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## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

What's Your Story? As one of the organizers for the upcoming "Critical Conversations" conference in April, I began reflecting upon one of the topics of the conference, "Race and Poverty". I began thinking about how I would help others who struggle with issues surrounding race and poverty. I must admit, even after being in Student Affairs for many years, I still struggle with this topic. Thankfully, one of the keynote speakers for the conference, Inky Johnson (InkyJohnson.com) has created a firestorm across the nation with his powerful keynote on race and poverty. After reading his bio and watching his promotional video about his story, the question I asked myself was, "How?" How did he overcome racism and poverty when the odds were certainly stacked against him? What is the story behind his comeback? [For rest of Blog, click here.](#)



## WE ARE ALL A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

In my role as Assessment and Systems Administrator in Student Academic Affairs at the University of North Dakota, my position description states that the person in this position "is responsible for providing leadership and direction to the assessment needs of the departments within Student Academic Services. This person will assist the departments to identify student needs, measure student satisfaction, program effectiveness, and assess student learning." As I pondered my topic for this article, I began to reflect on my career journey in Student Affairs and how I ended up in my current position, most likely the position I will retire out of. Assessment isn't where I started or where I thought I would ever end up but here I am, loving every minute of it. [For rest of Blog, click here.](#)



## UPDATE FROM YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR

I hope holidays were good for everyone and refreshing as we embark on the new year and another semester. While everyone experiences family, friends, the holidays, and life differently we all share a similar purpose in our chosen career: We each use our given and developed skills to impact the lives of others for the better and we likely all experience the same reflective experience over the break. How was our year? Did we accomplish all we set out to accomplish? What major things happened (good or bad)? What are our goals for the upcoming year or semester? We hope more than anything you had significant progress on your personal and professional goals and find excitement and energy to tackle all that is to come in the upcoming year. [For rest of Blog, click here.](#)



## A “2017 IS YOUR YEAR TO VOLUNTEER WITH IV-W!”

Over the Holiday’s I hope our IV-W family was able to take a moment to sit back and reflect on you! As we start 2017, think about getting involved and giving back to your profession. There are many great opportunities listed below that I encourage you to look into and if interested, apply online![For rest of Blog, click here.](#)

Don't be dismayed by good-byes. A farewell is necessary before you can meet again. And meeting again, after moments or lifetimes, is certain for those who are friends.  
Richard Bach

## KC SPOTLIGHT - GENDER & SEXUALITY

Well, folks, this is it. My last official duty as your Gender & Sexuality KC rep. After 6 outstanding years, it is time to pass the reins on to someone else. I’m sad to be leaving this position, as I’ve truly enjoyed my work on the Region IV-W Advisory Board, working alongside my NASPA family. I could not have been more fortunate to serve you all under the leadership of some outstanding Regional Directors: Eric Grospitch, Tim Alvarez, Wayne Young, and Jerrid Freeman.[For rest of Blog, click here.](#)



## UNPACKING YOUR “TOP 5”: STRENGTHSQUEST\* AND SOCIAL IDENTITIES

I work on a StrengthsQuest campus. A few years ago, my institution made a commitment to use StrengthsQuest as a tool for education across the curricular and co-curricular environments. Early StrengthsQuest efforts primarily originated in Student Affairs, and as a leadership educator, StrengthsQuest has quickly become a large component of my work. I love StrengthsQuest, and I have seen the benefits of StrengthsQuest education firsthand. As a result of several conversations with fellow student affairs professionals, I have some reservations about personality assessments.[For rest of Blog, click here.](#)



## NUFP STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

If you or someone you know is a current NUFP fellow (with a least a year left before graduation) right now there is an exciting opportunity to get involved in NASPA Region IV-West.[For rest of Blog, click here.](#)



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