

From the Co-Editors

Some propose that coherent theories of academic advising are not only possible but necessary (Creamer, 2000; Shaffer, Zalewski, & Leveille, 2010), while others suggest that because of the diversity of student needs, advising programs, institutional goals, and other factors, a unified theory for academic advising may not be possible (Hagen & Jordan, 2008; Robbins, 2010). This issue of the *NACADA Journal* provides support for the latter, providing articles on career advising and advising groups of students with special interests and needs.

Matthew Rust from North Carolina State University has written the lead article entitled “The Utility of Liberal Education: Concepts and Arguments for Use in Academic Advising.” Based on his recent presentation at the NACADA National Conference in Orlando, Matthew details scholarly, yet practical arguments that academic advisors can use with students who may doubt that the content of a college education has practical and personal value. His piece is followed by an article from Jessie Carduner and Gary M. Padak from Kent State University along with Jamie Reynolds of the University of Cincinnati titled, “Exploratory Honors Students: Academic Major and Career Decision Making.” Based on a qualitative study of volunteers in an undergraduate honors program, the authors illuminate the difficulties experienced by many of the most able students when selecting a major. Jason Thompson from the Brooklyn College–City University of New York and Eletra Gilchrist of The University of Alabama in Huntsville describe a model of academic advising for student-athletes in “The Academic Advisor’s Playbook: Seeking Compliance from College Student-Athletes.”

The next two articles focus on the special needs of two increasingly numerous subgroups attending college: immigrant students and returning veterans of military service. These articles are alike in that they both provide a useful descriptive statistical profile of each student group and offer an innovative model for conceptualizing academic advising practice based on well-known theoretical paradigms. Michael Stebleton of the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities features “Understanding Immigrant College Students: Applying a Developmental Ecology Framework to the Practice of Academic Advising” followed by “From Boots to Books: Applying Schlossberg’s Model to Transitioning American Veterans” written by Shawn W.

Ryan, from Alliant International University–Sacramento, and Aaron Carlstrom, Kenneth Hughey, and Brandon Harris from Kansas State University. Finally, two former colleagues from West Chester University, Leigh S. Shaffer (now from Downingtown, Pennsylvania) and Jacqueline M. Zalewski, contributed two articles focusing on the challenges of career advising in the new information-driven knowledge economy. The first, “Career Advising in a VUCA Environment,” introduces academic advisors to the concept of *VUCA* environment, a term that originated in the military and is now a widely accepted framework for conceptualizing today’s information society. In the first article, Shaffer and Zalewski explain the special challenges facing today’s graduates as they prepare for the job market. In the second piece, entitled “A Human Capital Approach to Career Advising,” they adapt a familiar approach to academic advising to the practice of career advising.

As evidenced from the varying articles in this issue, the analogy between the fields of academic advising and psychology supports the argument that a single theory proves an inadequate explanation for both. While an overarching concept and definition characterizes psychology as the study of human behavior, different theoretical perspectives have been developed to attempt to explain behavior, ranging from psychodynamic theory (cf., Adler, 1929; Freud, 1923, 1949) to behaviorism (cf., Pavlov, 1927; Skinner, 1938; Watson, 1926) to cognitive theory (cf. Piaget, 1954; Tolman, 1948) with dozens of additional individual theories and subtheories postulated. However, while a particular psychological theory may be offered to explain a part of or even an entire specific behavior, no one theory can explain it all. Similarly, one applied psychological method of intervention or treatment may be used in response to a specific psychological or behavioral need or issue, or even a spectrum of issues, but no one treatment is the panacea for every single problem. Just as no unified theory can explain human behavior, perhaps academic advising cannot be described with a single theory (Robbins, 2010), nor do all academic advisors follow the same theory in their practices.

Those interested in psychological theory as it applies to academic advising will appreciate the next *Journal* issue, 31(2), as it will provide articles focusing on an area of psychology relevant to academic advising: personality and social psychology.

We close with an expression of gratitude. Barbara Miller from Kent State University recently completed a 5-year term of service as a Research Bibliography Editor for the *Journal*, and we extend our thanks for all of her work to help readers stay abreast of research developments of interest to academic advisors. Barbara, you have made a lasting contribution to the breadth of our understanding of academic advising. On behalf of all of the members of the Editorial Board of the *NACADA Journal*, we thank you for your service.

We are pleased that we can say that Jessie Carduner, also from Kent State University, will continue to serve as a Research Bibliography Editor for the *Journal*, and we are happy to announce that Karen Mottarella and Shannon Whitten, from the University of Central Florida, have accepted our invitation to become new Research Bibliography Editors beginning immediately. Jessie has provided the excellent research summaries included in this issue, and we look forward to having contributions from Jessie, Karen, and Shannon in the Fall issue.

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