

NASPA IV-WEST

“It is not our abilities that show what we truly are. It is our choices.” (Albus Dumbledore from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*). This axiom holds true for many of our students. We all work with students who have the abilities to succeed on our campuses but sometimes lack the understanding to make good choices. And that’s where we come in. Our roles in helping students understand the reasons and methods in decision-making can have a profound impact on a student’s success. I do hope YOU have made a good choice to join us in Orlando. I am confident that you will gain more knowledge, skills and attitude to help you be more effective with your students.

The Magic Kingdom, Seaworld, Epcot, Universal Studios – many of the attractions you would expect to see in Orlando. Many of you will take advantage of these attractions but do not forget about the 2013 National Conference, March 16-20. It’s a good choice! I am delighted to announce that presently over 4500 of your best friends are planning to attend. A few other highlights that you should be aware of are: an SSAO/ Faculty breakfast on Monday, March 18 at 7am; a “Shout Out Wall” that will list what is Bold in all of the regions; an outstanding group of featured speakers (I suppose I say that because I am on the featured speakers committee, but nonetheless); and not to mention the plethora of educational sessions. Lastly, we have a treat for you - a fresh and new approach to the conference-wide reception on Tuesday, March 19 at 9pm, replete with a Harry Potter theme. I can’t say that I understand who Dumbledore is or even Hogwarts, and Gryffindor but it does sound like fun. This reception will be all-inclusive but will allow for intimate engagement

within each region, while affording easy access to visit your colleagues in other regions. Best of all – you don’t have to be a wizard to enjoy :)

I also invite you to join us for the regional business meeting on Monday, March 18 at 5:30pm. This is a great opportunity to gain a better understanding of the functions of your board and the region. It’s a good choice.

And a “shout out” to Dr. Wayne Young, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at Creighton University located in Omaha, NE, for being selected as the Regional Director Elect. His elect role will begin following the national conference and will begin the regional director role in March 2014. When you see him, please take a moment to thank him for his willingness to serve the region.

Lastly, we have numerous volunteer opportunities available within the region: board positions, ad hoc committees, conference committees, program reviewers, etc. Please visit Volunteer Central at NASPA.org to view those opportunities. It is often said that the “regions are its people”. And we need more people like you to participate. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any interest.

I wish you safe travels to Orlando and look forward to visiting with you. Those conversations always renew my spirit and inspire me to be better!

Tim Alvarez
Regional VP NASPA IV-W
University of Nebraska - Lincoln



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS' PERSPECTIVE

As I look back and reflect on my first NASPA IV-W regional conference, I have learned a great deal from individuals I have met, sessions I attended, and the connections I have made. NASPA IV-W regional conference was an amazing experience, and I can say that I have taken a lot of what I have learned and have worked to apply it to my daily tasks as a student affairs graduate assistant and as a student in general.

There was a particular session that stood out to me and made the biggest impact on my experience. I attended a session on Sexual Assault Programming and Prevention presented by North Dakota State University's own Dean of Students, Janna Stoskopf, and Assistant Director, Sara Dodd, Sexual Assault Prevention. I have always had an interest in students with relation to sexual assault programming and prevention, and I felt this session would be very interesting. Janna Stoskopf and Sara Dodd did not disappoint. This session was filled with wonderful information regarding statistics, survey results, program implementation, and much more. This particular presentation continued to spark my interests in this topic area. I have continued to find ways to keep myself more up-to-date on relative issues, have worked to better familiarize myself with Title IX, and have been in discussions with my institution's Dean of Students about what we can be doing to help students and how to provide them the resources they need in these unfortunate situations.

There were many highlights of my trip for NASPA IV-W, but finding out that there are job opportunities in the area of sexual assault prevention at various universities is by far still at the top. I have an extreme passion for student affairs and for advocating for sexual assault prevention. Knowing that there is a possibility that I may be able to have a job that will support both passions is extremely exciting to me, but not as exciting as what a position for sexual assault prevention can do to help students who are dealing with those types of situations.

I extremely enjoyed the time spent at NASPA IV-W and the opportunities to expand my knowledge of the South Dakota culture and to see the beautiful sites of the state. I hope to continue pursuing opportunities within NASPA, and I look forward to what is to come in Arkansas for NASPA IV-W in 2013!

Katelynn James
Graduate Student, VP of Student Affairs
Missouri State University

I was excited at the idea of starting a journey in student affairs and higher education during my days as an undergrad. There was a passion in me that wanted to do great things in this field for the betterment of our institutions and the students we work for. I felt confident in myself when I knew that I wanted to go into this field because I knew my what my ultimate goal was and felt that nothing was going to stop me, but things started changed when my journey into student affairs began.

Over the course of the last nine months, there have been times during which I have felt overwhelmed and lost to the point in which I questioned myself on if I made the right choice of going into this field. Through those feelings I began to lose sight of what my purpose and passions were. Upon learning about this year's theme for our regional conference, "Discovering Treasures," I decided that this conference was the right place to regain my purpose and passion in the field, the "treasures" I had lost.

I was excited for what our regional conference had in store, since it was the first conference I was attending as a grad

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student and future student affairs professional. During the first day of the conference, however, those feelings of being overwhelmed and lost began to surface, mainly in part because I am naturally shy and everyone was in large groups talking, which is rough on an introvert. Part of me felt that I was not going to find my purpose and passion. That feeling changed as the conference continued. During the sessions and meals, I had the opportunity to interact with individuals on a one-on-one basis, hearing what they were doing on their campuses, what got them into student affairs and learning what they were passionate about. I loved having these talks because I felt that I could connect with my peers and it was reminding me of why I wanted to join this field in the first place. During the conference I kept hearing that NASPA IV-W is a family. Through my conversations with others I began to feel the sense of belonging and family. As I am looking back at my time in Rapid City, I'm truly grateful for the conversations I had with so many of you. It is amazing to think that having conversations with someone can open the door to so many opportunities, as I learned firsthand. I was having a conversation with Sara Mata about why I decided to go into student affairs and about issues in diversity, and a few days later I got a message from her giving me an opportunity to get involved in next year's regional conference; all that happened because of a one-on-one conversation!

Even though I still have a lot to learn as a graduate student and as a student affairs professional, one thing is certain; I have regained my passion and purpose. Thank You NASPA IV-W for helping me rediscover the treasures that I lost! I look forward to seeing you all at the national conference and at next year's regional conference in Hot Springs!

Chris Flores
Resident Director for Soc. Justice & Inc.
Oklahoma State University

My experience at the NASPA IV-West regional conference was one to remember. I met many new people who I will stay in contact with for many years to come. There were so many different people who attended the conference, and each of them had their own little piece of knowledge to offer.

What I learned through attending this conference is that we all have a story and a "treasure" that we can share with someone else. All it takes is for you to connect and interact with those around you. Each session and each individual had a treasure to share about their experiences and programs on their campuses. They shared their wealth of knowledge to help upcoming student affairs professionals implement the newest and most innovative techniques on their campus. Many of the upper level student affairs professionals are willing and ready to assist those who are still getting their feet wet within the profession. As a masters student this conference was very beneficial.

Seeing the community, the camaraderie and the willingness to mentor and help was absolutely amazing. We have all been in a position that someone else is coming into, and I did not meet one person who was not willing to share their wealth of knowledge with me.

I really enjoyed my experience at the NASPA IV-West regional conference, and I will definitely be coming back for the conference next year in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Thank you for a great time in South Dakota.

Brittany Hunt
OASIS Promising Scholars Graduate Assistant
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS' PERSPECTIVE (CONT.)

When I chose to attend the NASPA IV-West regional conference, I was extremely unsure of just what it entailed. I had never been to a professional conference before but was anxious to get started on my path to becoming a professional in student affairs. I expected to potentially meet a few new people who could perhaps serve as the foundations of a network I hoped to build. I hoped to hear a new perspective or two and expand my base of knowledge with which to serve my students. I thought that by attending, I could take my uneasy first steps into this field that is new to me. What I got instead was much more.

The connections I made at the regional conference were far more than the exchange of a business card or two. During the opening banquet someone mentioned how NASPA IV-West was a friendly region, family even. I remember wondering to myself how the few hundred people around me who saw each other once or twice a year could possibly be a family. When everyone hugged those sitting around them, I wondered if the people I was hugging felt as out of place as I did. By the end of the conference, I realized that I was not out of place at all. In a few short days, the openness and warm welcome from all those I met, and even those I didn't get a chance to meet, served as my proof that this region truly is a family.

I could not have hoped to get as much knowledge and learn as many things as I did. I was not expecting to truly expand my mind in such a way. The speakers, presenters, and even other professionals taught me things that have already served to influence me in the short amount of time since the conference ended. This field is ever-expanding, and being in touch with some of the scholars that are helping it to progress is an honor. The passion for learning and growing is so evident at the regional level that it has inspired me to make efforts to present at the next conference.

The diversity of speakers and presenters was fantastic. From opening with a talk on Cowboy Ethics and "The Try" to closing with a kind and wise Lakota woman, the broad scope of what this conference covered and who it reached was incredible. It speaks to the warmth and commitment that the NASPA IV-West region strives for. These two speakers as well as the other presenters left an impact as they speak on such different topics. You come away from the conference knowing that your mind was expanded, and it's a feeling that I won't soon forget.

I can say with full confidence that the NASPA IV-West regional conference is the best I have ever gone to. Of course that sounds like it means little, considering it is the only conference I have attended. What is crucial is the passion and inspiration it left me. I have a new found love that grew from nervousness and anxiety. Conferences are so beneficial, and coming to one such as this was the perfect first experience.

Aaricka Hellberg
Residence Director for Conduct Educ.
Oklahoma State University

When I think of places one can easily reach by car from Arkansas, South Dakota doesn't come to mind. So when some other students asked me why I was willing to drive to the NASPA IV-West conference in Rapid City, South Dakota, they expected a compelling response. As a graduate student, with stereotypical limitations on my time and means, what was so appealing it could justify thirty-two hours in the car? I fought off the impulse to say I just thought it would be cool to visit Mt. Rushmore on election day. It would have been an honest answer. Honest, but incomplete. Rather, I cited more heuristic motives. As I see it, engagement with organizations such as NASPA represents not only a valuable professional development opportunity, but an invaluable educational

opportunity. This is especially true for graduate students. Any chance to propose and present an educational session represents an opportunity to develop and share your expertise on a timely, relevant topic in the field. Further, there's a certain perspective on the profession which can be acquired only through exposure to (and interaction with) one's professional counterparts. We'll address them in sequence.

Organizations such as NASPA are products of their members' labor. The return each of us receives on our investment is directly dependent on what each of us contributes. In this view, NASPA the organization is like a bank where we store our 'productive professional karma.' NASPA conferences are opportunities to balance the books. Are our deposits proportional to our withdrawals?

I'm fascinated by the relationship between our profession and the broader social context in which we operate. When I learned the 2012 IV-West conference began in earnest on election day, I saw a timely opportunity to develop a program concerning federal programs and policies pertaining to higher education. I was and am not an expert on the subject, but the 'proposal accepted' email I received in September provided an excuse to spend some time at least moving in that direction. It forced me to learn. And hopefully, if I did my job well, the participants in the resulting session learned something as well.

Many of us move to new institutions for our graduate programs. In many cases, we do so for strategic reasons: varied experiences, in theory, will make us better at our jobs and more appealing to potential employers. Conversations happened upon and relationships developed with an #SAPro or #SAGrad from other institutions are invaluable learning opportunities. In this field, we work more or less toward a common mission, but we do so in varied contexts and through alternative means. Learning about alternate models for delivering the same essential programs and services at another institution inspires creative thinking, progressive programming, and a deeper understanding of one's own institution. As practitioners, the contacts we make at NASPA events are invaluable parts not only of our professional development, but our personal education.

Predictably, I place tremendous value on learning. That's why I'm happy to see NASPA offering scholarship opportunities for graduate students to attend. That they were kind enough to offer one to me is only icing on the cake. In the future, as before, I look forward to making many more withdrawals. And, whenever possible, a nice deposit.

Chase P. Stoudenmire
Graduate Assistant for Assessment
University of Arkansas

I have had the opportunity to attend several conferences, but never have I had such a great experience at a conference like NASPA IV-West. I really enjoyed that it was a small conference because it was easier to meet people. I now understand what some of the speakers meant when they said they were not going to a conference, but a family reunion.

The learning sessions were very motivational and interesting. My favorite learning session was "Black Faces With White Faces" because a lot of the information they provided related to all minorities rather than a specific group of minorities. The conference was an overall great experience, and I can not wait for the next one.

Alma Torrez
NUFP
University of Nebraska at Kearney

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS' PERSPECTIVE (CONT.)

My experience at NASPA helped me become more inspired in the work I do. It was beneficial to continue learning about program development outside of my graduate classroom walls through the eyes of other university professionals. I especially enjoyed seeing graduate students present their research and the trip to Mount Rushmore. It was perfect for Election Day! The bus trip and dinner with a professional staff member allowed for more networking to take place outside the conference hotel.

The information sessions allowed me to connect with people at different universities who work in areas of higher education that I aspire to be at, once I am done with my masters degree this spring. It was crucial for me to attend the session on the Social Change Model by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Great ideas were tossed around the room, and I was able to bring back those ideas and apply to my 2nd Annual Alternative Break Service Trip coming this spring 2013. Conversations with students, faculty and staff, as well as the award luncheon allowed me to see what great things are being done around the region which gave me the drive to keep working hard. The treasures I learned were brought back to my campus, cohort and co-workers, supervisors, and others who support student success in the education system!

Sarah Elsey
Graduate Student
University of Colorado Colorado Springs

Dr. Seuss once said, "Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory."

Seuss's words help tell the story of my NASPA experience. With each NASPA conference I attend, I fall more in love with the organization, its mission, and the way it continues to develop its members. Although just a brief moment, each conference and experience has become a lasting and cherished memory. Attending this year's conference was no different.

Reflecting on my experience, I was most impacted by Jim Owen, the Awards of Distinction Banquet, and time spent reconnecting with those I consider mentors in my life.

Being a lover of leadership, motivational stories, and inspirational quotes, Jim Owen stole the show with his words on Cowboy Ethics and "Try" at the opening luncheon and in his session immediately following. Through his non-profit foundation he preaches, "We can all be heroes in our own lives." As student affairs professionals, we should adopt his words, take his message one step further, and say, "We can all be heroes not only in our own life, but also in someone else's life." Regardless of title or position, we have the opportunity to be heroes on a daily basis to those we serve and encounter on our respective campuses.

In addition to being impacted by Jim Owen's words, I was encouraged by those honored at the Awards of Distinction Banquet. The segments of recommendation letters read aloud and heart-felt and authentic speeches given by those accepting awards provides continual inspiration in knowing there are countless individuals in this field who truly care about the students they serve and who want to make an authentic difference in their lives.

Finally, I was able to reconnect with those I consider mentors in my life. I left each interaction feeling incredibly blessed and inspired, with a stronger passion for working in student affairs.

NASPA is truly a family, and I am proud to be a part of this rich heritage. I am eager to reconnect with undergraduates, graduates, and professionals this coming November and turn three days of "moments" into lasting memories.

Ashley Stone
Graduate Student
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

ACADEMICALLY ADRIFT

Dr. Sam Jennings, II
Dean of Students
South Dakota State University

“Our species needs, and deserves, a citizenry with minds wide awake and a basic understanding of how the world works.” ~ Carl Sagan

In 2011, many academicians in and out of the professoriate were abuzz due to the release of “Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses,” by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa. The report presents data in a clear and meaningful way. The authors use caution when drawing correlative conclusions. When it appears that a claim has been made, they dig deeper into the data to verify or counter said claim.

Before you continue reading, please be advised that skepticism exists about the methodology of the study. The instrument, *the College Learning Assessment (CLA)*, has been called to question due in part to what it measures. The CLA purports to measure critical thinking, analytic reasoning and writing skills. Specifically, students’ responses to prompts on the CLA are “evaluated to assess their abilities to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems and communicate clearly and cogently” (College Learning Assessment, <http://www.collegiatelearningassessment.org/>). As these measures are rarely quantifiable in an objective manner, room for interpretive human error exists. For the purposes of this article, it is assumed that, in grossly overstated terms, the book is on to something.

“Academically Adrift” posits that a student’s abilities to think critically, reason analytically, and write clearly do not improve in a meaningful way after three semesters of traditional undergraduate college. To avoid a soporific data dump, suffice to say some students even decline in scores on the CLA. One factor that may attribute to this lack of progress or decline is reported academic rigor.

Quality academic rigor comprises many more complexities than retaining the same syllabus, same modality, and same content and redistributing the grades to fit an acceptable bell curve. Some of the best academic rigor engages the student and the faculty. Subject matter approached with vigor may still utilize a Scantron for assessment. This

outcome requires intense advance faculty preparation. A “multiple guess” might elicit thoughts of an easier test by students and some faculty, but a well-written multiple choice exam can certainly test one’s mettle. Concurrently, students might be overheard saying, “I can BS my way through any essay.” True; if and only if the person assessing the essay allows it.

“I can BS my way through any essay.”

Putting the descriptive statistics of grades earned in a class aside, “Academically Adrift” also looks at assignments given. Specifically, the amount of effort expected of a student gauged by pages. Freshmen and seniors at 587 colleges and universities were surveyed. Of the freshmen respondents, 83% indicated they had not written a paper of 20 pages or more in the last year. When asked the question, 51% seniors responded the same. In regards to sophomores and reading, one third of the students had not taken a course in the prior semester that required a minimum of 40 pages of reading per week (Arum and Roska, p.71). Everyday life is likely not to require one to write 20-page treatises or read 40 pages of texts in a week. It is likely that the expectations placed on an educated citizenry require the ability to read and comprehend material and articulate one’s position or thoughts on a subject. These skills are honed through practice which can take the form of reading and writing to a higher degree than minimally necessary to comprehend a news article or ballot initiative.

In “Academically Adrift” the authors lay most of the academic rigor burden at the feet of the faculty. Student Affairs can and should do little to modify the syllabus of a professor or vision of a department. Powerful and engaging partnerships between Student and Academic Affairs exist and thrive. Absent a formal program or partnership, Student Affairs can still positively affect student education. Supporting the academic mission of the institution, Student Affairs may and should play a role.

1. **You (student affairs professional) are qualified to help** - You have earned at least one degree, you work in higher education in a role that is meant to help students succeed in college. Talk to students about classes. It might be fun to reminisce about programs, activities and even classes skipped for fun and frivolity. Those activities are only worthwhile as long as the student is a student, except skipping classes of course. Feel free to engage students about their academics for the benefit of the student talking to one more person at the institution about the student's academic struggles, victories and success.

2. **Student Conduct** – many of us classify student conduct as educational. The burden is on all hearing officers to ensure education remains in the process. This does mean a purposeful sanction. It also means engaging the student as a student. A colleague once offered an overview of a conduct meeting where the introduction was about the student: where they're from, what their major is, what classes they're in, which classes they like, what they want to do with their degree and so on. Then the question, "What does that have to do with this incident?"

Less abstract, if a hearing officer is one to sanction students to writing essays, evaluating the essay for content, flow, grammar, mechanics is completely appropriate, congruent to the skills of the hearing officer.

3. **Appeals and petitions** – A written appeal or petition should be evaluated on the content of the student's case in accordance with institutional procedure. Concurrently reviewing with the student over how to improve their appeal can help the student should there be another need for such a document. It also indicates that the institution is looking at quality work even if a grade is not assessed.

4. **Student governance** – This area has a wealth of opportunity for infusing many characteristics of academic quality and rigor. A committee may want to ban tobacco from campus. It may be tempting for the student to seek out those who have banned tobacco and offer 1) that this campus did it and 2) this is how they did it.

It may not be obviously valuable to the student group to seek out campuses that have tried and failed to ban tobacco. They may not be quite as eager to thoroughly explore reasons why banning tobacco from a campus is not a good idea. We can help them by being rigorous in advisement. Asking students why they think what they think, how they know what they know, and what experts in the field support and counter their position are the most fundamental ways to force the students to engage in the subject matter in a meaningful way.

“We have opportunities to capitalize on developing competence...We should not miss any opportunity to educate”

For these examples or opportunities, there are scores of tangents and new concepts where Student Affairs can engage students in the pursuit of education and development. Should we not care to engage in a student's academic life, it is time to embark on our own path of critical thinking and analytic reasoning. The field of higher education chose us for a reason. If all we need to do are great activities and leadership development, there are plenty of venues outside of higher education for using these skills and talents. Fortunately we get to do these things and also help individuals become better versions of themselves. When we help students develop today, we help them be a member of the educated citizenry. We have opportunities to capitalize on developing competence in the primary products we “sell” which are critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and writing skills. We should not miss any opportunity to educate.

Open-Source Oasis (#openoasis)

The featured open source technology for this quarter is Asana (@asana). In my role in the student activities office, I oversee three very distinct and different teams. We were using shared on-line Google documents, dry-erase boards, posted to-do lists, and a variety of other methods to manage all of our different projects, tasks assignments, etc. We found ourselves sending emails to ourselves to remind us of things that needed to be added to the multiple to-do lists, questions we had on different projects, etc. There had to be a better way.

As most of my #openoasis stories have started, I found Asana via a simple Google search, “team task management.” Asana was one of the first programs I signed up for, but I also felt it was important to try a couple at the same time to find the one that fit best for my needs. I was blown away by how simple and easy Asana was to use. Separate teams can be created in different areas, tasks can very easily be assigned to team members, we’re able to have conversations about the projects inside the software getting rid of the need to send countless emails, it is available online and on mobile platforms, and it is FREE. The old saying “you can’t get anything good for free” couldn’t be further from the truth. Several months into my Asana experience we are going strong, and I am not looking back. I am looking at how we can expand this to other projects and teams that I work with around campus. It is a great product that is constantly making updates to stay on the cutting edge and make the user experience better. I reached out to the folks from Asana to find out more about their product.

Matt Brinton (MB): What is the best way for Asana to be utilized?

Asana: Team communication, coordination and collaboration. Regardless of project or industry, a common challenge tends to be the struggle to minimize unnecessary distractions and keep on task at work. Teams often rely on email, internal meetings, and other status updates to accomplish important projects and reach their goals. But these processes cre-

ate friction, impede flow and are often counterproductive. Asana connects teams and individuals to all of the activity and information that matters to their work, minimizing the burden of unwanted distractions. At the most basic level, Asana is a task management application that enables people to create, prioritize, and assign tasks to team members while following the flow of work. This allows teams to better streamline the day-to-day busy work so that great things can be accomplished more efficiently. Essentially, Asana gives people back the time they need to focus on what’s most important.

MB: What benefits do you believe that Asana can have for higher education institutions?

Asana: It strips projects down so you can focus on the bare essentials of each task, rather than getting overwhelmed by a slew of unrelated emails or unnecessary meetings. This form of project management can be effective for administrators, faculty and students. With recent budget cuts and increased demands on higher education, Asana provides a low cost (or free) solution for improving collaboration and coordination at all levels. By seamlessly updating members in real-time, it will allow groups of administrators or faculty members to stay on track and be in the loop about upcoming projects. Once clutter has been eliminated, higher education institutions will be better equipped to function as intended: to educate, innovate and inspire.

MB: With so many solutions currently available on the web, what makes Asana a “must use” product?

Asana: Simplicity, speed, and emphasis behind the “task” (rather than the person or subject) set Asana apart from other applications. When developing Asana, the company spent a lot of time identifying and incorporating the best aspects of email, wikis, spreadsheets and the many other tools we use to collaborate, while eliminating the worst. At the end of the day, we built an application that focuses communication around the most essential part of work--the “task.” In Asana, you follow a task or

project instead of people and conversations. This allows you to focus on all of the actual work you are involved with. With other collaboration applications you will often find yourself digging for relevant context, trying to piece communication together while staying focused on what really matters; Asana eliminates all of the guesswork from the equation.

Taking it one step further, Asana's Inbox highlights real-time updates to tasks and projects, and is easily available in one location within the application. Everything you need to know about your work is visible in Inbox and connects you to your tasks, including notes, attachments and comments. Inbox is a one-stop shop for understanding the whole picture; it eliminates wasted hours from piecing information together. As projects become more complicated, we find that email just doesn't cut it anymore. With Inbox, Asana has really become the first credible post-email application, setting it apart from other productivity solutions.

MB: How can Asana help higher education break down their typically siloed structures and become more open and collaborative?

Asana: Opening up paths toward greater collaboration and creativity is core to the Asana vision. Asana was developed to encourage collaboration and openness to drive productivity. Even for the most siloed of organizations, Asana can help reduce the "work about work" and improve communication flow -- the higher education system is no different. With real-time updates and project transparency, information gaps are filled, bolstering collaboration and making open communication second nature.

MB: What is the best way for a new user to get to know your product/service?

Asana: Try Asana out for free with groups of 30 or less, or use Premium Workspaces for groups larger than 30 at a monthly fee, depending on size. Also check out the Asana blog for product insights, tips and tricks, and information on the newest enhancements and releases.

MB: What are your partners saying about Asana?

Asana: Rising Realty Partners (@RisingRP) is a new commercial real estate company that is growing rapidly. Christopher Rising, President & Chief Operating Officer, shared that "Asana has helped us navigate the ever changing landscape as we adjust to daily shifts in strategy and market. We are able to communicate quickly and efficiently, and we are able to minimize any potential risks in information flow. When we evaluate trends in the office market and discuss them with tenants, we are proud to use Asana because it represents what we believe is the future of organization in business. Asana keeps us organized so we can focus on our core business."

Emerald Therapeutics is a pharmaceutical startup who says that Asana has helped meetings to run smoother. Brian Frezza, Co-Chief Executive Officer at Emerald Therapeutics, said, "All those quick meetings were starting to dominate our daily activities. After we implemented Asana, we keep meetings to major stuff, like brainstorming sessions, companywide updates, etc. We're back to doing science now, which is awesome."

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

Do you have motivating words going into the end of the Spring semester? Has a new networking opportunity become available, and you would like to share with the region? Let everyone know by submitting your article to the Region IV-W Newsletter by emailing submissions to Richard Monroe at RichardMonroe@MissouriState.edu.

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

Feel Free to contact Richard via email at RichardMonroe@MissouriState.edu, by phone 417-529-9324, or on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/richardlmonroe>

Remember to join us in Orlando, Florida March 16 - 20



2013 NASPA Annual Conference
March 16-20, 2013
Orlando, Florida

REGISTER
by June 30
to lock in
2012 rates!

from the editor

Richard Monroe- Technical Operations and Marketing Manager, Missouri State University

What is your university brand? Is it academic, traditional, exciting, party school, athletic, a small and close campus, too large of a campus? When making important decisions that affect your University, having a complete understanding of what your brand is can help filter out those bad decisions.

After attending a recent conference, I had the opportunity to learn about a changing dynamic within higher education from various educational sessions. Finding your true brand, and making sure that all decisions go through the “brand filter” will allow your organization to stay focused on the true intention or meaning. This changing dynamic is by no means a new idea, but is quickly becoming a new focus for many departments while trying to strategically market to the incoming students of various generations. The take away would be to make sure all departments across campus are also using the same “brand filter” which the university has created. If your university has not yet created a “brand filter” now would be the time to figure out what message you want out there to potential students from across the globe.

So what is your brand now? Is it what you want it to be? Is it time to transition that branding message? Now is the time to begin those conversations, because your brand is “what the students feel” when they are attending or visiting your institution. Are you relying on a logo or your motto to be what draws your students to visit? Remember that “your logo is an image, your motto is only a phrase, but your brand is how the student feels.” Develop a brand that will truly tell your potential students what your institution truly stands for and the atmosphere in which they will continue their learning.



Bender, G. & Kizer, R. (2013, February). *Think Like a Brand, Act Like a Retailer*. Presentation at the 2013 National Association of College Stores CAMEX educational conference, Kansas City, MO.

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