



Editor's Greeting



Hello and Happy 2021 to all our fellow Florida advisors!

We hope you are hanging in there as we continue to wade through the effects of the global pandemic. It feels like it has been a long year, but it seems we are beginning to see conditions improve and no doubt many of our students will be eager to get back to the physical classroom in the near future.

In the midst of this crazy time, advising has not stopped. Advisors from across our state - from the 12 state universities, the 28 state and community colleges, and the more than 60 private colleges in Florida - have adapted to the remote environment and found ways to connect with the students that we support. It is important work that we do, especially in times like this.

As you continue to work with your students and see them through this spring semester, don't forget to practice some self-care as well. If you are needing a bit of refreshing and refueling we hope you will consider joining us at the upcoming FLACADA virtual conference on May 14. (*See details below in this newsletter.*) It is sure to be a time for all of us to reflect on what we have just been through, and learn new ideas to inspire us in our academic advising roles as we move forward. As always, FLACADA is here for you. Should there be anything we can do to support you in your work with our students, please let us know.

Jeannie Jacobs
Editor, The Sunshine Times



The "Why" Project: Helping Students to Define and Value Their Academic Purpose

Being a college student is hard sometimes. Add the uncertainties of a pandemic to the equation, and the list of challenges becomes even more daunting for students. As an academic advisor, I have seen how these challenges have nearly blinded students from seeing what is ahead. This has been a challenge in the field of academia and higher education as well. The emphasis on retention has become an even greater focus and concern for many institutions across the country as students question the logistics of attending classes in the midst of a pandemic. I have often found myself unsure on how to best advise my students this year, especially while recognizing how very individualized each students needs are, but I have also recognized how opportune this season is to remind students of their purpose in hopes of guiding them through challenging times in academia.

In fall 2020, I started the "Why Project." In efforts to truly understand and get to know the needs of my student load, I have asked that each student share their why statement with me via email. The why statement challenges students to think about their purpose and their motivation to declare their pursued major. This statement also gives me the information to connect with each student as they navigate their academic career and manage major academic obstacles.

I advise students in the arts, specifically music majors, so I ask them to specify why they choose the arts, an academic path that can be very rewarding but also demanding of time, talent and energy. The responses were so honest and generous.

In general, asking these students to share and explore their why statements with me has opened a door that has allowed me to communicate with students in a meaningful way, especially during a time when in-person advising appointments are not an option. I also received responses that were blunt and less dreamy.

I initially asked students this question, what is your why, in hopes of motivating students to question and discover their academic purpose, but I discovered this approach is an excellent way to connect with students in a thoughtful and individualized manner. Asking students about their purpose and motivation can open

the door for advisors to connect and empower students while providing quality advising (Delmas, 2002). It can also be a resourceful way to put NACADA core values (2017) into action.

I encourage advisors to take the time to create a Why Project of their own and let this be the path that motivates advisors to learn more about each of their student advisees, share campus resources, and truly understand the NACADA core values that shape academic advising globally. There is no formal model to a Why Project. I would recommend exploring communication that works best with your student advisee population. The lasting impact of seeking to know students more is an investment in their long term academic and personal success.

I plan to hold on to the student responses I have received this semester. I plan to review each of them carefully so that I can better advise my students on a personal and individualized level. I plan to reference their why statements in moments in which they need a reminder or moment of clarity as to why they choose this particular path in higher education, and I plan to reference it when they face inevitable challenges that blind them from the academic goals and long-term professional visions ahead.

Kelci Kosin

Academic Advisor
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References:

Delmas, P. (2002, June). The 'quality' in advising. *Academic Advising Today* 25(2).

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2017). *NACADA core values of academic advising*.

To read the entire article, go to: [Academic Advising Today, February 2021](#)



Online Study Tips for Students

Use a weekly planner to map out specific days and times to work on each class. As an example, focus on two classes per day on Monday and Wednesday and two different classes on Tuesday and Thursday. Use the other days for follow-up work

with discussion boards, papers, studying, etc. Include specific blocks for tests and project due dates (along with blocks of time for studying and/or researching or beginning projects). **Include time for breaks.** Take a walk, workout, swim, practice yoga or a mindfulness activity to break away from the computer so you can focus when you return.

Start studying early in the morning. Studies show we are more alert in the morning so begin the day with your toughest class. Whether reading, writing, etc., always start with the hardest course and unless you focus on different courses in the afternoon, return to the same course just before dinnertime.

Instructors and tutors are still available virtually! Take advantage of virtual office hours or online tutoring as needed. Be creative, work with classmates in virtual study groups or seek other online tutorials that may be available for your textbook topic to gain additional understanding of the course material.

Be focused and alert for live or recorded lectures. Watch them repeatedly as needed to take proper notes. As you would in a face-to-face class, rewrite your notes to organize then afterwards as this reinforces your knowledge of the material.

Read course policies carefully, especially as they relate to the class participation. The best way to participate online is through the discussion questions, so be prepared to have meaningful responses to instructor and classmate posts. The more detailed your initial response to any question, the better the overall discussion will be to allow further replies to classmates later in the week.

Have a contingency plan. If your internet goes out, know where you can access Wi-Fi. Back up your computer data, especially school assignments, to the cloud or a flash drive.

Communication is key. Remember to reach out to your instructors. Read the syllabus to be aware of the course structure and expectations. Attendance may still be required, although the manner of attendance may differ from class to class. Attend online training to understand the various remote platforms. Also, don't forget to meet with your advisor as needed for current semester questions and future planning.

Reminder for Advisors

Students may rely on us as their primary source of information. They will need reminders of how to contact various offices. Creating an FAQ page would be helpful. They may not know if tutoring is still available or that they can access counseling, the Registrar, Financial Aid, etc. Technical support may be a big issue along with software support or technical questions for specific courses.

*submitted by: Wendy Guedner,
Academic Advisor, FAU*

We have changed up our usual 'In The Spotlight' component of the Sunshine Times to highlight a randomly selected academic advisor in our state as a way to get to know advisors from various institutions around Florida.



Meet Sherrina Lofton

Academic Advisor in the Center for Academic Retention & Enrichment at Florida State University

How long have you been an academic advisor?

Almost three years.

What do you like most about being an advisor?

Building relationships with my students, specifically my Black/African American students, given our shared experiences with education. It's literally the most fulfilling aspect of my job because I get to pour into them the guidance, mentorship, and love that I received when I was an undergraduate. Having someone who looks like you and can understand where you come from and where you want to go is extremely important. I think higher education underplays the role that an advisor can have in the lives of students. Hearing my students tell me I have positively impacted their lives, feeds my passion. I honestly do this job for them and no one else.

Is there any particular professional development you received as an advisor that has really helped you in your role?

I had a senior advisor as a mentor and I frequent advisor training to stay updated on different trends that impact students' experiences. Also, I have attended and presented at the FLACADA conference.

Do you have any advice you would like to share with new advisors in the field?

It's okay not to give students all of you, because it can weigh you down wanting to be everything for them. Use your resources the same way you advise your students to. Also, draw from your experience as a student to be authentic and honest with students if you want to develop a good relationship with them.





The 2021 Annual Conference in Cincinnati!

This year's annual NACADA conference will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio from October 6-9. The theme will be ***Together, All Things are Possible***. Be sure to mark your calendars early so you won't miss registration when it opens. The latest conference updates will be posted on the NACADA website at <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu>.

We hope to see some of our Florida advisors there!



NACADA Region 4 Goes Virtual!

This year's Region 4 Conference will "look" a little different. It will be combined with our great advising colleagues from Region 7 (*from Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri*) to create a dynamic virtual conference experience.

When: March 29-30, 2021

Cost: \$125 (*for NACADA Members*)

Register Information:

<https://nacada.ksu.edu/Community/Regions/Region-4.aspx>

All Things FLACADA!!



FLACADA Conference 2021 - All Virtual!

We missed seeing all of you last year for our annual conference, but we

aren't going to let a pandemic keep us from gathering together with our state advising family this year!

Join us virtually on **Friday, May 14, 2021** for our state-wide conference. This year's theme will be **F.L.A.C.A.D.A - The One Where We Went Remote**.

The deadline to submit proposals is March 15. The cost for the conference is \$15, which includes membership to FLACADA for the year. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.flacada.org/conference2>.



Get Involved in FLACADA!

Would you like to contribute to your state's professional advising association?



FLACADA is looking for volunteers to assist the Steering Committee in the following areas:

- **communications** - help with social media and sending out information about events - email socialmedia@flacada.org
- **membership** - help reach out to academic advisors in the State of Florida and encourage their membership in our state advising association - email membership@flacada.org
- **awards** - assist with coordinating advising awards and evaluating nominations - email awards@flacada.org
- **sponsorship** - help find sponsors for our state association - email sponsorship@flacada.org
- **technology** - assist with keeping our website updated - email tech@flacada.org
- **newsletter** - assist with contributing content for the Sunshine Times - email newsletter@flacada.org

Benefits of involvement include networking with other advisors in our state, exposure for yourself and your institution, professional development and sharing your expertise with the advising community.

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