

Letter from Coeditors

We invite you to read five significant contributions to academic advising scholarship in this issue. These articles share the theme of support needed for both various student groups and advisors to thrive. The breadth in topics and approaches by the authors reflects exciting advancement of scholarship in advising. Implications from these studies offer important ways for practitioners to enhance advising practices.

In the first article, Zhang interviewed nine engineering students who transferred from community colleges to four-year institutions, as well as seven faculty advisors. The transfer students struggled with academic unpreparedness for engineering, nonacademic responsibilities, and financial issues. The advisors had heavy workloads, felt disconnected from other student services offices on campus, lacked communication with community college advisors, and found difficulty navigating transfer students previous coursework with the stringent engineering degree requirements at their institution. Zhang proposed solutions to improve the two-year transfer student experience to engineering programs at four-year institutions and to benefit the faculty advising experience.

The article by Schell explored whether a cultural mismatch exists between American academic advisors and international or immigrant students. Through 41 interviews with Chinese international, Chinese American, and European American undergraduate students and 33 interviews with advisors, she focused on the cultural mismatch between Chinese diaspora students and their advisors in the U.S. at two public and two private institutions on both coasts. Schell found cultural mismatches in five areas: definitions of autonomy, amount of student voice expected in advising, expectations of academic exploration, emphasis on passion, and types of socioemotional support. Mismatches were most prominent between advisors and Chinese international students. Schell provided suggestions for both advisors and administrators to reduce these cultural mismatches.

Shifting to the experiences of academic advisors, Soria, Kokenge, Wilson, Connley, Standley, Heath, and Agramon explored relationships between demographics, advising-related variables, institutional variables, organizational context variables, and burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. The

authors focused on responses from 821 academic advisors taken from a large data set. They found that 40.8% felt burned out from their work anywhere from at least once a week to daily. While demographic and institutional variables were not correlated with burnout, advising caseload was significantly related to dimensions of burnout. The mean advisor caseload was more than 380 students. The authors suggested ways to improve burnout and reduce advisors challenges.

Using a quantitative approach to examine relationships between advising, validation and belonging, and students grade point average (GPA), DeRosa examined survey data from 7,211 respondents to look at frequency of advising meetings, satisfaction with advising, sense of belonging on campus, demographic variables, and GPAs. She found that validation and belonging served as a critical mediating factor in the relationship between advising and GPA. DeRosa also found that marginalized and first-generation students experienced less validation than their peers. She recommended ways for advisors and administrators to improve the structure of advising to support students while developing their sense of belonging and validation on campus.

Our final article used a large data set of 257,813 students from 243 four-year institutions to examine the relationship between undecided students and their individual characteristics. Harper, Orr, and Stolzenberg focused on first-year, full-time, first-time college students who reported their major as undecided. Students identifying as female were significantly more likely to be undecided. Undecided students also reported higher household incomes and less financial concerns. Students who were undecided in their career choice were nearly 18 times as likely to be undecided in their major. As expected, there was a significant correlation between lack of career choice and undecided major. The authors described numerous approaches advisors can use when meeting with undecided students. They suggested that advisors use Social Cognitive Career Theory to support undecided students through decision-making.

All the articles in this issue offer new insight into important academic advising topics, including supporting STEM transfer students, developing greater understanding when advising Chinese diaspora students, reducing burnout among advisors,

understanding the role of validation and belongingness in advising students, and navigating advising meetings with undecided students. There are many takeaways for academic advisors that can be

implemented in practice right away. We hope you find inspiration in what you read!

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