Hello Commission for Wellness!

It’s hard to believe that October is already upon us - with cool air and crispy leaves at our feet. We hope that your year has been going well thus far.

Now’s the time to be on the lookout for evidence-based and best-practice programs happening around the country. We have some great program information in our newsletter, and also have a brand new Facebook page! This page will be updated regularly with news articles, program websites, and ways to connect. Search for us at ACPA - Commission for Wellness.

Our other big news is that we’ll be offering CEU credits at convention for those with Certified Health Education Specialist certification. Please let health educators on your campus know about this fabulous new benefit to attending convention!

As always, let us know how we can best serve you in the year ahead.

Stay warm,
Sara

Notes from the Chair

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Join us on Facebook!!
We'll post (and you can post too!) relevant news articles, professional development opportunities, and have conversations about health on your campus!

Announcements

Education & Professional Development Resources

Student Affairs E-Learning Series:
Pay one price ($150 - $175) and all your staff participates in the webinar!
Title: Taking the Next Step Toward a More Polished, Professional You!
Thursday, November 11 - 2:00 p.m. eastern time
For course information and to register: http://acpatraining.com/

Donna M. Bourassa Mid-Level Management Institute
January 22-26, 2011. University of South Florida
Applications due November 1, 2010
More information at http://www2.myacpa.org/pd/mmi/

Getting Involved with the Commission

Attention all Wellness Commission members, we want your opinion! Long onto our website and take a short survey (click the link in the first sentence on the home page) to let us know how we can better serve our membership. This is YOUR Commission and we want to make sure that we are providing you with the information and resources you are looking for.
Program Spotlight – 2010 NextGen Scholarship

I did not even think to consider a career within Student Affairs until my senior year of college. My first three years at the University of Massachusetts Amherst were spent completing pre-medical courses with the goal of becoming an optometrist. As a first-generation college student, I felt an intense pressure to exceed my family’s expectations. By the end of my junior year, I found myself overwhelmed with stress, burned out, and resenting my college experience.

I took refuge from my academic frustrations through my work as a Peer Mentor with UMass Residence Life. The position pushed me to go beyond my comfort zone while allowing me to develop my creativity and leadership skills, and I was invigorated by my daily interactions with students. After expressing my love for my job to my supervisor, she provided me with information on the NextGen Conference. The event seemed too good to be true; I would not only be able to meet peers with an interest in Student Affairs and student wellness, but also explore the many facets of the field under the guidance of enthusiastic professionals.

The weekend of NextGen was one of the most inspiring and enlightening experiences of my life. I have never encountered so many accomplished professionals with a passion for improving both college campuses and our society as a whole. I was also incredibly impressed by the importance that the ACPA places on personal wellness. From de-stressing stations to group sessions about prioritizing and balance, it was clear that the association is not only aware of one’s need to find balance as a whole person, but goes above and beyond to address and further this balance for their members and students. Attending the NextGen Conference helped me to realize our need as new professionals to explore our priorities while encouraging the six dimensions of the wellness wheel in our future workplaces.

My experiences at NextGen have fueled my desire to further the mission of the Commission for Wellness through my own professional work. Following my graduation this May, I hope to attain a position within Student Affairs in the Philadelphia area before pursuing a Master’s degree. I am beyond grateful for the Commission’s scholarship, and would like to sincerely thank the members of the Commission for Wellness for giving me the opportunity to attend this conference. I will no doubt carry the passion and knowledge I experienced at NextGen for the rest of my life.

Taryn O’Hearn
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Beginning in 2009, the Commission for Wellness has taken part in offering $100.00 towards one convention scholarship to a NextGen participant to cover the NextGen registration costs for an undergraduate student leader who is interested in the field of student affairs. By offering this scholarship, the Commission for Wellness aims to assist undergraduate student leaders in learning more about student affairs, ACPA and how the Commission for Wellness actively works to incorporate wellness values into the overarching principles of ACPA.

New for 2010-2011!

The Commission for Wellness proudly announces that we will be introducing three awards this year in Baltimore for the following awards; Newsletter Article of the Year, Individual Wellness Spotlight Award and the Wellness Programming Award of Excellence.

Nominations for each of these awards will be recognized as the submissions that are published in the quarterly Commission for Wellness newsletters. Criteria for these awards will be based on factors ranging from; The creation of new and innovative initiatives concerning wellness issues on college campuses, active involvement in helping to create wellness related programs/events for students and fellow staff members and relevance towards current trends in higher education surrounding wellness initiatives. Winners will be announced before the Annual Convention in Baltimore!
In an effort to support the mission and goals of the Commission for Wellness, we are sponsoring a webinar entitled **Promoting Wellness Among Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education** on Tuesday, December 7th, 2010 from 1-2:30pm EST.

The webinar is intended for all student affairs professionals, new and seasoned, to learn more about how the environment of higher education should and can promote wellness throughout the campus community. During the webinar, participants will learn the background of the wellness movement on college campuses, identify how they can utilize their professional positions to promote wellness efforts, and learn how to incorporate a culture of wellness based on best practices at other institutions. Participants will be encouraged to become involved in this interactive webinar and explore both their personal and institutional commitment to wellness.

To sign up for the webinar, go to [http://www.myacpa.org/pd/webinars/](http://www.myacpa.org/pd/webinars/).
Wellness Spotlight

In this edition, we are spotlighting the serious issue of burnout of young professionals in student affairs. Whether you are new in the field or now supervising younger professionals, it is critical to understand the impact of negative stress in our work environment.

Written by Julia Prince, Ohio Dominion University.

The burnout of young professionals appears to be a common phenomenon in student affairs. A variety of factors undoubtedly contribute to the prevalence of burnout, including the transition to full-time work and the nature of the student affairs profession. While enrolled in school, students have several milestones to excitedly anticipate, including breaks and graduation. In entry-level student affairs positions, in contrast, there are often few key landmarks. This transition – and the accompanying realization that a long life of work lies ahead – can be daunting. When the hectic pace of work in student affairs is added to this stress, it is not difficult to understand how burnout can result.

What is Burnout?

Burnout is a result of an individual’s patterns of response to negative stressors (Shirom as cited in Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). According to Maslach and Jackson (as cited in Swider & Zimmerman, 2010), “burnout is a multidimensional construct consisting of three separate, albeit related, dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (p. 488).”

A variety of factors, including personality and work environment, can influence the probability of burnout. Extraverts, for instance, are less likely to burnout because of their predisposition to optimism and positivity (Clark & Watson as cited in Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). When several of these factors are present, you are likely to experience burnout. These factors include a high number of job demands, continuous or repetitive stressful events, and a lack of social interaction at work.

How to Recognize Burnout

Symptoms of burnout can include physical illness, problems sleeping, conflict at work or at home, and substance abuse (several citations in Swider & Simmerman, 2010). Additional signs of burnout include feelings of incompetence at work, irritability, viewing work as a chore, and feeling lethargic.

Implications for Employers

Employee burnout also has several significant implications for the organization, including employee turnover, absenteeism, and decreased quality of job performance (Swider & Simmerman, 2010). Because those who are most likely to burn out are often the “best” employees (they are highly invested and motivated in the job) burnout can decrease overall productivity (Vikesland, 2010).

Employers who recognize symptoms of burnout can take several steps (Vikesland, 2010). First, help the employee to create balance – between work and personal life, high- and low-stress tasks, etc. Increase task diversity, but be sure to ask the employee for input in order to avoid piling on unwanted responsibilities. Be sure to provide time for fun and appreciation. Finally, encourage periods of low productivity to balance busier periods.

Coping with Burnout

When you feel burnt out, you may also believe that you do not have the energy to cope with what’s what is causing the problem in the first place. As common sense indicates, however, burnout is unlikely to go away without any change in circumstance or behavior. The following strategies could help to decrease your feelings of burn-out and to address its causes (Vikesland, 2010). Do not try to outwork burnout. If you believe a large number of projects may be the culprit, working even harder to complete them is not the answer. In fact, you are likely to feel even more exhausted and burnt out. Next, Change the way you approach a stressful event. Eliminate negative words and phrases and focus on the positive! Last, find ways to increase the fun you have at work. Talk to coworkers, listen to music, or take a walk around the building.

Burnout can typically be resolved within a few weeks with adequate opportunities for relaxation and breaks. In student affairs, burnout may naturally decrease during slower periods, including summer and other student break periods. If the symptoms do not resolve after a reasonable amount of time, see your doctor. The symptoms of burnout are similar to those for depression. However, depression is more likely to impact all areas of your life, while burnout is concentrated on work activities. For live-on student affairs professionals it may be difficult to distinguish these spheres, and your doctor can help you determine which condition you may have.

References
