Welcome to another great year on the Standing Committee for Graduate Students and New Professionals’! We are happy to have you as a member of our standing committee as we celebrate our 25TH anniversary year! As the academic year comes to a close, I cannot help but look forward to the summer as our directorate engages in planning and goal setting for the upcoming year. It’s hard to believe how much time has passed since convention already, however, many exciting conversations have occurred since then that will propel us forward for the next year. The SCGSNP Vice Chairs and I have engaged in our initial conversations as we get started on another great year of engaging our membership in professional development and networking opportunities, and a number of the Vice Chairs have already begun working with their Coordinators to get work started on this year’s projects.

As the new Chair of the SCGSNP, I am filled with excitement and energy as we move forward to enhance the opportunities and services that we offer to our membership, while also focusing on new and innovative ways we can engage everyone throughout the year. In my initial conversations with our Vice Chairs, I have asked that their work support three major goals that I have work the SCGSNP this year. The first is to embrace the eagerness of our membership to engage in the work of ACPA and our standing committee. With that being said, please make sure you are on our listserv so that you are getting information about all of the volunteer opportunities that we will have throughout the year. The second is to focus on developing new initiatives or re-envisioning ones we already have so that everyone has an impact on and outside of these annual meeting experiences. Recognizing that virtually all of
attend convention every year is something that graduated students and new professionals know very well, and such it is my hope that we are able to provide our membership with engaging and developmental opportunities that do not require convention attendance. Lastly, my hope is that we embrace the reinvention of the ACPA Annual Convention and take an innovative approach to reinventing the work that we do to serve our membership.

As we move forward, I welcome any thoughts, suggestion, or ideas that you have. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me and let me know how we can enhance your ACPA membership experience. I can be reached by email at chair.scgsnp@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Brian Hopkins
2013-2014 Chair
Standing Committee for Graduate Students and New Professionals

Making Self-Reflection a Priority

Sarah Schultz

As the campus calmed, the to-do list shortened, and the realization that my semester as a second-year graduate student was concluding, I arrived to an often-anticipated location on any long journey: the rest stop. This year has been a year of personal and professional seismic shifts—some anticipated, many unexpected, yet all leaving their undoubtedly important lessons learned. Many of us reflect in daily doses, while others reflect in weekly, monthly, or other increments; nonetheless, research has found that self-reflection is an area new professionals often struggle to individually engage in. In their national study of new student affairs professionals, Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) found that the participating professionals struggled to personally reflect without such opportunities being initiated by a mentor within their new professional roles. As graduate students and new professionals, I believe we need to add improving self-reflection habits into our yearly professional goals.

For student affairs professionals to be successful, participation in our own self-reflection is critical, as “a person’s identity is closely tied to what he or she does professionally” (Cutler, 2003, p. 167). Reflecting upon significant experiences, successes, and challenges is where I believe we all can learn exceptional insight into who we are personally and professionally, and where I greatly focus my self-reflection efforts. For example, in March 2012 my best friend’s father was killed unexpectedly in an automobile accident. By reflecting on the significance of this moment to myself as a person, there was no way this critical experience would not impact me as a professional. For example, it allowed my empathy skills to develop, and also allowed me to identify demographic trends in...
truly believe self-reflection can also guide us to be more authentic individuals and professionals, as we give our life experiences the right to be mattered, and not simply lived.

Holding Connectedness in my Top 5 Strengths and having a mind that craves understanding, I am grateful that self-reflection is truly a part of who I am. I know that reflecting upon the critical developmental moments in my professional journey will better equip me to navigate the job search in 2013, and the student affairs professional I am becoming. Self-reflection can be natural to some and challenging to others, yet it is nonetheless a skill I believe we must personally invest in. I believe it is a critical skill that we should encourage ourselves and colleagues to include in their toolbox as graduate students and new student affairs professionals. We can all become better professionals by reflecting upon key personal and professional experiences that will therefore enhance the work we do with students and who we are as individuals.

If you have not taken the time to reflect on what this year has meant to you as a graduate student or new student affairs professional, I challenge you to engage in a worthwhile introspective conversation with yourself to further develop your professional identity. What questions could you begin asking yourself to improve your self-reflection? How do you anticipate how engaging in self-reflection as a student affairs professional will impact your professional and/or personal journey? What individuals and resources could you utilize to aid you in self-reflection? Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) suggest that new professionals engage in “purposeful reflection on practice through journaling or regular meetings with a mentor and a small group of peers” (p. 331). I also know engaging with colleagues in conversations through Twitter, blogs, and related media can add creativity to the reflection process. No matter the self-reflection route(s) you choose, I believe what you will learn will enhance how you serve and work as a student affairs professional. To best serve our students, our colleagues, and the profession as a whole, reflecting on our experiences, our successes, and our challenges is imperative.

References

The Importance of Hope in our Lives and the Student We Influence

Lee Roddick

Dr. Barbara Frederickson (2009), author of the book Positivity, states that increasing your level of hope is one of the keys to happiness. Hope can help keep you going on days when things have not gone the way you planned.

Certainly as emerging higher education professionals we all have bad days and need a pick-me-up. In addition, we sometimes deal with students who seem dazed and confused who need to be reminded that there is always hope for a brighter day ahead. The purpose of this article is to share the research on why hope is important and to provide specific ideas for fueling a sense of hope in ourselves and our students.

The Research on the Importance of Hope

The Importance of Hope in our Lives and the Student We Influence

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If you take a moment to go online and type in "the research on hope" in Google scholar you get over 10,000 hits on possible articles to read on how hope can change lives. Consider the reaction of the word “Hope” that President Obama during his 2008 election campaign. There were millions of people who supported him because he embraced the idea of hope. Sung, Turner and Kaewchinda (2013) found that hope has two components: pathways and agency. Hope increases when students realize that there are multiple ways to accomplish goals (pathways) and when they feel capable of attaining their goals (agency). The study demonstrated how students with higher levels of hope had higher levels of academic success in their college courses. The students who had a foundational understanding of developing their own hope were more prepared for their classes and had more confidence when faced with “the real world” (Sung, Turner, & Kaewchinda, 2013).

Ideas for Fueling a Sense of Hope
This section will provide two ideas for increasing hope in ourselves and our students: hope boxes and hope libraries. The goal is that you will find inspiration in one of these things to create your own way to inspire hope within yourself and students.

Hope Box
Fredrickson (2009) advocated the use of a Hope Box as a way to increase your own hope levels when your day is getting you down. The Hope Box can be kept in a drawer or displayed prominently. The ingredients of the Hope Box should include things that inspire you and make you hopeful. Begin by collecting pictures and quotes that make you feel hopeful. Write down your most cherished values on a piece of paper and add it to your Hope Box to help re-center you on your values when you are feeling lost and disconnected. The Hope Box can also be a place to save thank you cards and letters from friends and family as well as pictures of vacations or happy times. These are your “hope-filled moments” and they will grant you not only a happy moment, but possibly a new outlook on current hardships (Fredrickson, 2009). Ask friends, colleagues, and relatives to make contributions to your Hope Box and ask them to share what they most appreciate about the role you play in their lives. These little snippets of happiness can bring hope to the darkest hours of our lives.

Hope Library
Similar to the Hope Box idea, the hope library is another opportunity to collect items that bring you hope. In this case it is a collection of literature or written works that give you a sense of hope. Consider making this article and Frederickson’s (2009) book Positivity the first additions to your library. If you read something during the summer break or even during a division meeting that really touched you, add it to your library. You can also create a Hope Library folder on your computer where you can download articles, websites, and books that help restore your hope on dark days. Save a selection of emails from your students about the impact you have had on their lives as a reminder of the importance of the work you do every day. The Hope Library is your own literary hope collection filled with things that inspire you and give you hope.

Conclusion
Are you hopeful about your future? How can we as student affairs professionals inspire hope, if we are not hopeful ourselves? By creating your own Hope Box and/or Hope Library you can help yourself and your students take advantage of the power of hope!

References
Employees, specifically graduate students, sometimes feel dissatisfied in their assistantship. For example, Mary Alice may have a strong interest in Orientation and the First-Year Experience, but was offered a live-out graduate assistantship within housing and accepted. After working in the position for a few months, Mary Alice begins to feel unhappy and dreads going into the office every day. The position does not include student interaction and there are minimal duties to complete, unlike her fellow graduates who seem to find fulfillment and pride in their busy days. She feels a sense of purposeless and unhappiness which begins to make her question her passion for student affairs. Instead of wallowing in unhappiness, the purpose of this article is to advocate the use of an organizational development theory, Appreciative Inquiry, to help Mary Alice change her perspective on her assistantship and help her craft a plan for optimizing her current position and reinvigorating her passion for student affairs.

Overview of Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an organizational development theory that was created in the mid-1980s by David Cooperrider of Case Western Reserve University (Bloom & Martin, 2002, para 2). To understand the foundation of this model, one can divide this phrase into its core words of “appreciation” and “inquiry.” Appreciation can be defined as a sensitive attentiveness or recognition of positive attributes, while inquiry refers to an examination and openness to these changes (Merriam-Webster, 2013). “Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them . . . AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to heighten positive potential” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000, p. 245-263).

AI is a method that focuses on positivity, specifically the positive aspects of an individual, company or group. With this tool, one identifies and builds on positive attributes and strengths to create a meaningful change. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003, p. 15) state that:

Appreciative Inquiry is a bold shift in the way we think about and approach organization change. The ultimate paradox of Appreciative Inquiry is that it does not aim to change anything. It aims to uncover and bring forth existing strengths, hopes, and dreams: to identify and amplify the positive core of the organization. In doing so, it transforms people and organizations. With Appreciative Inquiry, the focus of attention is on positive potential—the best of what has been, what is, and what might be. It is a process of positive change.

Applying Appreciative Inquiry

There are five phases in Appreciative Inquiry: Define, Discovery, Dream, Design, and Deliver. Using Mary Alice’s situation, I will demonstrate how these five phases can be used to help people create positive change in their lives.

Define. The first phase of Appreciative Inquiry is to clearly Define the issue in a positive manner, or in other words, to turn a problem into an opportunity. Mary Alice should first identify the root of her dissatisfaction. After a bit of self-reflection, she realizes that her lack of student contact and meaningful tasks is the
housing, the transferrable skills she is acquiring, and the professional development opportunities she has access to in her position. With both the issue and positive attributes in mind, Mary Alice can Define the outcome she wants and physically write it down (as well as the rest of the phases of AI) in a positive light: *I will find enjoyment and fulfillment in my assistantship and gain valuable skills that will help me further my career.* After creating this definition, she moves on to the Discovery phase to self-reflect.

**Discovery.** “The core task of the discovery phase is to discover and disclose positive capacity” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000, p. 7). In this phase, Mary Alice reflects and discovers her strengths, positive attributes, and passions. Mary Alice draws up a list of activities that she enjoys doing at and outside of work. After making the list, she delves even further by inquiring about her strengths within these activities. For example, her list includes that she enjoys meeting new people and doing crafts. Within her strengths, she realizes that she’s very outgoing and great at building relationships. Further, doing crafts has led her to discover that she is a very creative individual. Mary Alice can use these discoveries in a later phase to help tailor her plan toward a positive change.

**Dream.** The next phase requires a bit of imagination: Dream. Mary Alice asks herself “If I could do anything in the world, regardless of limitations, what would it be?” Although Mary Alice at first was having trouble writing down her answer to this question, she instead decides to create a dream board. The dream board allows her to use artistic skills to create a bulletin board filled with images and symbols of her dreams and goals. Physically seeing these images allows her to dig deeper into her own hopes and dreams for her future. Looking at her dream board, Mary Alice notices a social theme and realizes that she truly wants to be constantly interacting with others in whatever she does. The next phase of AI is to actually Design a plan for making her dreams a reality.

**Design.** Keeping in mind her creativity and social skills, Mary Alice begins designing a feasible plan to tailor her graduate assistantship in such a way that it will improve her sense of fulfillment and overall happiness. In the Design phase, the goal is not to simply attempt to fix what is not currently working, but instead build upon the positives that are already in place. Because there is flexibility within her position to add additional duties, Mary Alice uses her Discoveries and Dreams to take initiative to mold her assistantship responsibilities in a way that better plays to her strengths and her dreams. Therefore, she writes down her plan to start volunteering as an academic coach and advising a hall government to gain the student contact that she has been missing. Further, she decides to use her creativity by revamping the housing website and enhancing the layout of her quarterly newsletters. She also decides to run for the Orientation Director position within her program’s student association to gain valuable experience to reach her future career goals. After creating this plan comes the final and most difficult stage to creating a change, actually following through.

**Deliver.** Mary Alice has Defined, Discovered, Dreamed, Designed and now, she must Deliver. After moving through these phases, she posts her plan in a prominent place both at home and at work so that she will see it often. The constant visual reminder will provide added motivation to successfully reach the desired outcome. Mary Alice reminds herself that if the plan does not seem to be producing the desired results, that she can go back through the earlier phases and make adjustments to the design of her plan. No matter what, her goal is to keep persisting despite obstacles that will arise so that she can meet her end goals.

**Conclusion**

Creating change is never an easy feat; however, Appreciative Inquiry is a positive-focused method that provides a five phase framework for helping individuals successfully reach their goals. Through Defining, Discovering, Dreaming, Designing and Delivering, anyone can make a positive change in their lives. Perseverance through these phases and a will to succeed are crucial components for creating positive change throughout your life that will ultimately lead to everyone’s desired end result: happiness.
Tricks of the Job Search: Why Sugar and Spice Can Get You Everything Nice

Stephanie Ann Suarez

Emerging Student Affairs professionals are always applying for a variety of positions, starting with graduate assistantships, continuing with summer internships, and finally for full-time positions. Most of us find the process for applying and interviewing for positions to be a daunting, overwhelming, and even frightening experience. We all are trying to figure out how we can set ourselves apart from our competition. Having worked in a Career Center to coordinate the recruiting weekend for our graduate program and having the opportunity to see firsthand what employers are seeking in prospective Graduate Assistants, I realize that the answer is actually pretty simple. Just follow the Golden Rule: do unto others what you would want others to do for you.

The best way to do unto others is to realize what you would want if you were in their position. Turn the tables and think about what you would expect from your candidates. Would you expect to see grammar errors in a resume and/or cover letter? Multiple emails from candidates within a 24-hour time period? Emphasizing in the cover letter how the position is going to benefit the candidate instead of the employer? While coordinating our recruiting weekend, I realized that how candidates react before, during, and after interviews can mean the difference between an offer letter and a rejection letter. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to provide five tips for navigating the internship/job search process.

Tip 1: Making a “Resume” and Checking It Twice

A resume is always the first step, and the steps to creating/editing your resume are very similar to those used to write a great paper. First, you figure out what you want to write, then you draft the resume, and then last but not least, you revise, revise, and revise. Even though a resume is not a paper, it is easy to forget to revise it. Some key revision tips include:

- Read your Resume Aloud to Yourself: Are you using action verbs to describe your accomplishments? Are you using correct grammar? Will what you wrote make sense to someone outside of your institution and/or field? A simple way to ensure that what you have written flows well and makes sense is to read it to yourself out loud to yourself word-for-word. It may seem awkward at first, but reading aloud what you have written helps catch missing words, run-ons, or awkwardly worded sentences.

- Use Spell Check:
any reason to shorten the pile of credentials. Most of the time, it is nothing personal. They just need something—anything that will help them cut down the applicant pool. One typo could be what separates you from the job you are seeking. So take a moment to make sure everything is spelled correctly.

- **Phone a Friend:** Spell check is not perfect, so the more people that read, edit, and critique your resume the better. Your campus Career Center is a great place to go for input on improving your resume. In addition, ask trusted colleagues or professionals in the field to look it over. They will have a great idea of what should be in your resume and serve as another set of eyes to catch other mistakes.

Your resume is the first step and the true first impression in this process. It sets the tone. Showing that you have taken great care to make sure that it is perfect will tell potential employers a lot about you and your level of professionalism and attention to detail.

**Tip 2: To Cover letter or Not to Cover Letter, that is the Question**
Even if the job description does not explicitly require you to submit a cover letter, it is still a good idea to do so (unless they specifically state they will not accept cover letters). Submitting a cover letter sets you apart from other candidates who may have decided not to, since it was not required. A cover letter also allows you to demonstrate how your education and experiences will allow you to meet their specific needs. It is an opportunity to highlight the congruence between your values and those of the institution.

**Tip 3: Read Before You Leap**
All search processes are different (online systems, giant interview fairs, etc.) and most employers try to clearly outline the process to prospective candidates. Please be sure to carefully read detailed candidate instructions as well as all correspondence received from potential employers. Although it may sometimes be tempting to overlook the instructions and jump right into the process, this can be a fatal misstep. By accidentally not following the instructions correctly or asking a question that was addressed in a written communication, you risk making a poor first impression. Be sure that when you do have a question, it is not one that could be easily answered by the employer materials or checking their website.

**Tip 4: In 48 hours this message will self-destruct**
After the interview it is easy for panic to set in. Why are not they contacting you back? Are they ignoring you? At this point it is important to remember that you have done everything you can to make a good impression. Do not ruin the positive impression you made during the interview by bombarding interviewers with emails, leaving multiple voice messages, and/or calling everyone you know at the institution to find out if a decision has been made. Most of the time if they have not gotten back to you right away, there is probably a good reason. It is important to put yourself in their shoes and remember that your interviewer has multiple responsibilities to attend to every day. If the interviewer has given you a timeline for contacting you, please give them at least 24 before contacting them. In fact waiting 48 hours would be best, especially if it is not an emergency.

**Tip 5: “Thank You. Thank you very much.” – Elvis**
Most people know to send a thank you after an interview, but have you considered sending a thank you before or even during the process? A simple thank you can make all the difference. An example of this could be sending a note to the secretary who helped arrange your visit thanking her for coordinating your interview schedule. Appreciation goes a long way, and those on the receiving end will remember you for it.

**Conclusion**
During the search process it is important that you look at both ends, the employer and the applicant. Each person should direct their attention to the other. It is a two-way road.
ensure that there is a good fit for both parties. These five tips for navigating the interview process will help optimize your chances of being offered the position. Creating a compelling resume, writing an inspiring cover letter, clearly reading the instructions, giving the employer time to notify you of the search results, and saying thank you—paying attention to these details will set you apart from the competition. Above all else, remember to do unto others what you would want others to do for you, because before long you will be the one hiring people!

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**SCGSNP Alumni Spotlight:**

**Eddie Wright**

*Lena Kavaliauskas*

For Eddie Wright, the SCGSNP has been both a springboard into new pursuits and a professional home for longtime friends. Now the Associate Director of Admissions at Mount St. Mary’s University, Wright balances this responsibility with continued involvement with ACPA, serving on the planning committee for NextGen and on the Directorate for AOFYE. Additionally, Eddie is the President-Elect for the Maryland College Personnel Association. In his spare (haha) time, Eddie enjoys chasing his two puppies and 8-month-old daughter, Fiona, and is grateful to his wife, Jen, who “is always around to keep us from breaking things.” Read on for Eddie’s reflections on early ACPA involvement, the parallels between law enforcement and student affairs, and Fiona’s literature of choice:

**Where did you grow up and complete your education?**

I grew up in Hazleton, PA—a small coal-cracker town. I received my BA from Mount St. Mary’s University in Sociology/Criminal Justice and Theology and my MS from Canisius College in College Student Personnel Administration.

**When did you become involved with ACPA? Why?**

I first became involved with ACPA as a junior in undergrad by attending the NextGen Conference. I had two great mentors, Dave Turner and Sean Adams, who encouraged me to attend and the Mount provided funding to make it possible. It was an awe-evoking experience to see so many professionals all working towards the same goal. This experience helped solidify my decision to work in higher education.

**Did your involvement with the SCGSNP lead to other professional/development positions?**

My long list of ACPA involvement can all be traced back to the SCGSNP. Many grad students have a hard time finding a home in ACPA at first because they are unsure of their role. SCGSNP is the perfect place to start. From there, you learn about all the different ways to be involved. You become more confident in your skills as a leader and new professional. SCGSNP is very open and a fun home to come back to!

**What advice do you have for graduate students and new professionals?**

Your voice matters! It is important to get involved on the regional, state and national level when it comes to professional organizations. You will network with many colleagues who you will later turn to for help with a situation, job advice or just a great friend that you need to catch up with. Find a home, such as SCGSNP, and then start to explore the other entities and leadership opportunities.

**If you weren’t in higher education, what career path would you have chosen? Why?**

I used to think I wanted to work in federal law enforcement- and when I worked in res life it was very similar- but now I think a career in event planning might be where I would end up. My current job has brought out my inner
What are you currently reading?
Outside of professional journals and newsletters, the only books I am reading have really big pictures and about ten pages, but Fiona loves them.

Questions or Concerns about the ACPA'S SCGSNP Eigth Vector?
Please contact Dale O'Neill, Newsletter Editor, at dmoneill@uno.edu or 504-280-6349

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