



# THE SIGNPOST

Spring 2015

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## Tweet, Tag, and Share

Did you know that NCHO has a **new** Twitter handle?\*

We've taken out the underscore.

Follow us today: **@NCHO1973**



Our Twitter account can be a great space to share ideas with one another between conferences.

\*New Twitter Handle: You will need to re-follow us even if you followed the old account.

\*\* Twitter Tip: When you tag us, put the tag at the end of your message instead of the very beginning, this way anyone following @NCHO1973 will be able to see the tweet.\*\*

## Save the NCHO Conference dates:

2015 NCHO Conference: **Gateway to the Future**  
October 12-14 - *ECU*

<http://ncho.org/conferences/annual-conference/>

Want to take a bus from Greensboro to ECU? - need 50 people at \$50/person

**2016 NCHO Conference** - October 10-12, 2016 - *Winston Salem*

# Connect Four or More:

Building relationships and partnerships in higher education

**By: Mindy Bliss**

Director of Residence Life & Housing, Mars Hill University

NCHO President 2015

There are many ways to develop professionally, going to a conference, participating in a webinar, reading a book/journal/news article, etc. All of these are great ways to increase one's knowledge, however one of the best ways to develop professionally is to connect with another professional.

During Mars Hill University's 2015 Spring Break, DeAndre Howard and I made a point to visit other professionals in our area. This adventure did take us out of the office for 3 days, but the benefits we received from our outing outweighed our absence from our very own offices.

During our adventure we were able to visit several campuses that we had not been to and connected with some old friends that we had not seen in a while. I now wish that we had taken "selfies" at each location to make our tour, but my mind does not work on the "selfie" waves.

One of the best parts of our time was just sitting and discussing issues. I know that I am not alone when issues arise on campus, but it was a much needed reminder that I am not alone. Many professionals are going through the same challenges across the state, country and world. The "B" word often comes up in many discussions with other higher education professionals, which is "the budget." Whether you are a small private or a large public institution, budget plays a vital role in daily administration. Determining budget priorities and how to fund them in a timely manner weighs heavily on my plate at Mars Hill University. As one parent reminded me on check in day last August,

*"We do not mind an old building, but we cannot tolerate a dirty building."*

This was a reminder for me to look at my buildings with new eyes each time I enter and reflect on areas of need and what I can do with the funding available to spruce it up and address issues of concern.

I encourage each of you to reach out to another professional in our state. This can be done via phone, skype, go to meeting, old fashioned visit or whatever new fangled way that is past my technological abilities. Connecting with other professionals helps to ground me in the quest for perfection. Making connections with other professionals also gives me a good sounding board to throw ideas at. I also enjoy helping others if they have a conundrum that is perplexing them.

Another way to think about it is as follows:

Do you have a list of 10 people you could contact that are not at your institution to discuss an issue or issues that you needed fresh eyes on? If so, then great! Keep on connecting. If not, then what are some ways that you can make connections?

LinkedIn is a great resource to connect with other professionals. There are several groups that you can connect with for higher education including NASPA, ACPA, ACUHO-I, ASCA and more. Also take all of these business cards that you have from your last conference and connect with them on LinkedIn. Business cards are great, but I find that I reach out to people on social media more than I call them.

You can connect to organizational pages on Facebook and Twitter. Then you will receive their daily feeds on hot topics. Have you set up a profile on [www.SEAHO.org](http://www.SEAHO.org) and connected with others within our region?

Subscribe to list serves. NCHO has one that you can subscribe to. I have used it on more than one occasion to ask for assistance on an issue. Go to [www.ncho.org](http://www.ncho.org) and enter your email in the box to subscribe to the list serve.

Set up a campus visit with a neighboring institution. It may be just for an hour, but it is well worth the effort. For institutions with budget constraints, connecting with another institution is a great way to see if you can have joint training for professional, graduate and/or student staff. In many cases, we do not have the budget to bring in a speaker. However, if we work with another institution(s) we can make it happen.

I am sure that there are many more ways that you can connect with professionals. Let me know and I will share them with the state. Keep up the great work and remember you are never alone out there. There is always someone you can reach out to for assistance. Not trying to be creepy, but when you think about it we spend quite a bit of our time helping others and solving problems. It is part of my daily life and one of the major benefits that I find in working in higher education.

Keep on connecting!

*Tell us how you connect today on Twitter using: **#connect4** and **@NCHO1973***

## **New Professionals Corner**

*By: Jameson Sellers, NCHO's SEAHO Representative*

The term "New Professional" is typically used to categorize someone within their first 3 years post graduate school or newly entered into the field of Student Affairs. In my mind, this term is accurate and makes complete sense when I consider the time it took to adjust, adapt, and learn the work I am so passionate about. With this said, I consider where I am as I finish up my 3rd year post graduate school and I can't help think, "What does this mean for my professional development given I will be post 3 years yet still working in an entry level position?" A question I think several of my colleagues have asked themselves at some point during their time in an entry level position if past that 3 year mark.

This is a tough, yet honest question as it is imperative that this advanced or experienced (whichever term seems less superior) group of entry level professionals gets the attention and development needed to continue successfully in our field. This includes but is not limited to participating in leadership opportunities via committees, meetings, professional organization involvement; structured mentorship opportunities; formal collaboration efforts between other offices and institutions; increased responsibility within the position; most importantly continuous conversations with a supervisor about opportunities for growth within the department and institution. I urge supervisors not to assume that because employees are successful and excelling at their work, they are still growing and developing as a professional. Those two do not necessarily go hand-in-hand and our students and your employees deserve better.

As someone going into their 4th year, I expect very specific conversations to happen with my supervisor about what it is I can continue bringing to the organization and if there are still opportunities for me to grow. If not, my hope is that I will be encouraged to look at advanced job opportunities or given additional responsibilities that will allow the ceiling to heighten so I don't remain stagnate in my position. This is exactly where it begins though, honest and transparent conversation; action to follow should I still be the best fit for my current position.

# After the Waiting Room

By: *Isabella Kwai, Duke University Class of 2016*

On Thursday mornings, I find myself sitting on the plush blue sofa, waiting for my name to be called. There are a few of us here, waiting quietly. A tall, jock-ish-looking guy with blond hair looks out the window. A small girl in leggings scrolls on her iPhone. I don't look at any of them, and they don't look at me. It's a little awkward, but it's also nice not waiting alone.

"Bella?" I turn and it's Gary in his usual black turtleneck, smiling at me. Instantly, I feel a little better. I follow him to his office, out of the waiting room at Duke's Counseling and Psychological Services.

This February was Mental Health Awareness Month at Duke, a month that celebrates transparency about mental illnesses and highlights the various support services available to students. In my age bracket, 1 in 4 young people will experience mental un-wellness at some point, and suicide continues to be a leading cause of death. Yet despite its overwhelming prevalence, mental health remains a murky topic that often needs the veil of anonymity to be comfortably talked about. There have been improvements at Duke—more students are openly sharing about their own struggles with mental health, and the stigma against going to CAPS seems to be diminishing.

Seeing a counseling at CAPS is often brought up as an intervention. But what does counseling really involve? What happens after the waiting room? And will it really help you?

So, let me be entirely honest and open in what I'm about to write. Real honesty can be so difficult to find in conversations about mental health, yet it is so powerful, and vital if we are to normalize and support those who are suffering. I have struggled with my mental health deeply, and have been seeing a counselor for about four months now. Being at Duke has brought about both my best and worst memories of living. I have had moments where I've been sick with misery

and consumed with self-loathing. I have also felt ecstatically happy and grateful.

But there was a point, last semester, where I was not well at all. I was faking positivity to myself every day and pep-talking myself out of bed, throwing on smiles when all I wanted to do was cry. I felt as if I was worthless—achieving nothing, doing nothing, even though I knew rationally that that wasn't true. I would look at my schedule, teeming with coffee appointments, class assignments, deadlines and feel utter hopelessness. People seemed unreachable. Duke seemed unbearable.

Yet even when it became apparent something was wrong, I did not immediately seek help. At the back of my mind was a sinister whisper that refused to go away. It shamed me and angered me, and prompted me to deny my feelings further. Out of everyone at this school, why did I need help? Why had I failed?

It was the possibility of feeling good again that pushed me to make an appointment at CAPS. I was beginning to fear that I would only know life through my depressive feelings. It was a horrifying thought and I did not doubt that if I let it go far enough, I would get hurt. A part of me cared about that. So a few weeks later, I found myself in a quiet, calm room with dim lights where I was offered, not a quick fix or someone pushing me on "how I felt", but a chance. A chance to understand myself, in the midst of these complicated emotions and values. A chance to get out – to get better.

I took it. Eight sessions later, I think going into counseling has been one of the best decisions I've ever made. I cannot overstate the liberating relief I feel when my emotions are validated instead of dismissed. Every week, Gary and I sit down together and simply chat about my week. I tell him what has disturbed me, and what has empowered me. He listens intently and asks reflective questions. What was it about this situation that hurt me? Imagine I could tell this person anything, no holds barred – what would I say?

The answers have surprised me. In fact, I've learned to accept that, despite being in my own mind for twenty-one years, I know very little about myself. Our sessions are like an independent study into my own persona, where I examine how I react to certain situations and why they incite certain emotions. I often wonder if I see myself accurately, or if I am too harsh. I have learnt to catch myself and re-assess when I self-hate. How much do we all think reflectively about our internal processes and memories? In this uncertain stage of life, I believe the insights counseling can yield are useful to any young person.

This is not to say that counseling is always helpful, and that it solves everything in mental health. The exploratory nature of it makes everyone's experience varied and unique. Yet the stereotypical image of lying on a couch and talking about how you feel robs counseling of the complexity it deserves. For me, it is much more than that—it's an intimate leap into my own mind that is exhilarating, uncomfortable, and confronting. It's helped me determine my values and priorities, and taught me that emotions are actually a subconscious reaction to whether these are upheld. It's showing me, slowly, how to be happier.

I don't want to speak for anyone but myself, on what it is like to step into Gary's room every week. But if you're feeling pressure that's building and building, if you find yourself despairing, if you're crying in the bathroom stalls, and you don't know what to do, listen to me. Your mental health is an important—perhaps the most important—thing. It stays with you long after physical health diminishes. It can heal, and it can kill. Your emotions are not supposed to be repressed and hidden. Your emotions are trying to protect you from harming yourself. Please give CAPS a chance, if you haven't already, even if you have to wait.

Maybe I'll see you in the waiting room, and we can wait together.

### **When Isabella shared this article on her Facebook Page, she included this introduction:**

*This was a very scary piece to write, but I wish it didn't have to be. It took me a long time to stop being ashamed about my mental health, and an even longer time to seek any kind of help. How tragic, how terribly tragic, that we live in a society where something so common to the experience of youth is treated with such discomfort and stigma. We are in perhaps the most unstable, uncertain, confusing time of our lives - how could we not falter sometimes? Your mental health is really, really important. Not taking care of it can hurt you badly, just like your body can.*

*So I wanted to give an insight, as honest as I could possibly make it, into what counseling has been like for me. And I hope this finds you well, and if it doesn't, I hope you know that it is alright to not be well. I hope you know that it truly is hard to be here sometimes, that I think so and others think so, and that feeling that way is not weak or shameful, not at all.*

*How do you talk to your students about mental health issues on campus?*

Tell us on Twitter using **#WaitingRoom** and **@NCHO1973**

### **ICYMI:**

The January/February issue of the *Talking Stick* highlighted the top 5, but we want to give a special shout out to **North Carolina State University** (#18), recognized by [TopCounselingSchools.org](http://www.topcounselingschools.org) for "Leading the way with Wellness Centers for Students".

Check out the full list here:

<http://www.topcounselingschools.org/universities-wellness-centers-for-students/>

# Professional Development Calendar

## Twitter Chats:

#SAChat - Every **Thursday at 1pm and 7pm**

#WISAchat - Every **Wednesday at 12pm**

## Upcoming Webinars:

### Student Hunger on Campus: An Emerging Crisis

Wednesday, April 15, 1:00pm

<http://www.studentaffairs.com/webinars/148.html>

### En Sus Voces: Latinos Navigating and Working in a Community College Environment

Thursday, April 16, 3:00pm

<http://bit.ly/1yeOTI3>

### Universal design: Making your program accessible to all students

Tuesday, April 21, 2:00pm

<http://www.studentaffairs.com/webinars/136.html>

### Defining Title IX Roles/Clery Act Roles - A Live Briefing

Wednesday, April 22, 1:00pm

<https://www.naspa.org/events/defining-title-ix-roles-clery-act-roles>

### Same Generation, New Challenges: Transforming Advising for New Professionals

Wednesday, April 22, 3:00pm

<https://www.naspa.org/events/sainvest-advising-helping>

### Student Leadership Development in the Digital Age

Thursday, April 23, 1:00pm

<http://www.studentaffairs.com/webinars/149.html>

### Title IX Investigations: Interviewing Hints, Tips and Techniques

Tuesday, April 28, 1:00pm

<http://www.studentaffairs.com/webinars/154.html>

### Advanced Supervision Strategies

Thursday, May 7, 2:00pm

<http://www.studentaffairs.com/webinars/151.html>

## Hold these Dates:

NCHO's Pro-Devo and New Professional Chairs are hoping to gather a group to catch a Durham Bulls baseball game on May 29th or 30th!

# 2015 - A Year of Greatness

By: Ben Huff, UNC-Greensboro Class of 2015



You know, every new year brings about a plethora of mantras— “New year, new me” seems to be the most common one. But what about “New year, great me?”. In my current position as a Senior Resident Advisor, my staff and I have adopted the phrase “#Greatness” into everything that we do. And “Greatness” is the word that I’m taking with me into 2015!

Now, what defines greatness? Greatness is more than a word, containing two syllables and nine letters. It is a lifestyle—a commitment to being a better you than you ever thought possible. And that’s just what #Greatness means to me. In order to have Greatness, you first have to evaluate where you are in life. Are you happy where you are? Where do you see yourself in 5/10/20 years? Are you on your way to making the most out of your abilities? These are some of the critical questions that I’ve asked myself when it comes to defining what Greatness means to me. And truly, it’s waking up every morning, knowing in your heart that today is the day that you make a difference, that today is the day you make an impact, and that today is the day you go on the adventure of your life.

I am nearing the end of my time at UNC-Greensboro, and Greatness is something that I have been striving for from the moment that I first set foot on campus. Over the past 3 1/2 years, I’ve been immensely lucky and honored to have held some of the most prestigious positions that a student can hold. From my work in Housing & Residence Life, to

New Student & Spartan Family Programs, and every opportunity in between, Greatness is what I have been striving for. Each morning, I wake up and continue to think about ways that I can better not only my current residents, but the campus and the greater Greensboro area.

As a student leader, I plan to live a life full of Greatness by continuing to learn and grow in my passion for helping students, preparing for graduate school, and preparing for life in general. Each day, if I’m having an impact on either my residents, my staff members, or myself, then I am living a life full of Greatness. Outside of my leadership role, I plan on continuing to explore what it that I value in myself and creating a Great life.

I hope and wish for all of you to have a 2015 that is full of Greatness!! Now, go forth and be Great!

*Care to share what's made this year great?*  
Use **#Greatness** and **@NCHO1973** on Twitter!

## About the Author:

*Benjamin “Ben” Huff is a Senior Resident Advisor at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He has also worked in orientation and student conduct. He is currently working on two degrees: a B.A. in Political Science. He will be enrolling in the Higher Education Leadership program at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, GA for the Fall 2015. Ben is passionate about working with upperclassmen residents, incorporating civic engagement in residential environments, LGBT-identity development, student conduct, and access to higher education. Outside of his role as a student and SRA, Ben enjoys the outdoors, binge-watching Netflix, and trying new recipes! You can follow Ben on Twitter at @ben\_huff!*



Have you seen the Sundance Film that is making headlines across the nation about sexual assault on campus and how cases are handled? We know our students are watching, more importantly, we know their parents are watching. With screenings of "The Hunting Ground" taking place across the country and around the state, this is our chance as student affairs educators and administrators to stay ahead of the concerns that our constituents may raise as they reflect on the stories shared in this documentary.

For more information on the film go to: <http://www.thehuntinggroundfilm.com/>

**Share these screening dates and locations with your colleagues on campus:**

April 16th - **UNC Chapel Hill - Caroll Hall 111 - 7pm**

April 22nd - **NCSU - Witherspoon Theater - 6:30pm**

April 22nd - **UNC Wilmington - Lumina Theater - 7pm**

April 28th - **High Point University - Extrordinaire Cinema, RG Wanek Center - 5pm**

May 1st - **Winston Salem - Aperture Cinema - Multiple showtimes**

**The Signpost is in need of articles from**

**YOU**

**Please consider writing articles for The Signpost!**

If there is something you are passionate about or would like to share we want to read about it!

Contact: Jessie Stellini  
[jessie.stellini@duke.edu](mailto:jessie.stellini@duke.edu)

**RETIREMENT RECEPTION for BRAD REID**

UNC-W is hosting a retirement reception the afternoon/evening of

**Friday, May 1st, 2015**

for our Director of Housing & Residence Life, Brad Reid. We know Brad has touched many lives around NC and we wanted to ask folks to save the date as Brad would surely enjoy catching up with many of his past colleagues from this great state. More information to come!

**New Colleagues?**

Make sure they are connected to what we do! Get them on the NCHO ListServ (you can do this on our website at: [ncho.org](http://ncho.org)), and connect them with Jason Timpson, our Member at Large.

