

Office of Undergraduate Academic Advising NEWSLETTER

October 2022



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Sneak Peek:

October Academic Advising Workshop

The global pandemic has perpetuated cumulative trauma for most students, overwhelming their capacities to cope with normal life stressors, become socially engaged, and manifest self-agency. The unprecedented challenges manifested by the pandemic and civil unrest have impacted student engagement, belonging, and social integration. Furthermore, disadvantaged students' unique differences and experiences are conflated by social determinants requiring culturally responsive advising practices. Thus, creating an advising climate and toolkit that supports well-being and encourages resilience, while emphasizing the value of student autonomy and empowerment serves as a protective strategy for student success.

This session will equip advising faculty and staff with a fundamental understanding of trauma and the collective impact on student engagement and academic success. Participants will become more aware of the principles of trauma informed practices in advising that supports active student engagement, collaboration and mutuality, and empowerment.



Upcoming Important dates

- ✓ **October 11:** Academic Advising October Workshop
- ✓ **October 23:** Start of Late Fall Session
- ✓ **October 31-November 4:** Advising Week
- ✓ **November 2:** Last day to WITHDRAW from a fall term course

Sneak Peek:

October Academic Advising Workshop

MEET THE PRESENTERS



Dr. Quentin Alexander

Dr. Quentin Alexander is the Associate Vice Provost of Enrollment, at James Madison University. Before assuming this role, he was the Senior Director of Advising for Undergraduate Education at George Mason University, an assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University in Counselor Education, and an associate professor in Counselor Education in the College of Education and Human Services at Longwood University where he coordinated the College Counseling and Student Affairs track.

He specializes in research about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging issues in academic advising, mental health counseling, and academic and student affairs.

Dr. Alexander developed and co-coordinated an academic counseling and student success coaching program (C.L.A.S.P.) at Longwood University focused on the psychosocial, academic, and emotional development of first-generation, low-income, transfer, and racially/ethnically diverse students. This program is a winner of the 2021 NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising's Outstanding Advising Program Global Award. Currently he serves on the editorial board for the NACADA Review and NACADA Publications Advisory Board and is also elected to the NACADA Board of Directors, term (2021-2024).

Dr. Erica Brown-Meridith

Dr. Brown-Meredith holds bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in Social Work and has served as a Certified School Social Worker. The Global Community for Academic Advisors (NACADA), named her an emerging leader honoree. Dr. Brown-Meredith has made profound influences on the practice of academic advising professionally in the form of conference planning, local and national presentations, global webinars, and institutional consultation services.



Dr. Brown-Meredith is the director of a student success program that specifically targets first-generation, limited-income, racial/ethnic minority, and transfer students, utilizing a culturally responsive coaching model and ethnocentric counseling approach. Dr. Brown-Meredith earned several professional awards of distinction: Faculty Citizen Leadership Award and Advocate of the Year, Professional Excellence and Devoted Service to Students Award, and NACADA Outstanding Advising Program Award.

Save the Date



October Advising Workshop

October 11

9:30 - 10:20 AM

at Boyer 131



**DID YOU
KNOW?**



According to the CDC, some healthy ways to cope include “engaging in community or faith organizations, eating healthy, and taking a break from social media.”

October Article

Trauma-Informed Advising

by Samie Tan

WHAT IS TRAUMA AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT STUDENTS

Many students come into higher education with a past trauma that could disrupt their educational experience. Research by Shannon Cusack (2018) on the “Prevalence and predictors of PTSD among a college sample” shows that two-thirds of incoming undergraduate students have had exposure to trauma, directly or as a witness and nearly 10% develop PTSD or post-traumatic syndrome, “A mental health condition that’s triggered by a terrifying event.” (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2018). PTSD symptoms such as nightmares, severe anxiety, and flashbacks make it hard for victims to adjust and cope. If symptoms are left untreated it can interfere with an individual’s day-to-day function (Mayo Clinic Staff, n.d.).

There’s a wide range of traumatic experiences that any individual such as a student can go through. Some examples would be the loss of a loved one, racial harassment, bullying, natural disaster, rape and/or domestic abuse, and/or financial issues (Firestein, 2019). These experiences, according to University of Rochester assistant professor Tricia Shalka who studies the impact of trauma on students’ developmental outcomes, have “some kind of lasting adverse consequence” and in various ways “can be working against some of the basic goals we have for students” (McCally, 2022). This “lasting adverse effect” can be related to the fact that trauma affects the individual’s frontal lobe, ceasing it to function correctly after the distressing experience (Firestein, 2019).

The learning and development of traumatized students are heavily affected, and most are not able to recover the same way as other individuals mentally and emotionally. Trauma victim students “described their felt experience of campus spaces as utterly transformed.” and sees the university as a “kind of battleground”. This leads these students to be easily triggered and overwhelmed (McCally, 2022), to have episodes of emotional breakdown, to be emotionally withdrawn, and have a hard time making simple decisions (Firestein, 2019).

HOW CAN ADVISORS SUPPORT TRAUMA VICTIM STUDENTS

Due to the long-term effects of trauma on student outcomes, the importance of trauma-informed advising cannot be understated. Tara Sagor, the Director of Training and Trauma at the Justice Resource Institute in Boston, MA, stresses that “As advisors, we need to understand how stress/trauma impacts our students so we can explain it to them in a language they can understand, normalize their responses, and help them feel safe”, especially because of the relationship built with students early on in their academic career (Firestein, 2019). Advisors who are advising a student going through trauma or PTSD and even more, if advisors find themselves in the middle of a student having an emotional breakdown during an advising session, they must consider using psychological first aid or “in-the-moment-support” (Firestein, 2019).

Psychological first aid comes from disaster mental health counseling which is usually used in comprehensive disaster response to survivors of hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, etc. But according to Firestein (2019), as someone who can sometimes be the first line of support for students, this technique can also be used by advisors in dealing with students confiding about their trauma.

Similar to first aid responders in a disaster, advisors should remember that their top priority is to provide a safe and secure space for their advisees. After a student discloses a traumatizing experience with an advisor, “The advising session needs to go on the back burner to focus on the student’s safety, wellbeing, and mental health.” (Firestein, 2019). Providing a safe space in a room or an office away from any form of trigger for the student, offering a glass of water, a box of tissue, a blanket or even to call a close friend that could help them calm down, leading breathing exercises and/or walking students to their next class are some of the things an advisor can do to support their students. But most importantly, advisors should be knowledgeable about the resources they can direct their students to for proper psychological support.

It is not the role of the advisor to know the whole story, ask open-ended questions to inquire about the trauma or give advice on how to solve them (Firestein, 2019). Advisors are only there to give “in-the-moment-support”, after successfully administering that, advisors are to direct and refer students to appropriate medical, psychological, or tangible services offered by their educational institution for long-term support and wellbeing rehabilitation (Public Health Emergency, 2020).

Cited Works listed on page 5

WHAT NOT TO SAY TO SOMEONE WITH ANXIETY:



TRY ONE OF THESE INSTEAD:



Source: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/comics-about-dealing-with-anxiety_l_5c533ceee4b01d3c1f118265



Meet the Staff

New Academic Advising Graduate Assistant

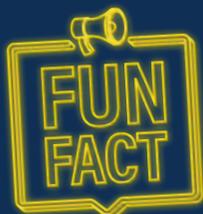
Meet Samantha Tan! She is the newest addition to our team working as the Academic Advising Graduate Assistant! Samantha was born and raised in Manila, Philippines. She grew up in a large family where most of her time was spent with her six siblings and five cousins. As a child, Samantha loved music, and she still does, but she found her true passion when she entered high school and was introduced to sports.

Samantha went to the University of the Philippines Diliman for her undergraduate studies. While earning her bachelor's degree in sports science, she also played collegiate varsity with the U.P. Women's Fighting Maroons Basketball team. After graduating, Samantha began working as a high school basketball coach and a Whole School Sports and Extra-curricular Coordinator at an international school in Manila. Four years after earning her degree, she decided to pursue playing ball again and was drafted to play professional women's basketball in the Philippines.

After playing for 2 seasons, Samantha decided that she wanted to step down and pursue her master's degree. She began looking for schools overseas, which is when she found Messiah University. She fell in love with Messiah and has now come to join us here.

Samantha is currently earning her master's degree in higher education with a concentration in college athletics leadership. Samantha's dream job is to be an athletic director at one of the eight major universities in the Philippines, and to help champion equal rights and opportunity for women athletes at the collegiate level.

We are so excited to welcome Samantha to our team!



Samantha's favorite book is **Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance** by Angela Duckworth. Samantha loves this book because it talks about the Growth Mindset and how "you can always be better and do better!"

Written by: Sarah Cotner

Office of Undergraduate Academic Advising

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Important Updates

Check out our website:

[Messiah Academic Advising Webpage](#)

Follow us on Instagram:

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Newsletter Article Citation

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Verse of the Month

Romans 8:28

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

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