2017-2018 First Year of Studies’ Anniversary Lecture Series on Advising

The 2017-2018 First Year of Studies’ Anniversary Lecture Series on Advising was designed to celebrate the University of Notre Dame's First Year of Studies’ dedication to and innovation in the field of undergraduate advising. The presentations in the series were as follows:

- Introductions to The First Year of Studies Anniversary Lecture Series by Hugh R. Page
- Not an Easy Place: New Strategies for Helping Anxious Students by Elizabeth Wilcox, September 25, 2017
- The Architect of Hope by Elizabeth Wilcox, September 25, 2017
- Culturally Competent Advising: Beyond the Demographics, by Pamela Nolan Young, November 13, 2017
- Encouraging Achievement on an Uneven Playing Field: Framing the Discussion, by Jennifer Fox and Holly Martin, November 13, 2017
- Establishing an Advising Community: Launching an Organization and Fostering Scholarship, by Mathew Bumbalough, February 26, 2018

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Establishing an Advising Community: Launching an Organization and Fostering Scholarship

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Good afternoon and thank you for inviting me to Notre Dame. It was always a dream of mine of a child to come and see the home turf of Knute Rockne and the Fighting Irish. My name is Mathew and I’m an academic advisor at Indiana University. I want to talk to you today about building a professional advising community, and what it takes to ensure that advisors and faculty are prepared to foster much needed scholarship in our quickly expanding academic field.

This picture on my presentation is of me and my wife at a welcoming line for international students here at IU. This was soon after there was a travel ban put in place, and we had a few dozen students from those countries on the list impacted by the new regulations. One of our advisors on campus was able to organize and launch the welcome line for those students when they came in for an emergency meeting, taking advantage of our advising community on campus to ensure that the students know they were being supported by our staff. When we think about building an advising community most people might think of professional development, scholarship, and research, which are extremely important, but at the end of the day we are here for our students and we need to keep that in mind when we start to think more deeply about what it means to be an advisor.

Today thought I want to focus more on the overall context of establishing a professional advising organization and research here at Notre Dame. I have provided you with a toolkit that you can follow along with as I speak that breaks down many of the steps in establishing an organization and academic journal. I will also explain how our advising community works on
our campus at IU, explore a bit about what scholarship and research mean in the context of advising, and introduce a new journal that we started on our campus. With the rise of graduate certificates, masters programs and now a PhD in Advising at KSU the time is ripe for new journals that focus on academic advising.

It is important though to first think about what benefits an advising community can have on advisors and faculty on campus. I had the opportunity to speak with current and past executive officers and directors on campus on the direct impact that our organization BAAC (Bloomington Academic Advising Council) has had on its members. They say that firstly, the organization itself provides resources to advocate on behalf of advisors. It used to be that advisors on our campus were only strictly an administrative role, but with the start of BAAC it has led to greater engagement on campus and the ability to address our concerns to senior level faculty and staff. The organization also promotes growth in scholarship and professional development by holding regular workshops and scholarship opportunities for advisors who present at conferences about the work and initiatives they are taking. Much of this has led to policy change on our campus and now we have started a career ladder for advising staff, one of the first in the nation to do so. Because of this, we are attracting a new group of advisors that are keen on furthering conversation and exchanging ideas both on and off campus for ways of improving our practice that leads to better retention of students. Finally, having an established community allows us to align with NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) and IAAN (Indiana Academic Advising Network), two organizations that can provide support for advising staff and helps to network with other campuses to promote a better exchange of ideas.

On our campus, BAAC has been around for a while, but it has gone through several major transitions. I have provided examples of other advising. For BAAC though, it was started
in 1993 by Laura Neumeyr. She was an advisor in our telecommunications school and felt it was necessary to provide a voice for advisors on campus. At that point at IU many of the advising positions were there in a strictly administrative role and there was not much direction or continuity in advising practices. While there were certainly highly motivated and active advisors, there was no venue for them to communicate and share what they were doing other than to send campus mail, emails, or meet up during lunch hours in an unofficial capacity. So with support from her department, Laura was able to launch the Campus Advising Network (CAN) and was its president for the first two years. She later became a director of advising for the school and recently moved to a new position in Texas. This was very much a bottom-up method of starting an organization and that is one of the key points I note in the toolkit. There are certainly benefits and drawback to starting an organization from the bottom-up, or advisor initiated, versus a top-down, which is mandated by senior staff and faculty. On our campus there is a clear divide though between advisors and faculty members so that might not be the case for Notre Dame where advisors can also hold faculty positions. A bottom-up approach has the potential to strike more interest and buy-in from the advising staff, but without institutional support it can quickly fade. A top-down approach makes it easier to establish a professional community, but if there are no volunteers to be an executive officer or a member of a steering committee it can be problematic in having advisors buy-in to what the organization has to offer. At IU and IUPUI, the organization are very much used to a bottom-up approach to advising, while Purdue and Loyola are either more mixed or top-down. Since each campus is unique in how advisors are used, it may be best examine how the organization should initially form and how best to have advisors buy in to the organization. In any case ours started from a grassroots effort and quickly gained traction. In 1996 though we changed the name to BAC (Bloomington Advising Council)
as a way to better establish our presence on campus as a more formal organization with the adoption of By Laws and the establishment of representatives from each of the major advising divisions. This was a very pivotal time in the organization and helped to launch more initiatives on campus for advisors with the start of workshops and yearly meetings that helped to formalize and provide continuity for advising practices on campus. The one thing all of the examples I give you for different advising communities is that they all provide these opportunities for advisors. If you dive deeper into their websites you can see that many of these workshops are for sharing information about different offices on campus, using new technology, showcasing best practices for specific student groups, and committee meetings to provide vision for future endeavors.

In 2014 we went through yet another name change. Eric was the president at the time, and there was some debate whether to call the organization BAAC or BACADA (Bloomington Academic Advising Association). One thing you will notice with advising communities that align with NACADA is that they often will simply change the first letter of NACADA to reflect their university. JACADA and PACADA are two examples, but at the time, BAAC wanted a way to still differentiate itself from the NACADA moniker and establish that we are our own organization. Alignment with NACADA is still part of our mission statement and that is one things that all advising organizations make explicit or not. There is a cost involved in maintaining membership, but the national organization provides many benefits to members and keeping in communication and alignment with them has allowed BAAC to flourish and network across the state and nation wide to reach out to other NACADA aligned organizations. Since 2014, our name has remained BAAC and Sam Allen was elected president for the next two-year term, replacing William Smith who was president since 2014. I have provided a QR code for ease of access to our website if you wish to know more about the organization in detail.
With most advising organizations, they follow a similar pattern of how they are structured. For the examples I provided, each one has a steering committee. This committee is the overall governing body of the organization and is usually comprised of a representative from each school or advising department. At IU we require that the representatives are advisors, while at IUPUI, Purdue, and Loyola they are able to be faculty or directors as well. We do have nearly 200 advisors on campus though so for us it is possible that we do so. Then there are the executive officers, which include the President, Vice president, Treasurer, and Secretary. Purdue has six officer members with overlap in the VP and Secretary Roles to spread around their work and responsibilities. These officers are mostly responsible for the administrative tasks involved in running the organization. Then there are the Standing Committees and general membership. Standing committees can differ, and, if you look at the examples, you can see that they are generally tasked with outreach and interaction to the membership.

However, the first step of solidifying what your advising community might look like are the establishment of By Laws. I have provided for you an amalgamation of both BAAC and JACADA’s By Laws and what each part entails. This will determine things like the composition of the steering committee and executive officers, what standing committees you may want to create, finances and budgets, how you will determine membership, elections, and other professional development administrative tasks.

The steering committee though is one of the more integral parts of the organization, and in most cases will determine and approve initiatives proposed by the executive officer. While the president will preside over their meetings the steering committee ensures that the voices of advisors are most represented. It is probably more like a parliament in that regard more than a House or Senate. One change that we implemented recently thought is that the steering
committee will be able to approve budget changes rather than holding an at-large membership vote. We found that most members would simply approve budget changes. Since members do not usually sit in on the monthly meetings we decided that it would be best to have those most informed on policy change make the final vote on that issue. Again, while BAAC requires that a member is an advisor, it may not be possible for some institutions that do not have as many advising staff. In that case, the By Laws can help to regulate what works best for you.

The executive officers are usually the initial driving force of the organization as a whole. The president especially is expected to guide the organization through any changes, keep a pulse on campus life, and attend all advising meetings across campus. Again, for IU these positions are regulated to advisors only. For us, our President, Vice President, and Secretary change every 2-4 years despite there being no term limits, but our Treasurer has taken on her role for several years. In her case, it is more acceptable as she has been providing very detailed accounts and is more easily able to navigate our processes for funding which are important to our other administrative functions. The executive officers though are all expected to handle to day-to-day of ensuring the organization runs smoothly, while also performing their duties as advisors.

Every organization also has several standing committees that are able to execute the vision of the executive officers. In the examples in the toolkit, the professional development committee is always first and foremost for establishing and maintaining an impact on campus through providing workshop and conferences. They will also contact other institutions and work to develop relationships with campus partners both on and off campus. For BAAC, we hold monthly workshops during the academic year, and both a Fall and Spring conference that we highly publicize. All of our workshops and conferences we are open for all people to attend, even if they do not have BAAC membership. For the Fall and Spring conferences through we will
send information out through our channels to other universities inviting them to join. Since our budget cycle start in April, we generally have an on-campus speaker come to give the keynote address to cut down on costs, and invite an off-campus guest for our Spring Conference.

Next, it is important that the By Laws define who is able to be a member of the organization. At one point we were open to all advisors on campus, but differentiated between career advising and academic advising with our name change to BAAC in 2014. Since the roles of these groups are quite different in our case we felt it necessary to define who could be a voting member of BAAC and opened it up to undergraduate advisors only. However, the directors of advising and the career advisor will still attend our conferences, and we encourage those who do wish to be a part of the membership to petition the standing committee. We also reset our membership each year and advisors will have to select in to be a BAAC member. With Notre Dame being so different in the makeup of your advising staff, it will be important to define who is eligible to be a member so that the voices of advisors will hold the most weight in determining the future of the organization.

At the end of the day though, it does require some funding to run a successful organization. We are fortunate with BAAC in that the individual departments have agreed to pay a set price each year for their members, while other organizations require the advisors to pay a small fee each year for membership, usually $10-$15. Many of the budgets for public universities are available online, and for BAAC we usually spend around $5,500 a year in order to pay for the costs of guest speakers, conferences, food, and awards. The spring conference though is usually our biggest expenditure as the Fall speaker is already on campus, and the workshops are free since we are able to reserve rooms at no cost. However, if the costs do go over budget, as it did for us this year, we are able to pull from a reserve fund. Overall the budget
is the grease that makes the wheels turn and how you are able to acquire funding through membership fees, department or school funding, or donors can help to determine what sort of professional development experience you will be able to provide your advisors and your networks outside campus.

There is one more integral part of having a successful organization and that is recognizing those members who go above and beyond what is expected of them as an advisor. As I stated before, at the end of the day we are here for our students, and it is the work that we do that can either put them ahead and set them back. Stacy Weida was one such advisor who engaged her students in community events, served on BAAC committees, and is very engaged in both on and off campus organizations. This award is for advisors who have been serving less than three years as an advisor and recognizes them at the Fall conference. The award winner will get a plaque to hang in their office and is awarded a seat at the steering committee. Also at the Fall conference we recognize advisors who have taken part in at least 5 professional development opportunities in the past year. We require that at least 3 of these events are BAAC Sponsored, but the other 2 can come from other conferences or submission of articles to academic journals. We have been awarding advisors with this certificate since 2014 and in that time more advisors receive it every year, with 81 receiving it last time, compared with 77 the year before. With our total membership around 180 we are hoping that this year we can reach the 50% mark for completion. Recipients’ names are usually read off at the start of the fall conference and this award is useful for those advisors going up for promotion to show that they are engaged in advising beyond the office environment.

Finally, we have the Teri Nation Award. Teri was an advisor who passed away after battling cancer in 2003. She was a friend to all students on campus and an outstanding mentor to
every advisor she came across. BAAC decided in 2006 to create an award for advisors and after consultation with her family, named the award in her honor. The family attended for several years to present the award, and it represents an absolute love for students and a deep engagement with advisors and staff on campus. This Year Libby Tilghman received the award along with a small honorarium, a plaque with her name, and a traveling plaque with all past recipients named. Recognizing the good work of advisors is important, especially for those who go beyond what is expected of them, and to guide and foster students in their care. This can go beyond the institutional level though, and there are also national awards through NACADA that are a way to recognize advisors on your campus who you feel are contributing to furthering stewardship and scholarship in academic advising.

That brings us to scholarship and research in advising. Building an organization and promoting workshops and other professional development on your campus is a way to start the scholarship process. But how do you go beyond what is the search for knowledge, or scholarship, into research, or the creation of knowledge? Scholarship and research are two sides of the same coin when it comes to helping to evolve academic advising into an academic discipline. Wendy Troxel, an excellent resource at the NACADA Research Center, presented to a group of advisors on our campus over the different levels of scholarship and research. Scholarship is implementing evidence-based practice that you read in journals or interpret from research that you have read. Most of us do this without thinking when we read a news article online, talk to a colleague, or crack open the newest issue of an advising journal. A step above that would be collaboration with others. This would be more of what you see as far as professional organizations holding workshops, hosting round table workshops, or providing classroom instructions for advisors. Most advisors do this on a daily or monthly basis in most cases, but a step above that would be
transitioning into research, or the creation of new knowledge. This would mean leading a research project, or supervising the work of others at the top level.

So, on our campus, we made an advising journal. The Journal of Academic Advising is in its inaugural year, and we are just wrapping up our review process. I initially came up with the idea for our journal at an annual advisor retreat on campus when our Vice Provost let us know about the new PhD program at KSU. Part of me was intrigued about the academic nature of a program, and another part of me remained skeptical. In most academic disciplines there are numerous academic journals that explore different aspects of that field of study. Coming from a language education background I know there are several A level journals in that field; many of them hosted by the universities themselves. NACADA is unique in that the main journal is essentially the only journal in advising as a discipline. With the focus mostly on programming and quantitative analysis, I knew that there was room for more research that breaks outside of the organizational norm. On your toolkit I have provided a description of the current journals centered on advising. The NACADA Journal is the oldest journal with its start in 1981. It has a focus on determining the research priorities of advising as an academic discipline. This has expanded into the NACADA Clearing House and Academic Advising Today which are also repositories for shorter or more practitioner-based readings. While the overall mission of the Journal is to promote discovery, interaction, application, and teaching it has in most recent issues focused mostly on quantitative analysis. While this work is certainly important, the average advisor is not usually implementing programs on campus. Access to current Journal issues also require membership in NACADA, further preventing advisors without means or institutional support to access their cutting-edge research. While this is slowly changing, it still creates barriers in the discipline. There is also The Mentor started by Eric White out of Penn State. Eric
is an advisory board member on our journal and has been pushing for a very long time for more practitioner and human focused research in advising. The Mentor is a way for advisors to publish their work with a variety of different focuses, with a rolling publication of articles as they come in through their website. It is open-access and has been in talks recently to standardize their publication.

For our journal, the Journal of Academic Advising, I took this knowledge and ran it by my supervisor. I have worked on and still work on a few journals in my field of language education and felt that with support from the department and other advisors in BAAC and in our office, we could set out to create a journal that is specifically focused on what it means to be an advisors at the ground level, pulling in our varied backgrounds to make meaning of what our experiences with student interactions is at the micro-level. We settled on the label ‘humanistic-inquiry’ to show that we are more interested in the human-to-human interaction that happens in our offices, and encourage potential authors to write from their perspective and education background. None of us have certification or credentialing in advising, and for the next few years in any case there will be few and far between advisors who hold graduate certificates, masters, or PhDs in advising. We are standing on a precipice right now with the potential to expand to even more outlets for research and inquiry in advising and it will be interesting to say the least as to what this will look like 5 or even 1 year down the road.

If your campus is interested in creating a publication or seeing how we set up our journal I have included the one-year timeline for publication that we have been on since May of last year, along with who will need to be included in the process of establishing a journal. Starting a journal and promoting research and scholarship have several benefits for advisors and faculty. First, it promotes professional development and working beyond the advising appointment. I like
to use Action Research as an example of how advisors can get involved in this process right away. But it is essentially taking note of your office and what changes you can make to improve the advising experience when a student comes in for a meeting. Another benefit of research is that advisors can share timely information with others. One example I can think of is a recent submission that we had to our journal that examines using Skype as a way of meeting with a student who may be working or living away from campus and cannot make it in. They author uses disruptive innovation as a theoretical framework to explain the impact of technologies in the advising session. Another way this can foster advisor research is to open up new ways of defining what it means to be an advisor at the office, department, school, and national level. With big changes happening in our profession it is important that we define who we are from the ground up rather than letting the changes come down from the top-up. This will allow advisors to have the biggest say in who we are as a profession and as an academic discipline. So, in order to start out journal we simply started emailing those people who we felt were instrumental in research in advising and leaders in their institutions for advisors. We were fortunate enough to have Eric White, a past NACADA president and founder of the Mentor, heartily agree to join us. He has been instrumental in helping us to navigate communications with NACADA, determine the scope of our journal, and push for people to submit. We also have Marc Lowenstein, recently retired but very active in publication through NACADA and at the forefront of determining if there exists an overall theory of advising. Wendy Troxel, while not a member of the board, has been very helpful as well, giving us guidance for research in advising.

I am the type of person who would rather beg forgiveness than ask for permission so that would be my advice in creating a journal. Just do it and don’t’ wait for permission. The advisory board though meets once a month or so online to discuss our submissions and help with giving
us feedback and guidance, and we will meet more often until May when we publish our first issue.

The journal itself is published online through an open-access library provided by IU ScholarWorks. Recently, more universities have been using this model. Libraries and schools have found that the current model of publication in subscription journals is hurting academic fields as it provides a barrier to access for scholars. IU has recently agreed to make all campus research open-access, which means the subscriptions barrier is removed and all with access to the internet can read our research. 45% of campuses have now adopted this model, and IU ScholarWorks is the host for IU’s publications. As such our editorial team is determined that our journal is open to all and will not require a paid subscription to read or submit scholarly research. While NACADA is planning to launch a new open-access journal itself, the Journal of Academic Advising will be the first peer-reviewed volume for advisors.

The process for starting a journal though is as simple as one or more people wanting to get the groundwork started. The toolkit lays this out in more depth, but after formation of an editorial team, advisory board, and deciding on what platform you will use to launch the journal, you put out a call for papers. Like most journals I have worked on though, you may notice that you get the majority of submissions in the last week leading up to the due date. After the deadline passed we sent out the articles to reviewers. We decided on this first round to do a single blind review, which means that the reviewers are able to see who submitted the work, but the reviewer is not known to the author. With our first issues, and after discussion with the board, we felt that this could help us ensure that our first issue at least is well vetted and precise. We have just wrapped up our review process and will now bring forward our recommendations to the board in early March to talk about which articles we feel are good candidates for the first
issue and which ones we will reject. We anticipate 4-5 articles total in the first issue, which is standard for most publications. This will allow readers to really engage with each article and not be inundated with information.

Starting a journal is easy, but seeing the process through and determining the scope and mission of what you will publish can be tedious. I was able to read The First Year of Studies’ Compendium publication from 2016 published by Notre Dame, and Adrienne and I definitely used that as a way of thinking about how we would publish our own journal. Research definitely does take time, patience, and years to become a well-established part of a field of study. The time is right though for more publications as the first group of PhD students in advising at KSU will be graduating in a few years’ time.

I want to leave you today with several questions to consider, and I will also leave more time for a Q&A, but hopefully I was able to help you in thinking about what it would take to start a professional advising organization here at Notre Dame. The context and job responsibilities of your advising staff differ from those of IU, but there are definitely lessons that we have learned in making our organization. In starting this organization though it is important to start with Notre Dame’s overall mission statement is as an institution. You are a private Catholic institution with a core set of values that can help determine the best way for you to serve your advisors, but more importantly, your students, who will benefit from an informed and connected advising staff. You will also need to think more deeply about what is missing right now as far as research goes that can help your advisors and give back to the advising community as a whole. There is room for several more publications in advising, so if you wish to start a journal think about where it might this fit in to the bigger picture. Think about what piece of the pie still needs to be claimed or how can you help to complement or challenge current research.
I want to thank you for listening today, and I have one more thought in mind. Advisors have a unique mission and perspective. We get to interact with our students one-on-one outside of the classroom. I know at IU we have 300 person lecture halls, hundreds of classrooms, and thousands of students. It is easy as advisors to get lost in the minutia of administrative tasks and checking off a box on a screen. But we have a chance to make a big difference in our students’ lives by sitting down with them and exploring what it means to be a steward on campus, how they can develop as community members, and ensure their well-being. Having a group of advisors to get together and talk about their concerns, hear about better outreach, and share their experiences through workshops and research can ensure that good ideas don’t remain in your office but are out there for all to share. Thank you and please keep your students in your hearts.
Establishing an Advising Community: Launching an Organization and Fostering Scholarship

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Agenda

- Toolkit for Organization Building
- Establishing an Advising Community
- Scholarship vs Research
- Journal of Academic Advising
Establishing a Professional Advising Organization

- Advocates on behalf of advisors
- Fosters growth in scholarship and professional development
- Informs policy changes
- Promotes exchange of ideas for advising staff, both internal and external
- Alignment with NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) & IAAN (Indiana Academic Advising Network)
Bloomington Academic Advising Council

**CAN**
- Campus Advising Network
- 1993-1996
- Laura Neumeyer

**BAAC**
- Bloomington Academic Advising Council
- 2014-Present
- Sam Allen, 2018-2020

**BAC**
- Bloomington Advising Council
- 1996-2014
- BACADA VS BAAC (Eric Beckstrom)
Structure

Steering Committee

Executive Officers

Standing Committees

Members
By Laws

- Steering Committee
- Executive Officers
- Standing Committees
- Finance & Budgeting
- Membership
- Elections/Term Limits
- Professional Development
Steering Committee

• Acts as main governing body
• Consists of a representative from each major school or department with advising staff
• Gives final approval of expenditures and conferences
Executive Officers

• Comprised of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer
• Provide overall vision and direction for the organization
• Ensures continuity of tasks and administrative functions
Professional Development Committee

- Plans and executes workshops and conferences
- Publicizes external professional development opportunities
- Networks with external organizations
Membership Committee

• Membership is open to any employee who is an undergraduate academic advisor.
• Membership application for non-advising employees is by petition.
• Only members that have renewed membership can vote.
• Membership is determined by advisors individually and occurs annually.
Financing & Budgets

2017-2018

- Institutional Vs Fundraising (Donors)
- $5,525 pledged income from departments, $5,570 expected expenditures
- $5,484 reserve fund
- Pays conference costs, guest speakers, food, awards
Honors and Awards

- Outstanding New Advisor Award
- Professional Development Certificate
- Terri Nation Award
Scholarship vs Research

Searching for vs Creating Knowledge
Framework of Scholarship & Research

- Level 4: Leadership
- Level 3: Leading Research
- Level 2: Collaboration
- Level 1: Evidence-Based Practice
Journal Of Academic Advising

Editors-in-Chief:
Adrienne Sewell, Director of Advising Retention
Mathew Bumbalough, Academic Advisor
Fostering Research and Scholarship through our Journal

- Promotes advisors’ professional development
- Disseminates timely and relevant research through humanistic inquiry
- Opens up a new approach to research in advising
- Supports changing model of what it means to be an academic advisor
Advisory Board & Platform

• Advisory board comprised of past NACADA president and researchers in the field.
• Meet online to discuss direction and feedback on submissions
• Publication is open access, online, on IU ScholarWorks
Your Future Plans

• What will it take to start an advising community at ND?
• How does this support your University’s Mission Statement?
• What academic advising journals focus on your particular issues?
• If you had a journal, where might it fit in?
Q&A