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

Presenters:

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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.

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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?

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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!

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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.

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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)

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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

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Systems Change Work

- Culture Change has a longer time horizon

- COVID is a tipping point

- We need to Engage Resistance

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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.

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Our Partnership Model

- Partnering for whole student care—we want the same things!

- Educate each other

- Empowerment

- Budget/Resource support

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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

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(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

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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.

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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)

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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

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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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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Summary:

- Invest in the relationship—get to know your teammate
- Have a shared vision (what the foundation looks like)
- Be strategic

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What have <u>you</u> experienced?

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Session Evaluation

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

- Your feedback helps shape future programming.

- Thank you for attending!

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