

Leadership Competencies for Leaders in a Volunteer Organization: A Delphi Method Study

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Using competencies for volunteer organizations and applying those competencies to both situational and servant leadership, the Delphi study method was used to identify leadership competencies necessary for titled leaders within NACADA's Advising Communities Division. Surveys were administered to former and outgoing chairs within the division. Results from 10 experts identified important competencies, including knowledge of the advising community, communication, time management skills, and the ability to conduct meetings. At the end of the chair term, important competencies identified were a deeper knowledge of the advising community; communication; the ability to determine, organize, and prioritize the needs of the advising community; and people management skills. Implications for practice and areas for additional research are discussed.

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NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA) was chartered in 1979 and is now a global association encompassing more than 14,000 members representing all 50 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and multiple international countries. Members represent higher education institutions with myriad professional titles that include primary-role advisors, counselors, faculty, administrators, and students whose responsibilities include academic advising (NACADA, 2022b). Similar to other professional associations, NACADA relies on volunteers to facilitate and lead association activities and initiatives.

Many NACADA volunteers serve as leaders of specific association activities, either elected or appointed to those leadership roles (referred to as titled leaders). This research focuses on the leadership skills of chairs within the Advising Community Division (ACD). However, many volunteers, whether in leadership or membership roles, work closely with the executive office

personnel, paid staff who coordinate functions of the NACADA association. Volunteers in leadership positions may be more directly connected to the executive director and liaise with the volunteer board of directors, council, divisions (including administration, advising community, and region), and other entities under those divisions. Each of the three divisions has an appointed and elected representative who serves on the NACADA Council, where the NACADA vice president serves as chair. The NACADA Council ensures the day-to-day work occurs and member needs are served. Additionally, an elected board of directors oversees the strategic mission and long-term planning of the association. Each division has individual leadership roles as well, including division-wide steering committee members and committee chairs.

Individuals involved with professional and service associations often choose to advance themselves, engage within those associations, and embark in volunteer titled leadership positions. Within NACADA's Advising Communities Division there are 37 advising communities, led by volunteer titled leaders—advising community chairs—serving more than 14,000 members of this association (NACADA, 2022c). The Advising Communities Division was chosen for this study because of the large number of titled leadership positions available. Professionals interested in pursuing leadership positions in ACD are provided eligibility guidance and a brief position description (NACADA, 2022a). Missing, however, are materials articulating the leadership competencies expected of professionals entering one of these titled leadership roles. With a more thorough understanding of the knowledge, skills, attitudes/abilities, and other characteristics of the individuals serving in the chair role, volunteer administrators within NACADA can appropriately articulate these competencies within the position description and expectations for potential volunteer leaders and plan leadership onboarding, training, and professional development to meet the needs of the volunteer titled leaders within this division.

Literature Review

Core Competencies for Volunteers and Volunteer Organizations

Volunteer management is both time consuming, challenging (Alfes et al., 2017), and important for the benefit of the association (Campion & Aaron Bond, 2018). Brewis et al. (2010) noted a key area for additional training as “leading and motivating volunteers” (p. 36). While serving as volunteers themselves, chairs within the ACD also serve as volunteer titled leaders and work to manage other volunteers. These leaders can also be considered volunteer coordinators or volunteer managers through their “systematic and logical process of working with and through volunteers to achieve an organization’s objectives in an ever-changing environment” (Safrit & Schmiesing, 2012, p. 6). Literature explores the competencies needed for volunteers who serve in administrative capacities. Boyd (2003) identified core competencies for volunteer administrators in the areas of “organizational leadership, systems leadership, organizational culture, personal skills, and management skills” (p. 47). Each competency category has its own set of knowledge and skills in which individuals can engage for continued growth, improvement, and professional development.

Competency Model Approach

A competency model approach is used in this study. Noe (2020) described competencies as “sets of skills, knowledge, abilities, and personal characteristics that enable employees to perform their jobs successfully” (p. 146). The competency model describes job families and clusters competencies associated with them. This model allows for competencies related to specific roles (such as an advising community chair) to be identified and articulated. When considering the competency model in the context of volunteer associations and titled leadership roles, competencies related to specific volunteer titled leadership roles can and should be identified and articulated.

Titled leaders within NACADA must simultaneously balance their professional roles as academic advisor, faculty member, or advising administrator outside of NACADA along with their NACADA roles as both volunteer titled leaders and association member. Each role carries varying responsibilities, expectations, and competencies. Not only do these individuals consider

their personal development plan, but as a titled leader they consider the development of others within the NACADA association. These titled leaders foster further professional and competency development for those with whom they interact.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Two leadership frameworks guide this study. The first is the situational approach (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) and is used to frame the volunteer titled leaders with respect to the chair role and its responsibilities, including their interactions with others within both the advising community and association itself. The second framework is servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), which is used to frame the individual and their intrinsic desire to serve within both the NACADA association and the advising profession.

Situational Approach

Using the situational approach, leaders identify the competence and commitment level of the individuals with whom they work and then match their leadership style accordingly (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). This approach is highly adaptive; it is individualized to the individual, situation, and context. Leaders assess competence, then provide appropriate levels of direction (directive dimension), determine motivation, and provide appropriate levels of support (supportive dimension). As such, both task and relationship aspects of the leader and individuals with whom they are working are addressed (Northouse, 2019).

Servant Leadership

The servant leadership approach is how we frame the individual and their intrinsic desire to serve as a volunteer within both the NACADA association and the advising profession. While references to and examples of servant leadership can be traced to biblical times, Robert Greenleaf is credited with the identification of this term and its initial work as a leadership theory (2002). His premise dealt with the desire of an individual to serve others. This desire led to the leader ensuring those with whom they worked (individuals and organizations) had their needs met based on the service and interaction of the leader (Greenleaf, 2002; McClellan, 2007; Paul et al., 2012). Ten primary characteristics of servant leaders are: listening,

empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears, 2010).

Multiple factors influence leaders and their behavior, serving as antecedents, including the context in which they are serving, culture (of all parties involved), individual characteristics and attributes, and whether the individuals with whom they are working are receptive to servant leaders (Northouse, 2019). The servant leader works to have a thorough understanding of the organization, recognizes needs and problems, and works to solve them (Higgins & Campbell, 2019; Liden et al., 2008). Through their role within the organization, they help others grow, develop, and excel, and they do so in a moral and ethical way. Throughout this process and through their support, they empower others (Liden et al., 2008).

Purpose of the Present Research

NACADA is the premier association for academic advising worldwide. The association's vision states, "NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising is the leading association globally for the advancement of student success through excellence in academic advising in higher education" (NACADA, 2022b). NACADA provides its members with vast and varied opportunities for professional development and personal growth. As such, academic advisors looking to develop professionally through volunteer titled leadership opportunities with NACADA should be able to understand what they will gain from that role. Establishing competencies for this titled position within this division will help to solidify these competencies to better market these for future leaders. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the knowledge, skills, attitudes/abilities, and other characteristics that leaders of NACADA Advising Communities should possess in their titled leadership role as chair.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes should leaders of the NACADA Advising Communities possess *when assuming their term* in titled leadership as chair?
2. What knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes should leaders of the

NACADA Advising Communities possess *by the end of their term* in titled leadership as chair?

Methods

To achieve the volunteer titled leadership position of advising community chair, it is expected that individuals who take on these roles have some level of leadership competency. However, the leadership competencies for individuals entering these roles previously have not been articulated. To be eligible to run for election, minimum qualifications exist—the candidate completing the previous year as a member within the advising community and being a current member of that community (NACADA, 2022a). Other than these basic standards, competencies needed for these volunteer titled leadership positions remain unclear.

Participants and Procedure

This study used the Delphi method, chosen for its purpose of consensus development around a given topic or area. This is a multistep method, using formal questionnaires through multiple rounds of data gathering (Gupta & Clarke, 1996). "The Delphi method embraces the philosophy that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, thus facilitating team work" (Bowden, 1989, as cited in Gupta and Clarke, 1995, p. 186). This method has been used to identify competencies in various contexts, including academic advising for entry-level advisors (Menke et al., 2018) and volunteer administrators (Boyd, 2003). For this study, the focus was the identification of desired leadership competencies necessary for volunteer titled leadership within the NACADA organization.

The panel of experts, referred to as participants or panel members, for our Delphi study was purposefully chosen. The number of participants included in expert panels for a Delphi study can range in size based on the scope of the problem being addressed (Powell, 2003). For this study, participants included outgoing and past advising community chairs who had served in the chair role since the division restructured into advising community from commission and interest group. These individuals were identified with the assistance of personnel within the NACADA executive office. Selection of "post division restructuring" panel members was important because the ACD implemented both chair and

advising community expectation and performance rubrics not in place in the previous commission and interest group structure.

Initially, 41 individuals met the criteria for panel inclusion and were invited to participate. The contact information for one individual malfunctioned, leaving 40 individuals who received invitations to join the expert panel. For Round 1, 22 of the 40 experts responded (55% response rate), with 12 experts fully completing the instrument (54.5% completion rate). The 12 individuals who completed Round 1 were invited to participate in Round 2. Eleven responded and completed the instrument (91.67% response rate, with 100% full completion of instrument rate). All 11 individuals who completed Round 2 were invited to complete Round 3. Ten of those individuals responded and completed the instrument (91% response rate, with 100% completion of instrument rate).

To explore competencies needed of NACADA volunteer titled leaders, NACADA titled leaders were surveyed. For Round 1, these panel of experts (former and outgoing NACADA titled leaders—advising community chairs) were sent an email with a link to a Qualtrics survey. Individuals were asked the following open-ended questions:

1. Based on your experience and your observations of other successful chairs, please list the knowledge, skills, attitudes/abilities, and other characteristics that leaders of NACADA advising communities (AC) should possess when **assuming their term** as an AC Chair.
2. Based on your experience and your observations of other successful chairs, please list the knowledge, skills, attitudes/abilities, and other characteristics that leaders of NACADA advising communities (AC) should possess **by the end of their term** as an AC Chair.

Following a modified Dillman (2007) communication protocol, the panel of experts (referred to as participants or panel members) received five contacts in a 2-week period for initial participation. No incentive for participation was provided to participants. Responses were analyzed using qualitative measures in an inductive manner (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The participant responses were reviewed for identical submissions between panel members; responses

were quantified to determine initial competency priorities, and then combined into competency themes. Those competency themes were then compiled and sent back to the panel of experts for their feedback in Round 2.

Participation in Round 2 was requested from respondents from Round 1, who were sent both their individual responses from Round 1 and a link to a Qualtrics instrument that included summarized Round 1 responses. Participants were asked to rank, by importance, each of the areas identified in Round 1 based on their experience and observations of other successful chairs. Following a modified Dillman (2007) communication protocol, participants in Round 2 received five contacts in a 3-week period to encourage participation and instrument completion.

Participation in Round 3 was requested from respondents from Round 2, who were sent statistical analysis (Kendall's W), mean, min, and max rank, and the rank standard deviation for each competency area to further explain the Round 2 results. The participants were asked to review the rankings and make new rankings only for items they wished to change.

Again, following a modified Dillman (2007) communication protocol, participants in Round 3 received five contacts in a 3-week period to encourage participation and instrument completion.

Data Analysis

For each round of the Delphi study, contacting participants involved use of names and email addresses. Once data analysis began for each round, confidentiality of responses was protected. No personally identifying information was used at that point, and all data were aggregated.

In Round 1, responses to Question 1 (n = 64) and Question 2 (n = 65) were analyzed qualitatively because of the open-ended nature of the instrument (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Initially, duplicate or identical responses among participants were identified for each question independently to determine frequency. Responses to each question were then inductively sorted into researcher identified competency themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

During Round 2, the competency themes and frequency rankings generated from Round 1 were sent to each panel member, along with their individualized responses from Round 1 (Hasson

et al., 2000). Participants were asked to rank each competency within the competency themes. The mean, minimum, and maximum rankings for each competency theme were reported and analyzed using Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (Kendall's W ; Schmidt, 1997) in SPSS. Eleven participants completed the Round 2 instrument.

During Round 3, each panel member was provided with mean, min, and max rankings, along with standard deviations and Kendall's W , which provides a value of the level of agreement for panel member rankings (Hasson et al., 2000). Each panel member was asked to review these rankings and make new rankings only for items they wished to change. Analysis was performed using Kendall's W (Schmidt, 1997).

Results

Based on participant data from Round 1, responses were inductively sorted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) into researcher developed competency themes, including organizational knowledge, personal skills, strategic planning, and interpersonal skills. Although the researcher-developed competency themes involve similar competencies as those within Boyd's (2003) five competency themed model, the competencies identified by participant data were organized into four competency themes. Table 1 shows the researcher-developed competencies included within each of these competency themes and the number of respondents identifying this competency.

Table 2 shows the competencies included within each of these competency themes and the number of respondents identifying this competency.

Table 3 shows the competency themes and the mean, minimum, maximum rank for each individual item related to the chair prior to assuming their chair role.

For Round 2, panel members ranked each competency within the competency themes, with "1" being most important. Results varied among the panel members. The Kendall's W calculated for Round 2 for Chair Prior Knowledge for the organizational knowledge competency theme was $W = 0.42$, personal skills was $W = 0.24$, strategic planning was $W = 0.05$, and interpersonal skills was $W = 0.10$. Table 4 shows the competency themes and the mean, minimum, and maximum rank for each individual item related to the chair at the end of their role.

The Kendall's W calculated for Round 2 for Knowledge at End of Chair Term for the

organizational knowledge competency theme was $W = 0.47$, personal skills was $W = 0.43$, strategic planning was $W = 0.56$, and interpersonal skills was $W = 0.32$. Although items that received higher frequencies among panel members in Round 1 were not consistently ranked by panel members within Round 2, the variation within the panel members did not ultimately result in large ranking changes between Round 1 (utilizing frequencies of responses) and Round 2 (utilizing rankings).

As is typical in Delphi studies (Menke et al., 2018), Round 2 did not result in an acceptable level—moderate agreement or higher—from panel members for all competency areas (Schmidt, 1997), necessitating a Round 3 survey administration, which the researchers anticipated. In Round 3, panel members were provided statistical data (Kendall's W) related to competency areas, as well as item rankings within the competencies that included mean, min, and max rankings, and standard deviation, in addition to their own responses from Round 2. They were asked to review this information and make new rankings only for items they wished to change. Tables 5 and 6 summarize Round 3 data, which resulted in acceptable levels of agreement, ranging from moderate to unusually strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997).

Discussion

Individuals choose to engage in professional organizations, volunteering their time within these associations for different reasons. From the lens of servant leadership, volunteering to serve within a professional association such as NACADA provides an opportunity to serve academic advising colleagues and advance the academic advising profession. Servant leaders are motivated to serve first and are committed to the growth and development of others (Higgins & Campbell, 2019). However, volunteers enter their roles with varying levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities for accomplishing the wide array of tasks necessary. This variation—both within the volunteer titled leadership and the volunteers with whom they will be working—necessitates a situational leadership approach to volunteer management. Within volunteer titled leadership roles, knowledge of the organization within which they are working (organizational knowledge), their own personal skills (personal skills), strategic planning, and interpersonal skills were identified as competency

Table 1. Competency Themes and Competencies by Respondents for Round 1, Question 1 (Should Possess when Assuming Their Term)

Competency Theme	Competency	N
Organizational Knowledge	Knowledge of advising community	9
	Knowledge of NACADA	6
	Willingness to engage with others, including advising community	3
	Understanding the expectation of chair role	1
	Understanding advising community interaction within NACADA	1
	Ability to connect people to meet the needs of membership	1
	Commitment to diversity and inclusion	1
Personal Skills	Communication	6
	Technological abilities	5
	Openness	2
	Creativity	2
	Appreciation for diverse, new, and creative ideas	1
	Positive attitude	1
	Collaborative spirit	1
	Self-starter	1
	Flexible	1
	Independent	1
	Resourceful	1
	Time to commit	1
	Academic advising experience	1
Strategic Planning	Organization	4
	Time management skills	3
	Goal setting	2
Interpersonal Skills	Ability to conduct group meetings	1
	Delegation skills	1
	Networking ability	1
	Consensus-building ability	1
	Skills building rapport	1
	Leadership skills	1

themes important for volunteer titled leadership success.

Within the organizational knowledge competency theme, the $W = 0.82$ indicates strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997) among the panel members for competency needed prior to the chair role and $W = 0.98$ indicates unusually strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997) among the panel members for competency needed at the end of the chair role. Knowledge of the advising community was ranked as the most important competency area, both for chairs prior to assuming their role and ultimately for chairs at the end of their term. This information helps to illustrate the belief that panel members feel connection within the advising community and find

that meeting the needs of those individuals is crucial to the success of an incoming chair, more so than knowledge of NACADA. A focus on growth, well-being, and needs of others also are characteristics of servant leaders (Greenleaf, 2002; Higgins & Campbell, 2019). Similar trends with consensus were identified by the panel and verified statistically for chairs at the end of their term. They include competencies of deeper knowledge of NACADA, knowledge of NACADA resources, understanding their advising community fit within NACADA, and ability to connect people to meet the needs of the member. As with chairs prior to assuming their role, these data help to illustrate panel members' belief that although larger

Table 2. Competency Themes and Competencies by Respondents for Round 1, Question 2 (Should Possess by the End of Their Term)

Competency Theme	Competency	N
Organizational Knowledge	Deeper knowledge of NACADA	7
	Deeper knowledge of advising community	5
	Knowledge of NACADA resources	4
	Understanding their advising community fit within NACADA	3
	Ability to connect people to meet the needs of membership	3
	Leadership sustainability and succession planning in advising community	2
	Ability to engage members across communication platforms	2
	Understanding leadership paths in NACADA	1
	How to write an annual report for advising community	1
	Commitment to diversity and inclusion	1
	Advising community promotion through success celebration and education	1
Personal Skills	Communication	4
	Leadership strengths and skills	3
	Technological abilities	2
	Ability to address and balance needs and requests	1
	Appreciation for diverse, new, and creative ideas	1
	Openness	1
	Self-starter	1
	Flexible	1
	Independent	1
Creative	1	
Strategic Planning	Experience with goal setting and assessment	2
	Time management	2
	Ability to determine, organize, and prioritize needs of advising community	1
	Balance NACADA timeline with personal workload	1
	Organizational skills	1
	Event planning	1
Interpersonal Skills	People management skills (volunteer management, goal setting, delegation)	6
	Skills building rapport	1
	Ability to conduct group meetings	1
	Ensure appropriate support	1
	Networking ability	1
	Mentoring	1

NACADA organizational knowledge is important, connections and engagement with individuals and understanding the advising community group as it is situated within the larger NACADA organizational context are more important for this volunteer titled leadership role. This again aligns with characteristics of servant leaders through focus on

the growth and development of individuals (Greenleaf, 2002; Higgins & Campbell, 2019). These data support the titled volunteer leader as a servant leader, in building community that involves fostering connectivity and supporting members to identify with a group while simultaneously expressing their individuality (Northouse, 2019).

Table 3. Rankings and Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance of Round 2 Responses Related to Chair Prior Knowledge, N = 11

Competency Theme	Competency	Mean Rank	Min Rank	Max Rank	SD
Organizational Knowledge, W = 0.42					
	Knowledge of advising community	1.73	1	5	1.42
	Willingness to engage with others, including advising community	2.73	1	5	1.10
	Ability to connect people to meet the needs of membership	3.55	2	6	1.37
	Understanding the expectation of chair role	4.55	2	7	2.07
	Commitment to diversity and inclusion	4.82	1	7	1.72
	Knowledge of NACADA	4.91	1	7	2.17
	Understanding advising community interaction within NACADA	5.73	4	7	0.92
Personal Skills, W = 0.24					
	Communication	2.73	1	7	1.95
	Time to commit	5.09	1	12	4.06
	Self-starter	5.91	1	12	4.04
	Appreciation for diverse, new, and creative ideas	6.09	1	12	3.24
	Openness	6.18	2	9	2.18
	Positive attitude	6.18	1	12	4.32
	Collaborative spirit	7.18	2	13	3.71
	Technological abilities	7.64	2	13	3.67
	Creativity	8.09	2	13	3.05
	Resourceful	8.27	5	13	2.94
	Academic advising experience	8.45	1	13	4.57
	Independent	9.55	3	13	3.36
	Flexible	9.64	6	13	1.96
Strategic Planning*, W = 0.05					
	Time management skills	1.78	1	3	0.83
	Organization	2.00	1	3	0.71
	Goal setting	2.22	1	3	0.97
Interpersonal Skills, W = 0.10					
	Ability to conduct group meetings	2.64	1	6	1.80
	Leadership skills	3.36	1	5	1.63
	Networking ability	3.36	1	6	1.69
	Delegation skills	3.45	1	6	1.44
	Consensus-building ability	3.73	2	6	1.62
	Skills building rapport	4.45	1	6	1.97

*n=9 respondents

In the personal skills competency theme, the W = 0.87 indicates strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997) among the panel members for competency needed prior to the chair role and W = 0.90 indicates unusually strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997) among the panel members for competency needed

at the end of the chair role. Communication ranked as the most important for chairs prior to assuming their role and at the end of their role. The identification of characteristics as a self-starter, technological abilities, having time to commit, and the ability to manage time for this role for chairs

Table 4. Rankings and Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance of Round 2 Responses Related to Knowledge at End of Chair Term, N = 11

Competency Theme	Competency	Mean Rank	Min Rank	Max Rank	SD
Organizational Knowledge, W = 0.47	Deeper knowledge of advising community	2.18	1	6	2.63
	Understanding their advising community fit within NACADA	3.09	1	9	2.21
	Ability to connect people to meet the needs of membership	4.45	2	8	1.81
	Deeper knowledge of NACADA	5.09	1	8	2.63
	Leadership sustainability and succession planning in advising community	5.45	2	9	2.70
	Knowledge of NACADA resources	5.64	3	8	1.70
	Ability to engage members across communication platforms	6.45	3	10	2.77
	Commitment to diversity and inclusion	7.27	1	11	3.29
	Advising community promotion through success celebration and education	8.55	1	11	3.36
	Understanding leadership paths in NACADA	8.91	7	11	1.14
	How to write an annual report for advising community	8.91	5	11	2.21
Personal Skills, W = 0.43	Communication	2.18	1	8	2.14
	Leadership strengths and skills	3.45	1	9	2.51
	Ability to address and balance needs and requests	3.64	1	10	2.54
	Appreciation for diverse, new, and creative ideas	4.36	1	9	2.38
	Self-starter	5.82	2	9	2.36
	Openness	5.82	2	9	1.99
	Technological abilities	7.36	4	10	2.29
	Creative	7.45	4	10	1.18
	Flexible	7.45	4	9	1.64
Strategic Planning, W = 0.56	Independent	7.45	3	10	2.91
	Ability to determine, organize, and prioritize needs of advising community	1.64	1	3	0.81
	Balance NACADA timeline with personal workload	2.73	1	6	1.35
	Time management	3.09	1	5	1.58
	Experience with goal setting and assessment	3.55	1	5	1.37
	Organizational skills	4.27	2	5	0.91
	Event planning	5.73	3	6	0.91
Interpersonal Skills, W = 0.32	People management skills (volunteer management, goal setting, delegation)	1.55	1	4	0.04
	Ability to conduct group meetings	3.36	2	6	1.63
	Mentoring	3.64	1	6	1.80
	Skills building rapport	3.86	1	6	1.54
	Networking ability	3.91	1	6	1.51
	Ensure appropriate support	4.64	3	6	1.21

Table 5. Rankings and Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance of Round 3 Responses Related to Chair Prior Knowledge, N = 10

Competency Theme	Competency	Mean Rank	Min Rank	Max Rank
Organizational Knowledge, W = 0.82	Knowledge of advising community	1.29	1	3
	Willingness to engage with others, including advising community	2.00	1	5
	Ability to connect people to meet the needs of membership	3.43	3	6
	Understanding the expectation of chair role	3.86	2	6
	Commitment to diversity and inclusion	4.86	4	7
	Knowledge of NACADA	6.14	3	7
	Understanding advising Community interaction within NACADA	6.43	2	7
Personal Skills, W = 0.87	Communication	1.14	1	2
	Time to commit	2.00	1	5
	Self-starter	3.00	2	6
	Appreciation for diverse, new, and creative ideas	3.86	3	10
	Openness	5.29	5	11
	Positive attitude	6.86	4	10
	Collaborative spirit	7.14	6	12
	Technological abilities	9.14	7	13
	Creativity	9.29	8	11
	Resourceful	10.00	8	13
	Academic advising experience	10.29	1	13
	Independent	11.57	3	13
	Flexible	11.43	6	13
Strategic Planning*, W = 1.00	Time management skills	1.00	1	N/A
	Organization	2.00	2	N/A
	Goal setting	3.00	3	N/A
Interpersonal Skills, W = 0.56	Ability to conduct group meetings	1.29	1	3
	Networking ability	2.71	2	5
	Delegation skills	2.86	2	4
	Consensus-building ability	3.71	2	4
	Skills building rapport	4.43	1	5

provides clear role expectations for potential volunteer titled leaders. Furthermore, being a self-starter and evaluating the time commitment for an endeavor are examples of the stewardship characteristic of a servant leader (Northouse, 2019). “Stewardship is about taking responsibility for the leadership role entrusted to the leader”

(Northouse, 2019, p. 230), and the higher rankings for self-starter and evaluation of time commitment support this leadership approach.

For the strategic planning competency theme, the W = 1.0 indicates unusually strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997) among the panel members for competency needed prior to the chair role and W =

Table 6. Rankings and Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance of Round 3 Responses Related to Knowledge at End of Chair Term, N = 10

Competency Theme	Competency	Mean Rank	Min Rank	Max Rank
Organizational Knowledge, W = 0.98				
	Deeper knowledge of advising community	1.00	1	N/A
	Understanding their advising community fit within NACADA	2.00	2	N/A
	Ability to connect people to meet the needs of membership	3.43	3	6
	Deeper knowledge of NACADA	4.00	3	5
	Leadership sustainability and succession planning in advising community	4.71	4	5
	Knowledge of NACADA resources	5.86	5	6
	Ability to engage members across communication platforms	7.14	7	8
	Commitment to diversity and inclusion	7.86	7	8
	Advising community promotion through success celebration and education	9.00	9	N/A
	Understanding leadership paths in NACADA	10.00	10	N/A
	How to write an annual report for advising community	11.00	11	N/A
Personal Skills, W = 0.90				
	Communication	1.00	1	N/A
	Leadership strengths and skills	2.00	2	N/A
	Ability to address and balance needs and requests	3.00	3	N/A
	Appreciation for diverse, new, and creative ideas	4.00	4	N/A
	Self-starter	5.71	5	9
	Openness	6.43	5	10
	Technological abilities	7.14	5	10
	Creative	7.86	7	9
	Flexible	8.43	6	9
	Independent	9.43	8	10
Strategic Planning, W = 0.94				
	Ability to determine, organize, and prioritize needs of advising community	1.00	1	N/A
	Time management	2.00	2	N/A
	Experience with goal setting and assessment	3.14	3	4
	Organizational skills	4.00	3	5
	Event planning	5.29	5	6
	Balance NACADA timeline with personal workload	5.57	5	6
Interpersonal Skills, W = 0.86				
	People management skills (volunteer management, goal setting, delegation)	1.00	1	N/A
	Ability to conduct group meetings	2.29	2	4
	Mentoring	3.00	2	4
	Skills building rapport	4.29	3	6
	Networking ability	4.71	3	6
	Ensure appropriate support	5.71	5	6

0.94 indicates unusually strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997) among the panel members for competency needed at the end of the chair role. For chairs prior to assuming their role, the identification of time management skills was noted as a necessity. For chairs at the end of their role, the ability to determine, organize, and prioritize the needs of the advising community was identified to be of primary importance. Time management skills remained a crucial competency. The ability to determine, organize, and prioritize the needs of the advising community relates to the servant leader characteristic of conceptualization or “providing a clear sense of its [organizations] goals and direction” (Northouse, 2019, p. 230).

In the interpersonal skills competency theme, the $W = 0.56$ indicates moderate agreement (Schmidt, 1997) among the panel members for competency needed prior to the chair role and $W = 0.86$ indicates strong agreement (Schmidt, 1997) among panel members for competency needed at the end of the chair role. All items identified as important for chairs prior to assuming their role had similar frequencies. This could illustrate that there is not a singular pathway or competency outlined as a preparation for volunteer titled leadership. However, during the volunteer titled leadership role itself, it becomes increasingly clear what characteristics and skill sets are needed to achieve success within the position. For chairs at the end of their role, people management skills—including volunteer management, goal setting, and delegation—was ranked as a high priority, along with the ability to conduct group meetings and mentor. The ability to work with, mentor, effectively lead, and delegate appropriately relate to a leader’s ability to understand the individual competence and motivation of volunteers and tailor their leadership approach accordingly and is indicative of situational leadership (Northouse, 2019).

Limitations

There is no uniform standard for the number of rounds administered within the Delphi study method (Hasson et al., 2000). Evidence indicates a potential preference for two (Beech, 1997) or three rounds (Green et al., 1999). Researchers should weigh the use of additional rounds with the law of diminishing returns of continued participation of their expert panel members. Understanding the limitation of participant attrition commonly noted with the Delphi study method, the research-

ers chose to conduct three rounds after statistical analysis reached acceptable levels (moderate agreement or higher) (Schmidt, 1997) for each competency area.

Round 1 consisted of expert panel members indicating knowledge, skills, attitudes/attributes, and other characteristics of chairs prior to assuming their role and by the end of their chair role. The expert panel submitted open-ended responses that were then categorized in an inductive manner (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A potential limitation of the study is incorrect categorization of participant submissions. Despite these potential limitations, we believe the Delphi study method was the most appropriate method for obtaining consensus from these experts to generate an agreed upon list of competencies for chairs within the advising communities.

At the time of data collection, the world was in the COVID-19 global pandemic. During this time, many individuals were working remotely. As such, it is possible that certain skills and characteristics were highly valuable during these events. We recommend post-pandemic research in this area to explore the impact of this on competencies.

Future Directions

Competencies were identified as they related to the volunteer titled leadership role within NACADA and the advising community and as they related to the individual themselves. With respect to competencies related to the volunteer titled leadership role, these results can be used to inform future training planned by the ACD. Onboarding for new chairs occurs annually, with periodic training as well. The identification of competency areas can inform future work for the division leadership team as they plan future trainings and identify content focus.

With respect to competencies identified related to the individual, this research can inform those who are interested in volunteer titled leadership roles within this division about leadership competencies beneficial for future success. As an association, NACADA can review these to both inform future work and determine if it is appropriate for another subsection of the association to support this professional growth and development through content creation.

Additionally, data can inform association-wide leadership training and curriculum currently being developed by the Sustainable Leadership Committee.

Individuals enter volunteer titled leadership roles from a variety of pathways. As such, it is worth exploring whether volunteer titled leaders from different divisions identify different leadership competencies for their various roles. Future research may include a study of a similar nature to volunteer titled leaders within the different divisions to compare leadership competencies across divisions and within the entirety of the association.

Because one competency theme identified was related to organizational knowledge, a recommendation is for any current onboarding materials related to the organization be evaluated to determine if current practices meet the needs of the volunteer titled leaders. Additionally, if each individual division is creating separate onboarding content related to general organizational knowledge or association processes, centralizing association-wide content for efficiency and consistency should be considered. Furthermore, including pre- and post-test assessments to measure potential changes in competencies after onboarding or training interventions is recommended.

Conclusions

Results of the Delphi study indicate that volunteer titled leaders in a volunteer organization should have a variety of competencies prior to and by the end of their term as chair within the Advising Communities Division. Leaders can develop knowledge, skills, attitudes/abilities, and other characteristics in four thematic competency areas, including organizational knowledge, specifically knowledge of their advising community, personal skills, and specifically communication. They can develop strategic planning, including time management and prioritizing the needs of their advising community. Interpersonal skill development is the fourth competency area identified, with specific attention to managerial skills such as volunteer management, goal setting, and delegation.

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The institutional review board at Texas A&M University (IRB ID2020-0053M) approved this study on April 7, 2020, and further authorization to conduct this study was provided by the NACADA Research Committee. We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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