

From the Co-Editors

A scholar-practitioner is someone who employs literature to inform their practice and engages in scholarly inquiry that is informed by their practice in higher education (Kidder, 2010). For those involved in academic advising, the *NACADA Journal* is a conduit through which to share the findings of their research and lived experiences. This issue offers a variety of research questions, methodologies, findings, and implications that inform practice and policy and that point to future research opportunities. As NACADA continues to develop a body of literature focused on all facets of academic advising, we thank these authors, who lead us to questions about student learning, assessment, advising strategies, and advisor training and development. Using both curiosity and a strong motivation to actualize student learning and success, please read, reflect, and respond to the work of our advising colleagues presented in this issue.

This issue begins with the work of Miller, Greer, Cozier, Whitener, Patton, and Koffarnus, who focused on interventions that impact students faced with low academic standing (e.g., academic probation). The authors applied advising interventions that had been successfully used with residential students to online students on probation. Specifically, they redesigned a proactive advising plan to address the needs of online learners and then compared the outcome of the intervention with online students to that of residential students advised with the original proactive plan. Data on advisee use of e-mail and telephone interactions were used to categorize online students as responders or nonresponders, and findings showed that more responders than nonresponders improved their academic standing. The discussion of the findings presented an excellent comparison of the impact of proactive advising plans between on-campus and online students and described significant differences in course withdrawals and improved grade point average (GPA).

Using a quantitative study, Lema and Agrusa addressed the connection between advising, teaching, and learning by measuring student readiness for self-directed learning. Data from this study suggest that noncognitive variables from the instrument that focus on previous employment, length of work experiences, and GPA were statistically significant, thereby supporting the use of the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale

(Guglielmino, 1977) as a tool for acquiring greater understanding about differences in the perceptions of advisors and advisees about the delivery of advising content and the best pedagogical tools.

Yonker, Hebreard, and Cawley bring attention to opportunities for influencing advisor development by using student evaluations of the advising experience that focus on a constructive feedback loop. For this quantitative study, they used data from a campus advising survey to evaluate four components identified as significant to advising: academic advice, availability, personable and interested, and vocation. Yonker et al. found that advisors who participated in advising development activities (e.g., workshops) received higher evaluations, over time, from students. They discussed the advisors' increased confidence in using career advising tools with students after attending the advising workshop.

Brecht and Burnett used logistical regression to consider noncognitive, cognitive, and demographic factors as predictors for success and retention of student-athletes. Data from the administration of the *Transition to College Inventory* (Pickering, Calliotte, Macera, & Zerwas, 2005) to first-year, Division I athletes offered a deeper understanding of the importance of high school GPA for facilitating student success and college cumulative GPA for predicting retention for this special student population. The findings have implications for advisors who interact with first-year athletes.

The assessment process as a means to match the advising curriculum to student learning informed the work of Kraft-Terry and Kau. Through the use of backward design, the authors explained ways to integrate student learning, the advising curriculum, and assessment to create an impact on student success and inspire change in advising pedagogy. They offered examples of direct measures for an assessment plan, such as pre- and postappointment evaluations and the associated rubrics, as well as ways to focus assessment on specific student populations, such as academically at-risk students, when engaging in a proactive advising curriculum.

Mulhern Halasz and Bloom used qualitative methods based on Schlossberg's 4S system (situation, self, support, and strategies) to explore and describe the transition experience of undergraduates who need to find a new major (Schlossberg, 1981). Through the lived experiences of students who involuntarily changed majors, three key

findings emerged: Students recognized the importance of family and proactive coping strategies but found support from the institution lacking. The authors also examined the students' decision to persist at the current institution with a new major rather than transition to another institution. These findings offer advisors and policy makers direction for addressing student retention and completion during unexpected major transitions.

McGill used the tool of a literature review to not only inform *NACADA Journal* readers about 17 unique documents and articles focused on the professionalization of academic advising but to also challenges advisors to reflect on the future. Through a multilayered coding process, McGill found that categories were consistent in the literature focused on scholarship and literature, graduate programs, and community. He also found discussions about the specific challenges that have stalled progress toward recognizing academic advising as a profession. McGill pointed to the significant barrier created by failure to articulate a clear definition of academic advising.

This issue concludes with a longitudinal study by Pasquini and Eaton that offers perspective on social media platforms as dynamic environments useful for advisor training and community building. The authors approached the research study with netnography, a type of digital ethnography designed to examine online communities. They examined the real-world knowledge created in the #acadv community by examining archived chat transcripts. They mapped topics and themes found in their analysis to the professional development competencies outlined in the NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies Model (NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2017) to identify topics that are absent in this online development environment.

These articles exemplify the concept of scholar-practitioner for academic advising. They will motivate you to continue your routine of engaging the literature that informs your practice as well as inspire you to begin your research journey with a

question that emerges from your own lived experiences.

We close the introduction to this issue with a note of deep and heartfelt appreciation to Nancy Vesta, *NACADA Journal* copy editor. Nancy has been a key member of the NACADA publication community since October 1996. Her keen understanding of grammar, style, APA, and advising content has had a transformational effect on any manuscript that she touched, and the *NACADA Journal* has significantly benefited from her expertise and continued engagement. Nancy will be departing for a new opportunity in publishing. Nancy, as you conclude your service to NACADA, we want you to know that you have greatly impacted the field of academic advising through the literature. The NACADA community wishes you success in your new opportunity and will miss you as a colleague but looks forward to continued friendship!

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