

From the Co-Editors

In This Issue

We are very pleased with the breadth of scholarly articles that we are able to include in issue 2 of *NACADA Journal* volume 30. As was the case in the first issue, the articles herein offer substantive information to academic advisors, whether they are primarily interested in research, theory, or practice. Emily Shaw and Sandra Barbuti report the results of an extensive study of major switching and persistence among science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) students through the first 3 years of college. Cynthia Wiseman and Holly Messitt summarize academic advisors' perceptions of their roles in advising delivery at a large, urban, community college. Kristi Bitz introduces a new survey instrument that she developed and validated to measure first-year students' perceptions of the student-advisor relationship. Karen Cunningham and Anthony Smothers explore the influence of undergraduate students' levels of psychosocial development and self-efficacy on those students' decisions to change academic majors. Leigh Shaffer updates the *NACADA Journal's* previously published cumulative subject indexes to include the contents of the first 30 volumes, including this issue.

We take special note of two contributions from Sarah Keeling with which we lead this issue. Dr. Keeling, who is a previously published author in this *Journal* ("Advising the Millennial Generation," Volume 23, issues 1&2, pp. 30-36), approached us with a query concerning preparation of an article based on the research she recently completed for her doctoral dissertation. She was interested in sharing her experiences in designing and conducting this research with readers of the *Journal*, believing that many novice researchers would be as interested in the process of doing research as they would be in reading the results of her dissertation. She queried us about the possibility of submitting a single article that integrated the process and the results into a personal, narrative format, noting that she realized that such a manuscript would be an unusual genre for the *Journal*. We agreed with her goals and sought an approach that allowed her both to share her accumulated wisdom about successfully negotiating the challenges of a successfully conducted research project and fully and formally report her results. In the end, she agreed to produce the two pieces that appear in this issue: She shares her wisdom and advice in the Letter to the Co-Editors and

the full results in the lead article that follows. We strongly recommend that readers attend equally to both works to benefit from Dr. Keeling's foresight and efforts on the *Journal's* behalf.

Notice of Change in Editorial Policy

Beginning January 1, 2011, all manuscripts submitted to The *NACADA Journal* for editorial review should be prepared following the revised manuscript guidelines available online at www.nacada.ksu.edu/journal_guidelines.htm. The most important change in the revised guidelines concerns a new policy requiring all submissions to conform to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). The publication of the sixth edition required us to take some action to bring the *Journal's* style guide up to date, and we took this occasion to review all aspects of the previous policies and determine whether or not it was time to make more than perfunctory changes to the previous practices. As we are about to explain, we decided that recent experience with editing the *Journal* gave us reason to make one substantial decision and reverse course by returning to the previous practice of following only one manual of style.

In recent years, authors had been given the option to prepare their manuscripts according to one of three manuals of style: *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th ed.), *The MLA Style Manual* (2nd ed.), and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th, or more recently, 6th ed.), with the *APA Manual* listed merely as the preferred choice. Authors were instructed not to mix manuals of style in preparing their manuscripts for submission, and authors were also asked to specify on the title page of the manuscript the manual of style followed in preparing the manuscript. The primary reason for this policy was the thought that unfamiliarity with the *APA Manual of Style* might prove to be a deterrent to scholars whose disciplines typically specified one of the other manuals of style and the choice of these two additional manuals might encourage more prospective authors to submit their work to the *NACADA Journal*. In practice, however, this flexibility seemed to create more problems than it solved. For example, most manuscripts submitted over the last 2 years did not specify the manual of style on the title page as requested, and, in truth, it was sometimes difficult to determine the style standards to use in

judging the quality of manuscripts. Also, authors sometimes voiced objections to suggested editorial corrections or revisions, mistakenly thinking that they were following appropriate standards of style when, in fact, they were not. While everyone was very civil in the exchanges that followed from these misunderstandings, we felt that valuable time and energy were wasted by all parties involved in trying to prepare the final contents of the *Journal* for publication.

More than simply a set of conventions concerning documentation of sources for reference lists, the *APA Manual of Style* is a complete guide to all facets of communication, including organization and presentation of ideas, tone and diction, and reduction of imprecision and bias in language. We, therefore, strongly recommend that authors secure and consult the complete manual rather than some of the synopses of APA conventions that have been privately circulated or posted on the Internet.

The sixth edition of the *APA Manual of Style* has been extensively revised from the previous edition and contains both new information (e.g., new ethical guidelines for determining authorship, disguising of participants, and self-plagiarism) and revised guidelines (e.g., a simplified APA heading style for electronic publication). Due to the rapid growth of electronic sources for scholarly materials, APA offers an extensive revision of the guidelines for the citation of these sources, including the inclusion of the digital object identifier (DOI) as

the most reliable way to document references in a reliable manner.

We especially recommend that prospective contributors to the *NACADA Journal* consult two additional features of the *APA Manual of Style* (6th ed.) before submitting manuscripts for editorial review. First, the Checklist for Manuscript Submission (pp. 241–243) will help authors prepare manuscripts that need not be returned for stylistic revisions before they can be seriously reviewed for content. Second, the sixth edition also features the Journal Article Reporting Standards (pp. 247–250), which specify information that should be included in any article that reports the results of original data-collection studies regardless of the research design employed. The standards are summarized in a table that organizes the content by section of a standard APA style manuscript (e.g., title and title page, abstract, introduction, methods, etc.). This table is an invaluable guide for new and experienced authors alike in determining the details to include in each section of the manuscript.

One of the most important features of the sixth edition, www.apastyle.org, offers an online set of helpful features on using APA style. We encourage authors who visit this site to look for the free tutorial on style basics, the tutorial on key revisions from the fifth edition, and the listing of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

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Leigh Shaffer