

Oh, the Places You'll Go; How I will Professionally Grow as a Student Affairs Practitioner

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When thinking about where I want to see myself through the next decade of my career journey, I had to sit and think about where my priorities lie, what my values are, and what I want to accomplish through these next few years. This started at the beginning of this graduate program. I reflected back on a paper I wrote in ARP 620 in the Fall of 2020, where we were instructed to write a professional development plan, as it applies to the ten competency areas that were outlined in 2015 by the NASPA and ACPA Professional Competencies Task Force. In this paper, I assessed where I was starting at for the graduate program in the intersectional diagram of the 10 competencies (Figure 1). I had assessed that I was foundational in Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH) and Law, Policy, and Governance (LPG). I determined I was a Foundational-Intermediate in Student Learning and Development (SLD) and Advising and Supporting (A/S). I was Intermediate in Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF), Organizational and Human Resource (OHR), Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER), Leadership (LEAD), and Technology (TECH). I was Intermediate to Advanced in Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI). Reflecting back to where I thought I was at the start of the program, I have changed and grown a lot in these areas, which has helped me plan out my future through the next 10 years and beyond.

First, I am thinking short-term, and looking at a year into the future, where I will be a Residence Life Coordinator or hall director of some kind. Having worked with residential students for the past few years, and knowing that is where my student affairs journey started, I plan to continue helping residential students grow into their potential. I also hope to expand my

knowledge by engaging in opportunities across departments on campus such as volunteering and interfacing with student activities and helping with campus events planned for students.

Three years out from now, I will be finishing up my contract as a Residence Life Coordinator and looking to land my feet into the realm of student activities and start to help plan these events with students and for students to engage with on and off campus. In my time as a Residence Life Coordinator, I plan to help with advising students by associating and assisting with organizations such as the Residence Hall Association and the National Residence Hall Honorary. I then plan to assist students by engaging with and being able to provide outside extra-curricular learning opportunities and provide alcohol-alternative programming at late-night events for the safety of the campus community. I have always been successful as an event planner and have creativity in my toolkit, as well as the openness to work with students as they plan events they want to see.

After I have been working in student activities as an entry- to mid- level coordinator for a couple years, I aspire to enter into an associate director or director role in student activities. This will allow me the opportunity to grow in my supervisory skills, grow in my engagement skills, and be able to help guide newer professionals toward their goals. I hope to use the time in this position to continue to speak up for the students and provide student voice in spaces that students aren't in to make sure the institutions are connected with helping students grow.

Around a decade out from today, I plan to be entering into or applying to enter into an Associate Dean of Students role and continuing to work through other opportunities such as volunteering and participating in professional development conferences to help me get into that

space. I plan to make sure that I am active in my crisis response, reflective on my interactions, and intentional about my programming. I hope to stay engaged with students and learn what they are needing, apply that to my daily practice, and give back to students in ways where they can benefit the most. I would continue to help with student activities, while also helping across the division in areas that are related, such as New Student and Parent Programs, Cultural and Identity Centers, and Residence Life, to build a stronger connection between departments.

As I look at what I have accomplished and what I have learned so far, I can see how these skills and experiences will continue to uplift me into these aspirational positions and my future plans. I am very student-oriented and have supervisory experience. I am empathetic and flexible. These are all good experiences to have, especially as I grow into being a student affairs practitioner. My time through this program has allowed me to grow and become who I know I want to be. Through this time, my alignments to the NASPA and ACPA competencies have adjusted as they compare to where I started in this program. Currently, I am assessing that I am foundational in Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF). Although I thought I was more advanced in this competency at the start of the program, I realized that this is an area that I need to put some more focus towards. Through conversations and feedback from current students I supervise, I realize that my foundational interactions and communication styles are attached to who I am, and my internal ethics. I need to spend time working through the process of evaluating my interactions, how I engage in an ethical format, and how I interact with students. I am more Intermediate with Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH), Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI), Organizational and Human Resource (OHR), Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER),

Student Learning and Development (SLD) and Advising and Supporting (A/S). I see myself more advanced in Leadership (LEAD), Technology (TECH) and Law, Policy, and Governance (LPG). Some of these have changed spots as I have learned more about me and who I am, and where I want to grow as an individual and as a professional.

Additional responsibilities or learning opportunities I hope to engage in would be areas where I could continue to teach a course. I had the wonderful opportunity in my graduate program to be able to help facilitate a learning program in a classroom setting and would love to spend some time where I could engage with students in this manner. I also would like to continue to find new parks, beaches, restaurants, hikes, and more outdoor activities to help in my overall work-life balance and provide some out-of-work time to focus on my mental health.

Currently, I hold two associates degrees, one bachelor's degree and am on track to be receiving my first master's degree. I specify my first, as I am not sure if I plan to continue and obtain a Doctoral degree, or if I want another master's degree. I may someday want to get my Doctoral degree but haven't yet decided if/when I want to get that. If so, I would plan to go down the route that is a practitioner-based program, as I am a very hands-on learner and practitioner. I hope to get as far as I can with my master's degree but will progress to a doctoral degree if I am financially stable enough and ready to grow into my next steps moving forward.

As I continue through my career journey, I will continuously reflect back on my journey through this program, through my time so far as a professional, and be able to find areas of growth and work towards them. As stated earlier in this paper, I self-assessed myself to have changed in some of the levels of the NASPA and ACPA competencies and have evaluated that I

need to refocus on my Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF). Using this similar thought process, and finding where I need to re-evaluate my trajectory, will allow me to refocus on what I need to do as a professional, while still working on my own personal growth.

References

NASPA and ACPA Professional Competencies Task Force (2015, August). *Professional competency areas for student affairs educators*. NASPA Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education. <https://www.naspa.org/articles/professional-competency-areas-for-student-affairs-educators>

Figures

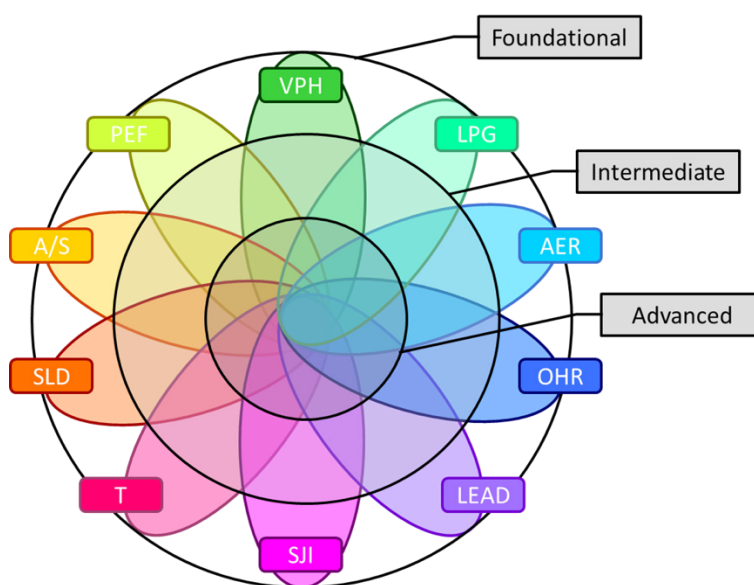


Figure 1. Visual Representation of the Intersection of the 10 Competency Areas (NASPA and ACPA Professional Competencies Task Force 2015)

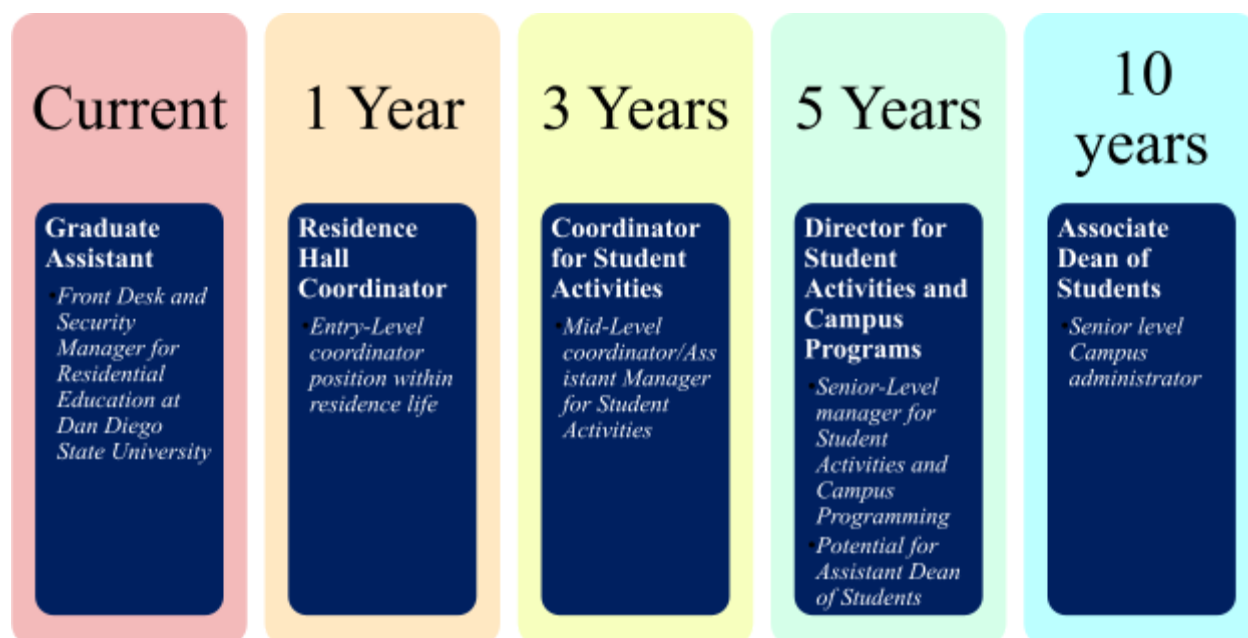


Figure 2. Professional Development Plan for Kyle Hamlin