CREATING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDENT GROUP FOR ASPIRING
STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

A CREATIVE PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
MASTERS OF ARTS
IN
STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY
SARAH TRUSZ
THALIA MULVIHILL PH.D. - ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA

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ABSTRACT

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Student: Sarah Trusz

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The purpose of this project was to propose the guidelines necessary to create a new student group at Ball State University specifically for the professional development of aspiring student affairs professionals. This student group also has the potential to be implemented at other institutions of higher education. There is a missing link at Ball State University in the preparation of undergraduate students for graduate schools in the area of Student Affairs Administration or College Student Personnel. The main goal of this organization is to provide professional development opportunities for undergraduate students who seek a career in student affairs. The organization will collaborate with campus partners in other academic and educational departments to achieve student learning and developmental outcomes. An overarching result of participating in this student organization is the professional growth of individuals with a common interest or goal.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Involvement with faculty and student peers is instrumental in the success of students (Astin, 1996). This involvement also leads to positive contribution to persistence and retention among college students (Berger & Milem, 1999). The implementation of a professional development group for aspiring student affairs professionals will provide students with mentors within the field of Student Affairs. This faculty/student mentoring relationship is developmentally important (Levinson, 1996). In general, the more involved college students are in academic and social aspects of campus life, the more they will benefit in terms of learning and personal development.

Students will participate in this student organization if they are interested in pursuing a career in Student Affairs. A graduate student in the Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education program and an administrative member of the Division of Student Affairs will serve as advisors for the student group. A plan outlining the construction and implementation of this student group will be developed within this creative project.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this creative project was to complete the necessary research and planning in order to implement a student group designed to provide professional development for aspiring student affairs professionals and gather information about the experiences of participants in (and advisors of) an undergraduate student organization designed to encourage and support career exploration within the field of Student Affairs. The intention of this student group is to offer mentorship and guidance to aspiring student affairs professionals as they begin preparation for their post baccalaureate career or educational goals.
Significance of Study

There is a need for a student organization focused on the professional development of aspiring student affairs professionals at Ball State University. Ball State University has a strong Division of Student Affairs and a competitive Master of Arts program in Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education. Each of these components serves as a readily available resource that is not being used in the fullest potential. By creating this student group, Ball State University will play a key role in preparing successful future professionals in the field of Student Affairs.

Scope and Limitations

A limitation included in this project is the fact that the potential implementation of the student group for aspiring student affairs professionals has only been considered for a Ball State University.

Organization of the Paper

The organization of this creative project consists of four chapters. The second chapter includes a literature review regarding the benefits of co-curricular involvement and faculty/student mentoring relationships found within student groups. The third chapter explains the methodology used in the construction of this creative project. The fourth chapter describes the application of the key findings in research and the guidelines necessary to follow in order to implement this student group for aspiring student affairs professionals at Ball State University and other institutions of higher education. Appendices are attached to the end of the project to help guide the creation of a resource binder for members of this student organization.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on career paths in student affairs, including entry into graduate study and the profession, has been inadequate (Brown, 1987). After having little luck, I began pursuing topics related to the benefits associated with student involvement at college and faculty-student mentoring relationships. I explored the literature on these topics and examined student development theories to construct the following literature review.

**Student Development Theories**

Astin (1996) indicated that involvements with faculty and student peers are the most potent forms of positive student involvement, while noninvolvement with campus life has a powerful negative impact on student outcomes. It is also important to recognize that involvement, along with students’ perceptions of integration, is an important contributing factor in college student persistence (Berger & Milem, 1999). Levinson (1996) argued that a faculty-student mentoring relationship is one of the most complex, and developmentally important, a person can have in early adulthood. Creating a student group specifically for the professional development of aspiring student affairs professionals will promote purposeful campus involvement that may lead to increased persistence and academic benefits. Vincent Tinto (1993) supports the role of student involvement in promoting positive educational outcomes for college students. The processes of socialization whereby students become successfully socialized into the campus academic and social systems contribute to the persistence of students. Formal and informal interactions with faculty and peers play a significant role in the undergraduate socialization process (Weidman, 1989). Previous studies (e.g., Hunter, 1992; Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Williams, McEwen & Engstrom, 1990) have indicated the importance of a
mentor or sponsor in the decision to enter student affairs. With an emphasis on faculty mentors, this student organization will produce students who are confident and well equipped for the graduate school or job search process. Students in higher education are experiencing a time of emerging adulthood when “the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course,” (Arnett, 2000, p. 469). This specific stage of student development often includes a high degree of emphasis on exploration. But as students progress into their early twenties, young people make more enduring choices regarding career choice. This is why it is important to provide guidance and mentorship during this developmental time. As described by Chickering and Reisser (1993), students often take responsibility for pursuing self-chosen goals while moving towards independence, which also plays a role in finding an identity. Utilizing campus resources such as a professional development student group for aspiring student affairs professionals will be beneficial to students looking to solidify their choice in the career field.

The Benefits of Involvement in Student Organizations

Co-curricular Involvement

Universities today are continuously looking for additional learning opportunities for its students. Co-curricular programs have been implemented at institutions of higher education across the United States in order to optimize student-learning outcomes. These programs consist of first-year experience programs, transitional programs, general education courses, student government, and other student services (Keeling, Underhile, & Wall, 2007).

Research has found that students learn more when there is continuous learning outside the classroom. Sriram, Shushok, Perkins, and Scales (2011) explained that in order to “increase the integration of undergraduate learning experiences, many efforts have combined the curricular
and co-curricular worlds of students” (p. 41). Co-curricular activities come in many forms that include a range of service-learning opportunities, residential learning community involvement, student organizations, and professional development programming.

The more involved college students are in academic and social aspects of campus life, the more they will benefit in terms of learning and personal development. According to Huang and Chang (2004), the concept of campus involvement provides framework necessary to analyze and interpret relationships between college experiences and student outcomes. Co-curricular participation has led to improvements in cognitive development, interpersonal and communication skills, development of identity, and job-seeking skills. These findings demonstrated the importance of co-curricular programs in enhancing student retention and graduates’ success in life (Chao & Good, 2004).

**Co-curricular Involvement and GPA.** Bergen-Cico and Viscomi (2012) examined the relationship between college student attendance at co-curricular events and grade point average (GPA). They articulated that retention and success in college were positively influenced by out-of-class experiences. Braxton, Milmen, and Sullivan (2000) also provided that when faculty and student affairs staff worked together in creating curricular and co-curricular experiences, a positive impact resulted for students. Students were more likely to succeed in the classroom when they were able to connect a curricular topic to a co-curricular learning experience. “Students who are involved in a variety of co-curricular activities may realize the benefits of their involvement and thus develop a renewed interest in discovering the benefits of in-class activities” (Gellin, 2003, p. 754). This appreciation for academics may produce an increase of focus on classroom learning. In fact, involved students may apply what they have learned through co-curricular activities to learning in a classroom environment.
A growing body of literature has linked co-curricular student involvement and its effect on critical thinking. According to Gellin (2003), an accumulation of experiences at college may contribute to gains in critical thinking and illustrates how undergraduates can benefit from their involvement in the overall college environment. “Undergraduates must make a conscious effort to seek out groups they are interested in and, therefore, may bring a high level of commitment to their involvement,” (p. 754). This level of commitment and acquired sense of belonging found within these groups may lead to developing the abilities associated with critical thinking. Students may use critical thinking during the process of joining a group, becoming an accepted group member, and secure a leadership role.

**Co-curricular Involvement and Persistence.** What students do in college impacts learning and persistence. The time and energy spent on educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of a student’s learning and personal development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Students learn through involvement and an involved student devotes considerable energy to academics, spends quite a bit of time on campus, participates in student organizations, and interacts with faculty (Astin, 1999). According to Bergen-Cico and Viscomi (2012), the quality of students’ undergraduate experience was related to the students’ involvement in campus life. If a student was actively involved in activities of interest, that student had a better overall experience. Both the campus and its students benefited when student-learning patterns involve active modes of teaching and learning that seamlessly connect co-curricular programs. Students become more committed and dedicated to the institution when there is a greater integration into the social and academic system, particularly through student involvement in organizations (Kuh et al. 1991).
Bean (1980) provided research that proves student interaction with faculty and lack of student involvement on a college campus plays an important role in the persistence of a student. Tinto (1975, 1993) and Weidman (1989) also highlighted the importance of interaction with student peers along with interaction with faculty. They explained this to be an important part of the socialization process that ultimately increases persistence. Students who choose to take advantage of opportunities to interact are “exposed to diverse points of view through their interactions with peers and/or faculty” (Gellin, 2003, p. 754). Faculty concern helps students get through tough times such as the graduate school application process and motivates them to keep working on (Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

**Group Dynamic and Active Learning**

Students involved in student organizations receive other benefits including reduced stress, ability to manage time, and a support group. “Methods to reduce stress by students often include effective time management, social support, positive reappraisal, and engagement in leisure pursuits” (Mattlin, Wethington, & Kessler, 1990). Effective time management strategies also increase academic performance among involved students. Using one’s time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Learning is enhanced when there is a team effort involved rather than a solo race. Good learning is often collaborative and social that lacks competition and isolation. Sharing ideas among peers helps build deeper understanding and sharpens thinking about critical topics (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Students relate to what they are learning through interaction and the application to their daily lives.

**Professional Development**

Students are encouraged to explore programs designed to help them learn more about their future careers. By joining professional organizations, undergraduate students become more
appealing candidates for future employers or graduate schools. Many student organizations can secure funding for attending conferences and other professional opportunities. Specifically for students interested in pursuing a career in student affairs, they have the opportunity to investigate his or her potential workplace at the college they currently attend. A student organization with the goal of professional development can match students with internship and volunteer experiences to help students develop professionalism and promote networking (University of Louisville, 2012). Professional development for future student affairs professionals can help undergraduate students turn student leadership and employment experiences into a career (ACUI Career Center, 2012).

The Impact of Faculty-Student Mentoring Relationships

According to Levinson (1996), a mentor – mentee relationship is one of the most complex, and developmentally important, a person can have in early adulthood. Mentoring is defined in terms of the character of the relationship and the function it serves. Leaders in graduate education continuously promote the importance of mentoring and argue its role as a vital, core component of student development (Johnson, 2011). According to Russell and Adams (1997), the benefits a protégé receives through a mentoring relationship can be so valuable that the identification with a mentor should be considered a major and important task of the early career.

Typically in postsecondary education, a faculty mentor acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced (usually younger) student (Johnson, 2011). A mentor provides the protégé with knowledge, advice, challenge, and support in the protégé’s journey to becoming a full member of a particular function (Johnson & Huwe, 2003). It is important to note that research on the prevalence of undergraduate student mentoring is almost nonexistent.
Jacobi (1991) found that 67 percent of undergraduate students reported difficulty when searching for a mentor and those who did have a mentor said that the mentorship was sorely lacking. This is where the emphasis of effective faculty-student mentoring relationships becomes an important cause where student affairs professionals should focus more attention.

Mentors often facilitate professional skill and behavioral development when working with student protégés (Johnson, 2011). This is usually done through role modeling, coaching and advising. Student-faculty mentoring promotes development of professional attitudes and skills in newcomers to the professional world. Protégés are more prone to adopt a professional demeanor resembling that of their mentor and sharpen profession-specific skills crucial to future success. Many protégés benefit from networking as a part of a faculty-student mentoring relationship and excellent mentors seek opportunities to introduce protégés to important colleagues. When a protégé is associated with the network of his or her mentor, he or she enjoys more professional influence, access to power-holders and greater allocation of resources. Excellent mentoring is correlated with eventual academic job offers. Many times, a mentor’s reputation in a field extends to the protégé and he or she benefits from positive attributions associated with the mentor.

According to Erkut and Mokros (1984), professional confidence and identity development play a large role in the success of students entering the professional world. The enhancement of professional confidence and identity is one of the most enduring benefits of student-faculty mentorships. Students who identified a faculty role model reported the establishment of personal and professional priorities as a result of interacting with his or her mentor.
Another minimally explored, but still important result of student-faculty mentorship is psychological health benefits and increased personal well-being. A successful mentoring relationship resulted in higher levels of self-esteem and lower self-ratings of loneliness (Liang, Tracy, Taylor, & Williams, 2002). In the professional world, new faculty members who acknowledged having a mentor at the university reported less isolation and stress and more positive assessments of their ability to cope with the demands of academic life (Bode, 1999).

Benefits to Mentors

Rheingold (1994) suggested that the formation of mentorships with students was among one of the most rewarding decisions faculty can make. Mentors usually reap benefits such as a sense of excitement and fulfillment at seeing a protégé develop personally and professionally. They may also see more incentive to stay informed on hot topics in one’s field in order to teach and prepare protégés. Many mentors also feel rejuvenated while working with talented and creative students (Johnson, 2011). Over time, institutions may recognize faculty with track records of successfully developing subsequent generations of scholars.

Benefits to Institutions

Satisfied students are certainly more likely to become loyal and engages alumni; one might predict a relationship between the availability of mentors and level of giving and support among graduates (Johnson, 2011). There are also positive results for academic institutions when strong mentoring enhances academic success and lowers attrition among students (Campbell & Campbell, 1997). It has been shown that students who reported being mentored are more likely to mentor others in the future. If a university facilitates a culture conducive to mentorship, it helps ensure the continuation of the cycle of active career development.
Summary

Students benefit greatly from involvement in co-curricular activities. The more involved college students are in academic and social aspects of campus life, the more they will benefit in terms of learning and personal development (Huang and Chang, 2004). Studies have shown that co-curricular involvement often leads to an overall improvement in GPA (Bergen-Cico & Viscomi, 2012) and more motivation for persistence among undergraduate students (Weidman, 1989). Levinson (1996) has researched the importance of mentoring relationship in young adults and has articulated that having a mentor is one of the most important relationships a student can build. Faculty-student mentorships result in more professional development opportunities and increased confidence during the job or graduate school search process. A student organization that can bring these two elements together will result in the overall success of participating students.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this creative project was to complete the necessary research and planning in order to implement a student group designed to provide professional development for aspiring student affairs professionals and gather information about the experiences of participants in (and advisors of) an undergraduate student organization designed to encourage and support career exploration within the field of Student Affairs. The intention of this student group is to offer mentorship and guidance to aspiring student affairs professionals as they begin preparation for their post baccalaureate career or educational goals.

Methodology

The first step to the construction of this creative project involved gathering preliminary research based on the existing literature on the background of the benefits of faculty-student mentoring relationships, positive outcomes resulting from co-curricular involvement and the overall gains mentors receive as a result of involvement with a student organization. Next, a student organization with similar characteristics focused on aspiring student affairs professionals at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) was investigated to gain insight into the process of creation and implementation of the student organization in order to provide recommendations to administrators at Ball State University (BSU) who may utilize this research. After identifying key players in the creation and implementation of the student organization at BGSU, email contact was made to those individuals to initiate the interview portion of the research. These key players were identified through and online search and initial outreach via email to current members of the organization at BGSU. The information gathering interviews were conducted
over the phone and specifically focused on the creation and implementation of the student organization, the benefits given to members and advisors of the organization, and general guidelines and structure of the organization and its meetings.

**Design of Project**

Creating a professional development student group for aspiring student affairs professionals at BSU will fulfill a particular need for professional development to prepare undergraduates for the very specific graduate school and job search process found within the field of Student Affairs. Research has shown the multiple benefits of student involvement in co-curricular activities and a faculty-student mentoring relationship including the integration of the undergraduate learning experience (Sriram, Shushok, Perkins, & Scales, 2011), an increase in student success and retention (Bergen-Cico & Viscomi, 2012), and a surge in confidence when pursuing post-baccalaureate goals (Erkut & Mokros, 1984). Mentors and advisors also benefit from the involvement of a student organization in which they are able to groom and coach students interested in the mentor or advisor’s field of work (Johnson, 2011). BSU will benefit from the creation of this student organization as well. Once these well inclined students enter the workforce or begin a higher education degree at another institution, BSU’s Division of Student Affairs will be recognized for preparing students to be successful and knowledgeable in the field of Student Affairs. Students will benefit greatly from this program because they will have the support, opportunity, and encouragement to be proactive in their search for jobs and/or graduate school after graduation. Juniors will be able to start early on these processes, instead of waiting until their senior year. Freshmen and sophomores will have the opportunity to explore the field of Student Affairs before determining this as a career path for themselves.
Students may join this organization at any time and there are no membership requirements during the preliminary establishment of the organization. The group will have a faculty or staff advisor and a graduate assistant to oversee all functions of the organization. Members of the executive board will meet weekly with the advisor and graduate assistant separately from general meetings. Meetings will alternate each week in order to meet the needs of the general members and the graduating seniors. General meetings will cover a wide array of topics regarding the field of Student Affairs and include guest speakers. Senior meetings will focus solely on the application and interview process for graduate studies or career search preparation. Students will have the opportunity to interact with and learn from each other, gather ideas and tips, and build rapport as a student group while also networking with guest speakers who practice in the field.

Students will have the opportunity to take part in professional development opportunities, particularly the chance to attend a professional conference. This function of the student organization will depend on the funding received from the university and support from the Division of Student Affairs. Students interested in attending a professional conference will apply for funding and will be required to summarize his or her experience and share it with the rest of the student organization after returning from the conference. Potential conference could include the Indiana Student Affairs Association annual drive-in conference, the American College Personnel Association Next-Gen conference, or a conference in a field specific to the interest of the student organization such as NODA: the association for orientation, transition, and retention in higher education.

A main feature of the student organization will be programming during National Career in Student Affairs Month in October. This time will also be used as a key recruitment tool to
advertise the student organization. The advisor and graduate assistant will plan events throughout the month specifically correlated to the field of Student Affairs and networking for students in the student organization. These events could include a speed networking activity incorporating students and professionals, a mentee-mentor recognition luncheon, and a keynote speaker.

Students will realize that Student Affairs is drastically different than being an involved student on campus and attending graduate school or working in the field is not just a continuation of their student leadership roles. The main goal of this student organization will be to successfully prepare students for graduate school and a job in the field by giving them the resources to excel during the search and interview process and providing a vast depth of knowledge about the field of Student Affairs before they even enter it.

Summary

The implementation of this student group will increase the opportunity for professional development for students interested in Student Affairs. Students will receive confidence in knowing they are well prepared for their post-baccalaureate endeavors. Members will also receive preparation and information about the field not found anywhere else on Ball State’s campus.
CHAPTER FOUR

CREATING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDENT GROUP FOR
ASPIRING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

Project Summary

This creative project was designed to develop a student group at Ball State University to provide professional development for undergraduate students that are also aspiring student affairs professionals. Its intent is to provide outlets for members to engage in professional development and networking opportunities within the field of Student Affairs. The student organization will also provide preparatory tools for students as they pursue the graduate school search and job application process. This chapter has been created to guide the help outline the implementation of this student group at Ball State University.

The design of this project includes the following items:

- Create Student Organization and Register through Ball State University, page 23.
- Timeline and Plans for General and Senior Meetings, page 25.
Create Student Organization and Register through Ball State

This student group should be registered with the university. The process can begin by going to http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/studentlife/studentorgs/neworgs and completing the “Intent To Organize Packet.” The packet states the following information:

Details on Becoming a Recognized Student Organization:
Completing the Intent To Organize Form (ITO):
• Ball State students interested in starting a student organization that is recognized by the university must complete and submit the ITO form.
• All student organizations are required to have an advisor who must be a Ball State faculty member or professional staff member.
• All student organizations are required to have an on-campus mailing address. If you do not currently have an on-campus address, there are mailboxes located in the Student Center that are available to student organizations. If you are interested in securing a mailbox, you may speak with the support staff in the Office of Student Life and one will be assigned to your organization.

Creating and Submitting a Constitution:
• Follow the requirements as stated in the Constitution Construction Guide contained in this packet.
• All organizations submitting constitutions for consideration shall be required to include in their constitutions a statement regarding membership which limits regular membership to Ball State University students, faculty, and staff. If the statement “membership is open to…” is included, the constitution will not be accepted for consideration.

Once the Intent to Organize form is completed and the constitution is created, submit the completed ITO form and constitution to the Office of Student Life, located in Student Center 133. The ITO form and constitution will then be forwarded to the Student Activities Committee. The Committee, which convenes approximately once a month during the academic year, will review the materials. Any constitutions submitted during the summer months will be reviewed at the first committee meeting in the fall. The Committee will consider as many proposals as time allows during each meeting and the group will be notified by email of any revisions that have been requested by the Committee or in writing if recognition as a campus organization has been granted.
Marketing Flyer and Recruitment Tactics

Marketing and recruiting during Careers in Student Affairs Month in October is a good start to creating a buzz about the student organization. Since this month should be full of programming and opportunities to attract students, it’s a great kickoff for the student organization. Many current students in the organization at Bowling Green State University were “shoulder tapped” to attend a meeting. This is very typical in the field of Student Affairs and is an important tactic to utilize while advertising and creating the student organization. Information within the informational flyer should explain the goals and mission of the organization and include a list of events happening during the month. Also, it is important to include contact information in case interested students have questions about the events. The student organization at Bowling Green State University also utilizes Facebook to communicate with current or interested members. It is a great tool to post reminders about upcoming meetings and events as well as post documents articles or other media that pertains to the field of student affairs that members of the organization may find interesting. It may be in the best interest of the organization to establish a marketing chair that is comfortable with and confident in explaining the organization to potential students and who is organized to keep constant contact with interested potential members.
Graduate School Timeline and Plans for General and Senior Meetings

Graduate School Timeline Considerations – Adapted from Bowling Green State University’s Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals student organization.

There is no uniform schedule or timeline for graduate program admission in student affairs but this should assist you as you begin your journey!

**Junior Year:**
- Start researching programs on ACPAs directory of graduate programs.
  - [http://www2.myacpa.org/comm/profprep/directory/](http://www2.myacpa.org/comm/profprep/directory/)
- Ask professionals about the schools that they would recommend or have gone to.
- Contact professors and students from the different schools to talk about their graduate program.
- Look for a summer internship or set-up job shadowing opportunities in functional areas that you might be interested in getting a graduate assistantship or someday working (paid or unpaid – both are good experience!) Good places to look are the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) ([http://noda.orgsync.com/](http://noda.orgsync.com/)) and the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I) ([http://www.acuho-i.org/?tabid=125](http://www.acuho-i.org/?tabid=125)).

**Summer (August) before Senior Year:**
- Register/begin to prepare for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (if applicable) – its advantageous to complete sooner rather than later to provide enough time to prepare in case you need to re-take.
- Internship or Job Shadowing (Contact college professional staff about opportunities).

**Senior Year:**

**August through May**
- Attend Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals (ASAP) Meetings (or whatever advisor decides to name the student organization).
- Seek out mentors - Find and connect with at least two professionals on campus to bounce ideas, seek advice, and serve as references.

**September**
- Meet with faculty and staff and ask them to write a letter of recommendation for you. (May not need until later in semester). Remember to choose your references wisely and be prepared to have at least three, and give them a specific deadline. Select references that know you really well and write about your accomplishments in detail.
- Become a member of one or both national student affairs professional organizations - ACPA and/or NASPA - Obtain additional resources and incite in student affairs by joining as an undergraduate member. It is generally about $30.00 and a great thing to add to your resume.
- Start to save and create a budget for graduate school - Review the cost of applying to each institution (plus the GRE) as well as cost to visit institution and buying professional interview attire.
Self-Reflection - What do you value? How does a career in SA factor in to those values? (Will help for Personal Statement).

October
- Take the GRE.
- Institutional Reflection - What is important to you in a program? Geographic location, assistantship opportunities, cost, faculty/reputation of program (will help with your personal statement).
- Continue to review ACPA website for graduate programs to narrow down your program applications – pay special attention to application deadlines – some are as early as December - [http://www2.myacpa.org/profprep-program-directory/profprep-directory-home2](http://www2.myacpa.org/profprep-program-directory/profprep-directory-home2)
- Start to think about your statement of purpose. A statement or purpose is often a required part of the program application.
- Review institution recruitment weekend and conferences - before applying to institutions investigate the weekend(s) that they host prospective students. Students interested in housing - Also factor in weekend of OPE (Oshkosh Placement Exchange).
- Seek out institutions where Ball State University staff are alumni - alumni can give you wonderful incite to the program and what you may experience.
- Seek to finalize resume – at this point you should be polishing up your resume to be almost done.

November
- Have someone in the field and a few honest friends look over your personal statement.
- Re-Take the GRE if needed.
- Collect your letters of recommendation unless they were to be sent directly to the program you are applying for. (Give your references a timeline/deadline well in advance of the institutional program deadline).
  - Remind them if needed!

December
- Your application packets should be completed and mailed.
  - Keep a copy for your record.
  - Many programs have deadlines in January and February, however, some have rolling admissions, so pay attention to specific wording of the applications.
- Verify your recommendations have been sent.

January
- Confirm with individual schools that all of your application materials have been received.
- Continue to seek information about the interview process is for each institution. Some require interviews and others do not, but most schools require interviews for assistantships.
- Write/send thank you cards to references - purchase nice thank you cards which you can use to thank references and potential employers later in the spring.
- Focus on financial aid - fill out FAFSA online.
• Save your money for campus interviews.
• Schedule Mock Interviews at the Career Center 765-285-1522.

**February/March**
• Attend interviews as invited-research the schools in depth and prepare questions to ask while on campus.
• Try to relax while you wait it out. This will be the most relaxing time you will have for the next several years, so enjoy it! Make connections!

**April**
• Celebrate acceptances! Or, if you are not given any offers, figure out a new plan and apply the next year. There is plenty of time to go to graduate school
• Appeal the aid package or apply for scholarships/loans!

**Potential General Meeting Topics:**
• Guest speaker in the areas of admissions, orientation, student life, retention, student conduct, housing, or other departments under the Division of Student Affairs at Ball State University.
• Values and ethics discussions.
• Incorporate student development theory into a meeting to introduce students to potential coursework.
• Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education graduate student panel, invite current graduate students to participate in a panel like discussion with undergraduates interested in the field (good for National Careers in Student Affairs Month as well).

**Potential Senior Meeting Topics:**
• Guest speaker, program director of the Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education program, what reviewers are looking for in your application.
• Mock interviews, faculty and staff from within the division conduct mock interviews.
• Graduate school vent session, come and talk about any issues you’re having with the process and get out all of your frustrations.
Ideas and Tools for National Careers in Student Affairs Month

Ideas

- Mentee-mentor luncheon (may require fee if there is no funding available for the student organization).
  - Students may invite one mentor who has helped them throughout their higher education journey and recognize them at a luncheon.
- Speed networking event
  - Invite professionals within the Division of Student Affairs to participate.
  - Set up a large meeting room with two circles of chairs facing each other.
  - Have students rotate along the outside every 3-4 minutes while the professional staff stays put.
  - Provide potential questions for students to ask the professional staff in case they are unsure where to begin.
- Keynote speaker
  - Bring in a keynote speaker within the field of Student Affairs, an author, someone who has conducted research, or prominent alum in the field.
  - Open event to everyone within the Division of Student Affairs.

Tools

- Advertise the month and events over email through current graduate student and professional staff listserves and have them pass along to students they think will be interested in attending events.
- Create Facebook events to invite potential new members.
- Attend Resident Advisor, Orientation Leader, Tour Guide, and Greek Life meetings to advertise to students who are already immersed in the field.
- Create Facebook timeline graphic for all graduate and current professionals to use during the month. See the following example from 2013:

![Image of the 2013 National Careers in Student Affairs Month graphic]
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

National Organizations

It is advantageous to consider the use of materials and information gathered from national organizations devoted to student affairs while creating and implementing plans for a student group designed for the professional development of aspiring student affairs professionals. The following paragraphs include information about a few national organizations followed by information about initiatives within those organizations specifically for undergraduate students.

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)

NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Their work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 13,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and eight U.S. territories. NASPA’s mission is to be the principal source of leadership, scholarship, professional development, and advocacy for student affairs. NASPA is made up of an executive committee and a board of directors that is crucial in establishing the association’s strategic goals and ensuring that they are being achieved (NASPA, n.d. a).

The American College Personnel Association (ACPA)

ACPA has nearly 7,500 members representing 1,200 private and public institutions from across the U.S. and around the world. ACPA members include graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in student affairs/higher education administration programs, faculty, and student affairs educators. ACPA supports and fosters college student learning through the generation and dissemination of knowledge, which informs policies, practices and programs for student affairs professionals and the higher education community (ACPA, n.d.). ACPA has a
governing board made up of 12 voting members that contribute to bylaws and government and corporate relations.

**The Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA)**

NODA was chartered in 1976 and continues the tradition of orientation, retention and transition professionals who have met annually for over 40 years. The Association strives to attract a pluralistic membership and leadership and endeavors to facilitate the professional development of its members. NODA is further dedicated to inter-association cooperation, the advancement of professional and ethical standards, and the production of scholarly works. The mission of NODA is to provide education, leadership and professional development in the fields of college student orientation, transition and retention (NODA, n.d.). NODA is governed by a Board and different committee chairs that contribute to the strategies for attaining and implementing the goals of the organization.

**Preexisting Initiatives**

The national organizations mentioned previously have initiated professional development for undergraduate students. The main goal of these organizations was to provide a mentoring relationship for students interested in pursuing student affairs as a career. Students involved in a professional development group specifically for aspiring student affairs professionals would benefit greatly from attending one of the following initiatives:

- The Minority Undergraduate Fellows Program hosted by The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. The main purpose of this program is to identify and encourage undergraduate students of ethnic-minority to continue to higher education and pursue student affairs as a profession.
- The Next Generation Conference hosted by the American College Personnel Association. The purpose of this conference is to provide a unique opportunity for undergraduate students to learn about careers in student affairs.
- The Undergraduate Conference hosted by The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. This conference provides the opportunity for
undergraduates to learn more about student affairs as a possible career choice and network with their future colleagues.

- Regional conferences hosted by the Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA). These conferences aim to provide education, leadership and professional development in the fields of college student orientation, transition and retention for undergraduates and professionals.

Each of these opportunities provides an undergraduate student with a glimpse into the profession before he or she decides to pursue the career. It is important for a student group like the one outlined in this creative project to secure funding in order to send students to take advantage of these opportunities.

**Cross-Campus Partnerships**

It is important to utilize resources available within the campus community. Since a main objective of this student organization is to provide professional development, it will be imperative that the student group forms a relationship with the Career Center. Taking advantage of the resources and personnel at the Career Center will help guide activities such as resume building and mock interviews that happen during organizational meetings. Another important partnership to establish will be with the Office of Student Affairs. It is important to have the support of the Vice President or the Assistant to the Vice President when implementing events throughout National Careers in Student Affairs Month. This kind of support will translate into institutional support and could prove to be beneficial in the long run. The Division of Student Affairs could potentially be used to help with initial funding for the student group and also for the advertising of the organization and its purpose and events.

**Implementing at Other Institutions**

The outline for implementing a professional student group for aspiring student affairs professionals can be used at other institutions. It is important to gauge interest in the creation of the student group before making the effort to create one. Based on the interview conducted with
the founding creator of Aspiring Student Affairs professionals at Bowling Green State University, the creation and implementation of a student group like this one takes a lot of time and energy. Since many resources are needed to get a group like this off the ground, it will be important that research has been conducted to ensure there are proper resources at the institution to support the student group.

**Use of Informational Interviews**

I conducted four informational interviews from current and previous participants or advisors associated with Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals at Bowling Green State University. The results of these interviews are listed in Appendix F. The purpose of these informational interviews was to provide insight to myself and future professionals interested in creating a student group like the one outlined in this project. I chose to interview the founding advisor, a past student president, a former graduate student advisor, and a current member of Aspiring Student Affairs Professional. This provided perspective on what it takes to implement a professional development student group and the outcomes related to involvement in the words of participants themselves.

**Conclusion**

Research has shown that involvement in student organizations involving a mentoring component help undergraduate students persist in college and feel confident during the job search or graduate school application process (Berger & Milem, 1999, Levinson, 1996). After taking the information within this creative project into consideration, it is my hope that a student organization providing professional development opportunities for undergraduate students who seek a career in student affairs will be created at Ball State University or another institution with a captive student interest.
References


NASPA. (n.d.), b. *Factors to consider when applying to graduate school*. Retrieved from https://www.naspa.org/careers/graduate/factors-to-consider-when-applying-to-graduate-school


APENDIX A

RESOURCE BINDER

GUIDE FOR PERSONAL STATEMENTS
GUIDE TO WRITING A GRADUATE SCHOOL PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS®

1st Paragraph: The Introduction
Your intro doesn’t need to be fluffy, creative, or overly-inspiring. It is likely an admissions or selection committee of professors, students, and/or staff members will be reading your statement among many other statements. The more concisely and directly you are able to make a point, the more appreciative they will be for not having to read through crap. Your goal in this paragraph should be to briefly explain your decision to apply to graduate school, specifically in the area of Student Affairs. Try to answer the following questions in your explanation:

• Why are you choosing Student Affairs as your anticipated career?
• What is it about a graduate school program that will help you work toward your career goals?
• Why are you applying for the program at X institution?

2nd-4th Paragraphs: Your Experiences
Use the next three paragraphs to describe three different experiences you’ve had as an undergraduate student that have guided/influenced your decision to go into Student Affairs. This will help you to stand out as an individual candidate to the admissions or selection committee, and will help them to determine whether you would be a good fit with the faculty, staff, and other students involved with the graduate program. For each paragraph:

• Offer a description of an experience (ex. RA, OL, tour guide, fraternity/sorority, honor society, etc.) – if you had a particular role within the experience (ex. President), be sure to include that as well. You’re basically highlighting/reiterating something that appears on your résumé
• Give an example of one aspect of the experience that makes you most proud and/or that you were able to learn something or gain a different perspective (ex. teamwork/collaboration, exposure to and appreciation of diversity, leading a group of peers, etc.). Be sure to include WHY you are proud of this aspect or HOW you applied your new skill or perspective to other areas of your life.
• Offer an idea as to how you might carry this experience with you to graduate school. How can this experience aid in your contributions as an emerging professional?

5th Paragraph: New Experiences
This paragraph should be dedicated to what you hope to gain from a graduate school experience. Unlike the previous paragraphs where you explained why you would be good for graduate school, this paragraph is an opportunity for you to explain why graduate school would be good for you. Specifically, you should attempt to answer the following questions in this paragraph:

• What are you hoping to learn about in the classroom setting?
• What are you hoping to learn through practical experience?
• What are you hoping to learn about yourself?
6th Paragraph: Conclusion/The Future
Like most essays, the conclusion is restating the introduction with a summarizing statement of why you’re applying for a graduate program in Student Affairs. This is where your Personal Statement can get a little fluffy or inspiring, because you’ll also want to share your ultimate career goal, which can be as specific as “Vice President for Student Affairs” or as lofty as “make a difference in the lives of students”. Regardless, you want to leave the committee satisfied that you understand your potential to influence and affect future students, and how graduate school can help to prepare you for a career to help students in the best way possible.

*Adapted from Bowling Green State University’s Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals student organization
APPENDIX B

RESOURCE BINDER

REFERENCES: WHO AND HOW TO ASK
Summer is a great time to find people—think summer employers— who are willing to serve as references for your full-time job search. Kelli Robinson offers tips on how to put that important list together.

References available upon request is a statement that can make or break your job offer. Here are 10 tips for assembling a successful reference list.

1. Ask, don’t assume. Ask your references for permission to use their names. Confirm the following:
   - Do the people you include as references actually want to give you a reference?
   - Does their schedule permit time to discuss your qualifications?
   - Most importantly, what kind of reference will they be?
   When it comes to references, neutral is the same as negative, so ask your contacts to be honest: Can the people you ask to do this task give you a positive recommendation?

2. Let the professionals do the job. Potential supervisors are not interested in hearing friends or relatives talk about how nice you are. They want confirmation for their main objective: Are you going to deliver the duties of the job? Good reference sources include previous supervisors, co-workers, professors, or advisers. Think outside the box. If you voluntarily coordinated a fund-raising effort for an organization, the organization’s supervisor could be a great reference. It doesn’t matter that you weren’t paid.

3. Avoid name dropping. A reference’s name or job title is insignificant compared to the information he or she will provide regarding your strengths and weaknesses. CEO may be a loftier title than supervisor; however, who can better attest to your abilities on a daily basis?

4. Provide references with the appropriate tools. Give each reference a copy of your resume, so that he or she has a complete picture of your background. Provide a description of the job to which you are applying. Knowing the duties and responsibilities ahead of time will prepare references for questions they may be asked and help them relate your experience to the potential job.

5. Alert them to potential phone calls. Contact your references and tell them to anticipate a phone call or e-mail. Tell them the name of the Graduate Program, and the assistantship/position for which you interviewed. If you know the name of the person who will check your references, offer that information, too.

6. Keep your references informed. Were you offered the position? If so, did you accept? When will you start?

7. Thank your references. When you accept a job offer, take the time to write each of your references a thank-you note. They have been a valuable tool in your receiving an offer.
8. Keep in touch. Don’t end contact with your references. Send an e-mail, give them a phone call, or meet for lunch on occasion. You never know when if and when you may need to call upon them to be references in the future.

9. Update your list. Just like resumes become outdated, so do reference lists. As your career builds, keep your reference list up-to-date.

10. Return the favor. Your references may have been the deciding factor in your job offer. When you are asked to be a reference, say yes.
### Resume checklist courtesy of George Mason University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layout &amp; Appearance</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Career Counselor Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is my name at the top of the page and in bold? Are my address, phone number and email easy to read?</td>
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<td>Is my resume an appropriate length?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is formatting (e.g. bold, font, bullet sizes, heading styles) consistent throughout the resume? Are the headings and statements evenly spaced?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are verb tenses in the present tense for current jobs? Are verb tenses in the past tense for previous jobs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I have approximately 2-6 statements per job? (Bullet form is recommended.)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Career Counselor Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did I include the following headings: Education, Experience, and Skills?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does my education section state my official degree and expected graduation date? Did I include my cumulative GPA (if a 3.0 or above)? Is my GPA accurate?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do my statements demonstrate major accomplishments rather than routine tasks/duties? Check the statements that demonstrate your accomplishments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do my accomplishment statements start with action verbs? (See below for examples of action verbs.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do my accomplishment statements demonstrate the use of key skills? (See top skills employers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do my statements demonstrate the results of my accomplishments? Did I quantify my results (e.g. use numbers when possible)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is my resume completely free from spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

RESOURCE BINDER

THE BENEFITS OF A CAREER IN STUDENT AFFAIRS
The personal rewards of a career in student affairs are numerous (NASPA, n.d. b). Here are just a few:

**The Ability to Make a Difference**

As a student affairs practitioner, you will have the opportunity to help students during a critical time in their development. You’ll see the results of your work in the lives of individuals and the community, and build mentoring relationships with students that can last a lifetime.

**A Wide Range of Choices**

Student affairs offers a broad range of career possibilities. It also attracts people with many different interests. If you like business or technology, for example, you might consider a career in financial aid or admissions. If you've been active in student government or Greek life, you might enjoy coordinating student activities. Or, if you like to study human behavior, career counseling or residence life might be right for you.

You can consider a career in student affairs no matter what your undergraduate major is or was. Many professionals who enter the field have a background in psychology, sociology, education, or human development. But having a major in another field – from political science to art to physics – is also useful when working in an academic setting.

Your possibilities expand even more when you consider the variety of workplaces available to you as a student affairs professional. You can choose a campus based on its geographic location, its student population, or any other requirement that's important to your life plans and career goals. All colleges and universities – large or small, public or private, two-year or four-year, rural or urban – need professionals trained in student affairs.

**An Exciting Work Environment**

Student affairs professionals rarely have a boring day at the office. They perform many different types of tasks – advising groups, chairing meetings, coordinating events, overseeing budgets, and working with a range of students, staff, and faculty. The campus environment continually offers new challenges and requires new strategies to deal with them. On top of that, working with students generates its own kind of energy and excitement.

**Access to the Profession**

There are numerous entry-level positions available each year in the nation's 4,000+ colleges and universities. Because of the need for student affairs professionals on campus, your services will be in demand.

**Potential for Advancement**

A master's degree in college student affairs is your ticket to enter the profession. Through assistantships and internships, you’ll have the opportunity to gain valuable experience while you attend graduate school.
Once you enter the profession, the possibilities for career growth are limitless. New student affairs professionals who demonstrate talent can move quickly from entry level positions to roles of increasing responsibility.

Some student affairs professionals take advantage of the opportunity to pursue a doctoral degree, which gives them even more options, including becoming a director, a faculty member in a student affairs graduate program, a dean of students, or even a vice president for student affairs.

Fringe Benefits

Colleges and universities often offer an attractive benefits package. One of the greatest advantages is the opportunity for additional education – some schools provide tuition remission for employees and their family members. Student affairs professionals also enjoy comprehensive medical benefits, retirement plans, generous vacation time, and access to all of the cultural, recreational, and social opportunities that a college campus has to offer.

If the idea of a career in student affairs appeals to you, you can take these steps to learn more about the profession (NASPA, n.d.):

- Talk to student affairs professionals at your school, a nearby college or your alma mater. Talk to the senior student affairs officer, usually known as the Dean of Students or the Vice President for Student Affairs. Talk with another student affairs professional on campus – perhaps the director of orientation, the coordinator of student activities, or staff in residence life. You may want to start with a brief informational interview to learn more about what they do or set up a day of job shadowing. If you're not sure how to get started with this idea, the career services office on campus will be able to help. Also, if you are still a student or working on a campus, go a step farther and establish a mentoring relationship with one of the professionals that you talk to.

- If you are a student, you have a great opportunity to explore your potential workplace. Take advantage of every chance you can to learn how your college works and develop your skills. If you are a student, run for an office in student government or in a student organization; serve on a judicial board; be a tour guide, orientation leader, resident assistant, or peer educator; or join a student organization. If you are not sure where to start, ask a member of the student activities staff.

- Work in a student affairs office. Ask about internships, jobs, and volunteer opportunities in student affairs offices on campus. Consider possibilities during the summer as well as during the school year. You'll get hands-on experience and have a chance to interact with professionals in the field.
• If your college offers an undergraduate class geared toward learning more about student affairs (or related paraprofessional or leadership classes), sign up. Often, these classes are taught by student affairs professionals and can help you learn more about your interests and preferences, as well as what it is like to work on a college campus.

• Join a student affairs professional association. Undergraduate students can become a member of NASPA for $25 a year. Benefits include member discounts, access to publications and online resources, and a range of professional development opportunities (including regional/national conferences and workshops).

• Explore programs designed to help you learn more about careers in student affairs and higher education. These include the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program, targeted toward increasing the number of ethnic minority, LGBT, and persons with disabilities in student affairs; the National Orientation Directors Association's (NODA) internship program; and the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International's (ACUHO-I) STARS College and Housing Internship programs. Learn more about graduate study. You'll find graduate programs in student affairs (also known as "college student personnel") and higher education at colleges and universities across the country. A helpful resource is NASPA's comprehensive online Directory of Graduate Programs. Once you've identified programs that you're interested in, call, write, or e-mail them to request more information. Ask for admissions, curriculum, and financial aid information, as well as information about possible assistantships and fellowships. If possible, visit the campus, meet with current students and faculty in the program, and talk with recent graduates.
APPENDIX E

RESOURCE BINDER

FACTORS TO CONSIDER
NASPA receives quite a few requests for information about graduate degree programs in student affairs. One of the most commonly asked questions is "does NASPA rate graduate preparation programs so that students can apply to the 'best' ones?" The answer is no. Selecting the right graduate program for you is a personal decision, based on a number of different factors.

We recommend that you think about the following things when selecting a degree program in student affairs:

- What type of a program interests you most? One with an emphasis in student development? higher education administration? counseling? public policy? or, another related field (i.e., community college, multicultural emphasis, etc)?

- Are you interested in full-time or part-time study? Do you want to take classes during the day, in the evening, or on weekends? Are you interested in classes that are primarily online, campus-based, or a mixture of both?

- What type of institution would you like to attend? Public or private? Urban, rural, or suburban? Residential or commuter? Research or comprehensive?

- Where do you want to study? In a particular part of the country, or particular state? Are you willing to move? Or, do you want to stay close to home?

- What types of assistantships and/or professional experiences are available to students? Research opportunities? Publication opportunities? Assistantship and/or internship opportunities? Professional presentation opportunities?


- What are the faculty members' areas of expertise or research interests? Are they involved in professional associations? What is the availability and quality of mentor/advisor relationships?

- What are the program's academic requirements? Course requirements? Electives? Does the program require oral or written comprehensive exams? A thesis or dissertation? Are internships/practica available? How many years does it "typically" take students to complete the degree?

- What are your personal career goals? Do you want to work in a particular functional area (i.e., Greek life, residence life, assessment)? Does the institution have student affairs departments in those areas?
• How important are peer and classmate interactions? Are your peers recent college graduates or have they been in the field for a number of years?

• What types of positions have most recent graduates of the program taken? Is there an active alumni network?
APPENDIX F

OVERVIEW OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS
INTERVIEW #1

FORMER GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISOR OF ASPIRING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS (ASAP) AT BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Conducted March 12, 2014 at 12pm over the phone

Duration: 26 minutes 40 seconds

1. What was your affiliation with Aspiring Student Affairs Professionals?
   - She was the advisor for the 2012-2013 academic year.
   - She went through training initially before starting advising the organization through the Division of Student Affairs.

2. What type of time commitment was this involvement for you? How often did the group and exec board meet? When did you meet with staff advisor?
   - She was given practicum hours to devote to the student organization which entailed about 10 hours a week.
   - Met for an hour every other week with the staff advisor.
   - Met for an hour every week with the president of the student organization.
   - Met with the entire executive board every week or every other week depending on what needed to be accomplished.
   - General and senior meetings every week for about an hour to an hour and a half.
   - She did a lot of one-on-ones with ASAP members during practicum office hours as well and updated social media and calendars.

3. What kinds of students make up the executive board?
   - Students that were motivated and dedicated to be there.
   - This was for the benefit of the students involved.
   - Sometimes this took grooming for younger members so the leadership would persist in a role for more than one year.
   - Looked for people that were creative and had a good vision for what they wanted out of the student organization.

4. What were the main goals for this student group?
   - Professional development regarding student affairs as a career.
   - This is why it is important that the group was student run so they may tell the advisor what they needed.
   - Student Affairs is a different experience than just being a student leader in college.
   - Offered chances for students to attend graduate level classes to get insight into what courses would entail.
   - Connect students to mentors in the field and to other students interested in the field.

5. As an advisor, what was the biggest benefit you saw for students participating?
People don’t really think about Student Affairs as a career. It gave students a chance to almost “try out” the career before they devoted a graduate school education to the field.
This is also another leadership opportunity for students with a lot of career development whether they went into Student Affairs or not and translate that information into any future career.
Partnering with the Division of Student Affairs during National Careers in Student Affairs month to educate peers.

6. Were there benefits to you as a mentor of the group? What were they?
   • Went into wanting more experience advising a student organization that wasn’t Greek related.
   • She made some awesome connections with the students and learned how to be a mentor for those students.
   • Students would make decisions that she wouldn’t agree with and she learned to exercise patience and diplomacy.
   • Thrived off of working with students and offering them advice.

7. What types of professional development opportunities were offered to students?
   • Students attended the Next Gen conference through ACPA and utilized funding from the Division of Student Affairs.
   • Students also attended the Ohio College Personnel Association conference.
   • Students were chosen and given funding based on an application process, there was little or no cost to the student.
   • Students had to do a presentation to ASAP about the conference and were also required to do an assessment about what they learned and how they felt about their experiences.

8. How was the student group funded?
   • They were given a fairly minimal budget through the funding board within OCA (Office of Campus Activities) at Bowling Green State University.
   • Partnered with the Division of Student Affairs in many ways and in turn the Division helped fund some of those events.
   • Funding was used to buy marketing materials such as banners and pop ups and also sent students to conferences.
   • A lot of money isn’t needed, there are plenty of free resources that can be utilized and help the group prosper.

9. How was success measured?
   • There wasn’t any formal assessment, mostly informal.
   • Mostly did goal setting within the organization and worked to meet those goals on some level.
   • Measure membership numbers or how many members got into graduate school or a professional job after graduation.

10. What types of marketing tactics were used to promote the student group? Were they effective?
    • Used a Facebook page and other social media to promote information about the student group.
    • Used OrgSync to connect with students.
• Tabling and advertising in the Student Union and participated in “Get Involved” fairs each semester.
• Sent members to clubs and organizational meetings to talk about the student group (Resident advisors, tour guides, PanHellenic meetings, etc.).
• Participating in Careers in Student Affairs month was a great marketing tactic.
• She was able to send ASAP meeting announcements over the listerv to the College Student Personnel graduate students in hopes of “shoulder tapping” through her cohort members, used word of mouth.

INTERVIEW #2

FOUNDING ADVISOR OF ASPIRING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS (ASAP) AT BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Conducted March 14, 2014 at 10am over the phone

Duration: 21 minutes 22 seconds

1. What was the main purpose for forming ASAP?
   • Part of the creation of the group was to meet a job requirement while she was working in the Division of Student Affairs as a Doctoral Student in the College Student Personnel Program.
   • Nothing existed for her to use when forming this student group. She built it from the ground up. She spent about two years gathering information and resources in order to start the student group.
   • There was a large interest among student interns within the Division of Student affairs to join the field.
   • The purpose of this group was to help the seniors and also cater to junior and sophomores who were considering Student Affairs as a career path, but may not know much about it.
   • She utilized resources on campus, specifically departments within the division, to provide information, expectations, and interview questions they used for their graduate assistants in their office.

2. When did the organization start using a graduate assistant in an advisory role?
   • She went on to get a full-time job and the student group needed someone who was able to give more of a time commitment.
   • Advising the student group turned into part of a practicum opportunity within the Division of Student Affairs and the practicum student spent about 10-15 hours a week on the student organization.

3. Initially how did you market ASAP? Was it effective?
• Mostly through National Careers in Student Affairs month programming (posters and flyers).
• Sending out information through the Division of Student Affairs listserv in hopes that administrators would send it to students.
• Worked with the career center to identify students who may be using that resource who may be interested in student affairs.
• Word of mouth marketing.

4. How often did the organization meet and where?
• The student group always met in the student union and was strategic about the time since most students were already overinvolved and student leaders with big time commitments.
• Met every week, but broke it up into senior meetings and general meetings.

5. What typically happened at those meetings?
• General meetings: introduction to student affairs and the functional areas.
• Senior meetings: grad school and job search preparation.

6. What challenges did you face when forming this student organization?
• What information to cover in the meetings and how to give students a good breadth of what the field of student affairs really entailed.
• Intentional about bringing in professionals to talk about functional areas.
• What would make the student organization and the field enticing to students? Students would come to one meeting and stopped attending because they weren’t drawn in.
• She was a one-woman show and it took a lot of time and effort into the organization, which made it personally challenging.
• It is a student driven organization, but since the students don’t have the necessary knowledge, they depend a lot on the advisor.

7. What tactics did you use to measure the success of ASAP?
• During general member meeting, she assessed the interest of the members and what were things they were eager to learn about.
• Never really took time to go back and measure though.

8. What benefits were you hoping students gained through participating in ASAP?
• A main feature of the student group is the option to attend professional development conferences.
• The first year that ASAP was created, students attended the Ohio College Personnel Association (OCPA) conference and gathered information and presented an educational session to the rest of the group.
• Students only know about the experiences they’ve had in their student organizations, it is important to inform students about all of the other opportunities and facets of the field.
- Teaching students about budgets and governance is something they never had to opportunity to take advantage of until this student group was formed.

9. What benefits did you gain personally by being involved in ASAP?
   - Other than working in the office, she didn’t have a lot of contact with students. She was able to work with students one-on-one and on a more personal level while they were truly in their element.
   - Having conversations about the future with strong students was very rewarding for her.

10. Did you have any funding when creating ASAP?
    - No funding initially, but currently the student organization applies for funding through the university.
    - The organization also receives financial support from the Division of Student Affairs.

INTERVIEW #3

FORMER PRESIDENT OF ASPIRING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS (ASAP) AT BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Conducted March 18, 2014 at 12pm over the phone

Duration: 15 minutes 3 seconds

1. How did you hear about ASAP?
   - During National Careers in Student Affairs month and she heard an announcement about it. “Shoulder tapping.”
   - She joined the organization after it had been around for about two years.

2. Why did you join initially?
   - She knew she wanted to go into Student Affairs and began going to the meeting and got good things out of it that she wasn’t getting anywhere else.
   - There was a lot of foundational education about what Student Affairs actually was and peaking her curiosity.

3. How long were you a member?
   - Two years during her junior and senior year

4. What positions did you hold during your time in ASAP?
   - The first year she was a general member and the following year she was the president of the organization.

5. What did those positions entail?
   - As a regular member, she was fairly active. She was probably the only person who was not a senior that was attending the meeting and acted as a cheerleader to the older students.
   - As president, she designed her role as it went. She worked with the advisor to create what she thought the students wanted. She spent a lot of her time planning
the meetings and implementing a timeline that kept the organization on track with
the graduate school application process.

- She also tried to design certain meetings for those on the graduate school track
  and for those just wanting more information.

6. What did you gain as a result of participating in ASAP?
- She made a strong connection with the advisor who eventually turned into a
  mentor for her.
- She spent a lot of time outside of the student group meetings with the advisor.
- She said it felt like a cohort going through this same process all at once. It really
  brought together students from different areas on campus with a commonality.
- I gave her a leg up in grad school. She was exposed to the field and had more of
  an understanding before getting to graduate school, which really helped her in the
  long run.

7. How did participation in this student group help you in your future endeavors/other
   professional endeavors?
- Participation in this group was the biggest help during grad school interviews.
  She walked in confident and knew what to expect.
- She was prepared even down to the items in her purse during interview weekends.
  These were things she would not have known without a fantastic mentor in the
  field through this organization.
- She was given a lot of feedback regarding interview techniques that made her
  stand out in the process.

8. What were your interactions with advisors of the group like?
- She tried to hold a regular weekly meeting with the advisor.
- She became very close to the advisor and was able to share professional and
  personal goals with her.

9. Did you ever attend conferences through sponsorship of this student group?
   a. If yes, how did this benefit you?
- Never attended a conference.
- But, many doors were opened for her through professional development and
  networking during her participation in this student group.
- During her senior year, the advisor and other graduate students nominated her for
  an OCPA (Ohio College Personnel Association) award and she ended up
  receiving the award. This was a big deal to her to be honored in such a way.

10. What types of topics were covered during meetings?
- “Grad school boot camp”.
- Mock interview sessions to prepare for Interview Days.
- Lesson on Student Development Theory and current graduate students came to
    speak to the group.
- The group went through the individual functional areas and often accompanied
    that with a guest speaker to get practical and theoretical connections.
- Attempted to do current events and assigned readings, but these weren’t always
    successful.
- The advisor did an ‘inclusive language’ activity with students to create a
    developmental piece.
11. What would you change about ASAP?
   - Wants to see more of a connection with the different departments on campus to reach students.
   - Use National Careers in Student Affairs Month as a large jumping off point.

12. What else would you like me to know about your involvement with this student group?
   - Nothing else.

INTERVIEW #4

CURRENT SENIOR MEMBER OF ASPIRING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS (ASAP) AT BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Conducted March 19th, 2014 via email exchange

2. Why did you join this student group?
   - She joined ASAP because her Greek House Director at Kappa Kappa Gamma was a Graduate Assistant advisor for the organization.
   - She had one-on-one meetings weekly with her and after some weeks she suggested that I go to a meeting to see what a career in Student Affairs is.

3. How long have you been a member?
   - For about one year.

4. How often did you attend meetings/how involved were you with the student group?
   - She attends meetings weekly.
   - She is also on the executive board as the membership chair. She is quite involved in the group but mentioned she could definitely do more for this organization.

5. Are you pursuing a graduate education in the field or a job?
   - Yes, she pursuing a degree in Student Affairs and attending Ball State University in the fall.

6. What did you gain as a result of participation in this student group?
   - Each meeting she learned something new about student affairs. The organization had guest speakers from a variety of functional areas come and tell their stories. This was interesting to her especially when someone came from one she was not necessarily well informed about.
   - There was a meeting on the history of Student Affairs and workshops to better her professional development.
   - ASAP prepared her for her graduate school interviews with mock interviews with BGSU current College Student Personnel students. This made her feel more confident going to interviews.
   - Whenever she lost motivation or was unsure of something within the hectic graduate application process there were people there to answer her questions and to support her every step of the way.

7. How did participation in this student group help you in your future endeavors/other professional endeavors?
It gave her a greater insight into the field of Student Affairs. Even though she was only a member for one year, she heard stories from others that inspired her to follow her dreams in helping students.

- The professional development from mock interviews, resume and leadership workshops helped her improve professional skills.
- The most important part for her was the graduate school support. Applying to grad school can be very stressful and confusing. Whenever she got stuck on a question or did not know where to find an answer this group was always there to help. Also, the organization had graduate school timelines that kept her in line and focused while completing applications.

8. How did you interact with advisors of this student group (grad students and professionals)?

- She interacted with the advisors a lot. Since her previous mentor moved to Texas, she turned to the current advisors for help throughout the process of applying to graduate schools.
- She learned a lot from the professional staff that came to meetings and kept all their contact information for the future.

9. Did you ever attend conferences through sponsorship of this student group?

a. If yes, how did this benefit you?

- She was sponsored to attend ACPA but is unable to attend because of personal commitments.
- She was able to help with the College Student Personnel program interview days.

10. What types of topics were covered during meetings?

- There are many different topics. One week President Mary Ellen Mazey spoke at the meeting and that was pretty amazing!
- The group covers different functional areas, summer internship possibilities, resume building, graduate school search, mock interviews, speed networking with different professionals to hear about different functional area, and are able to participate in leadership workshops.

11. What did you dislike about this student group?

- Most of the members are already very involved students on campus so it is sometimes hard to get people on the executive board.
- But overall she has loved the organization and doesn’t think she would be attending Ball State in the fall without its help and support.

12. What else would you like me to know about your involvement with this student group?

- Every school should have this organization to help prepare students.
- Sometimes it is marketed as a professional development organization instead of strictly for Student Affairs in order to help a wider array of students.