



THE SIGNPOST

Winter 2014-2015

Competency Focus: Staff Selection and Supervision

In this Issue:

Tweet, Tag, and Share:
Building our Social Media
Game to Support Each
Other..... 1

Passing the Gavel:
Tips for Transitioning from Student
Leader to Advisor 2

**Meet your Executive
Council..... 4**

**“Identity within Student
Leadership: Creating Effective
Organizations” 5**

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

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.

When you tweet your response to the following,
tag us using @NCHO1973, so all can see**

Q1: What's your “go-to” for
team development?

Q2: What are your tips for a long
day of RA interviews?

*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.**

Passing the Gavel:

Tips for Transitioning from Student Leader to Advisor

By: Ryan Collins, UNC Greensboro

In April 2011, I stood on stage at the closing banquet for the Residence Hall Association of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and ceremoniously passed the organization's gavel on to my successor. It was a bittersweet moment that marked an end not only my term as president, but also to four years of student leadership within an organization I had come to love. Fortunately, as I prepared to head to graduate school in the fall, I knew my time with RHA was not done; rather, I would be assuming a new and equally challenging role: advisor.

My story is a familiar one in student affairs, as many professionals involved with RHA or other student groups were once leaders in those very same groups. Anyone who has made that transition knows how difficult it can be to get out of the driver's seat and into the driver's ed instructor's chair. Over the past three years I have advised a variety of groups, including hall councils, living learning community leadership teams, and a programming committee. I now serve as the lead advisor for the Residence Hall Association at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In my short albeit rich career in advising, I have learned many lessons about successfully transitioning into the advisor role. I share some of them here for any incoming professionals preparing to make this transition.

Know Departmental Expectations.

As a professional, you are ultimately responsible to your department, whether it is residence life, campus activities, or another home unit. By dedicating part (or all) of your time to advising, your department has taken a vested interest in the group's success. As the advisor, you take on the responsibility of ensuring those expectations are met. At the same time, your goal is cultivate leadership, initiative, and creativity amongst your advisees.

This can be challenging if your students view themselves as employees rather than student leaders. Take the time to understand whatever departmental expectations may exist and share these with your students, but also promote self-governance and advocate for the decisions your students make.

Maintain Professional Boundaries.

This advice is true for any student relationships, but can be particularly challenging for an advisor. Most likely you have taken on the advising role because you enjoyed your time as a student leader, and you want to continue having fun to some degree. Nevertheless, it is vital to maintain a professional distance with your students. Sadly (or not), your days of riding the pony at NACURH have come to an end.

Use, Don't Abuse, Your Knowledge and Experience.

Former student leaders have a natural advantage in advising, especially if it is a group similar to one in which we once participated. We are able to draw upon our past experiences, successes, and failures to know how to run an organization effectively. This knowledge is valuable, and should be fully utilized to help your students and the organization grow. At the same time, you must avoid trying to recreate your experience on a different campus, or even the same one. Every institution is different—different culture, different students, different role of student organizations—therefore what is best for your organization may be different. It is perfectly acceptable to introduce an idea that worked for you as a student leader, but you must also ask "How can this idea be adapted to this institution, this organization?" Sometimes the answer is it simply can't (again, consider culture and expectations). Most importantly, you must take care to introduce

your experiences only as recommendations. Students often view advisors as a source of knowledge and authority, so you must intentionally empower the students to make the final decision on their own.

View Things Through Both Lenses.

As a student leader-turned-advisor, you have the ability to examine situations or problems through both lenses. Even though you are now in the advisor role, it can be extraordinarily useful to maintain the student leader perspective. This enables you to identify opportunities for compromise or explain your decisions in a way they will understand. Sometimes, you may even be able to use the student leader lens to convince your colleagues and superiors of the validity of the student point of view, even when it goes against precedent or historical expectations. On the other hand, don't allow the student leader lens to cloud your professional judgment; sometimes you have to take the advisor road, even when it's hard.

Let the Students Make Their Own Decisions, Even When it's Not What You Would Have Done.

As former student leaders, sometimes we have very strong opinions about how an organization or program should run. As advisors, we have to take a step back from that and allow the students to shape their own destiny. I noted earlier that you should not hesitate to share your knowledge and experience with students in the form of recommendations, but you also shouldn't get upset when they take a different route. As long as students are able to make reasonable decisions, justify their approach, and not do anything dangerous, unethical, or counter to departmental expectations, your role is to support them in that endeavor. If and when they fail, you are there to boost them back up and help them understand what could have been done differently.

You Are Only as Successful as Your Students.

Success as an advisor isn't measured by the number of programs your organization produces or its level of notoriety on campus—that is a student leader metric. If your organization implements fifty programs in a year, but all of them were planned by you with your students just following instructions, you have not succeeded as an advisor. Your success as an advisor is measured by the degree to which your students have learned and grown over the course of the year, the skills they have developed, and their ability to stand on their own. You should never be so important as an advisor (or supervisor for that matter) that your students can't function without you. Advising is all about helping students help themselves.

I would be remiss if I did not conclude this article with a metaphor. You are no longer the quarterback for your team, you are the head coach. You mentor students and teach them how to play the game. Sometimes you might even get upset and throw your hat on the ground. In the end, however, it is the students who must play the game, who must make decisions under pressure, who must look for opportunities down-field, and who must make the best decisions to help their team win. And when they don't win, you as the head coach are there to encourage them help them get better, and try again the next game.

Have a response? Tweet it using #GavelPass and @NCHO1973



Meet Your Executive Council

President: Mindy Bliss
(Mars Hill University)

President-Elect: Chris Gregory
(University of North Carolina – Greensboro)

Past President: Hassel Morrison
(North Carolina Central University)

Business Manager: Chester Miller
(North Carolina State University)

Member-at-Large: Jason Timpson
(Appalachian State University)

SEAHO Representative: Jameson Sellers
(University of North Carolina – Greensboro)

Communications Coordinator: Jessie Stellini
(Duke University)

Graduate Student Representative: Tyler Rathbone
(University of North Carolina – Greensboro)

Small College & University Representative: Brian Daniel
(Guilford College)

2015 Annual Conference Chairs: Brian Stutz & Holly Bowen
(East Carolina University)

Professional Development Committee Chair: Paige Abe
(University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill)

Professional Development Committee Chair-select: Nicole Percival
(East Carolina University)

NCARH Liaison: Brian Stutz
(East Carolina University)

Technology Coordinator: Daniel Flowers
(Duke University)

New Professional Representative: Veratta Pegram-Floyd
(Western Carolina University)

HBCU Representative: Shawn Odom
(North Carolina Central University)

Identity within Student Leadership: Creating Effective Organizations

By: Kellie M Dixon (North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University) and M. Anthony Brumfield II

Submitted By: Shawn Odom, North Carolina Central University

Introduction.

Leadership, a term we utilize to describe the act of a person or people who are moving a group or project forward. Many students relate leadership to titles, power and resume builders which can be by-products of good leadership as well as bad leadership. The one thing students normally do not relate to being a leader or leadership is the importance of individual and organizational identity. We believe that in order for a leader and an organization to become effective, they must first tackle their issues with identity. Many organizations struggle with success, either it's through membership, programming or being seen on campus. Most of the time organizations try to increase their programming in hopes that it will help them be more successful, or they grab anybody who will join, or do things to be seen on campus, but in the end they ultimately fail. It is usually because the organization has failed to find their identity. If an organization wants to succeed, they must first figure out who they are, then build from there. We want to give four points that we think can help with the process to help students and their organizations move forward. Those points are:

1. Organizational and self- reflection
2. Understanding mission and values
3. Positional leaders vs. servant leaders
4. Identity barriers for student leadership

Organization and Self Reflection.

Student leaders and groups must first take the time to ask some key questions and reflect on where they are as leaders as well as organizations. What is my passion? What motivates me? What encourages me and

how do I feel celebrated? Where are my areas of improvements? Where do I excel? Most of these questions can be interchanged with organizations as they reflect. In order for organizations to reflect, they must also ask: How are our members motivated? What community are we intending to impact? Are we providing the necessary impact needed? What programs are effective and which ones are not? What type of leaders do we have in leadership positions?

We have learned that these questions are good starting points for the organization and individuals to begin the process of learning more about themselves. It is through the reflection process that students can begin to map out ways to grow. Without reflection, people and the groups they lead are destined to repeat past mistakes, they also lose track of successes.

Understanding Mission and Values.

Through asking the previous questions groups can begin to see if their answers align with the actual mission and values of the organization. We have many groups who have mission statements and values that they do not even know or understand. This can be seen by the activities they approve and present to the campus and community. Many times there is an assumed mission, which is usually shaped by the current leadership's agenda. Typically leaders or members look to align their values or personal mission statement with the organization they join. This is due to students not knowing their own personal views, however the views of others that have been given to them. When we meet with students we first ask them, who are you? This question is rarely answered because they have never had to think about that for

themselves. The few who have answered the question gave surface level answers, which show a false sense of depth. Please note that we do not expect our students to know completely and deeply who they are, we understand that knowledge of self is a process not a destination. We encourage them to learn more about who they are before they decide to join any organization. It is when they get a better understanding of who they are, they can enact change in an organization they choose, through aligning their values to a group's mission. It is also important that the group reads their mission at every meeting and that the collective group talks about what the mission means to them. Understanding not only the mission for yourself but how your co-leaders and members interpret the mission is very important; through that process you can see how you all can advance the organization. For example, the Black Student Association at a particular University's actual mission statement and the students perceived mission statement did not align. Their perceived mission statement was 'we are a group for Black students to hang out'. Their actual mission statement stated "Our mission is to actively make a change for unity by encouraging the principles of scholarship, leadership, cultural uplift, and diversity. In addition, BSA is committed to promoting a positive image at the University and the African American community at large". Due to this disconnect the group was not achieving many things on campus and they were confused. Once they reflected on the organization, saw the mission, and aligned their initiatives to their mission they became one of the most successful groups on their campus. The mission and values of an individual and organization are essential to forming identity and developing a successful leader.

Positional Leaders vs. Servant Leaders.

As a student affairs practitioner, it is always interesting to explore why students decide to embark in leadership roles. Students have their different reasons for leadership

on campus; some to make a difference and others to gain status. Whichever the case may be, it is clear that at some point in time students must understand the difference between positional leadership and servant leadership. We define positional leaders as students who are more concerned about the title and prestige a leadership role offers. Servant leaders are defined as students who are devoted to a common goal to assist others, while being selfless in their acts. It is clear that as practitioners we must create programs and workshops that promote servant leaders for an ever changing global society. Servant leaders get the bigger picture and provide a safe environment for the entire student body, regardless of their position. Students who are servants first and leaders second, meet the standards for which college and university mission and vision statements clearly state. In most college and university mission and vision statements, the concept of leadership, global citizens, and social justice is depicted.

Identity Barriers for Student Leadership.

It is not common that to find students who are in different stages and development periods of their lives. During college is when most students begin to define who they are and understand their own identity amongst a group of others. With this fact, it is sometimes difficult for students to work together within an organization, when they are not aware of other's identity barriers. It is important for student leaders to know how their identity will or will not affect their involvement within a chosen organization. As student affairs practitioners, we must encourage self reflection for all students, especially our student leaders. For some, this will be their first exposure to student leadership; therefore retreats for organizations prior to academic school years are essential for student growth and overall organization effectiveness.

The BIG Idea.

The BIG Idea for student leadership involves four factors: collective behaviors, direction, image, and persistence. First, student leaders should have a personal motivation

and feeling (collective behaviors) towards the organization that they are apart. Self motivation encompasses self reflection and understanding ones personal values. When a student understands their personal values, they are able to distinguish if the organization's values align with their own. When a student and organization align in both values and visions, effective leadership is shown. Second, the reason in which a student joins a particular organization or seeks a certain position is different. As student leaders, it is their responsibility to explore those reasons in order to define the direction of the organization. In understanding individual motives, organizations begin to piece together the development and direction in which the organization will follow.

Third, there should be an image of the organization that fits all members and potential members. This allows for students to express their own identity through the organization in which they chose to be apart. Image allows a student's identity to further develop without hindrance due to other members of an organization. Lastly, the key to a successful student leadership and individual identity is the persistence, of all members to be active and committed to the development of its members and organization. This should be the ultimate goal for all student leaders.

Conclusion.

Typically in student organizations, everyone is diverse and unique. In order to get the best results, students must learn to lead through their differences. All members have to appreciate what everyone brings to the table, not just the executive officers. There should be equal involvement for the betterment of the organization. Identity development is a major part of individual and organizational development. It is difficult for a person to effect change and lead if they do not know their own identity. When students learn to acknowledge everybody's differences and uniqueness, they are more likely to stand for the mission and have it become a part of the member's and potential member's vision. We

lead because we have something different to bring to the table, we lead because we are selfless in our acts, we lead because we believe in the success of not only ourselves, but others, and lastly we lead because we have been led through experiences.

*Thoughts? Tweet them using
#LeaderIdentity and @NCHO1973*



About the Authors

Kellie M Dixon: Kellie M Dixon was born in South Boston, VA. She has been within student affairs since 2011. She has held positions in Housing and Residence Life, Judicial Affairs, and Multicultural Affairs. Kellie is currently employed at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Because of her passion to help others succeed holistic, she has committed her life to being a servant leader, therefore founded S.P.E.A.K Life Enterprise. The mission of S.P.E.A.K Life Enterprise is to encourage, assist, and motivate people to reach their highest potential and live a purposeful life.

S.P.E.A.K stands for :

Shifting through Paramount Encouragement and Knowledge.

Kellie consults with individuals and groups, by helping them (1) reach their highest potential regardless of their environment, (2) prepare/plan for college and/or a career change and (3) become and/or continue to be an active and committed leader. Kellie received an Associate Degree in Science (Danville Community College), a Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology (Longwood University), and a Master's Degree in Counseling (Longwood University). Kellie is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Education Degree in Organizational Leadership with emphasis on Organizational Development (Grand Canyon University). She is a proud and active member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated.

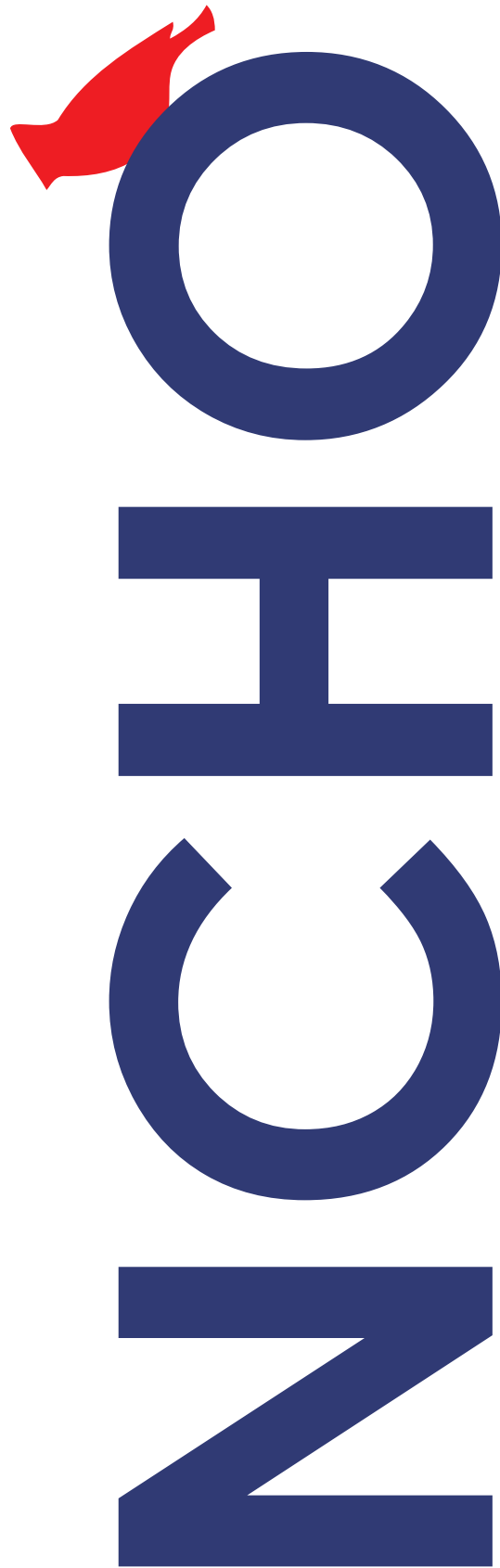
M. Anthony Brumfield II: M. Anthony Brumfield II was born in Rochester, NY. He previously worked in student affairs for over 5 years. He has formerly worked at Longwood University as a Residence Education Coordinator, and he also served in a role as an Assistant Director of Multicultural Student Engagement at Appalachian State University and an advisor of different student organizations. During his career he assisted with the implementation of different programs that has helped with the retention of students and the adjustment of first year students to the life at college. He attended UNC-Charlotte from 2003-2007 where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Appalachian State from 2007-2009 where he earned his Master of Arts in Higher Education. Currently Anthony is an entrepreneur and working in various consulting capacities. He is aspiring to gain his doctoral degree in education which he plans to utilize in the research and development of all students young and old.

Together, Kellie and Anthony developed a workshop to educate and develop student leaders. They have presented their workshop at several colleges and universities.

About the Workshop

Do You Know Your Organization's Identity?:

Many organizations struggle with success, either it's through membership, identity, programming and/or visibility. Most of the time organizations try to increase their programming in hopes that it will aide in its success, or they grab anybody who will join, or do things to be seen on campus, but in the end they ultimately fail. This failure is associated with the organization's failed attempt to find their identity. If an organization wants to succeed they must first find out who they are individually and collectively and begin to build! Through this workshop students will embark on a journey of self and organization reflection; thus maximizing results through capitalizing on their Organization's Identity.



North Carolina Housing Officers

est. 1973