**A Message From Dr. Ruth Darling**

One of the most exciting and engaging initiatives that has emerged from the implementation of Academic Advising: The Volunteer Experience is the opportunity to work with the Professional Development Work Group. These colleagues have helped craft the details of our advising model’s components and designed and created the retreats and professional development programs we have had the past eighteen months - and they continue to plan for the future! During a recent meeting, we took a few minutes to explore the question, “What makes academic advising unique? We can take the next step and ask, “What makes an advisor academic?” As I left the meeting, I found myself thinking about these questions and how various authors in the advising literature had considered these same questions. How do these questions help frame our daily practice and how do they shape the profession of academic advising?

Hagen and Jordan (2008) assert, “Advisors are academics” (p. 30) and Lowenstein (2005) proclaims, “The advisor is arguably the most important person in the student’s educational world” (p. 72). Hemwall and Trachte (1990) argue that advising supports “the centrality of the academic curriculum” (p.7). We can explore Hagen and Jordan's (2008) discussion of advisors as academics and Lowenstein’s (2005) learning-centered paradigm for academic advising. “Advisors teach the curriculum itself, its intra-relations, its relevance to the life of the mind, and its power as a pathway to lifelong learning (Hagen and Jordan, 2008, p.29).” It makes sense then, that advisors are in a position to create connections between the curriculum and the students’ experience at our university and beyond. Our new model for university academic advising is built on these principles.

However, as a community of advising professionals, we are challenged each day as our roles and responsibilities have become increasingly complex. The landscape of higher educations is changing in ways that directly impact our daily practice. We are fortunate that academic advising is viewed by university leaders as central to student success. The focus on advising as critical to retaining and graduating students has influenced the body of knowledge advisors must have to be effective, and, in fact, the definition of an effective advisor is changing to include being not only a co-creator of academic plans but also an expert in and advocate for student success, retention, and degree completion. The use of technology and data to guide timely interventions, the knowledge of risk indicators for students and an in-depth understanding of student development and approaches to learning, as well as career advising have emerged as critical knowledge needed to respond to diverse student needs as well as institutional, state and federal student success priorities.

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Upcoming Spring 2018 Events

Helping Students Thrive in Challenging Environments
Thursday, April 19, 2018
3:00 pm-5:00 pm, HBB West Wing (440)

Advisors and coaches will discuss various student situations and populations that can be challenging to navigate. Panelists will highlight campus resources that are available to assist students who may be struggling or need additional assistance. By attending this event, attendees will learn more about special student populations and will also develop strategies for helping students navigate challenging environments and situations.

TennACADA Awards Reception
Thursday, May 3, 2018
1:00 pm-2:00 pm, Panhellenic 106

The TennACADA Executive Board agrees with NACADA that good advising, like good teaching, publication, and research, needs to be recognized. In addition to the university wide Chancellor’s Honors award for advising, we recognize more of our colleagues within our advising community during our spring advising awards reception. This year, the awards reception will be a part of the May Advising Retreat. Nominations are open and will close on April 16th at 8am. Please nominate any coworkers that you feel deserve recognition for their contributions to the UTK advising community! We will also introduce the new TennACADA Executive Board during this time. Nominations for the Executive Board will be open April 9th-16th, so please nominate yourself or a colleague for an officer position.

We hope to see everyone at our events this semester!
TennACADA Awards

It is the time of year when TennACADA recognizes outstanding faculty and staff at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. A variety of awards are available for nominations. All nominations must be submitted via the TennACADA website by Monday, April 16th at 8am.

While considering potential nominations, please remember that award winners will be nominated by the TennACADA Executive Board for correlating Region 3 and national NACADA awards for the following year’s cycle. This is an excellent opportunity to recognize individuals who provide exceptional service to our students and the advising community at large! The six awards available are:

- **Outstanding New Advisor Award**
- **Excellence in Advising Award**
- **Empowering Leadership in Administration Award**
- **Exceptional Faculty Mentor and Advisor Award**
- **Innovative Advising Award**
- **Advocate in Advising: Friend to the Community Award**

Full award descriptions can be viewed and nominations can be made via the TennACADA website, found here: [https://tennacada.utk.edu/annual-advising-awards/](https://tennacada.utk.edu/annual-advising-awards/)

TennACADA Executive Board

The time has come to nominate and elect the TennACADA Executive Board for the Fall 2018-Spring 2019 year! Please consider nominating those individuals on campus who demonstrate the desire to collaborate with peers, empower others, and support professional development for all advisors! The positions available are as follows:

- **President**
- **Vice President and Programming Chair**
- **Communications Chair**
- **Secretary**

Nominations will be open April 9th-16th. Voting begins on April 23rd and closes April 27th. If you are interested in a position and have questions regarding what a specific position would involve, please feel free to contact current Executive Board members!

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, please do so. We will provide you with the nomination form through the TennACADA website, so make sure to look for that email communication later this week.
How did you get into the academic advising profession?
My first professional position after graduate school was in academic advising at a community college in Harrisonburg, VA. I wanted to work in a field that will allow me to be a part of the personal and professional growth of other people. I feel that this is my purpose in life.

My top theme from the Clifton Strengths assessment is Developer. The Academic Advising profession allows me to exercise that strength.

Tell us about your proudest moment that has occurred while working with a student.
In my advising appointments, I like to ask students the question, “Why Business?” Many times the students’ answers will lead us into a discussion about their long term goals, purpose, and passions. My proudest moment is when a student is able to understand how their major and time at UT will help them fulfil their purpose and long-term goals.

What is your favorite thing about working at UT-Knoxville?
I love to learn and grow as a professional and person. UT-Knoxville provides so many opportunities for its employees for professional and personal development. The university is also committed to being innovative and providing amazing resources for our students to thrive and be ready for life after graduation.

Tell us one fun fact we wouldn’t know about you.
I grew up in a military family. I’ve lived all over the world, including Germany, for a big part of my childhood.

What are some of your hobbies?
I may not have much rhythm or good dance moves, but I love going to my Zumba Dance class on Monday nights. It helps me to release stress and get a good workout. I enjoy reading, going to the movies, window shopping, as well as traveling to new places. I am also a homebody, so I love being at home with my husband and daughter watching a sports game with hot tea in front of the fireplace.
Advisor Spotlight:

Amber Rayborn

Amber Rayborn is an advisor in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. She previously worked at the University of Georgia and Pellissippi State Community College. Amber has been in her current role since August 2017.

How did you get into the academic advising profession?
One of my favorite professors recommended me for a position with The University of Alabama's College Transfer Advising Corps. The Advising Corps was a grant-funded program aimed at increasing college transfer rates in Alabama by placing recent graduates in local community colleges to serve as “near peer” transfer advisors. I quickly realized that advising students was my passion and, as a first-generation college student, it gave me the opportunity to help students in ways that I wasn’t helped.

Tell us about your proudest moment that has occurred while working with a student.
My proudest moment is whenever I see the look of relief on a student’s face when they realize that they’re talking to someone who gets them, someone who can help them, and someone who truly cares about them.

What is your favorite thing about working at UTK-Knoxville?
By far, my favorite thing about working at UT-Knoxville has been the amazing people I’ve met in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources—administration, faculty, staff, and students alike!

What is your favorite quote?
I have a million favorite quotes, but this Denzel Washington quote really speaks to me: “At the end of the day, it’s not about what you have or even what you’ve accomplished. It’s about what you’ve done with those accomplishments. It’s about who you’ve lifted up, who you’ve made better. It’s about what you’ve given back.”

What are some of your hobbies?
My biggest hobby is spending time with my husband, my amazing little girl, and my two miniature dachshunds. Beyond that, I really enjoy reading, listening to music, and watching stand-up comedy specials on Netflix.

Tell us one fun fact we wouldn’t know about you.
I am the first person in my immediate family to graduate from high school and the only person in the entire history of my family to graduate from college.
Advisor Spotlight: Britta Svoboda

Britta Svoboda is the Programs Advisor for the RN to BSN Program and Graduate Nursing Programs in the College of Nursing. She came to UTK after working at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and has been in her current role since June 2017.

How did you get into the academic advising profession?
I was initially intrigued with my current position because a big portion of my job is recruiting, marketing, and admissions for my programs. I get to continue doing what I love and weave my previous experiences in with new experiences as an advisor. The advising piece is expanding my opportunities in higher education.

What is your favorite quote?
“The world is but a canvas to our imagination.” –Henry David Thoreau

Tell us about your proudest moment that has occurred while working with a student.
I’m always proud to be an advocate for students. In my previous role, I advocated for students with disabilities who had lower GPA’s and test scores that were not likely candidates for admission. Every disability and story is unique, and every time I helped a student gain admission, I felt my place in helping them create a new future. Many students with disabilities and their families don’t think their dreams of college can become a reality, yet I admitted over 300 students with disabilities who are now achieving extraordinary feats that they never dreamed possible.

What is your favorite thing about working at UT-Knoxville?
The advising community keeps me engaged. The friends and colleagues I’ve made in TennACADA inspire me to keep making a difference.

What are some of your hobbies?
I love being active, hiking, cuddling with my two puppies, trying new breweries and exploring new places, and discussing book and movie plots with my boyfriend while drinking lattes. I love anything to do with art- I regularly paint, draw, and create greeting cards. I am also a huge Christmas fanatic, and I enjoy musicals, going to the movies, hanging out with friends, and going to social events.

Tell us one fun fact we would not know about you.
I’ve been fortunate enough to attend over 400 concerts and meet around 200 country music stars. My dad is in country music radio, and I’ve been lucky enough to reap the benefits!