

Spring 2011



# Wiser Advisor



## ADVISOR SPOTLIGHT: Gin Brown

by Kay Adkins



After over 30 years of work in the education field, Gin Brown considers advising students to be the one of the highest priorities in her role as Director of Operations at the Mountain View site.

Brown strives to keep an open door policy to her advisees and other students and she will visit with them about most anything. "How are your classes going?" is a question she regularly asks students. She celebrates with them over important events such as getting engaged or married, having babies, graduating, or simply doing well on their placement tests. Brown believes it is that personal connection to the college that can make a difference for some students in completing their coursework. She said, "It all boils down to the opportunities that Ozarka College provides for people to better their lives through education. That's what it is all about!"

"Ms. Brown," as she is respectfully and affectionately known by many, began her career in education in the late 70's as a home economics teacher in Norfolk. After teaching for 7 years in Norfolk, Brown took the K-12 counselor position in Calico Rock which she held for the next 12 years. Her employment with Ozarka began in 1996 when she became the first director of the TRiO program. She has since served Ozarka in many roles: Director of Counseling, Director of Admissions, and Registrar. She has directed the Mountain View campus operations for the last six years.

Regarding advising, Brown said, "I feel it is important to always be friendly, to always be courteous, and to always show a genuine interest in the student. You have to establish a relationship."

She added, "Most students we deal with don't know about college. College is a new world of terms. We've got to educate them about college, and we need to cover all the bases—enrolling, testing, financial aid, and finally registration. You have to walk them through it."

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Gin Brown*

Brown has been married to Stanley for 21 years. They are both big fans of old-time rock and roll and they frequent as many concerts as possible--The Rolling Stones, James Taylor, Styx, and Bruce Springsteen, to name a few. But Neil Diamond will always be Ms. Brown's music hero! Stanley and Gin also enjoy doing home improvement projects together including remodeling, furniture refinishing and gardening.

### Other facts about Gin Brown:

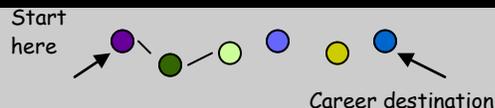
- ◆ Education: B.S. in Home Economics from Ouachita Baptist College, MA in Education from University of Central Arkansas, plus 30 hours additional master's level coursework in counseling
- ◆ Brown is serving as the 2010-2011 President of ArkACRAO, the state's Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- ◆ In her teen years Brown rode quarter horses and competed in rodeo events such as barrel racing, cutting, western pleasure and poles.
- ◆ Favorite book: *Who Moved My Cheese?*, by Dr. Spencer Johnson, "because it is all about dealing with change and we are all the time dealing with change," she said.
- ◆ Person she would most like to meet (besides Neil Diamond): "This may sound corny, but if I could go back in time and meet Jesus when he walked the earth, that would just be phenomenal. Also my great, great grandparents, to learn about my family history."
- ◆ Favorite song: "Forever in Blue Jeans" by Neil Diamond





# Ozarka College Provides Life-Changing Experiences Through Education

## Connecting All the Dots: Resources to help design a seamless journey from prospective student to successful graduate



By Kay Adkins

College student retention researchers assert “regular meetings with advisors and completion of a long-term plan for the student positively correlate with student persistence” (Wiseman and Messitt, NACADA Journal, 30(2), 35). For a long-term plan, the advising process should include:

- (1) Exploration of life goals
- (2) Exploration of vocational goals
- (3) A program choice
- (4) Course choices, and finally
- (5) Scheduling the courses.

(O'Banion, NACADA Journal 29(1), 83-89)

Helping students formulate and reach their goals is the bottom line task for academic advisors. The last two steps, selecting and scheduling courses, are “must do’s.” But often advisors lack the time or tools to help advisees determine a clear picture of how to get from point “A” (where the student is now), to point “?” (the life and vocational goals they may yet need to determine).

Some tools advisors can use to help students discover some answers and develop some specific goals, are:

### Exploration of Life Goals

To help students develop long term and short term life goals that are specific and attainable, use these PERSONAL GOAL-SETTING guides:

- ◆ <http://www.sia-hq.com/articles/Life-Goals-Worksheet>
- ◆ [http://www.ccd.me.edu/careerprep/CareerPrepCurriculum\\_LP-7.pdf](http://www.ccd.me.edu/careerprep/CareerPrepCurriculum_LP-7.pdf)

### Exploration of Vocational Goals

What vocations can help them achieve their life goals? To help students discover their skills, interests, and values, and learn about vocations that fit them best:

- ◆ [www.kuderjourney.com](http://www.kuderjourney.com) (The Student Success Center can help administer this assessment.)

### A Program Choice

Understanding the possibilities with any given degree can help a student choose the best program to achieve their life and vocational goals. To help a student focus on a program, two resources can be helpful:

- ◆ “What Can I Do with this Degree?” (<http://dus.psu.edu/dus101/whatcanido.htm>)
- ◆ The University of Missouri’s Degree Interest Game at <http://career.missouri.edu/students/majors-careers/skills-interests/career-interest-game/>.

A student with a clear objective, along with a clear and direct course plotted to reach it, is more likely to persist to complete a program. Advising that facilitates this clarity can make a positive difference in retention.



## Strategic Importance of Academic Advising for Institutions of Higher Education

By Candace Jeffery

Contributing to student learning, success, satisfaction, and persistence, academic advisors are integral to the achievement of institutional missions and strategic goals. Strong academic advising contributes to and supports every component of their definition of student success.

The best academic advisors challenge students to achieve and offer students support and strategies to reach their goals. It is our responsibility as advisors to connect students to institutional resources as well as educational and co-curricular opportunities for involvement. We need to help students develop the critical-thinking skills necessary to make good decisions.

Teaching students the information that they need to be successful and engaging students in the appropriate skill-building activities and opportunities takes knowledge, skill, and understanding.

In order stay on top of academic advisor skills, comprehensive training and ongoing professional development are needed to update advisors’ knowledge, hone their communication skills and deepen their understanding of the importance of advising for students and the institution.

(Folsom and Scobie MS vol. 21, 2010)

