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**Special Issue: Education and Training Issues in Forensic Vocational Analysis**

Guest Editors: Joseph Havranek, Ph.D., and Martin Brodwin, Ph.D.

### **Incorporating Social Security Vocational Expert Testimony into University Curricula**

Joseph Havranek, Ph.D., and Martin Brodwin, Ph.D.

**Abstract** . This article evaluates the responses to a survey requesting opinions of practicing Vocational Experts under the Office of Hearings and Appeals of the Social Security Administration, and explores the results in terms of knowledge and skills of Vocational Experts. Suggestions to incorporate information on VE testimony within rehabilitation counselor education programs are outlined.

### **Training in Forensic Rehabilitation by Graduate Rehabilitation Counselor Education Programs**

Timothy N. Tansey, Ph.D., CRC, CVE and Julie F. Smart, Ph.D., CRC

**Abstract** . In 2003, the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) developed new curricula requirements for programs offering graduate training in rehabilitation counseling. The revised curricula, although not specifically intended to train students as vocational experts, provides guidelines for preparing students for careers in forensic rehabilitation. This article is a review of current CORE standards and the specific curricula areas which train competencies required by vocational experts. Also provided is a methodology for implementing modifications to existing coursework, which, while maintaining CORE requirements, will allow for greater exposure to principles of forensic vocational evaluation. The suggested modifications provide infusion across the rehabilitation curriculum, relying on alterations in existing coursework and, in addition, the development of coursework specific to forensic rehabilitation. Finally, the authors address why “forensic-friendly” coursework may not be widely.

### **Vocational Expert Testimony for the Social Security Administration: How Beneficiaries, Related Experts and the Process has Changed**

Irmo Marini, Ph.D., C.R.C., CLCP, RVE, Amber Feist, B.S. and Eva Miller, Ph.D., C.R.C.

**Abstract** . With the Social Security Administration beneficiary rolls currently increasing dramatically, and new benefit awards climbing in 2002 alone, the Social Security Trust Fund is expected to run deficits by 2031. This paper explores the changing demographics of beneficiaries, citing increases in those diagnosed with mental disorders, obesity complications, non-English speaking applicants, and those living in poverty. Also discussed are the Social Security Administration policies and procedures in relying upon medical and psychological experts that directly impact vocational expert testimony. Procedural implications concerning the datedness of the Social Security Grid Rules and the Dictionary of Occupational Titles is also presented as well as current administrative problems in conducting Continuing Disability Reviews.

### **Examining Rehabilitation Counselor Preparedness as Vocational Experts**

Chandra M. Donnell, Silvio Sean Reyes, Pamela Cogdal, Dion F. Porter

**Abstract** . Approximately a decade has passed since the role and functions, or knowledge level and training needs of rehabilitation counselors has been examined (Leahy, Szymanski & Linkowski, 1993; Leahy, Chan, & Saunders, 2003; Szymanski, Leahy & Linkowski, 1993; Szymanski, Linkowski, Leahy, Diamond, Thoreson, 1993). More recently, substantial research of competencies and standards for vocational experts has occurred as well (Weed, 2000; Sleister, 2000; Martin & Sinsabaugh, 2001). However, it appears as though a comprehensive review of the “match” between rehabilitation counselor training and vocational expert witness standards has yet to occur. This article discusses and compares

educational standards for rehabilitation counselor trainees, and the recommended competencies and standards for practicing vocational experts. A comparison of both sets of standards will identify training strengths and needs for rehabilitation counselors seeking to become effective vocational experts.

### **The Role of Vocational Experts in Determining Disability in Social Security in the 21st Century**

Judith L. Drew, ABD, CRC and Bruce Growick, Ph.D.

**Abstract** . This paper will present the role of vocational experts in determining disability for the Social Security Administration, and then discuss ways in which this role can be expanded. Vocational experts must understand the impact that age, education, residual functional capacity, and transferable skills have on the employment of people with disabilities. This expertise is crucial to the disability determination process in Social Security. However, vocational experts can be used to improve not only the accuracy and consistency of the decision-making process for eligibility, but also increase the number of SSA beneficiaries who can return to work.

### **A Model Course for Training and Education in Vocational Forensics**

Joseph E. Havranek, Ed.D.

**Abstract** . An approach to education for rehabilitation counselors who aspire to serve in forensic rehabilitation has been developed. It is a post-master's course in forensic rehabilitation. This article is a brief description of such a course intended to facilitate others' efforts to achieve similar courses of study.