

From the Co-Editors

In *Academic Advising as a Field of Inquiry*, Habley (2009) chronicled 30 years of academic advising research and scholarship through 2008, noting that although progress had been made to increase the number of published articles related to academic advising in peer-reviewed journals, much more needed to be done to secure the place of academic advising in higher education. At this year's Annual Conference, the Director of the NACADA Center for Research, Dr. Wendy Troxel, along with colleagues from the United States and the United Kingdom presented preliminary results of their content analysis of research on academic advising from January 2002 to June 2018. Their work extends Habley's meta-analysis. In all—after significantly narrowing search terms and focusing on peer-reviewed journals in English—these colleagues identified 689 articles *directly* related to academic advising in postsecondary education. The articles represented 140 peer-reviewed journals with 2 of them specifically focused on academic advising, 98 generally focused on higher education, and 40 disciplinary focused (Troxel, Grey, Rubin, McIntosh, Hoagland, & Campbell, 2018). We continue to make the progress Habley noted as important.

This issue of the *NACADA Journal* continues to add to the growing body of research and scholarship regarding academic advising, employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies; addressing practice, both advising and administrative; exploring the relationship between theory and practice; and challenging us—however difficult it might be—to continue to self-reflect on our behaviors as advisors as well as the profession of academic advising. The end game is, as always, improving the student learning experience.

Employing multiple qualitative methods on data collected from focus groups and reflection letters, Dumke, Tyndall, Naff, Crowder, and Cauley explored the way upper level students pursuing dental or medical school defined academic success and their perceptions of the psychological and contextual factors that promoted their own success. The authors' insights into mastery and performance motivations regarding student success and their suggestion that academic advisors encourage students to reflect on future goals are instructive, with the latter being particularly important in

supporting the academic improvement efforts of high-achieving students.

Clark, Schwitzer, Paredes, and Grothaus used archived mid-sized, urban, research-intensive university records and the *Transition to College Inventory* in an ex post facto study of the effects of noncognitive factors on the academic success of first-semester students in and out of an Honors College who had entered in fall from 2008 to 2010. In their study, students in the Honors College expressed lower levels of self-confidence than those in a high-achieving peer group who did not participate in the Honors College, indicating that honors students may hold more realistic appraisals of self and expectations of the institution than their peers upon matriculation.

Yang, Briggs, Avalos, and Anderson's exploratory study was aimed at understanding the differences in the number and application of credits transferred into a professional program by type of student (first year, transfer), gender (male, female), and high school size (very small, small, medium, large). The results and implications for advising point to the importance and value of structuring early conversations with students about long-term goals to guard against extending the students' time in a program after transfer.

In a phenomenological study of nontraditional women students at two small, private women's colleges, Auguste, Packard, and Keep sought to explore students' experiences of identity recognition and marginalization during advising. More specifically, these authors "aimed to learn more about advisors' engagement with nontraditional women's intersectional identities, and the ways advisors may contribute to feelings of marginalization..." (p. 46). Their interviews with 42 nontraditional women students revealed three positive (guidance, identity recognition, advocacy) and three negative (indifference, identity marginalization, gatekeeping) themes. Students expressed encouragement when intersectional identities were viewed as assets by advisors. They experienced marginalization when advisors engaged in stereotyping or communicated low expectations.

Mann related models of clinical judgment for healthcare professionals to the professional growth and development of academic advisors. She addressed similarities between Tanner's (2006) clinical reasoning in healthcare and professional

reasoning in academic advising and then likened the development of professional reasoning in academic advising to Benner's (1982) five stages of clinical competence through which, in developmental fashion, a student moves from novice to expert. Her work has important implications for advisor professional development and for the identification of career ladders for academic advisors.

Citing growth in the number of graduate students who complete programs online and the need to ensure that these students receive appropriate advising, Cross's quantitative study focused on three advising-related areas important to online students: advisor communication, academic knowledge of support services, and behaviors. Cross created and piloted the *Online Advising Perceptions Survey* for this study. Of the 694 graduate students representing 16 programs sent a link to the survey, 165 responded with completed instruments. Results were consistent with other studies of a similar nature. In an interesting finding, students demonstrated a lack of awareness about the type of advisor to whom they were assigned: faculty or primary role.

Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski, and Barkenmeyer suggested that the lack of specificity and the variability in the myriad definitions of academic advising may be problematic for those who practice academic advising and for those who engage in research about advising. Their work was based on analytic induction, which was used to glean information about the experiences and

descriptions of those in the field to determine the "discrete categories of essentiality" (p. 84) and capture the activity that is and is not academic advising. Although they posited a definition of advising, the authors make clear that the conversation and reflection about an advising definition should be ongoing.

We hope the works in this issue inform your practice, advance the understanding of academic advising as a profession, and spark interest for others to contribute to the field through scholarship and research.

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References

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