendly venue for practitioner authors/researchers 9(2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Schein (HS)</td>
<td>Toolbox created to provide outlet for brief research reports and conceptual articles based in the literature with particular application by advising practitioners 12(2). Established the Annotated Bibliography of Recent Research Related to Academic Advising tapping a wide variety of journals that are of potential interest to advisors. Used revenues from sale of back issues to sponsor conference speakers. Opened book reviews to authorship by membership at large. Appointed Virginia N. Gordon and Thomas J. Grites as senior editors.</td>
<td>The <em>Journal</em> should publish quantitative studies that provide verifiable evidence for many of the assertions made about advising 10(1). Establish a research base for academic advising. Increase the quality of manuscripts and enhance the prestige of the <em>Journal</em> 15(2). Articulated a dichotomy between “data-driven research articles and nonresearch pieces that could be of immediate use to the readership” 15(2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Lynch (ML)</td>
<td>NACADA organization took over mailing lists and printing. In conjunction with Executive Office a professional copy editor (Nancy J. Vesta) was hired.</td>
<td>Concern was for publishing only quality manuscripts.</td>
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Table 3: Selected summary of editorial initiatives and purposes
Editors’ Observations

Table 3  Selected summary of editorial initiatives and purposes (continued)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Editorial Initiatives</th>
<th>Editorial Purposes (Journal volume &amp; issue cited)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joel Freund (JF)</td>
<td>Charged at the time of initial appointment to get the <em>Journal</em> back on schedule. Wrote plaintively about the time required to edit the <em>Journal</em>, and suggested that the <em>Journal</em> editor should carry a stipend 20(1)</td>
<td>Get back on production schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Kerr (TK)</td>
<td>Produced seven issues to catch up on production schedule, two of which were double issues 21(1 &amp; 2) and 23 (1 &amp; 2). Facets of Advising created to showcase research and theoretical articles on related topics based on suggested themes and to generate interest by potential authors</td>
<td>Get back on production schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Kuhn (TLK) &amp; Gary Padak (GP)</td>
<td>Completed and maintained timely publication of the <em>NACADA Journal</em> with double issue 24(1 &amp; 2). Created the <em>NACADA Journal</em> Manuscript Manager to process manuscript reviews electronically</td>
<td>All authors must discuss research, theory, and practice implications of their study. All articles must employ a research methodology</td>
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three things:

1. It gives credibility to the field of advising by showing that the theoretical base can be substantiated by research.
2. It gives an aura that we are academic.
3. It sometimes actually gives answers to questions."

According to the editors, the quality and the prestige of the *Journal* should be encouraged and maintained because the *Journal* is a primary representative of academic advising in academe. The previous editors expressed the notion that the *NACADA Journal* is becoming a research journal, and they all believe that direction to be good. However, some characterized it as a professional journal and not strictly as a research journal, and all agreed that its contents should include a variety that speaks to both practitioner and research audiences. The following bulleted quotes provide illustrations of these points:

- Yes, it is a research journal. And that means when the articles are submitted, they are fully documented with footnotes, and they are submitted to the editor who in turn submits them to reviewers for blind examination before a decision is made about publishing [EJ].
- I think it has become a research journal. I think NACADA and advising have matured enough that they can have a research journal and probably get enough articles to fill the issues. I don’t think the *NACADA Journal* and the people who belong to NACADA really want solely research. I’ll go back to my philosophy, which will differ from the philosophy of other people, that, yes, there should be research involved, but there should be a forum and articles for nuts-and-bolts things. Or just opinions. So I don’t think it has to be a pure research journal, and I especially don’t think it should be purely social science–oriented research. Coming from the humanities, I fought against that mentality [ED].
- It has grown to be a multifunctional journal, and research is one of the things that happen, but there’s a whole bunch of other things that go on with the *Journal*. When I was editor we didn’t get enough articles that were hard-core
research to base the *Journal* on only that. My memory is that most of the substantial research that came to us came from people who were not advisors but from researchers who just picked an advising topic to look at [HS].

- In the strictest sense, probably not. Now, having said that, it is a mix. I think it has elements of a research journal, and that’s a major part of it. But I know we still solicit and carry a number of theoretical articles, non-data-based program descriptions, program development manuscripts, Advisor’s Toolbox practices, a good deal of attention on book reviews, and the research bibliographies. I think the *NACADA Journal*, is much more diverse in its content than the term research journal implies. In fact, both the editorial board and the NACADA Board had several discussions about a disproportionate number of pages being devoted to book reviews, and we decided to cap the number of pages for book reviews so that it didn’t become a journal of nothing but book reviews [ML].
- No, it’s a journal that publishes some research. Because historically the majority of articles in it are not research. It does publish research, but I don’t see it as a primarily research journal [JF].
- I would say it’s a modified research journal [TK].
- While it is probably in the process of becoming a research journal, I’m not sure that the term research journal applies to the *NACADA Journal*. We’ve tried to bridge the gap between research and practice. And I like the way that we have linked the two by having authors suggest implications that are directed to practice. The *NACADA Journal* provides an opportunity for people to inquire into the theories—the practice—of advising and to have an outlet to publish. Overall, I’d say we are trying to become a research journal. I wouldn’t necessarily say that we are one, as compared to say in fields that have been around a lot longer. The *NACADA Journal* is a professional journal rather than an exclusively research journal. It does publish the results of scholarly inquiry, but it also publishes observations about practice and philosophical articles of interest to our practitioner audience [GP].

**During Your Editorship, Who Was the Primary Audience for the *NACADA Journal*?**

The editors agreed that the primary audience for the *NACADA Journal* is the NACADA membership. EJ said that it went to all members: “We were sure that when a person became a member, he got a *Journal*. This is what helped to increase the membership.” Not only have NACADA members been the primary recipients of the *NACADA Journal*, but the membership has provided the input for the issues. HS put an emphasis on members’ submitted book reviews:

We wanted to give everybody in the organization an opportunity to publish, and publishing a book review means you read a book and write a review of it as opposed to having to do research or have a new idea. So we made that offer and we went from 4 book reviews to up to 50 in some journals. Now pragmatically, as an editor, I needed that because people called me on that, asking why we were having so many book reviews, and one of the things I said was that if you take those book reviews out, how many pages you got? That solved that criticism.

HS also established that The Advisor’s Toolbox is “for people who had nifty ideas and could put them into short articles without having to think that they would have to write something lengthy and data driven.” TK summarized the question saying that the audience was “basically practitioners, and then followed by administrators, and then researchers and students.”

**As You Assumed the Editorship of the *NACADA Journal*, What Was the Biggest Challenge You Faced? How Did You Deal With It? How Successful Were You?**

The biggest challenge faced by all of the editors was getting enough manuscripts to publish an issue. This challenge was met in various ways.

EJ had a particular problem because he was dealing with a brand new organization that did not have many members. He met this challenge by reworking some articles in which good ideas were presented but that needed more writing finesse. He also solicited articles from experts in related fields. He had to create the *Journal* from nothing. Upon being charged to create a refereed journal, he applied for and received a grant from the University of Washington Department of Scholarly Journals. This grant provided sole support for the 6 years of EJ’s editorial term, and it included funds for printing and mailing. All editing and copy editing was done by EJ and his wife. His previous experience as an author publishing and marketing his own books served him well as he created the *NACADA Journal*. 
ED had similar problems to those of EJ but for different reasons. The awesome task of not only editing the Journal (processing and deciding which manuscripts were acceptable as well as copy editing and preparing copy for printing) but concerns about page size, font, color, cover design, printing, mailing lists, and mailing were thrust upon him for two reasons. First, the grant support from the University of Washington ceased with the end of EJ's editorial tenure. Second, while NACADA did pay out-of-pocket, printing, and mailing costs for producing the Journal, it did not have a formal infrastructure to support the Journal. ED got great support from his associate editor who “made the Journal look good from a format point of view.” However, without the external grant support and in the absence of a formal infrastructure, ED was left to restart the Journal on his own.

HS was faced with emphasizing research articles in the Journal. He referred to the Gordon and Grites (1988, p. 8) article that showed that the articles published did not reflect a greater proportion of research articles as a result of this effort: “I would contend that we definitely increased the quality of the research articles that went in there because we had a much stauncher review policy, and I always had an assistant editor who was a specialist in statistics and research design.” In an effort to decrease the processing time, HS changed from paper submission to electronic submission on disk, and he hired a part-time copy editor. In summary HS said, “The challenge was to put out something that would be relevant and interesting to everybody, and have the academic credibility that we promised the organization. The NACADA organization wanted a journal they could be proud of in the academic world.”

In a humorous initial response, ML indicated three challenges to publication: manuscripts, manuscripts, and manuscripts. He credited lack of manuscripts as the root cause of the Journal lagging behind the publication schedule:

I think we were already behind on the publication schedule when I became editor and one of my objectives was to get us back on publication schedule. And I really did not get that accomplished. Content (including articles, book reviews, and annotated bibliographies) drove the publication schedule . . . . So generally we would hold off on the publication until we got the number. The members would start screaming that they were entitled to two Journals, and they didn’t get the Journal. I know it was frustrating for the NACADA Office because we were literally across membership years. We would be publishing the Journals that went with one membership year and we were already taking members in the next membership year. So it was a frustration for the central office as well. It was just a dearth really of manuscripts of the kind that you would want to publish. Now, I suppose that if we’d have published everything why we could have got back on the schedule, but there is a line beyond which I would not go, and I don’t think anybody else has either. We worked with the authors, but you’ve got to have at least a certain level of quality that you can go with. That by far was the biggest challenge.

As part of his initial change when taking over the editorship of the NACADA Journal, JF was given the mission to eliminate the backlog and get it back up to publishing on a regular basis. . . . We were well behind publishing what we should have been publishing when I assumed the editorship. They were publishing an issue that should have been out a year or so before. So it was quite behind. I was also charged with getting it to be more of a research journal and to elicit more submissions from members.

“One of my goals was to streamline the review process and involve the editors to react more efficiently and in making helpful comments to the authors.” The comments of manuscript reviewers serve two purposes, one of which was so we could improve an article where need be or not accept it when that was appropriate, and do this on a timely basis. That had not been the case.

But part of the problem is that you have to have sufficient articles to publish an issue. And there wasn’t always enough, so the publication would be held up because you don’t want to publish a 10-page journal . . . . I was not as successful in dealing with this situation as I might have been because I had lots of things going on at the time and simply could not put in as much time and energy as would have been needed to catch up.

At that point, the President and NACADA Board sought an editor change.

The NACADA organization was feeling the pressure to achieve timely publication of the
Journal, so it is no surprise that TK said that his biggest challenge was
to get the NACADA Journal caught up. We did this by producing seven journals in 2 and
\( \frac{3}{2} \) years, two of them being double journals (21[1 & 2] and 23[1 & 2]) . . . .

The bottom line was that we needed to go ahead and expedite the process, encourage
more articles to come in, and then once the articles came, to work with the reviewers to make
sure that we turned them around in more timely fashion, and got feedback back to the authors
and then get the authors to get their responses back to us. And so that really was our main
focus. And our copy editor, Nancy Vesta, was just great in doing that and working with me
on an almost daily basis.

Another thing we did to generate manuscripts was to create the Facets of Advising series to
spark potential authors to write on pre-determined topics of interest to them.

GP indicated that his biggest challenge was finding time to address the responsibilities:
Particularly myself, I don’t think I’ve dealt with it very well and have probably still not
dealt with it. Had we not done this as a co-editorship, there’d be no way the work would be
getting done.

The learning process wasn’t so great. Grasping the task that had to be done didn’t take very
long. Personally, finding time in the schedule to even deal with the basics is very difficult.
Another problem is that even though we all thought the Journal was up-to-date with issue
23(1 & 2), it was actually still an issue behind; an insufficient number of editorial board members
were serving extended terms to carry us through; conceptualizations for types of articles published (i.e., the mission of the Journal)
were not clear.

Our solutions included creating the Web-based NACADA Journal Manuscript Manager and
bringing out another double issue with 24(1 & 2).

Available time for editors to devote to the Journal seems to be a root cause of the Journal’s untimely
production. Nevertheless, three editors (EJ, ED, and TK) and so far GP have managed timely pro-
duction of the Journal. “The fact is that we’re all volunteers, and we all try to do the best we can”
[TK].

Sometimes people get overwhelmed and are just unable to commit the time and resources neces-
sary to do the quick turnarounds, but if they do not handle the manuscripts promptly, then delays
push back the publication dates. When the Executive Office assumed more responsibility for production of the Journal, we co-editors could focus on the editing and manuscript processing tasks. This divi-
sion of labor has been a definite plus for us.

Did the NACADA Organization Have Particular Concerns During Your Editorship?

For the most part, the editors did not feel that NACADA organizational issues impacted the
NACADA Journal. EJ established the policy that everyone associated with the NACADA Journal
had to be NACADA members. ED stated, “The Journal was there, they like it, and the organization
went its way, and the Journal had to make do for itself then. But, NACADA did provide the funds to
publish the Journal. By no means is the Journal self-supporting.”

HS thought that “one of the biggest issues the Journal had was divorcing itself from the newsletter.
The newsletter people wanted to use the Journal for announcements and competition fliers, which the
Journal was doing, and, no, it wasn’t just the newsletter, it was committees that wanted to use the Journal
for what I considered newsworthy items rather than Journal worthy items: committee reports, etc.”

JF referred to the publication schedule:
The biggest issue with NACADA was getting the Journal back on its publication schedule because libraries were starting to drop the Journal because they weren’t getting them. NACADA also wanted more submissions and
from that point on they started trying to get more people to do research and publish it. They thought the Journal was going to be an avenue to instigate more research. But the Journal, no matter what it does, isn’t going to be the impetus for doing research. We did want
more people publishing, and to that end when I made presentations at the meetings, I
described the process and what potential authors needed to do to get published.

In responding to this question, TK also said that he and the NACADA leadership thought that lack
of manuscript submissions was the biggest problem facing the Journal:
The biggest thing we did when I was president of NACADA was to formalize the commission and interest group structure and encourage the commissions to publish articles in the Journal and try to produce some monographs. And especially early some of the commissions just saw that as a daunting task, that they just couldn’t get the resources and people together to produce a whole monograph. And, so they just didn’t do anything. They might submit things for the newsletter, but that was about the extent of it. And one of the things that we did with the Executive Office was to create the Facets of Advising and tried to dedicate one Journal toward a specific topic area where multiple commissions could submit articles into that topic. So that encouraged the commissions then to feel like they were publishing and doing things they wanted to do within their commissions and getting out there with articles, but they didn’t have to publish a whole monograph. So it made it a lot easier for them to participate in the writing component that we were looking for as an association from the commissions and the interest groups. And I think that alone was the biggest procedural change that we made that has assisted the Journal to stay on track and on its timeline.

GP said that one of the issues is “who really controls the content? Who really owns the Journal itself?” He went on to point out the following:

There might be considered three owners of the content: the author, the editors, and the Executive Office. So among those entities, to what extent is the dominant voice heard that really makes a decision? And maybe it floats and changes according to the specific nature of what the focus is at the time that the issue of control or influence or decision making is being discussed. Authors relinquish control over their manuscripts when they convey copyright control to NACADA. With regard to the relationship between the NACADA Journal and the NACADA organization, the editorial board has enunciated a policy whereby the “Co-Editors retain ultimate authority about publication of content in the NACADA Journal, while governing authority over the production of the NACADA Journal rests with the Executive Officers and the NACADA Executive Board.”

Another concern has to do with the production schedule. I think that it’s really clear that the legal responsibility to provide every member a copy twice a year is the factor that should drive everything. Membership years, conference registration, and the printer schedule availability have all been competing reasons to produce at different times. What matters is that NACADA owes every member two copies for the year in which they are members. That means that members should receive volume 1 of each issue of the NACADA Journal between March 1 and August 31 and volume 2 of each issue between September 1 and February 28 each year.

Now that NACADA has multiple publishing venues (Academic Advising Today, Clearinghouse, monograph series, newsletter) it is important to define the niche for each and to be clear about the type of material that is and is not published in each. I’ve come to realize that there was a time when the Journal had pre-eminent status because it really was the only publication. One problem today is that there are so many publications that most news gets out much faster than the Journal does, so maybe there is a need to focus the Journal on the publication of research results.

What Strengths Did the Journal Have During Your Editorship?

Over the first 25 years of the NACADA Journal, several elements have been viewed as strengths. Succinctly, these have included the Journal’s

• influence in conveying principles of advising to a new profession [EJ];
• production timeliness [EJ, ED, TK, GP];
• thickness of the volumes and provision of indexes [HS];
• quality of written material before it went to press [ML];
• breadth and knowledge of the editorial board [JF];
• professional copy editor Nancy Vesta [TK];
• Web-based manuscript processing [GP];
• formal acceptance of theoretical articles and qualitative research methodology [GP];
• requiring authors to address applicability to practice to make the Journal relevant and readable for the broader membership [GP];
• evolving a division of labor between the editor (editing) and the Executive Office (production) [GP];
• sole devotion to academic advising [JF].
In addition to being recognized for the quality of its content, the *Journal* also enjoys prestige among NACADA members. While members hold the *Journal* in high regard, some members read it selectively because they think that some articles are too esoteric or difficult to understand or are not applicable to their day-to-day work.

**What Weaknesses Did the Journal Have During Your Editorship?**

Most of the editors identified inadequate manuscript flow as a weakness of the *NACADA Journal* during their editorships. They all offered particulars about the reason for the dearth of manuscripts and each identified the ways in which he had attempted to increase the flow of acceptable submissions. Succinctly stated in list form, the reasons for an anemic flow of manuscripts into the *Journal* included:

- too few NACADA members have research training in their graduate programs [EJ, ML];
- lack of reward system and time for academic advisors to do scholarly work [ML];
- lack of professional copy editor [HS];
- job expectations of advisors to focus on student service rather than career development [JF];
- academic advisors tend to be overworked and underappreciated [ED];
- most faculty reward systems support scholarship only within their content areas [ML];
- academic advising is a field of practice, not a field of study or an academic discipline [JF].

Some of the strategies the editors pursued to increase the flow of manuscripts included the following:

- invited articles from experts and authorities in advising and other fields [EJ];
- defined a topic for a special issue and invited articles from recognized authorities [EJ, HS, TK];
- offered workshops at national and regional conferences to encourage submissions [ED];
- hired a professional copy editor [ML];
- invited conference presenters to convert their presentations into articles [ML];
- used book reviews to provide an introductory scholarship opportunity for practitioners [ML].

Two editors [ML, TK] identified overrepresentation of book reviews as another weakness. They specifically said that “the Journal was imbalanced because it contained too many book reviews versus articles.”

**Were There Any Policy or Procedural Obstacles to the Success of the Journal During Your Editorship?**

The editors reported that they were able to establish their own editorial procedures and conduct the *Journal’s* business with the helpful support of the Executive Office. EJ said, “No. No. No. No. I was given full reign to do exactly what I want to. There were no policy problems.” As first editor charged with creating the *Journal*, EJ gave an unsurprising response. However, after the *Journal* languished in arrears for 11 years, JF clearly owned the problem because he had not made progress in expediting production of the *Journal*. GP said that “because the identification of responsibilities of the editor and the Executive Office has now evolved into a comfortable and productive working relationship, the niche of the *NACADA Journal* and where the *Journal* fits within the array of NACADA publications remain to be defined.” He also indicated that finding qualified manuscript reviewers to serve on the editorial board was a challenge.

**What Advice Do You Have for the Journal?**

All of the former editors had some pearls of wisdom to pass on to new generations of editors. The advice they offered is based on experience in overcoming the many challenges associated with being the *Journal’s* editor. In his usual forthright manner, EJ revealed his theatrical talents when he burst out with “Get it out on time! Not having enough manuscripts is no excuse!”

Others were focused on encouraging people to write, as when ED said, “Keep up those workshops at the conferences, even if you don’t charge, and let people know that you really appreciate whatever they can do. Let them know what you’re looking for, and don’t be afraid to include some pure nuts-and-bolts articles.”

ML put the *Journal* in the foreground of a larger perspective when he reminded future editors that “there needs to be a commitment to quality because the *Journal* is the front-line window through which the other associations and higher education in general view academic advising and NACADA. The *Journal* is a major piece of the association’s image.” He added, “Don’t do too many book reviews.”

TK expressed his belief that the *Journal* that services our population of
NACADA members has got to be a Journal that has practical articles as well as research articles, and there’s got to be that balance. Within that balance, research articles need to be a part of it because we’re constantly trying to promote academic advising as a profession, and to do that you have to have a research base.

GP observed, “Our real function in improving quality comes from our function as a gatekeeper. What we don’t let in theoretically improves the quality. But we must be careful to distinguish the quality of the articles from the prestige the Journal elicits from members and readers.”

The most poignant advice for the Journal came from JF who noted the tremendous time required of the Journal editor as well as the support that is needed to function as editor. He acknowledged that NACADA pays the production costs (printing, mailing, etc.) but felt that NACADA should provide some stipend or salary for the editor. Teaching professors who serve as editor have classes to teach while the National Conference takes place, and the editor is expected to attend, conduct workshops, and meet with the editorial board. That is a huge demand on an individual’s time and monetary resources.

Is There Anything Else You Would Like to Add?

Most of the comments made in response to question number 10 were amplifications of previous statements, good-luck wishes, and reflections on points of pride about Journal achievements made during their tenures as editor. While this portion of the interview has already been characterized as the most lengthy, it tended to be repetitive and conversational rather than content based. Nevertheless, some comments deserve mention. Reflecting the driving force that he brought to the task of creating a new journal, EJ urged editors to “get better control over it than you have.” In this comment he reflected his one-man-show approach that was such a tremendous asset for the initiation of a brand new journal. Despite the clear accomplishments made by EJ, the unshared approach may no longer be desirable because the Executive Office can relieve the production responsibilities for the editor.

EJ’s final suggestion deserves the most serious reflection: “Treat it like your book. Treat it like you wrote it. Treat it like it’s a baby so that you can’t go to sleep until it goes to sleep.” ED used the Italian phrase la bella figura in describing the Journal, suggesting that it puts forth a good figure for NACADA.

HS commented, “No one except editors know how much work editors do, and the amount of appreciative feedback that editors get in relationship to how hard they work is zero.” ML echoed HS’s comments in saying, “It just takes a tremendous amount of time to be editor. For the 3 years I did it I never, ever, felt like I got caught up.”

Conclusions

Concluding remarks for this article come from GP:

The NACADA Journal has been, is, and will continue to be an essential element in academic advising as it becomes more accepted as an area of study in higher education. There are sporadic research studies, a few theoretical articles, and many more descriptions of practice than can be published. The NACADA Journal should strive to keep a balance among the three pillars of research, theory, and practice in the studies it publishes.

NACADA owes all of its former editors a debt of gratitude for the contributions they have made to the professional development of the academic advising profession.

Sources Consulted


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