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Statement of Research Interest and Objectives

My research agenda is informed by my blended identities as an educator, practitioner, administrator, and emerging scholar. I focus on the multiple relationships that exist between practitioners and research to engage practitioners in scholarship to benefit organizations and people. It is critical that practitioners are informed consumers of research as well as engaged in the process of knowledge creation within higher education.

Over the last five years I have been a member of the Research Committee for the National Association of Academic Advising (NACADA). In this role, I interact with faculty and practitioners who have a passion for collaboration to increase scholarly inquiry within academic advising. My activities have included reviewing research grant proposals, developing and implementing a scholarly Common Reading Program, and developing a list of scholars to deliver keynotes at the NACADA Annual Conference. I was invited to participate on a paper to describe the utilization of interpretive traditions for advising research that was included in a published NACADA Monograph (2010). I am also on the Editorial Board for the Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice as well as the Scholarship Chair for the Women in Student Affairs Knowledge Community. Through these projects, practitioners and administrators are exploring how to inform their practice through research as well as engaging in knowledge creation. I see myself as a catalyst for research among practitioners.

With my colleagues on the NACADA Research committee, I am collaborating on a study that replicates earlier research published by Dr. Adrienne Kezar in 2000, which focused on the practitioner-scholar relationship. This current study was examining the relationship between research and practitioners. Through an action research format (informed by the work of D. Greenwood, M. Levin, S. Kemmis, and R. McTaggart), the study focused on identifying how academic advisors would describe their relationship to research, and explain how to increase their involvement in inquiry that advances key elements of practice. Focus groups were held at regional advising conference across the U.S. in 2008. One key finding indicated many internal and external barriers existed for advisors to interact with research. All initial findings were presented at the 2008 Annual Conference. In this conference space, advisors were informed of findings and were asked for reactions to verify findings via the member-checking process. The next step is a publication that addresses findings, implications, and future research that will impact advising.

In addition to examining the relationship between practitioners and research on a macro level, I have engaged in studies that are informed through my practitioner and administrator lenses. One example is an increased awareness that emerged concerning women's educational patterns in certain disciplines. This awareness resulted in a study that focused on how women make decisions to participate in gendered occupations that connect to STEM fields with a specific focus on medical education. Through this line of inquiry that employed a grounded theory methodology (informed by the work of B.G. Glaser, A.L. Strauss, J. Corbin, and K. Charmaz), I developed a theory that describes the process of deciding to participate in medical education for women. My epistemological stance is informed by feminist standpoint theory (referencing the work of S. Harding and N.C. Hartsock) and social constructivism (referencing the work of N.K.

Denzin and K.J. Gergen). Due to these blended epistemologies, this theory emerged based on the lived experiences of women and honors their multiple realities. The findings offer insight to practitioners advising women and suggest reform in academic policy on major declaration.

I presented papers on this model and findings at conferences sponsored by the American Educational Researchers Association (AERA) and NACADA. Also, I have referenced this study in an article that ran in the Spring 2010 NACADA Journal and I am submitting a manuscript to the NASPA Journal About Women In Higher Education. Finally, this particular line of inquiry resulted in an invitation to be involved in the development of a National Science Foundation (NSF) Advance Grant at the U of U. I would like to continue this type of collaboration due to the relevance it has for multiple levels of organizations and diverse people engaging in higher education. These include universities, marginalized populations in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), and practitioners who interact with students interested in STEM. Other funding sources I would pursue beyond NSF would be the Association of American Medical Colleges, American Association of University Women, and other non-profit foundations that are focused on STEM and social justice issues. By engaging in questions that emerged through my practice, I have created an authentic location to launch my research agenda that empowers other student affairs practitioners to embrace scholarship.

A key project within my research agenda is to generate interest and resources to develop a *Center for the Practitioner-Scholar*. The goal of this Center would be to increase the consumption and production of research by front line student service professionals through resources and activities that engage and empower practitioners. External funding for the Center as well as scholarship by practitioners would be pursued through the National Academic Advising Association, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, American Educational Research Assn., and the Association of College Personnel Administrators. I would also identify private foundations that are interested in the connection between research and practice within higher education environment and the effect it has on the student outcomes and campus culture. Two possible sources would be the Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation.

My research agenda is firmly grounded in my multiple identities in higher education and promotes the blending of practice with scholarship to inform higher education in the future.

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