Student Affairs Administrators: A Resource for Amplifying the Need for Systemic Change

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We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects…
Access and Inclusion
and
Civility and Respect
…consistent with the AHEAD Statement of Civility during our conference and in all aspects of our organization.
Why this topic?

There’s often been a disconnect between disability offices and higher-ups:

How can senior leaders empower and enable disability office personnel to shift from addressing accommodation needs on an individual basis to making more systemic change?
Today’s agenda:

• Principles underlying SA and DRC work
• What Student Affairs and Disability offices need to understand about each other’s work
• Creating culture change—what do we ask for?
• What if you hit a road block?
• Your experiences: What has worked? Barriers encountered? Success stories!
Goals for our work in 2020:

• Shift the culture to include disability more broadly.
• Reframe access in a post-COVID world.
• Leverage this moment to make lasting change.
Student Affairs Principles

• Engage students in active learning.
• Help students develop coherent values and ethical standards.
• Set and communicate high expectations for student learning.
• Use systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance.
• Use resources effectively to achieve institutional missions and goals.
• Forge educational partnerships that advance student learning.
• Build supportive and inclusive communities.

Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs (ACPA/NASPA)
Disability Resources Principles

• Disability is natural part of human variation and an aspect of diversity.
• Access and inclusion are a matter of social justice.
• Creating accessible, and inclusive environments is a shared responsibility.

Refocus 2.0--Project LENS, a project of the University of Arkansas – Partners for Inclusive Communities
Systems Change Work

• Culture Change has a longer time horizon

• COVID is a tipping point

• We need to Engage Resistance
Need: Change the Culture

Disability offices need the support of Administrators:

• Disability offices can lead broad, systemic change on a campus if they have the tools and support they need.

• Upper level administrators can remind other Divisions and Offices that access is a shared responsibility—and lead conversations about how other Divisions can make access part of their work.
Our Partnership Model

• Partnering for whole student care—we want the same things!
• Educate each other
• Empowerment
• Budget/Resource support
What Student Affairs Needs to Know About Disability Office work:

• Equity in access means moving away from:
  • Helping model (paternalistic)
  • Compliance model (providing access because we have to)

• The institution must move toward:
  • Access as basic right (social justice)
  • Universal Design
  • Ensuring access is designed in—not an add-on later
(at least) Two Kinds of Support Needed:

• Logistical support to move from putting out the fires right in front of us to bigger picture work
  • Funding for office software or personnel ("loan" of partial FTEs?)

• A voice for access in higher level meetings
  • Help push campus-wide access initiatives
  • Invite campus disability experts (this includes us!) to participate in decision-making bodies
  • Recognize and address disability issues as discussions happen
What Disability Offices Need to Know About Student Affairs and Upper Administration

• We are on the same team—Modern Student Affairs practice centers on access and success for marginalized student populations, including students with disabilities.

• Strategy and Politics are (frustrating and) important—these tools are critical for organizational transformation.

• Working on the macro and micro levels simultaneously is crucial.
  • We are building a foundation one brick at a time. Each brick matters, and we need to know the design of the foundation along the way.
Making your case for institutional change:

Historic approach to access: Wait for access requests

- Is technically “ADA compliant,” BUT...
  - Creates an inherent inequality
  - Delays - exacerbate the inequality and incur legal risk
  - Rushed solutions are often inadequate for students
  - Hurried fixes can overwhelm university resources
  - Low return on investment (must be re-done for next student)
Examples of kinds of change to push for:

• Support the building of capacity for access work in other campus offices.
• Accessibility training requirements campus wide:
  • Faculty, Instructional Support:
    • Learning management system (Canvas, Blackboard, etc)
    • Classroom content (instructional design)
  • Communications Office: Web, social media, other
  • Procurement policy—learning materials, software, hardware, furniture, etc.
  • Contracting: include access mandate for outside entities
What if you hit a roadblock?

Resistance in A Culture Change Process
By Delyte D. Frost Ph.D.

• Resistance is a system dynamic… not an individual’s personal intent.

• Resistance is a constellation of forces that is “called up” by any significant effort to change the status quo… to change “The way it’s always been.”
Frost, continued:

• The forces constellate to block or oppose movement by stalling or pushing in the opposite direction.

• Resistance is often the unconscious acts by some that reflect the feelings of the many who remain silent.

• Those who express resistance serve to maintain the system; they want to keep something of value; they anticipate negative outcomes of the changes; they are often sensitive to neglected aspects of a change strategy.
Reframing Resistance

• The Energy Model:
  • Set of positive necessary disturbances.
  • Disturbances that create energy for transformation.
  • Resistance is an indicator that real change is ahead.
  • Resistance acts as a protector of core values, rather than those espoused and defines key taboos or unsaid issues in an organization.

The Washington Consulting Group
If you hit resistance: Seven Steps

1. Anticipate It
   • Look for signs, know that it is a positive indicator. Watch for patterns that challenge the change effort.

2. Name It
   • Describe the dynamic as a systems process - necessary and positive complement of change efforts.

3. Welcome It
   • Work to authentically experience the resistance and its actors as positive.

4. Explore It
   • Be open to perspectives of “resistors.” Seek to understand the source of the resistance.
If you hit resistance: Seven Steps (cont.)

5. Honor It
• Respect and learn from the voices of resistance. Accept multiple realities.

6. Embrace It
• Once true understanding is reached, move towards the resistance: bring energy into the change efforts.

7. Use It
• Incorporate the insight and energy of resistance into the change efforts. Create alliances with those who voice resistance.
Summary:

• Invest in the relationship—get to know your teammate
• Have a shared vision (what the foundation looks like)
• Be strategic
What have **you** experienced?
Session Evaluation

• Access Session Evaluation at: tinyurl.com/AHEAD2020-SessionEval

• Your feedback helps shape future programming.

• Thank you for attending!