

Vol. 47 / No. 7 MARCH 2015

# CAMPUS ACTIVITIES Programming®

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

## FOUR CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CAREERS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Power of Career Networking

Building Networks as a  
New Professional

Becoming a CSEP: Your Next Step?

Crafting an Undergraduate  
Student Affairs Internship



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# Be Brave

By Glenn Farr



**CHOOSING A CAREER PATH CAN BE PRETTY INTIMIDATING.** What do you want to do? What if you don't have any idea what you want to do for the next two years, much less the next 30 or 40? What if the career you think you'll love turns out to be something you hate? Do you get a do-over?

During the holidays, my cousin asked me to counsel his daughter about the realities of a career as a writer. She told me she wanted to write novels. "Well, don't we all?" I thought. I told her she could write as many novels as she liked, as long as she had a day job to pay the bills. And in an information age, writing and editing positions that provide steady income can be had, even if the resulting compensation doesn't match what J.K. Rowling earns from a single page of a Harry Potter novel. I also stressed the importance of developing professional connections and cultivating mentors as she pursued her education and career—all the things I've learned from working for NACA.

The advice I gave her came from my own experience and was what I could offer her. However, for some young people these days, there are other ways to pursue professional bliss.

Ever heard of Jerome Jarre?

I discovered him through a segment on *CBS This Morning* earlier this year. He is known as the "Vine Entrepreneur" and is a co-founder of Grapestory, an agency that assists Vine stars in making branded videos for major companies to post on their business Vine accounts—for compensation in the range of \$25,000 for a six-second video (Glazek). But by the time this 24-year-old French business school dropout had done that, he had already created two other startups, one in China and one in Canada. He's a Vine and Snapchat superstar in his own right, with millions of followers who enjoy his "funny" accent, sense of humor, and the sometimes-controversial messages he shares, such as those supporting the LGBT community (Wikipedia).

What enables someone so young to be able to do this? In

the YouTube video *My First Million Dollars* (Jarre), he explains how moving from place to place as a child after his father abandoned him and his mother resulted in him developing a certain comfort with taking risks, which he now does in the pursuit of personal growth and a search for purpose. He believes it's important to live "outside of your comfort zone ... challenging yourself every day." And when he began making his popular Vines, he decided to record something each day that "scares me and makes me laugh."

As his popularity has soared, he has obviously benefited financially. Yet, he doesn't necessarily consider that, in itself, to be a marker of success. Instead, he wants to continue to grow and learn, to continue to "reset" his life and keep "taking risks, listening to [my] heart."

If I had known about Jerome Jarre when talking to my cousin's daughter, it's possible my advice might have been less traditional. No, I would not have told her to abandon college (her good grades earned her a full scholarship). Not everyone can do what Jerome Jarre has done, nor should they. Still, I might have quoted what he shares at the end of *My First Million Dollars*:

"Be brave.  
"Believe in yourself.  
"Do what you think is right.  
"Take risks.  
"You have this one life.  
"Make yourself proud."

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# Why Professional Development Matters

By Ken Brill



**THE WORLD COMES ALIVE IN SPRING** as the winter landscape diminishes. Nature is filled with color and the scent of budding blossoms in this season of renewal. Early in my career, I committed to intentionally plan time for renewal, to utilize spring to recharge myself professionally, to reflect and create, looking outward for opportunities to develop, learn and grow.

Aspects of professional development are explored in this month's *Campus Activities Programming*®. When people use the term "professional development," they usually mean a formal process such as a conference, seminar or workshop, collaborative learning among members of a work team or even a course at a college or university. However, professional development can also occur in informal contexts—discussions among colleagues, independent reading and research, observations of a colleague's work, or other learning from a peer.

The NACA® National Convention is typically my starting point for professional renewal. Preparing for the Convention includes reflecting on our past program year. My team considers which committees and programs achieved their desired outcomes, and we regularly drop some committees and establish new ones. For example, we no longer plan spring break trips, replacing them with excursions to museums and performing arts and professional sports venues. We assess student engagement and consider the impact of our learning initiatives. We select new student leaders and develop a program strategy for the coming year. The National Convention also provides an opportunity to connect with campus activities colleagues. Our conversations often lead me to new resources and ideas to pursue.

Next for me is making connections between what I sense I need to know and existing opportunities. For instance, after attending an educational session offered by Dr. Adam Peck, I realized the need to learn more about crafting environments to promote student learning. In addition, I learned the importance of experiential learning and the power of reflection. Therefore, I sought opportunities to expand my knowledge and skills in these areas.

NACA offers several opportunities for students and professionals through our Summer Institutes. Over the years, I have participated in several such programs offered through NACA and have emerged with a deeper understanding and tools that equipped me to know how to perform my professional responsibilities better. Last year, I attended the International Experiential Learning Institute. As you may recall, experiential learning was at the top of my professional development "to do" list. This was an amazing opportunity, featuring Susan Komives as Scholar in Residence, allowing 40 professionals to broaden our understanding of experiential learning.

NACA offers 10 other opportunities, some of which are designed for students, while others are for professionals. The Student Organization Institute, National Leadership Symposium and Summer Leadership Event all provide a tremendous curriculum designed to strengthen our work as professionals.

With the ever-changing landscape of higher education, student demographics and educational delivery methods, professional development is essential to sustained professional success. Professional development provides opportunities for staff to develop and refine the skills and knowledge required to efficiently and effectively meet our students' needs.

Lastly, I will share a few highlights summarizing the NACA® Board of Directors' work. The Mission, Value Proposition and Core Values work group completed its task, sharing a final report at the February Board meeting. The changing demographics of higher education, coupled with the ever-changing roles of campus activities professionals, caused us to reflect on our Association identity. We can now better assess our role in supporting campus activities professionals and, more importantly, student learning and engagement. The work of this group, led by Dr. Beth Triplett, will serve as a foundation for developing strategies to grow our membership. In addition, Dr. Jillian Kinzie led a strategic conversation deepening our understanding of student engagement, focusing on the role of campus activities professionals in cultivating student engagement, as well as the professional development support NACA might offer in this area.

NACA® Chair-elect Brian Gardner led a strategic conversation outlining considerations surrounding growing the NACA® membership base. NACA cannot be all things to all people, so understanding whom we serve best will help define our message and assist us in reaching potential new members.

Throughout NACA, great things are happening. The National Volunteer Development team is working to complete the recommendations resulting from the Volunteer Experience Summit. The team sought feedback on various recommendations at the National Convention and is striving to meet target deadlines. The Research and Scholarship Group shared a white paper at the Convention, *Considering the Impact of Participation in Campus Activities and Collegiate Recreation on the Development of the Skills Employers Desire Most*. Similarly, the Education Advisory Group is exploring approaches to feature the campus marketplace as a learning lab for student leaders.

We have much to look forward to in the coming months. Write me at [kenbrill@augustana.edu](mailto:kenbrill@augustana.edu) if you have questions or comments.



*Dr. Hollie Smith (right), Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at Stephen F. Austin State University (TX), counsels Solomon Delaney about pursuing a career in student affairs.*

**A** **CORE VALUE IN STUDENT AFFAIRS** is helping students understand their strengths and find their calling. When students find that their calling is a career in student affairs, we professionals are understandably flattered and excited. By planning our coaching in advance, we can give students a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the values, realities and practical considerations for a career in student affairs.

#### **The Mentor's Perspective**

It happens several times each year. It's something I've come to call, "the student affairs conversation." It starts in a familiar way each time. For me, I am usually visiting with a student group or passing a student leader in the hall when they sheepishly approach and ask if I might have time to meet with them about a personal matter. I often find they seem a little embarrassed to be asking. I probe a little more deeply, perhaps due to my perspective from being in a dean of students role. I want to know how I can immediately connect them to services they may need or determine if

# **Four Conversations about Careers In Student Affairs: A Guide for Mentors**

By

**ADAM PECK, PhD**

and

**KENDALL DOTSON**

**Stephen F. Austin State University (TX)**

Photos by **BROOKE HOLMES,**

**Steven F. Austin State University (TX)**

they are suffering from any emotional concerns with which a counselor could assist. With a little prodding, they most often ask me some variation of the question, "How do I get to do what you do?"

I'm not surprised they would ask. For as long as I can remember, I've had a job that other people covet. I really feel like I have the best job in the world. When I worked in student activities, I got to plan all sorts of exciting events. I've met world leaders, US Presidents, musicians, comedians and movie stars. I have many great stories from years working with outstanding student leaders.

My life now is a little less fun. I spend considerably more time in meetings. But the upside of a dean of students job is that I have the resources and support to work with many talented colleagues to create our version of the ideal student experience, and I can assist students in being successful inside and outside of the classroom when they need it most. So, I'm not surprised when students still think they'd like to someday do what I do.

So, why do students seem so sheepish when they ask me about my job? Perhaps they don't want to be a burden or take up time that they know is valuable. I do my best to never look like I am too busy to talk with students (even when I am at





*Dr. Osaro Aire, right, Director of Multicultural Affairs at Stephen F. Austin State University (TX), meets with Morgan Pulliam.*

my busiest times of the year). But I think it's more than that. I've come to believe that it's because the traditional sequence of career planning is reversed in student affairs. For most students, they think about what career they might want to undertake and then seek majors that lead to that career. While I've had a few freshmen or sophomores make the decision to pursue a career in student affairs, in our field, this is usually not how discernment occurs. Usually, it is older students, who started with another career in mind. They become deeply involved in our programs and it takes a little longer to realize that their undergraduate experiences might make a rewarding career.

Clearly, the lack of any sort of undergraduate major in "higher education" or "student affairs" likely factors into students' confusion, as well. They want to know, "What should you major in if you want to work in student affairs?" During my career, I've seen undergraduate majors that are all over the map. I majored in theater, so I'm usually pretty persuasive when I say there isn't ONE major that leads to careers in our field. I've seen others with undergraduate degrees as varied as accounting, speech pathology, communication or psychology, and the list goes on.

Often, they wonder how they are going to articulate their

career decision to their family. For those of us in the field, we know that explaining what we do to others can be difficult. How can they tell their family that they no longer intend to be a lawyer, or a math teacher or whatever career their degree appears to be leading towards so they can (in the view of many from outside our field) "plan parties for a living."

Clearly, the "student affairs conversation" can pull us in many directions. Certainly there are others in our field who do this much better than I do, but I also suspect I am not the only one who wants to do it better. I'd like to organize my thoughts so that when I sit down with a student, I do more than just serve as a cheerleader for our profession. I am so passionate about my work that it's hard for me to be objective. I've seen a few students with whom I've met decide ultimately that it wasn't right for them. I've often wondered if they thought they let me down with that decision.

When Kendall approached me to talk about a career in student affairs, I knew I had a rare opportunity. I agreed to coach her in exchange for her agreeing to coach me on how to best have this conversation. I asked that she think about the questions and concerns she had and what she wanted to know about a career in student affairs. The result of those conversations is the framework we present in this article.

We began with Kendall's reflections on the considerations she had when choosing a career in student affairs and used it to develop a framework for something we call, "Four Conversations about Careers in Student Affairs." These offer some guidance to professionals about how they can speak comprehensively about this topic without omitting important aspects of the conversation.

### **The Student's Perspective**

Coming from a small town to a university was an eye-opening experience for me. Becoming highly involved in a variety of experiences outside of the classroom changed the way I saw college. As a freshman, I applied and got involved with our campus programming board. This involvement sparked my interest in many other organizations. I joined a sorority, worked as a counselor at our first-year transition camp, was a peer involvement advisor and have been serving as an orientation leader for the past two years. I got involved in academic organizations, started a club for my major and actively participate in our Greek honors society. I also represent my fellow students on our Student Center Advisory Board. Toward the end of the spring semester of my junior year, I realized I was enjoying my work in student activities more than my major. I wasn't exactly sure how to respond to this realization.

I started to question my major. I had so much more passion for my cocurricular experiences than I did for the idea of pursuing a career in elementary education. I began the journey of changing my major. One day, perhaps out of desperation, I skipped all of my classes and went from college to college asking any available advisors if they would give me their pitch as to why I might major in their program. My adventures took me through programs in business, management, advertising, human resources, theater and biology. I ended my search in the Communication Studies department. As the professor I met with described the concepts I'd be learning—presentation skills, conflict resolution and small group communication (to name just a few)—it really seemed to connect with my favorite aspects of being a student leader. I changed my major that day and haven't looked back, although I wasn't really sure if this was the "right" major for a career in student affairs.

My family was, and still is, apprehensive about student affairs and what in the world that means. My parents were not involved in college, so they have heard only my stories and seen my involvement. More than anything, they are concerned about the cost of continuing my education and the fact that rather than graduating and getting my first job, I'll be staying in school. They are supportive of my career choice, just a little unsure of what all it entails. I'm a little nervous about it, too. If I'm being entirely honest, as a college senior, I'm experiencing some degree of senioritis and, at times, "more school" does not sound as appealing as having a real paycheck and getting my life started.

As I think about my future career, I wonder, "Where do I go from here?" I've gotten some conflicting advice that sometimes leaves me confused. Some suggest I stay at my current institution and pursue our graduate program. Others

suggest it would be more beneficial to go someplace else, have an adventure and see how other places work. I really love my school, so would it hurt to just stay here where I'm comfortable and already involved? Going someplace else is obviously scarier, but perhaps it will help me prepare for the challenges of learning a new setting in a way that may benefit me in my job search one day.

There are also some questions I've been hesitant to ask. For example, it's hard to ask how much money people in student affairs make. I don't want to be rude and I also don't want to look like I am just looking to make money. I want to know more about work/life balance in the field. Is it doable to have a family as a female in this field? All these are rather personal questions to ask and can be a little touchy for some people.

As I have learned more about a career in student affairs, I have gotten more excited about pursuing one. My excitement primarily revolves around the idea of being able to continue doing what I love as an undergrad. I am also excited about a work environment where change is constant, creativity is encouraged, and communication is key. As I have learned more, I've been exposed to new areas that fall within the umbrella of student affairs that I would have never known about before—areas like residence life, student conduct, disability services and more. This is exciting, but also presents even more choices.

When Dr. Peck asked me to collaborate on this article, I was excited to work together, but also excited at the offer to "ask him anything." As we had conversations about a career in student affairs, I think we have developed a framework to help future prospective graduate students decide if a career in student affairs is for them.

### **Establishing a Framework for Discussions**

Our framework developed from conversations about what undergraduate students want to know about careers in student affairs and from the best aspects of the many conversations that have taken place over the years. We consulted with other student affairs professionals, students in graduate programs and with other undergraduate leaders.

We can't claim that it's the perfect model, just a guide for some of the important considerations we discovered. It is our hope that it will be a useful primer for conversations about this important topic.

We've divided the discussions into four separate conversations. Four isn't a magic number. We also aren't necessarily suggesting that it needs to be four separate "conversations." Many of these could occur within the same meeting. However, we do believe there is benefit to letting time pass between conversations to allow for reflection and discernment. The excitement about a career in student affairs could otherwise cloud the judgment of a student whose life goals or career aspirations aren't compatible with a career in student affairs.

We have also established an order that is based on how we think the conversations should flow, but we don't have a particularly strong basis for that, other than our own personal experience. How these conversations are configured really is at the discretion of the professional and the student.



# A Guide to the Four Conversations

## The Values Conversation

### Guiding Question

What makes you want to pursue a career in student affairs?

### Probing Questions

How important is it for you to be near your family?  
Do you want to work in student affairs, or do you just want to work here at our institution?  
How important is it for your work to be recognized by others?  
How important is money to you?  
How do you feel about change?  
Are predictable hours important to you?

## The Questions Conversation

### Guiding Question

What questions do you have about the realities of a career in student affairs?

### Probing Questions

When did you know you wanted to work in student affairs?  
How did you determine which area of student affairs was right for you (student activities, leadership programs, career services, conduct work, etc.)?  
What misconceptions did you have about working in student affairs prior to your first job?  
What is the best thing about your job? What is the worst thing about your job?  
What career advice do you have for me?  
If I want to have a family someday, how hard is it to balance working in student affairs with having a family?  
What should someone with a graduate degree expect to be paid in student affairs?  
What undergraduate majors can lead to a career in student affairs? What graduate degrees are best suited for a career in student affairs?

## The Practical Conversation

### Guiding Question

What is your next step in pursuing a career in student affairs?

### Probing Questions

What graduate programs are you considering?  
Have you considered whom to ask to write your letters of recommendation?  
Are there graduate assistantships available at the institutions you are considering?  
When are the deadlines?  
Are you interested in considering only those graduate programs that are nearby or are you considering programs out of the area?  
What is your cumulative GPA?  
What is your GPA in your major?

## The Capstone Conversation

### Guiding Question

Where do you want to go from here?

### Probing Questions

What steps are you taking to find your first job?  
For what institutions might you like to work?  
How do you know if you are a good fit for a particular job or institution?  
What disciplines in student affairs excite you most?  
What skills are you gaining to help you secure a job in that discipline?

## The Values Conversation

The goal of the values conversation is to talk about how a career in student affairs lines up with the personal values of the student. We throw the word “values” around quite a bit. In this context, we use it to mean a belief that guides action. For something to be a value, it has to influence what we do. We recommend starting with a guiding question of, “What makes you want to pursue a career in student affairs?” This question should reveal some of the values the student holds and can help you compare what the student says to the values of the profession.

In general, student affairs professionals are often driven by a desire to help others and to develop students in a holistic sense. Considering the American College Personnel Association’s “Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs,” we can determine some additional values that are important. Student affairs professionals value active learning and helping students determine their ethics and values, and we value partnerships with others and building “supportive and inclusive communities.” This means challenging unjust systems, helping students discover their own biases and removing barriers that

may limit a student’s success. We recommend some probing questions that can help students if this sounds like the kind of work they can see themselves doing.

As important as it is to determine whether the student shares the values of the profession, it is equally important to see what barriers may exist. Asking a student, “How important is it for you to be near your family?” is a particularly good question to ask if the student does not come from a major metropolitan area. As seasoned professionals know, it takes patience and some luck to find work in a particular geographical area. Finding the right first position may require a student to look at jobs all over the country. The more limitations one places on geography may make it harder. For students who see themselves in one particular area, fortune may play a larger role in whether or not they meet their goals.

We may also want to ask a student, “Do you want to work in student affairs, or do you just want to work here at our institution?” This can help a student reveal whether they are just looking to extend their college experience or if they really want to do what we do for the rest of their life. After thriving



**OUR FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED FROM CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WHAT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WANT TO KNOW ABOUT CAREERS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS AND FROM THE BEST ASPECTS OF THE MANY CONVERSATIONS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE OVER THE YEARS. WE CONSULTED WITH OTHER STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS, STUDENTS IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS AND WITH OTHER UNDERGRADUATE LEADERS.**

in college, some are fearful of entering “the real world.” It’s important to know if the student is just responding to that fear. In some cases, we may need to help students realize this fear and help them overcome it rather than coaching them into a profession that might not be right for them.

Finally, it is important to ask about extrinsic values. These are values that lie outside of the individual. “How important is money to you?” A career in student affairs usually requires a graduate degree and many could find more lucrative ways to spend their time. If money is a major motivator, it doesn’t necessarily mean someone isn’t right for student affairs, but they should at least go in with their eyes open.

Another question might be, “How important is it for your work to be recognized by others?” While student affairs professionals can be very affirming, we also need to accept that many (including the students themselves) won’t understand what we do, let alone understand the contributions we make to the learning process. In many ways, this is our strength. Our learning experiences are often so much fun that students don’t even realize they are learning. It’s not uncommon for students to come to the realization only after they leave college that we were teaching them. If someone wants to be understood by others, student affairs work may present some challenges.

### **The Questions Conversation**

Students can often be sheepish about asking personal questions. They are making an important life decision and there are things they want to know, but may be too afraid to ask. The questions conversation gives them permission to ask personal questions. It should be based on the shared understanding that the student can ask anything, but also that there may be some questions the advisor does not feel comfortable answering. The conversation may start with the advisor explaining that if the student asks a question with which the advisor is uncomfortable, they promise they won’t make the students feel bad about asking it. Of course, the more candid the advisor can be, the better it will be for the students.

The questions we recommend for this section are designed for the student to ask, but begins with a question from the advisor: “What questions do you have about the realities of a career in student affairs?” Recommended questions for the student include asking how the professional became interested in student affairs, as well as about their particular field and the job they are now in at their institution. It is our hope that using the guide will take some of the pressure off the student for some of the tougher questions.

### **The Practical Conversation**

Once students have had the chance to reflect on whether a career in student affairs is compatible with their values and goals, and once they have had the chance to ask questions to make sure that they are proceeding with an accurate understanding of what a career in student affairs entails, it’s time to turn their attention to practical considerations such as, “What graduate programs should you consider? Who will write your letters of recommendation? How do you find graduate assistantships?”

These considerations might be guided by some practical concerns such as, “Are you interested in considering only graduate programs that are nearby or are you considering programs out of the area?”

Another important consideration is the student’s academic record. The most competitive schools require a strong record of academic performance. Asking about the student’s cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) and in-major GPA can help to narrow the field of possible schools. Will the student need to take the GRE or other qualifying examinations? Some schools don’t require every part of the GRE. Knowing this in advance may allow the student to focus on just the parts that will be required. Also, some schools exempt students from examinations if their cumulative or in-major GPA is high enough.

While there is plenty of time for aspiring student affairs professionals to determine what area in the field interests them the most, if they know their areas of interest, it can



influence their selection of a graduate program. Certain schools are well known for preparing students in particular disciplines. Talking about these possibilities can assist the student in picking a graduate program.

I (Peck) generally recommend that students narrow their choice of graduate programs to around three. The process of applying can be very involved and difficult. Any more than three programs may keep the student from giving each application the attention it deserves. I've seen more than a few students who became so stressed by applying that they ended up missing important deadlines and their grades suffered. The advisor can be very useful in helping to narrow down the list to just the top choices. It's never a bad idea to ensure that at least one school is very likely to admit them.

Finally, students need to be mindful of important deadlines. It's wise to know that some have unpublished early admittance deadlines. The best way to learn about these is to call the programs and ask. Once you know what the deadlines are, you can work backwards. How long will it take to get GRE scores, transcripts and letters, etc.? Make sure students know that giving at least two weeks notice for a letter of reference is standard professional courtesy. It might also be nice to mention that it is the students' job to make sure it is easy to write the letter. Providing a résumé or at least a list of accomplishments can be very helpful. Students should also make sure those providing references have the names and addresses of the programs to which the students might apply.

### The Capstone Conversation

The capstone conversation is less a conversation and more a promise of a future conversation or conversations. This conversation could occur once the student is in graduate school or in their first professional position. It may involve questions about finding the first job or dealing with a difficult boss. When we send students into our profession with a promise of nurturing them in the future, we give them a resource that many lack.

### A Comprehensive and Thorough Understanding

A core value in student affairs is helping students understand their strengths and find their calling. When students find that their calling is a career in student affairs, we professionals are understandably flattered and excited. By planning our coaching in advance, we can give students a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the values, realities and practical considerations for a career in student affairs. We hope this article provides a structure student affairs professionals can use to have these important conversations.

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**“WHILE I’VE HAD A FEW FRESHMEN OR SOPHOMORES MAKE THE DECISION TO PURSUE A CAREER IN STUDENT AFFAIRS, IN OUR FIELD, THIS IS USUALLY NOT HOW DISCERNMENT OCCURS. USUALLY, IT IS OLDER STUDENTS, WHO STARTED WITH ANOTHER CAREER IN MIND. THEY BECOME DEEPLY INVOLVED IN OUR PROGRAMS AND IT TAKES A LITTLE LONGER TO REALIZE THAT THEIR UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCES MIGHT MAKE A REWARDING CAREER.” – PECK**



# THE POWER OF CAREER NETWORKING

Career networking is a portable skill that can help you become more effective in your current job, help you find the connecting dots to your next job, and provide a leadership skill you can impart to students.

By  
**KATHRYN E. GAGE, PhD**  
Oklahoma State University

Photos by **BARRY FUXA**, OSU Career Services,  
from a recent job fair held at Oklahoma State University.

**YOU KNOW THOSE PEOPLE.** The ones who get noticed, get promoted, and are always seemingly “in the know” at the office. These individuals have some kind of magnetic aura when it comes to being in the middle of information and opportunities, and they often get called on for special assignments and job perks. On closer examination, we find that these employees are actually practicing and harnessing the power of career networking, leveraging it to make a distinct difference in their career trajectory. The good news? You can develop that superpower, too.

Career networking is defined by Wolff & Moser (2009) as behavior that is “... aimed at building, maintaining, and using informal relationships that possess the (potential) benefit of facilitating work-related activities of individuals by voluntarily granting access to resources and maximizing common advantages” (pp 196-197). That is, career networking is all about connecting with people—in a give and take of mutual benefit. That kind of connectivity and professional relationship building is particularly key when we find ourselves in a job search. According to Steven Rothberg of CollegeRecruiter.com, up to 80% of all jobs are found through building relationships that result from networking (as cited in Nishi, 2013).

Networking is particularly effective at finding job opportunities because employers want to minimize the risk they are taking when making a job hire. One study (Merhar, 2013) found that for mid-range positions (those earning \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year), the cost of replacing an employee making \$40,000 a year would be \$8,000. Employers want to know that prospective employees can do the job, work well with the team, and have the attitude and aptitude that support job success. Networking with potential employers allows them to see how you perform when working on an actual project, while showcasing your interpersonal and other key skills.

### **Networking More Important than Ever**

Today’s job market is much different than it was before the Great Recession of 2007. Previous generations of employees could expect to find employment in the relative stability of a college or university and work their way up the ladder as institutional budgets kept increasing and opportunities for raises and promotions were a given. With the economic downturn of the past few years, more higher education employees than ever before find themselves in a “boundaryless” career. Instead of finding job satisfaction and advancement by moving in a straight line upward at their institutions, today’s professionals work in an ever-changing environment. That means that many of us must assume a boundaryless career path, where we ourselves take responsibility for the direction of our success (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). We may wish to move to another institution, or leap to another specialty in higher education. In an era when we are the architects of our career advancement, networking is a crucial skill to master.

### **Networking Is a Two-Way Street**

Before embarking on a networking plan, it is important to understand the essence of networking; in particular, that networking is a two-way street. To realize networking success, we want to enter the process knowing that networking is as much about “giving” as it is about “taking.” Networking is, at its heart, about building positive professional and community relationships. As with any healthy relationship, the effort is not all one-sided. When you ask others to support you in your career and daily work goals, it is necessary to remember that the most well regarded networkers are continuously doing something for others by demonstrating a genuine interest in them, their well being, and their projects. Showing others that you care by asking about their personal or professional lives, pitching in to support projects outside of your scope of responsibility, and giving people thanks and shared credit for your successes are all part of authentic networking. This kind of sincere warmth and effort gets noticed. People want to help those with whom they have a rapport, and who have also helped and supported their efforts.



### **What Are Some Effective Internal Networking Strategies?**

It may surprise you to learn that networking begins at home. If you want to be considered for promotions at your current college or university—you will need to network to instill confidence in the decision-makers at your institution. If you wish to move to another organization, the goodwill you have built up with a supervisor or campus colleagues can gain you a strong letter of reference. Your internal networking plan involves making new connections in the institution, sustaining existing relationships, building your reputation and brand, and increasing your social capital (establishing networks and trust to get things done). An effective internal networking strategy can result in an increased likelihood of raises, promotions and job security.

Some effective ways in which to carry out an internal networking plan include:



- Serve on committees outside of your department.
- Invite faculty or staff from other departments to speak at your meetings.
- Attend and support events outside of your department.
- Take on a highly visible project and successfully execute it.
- Take the time to visit others in their offices and ask about them.
- Attend campus events and gatherings where you can interact with a wide array of employees.
- Teach a course.
- Publicly share credit with partners who have helped you succeed.

**THE WIDER YOU CAST THE NET OF COLLEGIALLY AND CONNECTION, THE MORE LIKELY YOU ARE TO BE REMEMBERED WHEN JOBS COME OPEN AT EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONS. ADDITIONALLY, A HIGH PROFILE CONTACT WITH WHOM YOU HAVE NETWORKED COULD PROVIDE THE LETTER OF REFERENCE THAT MAKES YOU THE FAVORED JOB CANDIDATE.**

#### **What Are Some Effective External Networking Strategies?**

The wider you cast the net of collegiality and connection, the more likely you are to be remembered when jobs come open at external institutions. Additionally, a high profile contact with whom you have networked could provide the letter of reference that makes you the favored job candidate. Here are some crucial points to remember when deploying your external networking plan:

- Always remember to say “thank you” to those who have done you a favor. Written notes are best.
- Volunteer or present at conferences.
- Take a colleague to lunch.
- Publish a paper.
- Become involved in leadership or mentoring academies.
- Serve on community boards and/or volunteer for nonprofits.
- Reach out via social media to congratulate people, post their pictures from campus events, or “like” their achievements.
- Leave campus with lots of business cards and freely distribute them.

#### **When Should I Network?**

Networking is a weekly, if not daily task. In addition to doing a great job in your official capacity—those truly influential networkers are always building work and professional relationships, seeing how they can be of support to others, and taking the initiative to make contact.

Along the way, networking provides other benefits besides future job search support. It is an excellent way to make good work friends, get to know people who can help support your

current projects, and develop leadership skills.

Remember to be disciplined about your approach to networking. Try to reach out to your campus contacts as frequently as you deem appropriate, and to those beyond the borders of campus on a regular basis. Don’t let those connections get dusty; pick up the phone or have coffee with the people who need to know what you have to offer. Surely, you have observed someone who moves with ease in social situations and who has racked up an impressive résumé of accomplishments. Emulate their approach, or better yet, talk to them about their networking strategies. Listening to and learning from others are powerful networking practices.

Career networking is a portable skill that can help you become more effective in your current job, help you find the connecting dots to your next job, and provide a leadership skill you can impart to students. Keep the give and take of the process in mind as you build your networking portfolio and watch the benefits roll in.

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# Building Networks Crucial for Success as a New Campus Activities Professional

Building strong working relationships with others across campus will not only help you succeed, it will also help your entire campus be a more welcoming, accepting and efficient place for students to spend four years of their lives.



By

**JULIE PITEL**

Morningside College (IA)

**BEGINNING A CAREER AS A NEW PROFESSIONAL IN CAMPUS ACTIVITIES** can be a rather daunting experience. There are contracts to negotiate, budgets to manage, students to advise, and friends to make, just to name a few. But working in student activities involves far more than phone calls with agents and performers. Networking with others is essential to the development of a successful activities council.

Let's rewind just a bit. What is networking? According to *Merriam-Webster*, networking is, "the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business." That doesn't sound too intimidating, does it?

Still, reaching out to other offices and professionals may actually be a bit intimidating, especially for those who are new to the field. To coordinate a successful event, multiple campus offices all need to be on the same page. And that means networking with other professionals across campus. When I entered the field as a new professional, I preferred to send an email instead of making a phone call or scheduling a meeting. Yet, over time, it has become clear to me that a more personal interaction is incredibly beneficial in the formation of new relationships and often helps prevent misunderstandings, which can frequently occur when using electronic communications.

Upon entering the world of student activities straight out



of undergraduate or graduate school, some might anticipate a workday filled with emails, tweets, photo sharing and the latest new tech craze to connect with students—a day that is filled with the use of technology. Although this is a huge part of the job, there always seem to be duties and related communications you don't expect. I have come to learn that the more valuable communications and relationships are formed through personal interactions. A colleague is more likely to have a positive association with you if they can place your face with your name. Hiding behind email is very easy, but not very effective in creating healthy workplace relationships.

Therefore, the development of networking strategies and techniques are imperative to becoming a successful professional. The steps involved in developing these strategies and techniques are sometimes confusing or ambiguous, and even a little daunting. So, how do you go about expanding your horizons on campus and beyond to develop those crucial networks?

### **Jump (or Slowly Crawl) out of Your Comfort Zone**

Networking can be absolutely terrifying to many people, especially when they are new professionals on campus. For some, it is easy to walk up to complete strangers and introduce themselves. Others would prefer to crawl into a deep, dark hole. Reaching out and emerging from your comfort bubble will expand not only your professional networks, but will also result in more positive interactions for your student organizations in working with others on campus.

When you are ready to reach out, know that you can do so in baby steps. Your first call likely won't be to a president or chancellor with an invitation to the most expensive formal restaurant in town. Invite a colleague or professor to lunch in the cafeteria or to get a cup of coffee at a local café. That way, you are likely somewhere comfortable and it won't be the end of the world if you just happen spill something on your pants. As you become more and more comfortable meeting with people on campus, that phone call to the president will become less and less daunting.

And, if it is an option, bring along student leaders to these meetings. Encourage the student activities president or executive team to come along and actively participate in discussions about working together with other offices on campus. Sometimes, it is easier for students to communicate their own interests and priorities rather than going through a middleman. This will put you a little more at ease by having someone there with you, but will also expand the students' networks and promote their communication and collaboration skills.

Taking small steps will help increase your confidence and communication skills as building professional networks. Here are a few things you can do to be a bit more memorable when meeting someone for the first time.

- **Be friendly.** This seems simple, but you don't want to focus so much on networking that you overlook basic courtesy. Smile and greet people with kindness. They will be more likely to engage in a conversation with you.
- **Say the person's name.** People like hearing their name and it shows that you have listened to them and remember who they are.

- **Ask questions.** Get to know more about the person. Understand their goals and strategize ways in which you can work together to achieve shared objectives.

### **Respect the Process**

Being the new kid in your department means you are the one joining practices that have likely been in place for years. Take the time to understand how things are accomplished in your office and on campus, as a whole. Knowing to whom you should direct your questions will help develop stronger relationships and demonstrate your dependability and willingness to learn and adapt. As a new professional, you want to make an impact and leave your mark on an institution. And there is plenty of time to do just that. But be careful not to start stepping on toes or trying to reinvent the wheel when it comes to processes that have been in place long before you arrived.

Learn the computer system, even if it is outdated. Ask questions about paper forms when you don't understand something you might find on them. Respect the process and try to understand it. Your new colleagues won't be turned off by your go-getter, change-the-world attitude if you put your best foot forward and understand why they do the things they do. Adapting your style and practice helps develop solid professional relationships with those around you. And that leads to meeting in the middle.

### **Meet in the Middle**

One of my main goals in working with college students is to meet them where they are; to figure out how they work best and to adapt my practice to help them succeed. It quickly became clear to me that this goal also applies to working with colleagues on campus. Because there is so much coordination required in scheduling a campus event, it is important to quickly learn the best way to communicate with different offices on and off campus.

For initial meetings and introductions, face-to-face contact is essential. Putting a face to a name will create an incredibly helpful connection that cannot be overemphasized. Such connections lay the foundation for a professional network at any institution. A simple way to create a connection is to find commonalities. Bring up favorite activities outside the office or recent vacation destinations. Commonalities will make you instantly more likeable, as a colleague realizes that you aren't all that different than they are. It makes you much less intimidating. And this takes practice. Make sure that you show a sincere interest in colleagues and take the time to really listen to them.

After you've built this foundation, the relationship shifts somewhat when you work together with your colleague toward a common goal. Ask your colleague, "What works best for you?" That might seem a little bit awkward, but has major benefits in the long run. Does a colleague prefer to receive every reservation request via phone? Via email? Via text message? Or by scheduling a meeting to speak in person and hash out all the details in one sitting? Make sure you are asking how you can help make their job even a little bit easier.

Developing a system of communication with different departments and stakeholders is essential to hosting a successful campus event. Doing so may require a bit more flexibility and organization on your part, but, these skills are also crucial to networking.

### Make Organization a Priority

Because there are usually multiple players in each event that takes place on campus, organization in dealing with your networks should be a top priority. If the campus activities board doesn't know what is going on and doesn't present the same united message as an organization, chances are that others will likely dismiss an event as something not worth their time.

For each event our activities board sponsors on campus, the executive team uses a checklist to make sure all of their bases are covered. Each of these checklist items involves cooperation and understanding from a professional network:

- **Artist:** Basic information so that the file on the artist can be found easily.
- **Agent:** Contact information for the agent in case plans change.
- **Date and time of event:** Again, basic organizational information.
- **Time of performer's arrival:** This is extremely important. Sometimes, performers or artists do not have cell phone service on campus. Make note of their arrival time so they won't be wandering around campus searching for someone who can help them.
- **Date signed contract and rider were returned to agent:** Sometimes, contracts get signed and put into a pile to be filed. This item on the list helps make sure the contract was sent and that both the contract and rider were read carefully.
- **Hotel reservation made:** Sometimes, artists don't require a hotel room, but when they do, it is important not to forget to make a reservation. Compare the rider to the checklist to make sure it was not overlooked.
- **Hotel confirmation number:** Many artists request the confirmation number. This helps ensure that the reservation was made and it is helpful to reference in case the hotel has difficulty finding the reservation based on the person's name.
- **Venue and date reserved:** Knowing where an event will be held is essential to advertising and reaching out to students. On most campuses, space is limited. Make sure

space is available before signing a contract and keep good records of spaces that are reserved.

- **Date check request was submitted:** Often, a contract is signed and a check request isn't completed immediately thereafter. Remember that a paid artist is a happy artist.
- **Paid artist and agent:** Make sure checks are made out to the correct people. Contracts often list whether the fee should be divided between the artist and their agent.
- **Set-up:** If your scheduling department is able to set up a room for an event, it will save you a lot of heavy lifting. Make note of how the room should be set up and who is responsible for making sure it happens.
- **Rider requirements:** Does the artist want a fruit tray? Kombucha? What is kombucha, even? Make note of it here and check off each item as it is purchased or gathered for the event. This may also include sound and lighting requirements. Don't hesitate to add an additional sheet of paper to list all rider requirements, as they are very much appreciated by artists.

This isn't a foolproof list. Mistakes are bound to happen, so it's important to be prepared. Strive to keep the impact of mistakes as small as possible. Consistently calling the campus business office to request a check with a day's notice is going to cause additional stress, not only for you, but also for those in your network. Apologize when needed and learn how to prevent a recurrence.

### Strong Networks Enable Success

Many, many people need to be on board and working together for a campus, much less an event on campus, to run smoothly. Whether you realize it or not, you play a role on campus outside the world of campus activities. Consciously working on and building strong working relationships with others across campus will not only help you succeed, it will also help your entire campus be a more welcoming, accepting and efficient place for students to spend four years of their lives. So, step outside your comfort zone, shake a few hands, and push yourself to develop a strong professional network on campus and beyond.

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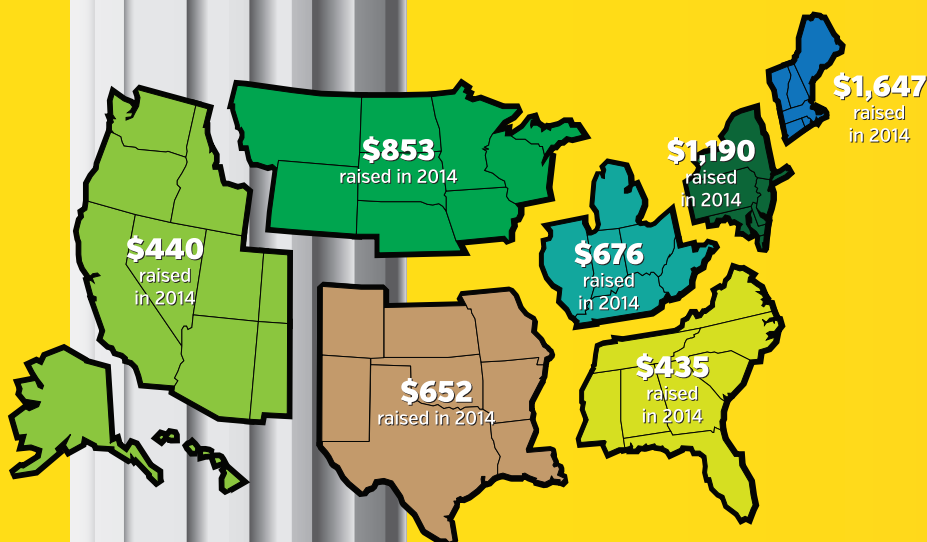
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# Becoming a Certified Special Event Professional (CSEP):

## What Will Be Your Next Step?

By  
**EVAN M. SCHAEFER, CSEP**  
and  
**MELISSA WERNER, CSEP**  
Arizona State University

*Becoming a Certified Special Event Professional takes study and work, but the professional rewards are worth it.*

**S**O, YOU'VE BEEN IN THE FIELD OF EVENT COORDINATION AND PRODUCTION FOR SOME TIME. You've developed the ability to pull together a conference on a week's notice. A lecture followed by a reception for 400 in two days? No problem. Maybe you've been doing this for more than 10 years, or maybe you've gained 10 years' experience in just a few years on the job. How do you find the next big challenge in your career or show those with whom you work you are more than a "party planner," that you are a serious event professional with well-honed event "chops?" It might be time to pursue professional certification.

The Certified Special Event Professional (CSEP) exam is not just for “big time” event professionals who run their own companies. It is also a great way to keep up to date on trends and standards within event production. This international exam is created by subject matter experts within a variety of fields including, but not limited to, corporate meetings, weddings, festivals, and everything in between. It will test your mastery of the knowledge, skills and abilities that are essential to perform all components of a special event.

Keep in mind that there is a difference between earning a certificate and receiving certification. A certificate can be obtained through a variety of educational outlets that are open to both experienced and novice event professionals, or to those who are looking for information and an entrée into the world of event production. But receiving formal certification from a professional association indicates you possess a specific skill set and have successfully passed an exam, and it will also likely require periodic recertification. You are also entitled to identify yourself as a certified professional by utilizing the appropriate letters in conjunction with your name and title.

There are few individuals who have successfully passed the CSEP exam in North America. In fact, before each of us passed the exam, there were only three CSEP-certified event professionals in Arizona, less than 100 in North America and less than 450 worldwide. At the college and university level, there are likely to be no event professionals with the CSEP designation. Think about all of the experts you have at your college or university in any number of disciplines—finance, engineering, biological sciences, academic research and more—and the professional credentials they may have earned. Similarly, the CSEP exam provides an opportunity for event professionals to receive much-deserved acknowledgment for their contributions to the special event industry. Once completed, this international certification is a “portable” type of certification that can carry you through the private or public industry anywhere in the world.

### **How We Got Started**

In the fall of 2013, several event professionals at Arizona State University formed a group that came together once a month to study for the exam. As individuals, we had expertise in a variety of areas, as well as various levels of experience. We shared that knowledge with one another. In areas where we lacked specific expertise, we met with subject matter experts and bought books to help us become more knowledgeable of the areas listed in the CSEP outline. We left no stone unturned at ASU because we had access to all of the subject matter experts we needed to get the information required to be successful on the exam.

When we needed to gather information and gain insight on marketing plans, we turned to the then Vice President for Strategic Marketing Communications and Media Relations. To gain a better understanding of risk and safety management, we called on the university’s fire marshal. Not having a good understanding of insurance and liability, we turned to the Executive Director for University Risk Management to clarify details about indemnification, contract liability, and

contingency and response plans.

We called in our vendors to talk to us about catering, power requirements, tenting, and generators, as well as anything about which we felt we needed more information to have a better idea of what we might encounter in an event scenario.

While a fair number of adventurers started on the path to take the CSEP, in the end, three of us from ASU and one local event professional took and passed the exam. We successfully increased the number of CSEPs in the State of Arizona by 135%! The CSEP designation has helped us promote ourselves as experts at the university and has resulted in others at the institution seeking us out for information and advice.

If you are looking to begin the process of preparing and taking the CSEP exam:

1. Look for other CSEPs in your area for advice.
2. Gather your resources—books, websites, etc.
3. Seek out others who are interested in taking the exam and put together a study group.

The end result is worth the effort.

### **How to Prepare for the CSEP Exam**

If you are planning to take the exam, understand that, as is the case with other exams you take, you must study. This is not an exam you can easily pass. It requires significant preparation for both its subject matter and format. To assist with preparation, the International Special Event Society created a content outline that contains event elements deemed as essential knowledge for experienced events professionals and is the criteria utilized in the content development of the CSEP.

The outline is divided into four different phases and subsequent sections: Development Phase, Pre-Production Phase, Production Phase, and Post-Production Phase. We have taken five sections from each phase of the outline to demonstrate the type of information needed to pass the exam.

#### **Development Phase (28%)**

- Be able to identify and create a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Define the purpose and scope of work.
- Conduct a risk/safety assessment/analysis.
- Define and develop an integrated marketing plan.
- Develop an initial budget.

#### **Pre-Production Phase (35%)**

- Execute contractual agreements.
- Create timelines, including pre-production calendar and production schedules.
- Establish event evaluation criteria.
- Determine logical sequence of show or event flow.
- Coordinate event element requirements.

#### **Production Phase (26%):**

- Conduct pre-event inspection and execute load-in.
- Employ communication systems.
- Ensure conceptual and contractual compliance of event.
- Implement show or event flow.
- Respond to and document incidents and changes.



### Post Production Phase (11%):

- Determine event success utilizing event evaluation criteria.
- Analyze and evaluate entire event management process.
- Audit and reconcile finances and present final budget.
- Archive information.
- Ensure full compliance with contractual obligations.

(Source: Sections taken from the CSEP Content Outline listed here: <http://www.ises.com/csep/preparing-for-the-exam>.)

This approach helps the candidate to identify the areas they need to understand in order to be successful. You may not know everything that is listed in the outline, but you will be expected to have some background knowledge of it for successful completion of the exam.

### Format of the Exam

Unfortunately, we are not at liberty to share specific details about the exam, but we can provide you with information about the format.

The exam is computer-based and will take approximately five hours to complete (inclusive of needed breaks). It is divided into a multiple-choice and a written, short-answer section. The multiple-choice section consists of 100 questions, all of which are based on the CSEP content outline. Most of the questions are based on “industry standard” terms and phrases, with a few hypothetical situations mixed in. The written portion is based entirely on an event scenario. You will be given a choice of two. Each scenario will contain important information you must be sure to keep in mind and include in your answers. This section is designed to test your cognitive abilities related to producing an event and is sure to challenge your typical

ways of thinking. As a whole, the exam will require you to think about everything from a 365-degree view.

### Our Thoughts about Earning the CSEP

“Ultimately, for me, this was a professional goal I had set for myself. Until I gathered with others and committed to completing the process, I knew I would continue talking about it and not take action. Having to be accountable to other colleagues compelled me to continue preparing for the exam and ensured that I would follow through, schedule the exam and see the process to its conclusion. My personal goal is to be a resource for others on my campus and share my expertise. Having the CSEP designation allows me to promote myself as an expert in the field of event planning and production.” –Melissa Werner

“At first, when I started to study for it, I didn’t think it would do much for me because I worked in higher education. But being considered an ‘expert in the field’ is something I was striving for since I started planning events. After I received my CSEP distinction, I felt I was able to do more and my opinion was taken more seriously by some of my colleagues. It took a lot of my time to study, both by myself and as part of a group, but in the end, it was well worth it. It helped to propel me from higher education into the private sector, working to produce one of the largest events in the world, the 2015 Super Bowl!” –Evan Schaefer

### Challenge Yourself

We challenged ourselves and pushed each other to the next level, and you can, too. Find a friend or group of friends and do it for yourselves. You won’t be disappointed.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Evan M. Schaefer, CSEP**, is Program Coordinator for Operations & Logistics for the **Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee**. Until November 2014, he served as Sr. Coordinator at Arizona State University and is currently completing his term as NACA’s National Block Booking Coordinator. He previously served as Program Advisor at St.

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**Melissa Werner, CSEP**, is Director of University Ceremonies and Protocol Officer at **Arizona State University**. She is the co-founder of the North American Association of Commencement Officers (NAACO), a professional association of commencement and graduation professionals from across the United States and Canada, with a membership of more than 300 institutions. She has led forums on a variety of graduation-related concerns, including workshops on establishing mission statements for ceremonies, academic versus non-academic ceremonies, and volunteer recruitment and retention, as well as how to establish and run graduation events for colleges and special interest groups. She has consulted with a variety of institutions on ceremony procedures and currently team-teaches a course in special events programming through the College of Public Service and Community Solutions at Arizona State University. She holds a bachelor’s degree in journalism and public relations from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University and a master’s degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University. She completed training as a protocol officer through the Protocol School of Washington® (DC).



## What is the NACA® Foundation?



# **FOUR APPROACHES TO HELP COLLEGE STUDENTS DEVELOP TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN A SOCIAL MEDIA AGE**

BY  
**JILLIAN VAN AUKEN**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-  
PURDUE UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS



**Because traditional forms of communication are no longer the default for students, even though these skill sets are still necessary to succeed in life during and after college, it has become necessary for student affairs professionals to step in and assist students with development in these areas.**

Social media has changed how individuals communicate and interact with each other in tremendous ways. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, just to name a few, allow people to communicate with thousands of others from across the country—or the world—with just the click of a mouse or a tap on a screen. No longer must individuals rely on other more traditional modes of communication, such as the telephone, print marketing or even email to share news of an event or an exciting development in their lives. They can reach their friends, family or mere acquaintances in a matter of seconds through social media.

Social media also gives its users ways to keep up with the latest trends, network with professionals in their field, talk to friends in other states or countries and share their thoughts about social issues. However, while social media offers a world of possibilities to anyone who uses it, such use has challenged the ability of many to interact in more traditional forms.

In my time working in student activities, I have observed the inability of many college students to engage in face-to-face communication. This prevents them from dealing with conflict, facilitating dialogue with groups of their peers and building meaningful relationships with others. Additionally, social media use seems to promote the growth of cyberbullying. The development of traditional social skills among college students is proving to be more challenging over time as social media consumes a large percentage of their free time and becomes their default means of communicating with others.

Social media enables college students to communicate with others without experiencing the vulnerable aspects of face-to-face interaction: interpreting body language, focusing on another individual sitting across from them and dealing with the emotions they might be expressing. Without having to contend with these aspects of traditional communication, students can focus their attention on other parts of their lives while communicating with peers and can process their reactions before responding. The resulting challenge arises when college students are forced to interact with their peers face to face. They struggle to navigate the vulnerable, sometimes uncomfortable, interactions that result from dealing with emotions, body language and focusing attention on the other person that are inherent in face-to-face communication. In addition, many students do not remember a time without social media, which presents the additional challenge of re-setting their communication default in order to close the gap they currently experience when faced with in-person communication.

So, why has social media use led to problems developing traditional social skills? The answer likely involves the amount of time college students spend behind a computer screen or on an iPad or smartphone. While they are perhaps talking to

each other and interacting with the world around them, they are spending fewer hours engaging in face-to-face interactions. As a result, when faced with small talk, a job interview or a conflict, their resulting interactions are often awkward, overwhelming or lead to anxiety due to their lack of knowledge and experience in dealing with these types of interactions.

I believe the lack of knowledge of and experience in traditional communication skills is impacting students' ability to get a job, develop meaningful relationships and appropriately respond when faced with conflict. Students are struggling to communicate their feelings, find ways to tell employers how their undergraduate experiences match with potential jobs and to build trust in their relationships with others. All of these behaviors require practice before individuals can develop confidence and increased comfort levels.

Because traditional forms of communication are no longer the default for students, even though these skill sets are still necessary to succeed in life during and after college, it has become necessary for student affairs professionals to step in and assist students with development in these areas.

#### **Four Approaches to Develop Traditional Communication Skills**

To address these kinds of communication issues and better prepare students for life during and after college, student affairs professionals need to spend time coaching the students they advise or supervise in understanding the basics of communication, conflict resolution and relationship building. There are various approaches to assist students in developing knowledge and skills, including, but not limited to: trainings and workshops, individual consultation and coaching to encourage increased face-to-face interactions, setting expectations for communication within a group, and helping students see the value in developing traditional social skills.

##### **1. Offering Trainings and Workshops**

As part of the officer transition retreat for the student program board organization I advise, I make a point of ensuring that students understand their communication and conflict resolution styles and the styles of the other officers in an effort to increase their understanding of how to best interact and approach their work with each other. Through the facilitation of style inventories, students begin to reflect on the benefits and challenges of their personal approach to communication and conflict resolution and the benefits and challenges of the approaches of others. In addition to training officers on how to effectively communicate with each other, similar topics are addressed in a required monthly professional development series for the general membership. While facilitating these types of conversations may seem basic, they are often skipped over, leading to gaps in communication and ultimately creating an unhealthy environment in which the students are still expected to complete the duties of their positions.

##### **2. Providing Individual Consultation and Coaching**

On a daily basis, I spend a decent amount of time helping students process a situation they don't know how to address or brainstorming ways to work through a conflict they are



currently experiencing with a peer. Many times, a student needs help working through how they feel about a situation or coming up with an appropriate way to communicate the emotions they are feeling toward another individual. Typically, these conversations involve me listening and asking questions to assist the student in discovering the healthiest approach to resolving the situation or providing clarity in the midst of a confusing situation.

Through these conversations, I encourage students to address situations in a timely manner to avoid small conflicts evolving into larger conflicts, and I advise them to deal with the situation face to face, not through email, Facebook or other electronic forms of communication. In my experience, addressing conflict through social media or email prolongs and complicates the situation due to misunderstandings caused by word choice or the inability of the other individual to interpret the meaning behind those words. Encouraging students to avoid social media as a means of resolving conflict in exchange for more traditional forms of communication assists them in developing a better understanding of how to navigate face-to-face interactions and leads to quicker resolution of conflict and more sustainable relationships.

### 3. Creating Community Standards and Expectations

Yet another approach I find effective is to have students create a list of community standards or expectations for how they will interact with each other. I use this approach when working with a new group of officers to assist the students in building a foundation for their work together. This list helps students understand what their peers place value on in their interactions with others and sets expectations for how they wish to spend their time together. The list is a working document that can be changed, revisited or adjusted at any time during the course of their time together to meet the needs of the group.

In addition, when conflict arises within the group, revisiting the standards serves as a starting point for addressing the issues underlying the conflict. Understanding how individuals prefer to communicate and the expectations they have for communication provides a healthy environment for face-to-face interactions. It is my hope that through this process students become more comfortable in dealing with conflict, build a foundation for effectively communicating with each other and begin to establish a sense of trust with each other.

### 4. Emphasizing the Relevance of Traditional Communication Methods

A fourth approach that I believe increases the effectiveness of the previous approaches entails assisting students in seeing value in the development of traditional social skills. Students need to understand the importance of interacting with peers through more traditional forms of communication or they will not be prepared for situations in which these skills are needed. The best way to achieve this aim is to relate the need for the development of these skills to their current academic and co-curricular goals or to the goals they have for after college. Helping students understand that devel-

oping traditional social skills will assist them in navigating interviews for internships and leadership positions, as well as in building relationships with their peers, faculty or staff and future employers, will place a sense of urgency and value on the development of these skills.

The ability to effectively communicate impacts every interaction college students have within the personal and professional spheres of their lives. The development of traditional social skills impacts an individual's ability to achieve their goals, no matter whether they are facilitating a business meeting, presenting a new idea to a target audience or simply understanding another individual's point of view. An easy way to assist students in understanding the value of traditional social skills is to have them write down their academic and co-curricular goals and the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve them. In my experience, the skills that tend to rise to the top are the ability to communicate their thoughts to others, resolve conflict, network or build relationships, and how to work on a team. All of these skills require the development of traditional social skills. Once students have identified the areas in which they need to develop, the value of communicating in traditional ways should become clear to them.

### Traditional Communication Skills Crucial to Complete Engagement

If student affairs professionals coach college students on the basics of how to effectively communicate with their peers through more traditional means, students will be better prepared for many experiences during and after college. Providing space for students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for positive face-to-face interactions and helping them to understand the value of more traditional social skills will assist them in better navigating their personal and professional worlds.

As is true with many things in our lives, practice makes perfect. The more opportunities students are provided to engage in face-to-face interactions and become comfortable with addressing conflict, the higher their confidence will be in communicating with each other through traditional means. Creating a place for the development of traditional social skills in the age of social media among college students is crucial to increasing their ability to effectively engage with the world around them.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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**Concert Management Institute** :: June 23–26 :: Marquette University (WI)

**Student Organizations Institute** :: June 29–July 2 :: University of Denver (CO)

**Student Government West** :: July 9–12 :: Colorado School of Mines

**International Experiential Learning Institute** :: July 12–15 :: Suffolk University (MA)

**Student Government East** :: July 16–19 :: Stockton University (NJ)

**National Leadership Symposium** :: July 20–23 :: University of Louisville (KY)



# Crafting an Undergraduate Student Affairs Internship

By

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*Photos from the Indiana University Collection.*

*The time and resources invested in making an undergraduate internship are substantial, but the positive results will reverberate long after the interns depart.*

## “HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS KIND OF WORK?”

This question frequently brings a smile to most student affairs professionals' faces, as often happenstance and luck (rather than intentionality) inform the answer.

While many current student affairs professionals trace their careers to undergraduate involvement (e.g. clubs and activities), or employment (e.g. resident advisors, union managers), those experiences in and of themselves are not specifically designed to produce student affairs employees. Nor should they be, as the intent of such activities is to develop students into well-rounded people, regardless of their vocational direction.

Changing the path to this occupation from an accidental discovery to an intentional destination will require the creation of realistic, hands-on undergraduate experiences, akin to student teaching positions, nursing practicum experiences, or engineering co-ops.

In 2009, the Memorial Union at Indiana University-



Bloomington created just such a program to intentionally introduce undergraduate students to the student affairs profession. We'd like to share information on that effort, as well as general considerations departments should be aware of when crafting their own program.

## What Is an Internship?

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), which represents more than 5,200 college career services professionals, defines an internship as a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting (Position Statement: U.S. Internships, July 2011).





*The Indiana Memorial Union and Indiana University-Bloomington campus in summer.*

NACE offers seven recommendations to ensure experiential programs meet this definition:

- The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
- There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.

- There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

With programs inspired by student development theory, organized by professionals who know the value of hands-on learning, student affairs departments can be ideal places for internships meeting the NACE definition.

#### **Creating the Job Description and Learning Outcomes**

When staff assemble to create an undergraduate intern-



ship program, the first questions that must be answered are what should an intern do and what should they learn? A purposeful job description is key to ensure students will walk away with theoretical knowledge and practical skills applicable to any student affairs setting.

This is the process Indiana University-Bloomington's Indiana Memorial Union undertook in 2009, when it launched its eight-week undergraduate internship program. While carefully structured, the program is adaptable to meet the special interests of participating students.

### Indiana Memorial Union Learning Outcomes

A full description of the summer internship experience is outlined in the Indiana Memorial Union intern program's learning outcomes, which are based on NASPA and ACPA's Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners, as well as ACUI's Core Competencies. Each intern is provided with the learning outcomes prior to their first day of work and the outcomes are individually reviewed throughout the summer. This provides all parties involved an understanding of what the student is expected to learn. At the end of the summer, staff review and revise the internship based on student feedback.

*Purpose Statement: The Indiana Memorial Union Office of Activities & Events will offer summer internship position(s) in order to allow undergraduate students to deepen their understanding of college unions in the context of higher education, and to expand their practical experiences working within a union and on a college campus.*

#### Student Affairs Overview

- Articulate a basic understanding of the historical contexts of higher education, institutional types, and functional areas within higher education and student affairs.
- Explain the campus and public roles of student affairs and of higher education generally.
- Articulate current events and issues relevant to higher education and student affairs.
- Articulate core theories and models that describe the development of college students and the conditions and practices that facilitate holistic development.

#### College Unions

- Exhibit a basic understanding of institutional and unit priorities and strategic plans, and the role they play in the day-to-day operations of a unit.
- Exhibit a basic understanding of the management of facility operations, both daily and long-term.

#### Office of Indiana Memorial Union Activities & Events

- Plan and implement an extra- or co-curricular program.
- Manage events from start to finish, using problem-solving and volunteer management skills.
- Articulate a basic knowledge of what assessment is and the benefits of assessing and evaluating.
- Implement assessment strategies.
- Analyze information from assessment and apply it to program development or alignment.



#### Personal Outcomes

- Practice/demonstrate effective personal time management strategies.
- Identify one's primary work responsibilities and, with appropriate ongoing feedback, craft a realistic, summative self-appraisal of one's strengths and limitations.
- Articulate meaningful goals for one's work.

#### Position Description/Duties

1. Intern will contribute to summer projects and programs of the Indiana Memorial Union Activities & Events Office, including (but not limited to):
  - Summer Union Board and Indiana Memorial Union (IMU) programming,
  - Managing IMU facilities,
  - IMU social media maintenance,
  - Assessment plans for student leader learning outcomes,
  - Data input for IMU and Activities & Events historical reports,
  - Outreach efforts for the IMU student organization tower offices, and
  - Other duties as assigned.
2. Intern will be required to do readings in professional

journals and publications, to acquire a deeper understanding of the profession of Student Affairs and different functional areas on campus.

3. Intern will take part in experiential learning opportunities in IMU partner offices, to deepen their practical understanding of other functional areas and of how to build and maintain collaborative relationships on campus.

### Specific Examples of Student Intern Projects

**Readings:** The summer internship is intended to be both an academic and experiential learning program. As part of the intern's learning, assigned journal articles on student affairs work, event planning, and student development theory are reviewed in consultation with the intern's supervisor and as a group with other interns. This year's readings included *The State of the College Union: Contemporary Issues and Trends* by Yakaboski and DeSawal, and selected chapters from *The Strategic Guide to Shaping Your Student Affairs Career* by Ardoin, among other articles and news clippings. The book on unions was also part of a professional staff summer reading program, so interns benefited from discussing chapter topics with other employees.

**College Union Tour:** A two-day tour of four Indiana college unions was built early into the summer schedule. Staff coordinated the tour to include meetings with college union employees at each four-year institution. For many, this is the first opportunity to compare unions within the context of university type. The institutions represented public-residential, public-commuter, public-urban, and private colleges.

**Projects:** As part of the learning experience, interns are assigned several projects that build the student's skills. When appropriate, the findings of the projects are conveyed both in a written report and presentation to professional staff members. Examples of recent projects include benchmarking programming board constitutions at various Big 10 schools, assisting in the coordination of professional staff retreats and summer student programs, and conceptual design of new meeting room displays to honor the room's namesake.

**College Union Work Shadow Experience:** A variety of experiences are coordinated with department supervisors that contribute to the intern's learning. Areas of special focus include evening building management, the bowling/billiards area, marketing, food service, outdoor recreation, and facility maintenance. Some of these shadowing experiences were one-time occurrences; others were long-term observations over the eight weeks of the internship.

**Outreach to Student Affairs Departments:** Part of the initial assessment of student interests is to determine specific areas for campus networking outside of the Memorial Union Activities Department. Fraternity/sorority life and student organizations are common requests that have been accommodated by our student affairs colleagues. Requests also have been for orientation/first-year experience, athletics, cultural centers, and institutional fundraising. These experiences have included short job-shadowing opportunities, as well as more long-term projects, depending upon the intern's interest.

## PAID VS. UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

The US Department of Labor (DOL) Fair Labor Standards Act requires a minimum wage be given to all who labor for an employer. However, the DOL has interpreted the act to allow for unpaid experiential education when six specific criteria are met. These are, as listed in DOL's Fact Sheet 71:

- The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the employer's facilities, is similar to training that would be given in a vocational school.
- The internship experience is for the benefit of the student.
- The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under the close observation of a regular employee.
- The employer provides the training and derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern. Occasionally, the operations may actually be impeded.
- The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship.
- The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time in the internship.

Departments considering the development of an unpaid internship program should consult with their human resources department and/or the state's department of labor for guidance.

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U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division. [2010]. *Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.pdf>.

### Logistical Considerations

The Indiana Memorial Union hosts one to two interns each summer and provides them housing and compensation. Interns have been IU students, as well as students from other institutions. Most receive academic credit for their work, either from IU or their home university. Start and end dates of the eight-week internship vary based upon the students' schedules.

During the semester before the internship, Indiana Memorial Union staff visit with prospective students and determine their interests, as well as the preferred timing of the internship (which can be adjusted to the intern's summer schedule). IU's program is focused on college union proficiency, so selecting students with this interest is beneficial. The conversation includes the sharing of the internship purpose statement (above). This pre-assessment likewise



**CHANGING THE PATH TO THIS OCCUPATION FROM AN ACCIDENTAL DISCOVERY TO AN INTENTIONAL DESTINATION WILL REQUIRE THE CREATION OF REALISTIC, HANDS-ON UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCES, AKIN TO STUDENT TEACHING POSITIONS, NURSING PRACTICUM EXPERIENCES, OR ENGINEERING CO-OPS.**



helps student affairs staff make arrangements with campus colleagues that match the student's specific interest areas.

As the Indiana Memorial Union staff did, student affairs professionals considering their own internship program need to address, in consultation with the institution's human resources department and/or university counsel, the question, "What is the relationship between the institution and the interns?" Are they employees, volunteers or trainees? The simplest way to determine the relationship is to pay the interns (minimum wage, at least). If the interns are students enrolled at the institution at which they do the internship, then the relationship is identical to that of any student employee paid an hourly wage. If the interns are enrolled at a different institution, hourly wages establish them as either full-time, part-time, or seasonal employees, depending on assigned workload.

Other questions that must be answered include:

- What are the start and end dates for the internships?
- Will we offer this internship to students from our institution, or other institutions, or both?
- Who will provide the academic credit (either on your own campus for your own students, or at the student's home institution, if they are from elsewhere)?
- Will we provide housing or housing assistance to the intern?

Ideally, all answers should be included in the job description so students have their most common questions answered prior to applying.

### **A Replicable Example**

Indiana University's undergraduate internship program is a replicable example of an undergraduate student affairs program. Other undergraduate internship programs are sponsored at the national level, such as the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program, the NACA® Internship Program, and the ACUHO-I Housing Internship Program.

The time and resources invested in making an undergraduate internship are substantial, but the positive results will reverberate long after the interns depart. The opportunity to impact so many students, by giving future student affairs officers an early, intentional insight into the profession, is well worth the investment of time and capital.

If more institutions create these internship opportunities, the answers to the question "How did you get into this kind of work?" may transition from stories of happenstance and luck to recollections of outstanding undergraduate experiential activities.

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**Cassidy Sansone, MS**, is Program Advisor in the Indiana Memorial Union Office of Activities & Events at **Indiana University-Bloomington**. She previously served as a graduate assistant for the Florida State Alumni Association, as well as a graduate assistant for Major Events & Involvement in the FSU Student Activities Center at Florida State University. She is also affiliated with NASPA, ACPA and ACUI, for which she serves as the Web & Social Media Coordinator for the Region VI Leadership Team. She is also affiliated with the Gamma Phi Beta and Phi Beta Kappa sororities. She holds a bachelor's degree in communication/English from Texas A&M University and a master's degree in higher education and student affairs from Florida State University.



# Undergraduate Summer Internships—Student Perspectives

By  
**ANDREW GILLETTE**  
Morehead State University (KY)  
and  
**LEXY PARRILL**  
Indiana University-Bloomington

The multiple aspects of undergraduate internships help interns have a deeper understanding of the field, which allows them to explore new ideas in a supportive and empowering environment.



Undergraduate students with an interest in pursuing careers in higher education or student affairs have limited options when it comes to learning about the field in a formalized setting. The typical route is to become involved with organizations in student life and develop experience in programming, time management and leadership. If students want to develop a deeper understanding of the field of higher education, they must look further than simple campus involvement. Students need to build a sustainable network and actively seek practical and personal experience from mentors. An undergraduate internship in the field can be a valuable experience for rising student affairs professionals.

An undergraduate interested in the profession of higher education has much to consider, including functional areas, preparation for graduate schools, and research about the profession. During an internship, interns will meet professionals who have been in the field for years and have the expertise to guide them towards the areas about which they are passionate. They will also meet young professionals who have a more recent understanding of what to expect in graduate schools and how to properly prepare for the transition from involved undergraduate student leader to student affairs graduate student. Finally, they will meet students of the same age who are also eager to be in the field of higher education. The shared experience of growth through an internship will provide important contacts for later in their careers. The network the student begins to create will be useful for the rest of an aspiring professional's career.

## Practical Experience

The practical experience gained in an internship can also prove to be useful in higher education. Having the opportunity to physically see how other institutions and functional areas operate can be enormously beneficial. If the internship involves research, it can further develop the essential researching skills necessary for graduate school. Research not only provides interns with necessary experience to excel in graduate school, but also expands their knowledge about issues in the field and gives them something to which to refer in future projects and interviews.

## Deeper Understanding

Through practical experience and networking, interns begin to develop a deeper understanding of the field of higher education. An undergraduate internship exposes interns to trends in the field, such as the rising cost of education or the future of student affairs. Through exposure to new information, interns develop an understanding about current topics in the field, allowing them to develop a deeper sense of confidence in talking through some of these topics and formulating their own opinions on them. An exposure to current topics allows for interns to enter graduate school and begin their professional career having already thought about some of the challenges they will face and formulate their own opinions they can then share with colleagues.



## Mentorships

One of the greatest advantages of an undergraduate internship is the mentorships formed through the experience. Mentorships come in a variety of forms: between intern and intern, intern and advisor, and intern and supervisor. These newfound networks help interns navigate the field through exposure to different ideas in a safe environment. Mentors are valuable aids, not only in an intern's professional development, but also in their personal development. Not only is a mentor helpful as a young professional is applying to graduate school or for their first job, they also provide a long lasting relationship through which an intern can seek out valuable feedback to help them grow.

**ONE OF THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES OF AN UNDERGRADUATE INTERNSHIP IS THE MENTORSHIPS FORMED THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE. MENTORSHIPS COME IN A VARIETY OF FORMS: BETWEEN INTERN AND INTERN, INTERN AND ADVISOR, AND INTERN AND SUPERVISOR.**

## Affirmation

More than anything, having a summer internship affirmed Lexy's decision to become a student affairs professional: "The experience I gained has encouraged me to think differently about my own institution and how I might best serve as a student affairs professional in the future. I would encourage any undergraduate interested in the field to seek out internship opportunities simply by connecting with professionals on their home campus and advocating for internship or other immersive experiences."

## Personal Development and Confidence

Undergraduate internships in higher education are important because they provide the personal development framework for up-and-coming professionals in the field. A well planned internship experience provides interns with networking opportunities, practical experience, exposure to new ideas, and mentorship that aid in personal development. The multiple aspects of undergraduate internships help interns have a deeper understanding of the field, which allows them to explore new ideas in a supportive and empowering environment. After having completed an undergraduate internship, students are able to formulate their own original ideas and have the confidence to become leaders in the field.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Andrew Gillette** is a senior pursuing a bachelor's degree in strategic communication at **Morehead State University (KY)**. He has served as an Indiana Memorial Activities & Events Intern. On his home campus, he has served as President of the Inter Fraternity Council, as a Residence Life Student Building Director and as a member of the Dean of Students Advisory Board Committee.



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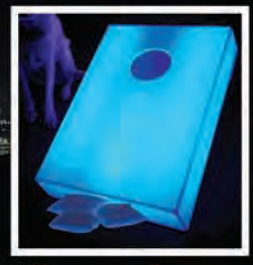




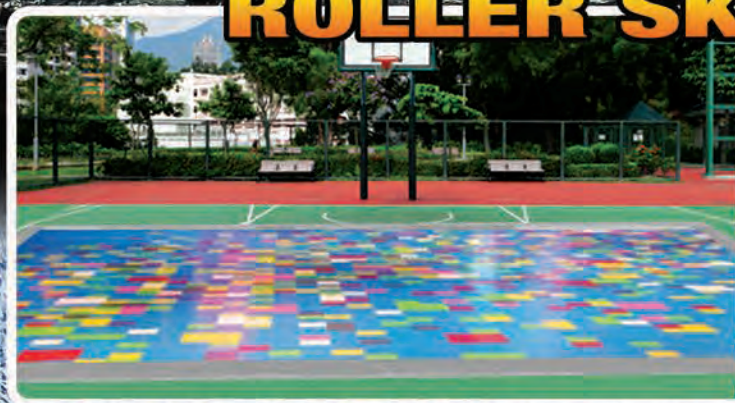
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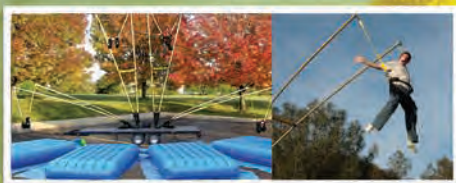
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# Engaging Students Who Are Academically Focused

By

**KRISTIN STAINE**

Bay State College (MA)

*Some of your students may not be aware of or have interest in co-curricular programs. It is up to you to find creative ways to engage them and enhance their collegiate experience.*

**IN STUDENT AFFAIRS, WE FREQUENTLY TALK ABOUT STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**, and we sometimes assume we are all talking about the same thing. In reality, though, we each likely perceive student engagement to mean different things. Engagement has been defined as “students’ cognitive investment in, active participation in, and emotional commitment to their learning” (Zepke). However, some of us may define engagement as “students’ involvement with activities and conditions likely to generate high-quality learning.” We are always thinking outside the box, or outside the classroom, to successfully engage our students. Yet, many of our students attend college in the hopes of bettering themselves academically to earn a degree.

During the first few years of my time in higher education, I had the opportunity to work at a variety of different institutions where the student populations varied in size and academic level. However, the same dynamic existed at each institution—some students just wanted to come to school to learn and not attend a comedy show or join a student organization. As much as it can bruise any student activities professional’s ego to realize this, we must be even more creative than we already are to better promote student engagement among these students. I now work at a small, urban college

where we pride ourselves on very specific degrees, such as nursing, audio engineering and fashion design, and our students often want to come in and go out very quickly, completing their degrees within a few short years.

## **Institutional Resources**

As we consider student engagement, we need to recognize that teachers and teaching are central to a student’s engagement level. We in student affairs are always trying to find the best way to bring students out of their shells and give them meaningful, fulfilling college experiences. Perhaps one of the best ways to accomplish this is through teaming up with academics—working with professors to create learning experiences that are collaborative and lead to more meaningful student relationships. That’s why we are in this field to begin with—to help our students have better college experiences, both inside and outside the classroom.

Depending on the set up of your department and institution, you may need to go in various directions. What works for some may not work for others. The direction that looked best for our students was more programming during school hours and less late-night programming. While we do have groups who host musical performances in the evening, the majority of our students are already home with their families, working, or still commuting. The key to our programming success was utilizing spaces that were centrally located and offering easy “grab-n-go” programs that allowed students to access an informational pamphlet, sign up for a new organization, or participate in a quick survey.

*In Bay State College's Minute To Win It Program on alcohol awareness, a student correctly answers a question about alcohol use, then is able to pop a balloon to see if there is a gift card inside.*





One of our more successful programs has been our Minute To Win It mini-series, in which we host monthly game shows based around academics, and various awareness months focusing on such things as diversity or alcohol use/abuse. Students are able to take part in an exciting, quick event that provides educational information, along with fun and prizes. Get an idea of what may work best for your student population and explore all the options, then confer with your dean of academics or coordinator for academic affairs to get their input, and mix it up to create programming that will appeal to your students.

### Your Target Audience

Examine your student population. Take notes on what your students respond to and what catches their attention. The population of students with which I work is comprised mostly of commuter students, many of whom hold multiple jobs and travel up to an hour to attend school. These students are not the ideal candidates for attending a late-night program, miss work to travel on the weekends, or volunteer because they have many responsibilities awaiting them at home. However, these students thrive in the classroom.

With some simple tweaks to our programming model, we established a new option for academic programming—utilizing a free period. This one-hour, weekly time slot is free of any classes, which allows more students to have time for studying, attending organization meetings, or attending an event. Offering events that take place directly in the hub of campus for our students during this time period is key. We provide monthly lecture series, student presentations and department collaborations because this is what works for our students.

All institutions are organized and function differently, but the main goal should be to provide an excellent experience for students, both socially and academically. The direction that worked best for us was to team up with Academic Affairs to establish Tuesday Topics, a monthly lecture series that was based around a theme selected by the Department of Student Affairs. Many of the lecture topics were presented by faculty members who offered extra credit for students who attended, or outside speakers, and covered topics such as diversity, sexuality and leadership. In addition, we have also created an event rewards system that encourages students to attend a variety of events on campus, such as Student Government Association meetings, the Tuesday Topics lecture series, off-campus events, events at our music venue, and more. Students who attend a specific number of *categorized* events are entered into a drawing for a prize.

### Utilizing Social Media Platforms

Facebook, Instagram, blogs—we do it all to promote our events to the student body, but some students may not respond the way we'd like. Social media is expanding and so are the ways we have decided to connect with students. Advertising academic and professional events through LinkedIn or categorized groups on Facebook has been successful in attracting the interest of our student population. Utilizing these platforms has helped in launching more work-study jobs and internship opportunities, and has even assisted in advertising academic and professional programs.

When students are so academically driven and the push to succeed is there, professionals want to do everything possible to help them achieve their goals. Many times, students are unaware of potential job opportunities that are available, such as internships and government work-study jobs. An avenue we have decided to pursue is student blogging—having students publish blogs about their work and internship experiences, or even doing a spotlight post regarding a student leader. It would be easy enough for a professional staff member to post about an upcoming event or experience for students, but it means so much more to students when that information comes directly from their peers.

### What's Next?

**Find your niche:** It is important that you understand what your institution and student body represents, and how to explore what may work best for you in any situation. Finding *that thing* that benefits both the students, as well as the university, is what every professional is aiming for.

**Collaborate and Come Together:** Bring down that wall that may exist between academics and student affairs. Host an academically driven forum for students, add a more academically associated position to your student government association and start funding more collaboration between various departments.

**Trial Period:** What is amazing about our field is that much of our work involves trial and error; we are allowed to make mistakes and implement new ideas. That aspect is one of the things I love most about what I do. You are always able to go back to the drawing board and reconsider your plans, and get more input from colleagues, as well as student leaders.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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# WE'VE GOT TO STOP MEETING LIKE THIS!

## *Tips and Strategies to Facilitate Effective Meetings*

When meetings aren't effective, important work often goes unaccomplished and members are dissatisfied.

By

**ADAM FRANK**

Westchester Community College (NY)

**HAVE YOU EVER FINISHED A MEETING** and said to yourself, “What on earth did I just sit through?” More likely, you may have walked out thinking you just wasted your time and accomplished nothing. Or maybe you felt there was no reason for you to be there. It happens to all of us. No matter whether we are professionals, students, graduate students or associates, we all sit through ineffective meetings. Enough is enough – it’s time we all stood up and said, “WE’VE GOT TO STOP MEETING LIKE THIS!”

So, how do we break the cycle? What ways can we help make meetings more effective? Here are a variety of tips you can use to do just that:

#### **Have objectives to complete.**

While this may sound pretty darn obvious, it is the most critical and often the most overlooked aspect of striving for effective meetings. It’s natural to feel the pressure to hold a meeting each week because you think that is what your group is supposed to do. Here is a friendly tip – if you don’t have a reason to meet, don’t have a meeting! If you cannot think of a purpose or goal to achieve – you probably shouldn’t meet. To make your meeting truly effective, establish clear and attainable objectives for your group to accomplish.

#### **Clarify roles, responsibilities and rights.**

Practically speaking, if people at your meeting don’t understand what they are supposed to be doing, it’s not going to be effective. Instead, it will feel more like a one-sided lecture with all eyes on the person leading the session. Clarify what members can and should do at meetings to avoid potential confusion or frustration in the future. Make sure your membership is empowered and understands the expectations and opportunities to be active participants and not just mere observers.

#### **Start and end on time.**

If you want your members to take your meetings seriously and treat them with respect, show them you value their time. To do that, don’t punish the punctual. Start the meeting at the announced time. You want to make sure you leave ample time to complete the objectives you set. Also, make sure you have selected objectives that can be accomplished in the allotted time. Nothing is worse than thinking you are in for an hour meeting only to have it last twice that long because there were too many lofty goals on the agenda. Ending meetings late can give the impression they have not been planned and facilitated properly. Plan ahead and break your objectives down into manageable chunks that can be accomplished in the allotted time.

#### **Choose an appropriate space and setup.**

In many cases, the physical environment of your meeting can determine if it is going to be effective before it even begins. Consider the people and objectives when selecting where to meet and how to arrange a room. If you want to have a fruitful and engaging dialogue, a room with seats fixed to the floor in a theater style arrangement probably is not best. Consider the room location, table/chair arrange-

ment, lighting, etc. Set the room to create an atmosphere that complements your meeting’s style.

#### **Record and approve minutes.**

Ever find your group asking, “Wait a second, what did we decide at the last meeting?” Or worse yet, arguing over what was decided by the group during the previous session? It is critical that you keep accurate written notes about each meeting, including what was discussed and what decisions were made. These documents are more commonly referred to as meeting minutes. They represent the official activity of meetings and detail important discussions and decisions of an organization. At the start of each meeting, have someone (typically a secretary) present the minutes for review and approval by the membership. By doing so, you are establishing an official record of meetings and solidifying, in writing, what was discussed and decided.

#### **Use formality and procedure, but don’t be afraid to incorporate some FUN, too!**

Select rules and procedures that work for your membership and your organizations. Don’t let that bully Robert dictate your rules of order. Write down and record the rules and procedures you agree to use. The rules and procedures of the meeting should create an inclusive, mutually agreed upon, and collaborative experience among members.

Also, it is important to recognize the social reasons people attend meetings. Consider providing food or allocating five or 10 minutes before the official start time for folks to enjoy each other’s company. Perhaps organize an activity at the beginning or end of a meeting to build community among members. It can help make the difference in member attention during the meeting and retention in your group.

#### **Facilitate effective discussions.**

One of the most common ways that we can have effective meetings is through the facilitation of quality conversations. If you want to have an effective meeting, it’s important that the work done is discussed in a meaningful, organized and purposeful way. These discussions should lead toward consensus and, ultimately, a decision being made. There are three simple steps to facilitate effective discussions at your meetings:

- **Deliver**
- **Discuss**
- **Decide**

#### **Deliver**

Simply put, introduce the concept. When you first present something at your meeting, it can be overwhelming to both the person leading the meeting and the group as a whole. There is usually a great deal of information out there about any given topic.

**Funnel down the topic.** The objective of this technique is to provide context to the topic you are presenting to ensure a solid foundation for group decision-making. For example, let’s say your group is discussing a spring carnival you are planning. You may start off by saying, “As you know, our



spring carnival is set for the last Saturday in April. It's one of our biggest events of the year, attracting over 500 students. So far, we have secured the rides, worked with security and approved our marketing. We have not decided on food vendors, novelties or our band." By saying this, you have provided the necessary context to bring everyone on the same page for the event and have also caught everyone up on where the group is with regard to the project. It provides a basis for discussion

**Frame the Conversation.** Once you have established this foundation, you want to proceed to introduce a single salient point or question for group response. This question or statement should directly relate to one of the objectives you set for the meeting. Let's say your objective is to decide the food vendors for the carnival. In this case, it could be as simple as saying, "Which food vendors should we use for the event?"

Another strategy may be to hand out some information or have someone share information about the discussion item. This helps provide further facts for group consideration and frames the conversation so everyone stays on the same page. In the carnival example, you may hand out a list of vendors you have worked with in the past, their prices and the types of food they offer. The question could then become, "Given the information I just shared, which food vendors should we use for the event?" This is not to say you limit discussion only to what you shared, but it helps to provide further context and a stronger common frame for discussion.

Utilizing the **deliver** strategy allows you to successfully funnel down a potentially large topic in a clear manner that provides context to your members and suitably establishes a question for discussion.

## Discuss

We all want to have a productive discussion at our meetings. Sometimes, that just isn't the case. Here are some strategies to ensure strong discussions at your meetings.

**Stay On Topic.** Have you ever played the video game Pong? Yes, that old game from the '70s. The objective was to keep a single dot from going off the screen using two lines on either end of the screen. You controlled the lines, moving them up or down as the dot bounced around. *Boop...boop...boop...boop.* Yup, you got it now. Think of your meetings much like that game.

After you have successfully framed your discussion, you want to make sure the comments and opinions shared stay within that frame and do not go off the screen. From the carnival example, you framed the conversation by saying, "Which food vendors should we use for the event?" Now, the dot (the discussion) is in motion and your job is to keep it in the frame (the question) by facilitating the conversation and calling on people to advance the conversation. When you call on others to respond, ensure they are responding to that question. If people veer from the topic, politely refocus the conversation. You can do this by saying, "That is a great point, but let's try to keep discussion on the food vendor preferences, please. I will make sure we get back to that later. Thanks!"

You are, in essence, saving the dot from going off the

## ALL TOO OFTEN, WE FORGET TO DISCUSS THE CRITICAL STEP OF ACTUALLY MAKING THE DECISION. WE FOCUS ON TRYING TO HAVE A GREAT, INCLUSIVE DISCUSSION, BUT FAIL TO RECOGNIZE STRATEGIES NEEDED TO BRING ABOUT RESOLUTION TO A TOPIC.

screen. This tells the group that future speakers should keep their points within the frame established without calling out any one person individually.

**Avoid circular conversations.** It's easy to think you are having a productive discussion because everyone is talking. But pay attention to what everyone is saying. If everyone is saying the same thing, but in different ways, it can just as easily derail a meeting. You will find the group going around and around repeating the same thoughts again and again. To break up the monotony, don't be afraid to play "devils advocate." This will help your members think about other angles of a topic and create a more well rounded discussion. For example, you may want to say:

- "Do you think we should consider ...?"
- "Perhaps we should look at this situation from this perspective ..."

You can also move the group forward to see if someone on their own wants to share a new perspective by inviting him/her to share:

- "Does anyone have anything else to share that has not yet been said?"

**Control the talkative.** Some people love to participate. However, you must ensure that no one dominates a discussion. If you notice this, you can do the following:

- Say to the entire group, "If you have already shared, I'd ask you to wait until everyone else has a chance before you ask to speak again."
- Or speak to the chatty individual immediately after a meeting. Thank them for being active and engaged, but encourage them to gather their thoughts prior to speaking, so they need to address the group only once.

**Draw out the silent.** Just because someone doesn't say

anything doesn't mean they don't have a valuable opinion or thought to share. You may want to use tactics to encourage them to share, such as saying:

- "We have not heard from Susan in a while. What are your thoughts?"
- "Timothy, you always have good ideas. What do you think?"

### Decide

All too often, we forget to discuss the critical step of actually making the decision. We focus on trying to have a great, inclusive discussion, but fail to recognize strategies needed to bring about resolution to a topic.

Utilize reflective consensus. Sometimes, it is obvious how the group is feeling, but no one in the room wants to make the move to take action. After a good discussion, try the tactic of attempting to identify the group consensus by reflecting on what you feel is the majority opinion. You can do this by saying:

- "What I am hearing from the group is ..."

If the majority of those present seems to agree with your assessment, or if there are simply no objections, call for a vote or move forward to make that the official decision of the group. If the room seems split, you can say:

- "It seems the room is split. I am hearing these two opinions <state the opinions>. Unless there are new thoughts or ideas to present, I think it is time we took a vote."

### Tips for the Chair

I hope many of you are either leading meetings yourself or aspire to do so in the future. A major responsibility of having effective meetings falls to the chair, so it is essential their role gets attention. The chair is more or less the ringmaster of the circus when it comes to meetings. Their main objective is to make sure the meeting runs smoothly and the work of the group is achieved in a fair and efficient manner. To do so, there are certain techniques a chair can use:

**Share the leadership role.** Allow others to lead discussions, give overview of group action, present information to frame discussion, etc.

**Avoid competing with your membership.** Do not force your opinion on the group, but don't be afraid to share it, either.

**Recognize language or actions that may put others on the defensive.** Do not allow put-downs or personal attacks in the meeting.

**Listen carefully and judiciously.** Give your members the same courtesy you would ask of them. Make eye contact with the speaker. It is always a good idea to respond by summarizing a speaker's thoughts to show you were listening.

**Do not squash members' suggestions.** Give every idea a chance – sometimes, the wildest ideas can be the most effective!

**Keep the energy high.** Positive attitudes are contagious! Remain and appear excited, interested and enthusiastic.

**Encourage an environment of critical thinking.** Encourage your group to put aside personal feelings and view issues objectively. When presenting arguments and making decisions, utilize facts and expert knowledge.

**Close every meeting on a positive note.** Thank members for their participation and reflect on all that was accomplished during the meeting.

**Summarize before adjourning.**

- Highlight major discussions and decisions.
- Remind everyone of the next meeting date, time and place.
- Make sure members leave with a clear sense of "next steps."

### It Takes Time and Practice to Get It Right

Overwhelmed at all? Scared? Well, good. That just means you care. Like most things we talk about with regard to leadership and programming, conducting effective meetings is an art, not a science. It takes practice and time to get it right. You need to allow yourself the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them. Seek feedback after your meetings to discover what went well and what can be improved. Ask your advisor, supervisor, a colleague, or a friend what they thought about the meeting after it has concluded. Be open to and welcoming of constructive criticism and make changes for your next meeting. If you can improve one area of your meeting each time you get together, you will gradually find yourself having increasingly effective sessions.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Adam Frank** is Director of Student Involvement at **Westchester Community College (NY)**, where he previously served as Coordinator of Student Activities. Active in NACA, he currently serves as the NACA® Northeast Student Projects Coordinator. He has also served the region as its Showcase Selection Coordinator, as its Education & Professional Development Coordinator, as its Awards Coordinator, as a member of its Special Events Committee, and as its Graduate Intern Coordinator. In addition, he has presented educational sessions for the NACA® Northeast Regional Conference, as well as for the National Convention. He has been honored with NACA's C. Shaw Smith New Professional Award, as well as with NACA® Northeast's David A. Ross New Professional Award and the M. Kevin Fahey Graduate Student Award. He has previously written for *Campus Activities Programming®* on the topics of creating inclusive environments and events for students with disabilities and successful late-night programming. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from Stonehill College (MA) and a master's degree in higher education and student affairs from the University of Connecticut.

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# CREATING A PROGRAMMING BOARD ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUP

By

**ROBERT A. MEYER, PhD**

Indiana University-Bloomington  
and

**CHRISTIAN CARROLL**

The John Wittenberger Society (IA)



*John Wittenberger - Indiana University Archives*

**An alumni affinity group adds value to your alumni base and your student group, fostering growth and continued support that can last indefinitely.**

EVERY YEAR, OUTSTANDING STUDENT LEADERS GRADUATE and pursue life and career goals beyond our university walls. They take with them their experiences as college programmers and the loyalty they have for the student union and institution. So, how can you capture this enthusiasm and keep it for a lifetime? Establish an alumni affinity group.

What is an affinity group? Duke University's (NC) alumni association describes alumni affinity groups as places where former students can "connect around shared interests, such as faith, ethnicity or activities."

At Indiana University-Bloomington, that is exactly what we did. In 1982, a small group of dedicated alumni and advisors met to form the Indiana Memorial Union Board affinity group. The original purpose, still true today, was "to preserve the Indiana University connection that links all alumni of the Indiana Memorial Union Board" (Claussen, 1982). It has not always been easy to keep the momentum, but after more than 30 years, the Union Board affinity group (known as the John Whittenberger Society, named for the student founder of the Indiana Memorial Union) is strong and recognized as a model alumni group at Indiana University.

So, how do you get an affinity group started? We hope to answer this question by sharing Indiana University's experi-

ence. The steps include finding volunteers, setting common goals, working with the alumni association, and maintaining a tie with the student organization. It may seem daunting, but the experience is filled with rewards for both current students and alumni.

## **Commitment**

Like many initiatives started by students and staff in the student activities profession, it requires commitment to form an affinity group. Time is needed to promote the idea, manage volunteers, follow up on assignments, administer budgets, and much more. Travel time and financial investments also may be involved initially to cultivate the needed volunteer commitments. Rarely is someone willing to support a project if the initiator is not equally involved.

## **Dedicated Volunteers**

The Indiana Memorial Union Board is fortunate to have dedicated alumni. One of our founding affinity group members dedicated his retirement years as a volunteer to this cause. You do not need a retiree to start an affinity group, though. Tap into institutional knowledge of recent and distant alumni to establish a strong database of former student



leaders. From this list, form a small committee of dedicated volunteers. This group may become the new affinity group's first board of directors. Our first meeting consisted of five alumni and two staff members. Several individuals from this group continued to serve for the next 10 years!

### **Common Goals**

The first volunteers should be involved in developing group goals. It has always been important to our affinity group members to stay connected to the institution, programming board and student union. This is the shared interest that holds our alumni together. Twice a year, a newsletter is mailed to all our alumni to share content of common interest: programs sponsored by the programming board, changes and updates to the student union facility, individual alumni updates, and news about the university.

Beyond this connection, the alumni wanted to contribute in ways that supported student leadership and the union. From the beginning, our affinity group has identified multiple funding projects to support, such as art collection expansion and restoration, facility furniture and equipment, student leader retreats, and student scholarships. Our alumni have also financed paintings, computers and resources for students to attend conferences.

### **Campus Alumni or Foundation Support**

Although our organization began as a stand-alone alumni group, today it is important for students and staff to work with their institution's alumni association or foundation employees. This is important for many reasons, the most important of which is tied to donations. Our alumni association and foundation offices are separate corporations with the ability to provide appropriate tax documentation for donations. If your intent is to ask alumni for donations, you may be required to work with one of these offices.

Another reason is again tied to donations. Your institution may already have identified one of your former student leaders as a potential donor. The institution may have previously been or currently be in the process of asking the former student for support. You do not want to be involved in making a separate request, as this may confuse the potential donor.

Additionally, the alumni or foundation offices may be able to assist in establishing the affinity group. Access to their alumni records will be invaluable in contacting former student leaders. Also, we found that our alumni association had a small budget to support new affinity groups. Money for postage, first meeting refreshments, and other start-up costs may be available.

Our experience has been that the best approach is to partner with the alumni association and foundation. We have an ex-officio position on the affinity group board for an alumni association representative. This representative has become an advocate for our group within the alumni association. Because of this knowledge, our affinity group members have been asked to serve on other committees and boards for the institution, such as college dean advisory boards, institution celebrations, and university staff search committees.

### **Organization Constitution**

One of the first tasks for the formation of our affinity group was the development of a working constitution. It has been updated several times over the years, but still contains the basic structure of the first document. It includes a purpose statement, definition of membership, definition of honorary membership, a list of the executive board with position titles and responsibilities, a description of the executive board election process, and general meeting requirements.

All current student leaders of the Union Board become members of the affinity group after completing one semester of service. Officers of the affinity group each serve a four-year term. These terms are staggered to assure a good mix of new and seasoned members. The executive board meets twice a year (in the fall, in conjunction with a home football game, and in the spring/summer) to accomplish the group's purposes.

### **From Idea to Implementation—Tasks and Accomplishments**

Once the goals and constitution were approved, the next task was implementation. The first project combined both fundraising and communication—a new outdoor patio consisting of brick pavers with alumni names engraved on them. This project definitely turned into more work than expected. Two years after the funding drive started, however, the patio was dedicated. One of the benefits from this inaugural project was the awareness raised about the affinity group. It also gave alumni a physical place to express their loyalty to the union and university. In subsequent years, alumni have donated to several endowment funds supporting student scholarships, retreats and operating funds.

The newsletter was another place where affinity group member involvement was, and still is, needed. Staff members write stories, design layout, and organize its publication. Affinity group members provide story ideas and serve as editors.

Alumni also are instrumental in organizing biennial reunions. A tradition established long before the affinity group came into being, reunion planning has always been handled by staff and student leaders. Today, alumni assist in the planning and offer insightful suggestions as to the programs and tours offered.

### **Affinity and Student Group Bond**

It is important to maintain a bond between the affinity group and the student group you represent. Not only is the affinity group becoming a resource for that organization, it should also build a foundation for cultivating interest in the group among future alumni. Each year, an affinity group representative attends the Indiana Memorial Union Board officer transition ceremony to present the official John Whittenberger Society membership certificate to our outgoing student leaders. This ceremony, along with an orientation about the affinity group to our incoming leaders, helps to establish a life-long relationship.

In addition, plan affinity group meetings at times when students are on campus. This will provide opportunities for both alumni and current students to interact. Finally, if you

have an active alumnus who is local, consider having them be an advocate for the affinity group while attending special events and meetings organized by the student organization.

### Rewards for Alumni

For the affinity group to be successful, there must be rewards for its members. This is true for our current board president, co-author Christian Carroll. As a student, the Indiana Memorial Union Board meant a great deal to him. The experience gave him the ability to be a leader, manage a board of directors and a budget, present campus events, and deal with issues on campus. That experience was so valuable to him that he wanted to give back. Being a part of the

## BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL ALUMNI AFFINITY GROUP IS GOING TO TAKE DEDICATION OF BOTH STAFF AND ALUMNI VOLUNTEERS.

affinity group is a way for him to not only give back financially, but to continue to interact with students, be a mentor, and provide resources for their success. The rewards are intrinsic for him: “... Just like alumni did for me when I was a student, I enjoy sitting with students, hearing about their experiences and goals, and being able to just share my experiences, give guidance or just listen.”

### Staff and Alumni Dedication

Building a successful alumni affinity group is going to take dedication of both staff and alumni volunteers. It will require defining a mission, building a coalition with your foundation and alumni association, locating a handful of dedicated alumni to get started, and then spreading the excitement to not only the alumni, but to the student group you are representing. In the end, you want to add value to both your alumni base and your student group, fostering growth and continued support within your affinity group that will last indefinitely. Remember that times change, and your affinity group should be prepared to also change to better serve the needs of both students and alumni alike.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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# Who Wants to Volunteer?

Volunteer with NACA! Opportunities are available in every region, throughout the year. Visit [www.naca.org](http://www.naca.org), call 803-732-6222 or visit us in person at NACA events. We'd love to have you on board!





# Talk Google to Me: Using Virtual Communication to Brainstorm and Plan Events

By

**LUCAS SWENSON**

Wake Forest University (NC)

How do you plan events during the summer when your board members are scattered to the four corners of the globe? Virtual communication can help keep plans in motion.

**APPLICATIONS, INTERVIEWS AND POSSIBLY ELECTIONS** for all different kinds of leadership positions are in full swing now on many campuses. Soon, your newest programming and executive boards will be chosen. This is the most exciting time of the year for many of us, except, of course, for the holidays. Who are the individuals who will plan engaging events for your entire campus next year?

That question can be exhilarating, and maybe a little frightening, too. It's on everybody's minds, and discussion of "who will be the next XYZ?" becomes a daily topic of conversation. We are all supposed to be working on midterm papers and projects and studying for exams, but the fear of the unknown with regard to the future of our board can be somewhat debilitating. As a result, emotions are usually running pretty high when the new board is finally chosen. When the dust settles, though, you realize working with "so-and-so" may not be so bad after all, and the year ahead is going to be full of opportunities and exciting times.



## Planning Across State, National—and Seasonal—Boundaries

Fast forward two months: school will be out and your campus will begin to feel like a deserted island. On top of it all, programs and activities will come to a screeching halt as students leave for the summer. If your board is anything like ours at Wake Forest University (NC), your students will scatter all over Planet Earth for internships, jobs and other opportunities that come their way. Program board members tend to be some of the most ambitious and highly driven students around, so it is no surprise they accept high-profile, frankly incredible positions in many different industries.

Summer is traditionally a down time for programming boards, but it is also crucial that you get started setting your vision and goals and begin planning for the events your board has committed to execute in the fall. Many take place at the very beginning of the year, which means they are also some of the most important events on your schedule, as these set a precedent for how the rest of the campus views your organization during the upcoming year.

We have found success utilizing Google to virtually brainstorm and plan our events across state and even national boundaries. One of our initiatives involved creating a form with questions for each person to fill out for every event they plan. This form contains all the standard information, such as name, date, time and venue, as well as a quick description of the event. But, it also includes much more, such as detailed descriptions of marketing plans, including digital and print media (we even ask for a #hashtag), as well as the anticipated budget and rain location. Then, our Vice President of Administration copies answers from each form to an open Google Doc. A Google Doc is a free, online word processor that lets you create and format text documents and collaborate with other people in real time. This has transformed the way we complete our summer planning.

## Feedback Forms

Using the Google Doc we create, each of the key members of the planning team can view others' responses and offer comments to encourage discussion and conversation around a given aspect of an event. These comments are special because anybody can add their own personal knowledge or thoughts. We call this a "Feedback Form." Ingenious ideas have come from this virtual outlet for brainstorming "what is possible" at an event.

Feedback Forms allow for a kind of personal attention that has never been possible for us through other virtual means. While we cannot meet face-to-face, we are able to find out what other members are thinking about our plans by logging on and viewing the Feedback Form. Accordingly, each key player can share openly their positive remarks, areas of concern, challenges, needs and wants. This level of response and interaction is hard to achieve through email chains, text messages, and other forms of communication, so this has greatly enhanced our summer planning productivity.

## Online Scheduling and "Hanging Out"

Utilizing Google Calendar to schedule meetings has also helped us to be proactive in keeping team members on track. I have discovered that some people in our group might refuse to check their email inboxes, but getting access to their individual calendars proved to be a meaningful way to show I cared about them as people, in addition to their specific program.

During the summer, we scheduled meetings weeks and months in advance, so there was enough time to prepare for our telephone or video conversations. During these calls, we were able to hear and sometimes see each other directly through a Google Hangout. Our focus was on our relationships as well as the events to be planned and I found that this is valuable and necessary to keep team members engaged.

## Continuous Chat

In the crazy world of event planning, it is all too easy to let your summer planning become chaotic. Google has a chat function, GChat, which provides a way to communicate with your team in real time. Creating this virtual dialogue has been very beneficial to our team. I have stayed logged on to my GChat all day long and responded to chats immediately. Our team members have been able to respond immediately to each other and convey opinions and thoughts about our plans.

It very quickly became clear to me that, as a leader, I value open lines of communication. I have made myself available around the clock (sometimes up to 16-18 hours a day) to talk about events and the summer happenings of other students on our team. This is not because it is required of me. It is not because I am nosy. It is simply because I have recognized the value of virtual discussion in brainstorming and event planning. I believe the events we initiated utilizing these virtual tools have been more efficiently planned and successful than they might have been otherwise. And we've facilitated this success through the use of Google Docs.

So, talk Google to me.

*Editor's Note: This article represents the writer's experience and opinions regarding the use of free Google Docs in event planning and execution. It is not to be construed as a specific endorsement by NACA, its members or employees of Google as a company or its products. Virtual event planning can be accomplished with a variety of software and apps.*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Lucas Swenson** is Student Union President at **Wake Forest University (NC)**, where he is pursuing degrees in business and enterprise management and health policy and administration. Active in NACA® South, his programming board was presented the People's Choice Award and Best Themed Campaign at the 2014 NACA® South Regional Conference.

# Successful Late-Night Events Need Balance

By  
**JOSHUA WILSON**  
University of Florida

**For a late-night event to offer the best possible participant experience, balance in program offerings is essential.**

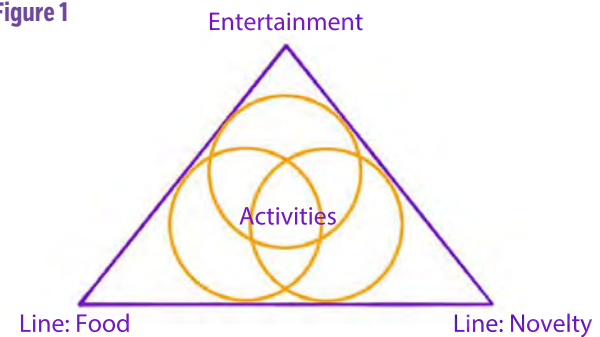
**THINK ABOUT YOUR LAST EVENT** and the experience it offered participants. Would they have viewed it as successful, mediocre or a waste of time? Most of us in programming are aiming to create successful programs. However, event success is measured in many ways, including learning outcomes, program quality, number of attendees, timeliness, meeting budgets, customer satisfaction, goals, and more. In Jon Taffer's book, *Raising the Bar*, he says, "Managing a business is not rocket science, but it is science—your success lies in the reactions of the people around you" (p. 6). We can all agree that there are measurements of success in campus programming that translate to campuses coast to coast. For our late-night program at the University of Florida, GatorNights, we saw that success was related to the balance of an event and, for a time, our balance was off.

GatorNights moved over time into the mediocre category due to poor event design. We knew this from the results of surveys, feedback from a focus group, and our student programmers' energy for planning the event. In the summer of 2013, we decided to make changes and reshape this program to enhance students' experiences and bring it back into balance.

We began with the conception of the Entertainment, Activities and Lines (EAL) model (see Figure 1), which we began to implement in the fall of 2013. We created it as a way to help students who plan GatorNights understand what a balanced approach to planning a late-night program should resemble. Our GatorNights committee is part of our student programming board and is responsible for programming each event in the series. We are also fortunate to be able to pay student employees to work at the program on Friday

nights. Both the committee and the employees needed to buy into the model if it were to be successful.

**Figure 1**



In the past, our board had felt its investment in the program was to "just ... pick a few novelties," according to one of our student directors in 2013. A typical night at that time consisted of four-to-five novelties, one form of entertainment, and one-to-two additional activities. For the purposes of the EAL model, here's how we define the categories:

- 1. Entertainment:** Patrons are entertained by a person, product or service, such as a comedian, musical performer, magician or movie.
- 2. Activity:** A majority of patrons are able to simultaneously and physically or mentally participate in an activity, which may include crafts, volleyball, dance, human foosball, musical chairs, trivia or bingo, etc.
- 3. Lines:** Patrons stand in line to receive a service or item, such as a stuff-a-bear, carnival ride, mechanical surfboard, photo booth, or food giveaway.



**Figure 2**

**GatorNights 2014 Fall Carnival**

| Event Name                        | Event Description |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Balloon Artist                    | Activity          |
| Carnival Games                    | Activity          |
| Mason Jar Jack O'Lanterns         | Activity          |
| Giant Slide                       | Activity          |
| Scarecrow Contest                 | Activity          |
| Pumpkin Decorating                | Activity          |
| Global Coffee House               | Activity          |
| Live Music: Brian Sutherland Band | Entertainment     |
| Movie: <i>If I Stay</i>           | Entertainment     |
| Movie: Popcorn & Soda             | Line: Food        |
| Apple Cider & Fall Treats         | Line: Food        |
| Midnight Munchies: Italian        | Line: Food        |
| Head in Hole Cut Out              | Line: Novelty     |
| Twin Spin Carnival Ride           | Line: Novelty     |
| Pirate Ship Carnival Ride         | Line: Novelty     |

**How It Works**

Looking at Figure 2, you'll see where the students adhered to the model to create a balanced event. There should always be more entertainment and activities. At UF, we see where it helps disperse the crowd to different areas of the event. With activities and entertainment, you're able to accommodate more people simultaneously, which enhances participant satisfaction.

In the **entertainment** category (see Figure 3), the patron's attention is always pulled to a point of focus. One example is a movie. The audience's attention is pulled to the screen. Including entertainment as part of your program can truly enhance participant experience.

If a thousand people attend your event, where are they? Where do they go first and at what time? If you know that, at the start of your event, you'll have a big wave of participants, this might be a great time to feature entertainment. If

**Figure 3**

**Entertainment**



you're trying to get patrons to stay until the end of the night, schedule the entertainment later as an incentive for people to stay until the end. At UF, we strive to feature two to three entertainment opportunities in our late-night events.

**Figure 4**



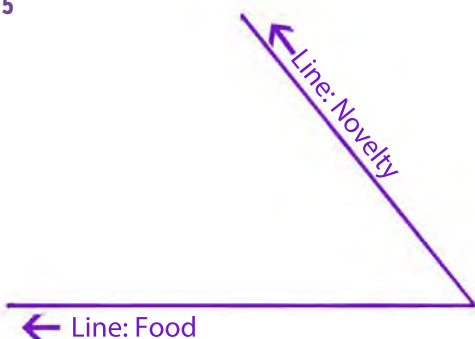
**Activities** (see Figure 4), similar to entertainment, are great for bringing balance to your event and can allow you to host many people simultaneously. A great example is a stuff-a-bear activity. The set-up for such an event usually requires an assembly line. If you have hundreds of people who are participating, each person might wait hours for their turn. However, we learned from our focus group that our patrons wanted fewer lines at our events.

So, instead of the assembly line approach, we used a community approach. We set the bear "stuffing" on the tables, along with other accessories. As patrons entered the space, each person was directed through a check-in station to receive their bear and then move to round tables to fill and dress them. We were amazed that something so simple as changing the layout of the space would change the nature of the activity. Hours turned to minutes for participants. Not having to stand in line the entire evening meant they were able to enjoy other features of the event.

See Figure 4 and notice the interlocking rings. It represents the opportunities patrons have for interacting with each other at events. I first noticed this concept on Jon Taffer's TV show, *Bar Rescue*. As he rescued these bars and introduced new layouts for them, they always featured a look that brought the bar together as a community in a defined space. When there is opportunity for community, people also have opportunities to interact with one another. This is not as likely with entertainment and lines.

**Lines** (See Figure 5), on the other hand, should be carefully orchestrated. Not only should you have a plan to account for their length, but also for their role in shaping participants' experience at your event. Our students' previous model for planning late-night events was to pick four to five novelties and call it a day. As we learned from our focus group, lines were hurting the participant experience. In fact, we had seen in the past that people moved from line to line to line and then went home. Lines are not all bad, though. Giveaways and novelties are concepts that fall under this category, but they can offer cool and unique elements to your event that participants will enjoy. I'm sure I don't have to tell you that students love free things.

Figure 5



As we came to the conclusion that balance was key to success in improving our GatorNights late-night experience, we agreed that pursuing Entertainment and Activities in addition to Lines was the path to a better patron experience.

We also learned from studying our new program design that each event had a centerpiece in either the Entertainment or Activity category. We realized we could use this aspect for marketing and publicity purposes. It also helped concentrate our efforts in creating a complete themed experience for students who attended.

### Assessment

Have you heard of instances in which an advisor assesses a program from the beginning to the end of the year, but does nothing with the data? We didn't want to let this happen to us. We shared the numbers we collected and feedback from participants with our student committee and had productive developmental conversations. We agreed to work as a unit to start fresh and try new things with our late-night program, including using the EAL model as a guide to create a balanced event. To be successful, our GatorNights committee members, as well as the student employees and professional staff, all had to be on the same page and commit fully to the model. One of our leaders came up with the motivational

concept, "Are We All Hands In?", which we used to unify everyone before each event.

Where are we today? Our students have proven they understand and utilize the EAL model weekly in their event planning, as well as at meetings. Also, we see where 97% of our attendees say they would return to our events since we've implemented the EAL model. This question was not asked before the design change, so we don't have a previous figure for comparison.

**WE WERE AMAZED THAT SOMETHING SO SIMPLE AS CHANGING THE LAYOUT OF THE SPACE WOULD CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE ACTIVITY. HOURS TURNED TO MINUTES FOR PARTICIPANTS. NOT HAVING TO STAND IN LINE THE ENTIRE EVENING MEANT THEY WERE ABLE TO ENJOY OTHER FEATURES OF THE EVENT.**

### Best Possible Participant Experiences

With respect to the continuing rotation of student leaders as they complete their studies, we have discovered the importance of sharing the EAL model and teaching students about what leads to successful events, no matter what is involved. We are responsible for creating the best most appealing events and best possible participant experiences at our late-night programs.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Joshua Wilson** is a Program Coordinator at the **University of Florida's** J. Wayne Reitz Union's Programs, Arts and Leisure Office. He directs *Student Affairs - the First Years* ([www.studentaffairsfirstyears.com](http://www.studentaffairsfirstyears.com)), a blog that celebrates the accomplishments and holistic development of new professionals and graduate students. Active in NACA, he has served as a member of the Diversity Activities Group, helping plan the Coffee & Conversations activity for the 2012 NACA® National Convention. He also serves as an NACA® Leadership Fellow for 2014-2015. While this is his first article for *Campus Activities Programming*®, he has presented at conferences on topics ranging from the first-year's experience for professionals, advising relationships, and student involvement opportunities for student leaders.

Editor's Note: Articles written for the NACA® Leadership Fellows Series are crafted by participants in the NACA® Leadership Fellows Program, which serves as an opportunity for NACA® members of diverse backgrounds to become familiar with Association programs and professional development opportunities. For more information on the NACA® Leadership Fellows Program, or to apply to become a 2015-16 Leadership Fellow, visit <http://forms.naca.org/NACA/Volunteers/Leadershipfellowapplication.htm>. You may also contact Leadership Fellows Coordinator Melanie Bullock at the University of South Florida-St. Petersburg at [mnbullock@mail.usf.edu](mailto:mnbullock@mail.usf.edu).



# College (Un)Bound: The Future of Higher Education and What It Means for Students

By Jeffrey J. Selingo

Reviewed by Ryan Lloyd, MEd, University of South Carolina

**Selingo has succeeded in crafting an informative narrative on the current state of higher education in America. This is precisely the reason why the book is so valuable for individuals who work in student affairs.**

IN TODAY'S DAY AND AGE, it is often difficult to turn on the news or pick up a newspaper without stumbling onto a story related to higher education in America. Headlines such as "Drowning in Debt" and "The Fall of Higher Education" often litter websites and blogs and are also often the centerpieces of nightly newscasts. Conversations frequently hover around a pessimistic view of whether or not college is truly worthwhile for prospective students and if higher education is appropriately managed and regulated. Yet, despite this media attention, it has become increasingly difficult to discern what the true state of higher education is in the United States.

In response to the unanswered questions about and the critical review of higher education, author Jeffrey J. Selingo has assembled an overview of the past, present and future of higher education in America. *College (Un)bound: the Future of Higher Education and What It Means for Students* is a brilliant look into the current problems colleges and universities are attempting to address. It is cleverly written with short vignettes that explore personal narratives of current students and educators, in addition to best practices from institutions across the US. Selingo, a well-known editor for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, presents his research by sharing clips of materials that have been reported through *The Chronicle's* seminal website.

I was introduced to this book last fall while completing my master's program at the University of South Carolina. At the time, I was enrolled in a course that explored the current trends in higher education and had to present on a new and upcoming book in the field. I was pleasantly surprised by the utility and impact of *College (Un)bound*. Instead of surfing through countless articles online, I discovered that this book provided me with a solid foundation for understanding the major trends and problems we were discussing in class. Even after the course was over, I continued to refer to the book's contents and

have applied some of its key messages in presentations, discussions with colleagues, and meetings with students.

Furthermore, the true value of this book comes in its ability to present a large amount of data and research while lulling the reader through personal narratives and innovative best practices. Selingo knows he is preaching to the choir with an audience composed primarily of higher education professionals, and goes beyond just claiming that higher education is valuable. Instead, he effortlessly documents research studies such as The Delta Cost Project and the Pew Research Center's Wellbeing survey to construct a case for higher education's value.

In his effort to educate his readers, Selingo presents the book in three sections, which loosely follow a chronological order of the past, present and future of higher education. This approach clearly articulates the current problems in higher education and provides readers with a solid foundation in order to advocate for the value of a college education.

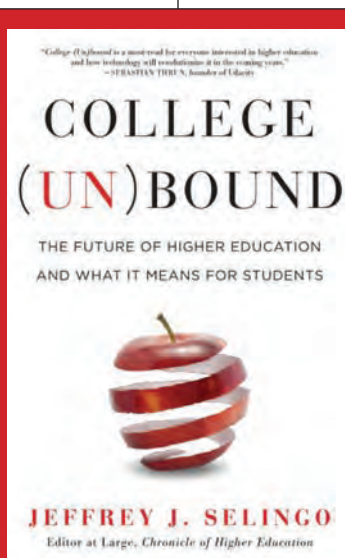
## The Past

The first part of *College (Un)bound*, titled "How We Got Here," digs into the root of the current problems higher

education faces (Selingo, 2013, p. 1).

Selingo starts by reviewing the time period between 1999 and 2009, which he refers to as the "Lost Decade" of higher education (Selingo, 2013, p. xvii). During this time, the author attests that colleges and universities failed to address rising concerns over finances and changing demographics and, instead, focused on competing with each other (Selingo, 2013, p. xvii). Selingo draws striking parallels between higher education and businesses while underscoring the concern that we have become too focused on "students as customers" (Selingo, 2013, p. 5). I would venture to say the concept of customer service in higher education is a familiar concept to which many student affairs professionals have to adapt in between parental involvement and the overall desire to provide a satisfactory student experience.

More specifically, Selingo attests that there were four key developments during this time period that have led to the majority of the problems we are currently facing. These problems include outrageous college



*College (Un)bound: the Future of Higher Education and What it Means for Students*  
by Jeffrey J. Selingo,  
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New York, New York.

spending, the proliferation of adjunct professors, a focus on retention, and a specialized focus on catering toward the Millennial Generation (Selingo, 2013, pp. 20-21). The book goes on to elaborate on each of these key developments by illustrating the changes that have occurred in areas such as campus construction and the new reality for professors in the classroom.

This section of the book was specifically interesting for me as a reader, because it confirmed many of my existing gripes with changes in higher education. Selingo discusses that there is now an expectation that professors act as “performer[s]” in the classroom (Selingo, 2013, p. 21). This concept struck a chord with me as a professional who serves as an instructor, as well as an ear for students to discuss their classroom experiences. On one hand, I understand the feeling of frustration students experience when they are in a class that is heavy in lecture material. However, I also know that, as an instructor, there are times when students simply need to receive the content without any bells or whistles.

### The Present

The second part of the book, “The Disruption,” continues to discuss some of the historical impacts on higher education while introducing the trends that are disrupting the everyday operation of colleges and universities. Selingo claims institutions fall victim to a concept called, “filiopietism,” in which they are often stuck in the past and averse to change (Selingo, 2013, p. xi). Due to this, the changes that are currently happening, both inside and outside of higher education, are disrupting the normal approach and philosophy to which institutions are accustomed.

Despite higher education’s adverse reaction to change, Selingo notes that there are five disruptive forces that are slowly pushing higher education to adapt to the 21st Century. These forces include rising debt, declining state support, a desire for increased tuition revenue, alternatives to the traditional model, and the increasing concern over the value of higher education (Selingo, 2013, pp. 58-70). The author then moves on to elaborate on each force, its origin, and how it is currently impacting higher education.

Personally, I found this section of the book to be the most eye-opening portion of the text due to Selingo’s skillful review of innovative practices in the field. For example, he exposes his readers to the pioneering initiatives that are being implemented at institutions such as Arizona State University and Austin Peay University (TN). These institutions are harnessing data in order to develop software that adapts to students in the classroom and throughout their collegiate careers (Selingo, 2013, p. 73).

Arizona State employs “adaptive learning technology” in the classroom in order to support students by learning concepts at their own pace. Instead of hearing a professor lecture on material that is easy to grasp, students are able to work through components of the course by completing computer modules that involve a professor only if the student is not grasping the material (Selingo, 2013, p. 74). On the other hand, Austin Peay is employing data in order to guide students through their academic advisement needs. The software analyzes course and student data in order to predict whether a student will be successful in a course or a given major (Selingo, 2013, p. 82).

The aforementioned innovations are only two examples

from a long list of best practices that Selingo surveys. There were moments when I was skeptical as to whether or not advancements, such as predictive analytics, were detracting from traditional student development in college. However, Selingo did a great job of noting these concerns and providing the rationale for each of the surveyed advancements.

### The Future

The last section of *College (Un)bound*, “The Future,” introduces the reader to ways higher education is currently changing, as well as suggestions for continual adaptation. Selingo provides one final list that notes five major changes that are on the horizon for colleges and universities (Selingo, 2013, p. 174). This list echoes the trends that were noted throughout the book and continues to explore best practices at institutions across the US.

One of the most fascinating changes Selingo chronicles is a move toward a more fluid education that is not restricted by the traditional timeframe of college semesters and degree periods. Selingo demonstrates that Western Governors University (UT) has moved beyond the traditional semester and now assesses students based on their level of competency (Selingo, 2013, p. 113). This approach is a major shift away from the current model and would be liberating for students who master content quickly and do not need to be held back by traditional timeframes.

Additionally, this section does a great job of actually addressing the value of a college degree. I would venture to say we higher education professionals are continuously attesting to the value of attending college. However, we may not always have the most eloquent or fact-packed responses. Selingo moves beyond the traditional talking points and pulls research from Georgetown University’s (DC) Center on Education and the Workforce (p. 129) and the Pew Research Center’s Wellbeing assessment data (p. 169) to clearly depict the major advantages to attending college.

### The Utility of *College (Un)bound*

Selingo has succeeded in crafting an informative narrative on the current state of higher education in America. This is precisely the reason why the book is so valuable for individuals who work in student affairs. It is our responsibility as educators to understand both the system in which we work and the students who are coming to us each year. *College (Un)bound* allows us to see into the experiences that many students have during their journey through the admission process, all the way up until they are employed after college.

Moreover, the information presented by Selingo is especially valuable for student affairs professionals, as they serve as advisors and mentors for students on a daily basis. Knowledge of key concepts in *College (Un)bound*, such as student swirling, under-matching, and financial troubles, will allow professionals to better advise and respond to student needs. Likewise, an understanding of academic concepts such as adaptive learning, flipped classrooms, and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) can also help student affairs professionals understand what is happening in the classroom and how student learning is being challenged in diverse and innovative ways.



*College (Un)bound* supplies its readers with the foundation needed to understand why problems exist in higher education and what current trends are pointing to for the future. If you are looking for a book that provides you with all of the answers for today's problems, this is not the book for you. However, I highly recommend *College (Un)bound* for a wide audience ranging from graduate students through seasoned professionals. The text is a phenomenal primer for future discourse on how to evolve and improve in our practice for the future.

## REFERENCES

Selinger, J. J. (2013). *College (Un)bound: the Future of Higher Education and What it Means for Students*. New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

## ABOUT THE REVIEWER



**Ryan Lloyd, MEd**, is Residence Life Coordinator for Preston Residential College and the International House at Maxcy College at the **University of South Carolina**, where he previously served as a Residence Hall Director. He also previously served as a Graduate Conference Coordinator at Loyola University New Orleans and as an ACUHO-I Intern for Residence Life at Marshall University (WV) and Capstone On-Campus Management. During his time at USC, he has served as a University 101 Programs Instructor and has been honored as the Graduate Assistant of the Year (2014) and the Advisor of the Year in University Housing (2014). In addition, he was presented the Robert G. Thurber Award by the USC College of Education (2012), and he is a former board member of the South Carolina College Personnel Association. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from American University (DC) and a master's degree in higher education and student affairs from the University of South Carolina. He has previously written for *Campus Activities Programming*® on the importance of international programming.

The Leadership Development Book Review Series provides reviews of books that share information useful to student activities and campus engagement practitioners and the students they serve. If you would like to recommend or review a book, contact *Campus Activities Programming*® Editor Glenn Farr at [glennf@naca.org](mailto:glennf@naca.org).

Explore,  
Engage,  
and Evolve **at this years**



Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista, FL  
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and  
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Lead365 is committed to empowering collegiate leaders and professionals dedicated to developing student leaders, to be prepared to serve the greater social good 365 days a year.

Focusing on individual growth and enhanced skill building, the Lead365 National Conference is designed to provide the "best of the best" in conference curriculum, faculty and host accommodations.

Included in our mission is a focus on building leadership capacity that will serve participants well in the workplace, as well as paying particular effort to sponsoring and supporting those individuals who normally would not be afforded such an opportunity.

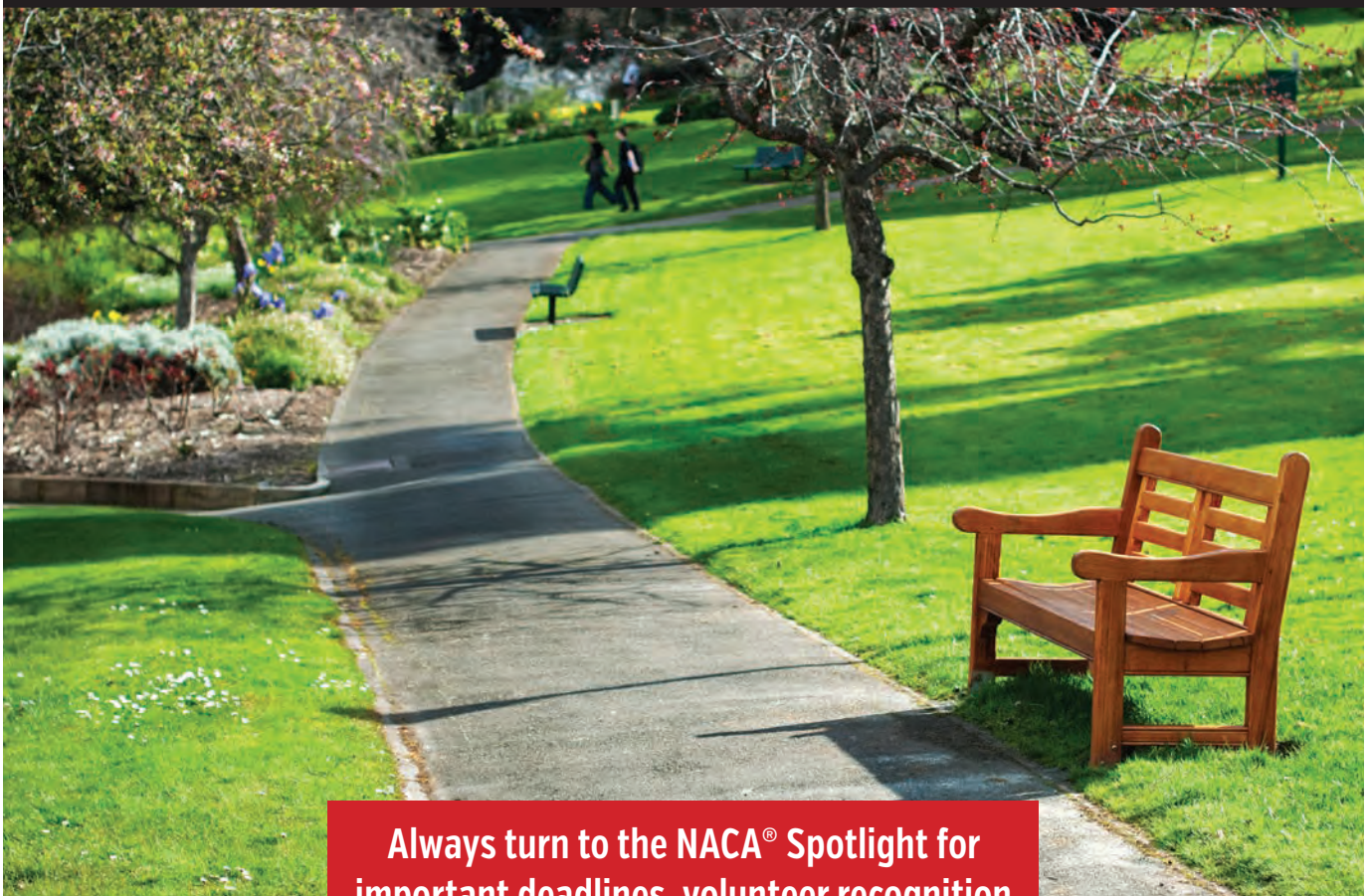
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Learn more about Lead365 and registration at [www.lead365.org](http://www.lead365.org).

find us on



# NACA® SPOTLIGHT



Always turn to the NACA® Spotlight for important deadlines, volunteer recognition and more about YOUR Association.

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# Registration Open for International Experiential Leadership Institute

Register now for the **2015 International Experiential Learning Institute**, set for July 12-15 in Boston, MA. NACA, NIRSA, Memorial University (Canada) and Suffolk University (MA) are partnering to offer this unique opportunity to learn more about how experiential learning relates to campus engagement.

Prospective topics also include developing learning outcomes, experiential leadership training, effective reflection techniques and assessment practices. Find complete information, along with registration fees and deadlines, online at [www.naca.org/IELI/pages/default.aspx](http://www.naca.org/IELI/pages/default.aspx). Registration will be limited to 60, with a balanced blend of attendees from Canada and the US.



## Zona Awarded Ross-Fahey Scholarship



**Leana M.L. Zona**, who is pursuing a master's degree in student development in higher education at the **University of Maine-Orono**, is a recipient of the NACA® Foundation's Ross-Fahey Scholarships.

She is currently a graduate assistant in Campus Activities and Student Engagement at her institution, where she also serves as an Academic Advisor Intern and adjunct instructor. She earned a bachelor's degree in sociology with a concentration in social problems and policy at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte. While an undergraduate, she served as President/Director of the UNC-Charlotte Campus Activities Board, received the Campus Activities Board Advisor Excellence Award (2011, 2012) and was named Campus Activities Board Director of the Year (2009).

In 2013, she contributed "A Different Kind of Superhero" to the American College Personnel Association's Standing Committee on Men and Masculinities Blog. She served as a Graduate Intern during the 2015 NACA® National Convention. She is affiliated with the National Academic Advising Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

The Ross-Fahey Scholarships were established in 1999 by the former NACA® New England Region to provide financial assistance to graduate student leaders enrolled in and new professionals employed by colleges and universities in the NACA® Northeast Region.

## NACA® Foundation Scholarship Application Deadlines

The NACA® Foundation offers various scholarships ([www.naca.org/Foundation/Pages/Scholarships.aspx](http://www.naca.org/Foundation/Pages/Scholarships.aspx)) that are available to undergraduate and graduate students, student leaders, professional staff and associate members on an annual basis. Scholarship nominations are solicited each year. Questions may be directed to **Morgan Grant** at the NACA® Office at [morgang@naca.org](mailto:morgang@naca.org).

Upcoming scholarship deadlines include:

- **NACA® South Student Leadership Scholarship:** Apply by March 31.
- **NACA® Mid Atlantic Undergraduate Scholarship for Student Leaders:** Apply by March 31.
- **Multicultural Scholarship Program:** Apply by May 1.
- **NACA® Graduate Scholarship (McCullough, Brattain & Daugherty Scholarships):** Apply by May 30.



## Congratulations to 2014 NACA® Foundation Scholarship Recipients

### **NACA® Northern Plains**

#### **Regional Student Leadership Scholarship**

Katlyn Hamm, St. Cloud State University (MN)

### **NACA® Mid Atlantic Undergraduate**

#### **Scholarship for Student Leaders**

Shelby Klick, Saint Vincent College (PA)

Nathan J. Taylor, Stockton University (NJ)

### **NACA® South Student Leadership Scholarship**

Jonathan “Connor” Yann, University of Florida

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Brittani Farmer, Berry College (GA)

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### **NACA® Regional Council Student Leader Scholarships**

Matthew Brancaccio, Albertus Magnus College (CT)

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### **NACA® Foundation Graduate Scholarships**

#### **William E. Brattain Graduate Scholarship**

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#### **McCullough Graduate Scholarship**

Jonathan Lopes, Rider University (NJ)

#### **Northeast McCullough Graduate Scholarship**

Ashlee Talbot, Salem State University (MA)

### **Markley Scholarship**

Lauren Rene Treacy, Louisiana State University

### **Ross-Fahey Scholarships**

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### **Scholarships for Student Leaders**

#### **Unnamed Scholarship for Student Leaders**

Lexa Gundelach, Diablo Valley College (CA)

#### **Public Media Inc./Films Inc. Scholarships for Student Leaders**

Alexandra Cascone, Benedictine University (IL)

#### **NACA® Central/Mid America Scholarship for Student Leaders**

Brandon Gosselin, University of Oklahoma

#### **NACA® Mid Atlantic Thomas E. Matthew Scholarship for Student Leaders**

Matthew Brown,

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

#### **NACA® Central/Northern Plains Scholarship for Student Leaders**

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Katie Louise Dion, Wagner College (NY)

#### **NACA® Northeast Scholarship for Student Leaders**

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Kyrie Kim, Binghamton University (NY)

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NACA® South  
NACA® West

## Proposals Sought for 2015 NACA® Research Grant

The National Association for Campus Activities is seeking proposals for the NACA® Research Grant. The grant is designed to encourage the development and dissemination of knowledge that has the potential to improve the experiences of college students and campus engagement. Completed applications must be received by the NACA® Office by 11:59 pm EST, June 12, 2015. One research team will be selected for the Comprehensive Award Package, while up to five research teams will be selected for the Secondary Award Package.

More information about awards packages and submission requirements can be found online at <https://www.naca.org/Pages/ResearchGrants.aspx>. You may also contact Educational and Research Manager **Dionne Ellison** at [dionnee@naca.org](mailto:dionnee@naca.org).

## Lead365 Conference Set for March and November

The Lead365 National Conference will be held March 12-14 and Nov. 5-7, 2015, in Orlando, FL. Lead365 is a new national organization with the mission of empowering collegiate leaders to be prepared to serve the greater social good 365 days a year. The target audience is undergraduates, graduate students and professionals overseeing or directly



responsible for developing leadership programs, teaching courses or advising/engaging student leaders. The conference curriculum is driven by the theme of "Explore, Engage and Evolve," which represents "personal knowing, collaboration and effective practice, and service to society." Participants will be offered only the "best of the best" in curriculum, faculty and host accommodations. Find more information on the NACA® website ([www.naca.org/Pages/Press.aspx](http://www.naca.org/Pages/Press.aspx)), along with registration ([www.lead365.org/event-registration/](http://www.lead365.org/event-registration/)) information.

### PUT NACA.ORG ON YOUR EMAIL SAFE LISTS

To be sure you're not missing important news, updates and member information from NACA, include [naca.org](http://naca.org) on your safe lists for incoming emails.



## Save the Date: 2015 Institutes Announced

Dates and locations have been announced for NACA's 2015 Institutes. Plan now to learn valuable skills and network with seasoned professionals and fellow students:

### ***Huge Leadership Weekend–May 28-31:***

John Newcombe Tennis Ranch [TX]

### ***Programming Basics Institute–June 4-7:***

Washington University in St. Louis [MO]

### ***S.P.I.R.I.T. Institute–June 5-7:***

Clemson University [SC]

### ***NACA® Summer Leadership Event at Walt Disney World®–June 21-24:***

Walt Disney World® Resort Florida

### ***Concert Management Institute–June 23-26:***

Marquette University [WI]

### ***Student Organizations Institute–June 29-July 2:***

University of Denver [CO]

### ***Student Government West Institute–July 9-12:***

Colorado School of Mines

### ***International Experiential Leadership Institute–July 12-15:***

Suffolk University [MA]

### ***Student Government East Institute–July 16-19:***

Stockton University [NJ]

### ***National Leadership Symposium–July 20-23:***

University of Louisville [KY]



## Take Advantage of this NACA® Member Benefit: Job Opportunities from The Placement Exchange

NACA partners with The Placement Exchange to promote job opportunities within the field of higher education that are relevant to NACA® membership. Sign in at **www.naca.org**, then look under the Member Resources tab to find Higher Ed Jobs. To learn more about an opportunity listed there, click on the job title. If you are interested in applying for the position, visit **The Placement Exchange** at <https://www.theplacementexchange.org>.



## Coming in the April 2015 Issue of *Campus Activities Programming*®

Keep an eye out for the April 2015 issue of *Campus Activities Programming*®, in which we'll cover conflict resolution, keeping leaders engaged during the summer months, motivating student employees in a student involvement office, values-based recruitment for student organizations, the top five challenges students usually don't know their advisors face, and much more.

## Keep Up with *Campus Activities Programming*® on Twitter, Online

Want to know about upcoming issues of *Campus Activities Programming*®? Want to be reminded of specific content needs and ways you can become a contributor? Follow Editor Glenn Farr on Twitter at @EditorGlennNACA.

Also, you can review a full year of *Campus Activities Programming*® online any time at <https://www.naca.org/CAP/Pages/Default.aspx>.

## CAMPUS NEWS

### Western Illinois Lounge Renamed to Honor Brattain

In ceremonies on Dec. 19, 2014, Western Illinois University renamed its University Union Prairie Lounge as the William E. Brattain Lounge in honor of **Dr. William E. Brattain**, Associate Vice President Emeritus for Student Services and Professor Emeritus of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration. Brattain served as director of the Office of Student Activities and the University Union at the institution for more than 24 years and played a crucial role in providing leadership opportunities for hundreds of students who've gone on to success in their careers.

Pictured with Brattain (center) are Dr. Beth Triplett (right), Vice President for Enrollment Management at Clarke University (IA), and Dr. Gayle Spencer, Director of



the Illinois Leadership Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Spencer and Triplett are both former students of Dr. Brattain and all three have served as Chair of the NACA® Board of Directors – Brattain in 1974-75, Triplett in 1993-94 and Spencer in 2002-03.

## Share Your News!

Share what's going on with you professionally and personally in the Campus News section of the NACA® Spotlight in *Campus Activities Programming*® magazine. This feature is designed for students and staff to inform others about what's going on in their lives. It's an easy way to announce a

- New job or promotion
- Marriage or civil union
- Birth or adoption of a child
- Graduation
- Award or other recognition
- Thank-you to other member
- And much more

To submit information, email it to Glenn Farr, editor of *Campus Activities Programming*®, at [glennf@naca.org](mailto:glennf@naca.org).



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## NACA® Mission, Vision and Core Values

During the second year of NACA's restructured board and advisory group governance model, a group of volunteer leaders was commissioned in August 2014 to work through a review of the Association's mission, vision, core values and messaging around the value we provide to members. This past month, the NACA® Board of Directors approved this work and now shares it with you, the members of NACA.

### NACA'S MISSION

The National Association for Campus Activities is a higher education organization providing members with the knowledge, ideas and resources to promote student learning through engagement in campus life.

### NACA'S VISION

The National Association for Campus Activities will be the recognized leader in higher education for providing the knowledge, ideas and resources to promote student learning through engagement in campus life.

### NACA'S CORE VALUES

Stewardship  
Innovation  
Communication  
Respect  
Learning  
Inclusivity

## Make Plans to Attend the 2015 Summer Leadership Event at Walt Disney World®!

Attend this year's Summer Leadership Event at Walt Disney World® Resort, Florida (FL), June 21-24, 2015, and learn how to take the Disney leadership magic back to your campus!

**Student Focus:** Peer-to-Peer Training & Supervision, Customer Service Skills, and Other Leadership Skills to help students excel as leaders

**Advisor Focus:** Student Leader Training, Communication with Student Leaders, and Connecting Student Leader Experiences with Future Goals

All participants will engage in group and individual breakout sessions, as well as experiential activities in Disney Theme Parks.

See what this year's participants had to say:

I have a NACA/Disney success story to report: After the event, I went back to KSU...and we created a vision for a cooperative link between our department and the Exercise Physiology lab, and also a much more efficient way to do our facility inventory.  
—Clyde Barrett, Kennesaw State University (GA)

Thank you NACA for an awesome experience! I'm so glad that I got to meet such an inspirational group of people! I'll never forget this amazing opportunity!  
—Dhora Lee, Nova Southeastern University (FL)

[www.naca.org/Institutes](http://www.naca.org/Institutes)





## Dates, Locations for Future Conventions, Regional Conferences Announced

Dates and locations have been confirmed for NACA's future National Conventions and regional conferences. Mark your calendars now!

### 2015 REGIONAL CONFERENCES

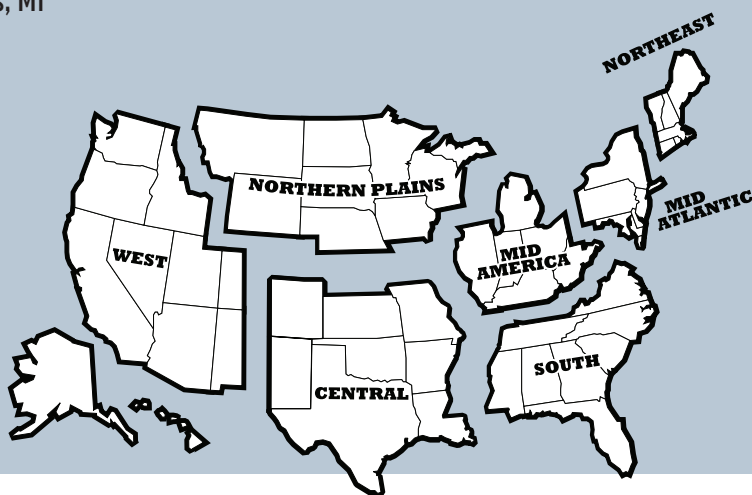
NACA® Northern Plains, April 16-19, Madison, WI  
NACA® South, Oct. 1-4, Chattanooga, TN  
NACA® Central, Oct. 15-18, Tulsa, OK  
NACA® Mid Atlantic, Oct. 22-25, Buffalo, NY  
NACA® Mid America, Oct. 29-Nov. 1, Grand Rapids, MI  
NACA® Northeast, Nov. 5-8, Hartford, CT  
NACA® West, Nov. 12-15, Spokane, WA

### 2016 REGIONAL CONFERENCES

NACA® Northern Plains, April 7-10, Madison, WI  
NACA® South, Sept. 29-Oct. 2, Charleston, SC  
NACA® Mid Atlantic, Oct. 13-16, Lancaster, PA  
NACA® Central, Oct. 20-23, Arlington, TX  
NACA® Mid America, Oct. 27-30, Covington, KY  
NACA® Northeast, Nov. 3-6, Hartford, CT  
NACA® West, Nov. 10-13, Ontario, CA

### NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Feb. 20-24, 2016: Louisville, KY  
Feb. 18-22, 2017: Baltimore, MD  
Feb. 17-21, 2018: Boston, MA



## Become a Published Author: Write for *Campus Activities Programming*®

Do you have expertise to share with others in the campus activities/student affairs field. Do you like teach others through instructional articles on programs and processes that have worked for you or your student organization? Ever just had a desire to see your name in print?

Then you're a prime candidate to become a writer for *Campus Activities Programming*® magazine. Contact Editor Glenn Farr at [glennf@naca.org](mailto:glennf@naca.org) today to share your ideas and interest in writing.

NORTHERN PLAINS MADISON, WI APRIL 16-19  
**NACA!**  
**NEON NIGHTS**

Register today! <https://www.naca.org/northernplains/pages/default.aspx>

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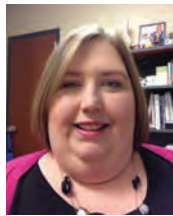
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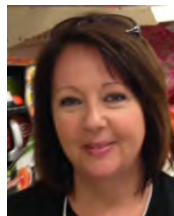
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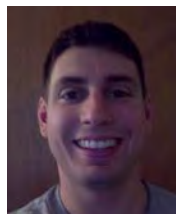
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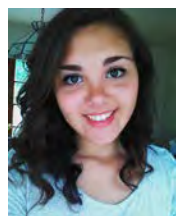
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"NOT ONLY WILL THIS SCHOLARSHIP HELP PAY FOR MY EDUCATION, BUT IT ALSO GIVES ME MOTIVATION BECAUSE MY HARD WORK HAS BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED."

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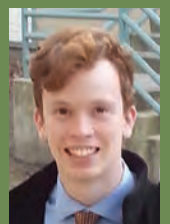
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For qualifying information, application deadlines  
and more, visit [www.naca.org/Foundation/  
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"I'M OVERJOYED TO BE NAMED THE  
RECIPIENT OF THE NACA® MID ATLANTIC  
UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP FOR  
STUDENT LEADERS."

**Nathan J. Taylor**  
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey





## 10 QUESTIONS WITH...

# Nicholas D. Barbati

**Assistant Director of Campus Life  
for Activities & Student Engagement  
Rider University (NJ)**



### 1. Leadership/management book you are currently reading?

I constantly refer to Dan Gheesling's *Clean Your Own Mirror* when looking for leadership inspiration. Aside from believing Dan is both the most relevant and relatable leadership speaker on the college circuit, I think the book's lessons are also transferable to any project or event. First and foremost, do not ask others to do what you, yourself, would not, and treat everyone in the task as you'd like to be treated. It's the simple reminders that go so far.

### 2. What recent campus program most exceeded your expectations and why?

Rider's Student Entertainment Council recently hosted Broadway legend Norm Lewis for a moderated Q&A and performance, and it truly was the most beautiful program I've ever seen on our, or any other, college campus. It's so tempting to get caught up in having the sexiest concert every year, but this program introduced our students to a classic star who has been a trailblazer in our lifetime. Mr. Lewis brought the house down, and it changed the way I view the type of events we should be hosting.

### 3. Favorite campus program in your entire career and why?

Four years ago, I created The R Factor, a singing competition show based on television's *The X Factor*. The event merged the traditional student talent show with state-of-the-art video and event production, professional talent mentoring students, and overarching goals of increasing our students' confidence and creating a closer link to our performing arts students. The result has become one of Rider's signature programs that students talk about and prepare for all year long.

### 4. Three things on your desk right now you couldn't live without for work?

Wrestling action figures given to me by my students to remind me of the people who make me excited to come to work every morning, an autograph of TV star Kathy Wakile to remind me of the type of person I want to be, and a photo of a friend who recently passed away to remind me that life is too short to sweat the small stuff.

### 5. Best teaching tool for your students?

More than any technology or tool, my students best respond to a good-old-fashioned "Nick Moment" of processing and talking to help them decide their next leadership steps. No tool in the world is greater than human connection when it comes to creativity and programming.

### 6. Technology that most benefits you at work?

As reluctant as I was to embrace it, I truly appreciate social media's ability to get information and opportunities to our students in a second's notice. Sure, 140 characters can be reductive when it comes to explaining a program's intent, but if it helps get students through the door, we can take it from there.

### 7. Most challenging aspect of your job?

Personal competition with myself to constantly one-up the previous year's programs can be exhausting, but it's also inspiring. More than anything, though, saying goodbye at graduation every year is the most challenging moment of all.

### 8. Tip you can share for balancing work with a personal life?

If you step away at night and give yourself a chance to recharge, you'll be better rested mentally for the next day. If you are really as committed to your students as you hope to be, you owe them the best "you" that you can give.

### 9. Best programming advice you've ever received?

When making a tough decision, I always hear my mentor, Cassie Iacovelli (former Director of Campus Life at Rider University) say, "It's all about the students. Make that your guiding principle." And it is when it comes to keeping them safe and their collective best interest at the forefront of major decision-making.

### 10. Something unique about your programming board?

The Student Entertainment Council of Rider University is unique in that its members constantly reinvent their position titles, job descriptions and traditional programs to most accurately represent our students' needs. At first, I struggled to keep up with the changing titles and roles, but I soon realized that, as our students evolve, so, too, do the language and approaches we must use to connect with them.

"10 Questions with ..." recognizes individual campus activities professionals for their outstanding work, letting readers know more about them. If you'd like to recommend a professional staff member to answer "10 Questions," contact Editor Glenn Farr at [glennf@naca.org](mailto:glennf@naca.org).

# That Baby Took My Dingo

By Mark Nizer



I WAS PERFORMING AT SEA WORLD IN THE EARLY '80s, a time long ago, when the skin-tight parachute pants I was wearing were considered in style. I was thrilled to be so close to the amazing creatures housed there and yearned to wander the park between shows to check out all the cool exhibits and rides.

Full disclosure here: I was early in my “glorious career” and was basically street performing at the entrance to the killer whale show to keep the incoming crowd entertained before they entered the amphitheater. I got free parking, a small fee and tips from the crowd, but on this day, I got a little more than I expected.

Between shows, I decided to wander over to the SeaWorld Sky Tower, which gave its passengers a slow rotating ride up to the top of a 320-ft. high structure and offered breathtaking views in all directions.

I had never been on it before; mostly because I didn’t want to leave my props unattended. This day, however, was a special day. A large religious group, with hundreds of members all dressed in white flowing robes, had engulfed the park and the place looked like heaven itself had descended onto SeaWorld. It was like a Biblical flood, but without the water. The place felt safe and righteous.

So there I was, 320 ft. off the ground, looking out of the “gyro” tower and decided to get my bearings by finding my performance area. That’s when I saw him. He was dressed all in white robes, looking around to see who was watching. After seeing that the coast was clear, he started going through my stuff on my prop table. First, he tried on my black derby, which not only was my special show hat that had been treated with fiberglass, but also my “collection plate” for tips at the end of my shows. “Fit’s good,” he decided, and put it on his head. Next up was my large apple I intended to juggle while on my 6 ft. unicycle, along with a couple of machetes. “Looks delicious!” he seemed to think, as he put it in his satchel, fiddled with a few more props and wandered off to enjoy the rest of the day.

The funny thing is, during all this, I helplessly witnessed this fiasco in progress from a high altitude, as the spinning platform/prison continued to rotate. To keep this guy in view, I had to continually run in the opposite direction of the rotation, smashing into everyone leaning against the glass as they looked out at the grandeur below. All I could do was scream “that guy is stealing my hat” while frantically trying to maintain a bead on his changing location. As we got closer to the ground, I (covered in sweat) positioned myself right at the door I came in, determined to be the first one out so I could get my stuff back. Of course the door that opened was the one on the opposite side. I literally clawed my way out and started sprinting toward the thief’s last location.

I cut around the dolphins, past the penguins, over to the far side of the park and there he was, sauntering along with his new hat and a snack for later.

“Excuse me,” I said. “Can I have my hat back?”

“This is my hat,” he stated, confident that no one had seen him take it.

“Really? Then why is my name written inside?” I countered.

“How did you know?” he stammered.

“Jugglers know when you touch their stuff,” I said “... And my apple! It’s in your left pocket.”

So, I got my stuff back, security escorted him out of the park and my comfort with people in white robes claiming the moral high ground began its slow but steady degradation.

MARK NIZER, a long-time NACA® member, is an award-winning juggler and comedian who incorporates 3D technology into his performances. He is represented in NACA by DCA Productions ([www.dcaproductions.com](http://www.dcaproductions.com)). For more information, visit <http://nizer.com> or contact him at [mark@nizer.com](mailto:mark@nizer.com).

“Curtain Call” is a regular feature of *Campus Activities Programming*® in which performers or agents who are members of NACA share anecdotes that help illuminate their perspectives and experiences in the college market. Entertainers and agencies wishing to submit a prospective column should contact Editor Glenn Farr at [glennf@naca.org](mailto:glennf@naca.org).