

A Brief History of American Council of Developmental Education Associations (now CLADEA)

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The American Council of Developmental Education Associations (ACDEA) held its first organizational meeting at the February 1996 conference of the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) in Little Rock, Arkansas. Dr. Gene Becket (then President of NADE) invited the presidents of other associations attending the conference to meet and discuss establishing a council representing developmental education and learning assistance organizations. The original idea as envisioned by Becket and Jim Melco (then Co-Chair of NADE's Political Liaison Committee) was to bring organizations together to:

1. Develop a political agenda for learning assistance and developmental education associations,
2. Promote that agenda through political liaison activities,
3. Establish a unified "voice" for the field,
4. Provide a forum for improved communication among the various professional associations in the field,
5. Provide a vehicle for the coordination of association activities, and
6. Promote cooperation among the various professional associations in the field.

Participants in the initial meeting represented the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), the College Division of the College Reading Association (CRA), Commission [\[1\]](#) XVI (Learning Centers in Higher Education) of the American College Personnel Association, the Midwest College Learning Center Association (MCLCA), the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE), the National Center for Developmental Education (NCDE), the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations (NCEOA), and the National Tutoring Association (NTA).

At this meeting the NCEOA representative indicated that the organization did not wish to be represented on the proposed Council but that they would support its activities.¹ The remaining representatives agreed to bring the idea of forming a Council back to their executive boards, discuss it, and meet again at the fall CRLA Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Commission XVI and CRA were both relatively small organizations with limited budgets. Consequently, their representatives indicated that they would like to continue as observers to the group but that they were not sure they would be able to send representatives to all future meetings. The association executive boards all agreed to pursue the idea of such a Council and the first official meeting was held at the 1996 CRLA Conference in Santa Fe. At this meeting the President of NTA pointed out that their association was prohibited by its constitution from participating in political activities. Because some of the other associations also had reservations about getting involved in political activities, the original vision of the Council as a political organization was discarded. Instead, the association presidents agreed that the Council should work to improve cooperation among associations, coordinate association activities, and to take on tasks cutting across organizational boundaries. The association presidents also felt that the Council would also be the appropriate body to air and to arbitrate disagreements among professional associations in the field.

Based on these general aims and purposes, the Council was formally established at this meeting. Hunter Boylan of NCDE was selected by the members to chair the Council.[\[2\]](#) It was also agreed that the Council would meet twice a year at the conferences of NADE and CRLA.

The Council met in 1997 at the NADE Conference in Chicago, Illinois and the CRLA Conference in Sacramento, California. Early activities included coordination of association conference dates and discussion of sharing conference privileges among member organizations. The Council also addressed two proposals from NADE for certification of individual developmental educators and certification of developmental programs. The former proposal was deferred for further study. The

latter proposal was supported by all Council members. NTA also introduced a proposal for tutoring program certification. Approval of this proposal was deferred until final details were worked out by the NAT Executive Board. The Council did agree that all member groups would recognize the pre-existing CRLA tutor certification program.

At the Council's 1998 meeting during the NADE Conference in Atlanta, a draft agreement was developed for sharing conference privileges. These included providing fee waivers for each other's conferences, providing free conference exhibit space at each other's conferences, providing complimentary advertisement in each other's conference programs, and promoting each other's conferences and events. Member associations also agreed to recognize and support each other's certification programs.

Considerable Council discussion was devoted to association certification programs during 1998 and 1999. CRLA and NTA worked collaboratively to insure that their tutor certification programs would not conflict. CRLA also added a mentoring certification program during this period and recognition of this program was approved by the Council. The NADE proposal for individual certification of developmental educators was eventually abandoned. There was considerable resistance from the field to the notion of certifying individual developmental education and learning assistance personnel. The Council and NADE decided that their efforts would be better invested in promoting and developing existing certification programs. Furthermore, Dr. Martha Maxwell had recently submitted a proposal to the Council for the establishment of a "Fellows Program" to honor outstanding professionals in the field. It was felt that this proposal might accomplish some of the same objectives as the original proposal to certify individuals and would be more acceptable to professionals in the field.

The association certification programs eventually agreed upon for joint recognition included the CRLA Tutor and Mentor Certification, the NTA Tutor Program Certification, and the NADE Program Certification. At the 1998 CRLA Conference in Salt Lake City, agreement was reached on shared conference privileges and these were later approved for implementation at the 1999 CRLA Conference in New Orleans. The idea of charging dues to support Council activities was also agreed upon at the Salt Lake City conference.

At the 1999 NADE Conference in Detroit, the Council agreed to develop a constitution for the group. A dues structure for Council members was also discussed and the Chair of the Council was asked to develop a proposed budget for Council operations. At this meeting, Council members invited Mr. Marty Vespo, the Director of the Kaplan Higher Education Division to discuss his organization's efforts to provide commercial remediation. The Kaplan organization was attempting, at that time, to become a major sub-contractor for remedial courses. Mr. Vespo sought Council support for these efforts. Instead, the Council voted to withhold any support for the notion of subcontracting remedial courses, primarily because members considered this to be a threat to the integrity of the field.[\[3\]](#)

At the 1999 CRLA Conference in New Orleans, the Council met with Mr. Daryl Peterson of the Houghton-Mifflin Faculty Development Programs. Mr. Peterson proposed that the Council cooperate with Houghton-Mifflin in designing and implementing a resource web site for developmental education. Following discussion, the proposal was rejected. A primary reason for this rejection, put forth by the NTA representative, was that the Council's credibility among professionals would be tainted by any involvement with commercial vendors.

Approved for implementation at the 1999 New Orleans CRLA Conference was Dr. Martha Maxwell's proposal for the establishment of a "Fellows" program sponsored by the Council. This program recognized distinguished professionals in learning assistance and developmental education

by initiating them as Council Fellows. The Council agreed that each member association would elect three people as “Fellows” and that this would form the core organization. Future fellows would be selected by the existing Fellows in consultation with the Council.

A group of the first 13 Council Fellows was inducted at the 2000 NADE Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi. The thirteen founding fellows included Dr. Cross, Dr. Al David Arendale, Dr. Hunter Boylan, Dr. Martha Casazza, Mr. Frank Christ, Dr. Al Granowsky, Dr. Gene Kerstiens, Dr. Martha Maxwell, Ms. Kathy Nuse, Dr. Michael Rose, Dr. Karen Smith, and Dr. Bunk Spann.[\[4\]](#)

Several debates marked the Council meeting during the 2000 NADE Conference. Among the first NADE programs certified was a tutoring program and it was described in the NADE Conference Program as a “tutoring program certification.” This was viewed by the CRLA representatives as conflicting with their tutor certification program. After some discussion, it was agreed that representatives of both organizations would meet after the conference to change the language of certification documents to avoid confusion between the NADE and the CRLA certification programs.

The NTA representatives to the Council also argued against having a formal structure for the organization, particularly one that required the payment of dues. Although no formal vote was taken, the consensus of the Council was that the structure of the organization should be formal rather than informal. The other Council members also agreed that some dues structure would be necessary to support the Council’s operations. Following this discussion a budget and dues structure was approved. It was agreed that each association would pay \$500 as part of their membership obligation and that this money would be used to fund Council activities.[\[5\]](#)

One outgrowth of collaboration of Council member organizations during the 2000-2001 academic year was a joint CRLA/NADE Symposium. This event was held in the summer of 2000 at the Breckenridge Resort in Colorado.

At the 2000 CRLA Conference meeting of the Council, arrangements for sharing consolidated mailing lists were discussed, the proposed Constitution for the Council was reviewed, and revisions were recommended. A discussion of the Fellows Program resulted in one of the Founding Fellows, Dr. Gene Kerstiens, being charged with coordinating the selection of future fellows. It was agreed that a detailed selection procedure would be adopted, that candidates for fellowship would be reviewed and selected by the Founding Fellows, and that the next round of Fellows would be initiated at the 2001 CRLA Conference.

A major outcome of the Council meeting at the 2001 NADE Conference in Louisville, Kentucky was the approval of a constitution for ACDEA. The Council’s first formal election was held and Dr. Hunter R. Boylan of the National Center for Developmental Education was elected to a two-year term as Chair of the Council.

At this meeting, Dr. Gene Kerstiens also proposed a selection process for Fellows of the ACDEA and this was approved. Arrangements for co-sponsorship of the 3rd National Conference on Research in Developmental Education were also discussed by Council representatives.[\[6\]](#)

The Council also discussed its budget and dues structure. Because a second round of “Fellows” was not selected during the 2000-2001 academic year, several anticipated expenses were not incurred. As a result, the Council had a budget surplus. Council representatives agreed that they would continue to pay membership dues of \$500 for the 2001-2002 fiscal year even though a budget surplus existed.

The Council also determined that because the National Tutoring Association was no longer a member of the organization, the Council could revisit the issue of political liaison activity. Following discussion, the Council members agreed that ACDEA should develop and pursue a political agenda. The CRLA President, Tom Dayton, agreed to develop a statement of rights for underprepared students and that this might serve as a framework for Council political activities. This statement was to be presented at the 2001 CRLA Conference.

To date, the Council's efforts have supported and/or resulted in:

- The establishment of a protocol for shared conference privileges among Council members,
- An agreement for universal recognition and support of Council member organizations' certification programs,
- The coordination of member associations' major conference and activities dates to avoid conflict and overlap,
- The improvement of inter-association communication, The approval of a dues structure to support Council activities,
- The sharing of association mailing lists for conference marketing purposes,
- The initiation of joint activities such as the CRLA/NADE symposium, and
- The establishment of the ACDEA "Fellows Program."

Current members of the Council include CRA, NADE, NCLCA, and NCDE. CRA continues to send representatives to Council meetings. Commission XVI has not sent an official representative since 1998.

Future Council activities include the continuation of the ACDEA Fellows Program, continued collaboration in events planning, establishment of Council by-laws, the establishment of a political agenda and political liaison activities, and further joint activities. The Council also plans to establish a joint membership base and to distribute information on current trends and issues in developmental education and learning assistance to member associations.

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[1]. As a Washington based political organization supporting educational opportunity, NCEOA was reluctant to confuse people about its identify by aligning itself with the concept of developmental education. In keeping with this emphasis on opportunity, the NCEOA was later renamed the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE).

[2]. It was felt by many Council members that because the NCDE was not a membership-based professional association its representative was more likely to be neutral in the event that the Council was called to deal with inter-association conflicts.

[3]. Kaplan disbanded their Higher Education Services in the spring of 2000.

[4]. Dr. Spann was nominated by the NCDE for the initial selection but NCDE declined to provide further nominations because the Center is not a membership-based organization.

[5]. The NTA withdrew from the Council following this meeting citing reluctance to pay dues for membership.

[6]. The Midwest College Learning Center Association had changed its name and its constitution to reflect a national agenda. It became the National College Learning Center Association in 1999 and, as a national organization, was eligible to co-sponsor the national research conference in developmental education.