

Preface

Since its inception in 1966 at the University of Michigan, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services (ERIC/CASS) has worked closely with ACA and has 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 means to continue to offer the many products and services for counselors which 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.

VISTAS – Perspectives on Counseling 2004 evolved from meetings with ACA Executive Director, Richard Yep, former ACA Associate Director, Howard Smith, and current ACA Associate Director, David Kaplan. *VISTAS* is 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 will initiate 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 which were developed by ERIC/CASS as a subset of the ERIC database. To a large extent, the counseling-relevant literature in the ERIC database has been contributed by ACA members. 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, websites, and training workshops.

As with any first time innovative endeavor, *VISTAS* has experienced its own growing pains. These pains were augmented by a host of difficulties associated with closing down ERIC/CASS, losing staff (and sometimes records), all while trying to manage a physical move of the resource materials. Nevertheless, an exciting new product has been produced which

features compelling ideas and practices which grew out of ACA program proposals submitted by members. Additionally, ACA elected leaders and prominent writers have contributed their thoughts as to what a judicious makeover of counseling would entail. The members of both of these groups deserve great credit for taking the time to share their ideas and resources.

We have learned greatly from this experience and expect that VISTAS – 2005 will grow easier and be even more impressive and useful than the 2004 edition. For now, we hope you find it useful and will share your ideas as to how we can make it more useful in the future. Enjoy. And benefit!

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