Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap Between Student Affairs & Academic Affairs: Building an Efficacious Relationship for Students

Presented by Angela Gibson
## Bridging the Gap

At this round table we will discuss:

- Where the gap exists
- Why the gap exists
- How to start building relationships
- How to maintain relationships
- Implications for First-Year & Transitional Students
- Additional resources
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- Introduction of facilitator
- Introduction of participants
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- There is a desire amongst many in higher education for a synergistic & efficacious relationship between academic affairs & student affairs.

- Collaborations are seen as desirous as more institutions push for student focused learning & student centered initiatives.
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- Often there are obstacles to creating a seamlessly interconnected campus.
- For student success initiatives to prosper research shows partnerships across campus must be developed.
Bridging the Gap: Where Does it Exit?

- Where does the gap exist?
- Colleges & Universities
- Between faculty & staff
- With students
- With divisions & departments
- In research & publications
- In graduate programs
- Where else?
Bridging the Gap: Why Does it Happen?

- Why does the gap between academic affairs & student affairs exist?
  - Miscommunication
  - Misperceptions
  - Compartmentalizing of areas
  - Language usage
  - Overburdening of roles
  - Lack of knowledge & training
  - Apathy
  - Why else?
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- Student affairs and academic affairs are two cultures on a campus that both strive for the same thing – improved student learning & student success.

- Collaborations between the two create a stronger campus community & create better student initiatives.
Bridging the Gap: Getting Started

- How do we start building relationships between student affairs & academic affairs?
Bridging the Gap: Initial Steps

Buy-in from top down
- President/Provost/VP/Deans
- Administrator meetings
- Faculty Senate

In-services between areas
- Meet and greet/raise awareness
- Brainstorming
- Needs analysis
- Goal setting
- Create objectives
Invitations

- Invite faculty and staff to upcoming events
- Provide invitations to sit on current committees
- Ask for feedback on issues
- Invite staff to classroom
- Invite faculty to office
- Do social activities
Campus awareness
- Present at campus wide development days
- Present to the Board
- Present to Student Government

Change language
- Change vocabulary usage in documents, policies, & everyday conversations

What else?
Taking the first step allows for:

- Staff and faculty to realize the value of contributions brought to the table.
- The belief that student services are equal partners with instruction in facilitating student learning & success.
- The belief that faculty are equal partners in developing students & promoting student success initiatives.
- The ability to work on maintaining and enhancing relationships.
Bridging the Gap: Maintaining Relationships

- How do we maintain relationships that have been started?

- Collaborations between student affairs and academic affairs is not a one time event
- Continuous upkeep must occur
- Constant interaction and communication is vital
- Reassessment of goals, objectives, and initiatives should regularly take place
Bridging the Gap: Maintaining Relationships

What initiatives can occur once the partnerships have developed?

Faculty and Staff Curriculum Initiatives

- Learning communities
- Living learning communities
- First year courses integrated across curriculum
Staffing Positions
- Creation of a Learning Specialist (Zeller)
- Faculty and Staff Advising
- Faculty and Staff Mentoring/Advising

New Student Orientation
- Staff and faculty student orientation participation
- Newsletters/postcards to new students before starting first semester & during first year from faculty & staff
- Involvement of staff & faculty in family orientations
Co-curricular Incorporation

- First year courses integration student activities/campus events into curriculum
- Faculty attend student campus events
- Staff and faculty co-advise student clubs & organizations
- Faculty program event with student life based on the faculty’s interests
- Adopt-a-hall
- Faculty & staff part of convocation & graduation
Training and Educational Initiatives

- Faculty provide workshops in areas of knowledge (subject expert), curriculum design, learning theory, etc.
- Staff host workshops in areas such as student development theory, program planning, etc.
- Graduate programs in higher education incorporate topic of academic and student affairs integration

What else?
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Strong relationships create a seamless community
Bridging the Gap: Implications for FYE Students

Positive affects on FYE students:
- Curricular & co-curricular aspects of campus connected
- Staff can connect students to faculty
- Learning occurring in and outside the classroom
- Faculty interaction occurs outside of class
- Students feel connected to faculty
- What else?
Bridging the Gap: Implications for FYE Students

- Student learning & success intrinsically related to retention
- Student satisfaction, grades, & retention improve
Additional Resources

- Zeller, W. J. The Learning Specialist, About Campus; Sep 1999, Vol. 4 Issue 4

- Tinto, V. *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes the Cures of Student Attrition*, 1993, University of Chicago Press
- Schroeder, C. C. *Partnerships: An Imperative for Enhancing Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness*, New Directions for Student Services, Fall 1999, Issue 87, Jossey-Bass
- Brady, S. M. *Students at the Center of Education*, Liberal Education, Winter 99, Vol. 85
- Shapiro, N. S. & Levine, J. H. *Introducing Learning Communities to Your Campus*, About Campus, Nov 1999, Vol. 4
- Woosley, S. A. *How Important are the First Few Weeks of College? The Long Term Effects of Initial College Experiences*, College Student Journal, Jun 2003, Vol. 37
Bridging the Gap: Additional Questions & Discussion

- Open floor for questions
- Open floor for discussion
Thank you for your attendance & participation

I hope this round table discussion provided some ideas & will foster further discussion on your campus
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