A Season of Engagement in Graduate Programs in Student Affairs

By Dr. Deb Liddell, Program Coordinator

“The beauty of young people is their openness, their yearning for enthusiasm. On the other hand, their discouragement is that ‘the machine’ is too big to be changed.”

French philosopher Jean Vanier

I’ve been thinking a lot about that yearning for enthusiasm, sitting at Ground Zero of the Presidential campaigns’ pre-season. What a season it was! I watched as Barack Obama drew over 10,000 people to an Earth Day rally on the Pentacrest lawn. John Edwards’ mini concerts with Jackson Browne brought folks of all ages. I heard the buzz of offices downtown, and saw staff, volunteers, and supporters from the Edwards, Biden, Clinton, Obama, and Giuliani campaigns work the Friday night summer concerts down on the Ped Mall. They held caucus training events, organized all-day canvassing, and gathered like eager roadies outside the Hamburg Inn where their favorite candidate was eating and working the crowd. It’s been an exciting season of engagement here.

Art Levine is credited with recognizing that activism, as a social movement, typically follows community service movements -- the idea being that once empowered to make local change through acts of volunteerism, one becomes likely to join movements to make social and political change.

Speaking for myself, I find the engagement of college students, and members of our own learning community, an encouraging sign of our national future.

Engagement has been evident not only in the larger community but also in our program. In my Cognitive & Moral Development class, students are held to a modest requirement of 15 hours toward a community service project. Students choose a project based on their own values and priorities, and learn about the good practices in service learning through their experiences. I was thrilled to learn that most of the students in that class reported they intend to continue their service commitment beyond the semester requirement.

Those commitments extend beyond our borders, as an increasing number of students and alumni have ventured abroad to extend their understanding of and connection to other countries: to Scotland, Italy, Ghana, Australia, Qatar, and South Africa. We explore a few of these adventures inside this newsletter.

Spring is a time of planning and great movement here, as grads and prospective students alike ponder their next moves, as faculty consider commitments for next year, and we take stock of what has gone well. I’d like to publicly acknowledge and thank our program assistants Jackie Thompson-Oster and Mike Schluckebier for their outstanding support to the program this year. Jackie’s terrific marketing campaign (to be launched later this year) and her work on Campus Visit Days help us reach out to our prospective communities. Mike’s active outreach with our growing group of alumni and editorial work on this newsletter have been remarkable. Thank you!

I look forward to catching up with our alums at our annual ACPA reception. Mark your calendars and plan to visit in Atlanta!
Congratulations to the MA Class of 2008!

Megan Lyons is originally from Bettendorf, Iowa. She received her BS degree in Marketing from Iowa State University in 2004 before moving to Iowa City to work as an ESL educational associate at Iowa City West High School. During her time in the Student Development Program, she has held a graduate assistantship with the Office of Student Life as the manager of the Asian Pacific American Cultural Center. Megan also worked as a practicum student with Coe College's residence life as well as the University of Iowa's Office of International Students and Scholars. Megan is currently seeking advising and/or diversity positions at the University of Iowa. Megan loves to chat over coffee, try diverse foods, and is partial to making people laugh.

Katie Wilson is originally from Lincoln, Nebraska. Before moving to Iowa, she lived in Wisconsin, graduating from Lawrence University in Appleton and later moving to Madison, where she worked for AmeriCorps and the public school system. She currently holds an assistantship at Health Iowa, where she teaches classes and does presentations on safer sex, alcohol, nutrition, and other health-related areas. Katie also helps coordinate the Health Ninjas, a peer health program created by Health Iowa and the 2007 graduating Student Development class. Her hobbies include Ultimate Frisbee, playing pick-up basketball at the Field House, and spending time with her 8-month old nephew, Jack.

Becki Levad, originally from Wilton, Iowa, completed her undergraduate work in journalism at Iowa State University. At The University of Iowa, Becki is a graduate assistant at Belin-Blank Center, where she works with a college transition and student success program. She has also completed an internship in career services, and has helped teach several outdoor recreation courses. This semester, she is involved in two practicum experiences: one in residential programming at Coe College and one in residence life at The University of Iowa. Becki is currently seeking a position in residence life, career services, service learning, or student support services, and is also researching student affairs opportunities in Latin America.

Nathan Frideres is originally from Algona, Iowa. He did his undergraduate work at the University of Iowa and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education. After completing his undergraduate schooling he spent time living in Vail, Colorado and Chicago, Illinois, where he worked at Chicago Title Insurance Company. During his second go round at Iowa, Nathan has worked as a graduate assistant with the Educational Technology Center (ETC). While working with the ETC some of his responsibilities have included teaching the Technology in the Classroom course, providing technical assistance for Distance Education courses, and presenting assistive technology to future teachers. Nathan’s practicum experiences have included working in Career Services at Coe College, Student Educational Services at Saint Louis University, and Judicial Affairs at Iowa. Nathan is looking forward to a future working in Student Support Services/Academic Support in the Midwest.

Maureen Perkins has enjoyed her experience in the MA Student Development program. As a native of Iowa City and a graduate of The University of Iowa, it was important for her to establish new communities to make her experience unique. The first community she joined was with the Office of Residence Life as an Educational Programmer. This community fostered her programming skills and provided experience advising student groups. She then joined several other communities through her experiential opportunities at Cornell College's Greek Life, The University of Iowa's Academic Advising Center, and teaching a section of the College Transition. The community she built with her fellow graduate students and faculty has been the most enriching experience for her. Each and every person she has met in her journey has provided her with unique perspectives, strong support, and lots of laughter. She is looking forward to joining future communities in the fields of career services, academic advising, and study abroad advising in the Midwest.

Nicole Sexton is a second year student who came to Iowa after she completed her BA in Business Administration and Speech Communications at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. During her time at Iowa, Nicole completed her assistantship work in the Office of Residence Life as an Assistant Hall Coordinator. Her responsibilities have ranged from co-supervising 23 Resident Assistants, to managing a 24-hour student desk staff, to advising hall government officers, to serving as a judicial officer. Nicole has also completed practicum experiences in Fraternity and Sorority Life, Career Services, and as a College Transition instructor, a for-credit course for first-year students. Currently, Nicole is working as a Hall Coordinator at Iowa after accepting a full-time position in January. When Nicole is not at work or in class, she enjoys spending time with her husband, watching the television series The Office, going to cheer on the Hawkeyes during football season, and spending time with family and friends.
Congratulations to the MA Class of 2008!

Sarah McCracken is originally from Waukee, IA and completed her Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering at Northwestern University. She holds an assistantship in the Office of Student Life working with Fraternity and Sorority Life and Student Credit and Money Management. While in the program, Sarah has taught The College Transition course as well as made presentations for the Iowa Student Personnel Association, Association of Fraternity Advisors, and Mid-American Greek Council Association. She was one of eight graduate students across the country to be selected for the AFA Annual Meeting Graduate Staff. Upon graduation, Sarah desires to continue advancing the fraternal movement and is seeking positions in Fraternity and Sorority Life in various places around the country.

Chris Johnson grew up in medium-sized Willmar in western Minnesota. She attended college at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota and graduated with degrees in journalism and Spanish. Chris found her pull toward student development through her involvement in student government and as an RA. At Iowa she’s worked as an Apartments Coordinator at the University Apartments where she’s enjoyed the vibrant, multicultural community and opportunities to be creative in her position. Chris has found her greatest enjoyment supervising the Community Assistants when she has been able to advise their articulating personal and professional goals and identifying the steps needed achievement. This passion for advising has been carried to her practicum in Career Services at the College of Law where Chris has found her niche and hopes to continue working with students in the areas of career development as she pursues her full-time professional endeavors. Chris is job searching primarily in the Washington D.C., Chicago, and Denver areas, and hopes to find a nice fit in a big city sometime soon!

Andy Merrill is a second year student who came to the University of Iowa after completing his BA at Simpson College in Marketing and German. During his time at Iowa, Andy has worked in the Pomerantz Career Center as a research assistant and as a teaching assistant for the College of Education. He teaches 07E:102 Technology in the Classroom. Andy has also completed practica in the Office of Student Life with Fraternity and Sorority Life and with the College of Pharmacy Alumni Services. He is also currently completing a practicum at Cornell College in the Office of Institutional Research. When Andy is not at work or in class, he enjoys spending time with his classmates, playing tennis, and staying active any way possible.

Kristin Wurster started the Student Development program after completing her BA in English, also at the University of Iowa. Her assistantship has been with the Office of Orientation Services, where she works as the Assistant Student Program Coordinator (and, in her first year, as the Parent Program Coordinator.) She has completed practica at Cornell College, UI’s University Housing, and as a College Transition instructor. She is looking forward to graduation and further experience in the field, but suspects she will miss the wonderful people and theoretical conversations that have been a dearly valued part of her SDP experience.

Jackie Thompson-Oster, affectionately known as ‘Jack’ to her office mate Mike Schluckebier, is currently recovering from acute blindness caused by two years of looking at the disgustingly tea green office walls. Similar to Daredevil, her other senses have more than made up for her loss of sight. She can often be seen performing cartwheels down Lindquist’s cramped corridors. Additionally, Jackie’s wit, as well as her judo chop, has been known to cut like a hot knife through lard. She hopes to parlay that wit, coupled with her SDP Master’s degree, into a position traveling with a comedy/interpretive dance troupe where she will perform her personal renditions of ACPA’s Student Learning Imperative and Marcia Baxter Magolda’s Good Company for the Journey. In the meantime, Jackie is studying for comprehensive exams with her crackpot motivation team: Tony Robbins, Matt Foley, and the “You can do it!” guy from the film The Waterboy.
GPSA Funds: Can We Count On You?

The Graduate Programs in Student Affairs now have 4 funds to which donations may be made in support of GPSA students and activities.

- First, we have opened a GPSA account with the UI Foundation, the funds from which will be used to support visiting speakers, graduate outreach programs, student projects and other events. In addition, three awards honor former GPSA faculty and students by providing funds for scholarships and speakers.
  - The Albert B. Hood Promising Scholar Award was established by Jean Hood as a tribute to Al at the time of his retirement. This fund supports dissertation research for a promising scholar in the Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation, and Student Development.
  - The Marlin Schmidt Memorial Fund honors Marlin Schmidt who received her Ph.D. from the University of Iowa in 1968 and taught in the Student Development program from 1972 until her death in 1984. Dr. Schmidt was an active member of the faculty and during her tenure served as department chair. This fund provides money for a visiting lecturer sponsored by GSDA. Recent speakers have included: Karen Kitchener, Charles Schroeder, George Kuh, and William Zeller.
  - The Terry Ganshaw Memorial Award was established in memory of Terry Ganshaw and honors an outstanding doctoral student. Terry began as a graduate student in Student Development in the late sixties. Following service during the Vietnam War he continued in the doctoral program until his death in a traffic accident in 1976. Terry is fondly remembered as an exceptional student. He was responsible for the development of GSDA and served as an Associate Editor for the Journal of College Student Personnel. The award recognizes students for academic excellence, professional promise and commitment to the field, and contributions to fellow graduate students and the department.

If you would like to contribute to any or all of these funds, please send your donation to The University of Iowa Foundation, 500 Alumni Center, P.O. Box 4550, Iowa City, IA, 52244-4550. Be sure to specify the program (Student Development Program) and any additional specific instructions for which your tax-deductible contribution is intended. If you have any questions, please contact us at (319)335-5275 or deborahiddell@uiowa.edu.

A Move On The Horizon For The PhD Program ...

In 2000, the SDP faculty developed and implemented a new PhD program, Student Affairs Administration & Research (SAAR). The SAAR program marked the inception of a formal agreement between our home department, Counseling, Rehabilitation, & Student Development (CRSD) and the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership Studies (EPLS) as the new program was a joint venture between the two. Over time, as the Higher Education program grew in faculty and students, we found that the 'new folks' shared many of our research and teaching interests about college students, and that our students benefited from those shared interests as well. After many discussions and some spirited debate, we have decided to merge our SAAR program with the Higher Education doctoral program. The redesigned Higher Education & Student Affairs PhD will have five areas of concentration, one of which will be Student Affairs Administration. As a result, we will move the administrative home of the PhD program to EPLS. We are awaiting news from the Graduate College about this proposal and hope to admit the inaugural class in fall 2009.

At this time there are no plans to move the MA program from the CRSD department.

We always welcome and appreciate alumni perspectives on these and other matters. Feel free to get in touch.
What in the World is Al Hood up to?

In keeping with the political theme of this and last year’s presidential race, Al & Jean remained right in the mix receiving “much mail aimed at them as veteran, elderly, female, or educator”. Al was even able to meet five of the candidates running. While Jean recuperated from some knee and back surgery, Al was also able to become somewhat of an culinary savant, taking over the cooking. Family is always in their thoughts as they were able to visit both coasts for graduations and other holidays. They’ll also get away from our never-ending Iowa winter with a visit to the oldest son who lives in Florida.

GSDA Update

Hello students, former students, and friends of GSDA! This year has been filled with updates and changes to meet the needs of our members. The biggest change we made was to adjust our meeting format to include social events, professional development opportunities, community service, or social opportunities into each meeting. We started this year with a BBQ at City Park with burgers, friends, and a few rousing games of bocci ball! We then attended the ISPA Annual Conference with funds from GSDA. Our annual Halloween party brought lots of arts and crafts and yummy treats. Though there was no one who braved the Karaoke stage at Café Liddell-Westefeld, the pasta dinner was a great success that helped us to reconnect as a community.

We look forward to future opportunities this semester with:

• A panel discussion presented by the Doctoral students on job and internship searching within student affairs,
• Meeting the prospective new students to the program for Campus Visit Days at the GSDA sponsored breakfast,
• Community service opportunities helping to improve our community,
• Social opportunities,
• The Iowa reception at the Annual ACPA National Convention,
• And, the Spring Banquet to celebrate another great year!

I would like to thank all of the hard work each and every member has put in to make this year a success! Special thanks go to our advisor, Ashley Asel, the executive committee, and committee chairs.

Please visit our website (http://www.uiowa.edu/~gsdaweb) for more information about GSDA.

ACPA Reception

Please join us at the Iowa Friends & Alumni Reception at the ACPA Annual Convention. The reception will be held in the Marriott Marquis - International B on Monday, March 31, 7:30pm-9:00pm. Rumor has it Mike Schluckebier will be in attendance giving away a basketball signed by Big 10 Coach of the Year, Lisa Bluder, and the other coaches of the Big 10 Conference regular season co-champion Iowa Hawkeye Women’s Basketball team!

In addition to giving away a signed basketball and other fabulous prizes, GSDA will once again be selling attractive silver travel mugs with the UI dome and your very own GPSA logos emblazoned across one side. Mugs are selling @ $10 each and if you’d like one for yourself, a loved one, or a favorite UI GPSA faculty member, please email me (michael-schluckebier@uiowa.edu) and I’ll bring one down or send it along in the mail. They make great gifts (for yourself or others) and the proceeds go to support the efforts and professional development activities of GSDA.
Experiences During the First Semester

Teaching my own College Transition
By Mike Schluckebier (1st Year SAAR)

I recall speaking with Dr. Liddell on the phone in April about registering for classes in the fall. I didn’t have any big ideas about what I’d take but never expected the curveball she threw in asking me to teach The College Transition. CT is a course in which the basic idea is to prepare college freshmen for the huge undertaking that is the undergraduate experience. The course covers the scope from understanding what is a liberal arts education to understanding how to manage newly experienced freedom with time and money. Essentially, it’s a course on how to make good decisions in a highly demanding environment.

I’d never taught from a formal curriculum with my experience in residence life and students activities. While I had facilitated week-long RA training sessions and constructed semester long plans for the student organizations I advised, I was never expected to implement a course whose scope was so broad. It was terrifying, to say the least.

My teaching progressed and transformed from imparting (what I considered to be) wisdom to mutually constructing the knowledge needed to have successful experiences at the UI. In fact, my investment in teaching was that much more deep because both my students and I were encountering similar experiences at the UI. While I didn’t (and still don’t) frequent downtown nearly as much as some of my students, it was comforting to note that we were all in similar boats, taking classes, riding Cambuses, and sometimes stumbling our way through our first semester.

Shared (and yet unique) experiences were something I attempted to keep in mind every day as I taught different lessons. While the lessons varied, the underlying message did not. The idea about college is to discover and reinforce who you are and then make decisions that positively affect that perception of self. I asked my class everyday, “How do you make decisions, and how will today’s material help get you to where you want to be?” At the end of the semester, I wanted the students to be able to understand their own decision making processes and how they and the material affected their various life roles.

As teaching goes, The College Transition was immensely enjoyable, both professionally and personally. I gained new insights and skills I use to relate to my SAAR curriculum, I have a new understanding and appreciation for the transitions new students experience, and I am able to stay connected to the students I study in a way that goes far beyond what textbooks and an assistantship can provide.

Theory to Practice?!
By Megan Lyons (SDP 2008)

When I received my College Student Learning and Cognitive Development syllabus on the first day of the fall semester, I did what most diligent students do: I turned directly to the course requirements and assignments section to see exactly what I was in for. Personal reflections? Check. Group project? Check. Theory application paper? Check. Active participation? Check. Service Learning Project? Um, that’s new ... I’m sure my facial expression changed from a nonchalant stare to that of an inquisitive puppy when it quickly cocks it head to the side and raises a brow. I sat silently thinking, “Volunteer for an assignment? And I have to find an opportunity on my own? Aren’t assistantships, practicum experiences, and professional interviews enough practical learning opportunities?” This news was not the highlight of my day.

As it turned out, this initial negativity turned into a great experience for me, both personally and professionally. Before I began the Student Development Program, I worked at Iowa City West High School with ESL students, a position which inspired me to enter the student affairs field. After I left that job, I had every intention of returning as a tutor for the students with whom I’d spent so many days. However, I failed to find designated time with my busy graduate student schedule. This assignment was the perfect opportunity.

Through my service learning experience, I was able to reconnec to with one of my former students through weekly tutoring sessions. Though I found great satisfaction from helping her with homework, my enjoyment went far beyond that. Because I had been gone from my position at West for well over a year, I was amazed by how much this student’s English had improved. I was so proud of her. Because her English skills had increased exponentially, I was able to appreciate her even more as an individual. We discussed her goals, her frustrations, and yes, even her perspective on gay marriage. Through weekly reflections, I started to connect my volunteer experience with the bigger picture. From English as a Second Language education to immigration issues in the United States, I thought deeper about these issues and was able to formulate a stronger, more educated opinion on them.

Professionally, I learned how influential service learning experiences can be for college students. We all know that students need to move beyond their current understanding of the world to appreciate others’ perspectives and life experiences. Incorporating such service opportunities into our work as student affairs professionals can be a powerful way to increase students’ potential for responsible citizenship and community leadership. Overall, I am glad I was encouraged to complete a service learning project. It most definitely benefited me in more ways than one.
What a great year to be in Iowa City. For a few months, our town was filled with political candidates and their entourages. They were giving speeches, hugging children, chatting it up with the locals and eating at locally-owned restaurants. My professors encouraged me to take advantage of living here during an election year by getting out to see the candidates. So even though we were busy with papers, deadlines, and work commitments, my classmates and I made time to go and see what all the commotion was about. As I listened to speeches, waited in lines, read campaign literature, and discussed issues with friends, a funny thing happened: For the first time, I started to really care about how our nation is run and who runs it.

I had been leaning toward a particular candidate, but did not make my decision final until the night before the caucus. When I showed up to caucus, I excitedly received my candidate’s sticker and wore it with pride. One of my classmates was helping with the campaign, so she put me to work checking in supporters as they arrived. This role allowed me to get into great conversations with many of my neighbors, and meet many new people. When it was time to be counted, we all smashed into a room designated for my candidate. I live in a highly international neighborhood, so I heard more than a few “I can’t vote, I’m just here to watch, can I come in?” To which the standard reply was “Sure, just don’t put your hand up when it’s time to be counted.” (I kept thinking of ways one could cheat this system ...) Once inside the room, we got to listen to various supporters plead their case for their candidate, but most folks had already made up their minds. About midway through the process, almost all of the supporters of a candidate that was declared non-viable strolled into our room, and there was much rejoicing. For the final count, we all raised our hands until we were counted one-by-one. In the end, my candidate won twice as many delegates as any of the others and I was standing shoulder to shoulder with my neighbor across the street, the black lab who walks by my house everyday, I was standing up for my candidate. It is amazing to actually feel like you legitimately helped your candidate get delegates. Anyone can pull a lever, but to publicly advocate for your candidate in the hope of attracting others to your cause is quite liberating and very patriotic. I now stand just a bit taller and beamed as they informed another newbie of their wonderful part in the American political process.

So as the caucuses approached I went and heard as many candidates as I could. I moved around in a genuine sense of awe from August to January. It was a whirlwind - Bill Clinton in the IMU ballroom, bumping into Elizabeth Edwards at the Bread Garden and then her husband, John, just down the Ped Mall after finishing my lunch, Ted Danson getting coffee at the Java House on his way to show support for Bill Richardson! Then there was the gracious invitation to go hear Barack Obama and Oprah make her first public appearance for him in Cedar Rapids - only iffy weather and some much delayed homework calling my name kept me from accepting. Then of course there is the Johnson County Barbeque which is a good ole’fashioned picnic where you mingle with candidates on the county fairgrounds!

On caucus night I was filled with great excitement and trepidation. I knew the issues and I was ready to interact with my fellow neighbors. My precinct was the Iowa City Library, and so many people showed up to caucus that we spilled into the lobby and the surrounding hallways. It was a truly interactive political experience of the masses. Normally you just go behind a curtain and pull a lever. Now, toe to toe and shoulder to shoulder with my neighbor across the street, the man in the produce section at the Hy Vee, and the lady with the black lab who walks by my house everyday, I was standing up for my candidate. It is amazing to actually feel like you legitimately helped your candidate get delegates. Anyone can pull a lever, but to publicly advocate for your candidate in the hope of attracting others to your cause is quite liberating and very patriotic. I now stand just a bit taller too, knowing that I have joined that long line of proud Iowans who have caucused and made a difference!
Reflections from Current Students & a Graduate …

PhD School: Where It’s Cool to Be a Nerd
By Georgianna Martin (1st Year SAAR)

Three weeks into my first semester as a doctoral student, I had the opportunity to visit with one of my mentors over coffee. This particular mentor was very influential in my decision to pursue doctoral education and in my initial interest in the University of Iowa. At some point in our conversation, he wanted to know what I enjoyed most about being a doctoral student at Iowa. While I imagine I could have been more eloquent had I spent time reflecting prior to our conversation, my response over coffee was that I had found the perfect network of fellow nerds. I further explained that as a Master’s student, my interest in coursework, research, and brainy conversations often resulted in good natured teasing from my peers. The difference as a doctoral student is that my peers are also equally interested and invested in their coursework and research and perhaps even a brainy conversation every now and then (in all of the free time being a Ph.D. student brings!)

Now, close to seven months later, my favorite thing about being a SAAR doctoral student remains my peer network. I no longer think of my peers as the “perfect network of fellow nerds”, but rather as an amazing and inspiring community of learners. One of my highlights with this outstanding community of learners was the effort and enthusiasm six of us put into making it through statistics during the Fall semester. This class was no cake walk for any of us, but the combination of our weekly stats study sessions, our extended review meetings before each exam, and our occasional social outings to vent frustrations made for good company on the journey.

From my perspective as a first year doctoral student, I enjoy observing the roles each member of the SAAR student community plays. I have noticed that the third years are very good at challenging and questioning, but always in a supportive and respectful manner. The second years seem to be the nurturers, always wanting to make sure that classes and assistantships are going well for the newbies. The first years spend a lot of time being confused! We ask a lot of questions of our second and third year peers and of one another. We get frustrated with ambiguity, excited by the many opportunities, overwhelmed with feedback on papers, and annoyed with the adjustment to Iowa winters! While we each may play out our different roles, at the end of the day, we are not first, second, or third years, or full-time versus part-time students. We are one student community of learners eager to encourage, support, and motivate one another, and I am very happy to be part of this community.

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‘Learning to Learn as we Learn’
By Libby Spotts (1st Year SDP)

Now that the first year is nearing an end, I can only say two things: It has taken forever to get here, and it has gone by too quickly. At the beginning of the year I felt an impetus to hit the ground running, and being compelled to not trip, I haven’t slowed down yet. It is my feeling now that I am chest forward, neck stretched to the mile marker that is flagged only by finals and the promise of a short summer break. But when I look back at the first part of the journey with my cohort, it is clear that this process has been a long and thoughtful one.

We started as I imagine all cohorts must- with awkward greetings and polite dialogue about the weather and assistantship updates. This quickly turned into lively conversations about the weather in relation to assistantships, in relation to Perry’s Theory of Cognitive Development, in relation to micro-counseling, in relation to higher education during the colonial period, in relation to my life, their lives and different lives all with different lenses until finally, painfully, personally, we are processing as a group on a level that so far surpasses the weather; we can look down on the clouds from where we are sitting. And we just met each other in August.

I’m ending this first year experience with something Deb Liddell said once in mind, “We learn to learn as we learn”. This is the best way I can explain the first year of the program to someone who has not gone through it, and the best way I can summarize the last eight months. Despite having the same information, this program has been personal and different for every person experiencing it. For me, the ownership that I now have over my learning (and in consequence, my practice) so far surpasses my undergraduate experience that I could not have been prepared for it. Some of this is due to my application of theory to myself, but most of it has come from the insight I’ve received from my cohort’s experiences. They have been both the challenge and the support at different times, and all of a sudden I can see the finish line next May- and it seems too close and all together too far away.
Movin’ on up ... to Orientation Services
By Jon Sexton (SDP 2006)

Whenever we experience life change, it seems to throw us a bit off balance. I can relate to that due to the significant amount of change I’ve experienced in the past year. In that time my wife Nicole and I managed to plan a wedding, complete two job searches, and move twice. While most of these changes were positive, they led to some big decisions on each of our part and ultimately resulted in my first job search since completing the MA program.

At the beginning of last year we were both working for the Housing department at the University of Iowa. As we began to plan our wedding that spring, we realized that it may be a good idea for us to try and find positions in separate departments since we would both be in student affairs. Ultimately we decided that at the time I was in a good place in my career to seek out a position that would present me with new challenges and opportunities.

One of the goals of my job search was to remain local. Ideally, I wanted to work in the Iowa City area. I realized that this significantly limited my search, but I also felt that there were some positions within the university that I was a good match for. In late spring and throughout the summer I scanned the university website looking for newly posted positions. I was also lucky to have the help of my colleagues in Housing who would periodically inform me of openings for which I would be a solid candidate.

After applying for a few different positions, I received a lead about a position in Orientation Services. As I reviewed the job description, I felt confident that I was a good fit for the position. My previous experience seemed to fit perfectly with what they were looking for. I made a decision to apply for the position and submitted my resume in early July. I then waited in anxious anticipation to see if I would have the opportunity to interview.

I received an invitation for an on campus interview in early September, and could barely contain my excitement. I spent the next several days preparing for the interview by running through practice questions with Nicole, preparing a required presentation for the interview, and talking with individuals who had been employed with the department in the past. That extensive preparation proved to be very helpful. I felt confident throughout my interview and regardless of whether I received an offer; I was genuinely excited for the opportunity to speak with the staff about my qualifications.

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Teaching Yourself to be a Mentor
By Katie Wildman (1st Year SAAR)

"Teaching"... hmmm. I thought to myself after getting off the phone with Deb Liddell.

"That should be a nice challenge. After all the class covers topics I have experienced, and I have always enjoyed teaching students, exploring new ideas and spending time with people.

Then the adventure began.

The first weeks of the second semester Masters Capstone Class, we were moving along. Deb and I met weekly to talk about the readings, how to use the class time and worked to examine what the class really needed to know. Class was off and running and although the group originally gave a groan at the topic of weekly icebreakers, they seemed to be enjoying them or moderately enduring them with a smile. Teaching seemed to be a well-organized science.

I was enjoying class, the idea of teaching and working with the students. As a new doc student I didn’t know the class participants very well and waited patiently to connect with them as a group.

At the end of the first semester I found myself longing for a more personal relationship with my students. We saw each other in class and even gave the obligatory hello, wave and non-personal chat in the hallway, but the interactions never seemed “real.” I was struggling to evaluate their thoughts and feeling about the class and who they were a students, people and friends.

Trying to break through the traditional-teacher/student mentality, I spent a small amount of time with each student individually under the guise of a job search conversation during the second semester of the course. Our discussion discussed their job interests and location preferences as well as any other job-search priorities such as partners and families. The conversations went well and all the students seemed to convey a real sense of genuineness. They shared their story and I listened, offered challenges and new ideas. We discussed simple things like resumes and tricky interview questions.

Since we haven’t finished the semester and they haven’t started their main job search, the majority of the class is still unemployed, still balk at ice-breakers and processing. But beyond that, it is apparent that being a teacher is one role and being a mentor is something much more complex. The class with all of their unique and colorful quirks has re-taught me about the power of relationships, reaching out to others, and beyond it all, spending time with each student individually. The verdict is still out on who learned more this semester. All I can say is we will all be able to report our successes at the end of the semester.
Globalizing Our GPSA Community
By Kathy Goodman (3rd Year SAAR)

Last spring, the doc students spent a week talking about globalization in our seminar on current issues. “Globalization” is a word we hear all of the time -- in the news, in the Chronicle of Higher Education, in all of our favorite student affairs publications. After sharing our global experiences with each other on a listserv, reading articles about globalization in higher education and student affairs, and delving into discussions about what it all means, we reached two conclusions. First, having a global experience doesn’t require traveling to another country. Global experiences simply require authentic engagement with global issues in the classroom, in student activities, in the community, and through our relationships. Second, global engagement requires a willingness to be changed. We walked away from the class asking, “How can we prepare our students and ourselves to be changed?”

Our GPSA community provides a good example of the many ways to have global experiences, at home and abroad. In the past year, our students have:

- Acted as the co-principle investigator for the UI Internationalization Assessment Project
- Volunteered to be a small-group leader for International Orientation
- Participated in the student leadership program to develop connections between global and domestic diversity
- Traveled to Italy with Kent State to study the internationalization of higher education
- Led an alternative spring break experience to Guatemala
- Lived in and led an international community in the residence halls
- Worked for International Programs at the University of Iowa
- Participated in Bridging Domestic and Global Diversity: A Training Program for Student Leaders
- Visited family and friends around the world in countries like Barbados, Japan, etc.
- Sat on the search committee to hire two student advisors for international students
- Lived overseas in countries such as the Netherlands and Ethiopia
- Travelled with a CPA to study student affairs in South Africa and Ghana

Have we allowed these experiences to change us? There is no doubt that these experiences have affected our individual growth and impacted our GPSA community as a whole. Here is a sampling of how our students describe the changes they have experienced:

“Especially rewarding for me was the opportunity to welcome new people not only to Iowa, but also to the United States and to help them gain a better understanding of our customs, culture and values.”
- Mary van Andel, 1st Year MA

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Higher Education in Post-apartheid Africa
Taken from EducationFirst (UI CoE Newsletter, 12/2007)

Noel Holman (3rd Year SAAR) is still reeling from her visit to South Africa.
A third-year doctoral student in the Student Affairs Administration and Research program, Holman went to South Africa as part of a group put together by four national professional student affairs organizations to explore higher education in the post-apartheid nation.

Holman learned that higher education is considered an important part of rebuilding and strengthening South Africa. “They are trying to galvanize their young people as citizens and intellectuals and are struggling to create a single, unified higher education system,” Holman said.

Higher education has expanded significantly since apartheid. There are now 23 public universities in South Africa compared to 11 all-white universities in 1960.

Holman and her 35 fellow scholars from across the United States visited several schools and spoke with leaders to learn about challenges at each institution. They saw schools ranging from Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa’s largest residential university with 52,000 students, to Durbin University of Technology, a formerly all-white school now open to all races.

“The development of their higher education system has been a political process from which we are now seeing outcomes,” Holman said. “They are working hard to create a new social order, new realities, and new opportunities.”

But it’s not an easy road. South African universities struggle with an AIDS epidemic and retention issues—at Tshwane University only 15 percent graduate.

Diversity, an area Holman studies, is also a major challenge at South Africa’s universities.

“Most schools have students from over 20 different countries within Africa, with over 12 different ‘official’ languages being spoken,” she said.

Holman said she saw the trip as a special opportunity to observe another culture and to look at higher education from a different perspective. She described her time in South Africa as, “truly a trip of a lifetime that will be close to me always.”
From the Midwest to the Mid-East
By Belle & Curt Vukovich Kenoyer (SDP 2001)

It was about this time last March when we began to dread the prospect of another joint job search. Then one fateful afternoon we received an email with a very simple question – have you ever considered working internationally? Our immediate thought was no but it quickly turned into why not? After all, we’re both avid travelers who consider ourselves adventurous, but these job opportunities were for a foundation in Qatar. Honestly, we didn’t even know where the country of Qatar was located. Turns out, Qatar is a very small, wealthy, and rapidly developing Muslim country located in the heart of the Arabian Gulf on the Saudi Arabian peninsula.

Initially our questions were probably the same ones running through your mind right now. Will it be safe? Will Belle have to be fully covered? Are we crazy? As Americans, the idea of traveling to, let alone living in, the Middle East stirs up some of our deepest fears. However, the more we read about the Qatar Foundation and this place known as Education City, the more intrigued we became. In particular, we were drawn to their incredible vision that a nation’s greatest resource is its people and that we must seek to develop human capacity in everything that we do.

The Qatar Foundation (QF) for Education, Science, and Community Development is a nonprofit organization founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar. The flagship project for QF is Education City, a 2,500 acre campus in the capital city of Doha that is currently home to six prestigious American colleges and universities including Virginia Commonwealth, Weill Cornell Medical College, Texas A&M, Carnegie Mellon, Georgetown, and Northwestern University. With each institution focused on its academic specialty, students from the Middle East and Asia have been given the opportunity for a world-class education at their doorstep.

After several months of phone interviews, campus interviews, and difficult conversations with family and friends we decided to take a leap of faith. Something about living and working in an truly international environment was too interesting to pass up. In our roles as student development educators we are constantly challenging our students to step out of their comfort zones, take risks, and seek out life changing growth experiences. It almost seemed hypocritical for us not to be willing to do the same. So, we sold our house, our cars, put most of our belongings in storage, said goodbye to dear family and friends and boarded a plane for Doha, Qatar on July 19th. We haven’t looked back since.

Our primary professional roles are to help create a more traditional campus experience by building a greater sense of community for all in Education City. While Belle is working to build a meaningful residential program, Curt is simultaneously working to develop a broader campus life program. While we have only been working for the Qatar Foundation for seven months we have been able to make some observations about our work as Student Affairs Professionals that is markedly different with students and institutions in Qatar than with students and institutions in the U.S. As there is more than one side to every story and experience, we decided to match each of our positives within this experience with a fairly equal challenge that we face in our work.

Students seem emotionally younger than those in the U.S. Often this presents itself in students being even less likely to work through conflict (though this could also be cultural in many cases) and more likely to expect the rules to bend on their behalf simply because they apologized or said they “didn’t know”. In many ways, interactions with students often feel as though they are with students who are in their mid to late teens instead of with young, somewhat independent adults. The fact that many of our students have never even held a part-time job or many students grew up with nannies providing most of their basic needs could contribute to this lack of maturity. Another key factor could be the very limited interaction that occurs between the genders while growing up.

We experience and engage in deep multicultural experiences everyday. In the U.S. the buzz word was “multicultural competence”, but when you are working with students from the U.A.E., Qatar, Lebanon, Sudan, and Bangalore in a student group or student staff you can really see how much of a juggling act achieving multicultural competence can be. There is a real diversity of students in their home cultures, and we didn’t even MENTION religion, social class, gender, or sexual orientation. Some of which are strictly not discussed in this culture.

We have access to funds. Boy, do we ever! While budgets are tightening around the U.S., at the Qatar Foundation, as long as our expenditures are approved by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar, we’re pretty much in the clear. Many of our students have never even held a part-time job or many students grew up with nannies providing most of their basic needs. With family support, students can focus on their studies and development. We are able to provide opportunities for students to experience different cultures and develop a world view that will one day help them to work and live in the global economy.

continued on page 16 (Mid-East) ...
The M1s practice standing without locking their knees ...

... looks like the back row fails.

From left: Buddy Housman, Laura Spencer, Libby Spotts, Holly Blosser-Yoder, Kat Pickens, Mary Van Adel, Samantha DeVilbiss, Lisa Banse, & Stacy Welp

The M2s ponder their remaining two and a half months ...

... "Cheers!" says Kristin.

Backward Z: Maureen Perkins, Becki Levad, Sarah Mc Cracken, Kristin Wurster, Andy Merrill, Megan Lyons, Nicole Sexton, Jackie Thompson-Oster, Katie Wilson, Chrissi Johnson, & Nathan Frideres

The PhDs hanging out in the only group space in Lindquist ...

... Noel gets the back row for the first time courtesy of the bench.

Like a book: Katie Wildman, Ashley Asel, Andy Borst, Noel Holman, Mike Schluckebier, Mike Venzon, Kathy Goodman, Sherri Edvalson, Kristi Mindrup, Georgianna Martin, Mark Salisbury

A gaggle of PhDs at the MLK Research Symposium ...

... check page 14 for more information.

From left: Kristi Mindrup, Katie Wildman, Noel Holman, Ashley Asel, Kathy Goodman, & Jamie Jorgensen (Higher Ed)
Facility Updates

Elizabeth Whitt, Professor in the College of Education, has served on the GPSA faculty since 1997 and holds a secondary appointment in the Higher Education program in the Department of Educational Policy Studies. In addition, she serves as co-director – with Ernie Pascarella – of the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education (CRUE). On July 1, 2007, Liz began a 3-year stint as UI’s first Director of Student Success Initiatives. In that capacity, she works with the Vice Provost on a variety of tasks, including Higher Learning Commission re-accreditation, outcomes assessment in undergraduate education, and undergraduate student success initiatives. Dr. Whitt also received ACPA’s 2007 Contribution to Knowledge Award, recognizing her outstanding contributions to the profession’s body of knowledge through publications, films, speeches, instructions, tapes, and other forms of communication.

Ernie Pascarella, the Mary Louise Petersen Professor of Higher Education, holds faculty appointments in the Higher Education Program as well as GPSA. Ernie is also co-director of the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education (CRUE) at The University of Iowa and has continued to stay busy this year with the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education. Last fall, the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, honored Ernie with its Regents Faculty Excellence Award for his significant contribution to excellence in public education. He was recognized as a role model for his commitment to teaching and service, and for his research that “virtually defines the intellectual terrain of the impact of college on students, moving easily between vast bodies of literature in psychology, economics, and sociology,” Dean Sandra Damico and Associate Dean David Bills said in their nomination letter. “His book, How College Affects Students (Vol. 2): A Third Decade of Research, long ago became a benchmark for the field. His important and timely research, highly relevant to higher education and educational policy, has been cited over 3,250 times in an area where other well-known researchers have a fraction of that number.”

This is a busy time for the program, and a busy time for the faculty! Deb Liddell published a test manual this year on the revised Measure of Moral Orientation. As the Journal of College and Character has entered a partnership with NASPA, the online publication ‘hits’ have increased significantly. Deb has enjoyed the opportunity to learn about emerging scholars and their scholarship by continuing as JCC’s Contributing Editor. Last spring she presented at ACPA/NASPA and presided over the closing session of the Faculty Summit there. In November she had several presentations at the Association of Moral Education at NYU. This spring she steps into the Chairperson position of ACPA’s Commission for Professional Preparation. The home front brings its own changes and challenges, with Deb and John’s recently-emptied nest. Gina is a first-year student at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, majoring in film, and playing soccer. Chris recently graduated from Iowa and works as a field organizer with the Obama for America campaign.

Sherry Watt is in her eighth year as a faculty member in the UI Graduate Programs in Student Affairs. She received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor last year and also was awarded a career development leave for Fall 2007. On leave, she continued her team research that explores reactions individuals have to difficult dialogues on race, sexual orientation, and disability. And she applied and was accepted to the Courage and Renewal Facilitator’s Preparation Program. The Center for Courage and Renewal is an organization founded and supported by the work of Parker J. Palmer. As a member of this distinguished group, she will use the principles of Courage and Renewal work to design and facilitate workshops for individuals who lead difficult dialogues intended to eradicate social oppression (racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc.). This workshop will provide support as well as skill development to participants who facilitate these difficult dialogues.

Sherry continues to develop The Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model. Practitioners can use this model as a tool to help them anticipate defensive behaviors and devise strategies to prevent productive dialogue from being derailed. Recently, Sherry became an Associate Editor of the College Student Affairs Journal.

Recent publications
Updates, Awards, & Achievements

2007 Albert Hood Distinguished GPSA Alumna Award

Diane L. Cooper is Professor and Coordinator of the College Student Affairs Administration graduate program at The University of Georgia. The author of 5 books and over 50 refereed articles, book chapters, and monographs, her interests span several areas: student developmental theory measurement, administrative issues (e.g., supervision and training of new professionals, doctoral education), and multicultural students and environments. Diane is former editor of the College Student Affairs Journal and currently serves on the editorial board of the Campus Ecologist Journal and the Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement. Professor Cooper also serves on the ACPA Governing Board and Senior Scholars.

Honors & Updates

Jodi Linley (SDP 2002) received the David J. Skorton Staff Excellence Award for Public Service. The award is given annually to individuals who have made significant contributions and have shown “exceptional imagination and dedication to improving the university community.” Service must include activities of high quality in staff governance, committee work, policy improvement, program creation, etc. and must be outside normal job responsibilities. Photo to the left is of Interim Provost Lola Lopes, Jodi, and UI President Sally Mason.

Ashley Asel (2nd Year SAAR) placed 4th at the MLK Symposium for her poster entitled “Gender Differences in Moral Development During the First Year of College”.

Kathy Goodman (3rd Year SAAR) and Jamie Jorgensen placed 2nd at the MLK Symposium for their poster updating and replicating their study “How do race and socioeconomic background influence experiences of liberal education and good practices in undergraduate education?”

Sarah McCracken (SDP 2008) and Nicole Sexton (SDP 2008) were the winners of the 2007 ISPA Case Study Competition.

Mark Salisbury (2nd Year SAAR) was named the recipient of AIEA’s prestigious Josephson award given based on exemplary graduate research in the field of international education. He was also invited to attend the 2008 AIEA conference in Washington, D.C. to present a poster of his research.

Kathy Goodman (3rd Year SAAR) was presented the International Programs Student Leadership Award by the Office of International Programs at the University of Iowa for culturally competent leadership and exceptional involvement in Bridging Domestic and Global Diversity: A Training Program for Student Leaders, December 2007.

Sarah McCracken (SDP 2008) was a recipient of the Order of Omega Graduate Fellowship.

Kathy Goodman (3rd Year SAAR) was placed on the National Dean’s List, a national award for academic achievement, June 2007.

Presentations


Ashley Asel (2nd Year SAAR) co-presented a paper with Ernie Pascarella at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education entitled “The Effects of Greek Affiliation on College Experiences and Outcomes: A Portrait of Complexity”.

Sarah McCracken (SDP 2008) presented “Fraternity Men on Campus” at the Mid American Greek Council Association meeting.


Ashley Asel (2nd Year SAAR) and Sarah McCracken (SDP 2008) co-presented “Research on and Strategies for Engaging Fraternity Men on Campus: Today’s Students, Tomorrow’s Alumni” at the annual meeting of Iowa Student Personnel Association.


Sarah McCracken (SDP 2008) presented “Are we the Tugboat or the Oceanliner: Navigating the political nature of our profession” at the annual meeting of the Association of Fraternity Advisors.
Updates, Awards, & Achievements

Other ‘Shout-outs’ from 2007, continued ...

Publications


Other Happenings in our Community
Becki Levad (SDP 2008) and Katie Wilson (SDP 2008) served on the ISPA/ICCSA Annual Meeting planning committee.

Brandy Killian (SDP 2007) is working as a Special Events Coordinator at Life University in Marietta, GA. In her role as events coordinator, she works closely with several campus offices to plan, execute and evaluate student organization events, campus-wide events, and even large conferences. Brandy is looking forward to several things in the upcoming year, including presenting with several of her graduate school peers at the 2008 ACPA conference and planning a 2009 wedding with her fiance, Drew.

Kelly (Behmer) Neumann (SDP 2001) is leaving her current position at Marquette University as the Coordinator for Residence Life Programs at the end of March to live in Cologne, Germany for two years. Her husband is taking a different position within his firm and so they will be starting a new adventure.

The Waldorf College Wellness program, in which Kristi Leonard (SDP 2000) serves as Chair, was selected and recognized as one of the institutions highlighted under the category of Overall Models of Wellness in the most recent edition of Best Practices For Creating And Promoting Comprehensive Student Wellness, which is published by National Student Affairs Best Practices (NSABP).

Joan Krush (SDP 1999) was recently recognized by the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources with the L.K. Crowe Outstanding Undergraduate Student Advisor Award. Photo at left is of Dr. Steven Waller, Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and Joan.

Susie Beederman Regan (SDP 2005) is now in her third year as a Resident Director at Binghamton University. This past summer she married Matt Regan, and they are currently job searching to return to the Chicago area. This school year Susie was involved in developing and instructing an online course for parents of first year college students. Susie has been busy this year with NEACUHO, where she recently chaired the host committee for the Spring Drive In & Mid-Level Institute. This past summer Susie was selected to attend the Regional Entry Level Institute, sponsored by NEACUHO and MACUHO.

Goodman ... continued from page 10

“I didn't necessarily intend to include internationalization as a part of my doctoral study. But now it is definitely a part of what I am doing because of the importance of intercultural proficiency and the lack of any systemic effort to weave those skills into the educational experience."
- Mark Salisbury, 2nd Year SAAR

“My experience with Bridge made me realize that there is a real longing among students to connect with people who are different from themselves, but they don't know how to do that or are afraid to try. As Student Affairs practitioners, we need to find ways to help them make those connections."
- Kathy Goodman, 3rd Year SAAR

“I see that while international experiences are wonderful catalysts for broadening perspectives, it is not and should not be the only way we encourage growth. I am working on a program for the residence halls that will introduce residents to cultures that are currently here on our campus.”
- Maureen Perkins, MA 2008

Our GPSA community is still grappling with questions about what it means to be “globalized,” mirroring the same conversation that is happening in higher education around the U.S.; however, grappling with those questions indicates an exciting level of growth. If the quotes are any indication, we’ve made a good start by participating in a variety of experiences and reflecting on how those experiences have changed us.

Martin ... continued from page 8

Note: While I have only reflected on the influence of the doctoral student community here, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the tremendous influence and support of the entire GPSA community including SAAR (and Higher Education) faculty, the CRUE post-doc research fellow, SAAR alumni, and the Student Development MA students. I have learned with and from members of each of these groups and am a better student and person because of my interaction with them.
Please join us at the Iowa Friends and Alumni Reception at the ACPA Conference on Monday, March 31, 7:30pm-9:30pm. The reception is in the Marriott Marquis, International B. Bring your business card and win prizes, including a basketball signed by the coaches of the Big Ten Conference regular season champion Hawkeye women’s basketball team!

We want you to stay involved with the program and there are many ways to do so. First, you can keep us updated on where you are and what you are doing. If you haven’t done so already, please send us the following information:
- Your current mailing address and (preferred) email contact,
- Your current institution or workplace, and
- Your position.

As that list is compiled, we can provide both you and prospective students a better view of where our graduates end up.

Second, you can join us on Facebook, the online social networking site. Dr. Deb Liddell has set up The University of Iowa Graduate Programs in Student Affairs group for us to stay connected. This can be a place where you can post position announcements and other news of interest to our alums and current student. At this point, the group is 79 members strong!

In addition, we are in the process of creating an active alumni network which will help us not only stay connected as a group, but also recruit energetic and bright new students to our programs. As you send us your information, please indicate whether you would be willing to recruit for us in passive ways (such as handing out information packets to students you think would benefit) or more active ways such as attending a grad fair in your geographical area.

Finally at the beginning of October, the director of Orientation called and offered me the position. I was excited and humbled that they had selected me from what I was told was an excellent group of candidates.

As I write this, I’ve been in the Student Program Coordinator position for about 4 months. The transition has been very smooth and the position has offered a variety of new challenges. One of the most exciting aspects of this new position is the opportunity to supervise one of our graduate students, which has been a very rewarding experience. So far the opportunity to work this new staff of professionals and students has helped me grow as a professional and has been an all around positive experience thus far.

The culture is extremely hierarchical in nature. While we have access to funds, we may also need 9 signatures (maybe I’m slightly exaggerating) in order to get some basic things done. This also comes out in ways various stakeholders at Education City will interact with one another. Based on my title, an email from me may be able to get something done for one of my RHDs or my Housing Assignments Officer, however, it will often take my Director or our AVP sending an email to accomplish things I was able to in previous jobs and at lower levels in the organization.

We are building community among seven different institutions. Developing inter-institutional collaboration, seeing the outstanding results when this is achieved and recognizing how much better events and experiences can be for students when this happens is inspiring and motivational. This particular configuration of institutions and the Foundation is helping us think outside of the box when it comes to developing true collaborative relationships.

Overall, this has been one of the most rewarding and interesting experiences of working in higher education. In many ways, the trade-off of living so far from our families and friends is mitigated by establishing Education City’s student affairs program from the ground up, working with some incredible academic programs and talented students, and having a chance to take a bird’s eye view of life in a Muslim country.