



## **National Career Development Association**

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### **National Career Development Association Leadership Academy Action Learning Project Summary**

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**Participant(s):** Graduate student members of NCDA and NASPA

**Board Mentor:** None

**Leadership Academy Class:** VIII

**Project Title:** *Graduate Student Academy or Graduate Student Institute* Interest Assessment

**Project Description:** The purpose of this project was to assess (1) the level of interest among graduate students to participate in a Graduate Student Academy/Institute, and (2) if interested, what type of specialized training graduate students would want. The Academy/Institute, if implemented in the future, will provide specialized training to graduate students enrolled in counseling, school counseling, higher education, and/or student affairs programs of study. Although graduate students enrolled in counseling or school counseling programs take a course in career counseling, career education consists, usually, of only one class. Some of these students gain a strong interest in career but feel unprepared to pursue career counseling as a career option due to lack of training. Typically, higher education/student affairs programs do not include any career coursework, although many graduate students from these programs either gain an interest in career, complete practicum or internship experiences in university career centers, and/or secure positions in university career centers upon graduation from their programs. Although CDF training is available for these individuals, the expense of this program may be cost prohibitive for graduate students.

**Summary/Conclusion:** My outcome goals for this project were:

- Identify the level of interest graduate students have in participating in specialized career-focused training
- Articulate level of interest specific to each of four programs of study
- Learn in what specific career topics students are interested in gaining additional knowledge
- Gain information to inform NCDA and me as to possible curriculum to include in a graduate student institute

## Results/Recommendations: (163 respondents; 131 completed surveys)

- *Participants included students from the following graduate programs:*
  - Mental Health Counseling (master's): 34 (22%)
  - Counselor Education (doctoral): 21 (13.6%)
  - School Counseling: 7 (4.6%)
  - Higher Education Administration (master's): 8 (5%)
  - Higher Education Administration (doctoral): 5 (3%)
  - College Student Personnel/Student Affairs (master's): 17 (11%)
  - College Student Personnel/Student Affairs (doctoral): 2 (1%)
  - Other: 60 (39%)
- *Graduate students indicated their confidence level to perform in the following specific areas of competency, as articulated by NCDA:*
  - Identifying and using sources of occupational information
  - Career development theory, including knowledge and application of career theory (60%/40%)
  - Tied: Individual and group counseling skills *and* Career counseling and developmental processes of diverse populations (59%/41%)
  - Work-related needs, values, and motivation (54%/46%)
  - Tied: Technology, including computer-based guidance/information systems, internet based career services (such as career planning) *and* Ethical/legal issues in career counseling (51%/49%)
  - Individual and/or Group Assessment, including selecting, administering, scoring, and interpreting career assessments (47%/53%)
  - Developing, planning, and managing comprehensive career development programs in a variety of settings (44%/56%)
  - Coaching, consultation, and performance improvement (36%/64%)
  - Research/evaluation in career counseling and development (34%/66%)
  - Supervision, including being in a supervisory relationship as both a supervisee and a supervisor (28%/72%)

*\*(very well prepared/slightly or not prepared at all)*
- *Sixty-four to 81% of participants indicated interest in participating in specialized career-focused training. Percentages range dependent upon the specialized topic.*
- *Participants from following graduate programs indicated the most interest in participating in specialized career-focused training:*
  - Mental Health Counseling (master's): *Developing, planning, and managing comprehensive career development programs in a variety of settings*
  - Counselor Education (doctoral): *Developing, planning, and managing comprehensive career development programs in a variety of settings*
  - School Counseling: *Coaching, consultation, and performance improvement*
  - Higher Education Administration (master's): *both Individual and Group Counseling Skills and Work-related needs, values, and motivation*

- Higher Education Administration (doctoral): *Individual and Group Counseling Skills, Research/evaluation in Career Counseling and Development, and Supervision, including being in a supervisory relationship as both a supervisee and a supervisor*
  - College Student Personnel/Student Affairs (master's): *Individual and/or Group Assessment, including selecting, administering, scoring, and interpreting career assessments*
  - College Student Personnel/Student Affairs (doctoral): fairly even across all specific topics
  - Other: *Individual and/or Group Assessment, including selecting, administering, scoring, and interpreting career assessments and Work-related needs, values, and motivation*
- *Graduate students indicated their desire to gain additional knowledge more in the following specific career topics:*
    - Developing, planning, and managing comprehensive career development programs in a variety of settings (81%)
    - Career counseling and developmental processes of diverse populations (79%)
    - Individual and/or Group Assessment, including selecting, administering, scoring, and interpreting career assessments (78%)
    - Tied: Identifying and using sources of occupational information *and* Work-related needs, values, and motivation (76%)
    - Technology, including computer-based guidance/information systems, internet based career services (such as career planning) (75%)
    - Coaching, consultation, and performance improvement (74%)
    - Individual and group counseling skills (72%)
    - Career development theory, including knowledge and application of career theory (70%)
    - Supervision, including being in a supervisory relationship as both a supervisee and a supervisor (68%)
    - Research/evaluation in career counseling and development (65%)
    - Ethical/legal issues in career counseling (64%)
- *The majority of participants (51%) prefer this specialized training via 2-3 day regional workshops. A distant second (27%) preferred specialized training during a professional conference.*
- *Qualitative Analysis – learning more about the following topics are of most interest to participants:*
    - *Assessment*
    - *Diversity/Multiculturalism*
- *Recommendation:*
    - Develop and implement a Graduate Student Career Academy that focuses on all of the minimum competency areas as articulated by NCDA.