



President's Message

Before I began my term as President, I spoke with many ARCA members, colleagues, mentors, and leaders from other rehabilitation organizations to make myself acutely aware of the challenges being faced by our profession. Although the profession of rehabilitation counseling is about to face many challenges we also are also faced with some historic opportunities with which to face these challenges. An old friend and teacher, Tom Tatlock, once impressed upon me the importance of “striking while the iron is hot” and I believe at this moment that our profession is hot and we need to strike! I began working closely with Carrie Wilde, President Elect, and ARCA Council Chairs in January 2010 to plan a succession of “arching” presidential initiatives to address the challenges we perceive; many of which cannot be accomplished in one year. The presidential initiatives we have decided to address over the next three years will fall within the following general categories: 1) *public policy and legislation*; 2) *collaboration with other professional organizations*; 3) *professional membership*; and 4) *research*.

Public Policy and Legislation. On January 27, 2010 Carrie Wilde and I met with Lee Perselay, Disability Counsel to Senator Harkins and Sharon Lewis, Senior Disability Policy Advisor to Representative George Miller on the matter of the reauthorization of WIA and The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The message we received from both house and senate staff was consistent and clear: from the perspective of legislators there are two workforce systems serving persons with disabilities - Vocational Rehabilitation and the One-Stop centers - but the two systems in their current form is expensive and the differences and similarities in terms of serving the employment needs of persons with disabilities is unclear. Moreover, we heard that

the research in the rehabilitation counseling literature documenting the importance of graduate-level education to employment outcomes is outdated. The meta analysis published in the Journal of Rehabilitation in 2006 by Michael Frain and colleagues helps but new research is also needed to convince legislators that two, seemingly similar workforce systems are necessary. We also met with Ed Anthony and Tom Finch at RSA who verbalized willingness to work with ARCA leadership to identify and communicate lines of research critical to the profession to NIDRR to ensure the funding is available to conduct quality research.

ARCA leadership discussed the outcome of the DC meetings (covered in greater detail in the section on research) and the result of this discussion was the development of a survey to evaluate the research published in RCB in an attempt to identify potential gaps in the research. You should have recently received one or both surveys for authors and reviewers or ARCA members. Your response to the items on the survey is important to us because the results will be used to construct a preliminary list of recommended research priorities that will be communicated to RSA and NIDRR leadership.

As you know, Ms. Lynnae Rutledge, RSA Commissioner, was appointed Acting Director of NIDRR in March 2010. This presents ARCA with an historic opportunity to work collaboratively with RSA and NIDRR to influence the research priorities for the future.

Collaboration. The American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) and the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA) have a long history of working collaboratively on goals that affect the professional of rehabilitation counseling. An example of this collaboration is the formation of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), which was formed out of a collaborative effort between both organizations. Some members of ARCA and NRCA have expressed concerns that the philosophical differences between the two organizations have been exaggerated over the past few years. Unfortunately, the differences that have been augmented at the national level are not reflective of the perceived differences by current and future rehabilitation counselors. In short, ARCA and NRCA leaders receive consistent feedback from professional and student members that ARCA and NRCA leadership

must “move-on.” As a result, Dr. Penny Willmering, NRCA President, and I plan to do just that, move-on!

In the spirit of collaboration, ARCA will be holding its mid-year board meeting at the NRCA conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma this fall. Both boards will meet on Wednesday, October 27th at the NRCA conference and participate in a joint strategic planning session with the purpose of identifying tactical goals that both organizations can work on together. NRCA has graciously decided to allow ARCA members to attend at the NRCA member price. I encourage all ARCA members to attend the NRCA conference and participate in the repositioning of both organizations to move forward.

Membership. Membership is a concern of most professional organizations and ARCA is no exception. We are addressing the issue of professional identification of student members and member benefits for new and existing professional members.

Professional Identification refers to the process whereby ARCA leadership formally welcomes new members into the group, acculturates them into the associations values and practices, and introduces them to other members; helping them to develop a sense of identity and engagement with a group of like-minded professionals.

ARCA is presently asking three questions related to student membership: (1) How does ARCA attract new student members to the association?; (2) What do student members consider important when: a. choosing a professional organization, b. deciding to change status from a student member to a new professional upon graduation, and c. deciding to remain with the organization as a professional member; and (3) How does ARCA keep student members by offering benefits that are attractive?

Ms. NyKeisha Moore worked tirelessly for two years as ARCA’s student task force representative to build an infrastructure that allows for student participation and a service ladder for mentoring future ARCA leaders. We are privileged to have NyKeisha agree to move into the role of Chairperson for the council on Public Relations and Awareness where she has begun to utilize her creativity and motivation to build ARCA membership. NyKeisha will be launching a

membership campaign in September 2010 that provides incentives to faculty who encourage their students to join the ARCA family by covering the benefits of student membership, participating in ARCA conferences and events, encouraging existing student to renew their membership and for ARCA student members to form student chapters.

NyKeisha will continue to focus her efforts on outreach to students and early career professionals...the future of our Division membership! She plans to continue offering a student reception, student-mentor breakfast, and reduced student fees to conferences. She is also committed to explore new opportunities that provide student members with structured opportunities to meet with senior ARCA members. These efforts will continue to be priorities within our annual American Counseling Association (ACA) Conference.

Benefits refer to delivering ongoing value for existing ARCA members, reinforcing their dedicated involvement and continually providing answers to the question “why am I here and why should I remain a member”.

The ability to communicate professional issues and knowledge with other Rehabilitation Counseling professionals continues to be an important benefit of professional membership. The ARCA executive council voted to move the listserv to a web-based service that will increase our control over the content and membership email addresses. The listserv will keep ARCA membership in constant communication for consultation, guidance, recruitment options, and news about fellow colleagues. The Rehabilitation Counseling Newsletter (RCN) has been removed from the journal and will now be disseminated to members through the website and listserv in electronic format. The electronic newsletter and listserv will be utilized as a means of alerting members to issues of professional interest/concern.

ARCA is also exploring Social Networking options through Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Please check the ARCA website at www.arca-web.org for links to these sites. The feedback we have received from members is that the biggest reward of membership continues to be the professional journal, *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin!*

Therefore, Doug Strohmer and I have decided to place a significant amount of energy on the growth of the journal and its contents.

Research. The feedback received from the Washington, DC trip caused us to look inward to the Research and Knowledge Council and ask ourselves some necessary but potentially difficult questions about the research being published in the journal. The ARCA executive council is re-conceptualizing its relationship to its journal, the Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, and its Editor, Doug Strohmer.

The Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin is a premier rehabilitation counseling journal and this is in large part due to the work of the editor and editorial board. ARCA's executive council should not be involved in the day-to-day activities of the journal but there should be a mechanism whereby the membership can communicate to the editor by way of the executive council (e.g. research on one-stops serving persons with disabilities) and the journal through the authors and reviewers should be responsive to those needs.

Doug Strohmer, Carrie Wilde, ARCA President-Elect and Joe Keferl, Chair, Research and Knowledge Council and I met in Pittsburgh during the ACA conference and discussed the feedback received from the trip to Washington, DC. The result of this meeting was to work on the following four goals: (1) Identify gaps in the research literature by surveying ARCA members, the editorial board for RCB, and authors who publish in RCB; (2) Evaluate the RCB by formulating a panel to review and provide feedback on the journal to the board and its editor; (3) Communicate differences between VR and the One-stop to Senator Harkins staff; and (4) Issue a call for papers for current research on the importance of qualified rehabilitation counselors.

The mechanism for discussing research will be a pre-conference learning event at the ACA conference in New Orleans. We heard your concerns that there are not enough disability-related sessions for ARCA members at ACA. Consequently, we are planning a pre-conference event to discuss the results of the RCB survey and participate in a discussion with the RCB editor, editorial board members, authors, RSA and NIDRR representatives in setting the agenda for rehabilitation counseling research and brainstorming how

to build the capacity for conducting research and accessing research funding. Attendees will earn 6 CEU's for the day in addition to CEU's earned by attending other sessions at the conference. There will be no additional charge to members who wish to attend the pre-conference session.

We have an exciting conference planned for you in New Orleans, LA from March 23-27, 2011. In addition to the pre-conference event, we are returning the reception to a more intimate venue that facilitates interaction among members throughout the conference. Another reason to attend the conference and support ARCA is the incoming President of ACA. Dr. Marcheta Evans is a rehabilitation counselor by training and she spent her first seven years of employment working as a rehabilitation counselor for Alabama vocational rehabilitation. I should also mention that ACA is planning to donate a significant portion of the profit to provide aid to New Orleans residents; many of whom are victims of natural and man-made disasters. If I haven't convinced you to attend the ACA conference yet, March is an ideal time of year to be in New Orleans!

I will be relying on feedback, support and guidance from colleagues and ARCA members during the 2010-2011 year. I encourage students and new professionals to consider making ARCA your professional home. I look forward to, and encourage, everyone to contact me with concerns or questions by sending me an email at lane@iit.edu or by voice or text at (773) 250-4983.

I look forward to seeing you in New Orleans, representing you as President over the next year, and working diligently on the goals mentioned above.



Frank J Lane, Ph.D.
ARCA President

July 1, 2010