

## Preface

From its inception in 1966 at the University of Michigan through its closing in 2003 at the University of North Carolina - Greensboro, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services (ERIC/CASS) worked closely with The American Counseling Association (ACA) and collaborated on numerous workshops, conferences, and publications. This collaboration resulted in many stellar accomplishments.

When the U.S. Department of Education abolished the ERIC clearinghouses in December 2003, the ERIC/CASS directors created two new organizational entities – Counseling Outfitters and CAPS Press – as a venue through which to continue to offer the many products and services for counselors that ERIC/CASS had provided for almost four decades. Since their founding, these new entities have been focused on working with the leadership of ACA to supplement and complement the impressive array of ACA member benefits.

The first volume of *VISTAS (VISTAS – Perspectives on Counseling 2004)* evolved from meetings with ACA Executive Director Richard Yep, former ACA Associate Executive Director Howard Smith, and current ACA Associate Executive Director for Professional Affairs David Kaplan. *VISTAS* has been a first step toward transferring ERIC/CASS' services and resources to ACA so that counselors can continue to benefit from them. Of particular note is that the ERIC/CASS resources were user-generated and frequently built upon and highlighted the activities and achievements of ACA members.

*VISTAS 2005* will continue the building of a user-driven ACA-sponsored database of counseling resources that will capture the best ideas and practices of ACA members. This database will also draw from the resources that were developed by ERIC/CASS as a subset of the ERIC database. As was true of the use of the ERIC/CASS database, plans are to use the ACA-sponsored database to spin off additional member benefits such as publications, Web sites, and training workshops. As more fully discussed in the Foreword, the ACA *VISTAS* database will become the core of an ACA professional counseling virtual library. Called *Ask ACA*, this new resource will be available to ACA members in the fall of 2005.

As with all innovative endeavors, *VISTAS* has experienced growing pains. Nevertheless, an exciting new collection of articles has been produced featuring

compelling ideas and practices that have grown out of ACA program proposals submitted by members. It should be noted that, as such, many of these articles are not written in an academic, professional journal style. In preparing the articles for publication, *VISTAS* editors were instructed to correct grammatical and typographical errors and to reword sections when necessary to clarify what the authors are trying to communicate. But they were also instructed to preserve the idiom and style of each writer as much as possible so that readers can better understand the perspective – and yes, the passion – of the individual presenter/author.

In addition to the articles selected from program presenter submissions, *VISTAS* includes a section of special invited articles prepared by current ACA leaders. The members of both of these groups deserve great credit for taking the time to share their ideas and resources. For convention participants who attend the sessions presented by the authors, *VISTAS* can enhance their understanding of the content of the sessions. For those unable to attend, *VISTAS* can provide an awareness of important current and emerging issues in counseling. For both groups, *VISTAS* will prove to be a highly useful reference long after the convention is over.

We have learned greatly from our experiences in developing the first two volumes of *VISTAS*, and readers will note the improvements in *VISTAS 2005*. Even more changes and improvements are planned for *VISTAS 2006*. For now, we hope you find this volume useful and will continue to share your compelling ideas and resources for *VISTAS 2006*. They are, after all, what has made ACA the preeminent professional counseling association that it is.

Our best to you all – contributors and readers.

Garry R. Walz, PhD, NCC  
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