Reinventing Pipelines to the Profession: The Undergraduate Student Affairs Course

Debora Liddell
Kira Pasquesi
Megan McDowell
Program Outline

I. Socialization and pipelines to the profession
II. Course design, syllabus, and key assignments
III. What we learned
IV. What they learned
V. Where are they now?
VI. Discussion
Learning Objectives

As a result of the program, participants will be able to:

• Define professional socialization
• Identify anticipatory socialization opportunities for undergraduate students interested in student affairs
• Develop strategies for planning an undergraduate class appropriate to your campus
• Identify sources of political and teaching support for considering the viability of a similar course at home campuses
Socialization

• “The process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less effective members of their society” (Brim, 1966, p. 3)
• “individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career” (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001, p. iii)
• Anticipatory socialization
  – Awareness of attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive expectations for a role within the field
  – Gathering information through media, personal observation, role models
Course Design

• Our goal and need for the course
• Surveyed undergraduate students about interests
• Identified campus champions and mentors
• Promoted the class to underrepresented students
Syllabus

Based on values of the profession

Desired outcomes:

– Articulate goals beyond undergraduate work
– Articulate how values fit with the profession
– Define student success
– Understand institutional differences
– Understand how functional areas contribute to student success
– Describe strengths, skills, values in relation to their professional futures
Topic Areas

- Purpose of higher education
- Values of the field
- History of the profession
- Professional standards & competencies
- Graduate school search/expectations

- Campus environments & cultures
- College outcomes
- Professional associations
- Functional areas
- Student development and change in college
- Campus ethics
Guest Speakers & Panels

- Institutional differences and distinctions
- Research on college impact
- SA as community builders: Working in residence life
- SA as evidenced work: Assessment and evaluation
- SA as change agency: Social justice on campus
- Working with specific student populations
- Working across difference
- What to expect in graduate school and what to look for in a graduate program
Summative Assignments

• Professional interview
• “My ideal position” & work values analysis
• Functional area group presentations
• Graduate school personal statement
Excerpts from Assignments

“They [leadership activities, student life, and career advising] all involve overlapping skills, yet all have a different perspective on Student Life, which gave me a larger perspective on the many choices and career opportunities present in Higher Education.”

“This career field has a variety of paths and opportunities and it’s not for everyone, but I have figured out that it’s the right fit for me and I’m willing to do what it takes to be a part of it and make it my journey.”

“The desire to help others is definitely required to be successful in this line of work.”
Excerpts from Assignments

“The personal goals and professional goals I wish to reach in the future can be attained with any functional area.”

“I have began to recognize how important it is to find an institutional ‘fit’ and what I will need to be a satisfied professional.”

“As a prospect in Student Affairs and Higher Education at this point, I can consciously acknowledge that I am drawn to this field because I hold very dear the values of being an advocate for students in hopes of promoting justice and fairness; benefiting others by developing relationships and partnerships across campus to help other students and congruently ensuring the success in others; and having a balanced life between personal and professional priorities.”
Excerpts from Assignments

“I desire to become a student affairs professional because I have recognized the importance of the entire college experience.”
Sample Class Activities

• Photo essay ("My Iowa")
• Developmental journeys
• Inside/outside the box
• Ethical case studies
• What’s trending now?
What We Learned

• Importance of marketing the class
• Balancing graduate school timeline with student needs
• Partnerships with campus professionals
• Creating boundaries
• Balancing academic demands vs. “their busy lives”
What They Learned

What was the best thing about this course?

- **The people! The enthusiasm and passion about the course and the profession**
- **Exploring grad programs**
- **Discussion-based learning**
- **My classmates! I loved learning from them**
- **Building a mentoring relationship with the instructors**
- **We built our own cohort in this classroom. I think I’ll know these people throughout my career.**
What They Learned

How would you describe your own effort in this class?

- *This is the one class where I did ALL of the readings. I was 100% engaged.*
- *I put a lot into all my assignments and worked to bring my whole self to class.*
- *This was a class where I could take risks and try out ideas.*
- *I was challenged to clarify my values and reflect on my own growth and development.*
Where are they now?

• Starting nursing school at Iowa
• Working in the counseling field and looking into graduate programs in rehab counseling
• Applying to graduate programs (and has some great offers)
• Chapter consultant with Alpha Chi Omega and deferring graduate school for a year
• Went to OPE and is interviewing/deciding about graduate school
• Attending Iowa State University with an assistantship with TRIO Student Support Services
• NUFP – NASPA undergraduate fellow program participant
Discussion
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Thank you!

Deb Liddell: debora-liddell@uiowa.edu
Kira Pasquesi: kira-pasquesi@uiowa.edu
Megan McDowell: megan-mcdowell@uiowa.edu
References
