

# SYNERGY



**Critical Questions  
for Academic Advisor  
Candidates (p. 2)**

**Advisor Insights on  
the Job Search (p. 5)**

**Appreciative Inquiry  
Webinar Notes (p. 8)**

**Research & Scholarship  
Book Review (p. 7)**

# Updates from the Chair Christopher Lewis



Hello SAPAA Members! I hope that this finds you well and moving in a positive direction in a new term. Since our last newsletter we have had a lot of changes within SAPAA, both within our leadership as well as in the planning of exciting projects for this upcoming year. I will highlight a few of these initiatives, but will leave it to our wonderful newsletter to fill you in with more details on event specifics.

We are eagerly awaiting our November Webinar, organized in conjunction with the Student Leadership Programs (SLP) Knowledge Community (KC). The Webinar is entitled Developing and Assessing Effective Partnerships in Service-Learning & Civic Engagement. We are thrilled about the potential of this partnership and hope that you will consider joining us for this great Webinar. (Read details on page 11).

All of our Working Groups are working hard at getting all SAPAA members engaged in their communities. I continue to encourage each of you to check out their Facebook pages as they are starting to have some great conversations. Also, if you are interested in getting more involved in any of these communities, please know that they are ready and willing to have you step in and get involved!

**Academic Advising** - <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=362885953250>  
Email - [sapaa.advising@gmail.com](mailto:sapaa.advising@gmail.com)

**Career Services** - <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=394873487773>  
Email - [SAPAA.CareerServices@gmail.com](mailto:SAPAA.CareerServices@gmail.com)

**LivingLearning Communities**  
- <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=362189134785>  
Email - [sapaa.llc@gmail.com](mailto:sapaa.llc@gmail.com)

**Service Learning/Civic Engagement**  
- <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=365755760757>. Email - [service.civicengagement.naspa@gmail.com](mailto:service.civicengagement.naspa@gmail.com)

Finally, we are already planning for the 2010 NASPA Annual Conference in Philadelphia. Right now, as always we are planning on having a regular business meeting, but we also are planning a joint reception with the SLP & Sustainability KC's on Tuesday Night from 7-9 PM at a local sports bar (within walking distance from the conference hotel) to get to know each other better and to celebrate the start of March Madness. We hope that you will join us for both of these great events!

As always, I welcome your comments, thoughts or ideas and hope that you will continue to reach out so that we can find ways to get you involved within our great Knowledge Community.

# The Interviewing Academic Advisor: Professional, Teacher, Mentor, Collaborator



Advisor candidates who showcase their skills during interviews ultimately contribute to strong work teams, as shown by LIM College colleagues, (from left to right) Academic Advisor Tanesha Green, Senior Academic Advisor Anjali Anderson, and Associate Registrar Carolyn Senatore-Schiavo.

By: Lianna Scull and Cecilia Lalama

*“Many institutions realize the importance of connecting the Offices of Student and Academic Affairs. Especially with small to mid-size colleges, administration recognizes that it is essential to build relationships between professional advisors, faculty and student life staff in order to provide the most support possible for students, regardless of staff size. Collaborating interdepartmentally is fundamental to a holistic approach to student support services.”*

–Tanesha Green, LIM College



*Lianna Scull (left) is an Academic Advisor at LIM College and a member of the SAPAA Communications Cttee. Cecilia Lalama (right) is an Assistant Director for Mentoring and Outreach at Boston University’s Educational Resource Center and Chair of the SAPAA Academic Advising Working Group.*

## Academic Advising Defined

Working to connect students to all facets of their home institution, advisors inevitably fulfill several, widely varying roles within an institution (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2005). Today, the profession of academic advising is comprised of advisors who serve as mentors and educators (Miller, 1994; Ryan, 1992) as well as purveyors of institutional policy and student advocates. Advisors not only serve as mentors to their advisees but comprise the core of an institution’s student support system, assisting students with the academic, professional, personal and social challenges characterizing the college experience.

As defined by National Academic Advising Association’s (NACADA) Statement of Core Values (2005), advisors are expected to fulfill the following professional competencies:

- work to strengthen the importance, dignity,

- potential, and unique nature of each individual within the academic setting,
- connect academic advising to students' lives, seek resources and inform students of specialists who can further assess student needs and provide access to appropriate programs and services,
- nurture collegial relationships throughout the institution,
- advocate for student educational achievement to the highest attainable standard, support student goals, and uphold the educational mission of the institution,
- become models for students by participating in community and professional growth and development activities.

Gloria Laureano, an Assistant Vice President for Student Enrollment & Enrollment Services at the University of Central Florida, suggests that candidates should demonstrate a number of skills. These core areas range from strong communication skills and assessment and evaluation knowledge to demonstrated program development and application of student development theories in the candidates' experiences and work with a range of student populations.

The above competencies illustrate the potential for academic advisors to influence students' collegiate experiences significantly. Advisors lacking experience in a particular skill set can work outside their own departments and offices in an effort to strengthen these competencies. Higher education personnel lacking academic advising experience can also actively seek out opportunities to work with colleagues serving in these roles. For example, if programming experiences are needed, a potential advisor can learn, hands-on, with orientation staffers or student activities

professionals.

Potential advisors can also seek out counseling and wellness staff to provide a basic training centered on supporting students going through emotional and personal crises.

### **Preparing for an Advising Interview**

Myriad resources for interviewing exist, but a brief investigation of tips geared for academic advising candidates is limited. As with any job, researching the job and place of employment is helpful to determine interest and fit for the interviewee. Reviewing full job descriptions, school marketing and promotional materials, mission statements and organizational charts can all be useful in preparation for an interview (Bloom, 2003).

The mock-interview is key for a candidate's smooth and successful actual meeting with prospective employers. Several "traditional" questions readily lend themselves to highlight the core skills and essential competencies of advisors (Chalmer, 2005; Davis, 2007; Quintessential Careers, 2010). A few questions from a number of possibilities include:

- In what types of work environments are you most comfortable?
- What qualities and skills do you believe are essential in this field?
- What student information system do you utilize and how did you learn to use it?
- What is an example of an ethical situation that you faced at work and how you resolved it?
- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time?
- How do you respond to a person

who is not entitled to the confidential/protected information s/he is requesting?

- What skills have you acquired by working with individuals outside of your team?
- What are three examples of the differences in support needed for students who are the first in their families to go to college compared to peers with traditions of college attendance?
- What are two examples of ways in which Student Affairs and Academic Affairs can collaborate for student success?
- How have you demonstrated your commitment to diversity and social justice?

Cecilia Lalama, Assistant Director for Mentoring and Outreach at Boston University Educational Resource Center, speaks to the importance of institutional fit. “Having been involved in a job search across a variety of institutions recently, I can certainly attest to the importance not only of finding the right institutional fit, but of feeling a sense of commitment to the community you are applying to work in. I believe this is directly related to the quality of advising you can provide for your students.”

Jamie Rodriguez, Residence Director Syracuse University agrees. “I asked every institution ... ‘what are you looking for in the incoming employee?’ It took one very strong answer to convince me that I had met the place that could be for me. ‘I can teach you to be a stronger administrator, I can teach you to be a better supervisor or trainer but I can’t teach you passion, enthusiasm and motivation to do this job well. We are looking for someone who has those qualities without effort.’ That answer blew me away... It’s important to remember that as much you want to impress these employers, they need to impress you too.”

## References

- Bloom, J.L. (2003, December). Career Services Corner. *Academic Advising Today*, 26(4). Retrieved from [http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/AAT/NW26\\_4.htm](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/AAT/NW26_4.htm)
- Chalmer, L.C. (2005). *An Advising Administrator’s Duty*. Retrieved -insert today’s date- from the NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources Web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/hiring.htm>
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- Quintessential Careers. (2010). *The 150 typical job interview questions*. Retrieved from the NASPA Student Affairs Partnering with Academic Affairs website: <http://www.naspa.org/kc/sapaa/connection.cfm>

# Navigating the Academic Advising Job Search: *Interviewee and Interviewer in One Semester*

By: Molly Morin, Chapman University

I first discovered my passion for academic advising while serving as a Peer Advisor during my undergraduate years at the University of La Verne. It was through this experience and with the guidance of my own advisor that I discovered my passion for student affairs. As a Peer Advisor I realized that I loved helping students transition into the college environment, discover their academic interests and ensure they make timely progress towards their degree. After my undergraduate experience in California I went on to pursue a master's degree in College Student Personnel from the University of Maryland College Park. The opportunity to pursue my academic advising passion as a graduate assistant while completing my master's degree led me to the East Coast.

I am happy to say that I just recently began my first full-time academic advising position at Chapman University in California. I have been in my position for about 11 weeks now and have already learned so much.

While I was job searching for a full-time position in academic advising I was also given the opportunity to serve on a search committee for a full-time advising position. Serving on a search committee provided excellent preparation for my own interview process and job search.

## ***From the Interviewee Perspective***

Like most spring 2010 student affairs master's graduates, my job search began in late January. Attending placement, signing



up for listservs, networking, bookmarking human resource sites and regularly checking the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) job postings were a regular part of my search. Knowing that I wanted to return to the West Coast and was, thus, limiting my geographic availability, also made searching tricky.

Interviewing is both an exciting and nerve-wracking experience. I would like to share a few interview questions that I recently encountered. I hope that these questions can serve as a resource for hiring committees as well as current academic advisors to reflect on their own work experiences.

Some reoccurring interview questions would include the following:

- How would your colleagues describe your academic advising style?
- What are three of the top traits/skills an academic advisor needs to be an effective advisor?
- What is the role of academic advising in student retention?
- How do you determine or evaluate your success as an advisor?
- How do you share disappointing counseling news with students?
- What have been your experiences in working with diverse students and how do they inform your work as an academic advisor?

- What role do advisors play in getting students involved in co-curricular opportunities?

Through my experiences as an interviewee I quickly learned about the increasing role of technology in the interview process. I completed interviews not only via phone but also through Skype, a Web-based communication tool I did not even know existed prior to the interview process. My experiences also affirmed for me the central role of academic advising in the college and university community. The search committees I encountered were comprised of a diverse representation of individuals, ranging from directors of advising units and fellow advising colleagues to faculty, registrar and study abroad staff members, current students and deans.

### ***From the Interviewer Perspective***

As a member of a search committee for a position that yielded more than 200 applications, I quickly realized the difficulty in identifying the most qualified candidate. How does one sift through hundreds of applications to shrink the applicant pool to a manageable size? Retention concerns, the increasing use of academic technology and the needs of a diverse student population are three key factors shaping the career landscape for academic advisors.

Some of the reoccurring skill sets search committees are looking for in academic advising candidates include:

- Ability to effectively communicate college/university policy to students
- Experience in working with students on academic probation/dismissal
- Ability to articulate the role of academic advising in student retention
- Ability to handle stress, ambiguity, competing priorities and sporadic work

flow patterns

- Utilizing academic technologies and social networking sites to meet the needs of students
- Strong collaborative/teamwork experience and interpersonal skills
- Excellent programming and presentation skills
- Work experience in a variety of institutional types and functional areas
- Ability to work with difficult/angry students (and unhappy parents)

The qualities an advising unit is looking for in a candidate also depend on the current needs of the office. In my previous position, student retention was a named priority for the division so individuals with retention experience were highly regarded. A candidate's fit with staff and the institution's goals and values, as well as the opportunities for the candidate's personal and professional growth help both candidates and search committees make important employment decisions.

My advice to those seeking an academic advising position is to get direct experience where you can – whether it is through a graduate assistantship, unpaid internship or full-time experience. I look forward to my own experiences as a new full-time academic advising professional and the opportunities I will have to learn from my senior advising colleagues.

***Molly Morin is an Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center and a Member of the SAPAA Academic Advising Working Group.***

# Notable Reads from the Research and Scholarship Committee...

Voller, J., Miller, M.A., & Neste, S.L. (Eds.) (2010).

*Comprehensive advisor training and development: Practices that deliver, 2nd Edition.* Monograph Series No. 21. ISBN 978-1-935140-21-4. Manhattan, KS: National Academic Advising Association.

Hagen, P.L., Kuhn, T.L., & Padak, G.M. (Eds.) (2010). *Scholarly inquiry in academic advising.* Monograph Series No. 20.

ISBN 978-1-935140-20-7. Manhattan, KS: National Academic Advising Association.



Professional development and ongoing program evaluation are cornerstones for effective advising programs for college student development. NASPA members will find the new texts in the field to be invaluable companion resources when creating and assessing advising competencies in their Academic Affairs or Student Affairs units.

Editors Julie Voller, Marsha Miller and Susan Neste update the popular 2003 NACADA handbook<sup>1</sup> and include a breadth and depth of academic advisor topics that will appeal to entering and veteran professionals alike. The monograph's 13 chapters, case studies on selected advising programs and first-person accounts reflected as "Voices of Experience" share current pictures of advising experiences and advisor training needs. Discussions range from the philosophical foundations of academic advising and practical components for centralized advisor training, to the diverse delivery systems used in the field and training challenges for advisors in decentralized units.

While the entire publication provides well-researched approaches to training programs, its chapters on technology and training formats highlight several emerging best practices.

Jennifer Joslin uses adult learning theory as a springboard for discussions on "Interactive Group Learning" (Chapter 6). Her suggestions for interactive and developmental practices include reading, thematic programming and discussion groups best suited to learning objectives to address the "independent and self-directed" and other characteristics of advisors and adult learners (p. 97). Alice Sommers recommends "Problem-based Learning Experiences" – used regularly to develop professionals in business, law, and health fields – as a means to foster advisor expertise through "role playing, action learning, shadowing and case studies" (Chapter 7, p. 109). Readers will see how easily theory may bear on daily practices.

Laura Pasquini's focus on new technology in Chapter 9 not only highlights a host of distance learning tools and curricula from the field, but also underscores opportunities for advisors to transform their shared learning. This type of collaboration across technology shows the possibilities of global academic advising networks and bears resemblance to what Wenger & Snyder (2000) refer to as the self-formed, informal

<sup>1</sup> Alberts, B., Clow, E., Davis, K., Gordon, V., Johnson, C., Jordan, P., Koring, H., Luce, R., Miller, A., Mills-Novoa, A., & Nutt, C. (Eds.) (2003). *Advisor training: Exemplary practices in the development of advisor skills.* Monograph No.9. Manhattan, KS: NACADA.

By: Marguerite Bonous-Hammarth

learning groups that gather passionate professionals together in “communities of practice.”<sup>2</sup> As an emerging best practice, Luiza Melo Dreasher details a theoretical lens of cultural competence to improve cross-cultural and multicultural communications, providing 23 annotated references on these specific skill dimensions (Chapter 12).

Editors Voller, Miller & Neste (2010) move considerations of emerging practices into broader contexts in their monograph about academic advising as specialized scholarship. The 11 chapters and reflections from authors provide historical and practical context to develop general research agendas in academic advising.

Of particular interest are chapters concerning academic advising as developmental theory and scholarly inquiry (Chapter 2). Sarah Champlin-Scharff provides a comprehensive review of the philosophical perspectives that frame academic advising as “developmental,” with

2 Wenger, E. & Snyder, W.M. (2000). Communities of practice: The organizational frontier. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(1), 139-145.

aims to understand student growth, traits and preferences related to identity through academic endeavors.

Jeffrey McClellan expands this discussion with comparisons between the developmental and “advising as teaching” approaches, where the latter aims to develop student “meaning making” through curricular and classroom knowledge application (Chapter 5, p. 61). The text also includes chapters on quantitative and qualitative research design (Chapters 7 and 8, respectively), ethical considerations in research (Chapter 10), and knowledge dissemination through research and publication (Chapter 11).

Taken together, these resources will enhance practitioner knowledge and will improve advising efforts across our diverse institutions.

**Dr. Marguerite Bonous-Hammarth is a Researcher at UC Irvine, Chair of the SAPAA Communications Cttee and a Member of the SAPAA R&S Cttee.**

## **Why Not Submit Your Story to Synergy?**

Share your research, program or other news from the field with SAPAA members!

Articles for *Synergy* should be concise, with text and references following general style guidelines from *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition* (2009). Please provide text in single-spaced, 12-point font, with double-spaces between paragraphs, and no more than 3 pages in length, including references. Include author’s information (name, title, institution, e-mail and telephone number), and photos/artwork as high resolution .jpg files with suggested captions to identify the relevant subjects.

**Submit** by the Synergy deadlines below to Editors Alexis Andres (ala5p@virginia.edu) and Nancy Singer (nsinger@email.arizona.edu).

December issue on Career Services – text due by November 1, 2010

February issue on Living and Learning Communities – text due by January 4, 2011

April issue on Civic Engagement/Service Learning – text due by March 1, 2011



# An Introduction to Appreciative Advising

By: Nancy Singer, University of Arizona

This summer I had the opportunity to participate in an Innovative Educators webinar on Appreciative Advising. Webinar presenters were Jenny Bloom from the University of South Carolina and Bryan Hutson from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Their knowledge of and passion for the topic inspired me to learn more about Appreciative Advising and to change my approach to working with students.

I had used Appreciative Inquiry techniques in strategic planning with student groups and nonprofit organizations, but had not before considered how the techniques could be applied to working one-on-one with students. If this notion of Appreciative Advising is new to you, I hope this introductory article will inspire you to explore the resources at the end of the article.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a tool for organizational change that focuses on the strengths in people and the positives in organizations, instead of centering on problems that need to be solved. “Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them ...AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a

system’s capacity to heighten positive potential” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000, p. 10). Appreciative advising grew out of this technique. It’s natural for academic advisers to want to help students reach their full potential, and one of the primary tools available for empowering students is asking questions.

“Appreciative Advising is the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials. It is perhaps the best example of a fully student-centered approach to student development”.

According to Bloom, Hutson, and He (2008) there are six phases of Appreciative Advising.

## **The Disarm Phase**

The Disarm phase involves making a positive first impression with students and allaying any fear or suspicion they might have of meeting with the advisor.

## **Discover Phase**

The Discover phase is spent continuing to build rapport with students and learning about the students’ skills and abilities.

**Dr. Nancy Singer is an Assistant Director for Admissions & Recruitment and a Member of the SAPAA Communications Cttee.**

### **Dream Phase**

The Dream phase involves uncovering students' hopes and dreams for their futures.

### **Design Phase**

Design phase is spent co-creating a plan to make their hopes and dreams come true.

### **Deliver...**

The Deliver phase is the implementation phase where students carry out their plan and the advisor's role is to support them as they encounter roadblocks.

### **...and Don't Settle**

The final phase, Don't Settle, involves challenging the students to achieve their full potential.

Evidence of the implementation of these advising techniques can be seen across multiple college campuses. At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro they are integrating Appreciative Advising into their First-Year Experience program, into their Student Strategies for Success course, and in writing Success Contracts with students returning from academic suspension. At the SALT Center at the University of Arizona, we are using Appreciative Advising techniques while coaching students with learning disabilities and attention challenges in making a successful transition from high school to college.

Two separate Appreciative Advising interventions are being conducted at the University of South Carolina (USC). The first focuses primarily on undergraduates and the second is focused on master's degree students. USC's Academic Centers for Excellence (ACE) use Appreciative Advising in a variety of undergraduate academic support and academic recovery initiatives. Appreciative Advising serves as the framework for helping students create academic plans. ACE coaches also use the Appreciative

Advising Inventory during planning and goal-setting sessions.

The director of the master's degree program in Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of South Carolina is using Appreciative Advising techniques during fall advisory conferences with master's degree students. These sessions focus on getting to know one another, understanding each student's life and career goals, and then co-designing a plan with each student to achieve his/her goals. In addition, a graduate-level course titled Advising in Higher Education is offered that focuses on Appreciative Advising.

If this article sparked your interest in Appreciative Advising, consider how you might apply these techniques to your work or incorporate the techniques into some of your campus initiatives.

### **References**

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- Cooperrider, D. L. & Whitney, D. (2000). A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry. In D.L. Cooperrider, P.F. Sorensen, Jr., D. Whitney, and T.F. Yaeger (Eds.), *Appreciative inquiry: Rethinking human organization toward a positive theory of change* (pp. 3-27). Champaign, IL: Stripes Publishing.

#### **Appreciate Advising Resources**

- <http://www.psu.edu/entor/090422jb.htm>  
[www.AppreciativeAdvising.net](http://www.AppreciativeAdvising.net)
- Bloom, J.L., Hutson, B.L., & He, Y. (2008). *The Appreciative Advising Revolution*. Champaign, IL: Stripes Publishing
- NACADA Clearinghouse Academic Advising Resources – Appreciative Advising  
<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/Appreciative-Advising.htm>
- Appreciative Inquiry Commons  
<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>

*Join colleagues and friends at the following events!*

**November 3-5**

“New Frontiers, Thinking Beyond Our Borders,” Region IV-W Conference in Omaha, Nebraska. Information at: <http://www.naspa.org/regions/regioniv-w/2010conference.cfm>.

**November 3-6**

“Progressive Pathways,” NASPA Western Regional Conference (Regions V and VI) in Portland, Oregon. Information at: <http://www.cwu.edu/~naspa2010/>.

**November 7-10**

“Climbing to New Heights,” Region I Conference in Manchester, New Hampshire. Information at: <http://www.naspa.org/regions/regioni/conference.cfm>.

**November 7-9**

“Innovative Practice Creative Discovery Together,” Region IV-E Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Information at: <http://www.naspa.org/regions/regioniv-e/default.cfm>.

**November 18**

NASPA Knowledge Community Webinar on “Developing and Assessing Effective Partnerships in Service-Learning and Civic Engagement.” Presented by Dr. Marshall Welch, 3:00-4:30 p.m. Eastern.

This webinar provides valuable tools for developing, sustaining, and evaluating staff/faculty partnerships in service-learning and civic engagement. Information/registration at: <http://www.naspa.org/programs/online/servicelearning.cfm>. **Register before Oct. 15th and save!**



*Marshall Welch, Director of the Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action at Saint Mary's College of California*



Synergy Editors: Alexis Andres, University of Virginia, and Nancy Singer, University of Arizona  
Layout and supplementary editing by Marguerite Bonous-Hammarth, University of California, Irvine  
Original design by Nathan Mugg, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis