

Letter From the Co-Editors

Summer is coming to a close. Many readers are or will soon be welcoming new students through campus orientation programs as well as engaging with continuing students to discuss their plans for the next semester, the next year, and their future. Although academic advising remains a continuous enterprise in the modern university, advisors need time to reflect on the field. Now is a great time to build this time into practice. Relying on the unwavering spirit of the *NACADA Journal*, this issue delivers articles that address a variety of relevant topics through rigorous strategies and methods of inquiry. The authors empower the reader to think about the process of academic advising and engage with students through the different lenses and frames revealed in their scholarship.

Before we introduce the articles in this issue, we ask each reader to take a moment to acknowledge the passing of a scholar and leader in the field of academic advising. Dr. Virginia Gordon, Senior Editor of the *NACADA Journal*, passed in November 2017 after a rich life that included countless contributions to academic advising and NACADA. We dare say that most, if not all, NACADA members have benefited from her scholarship as they engage in their advising practice and research. We thank George Steele and Melinda McDonald, close colleagues of Dr. Gordon at The Ohio State University, for preparing a short tribute about her for this issue. Because of the significance of her work, an issue devoted to the legacy of Virginia Gordon will be published in 2019.

This issue opens with ongoing dialogue around critical pedagogy informing advising in the academy. Drew Puroway replied to Ilya Winham's (2017) *Letter to the Editor* with a thoughtful response. The original inspiration for this respectful exchange of ideas, Puroway's (2016) *NACADA Journal* article, encouraged advisors to consider their work through a social justice lens that challenges oppression and creates inclusion for marginalized populations. In response, Winham asked whether advising practice leaves room for the work of Freire and other critical scholars. In this issue, Puroway answered the question and addressed the issues of power raised by Winham.

After the Letter to the Editor, which showcases rich discussions on theory, the first article presents competencies for advising practice. Donna Menke, Shaunna Stuck, and Sara Ackerson used the Delphi

method to explore the skills necessary for entry-level advisors. Their findings focused on competencies in broad skill areas, such as communication and local knowledge, which include institutional policy and resources. The article remains timely for understanding the development of a new advisor as well as for reminding practitioners of resources akin to the *NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies Model* (NACADA, 2017).

Following the article on competencies, this issue offers five articles intended to expand the understanding of the student experience within the realm of academic advising. Tracey Glaessgen, Cynthia MacGregor, Jeffrey Cornelius-White, Robert Hornberger, and Denise Baumann presented a study engaged through a constructivist approach and use of qualitative methods to unpack the experience of first-generation undecided students as they enter higher education. They discussed the importance of academic advisors connecting this population to transition communities and serving as translators for retention and student success. For the next article, Twaina Harris used quantitative methods to explore student satisfaction with advising strategies at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) by discussing the response from students about developmental and informational advising approaches as they achieve their academic goals at a HBCU. Using event history analysis, Jeffrey Sklar analyzed major changes through student characteristics during their time enrolled in a declared program, thereby advancing the understanding of the temporal nature of major changing and introducing a means for using institutional data to determine the nature of and timing for advising.

This issue also features explorations on the student experience with an article that encourages advisors to consider the impact of parental involvement on student academic performance. Dayna Weintraub and Linda Sax used quantitative methods and data from two surveys to test communication between students and parents in reference to future educational outcomes. The type and frequency of communication, as well as parent gender, presented important implications advisors might consider as they build relationships with students and administrators might remember when creating programming for parents. The student-experience portion of the issue wraps up with Jasmine Lee's article on critical race theory as a

means to explore the relationship between academic advising and marginalized communities. Lee explained that advocacy helps create inclusive environments at predominantly White institutions and encouraged advisors to adjust their practice consistently to address the racialized privilege–power dynamic.

Craig McGill offered a thought-provoking finale to this issue by reporting on a phenomenography of views from the NACADA leadership on professionalizing the field of academic advising. The analysis from the interactions with 17 respondents suggested five attitudinal categories that characterize the current state of the debate and led to McGill’s discussion on the relevancy of positioning academic advising as a profession.

With a variety of topics, this *NACADA Journal* issue moves the reader from theory to practice with research-based descriptions of the interaction between students and advisors, and it closes with questions about the future position of academic advising within the academy. As the editorial team, we suggest that readers view this issue of the *NACADA Journal* as one of the end-of-summer reading lists that inspire new ideas for the upcoming academic year. Reading and reflection

are gifts useful for rejuvenation and inspiration while preparing for another academic year with students and colleagues. Personal and professional development is as close as this copy of the *NACADA Journal*!

We look forward to seeing you at the 2018 NACADA Annual Conference in Phoenix and receiving your Letters to the Editors and submissions for future issues!

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References

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