

# NASPA IV-WEST



# W

What a great NASPA Board Meeting it was! If you haven't already heard the news, Dr. Kevin Kruger has been selected as the first NASPA President after the title changes. (You may recall that we had a bylaw vote in August that changed the appointed head of NASPA from Executive Director to President, and our current elected President will become Chair of the Board).

I am particularly excited for Kevin being selected because he has been with NASPA and has been an integral part of our strategic planning process at the national level. Kevin will be able to keep us moving forward and making necessary changes to impact our profession and our organization.

#### National Conference:

The 2012 Conference is moving forward with a ton of programs and initiatives—32 preconference programs and over 900 program submissions! NASPA is still working with local organizations to identify ways that we can aid their work, not take it over. There is great information now available online. Check out <http://www.naspa.org/conf/action.cfm> to see how you can engage while in Phoenix. Since the Convention Center is built on sacred ground, this history will be honored during the Opening. The conference will kick off with keynote speaker John Legend discussing his Show Me Campaign to reform education and alleviate poverty. Throughout the conference there will be an art display that explores immigration by a former NUFP Fellow.

#### International Programs:

NASPA is working with IASIS (International Association of Student Affairs and Services) to create a database for international experiences in higher education. If you are considering working abroad, I encourage you to check out the IASIS website and listserv.

#### Personal Thanks:

For those of you that aren't aware, on the first day of school at UMKC, our house was struck by lightning, and we lost almost all of our personal belongings. What could have been a devastating experience has served to remind me and my biological family just how dear my NASPA Family has been. The outreach from the NASPA members and business partners to help get my life straight has been overwhelming and humbling. I wanted to take this moment to thank you. You have left an indelible impression on my life and I thank you for that.

The experience as your Regional Vice President has taught me a lot about both my personal and our organization's strengths and areas of improvement, but it has been an experience that I would not have changed for the world.



**Eric Grospitch**

Regional VP NASPA IV-W

University of Missouri - Kansas City

# #NASPATech Conference

## or Why We Need to Have More Tech-Related Offerings

This past year, NASPA hosted the first major technology conference focused on the profession of student affairs - #NASPATech – in Newport, Rhode Island. As part of the programming committee, I was fortunate to get an early glimpse of what the conference had to offer, and it did not disappoint.

Although the conference attendance was understandably heavy on the tech-experienced side, there were a number of people attending who admitted they were not as experienced. Many expressed the importance of a conference like this to our profession and felt the need to be there to find out about current trends and see where we are headed. I couldn't agree more.

A few highlights from the conference:

- Hearing Dean Kenn Elmore and Rey Junco speak about student affairs and technology – Rey has some great research to share which I believe will be extremely important as we continue to look at how we use social media with our students. Dean Elmore did a fantastic job relating our profession to that of communicators improving our communication skills through social media.
- Getting to collaborate and present with different colleagues...whom I met face to face just hours or even minutes before we presented together. By meeting people through Twitter and the #SACHat group, I managed to collaborate on two different presentations. I can't say enough how much I enjoyed getting to work with all three of these colleagues and how much richer these presentations were for the collaborations.
- After attending a conference all about what's been happening in technology, what other campuses are doing, and where we're headed, I have just a few ideas about things to try on our campus and the various blogs for which I write. Talk about professional development!

So why is the #NASPATech conference such an important part of our profession? Technology is fast becoming (actually, already is) a central component to our profession. We use it to communicate, to teach, and to do everything in between. The more we facilitate conferences like this one, the more those of us with less technology knowledge/experience learn; the more we make our profession attractive for those with technology knowledge; and the more seriously the IT profession and businesses take us and higher education as a whole. Not enough of a reason for you? How about the fact that our students are being required to use and communicate through technology on a daily basis, and their future careers will necessitate an understanding and knowledge of technology far beyond what many of us have currently? If you are truly going to educate these students, you must have more knowledge about what technology holds for the future.

#NASPATech has been scheduled this fall on October 25 – 27 in Indianapolis. There's no question it will be a great conference – just a question of whether I'll see you there!

**Kristen Abell**

Director-UMKC Residential Life  
University of Missouri - Kansas City

Submit your article to the Region IV-W Newsletter. The deadline for the next newsletter is **April 1**.

# REMEMBERING THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

DENVER, CO 2011

## Outstanding Mid-Level Professional Award



Ryan Gove  
Director of Student Engagement  
University of Kansas Medical Center

## Distinguished Service Award



Dr. Rich Rossi  
Associate Vice President for Student Services/Residence Life  
Creighton University

## Community College Professional Award



Dr. Cheryl Rasmussen  
Vice President for Student Services  
Highland Community College in Kansas

## James J. Rhatigan Outstanding Dean Award



Dr. Blanche Hughes  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Colorado State University

## Outstanding Faculty Member



Dr. Margi Healy  
Professor of Educational Leadership  
University of North Dakota

## Presidential Excellence Award



Dr. Ed Hammond  
President  
Fort Hays State University

# GOLDEN KEY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS REFLECTIONS

**Tonia Karpowicz**

Graduate Student

University of Kansas-Medical Center

As a first year graduate student, I found the idea of attending my first regional student affairs conference slightly intimidating. I mean, it was highly possible that I would arrive in Denver and realize that, contrary to my hopes, I did not fit within this group of professionals whom I wished to call my colleagues. My fears could not have been more off base. When I arrived in Denver, I saw genuine smiles on every new face I met. The members of NASPA IV-West made it very clear that everyone was welcome. I would go so far as to say that NASPA IV-West makes its members feel like part of the family. When I felt the tiniest bit lost or confused, someone was there to graciously point me in the right direction. I quickly came to the realization how lucky I was to be a member of this region, and with the pressure of feeling ostracized pushed from my thoughts, I found myself free to mix and mingle and truly absorb the limitless amount of information at my fingertips.

Before my arrival in Denver, I perused the website constantly and sought out advice from my current mentors as to what would be the best programs to attend. Unfortunately, when I got to the conference, I found my decisions on where to spend my time more difficult to make. Each topic in the pamphlet jumped out, seeming innovative and refreshing. Once I met some of the presenters, the choice became even more difficult to make. However, I soon realized that the conference was not just about the programming available, but the people in attendance.

Whether it was the presentations on blogging, diversity, gender issues, etc. or simply the people, something about this year's conference solidified my desire to work in student affairs. I could not have asked for a better experience or a better group of individuals to share in this passion. After this year's conference, I can definitely say I am in this field for the long haul, armed with new friends, more passion, and plenty of inspiration.

**Marney Randle**

Graduate Student

Colorado State University

The NASPA IV-West Regional Conference was held in Denver, Colorado. The theme, "Views That Inspire," was evident throughout the conference with the various presentations, awards, and speakers. The conference theme of "Views that Inspire" has multiple significant meanings in my student affairs work. I believe in working with the "whole student" within the student affairs profession. To me, that means encouraging them to rise to challenges and helping them overcome obstacles, supporting them and providing affirmations, and most importantly, just listening to them when they want to be heard. Through working with the whole student, I have met many students that continually inspire me. Their ideas, viewpoints, and experiences consistently amaze me; it reminds me of how blessed I am to be a part of their lives. The conference theme and my experiences at the actual conference confirmed why I do the work I do.

It was so exciting to be at the conference and surround myself with individuals who share my love of student affairs. The energy at the conference, the passion for student support, learning, and engagement, and the overall sense of connectedness was invigorating. Surrounding myself with other student affairs professionals and graduate students helped me feel rejuvenated and ready to continue to do great work on my campus. I am honored to be a member of NASPA, as it provides me with the support I need to be successful in the student affairs profession.

One of my highlights of the conference was presenting about The HEART Project with Kyle Oldham. The HEART (Hear, Empathize, Advocate, Respond, Transform) Project was a new social justice and diversity initiative developed for Fall 2011 Residence Life student staff training at Colorado State University. It was such an honor to present this information to student affairs professionals in our region. People expressed interest in implementing this on their campuses, which is very inspiring!

Another one of my highlights was listening to the comments by Gwen Dungy. I think she is such a huge inspiration! She really speaks from the heart, and has put so much hard work into making NASPA the strong organization it is

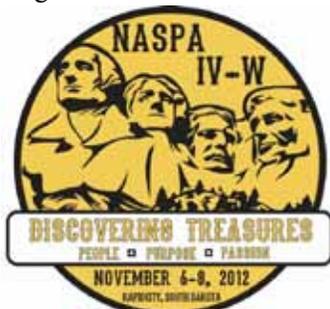
today.

Overall, I really enjoyed the NASPA IV-West conference, and I look forward to attending more conferences in the future! We all have different life stories, and these impact our views and ways we function in the world. Attending conferences, meeting new people, and engaging in dialogue help me see different views that inspire me.

**Michael Hoodless**  
Graduate Student  
University of Kansas

In the greatest region of NASPA, this conference was an experience that I feel lucky to be an integral part. With so many great sessions to pick from, it was nice to know whatever my interests were I couldn't go wrong with the choice I made. I was appreciative to attend the conference because being an Alum of the NUFP program, I was able to reconnect with my mentor Andrew Gonzalez. Through reconnecting with fellow graduate students like Torrey Eason, it was refreshing to know why we are in these graduate programs and the profession of student affairs. The volunteering opportunity was one that will be unforgettable because I was able to see how much work the host committee had to put in to give us such great learning opportunities.

This year was an exciting one with the debate on graduate students having a vote in what occurs in NASPA. With all of these great opportunities around me, the one I will cherish the most was speaking with some Nebraska NUFP students, for which I remembered what it was like to be in their shoes and gave them advice to prepare for the graduate school process. I felt that my conference was a success because I received amazing advice from my mentor, was given great networking opportunities through people like Torrey Eason, and was able to give back to the NUFP program that gave me so much. When I returned to the University of Kansas, I felt alive and ready to take on any challenge, so thank you for the help to go and participate in the greatest region's conference!



Save the Date  
November 6-8, 2012

## Publication Awards

### Campus Based

Office of Off Campus Life at Colorado State University  
Rose, Mason, and Aggie Ad Campaign

### Literature/Research



Dr. John Foubert,  
Associate Professor of College Student Development  
Oklahoma State University

### Outstanding Video

Resident Assistants  
Fort Hays State University

### Support Staff



Mary Guest  
Administrative Assistant to the Vice Chancellor  
for Student Affairs  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

### Outstanding New Professional



Beau Johnson  
Resident Director in Housing and Dining Services  
Colorado State University

# Open-Source Oasis (#openoasis)

Conceptboard (@ConceptboardApp) is an on-line, open-source collaboration tool that gives users the ability to share and discuss documents, provide feedback, develop ideas, and organize projects and meetings all in real-time with colleagues or students. The program, based in Stuttgart, Germany, provides users with a nearly infinite amount of space on a virtual whiteboard to add content, comments and more. Dan Toma (@toma\_dan), Vice President of Sales and Marketing with Conceptboard, adds, “(Conceptboard’s) usability is limited only by the imagination of the users.” When asked about how Conceptboard compares to other online collaboration software, Toma notes two main advantages. “First of all it makes the users think in a non-linear way and second of all it engages them in virtual team management.”

I am currently using Conceptboard to collaborate with a co-presenter on a workshop to be presented at the NASPA conference in Phoenix this March. Lisa Endersby (@lmendersby) is a Student Experience Advisor at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, and our workshop discusses the need to create a more collaborative and connected campus. “The information and ideas we work with on Conceptboard come alive - making research and writing a much more dynamic, engaging process,” says Endersby. “I’m impressed,” she continues, “by the use of Conceptboard in collaborating on research projects as a single space to house multiple ideas and pieces of information.” The software allows us to communicate quickly

The information and ideas we work with come alive - making research and writing a much more dynamic, engaging process

and easily, live and in real-time, even though we are separated by several time zones and an international border. And this is exactly what Conceptboard was created to do. According to Toma, “We are all aware that in today’s ever changing global environment, the need for professionals that can ‘think outside of the box’ in a non-linear way and be able to manage, at the same time, cross cultural and cross continental virtual teams is greater than ever.”

Another gem of the program is its adaptive nature. “I appreciate that Conceptboard can appeal to many diverse learning and communication styles,” Endersby noted. “I often find myself wanting to see the big(ger) picture or hear myself ask ‘can you show me?’ and concept board allows those I’m working with to do both.” Users of different abilities are able to use Conceptboard in a variety of ways, and mold their experience to what they need out of the program. It is a game changer when looking at the development of collaborative campuses and projects. Endersby explains, “Working collaboratively becomes more effective and efficient when there is a space to share & discuss ideas in real time that can also capitalize on our own strengths in learning and communicating.”

Basic users (open-source category) can create and share up to 25 boards. Plans with increased functionality are also available for small monthly fees, and the company is exploring an educational licensing option that is currently in beta testing. Overall, I find this software extremely helpful and hope you will as well. Find out more at [www.conceptboard.com](http://www.conceptboard.com), and make sure to find them on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Keep the conversation going and share your favorite open-source programs on Twitter by using the hash tag #openoasis.

Matt Brinton (@mcbrinton),  
Tech KC Rep, NASPA IV-W  
Assistant Director of Student Activities  
Metropolitan State College of Denver

# A Little Bit of Safety Goes a Long way

**Matt Zalman**

Residence Director

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Inspired from hearing the stories from my colleagues that attended the NASPA –IV West Regional Conference in Denver, one of the Program Objectives caught my attention. That program objective was: Inspire Courage.

Everyone will tell you building community in an apartment style residence hall is a difficult chore. Many of these students chose the apartment styles so that they would not have to continue meeting others and begin transitioning to a life that is more independent. As a Residence Director, this provides a love/hate relationship. On one hand, you have the disappointment of the Community Resident Assistants (CRAs) not having many people come to their programs and having a floor atmosphere that is quiet (sometimes eerily quiet), but students are making decisions that propel them toward independence and being successful in the real world, which is a goal of any Residence Director.

Looking at this, I went back to the basics and began looking at everyone's needs on a universal level, no matter what stage developmentally they are in or where they come from (i.e. rural vs. urban, transfer students, non-traditional, international students), the level from which they would benefit and decided to begin at ground zero. Starting with safety as the overall Maslow need in so many ways. Safety is what having that immediacy and individualized attention that most millennial students crave in their individual lives.

To highlight this for my staff and the students of my building, I tried to think in three stages: Personal Safety, Safety on Campus, and Global Awareness Safety. I created a checklist that would not only benefit them now, but benefit them in the future as well.

For Personal Safety

- Have money saved for a rainy day, in case of emergency
- Get a bus pass, most are free or at little cost for the city you live, use this in case you are stranded somewhere
- I.C.E. it when it hurts, (In Case of Emergency) when it hurts physically and emotionally, you know where to go to get help

- Know the benefits of being a student

For Safety on Campus

- Help students to ask questions: Residence Hall students at UNL have difficulty asking the right questions to the right people. We try to connect them at the very least with the emails of Community Resident Assistants and Residence Directors.

- Encourage them to take pictures of incidents and send them to the Residence Director/CRA if possible: This way there is a record of the incident and adds validity to the claim. This also helps the Residence director to follow up with the incident later down the road.

- Know what certain symbols mean (fallout shelter, innocent's society, ally sticker, safe space) This helps with safety because it signals the student about what to do in the future or clarifies confusion about a group.

- Identification as LGBTQA, as we know, is an important identity marker for students in higher education. The ally sticker and safe space sign is important for those who identify this way to know they are safe.

- Know your front desk's number in your residence hall: Test your staff right now. Do you think they know how to contact a specific residence hall on campus? These student workers will be the first to know about a cataclysmic event or weather emergency, so this is a good number to have.

- Know your CRAs email address: Do you know these? Are they stored in your memory or your phones memory...what if you lose your phone...?

- Know what to do in case of an active shooter on campus: This is the most important topic lately with the increase in campus shootings. If we educate those that are mostly always on campus, i.e. Residence Hall Students, then a higher sense of safety among all students can be achieved.

Update Your Technology

- On Twitter and Facebook:

- Follow the University Newspaper: There is nothing like an eager student journalist. These stories will hit the web faster than that cafeteria pizza indigestion. From this, you will be more aware of what is happening on campus and your safety will be increased.

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- Sign up for the text messaging alert system: UNL has NU Alert, the immediacy of this technology is priceless and provides rapid action when the emergency text message arrives on your phone.

#### Global Awareness Safety

- Have a plan for the trip, even if you deviate a little, at least you can look ahead and see how you need to be prepared
- Know where the American Embassy is where you are travelling
- Have money hidden in a separate place than your travel wallet just in case your wallet is stolen
- Understand the climate of the place you are travelling, not only for comfort but for safety
- Understand the culture of the environment in which you are going: a marketplace has its own dangers versus the countryside
- If you get sick, do you know where to go?

#### Update Your Technology

- Update Google Maps so you know where you are going, use street view to plan your route.
- Update Google Translate, just in case you need to communicate
- Follow on Twitter and Facebook local newspapers in the places you are traveling so that you have a sense of what is happening in those areas

These three topics will be rolled out in three stages in order to get this information to everyone: all will be mentioned at the first floor meeting with a corresponding checklist as a handout; the next stage will be a passive program in a prominent area for the second series of programming from mid-September to mid-October; and finally in the last series, a Facebook photo slide show distributed on Facebook, with a follow-up email and Twitter update to the floor with the link to the Facebook slide show. This will also allow for the recipients to become responders and updating themselves, providing the CRA with feedback.

To continue this for the rest of the semester, the CRAs will gather all responses they have received, both positive and negative through the crowd sourcing of the information, and all come together during a staff meeting to create a passive program that can be duplicated for every floor, sharing the positive comments and addressing the concerns of the negative comments, all coming from a kind and helpful place of inspiring students.

At the end, the CRAs and the community members on their floors have been updated, prepared, and guided to grab a little bit of security so that hopefully they have been inspired to find ways to be safe in the future. After all, a little bit of security goes a long way.

If we educate those that are on campus, then a higher sense of safety among all students can be achieved.

Submit your article to the Region IV-W Newsletter. The deadline for the next newsletter is April 1.

# Emotional Challenges Among College Men:

## Coping Strategies and Outlets

John Morad - Graduate Student, Southeast Missouri State University

Steven Taylor - IV West Men and Masculinities KC Rep, Academic Specialist, Southeast Missouri State University

The emotional challenges associated with college men have contributed to improper behaviors that can have a negative impact on masculinity. These emotional challenges can have a distinct impact on the way men function mentally as well as physically. According to a 2008 National College Health Assessment study, “53.2% of male college students reported feeling very sad in the past year, 25% felt so depressed they found it difficult to function, with 6.1% indicating they had seriously considered suicide, yet only 6.3% of men surveyed reported being formally diagnosed or treated for depression.” Given these implications, it becomes evident that actions need to be taken now to highlight emotional struggles among college men as well as encompass ways to treat this issue. The focus of this article is to address the causes and identify resources and outlets that need to be shared with college men.

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PERCEPTIONS

### Coping Strategies and Social Cognitive Theory

Increasingly, college men are relying on risky behaviors as a way to cope with emotional challenges. Some of the coping mechanisms include drugs/alcohol, unprotected sex, fighting, and weapon use. Despite these risky behaviors, college men are less likely to seek help for emotional and physical distress than women. Seeking help may be out of the question for many of these men due to social perceptions on how men should handle problems both physically and emotionally.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Dr. Albert Bandura of Stanford University, can help us better understand this premise. SCT derives that all individuals learn over time what behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable due to societal response. This theory

can be used to determine why people (college men) may or may not act in certain scenarios.

### Masculinity and College Men

The role of masculinity has been shaped by societal views over time. This stereotype portrays that men must be emotionally restricted, physically fit, and sexually sound. These expected characteristics can lead to an increase in pressure on men to “perform” regardless of circumstance.

Men may feel that asking for help will show weakness, which has been emphasized as a negative male trait throughout history. Due to this stereotype in societal/cultural teachings, men may handle emotional challenges in ways that shield the root of the problem from others. Instead of revealing problems and issues, men may try to bottle them up and handle these instances themselves. This approach to independence further highlights men’s societal patterns in dealing with emotional challenges.

### Outlets for College Men

- Support Group. Get involved in peer supported programs that focus on mentoring and issues related to masculinity.
- Professional Help. Seek out counseling services or a mental health professional who can deal with difficult situations.
- Talk About Your Feelings. Share feelings with others, whether it is a mentor, coach, family member or professor.
- Friends and Loved Ones. Form strong relationships with family members. If not family members, seek out student groups or organizations, religious groups, or other networks.
- Positive Activities. Activities that promote student wellness or activities that can be used as a distraction from negative feelings.

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- Maintain a Healthy and Active Lifestyle. Physical activity and a balanced diet are important. Eliminating drugs and alcohol will connect college men to more thoughts and feelings that were suppressed by substances.

The goal of this article was to make individuals more aware of the challenges that college men face. We want educators to be more involved and proactive when addressing these issues. At Southeast Missouri State University, we have accepted this responsibility by forming a Male Initiative Program: Men Encouraging New Ways.

The Male Initiative Program promotes relevant activities that support success academically, professionally and socially. The program assists participants in building academic skills and leadership skills, as well as enriches members socially through educational/cultural activities while promoting networking and career preparation.

#### Recommended Readings

Cuyjet, M. (2006). African American Men in College. Jossey-Bass; 1st edition.

Davis, T., Laker, J. (2011). Masculinities in Higher Education. Routledge; 1st edition.

Harper, S., Harris III, F. (2010). College Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research and Implications for Practice. Jossey-Bass; 1st edition.

Head, J. (2004). Standing in the Shadows: Understanding and Overcoming Depression in Black Men; Crown Archetype.

Hooks, B. (2003). We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity. Routledge; 1st edition.

For more information, please contact us by email or phone.



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Steven Taylor, IV West Men and Masculinities KC Rep (573-651-2273, staylor@semo.edu)

**Remember to join us in Phoenix, Arizona March 10 - 14**



# leadership workshop at UCCS

**Steve Horner, M.A.**- Assistant Director of Operations for Residence Life and Housing, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs  
**Amanda Koback, M.A.** - Graduate Fellow for Student Life and Leadership, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs

On October 1, 2011, approximately 60 students from the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs (UCCS) participated in a leadership workshop hosted by the Student Life and Leadership Department, with support from the Student Government Association and Residence Life. It was designed to help student leaders develop skills they could apply to their work on campus and in the community. This workshop was the first of its kind at UCCS, and it attracted students from the Student Government Association, fraternities and sororities, student clubs, honor societies, and students just generally interested in broadening their leadership skills.

The workshop was entitled “Making an Impact: Leadership in Action.” The goal was to inspire students to take action by providing practical skills they could begin utilizing immediately in student and community clubs and organizations. To begin the day, students were provided with a continental breakfast and then gathered together to listen to an inspiring keynote from Dr. Regina Lewis, Assistant Dean of Communications, Humanities and Technical Education and Director of the Women’s Forum at Pikes Peak Community College. She presented a moving presentation on making an impact through self-commitment. Following the keynote, students had the option to attend two of six breakout sessions. Lunch was then provided to the students and facilitators, and students were able to talk more in-depth with presenters and share ideas with each other. Lunch was followed by two additional session blocks. To conclude the day, participants gathered together once again to listen to a panel of students who were actively involved in a leadership role. These students answered questions from the facilitator and the audience about their experiences, and they offered advice as to how the participants can become successful leaders.



Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities, hoping to expand their knowledge and understanding in the areas of authentic leadership, communication, career building, organization, ethical leadership, team building, motivation, inspiration, and leadership theory. Leadership Identity Development Theory was used to develop the workshop curriculum, and the breakout sessions were designed to allow students to attend sessions that matched their developmental level and fit their own needs. Various members of both the UCCS campus and the Colorado Springs community participated in the event as facilitators for the various breakout sessions. This allowed students the opportunity to see different perspectives in a variety of leadership areas.

In order to assess student learning and to improve student programming, students were provided a program evaluation survey towards the end of the workshop. Students were able to offer feedback on each session they attended, as well as the event as a whole.

Overall the comments were very positive, and many of the students

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would like to see the workshop repeated in an expanded form, allowing more students to participate. Some of the comments from students included, “This was a great networking event,” “I feel ready to pursue my dreams,” “Each person has the ability to lead,” and “[This workshop is] something I will implement in my life after I leave today.”

Based on student and facilitator feedback, this event was considered a success by those who organized and implemented it. The feedback will be used to improve future programming. Several of the speakers will be asked back to facilitate a session, and new presenters will also be asked to participate in an effort to offer a wider variety of sessions to the students who attend. In addition to attracting new attendees, this would also encourage those students who have previously attended to participate again and gain different insights into leadership. Overall, those who participated in the event enjoyed the variety of sessions and speakers and would like to see a similar event in the future. It was a great start to offering a campus-wide leadership retreat.



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## Personal Accountability Literature and Our Work

Jane Tuttle-Assistant Vice Provost for Student Success, University of Kansas

The American Management Association provides a Management Development Competency Model that has amazing applicability to the work that many of us do with students on our campuses. Some of the competencies include:

- keeping promises and honoring commitments
- accepting responsibility for one’s actions;
- being honest and truthful when communicating information;
- behaving in a way that is consistent with espoused values; and
- assuming responsibility for dealing with problems, crises, or issues.

These behaviors are similar to the characteristics that Boyer outlined in *Sense of Community* and that most student affairs offices have as core values: integrity, honesty and personal responsibility. These are key components of personal accountability. Personal accountability plays a role in much of our work: our bystander training, our alcohol education, and our work on restorative justice.

There are a plethora of books on personal accountability. While each have their own approach (as a Kansan I appreciate the metaphor used in *The Oz Principle* by Connors, Smith and Hickman), I am struck by the simplicity of John G. Miller’s *The Question Behind the Question (QBQ)*. There are three keys to reframing questions and banishing the blame game.

In QBQ questions begin with what or how, always include “I” and focus on action. Those are the three components:

1. What or How
2. I
3. Action

Miller asks us to banish why, when, or who from our questions. “Why” can be the language of a victim – it implies that you have no power over your circumstances or environment. While it may be true that someone else is responsible for your situation, it doesn’t change things. “When” can be the language of procrastination – it implies that you have to wait for someone else to do something in order for you to be successful. Finally, “who” can be the language of

blame. Blame does not solve a problem and lives in the past.

Use “I” in your questions because it focuses on what you can do, not on what someone else can do. Finally, use verbs because action involves learning. Taking action requires courage because you might fail, but every failure teaches something. By following the three components of QBQ, the focus is on personal action and accountability.

Try it yourself. Reframe a few questions and see what the change of focus does for your feeling of accountability. For example:

Original Question	Reframed Question
Who dropped the ball?	How can I help?
When am I going to get the information?	What can I do to get the information I need?
When am I going to be told?	How can I get my work done? What do I need to do?
Why am I the last to know?	What can I do to improve the situation?
Why are you always late?	How can I help you be on time?

Stephen Covey said, “**Responsible people do not blame circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior. Their behavior is a product of their own conscious choice.**” If Stephen Covey is right, the questions we ask can improve the choices that students make as a result of our conversations. Before you ask a question, think about the words you are using. If it is a how, when, or why, ask yourself if the question can be reframed to be more accountable.

#### Some Personal Accountability Resources

Block, Peter (2007). Civic engagement and the restoration of community: changing the nature of the conversation. Retrieved May 20, 2009 from [http://www.asmallgroup.net/pages/images/pages/CES\\_jan2007.pdf](http://www.asmallgroup.net/pages/images/pages/CES_jan2007.pdf)

Connors, Roger, Smith, Tom & Hickman, Craig (2004). The Oz principle. New York City: The Penguin Group

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University of Nebraska NASPA Group



University of Kansas NASPA Group



Missouri State University  
NASPA Group  
(Some Members not present)

# from the editor

Richard Monroe-Marketing/Sales Specialist, Missouri State University

**H**ello again! Life truly is an amazing thing. Just when you think you may have a part of it figured out, it seems to change in an instant. On February 2, 2012, my amazing wife and I were privileged with the gift of an amazing little girl named Abigail Marie Monroe. Weighing in at 7lbs and 21 inches long, Abigail is a wonderful blessing to our lives. Seeing Abigail grow and develop right before my very eyes is a blessing and an honor.

Witnessing individuals develop around you is also an amazing sight, to have the privilege to hopefully be a helpful hand in an individual's personal and professional growth.



Being a professional in student affairs, I have already had the privilege to be a helping hand in an individual's personal and professional growth, and I hope to have these opportunities for years to come. The individuals you meet along the path of student affairs provide a unique and fascinating journey because everyone along the way is so willing to be there to help you succeed. So take the opportunities that are given to you and strive to be the best person you can be. Life has and will forever give you opportunities where you can succeed, so take those opportunities and follow those leaders who you can always trust and look up to. Life is a fascinating journey, so use those opportunities, and see where you will end up next.

Feel Free to contact Richard via email at [RichardMonroe@MissouriState.edu](mailto:RichardMonroe@MissouriState.edu), by phone 417.529.9324, or on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/richardlmonroe>

## Letter to the editor

I just finished reading the Fall newsletter for Region IV-West. It was excellent by any measure. I wrote the first Regional newsletter in 1972. The content was solely mine, printed on a mimeograph machine and sent by mail.

Looking at Richard Monroe's on-line effort, so informative and professionally done, represents one very spectacular illustration of our Regional progress during the intervening years. One perhaps has to be as old as I am to also fully appreciate the content of the newsletter, featuring writers from different perspectives and several institutions, bringing information of importance. One thing has remained constant...the appreciation and respect we have for each other and the optimism that underpins our work.

Congratulations to all of you who contributed to the newsletter. It makes one look forward to the next issue and certainly it made me very proud indeed.

James J. Rhatigan, NASPA past president (1975) and Vice President for Student Affairs Emeritus, Wichita State University

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NASPA Region IV-W, Winter 2012 Newsletter

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**NASPA**  
REGION IV-WEST

Take some time and submit an article, get published as a graduate student, or tell everyone a story about what is happening on your campus. Submit your article the Region IV-W Newsletter by emailing submissions to Richard Monroe at [RichardMonroe@MissouriState.edu](mailto:RichardMonroe@MissouriState.edu).

The deadline for the next newsletter is **April 1**.

Again a special thanks to Kristen Abell & Eric Gropitch for their help in editing the newsletter.

Thanks to all those who submitted an article for this issue of the NASPA IV-W newsletter.