

the NAVIGATOR

NORTHEAST ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY HOUSING OFFICERS



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Welcome



Picture:
Media & Publications Chair, Danielle Remigio

Hello friends and colleagues!

November and December is always such a great time for reflection and gratitude. Coming off the annual always provides space for new ideas, high energy, and a renewed passion for the work we do on a weekly, daily, and hourly basis.

This edition of the Navigator serves a few purposes.

1. To reflect on the experiences at Annual
2. To focus on the work the housing operations professionals do and will continue to do as we approach selection season and mid semester moves and transfers
3. To recognize and promote what our colleagues are doing and what the region is doing, has done, and is thinking about.

Our worlds and specialties are so intertwined. Some of us focus on operations while others have positions dedicated to residential education. Many of us are hearing officers and others are Title IX investigators. We supervise, advise, problem solve, learn, teach, and grow alongside our students and colleagues. I mention the similarities to then also highlight our differences. We talk about strengths and personality assessments with one another and yet sometimes I think we can generalize what a Residence Life and Housing professional is. All of us serve a multitude of purpose and approach it from a specialized viewpoint.

Those difference are what I am grateful for as a professional. I value the operations teams where I work because they allow me to be a part of the processes while I can focus on residential education and community standards on my campus. I recognize the analytical and detail oriented skillsets that so many of us possess and then also see the impact of the empathetic long conversation that a student needs when stressed. At the end of the day we all need to see that value to work as a well oiled machine. When we recognize the greatness in the differences we all attain the similar goal; positively impacting the student experience.

As many institutions are showcasing value and learning through curricular models, I want to take a moment to highlight what I want our region to gain from the professional development gained through this edition of the Navigator:

- I hope that you learn about the professional development opportunities this region can provide both in person and virtually
- I hope that you learn something new that you can bring back to a department meeting that is focused on operations
- I hope you tell one person after reading this to write an article, submit one picture, or nominate one colleague to be spotlighted

Now, these are not the most evaluable learning outcomes, but I hope that we continue to connect and grown in between the conferences, drive-ins, and emails.

I appreciate the work everyone has done this year, and I want to shout out all the people who took the time to write an article or contribute to this edition. You are seen, heard, and respected by many.

See you in the next edition!

~Danielle Remigio,
Media & Publications Chair

From the President

Hello NEACUHO!

Happy November! The Fall semester is quickly coming to a close in the next month or so and I hope that all is going well on your campuses. It's been over a month since our time together in Albany and since then I've also had the chance to represent our organization at the MACUHO Annual Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Both conferences left me with a great deal of pride for the work that we do on our campuses for our students each and every day but also for the incredibly committed professionals that we have working across both of our regions! It was also fantastic to hear so many MACUHO members express their excitement in coming together with us for our joint conference in 2021.

NEACUHO is off to a great start this year and I'm thankful not only for the hard work that our Executive Board has been putting in but also for the large number of members in our region who have expressed interest in volunteering their time to serve on a committee or the Strategic Plan Task Force. Thank you all for wanting to get more involved and contributing to the experience that we hope to provide to all of our members across the region! If you haven't had an opportunity to express an interest in volunteering or want more information about opportunities to get involved in the organization, there is still time! Please feel free to let any member of the Executive Board or I know and we would be more than happy to talk with you further.

Since we left each other in Albany, we have been hard at work in planning for a great year. We are just coming off of our first RD2B Conference hosted at Brandeis University, which was a great success! Kudos to the New Professionals Development Committee and its chair, Abigail Smith, for a great event. We were also able to provide 3 Dr. Tim Touchette Legacy Scholarships for students to join us for the conference. Our next event will be the Residential Operations Conference hosted by Manhattan College in December, followed by the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Retreat hosted by NHTI, Concord's Community College in February. The 2020 Annual Conference Committee has been put together and are getting started with the planning of our conference in Niagara Falls and the Strategic Plan Task Force working groups have begun their process of working towards the development of our next Strategic Plan which will guide the work of our organization over the next 5 years.

In the coming weeks, you will hear more updates regarding where we are with the Strategic Plan Task Force, the 2020 Annual Conference, our membership drive which will kick off in January, and other work that our board is doing behind the scenes. Our next membership year will start January 1, 2020 and end December 31, 2020.

As the Fall semester draws to a close, I hope that you all get an opportunity to enjoy the upcoming breaks and time with your friends and families. Thank you for being part of NEACUHO! We are only as strong and successful as our members and I'm grateful to each and every one of you for choosing us to be your professional home and hope to make continued connections with you over the next year.

Best wishes for a great rest of the semester!

~**Dave Grimes**

NEACUHO President



Picture:
NEACUHO President, David Grimes

External Review of Your Residence Life Program: It Can Be a Friend To You and Your Staff

By Co-Authors: Chuck Lamb & Jerry Stein



Joey Tribbiani was the character on the sitcom “Friends” with that classic line. Those simple words are also the heart and the goal of any assessment process. Residence Life programs and staff simply want to determine if their planning and efforts are having an impact. One way a department can answer that infamous “Joey” question is to conduct an external review.

In this age of cost containment and assessment many residence life/student housing programs are under the microscope. Student/customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups and participation in such

benchmarking surveys are excellent tools to consider when there is a need for unbiased/honest feedback. A challenge for any residence life/student housing program and its staff is to find the time during the active academic year to add this task to an already full plate of responsibilities and to provide the necessary time and commitment to be effective. A logical alternative is to reach out to colleagues well versed in a process of this nature to help and who are interested in assisting with the improvement of the services offered to students in the residence community on your campus.

Once the decision is made to conduct such a process, a team leader from outside the institution is identified who has experience with these kinds of processes but more importantly is not hesitant to provide unbiased/candid information and feedback. An alternative is the use of an institutional staff or faculty member who may have experience in an endeavor of this type who can provide candid feedback regarding the functions of a student housing program. External reviews can be performed by one person although a team approach enables multiple components to be assessed simultaneously. Reviews can be comprehensive or focus on one component of the overall program.

Usually a team leader will be identified who will work in collaboration with the institution to identify other members of the external review team. The leader/team will receive and review written materials in advance to assist in the preparation of the process. The team will meet with groups and individuals on campus arranged by institution staff to discuss and review program components, to collect data, opinions and feedback. At the conclusion of the actual on-campus visit, the individual /or the team would meet with the Director, VPSA and/or other campus representatives to present initial perceptions and recommendations for program changes and improvement if any are warranted.



This meeting is then followed by a formal written report from the leader/team to the institutional representative/s summarizing the perceptions and observations of the residence life program and offering a list of recommendations to modify the program-if necessary. This written report should be delivered within 60 days of the conclusion of the visit depending on the timing of the visit. A review/on campus visit occurring just prior to a major break in the academic calendar (Thanksgiving, semester break, spring break, professional conference season) may impact the delivery date of the report.

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"I absolutely loved True To Life. I thought it was one of the best parts of training, and I felt as though I truly learned skills that were applicable to my role. They brought a lot of excitement to training."
 Brandeis University Community Assistant

To make this type of process truly effective the team should be scheduled to visit campus for at least two days although this will depend on the scope of the review. The team could be housed by the host institution on campus or in a local hotel and meals would be provided on campus or at location chosen by the institution. The team members are usually compensated for travel expenses and in return for services receive an honorarium in an amount negotiated in advance, dependent on the scope of work.

Keep in mind this is not always an easy process to conduct as the External Review Team may uncover unknown variables or sentiments from staff and these feelings should be addressed by the organization. The issues may be systems related or staff connected and the sentiments could be difficult to confront and/or accept. BUT the long range outcomes to assist with the evolution of a residence life/housing program are certainly worth the temporary discomfort.

Be the Joey in your department; find out "how you doing" to move your program forward after an honest assessment of the strengths and weaknesses/assets and liabilities of your organization. And don't do it alone. Get some "FRIENDS" to help.

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Navigator Spotlight: Shannon Lee

Director of Residential Life and Community Standards

Shannon's Nominator Said:

Shannon has been working as the Director of Residence Life and Community Standards for 10 months and has been a trailblazer since she arrived. Shannon has successfully updated countless policies and protocols that best support the College's Mission, and encourage student development. Shannon has brought our small institution into the modern age. She was involved in securing a new apartment building as we welcomed the largest incoming class our institution has ever seen to campus this fall. During this time, she was able to acquire the facility, complete building inspections, and secure occupancy numbers in a two week span. Shannon and I work extremely closely as a two person department, and much of our success would not be feasible without her tirelessly leading us into our future at Albertus.



What's your favorite part of your job?

In addition to great colleagues and students, as the Director I enjoy developing policies and procedures that further support our students' success in college. With a smaller student population, I also have the opportunity to wear many hats and learn more about the areas that I am less familiar with such as campus master planning.

What made you want to be a part of Student Affairs?

I was an orientation leader in college and upon wishing that I could work in orientation full-time, I realized that the professional staff in the office did - and they all had a student affairs degree. As a first-generation college student who initially felt lost, I wanted to assist students in feeling a sense of belonging on campus as soon as possible. My work in orientation and other leadership roles furthered my passion for the first-year experience and students' transitions into college, which led me into Student Affairs.

Where do you want to be in 5 years?

I want to continue building skills within organizational development and determine if I want to pursue a doctoral degree within that field. Utilizing this lens, I would like to continue focusing on improving the student transition into higher education.

How do you want to get involved in the next year?

I would like to be more involved locally since I have not been in CT very long, both within my residential life and conduct areas of responsibility.

NETWORK WITH NEACUHO

2019-2020 Conferences



FALL RD2B: 11/16/19 @ BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY



RES OPS RETREAT: 12/6/19 @ MANHATTAN COLLEGE



EDI RETREAT: 2/7/20 @ NHTI



SPRING RD2B: 3/8/20 @ SIENA COLLEGE



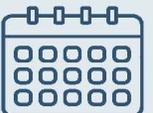
RES ED RETREAT: 6/5/20 @ SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY



TOOLKIT SERIES #1: 8/5/20 @ PURCHASE COLLEGE



TOOLKIT SERIES #2: 8/7/20 @ EASTERN CONNECTICUT



ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 10/6/20-10/9/20 @ NIAGARA FALLS



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Review of the RD2B Conference

By Jenna Smith

Before coming to this conference, I didn't really know what an RD's job looked like outside of staff meetings, on-call hours, conduct meetings, and being an available and consistent resource. I talked to my ResLife Director about my desire to work in student affairs and possibly ResLife, and how I just didn't have much knowledge of the opportunities out there. She pulled up her email, and two weeks later there was going to be the RD2B NEACUHO Conference. She signed me up, and I was excited to receive the kind of wisdom and insight I was looking for.

The RD2B Conference provided a breadth of information for what the RD job entails, the different aspects of an RD's role, what their schedule looks like, how each institution may have different requirements and may offer assistantships to pay for your professional development, and speakers gave us tangible links and resources for the job search! The conference had four sessions, with individual speakers and in-depth focuses, that helped break down some of the anxieties I had gone into the conference with, and replaced it with concrete ideas and knowledge of possible paths ahead of me. They started with the fundamentals of what our worries and fears were, our hopes, and then the need to establish our individual values and hard limits.

Evaluating your own wants and needs can help plan for the job search ahead of you, and it's much less overwhelming feeling like you have some direction. The sessions offered helped with resumes, cover letters, and interviews. They discussed tips for the job search, possible grad school options, the great importance of setting hard boundaries early on in order to find a work/life balance as an RD, and – what I found most helpful – the day-in-the-life of an RD session. Two RD's shared their lived experiences, their actual schedule from the week before, their job role and insight. Hearing people's advice and actual experiences allowed me to picture what my life would look like as an RD and if that was something I could see for my future. Then, they gave me the next steps. Above all else, I feel much more confident with my choices, planning, and knowledge after attending this conference.

It was cool to hear how there was no straight and narrow path to becoming an RD. Everyone there had different undergrad backgrounds, and typically didn't come into college thinking they wanted a degree/career in student affairs – but came out seeing how their passions and interests could align with this field. It was also comforting to hear how there's always institutions looking for RD's – some have different degree-requirements (some require or prefer Masters), and there are lots of grants and assistantships out there that can be utilized to get free or reduced classes to take on while working as an RD to get your masters.





During “mentor/mentee time,” attendees had a direct Q&A with someone directly in that job, who had a unique perspective and was extremely receptive. Jack Bushell was my group’s mentor and he gave us insight into his path, his best advice when applying, and how to narrow down what you want. He was great, clarified any questions, and even offered to look over our personal resumes to better set us up for success. Before going to this conference, I felt like a deer in headlights, with no concrete vision for what I wanted. However, now I can say I feel grounded, more confident in my next steps, and happy with my experience. It was incredibly helpful and insightful.



Interview:

Charlotte Sweeney (Skidmore College): “My favorite presentation was the Grad School presentation and the Day in the Life of the RD. I liked how they highlighted the importance of self-care and setting boundaries, what a schedule will look like and all the meetings, and the need to be flexible.”

Cristal Maria (Skidmore College RA): “I loved the Grad School and Job search one, and the list of resources!!! This is how u find jobs!! When I’ve been asking, ‘Where do I look to find these jobs?’ — finally, here’s clear resources.”

Gabriel Radcliffe (Skidmore College, third-year RA): “I agree with Jenna, I loved hearing what the real-time schedule and day-in-the-life RD’s input had, and how you can actually listen and imagine if this is a lifestyle that you can directly see yourself possibly in. Then the job search session had specific, direct resources to use when job searching. That’s an amazing resource.”



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My Experience, a Perspective of a College Closure

By Heather Quire, M.S.Ed. (former Dean of Students at Southern Vermont College)

Picture this: you're working at a college that you love. You enjoy the students and your colleagues and you have made significant strides in your primary mission of reshaping the campus culture into a more positive, accountable community. You've built a personal life as well as a professional one in the community. And then – all in one announcement – it's gone.

All right, that may be a little dramatic, but I can share in this article is my personal experience and perspective, and dramatic or not, that feeling of loss was immediate and total. From one moment to the next I saw everything I had worked to build fall away.

Now, to give you background, I was the Dean of Students at Southern Vermont College (SVC), a small liberal arts college with a mission centered around the potential of every individual; our motto, 400 acres - 400 students.

In my role, I wore many hats: I was part of Senior Leadership – reporting directly to the President, I was the VPSA – overseeing Student Affairs, the Dean of Students – overseeing student conduct, the Director of Residence Life, and the Director of Student Activities/Engagement. I was also part of the faculty, I helped create the curriculum for the 4 credit, FYE Course and was an instructor of one of the five sections of the course. Additionally, I was given the responsibility of managing the College through the NECHE (New England Commission of Higher Education) Comprehensive Self-Study process, the report and site visit was scheduled for Spring 2019. It was a lot of work and a lot of responsibility but I enjoyed everything I was a part of at SVC, even when stressed and overwhelmed. I was pushed professionally and learned quickly to navigate campus politics. I loved SVC and the work I got to do every day!

Then, March 4th, 2019, the announcement of the College closing happened.

To be honest, this announcement wasn't completely a surprise to me; with my role managing/writing the NECHE report I knew of the financial shortcomings we were facing. As part of Administration we had been preparing since the beginning of February for what we would need to do in the hypothetical situation of the college closing. But until that first weekend in March it really was only a hypothetical, a worst case scenario, emergency preparedness.

After the NECHE show-cause hearing on February 28th, the Board of Trustees, over the weekend, made the decision to close the College prior to NECHE's official statement that SVC would lose accreditation. That weekend we put a plan in place to announce the College closing on Monday. I gave my Student Affairs team the heads up on the closing announcement as they were crucial to the plan to announce to everyone; this way they could process over the weekend and be as strong as they could be for Monday's announcement. We also had a conversation with the SGA President so she could process and prepare to help support students on Monday. As a side note, I'd like to say I am truly proud of her and how she handled the information and how she responded over the next weeks.



Even with all the planning, we could not have predicted how this day was going to go. The plan was telling the faculty and staff at 8:00am and then the students at 9:00am on that Monday morning, however the local news announced it in the early morning which complicated our process and people's feelings. When telling the faculty and staff, the tears and anger came directly at the President and Cabinet. There was disappointment, sadness, and accusation, a suddenly uncertain future for many people. But we couldn't spend the time we wanted to with them to process. In order to help the student reactions with the information, we asked that faculty and staff to go upstairs for gathering to process the information together out of initial sight of the students, plus we needed the space in the theater for the students.

Then, it was time to announce to the students. The theater in the Mansion, which is SVC's main administrative building, can only seat about 100 people. I had sent an email at 6:30am to all students inviting them to the theater for an announcement. Over 200 students came, which meant the theater was crowded and the hallway outside was filled of students. When the President told the students that our college would be closing, that this spring semester would be our last graduating class, the hurt and sadness overcame individuals and the intense feelings overwhelmed the stagnant air of the Mansion.



I had Counseling Services on hand and the live-in Residence Life staff to help students process. Then, faculty and staff, only moments removed from their own shock, anger and fear, putting aside their own worries and grief, came back downstairs to connect and help with student emotions. In the coming weeks we would deal with the questions – what happens next; where will I go; will my credits transfer; how did this happen – but in that first morning we dealt simply with the feeling. Emotion was a physical thing, like electricity charged in the air after a lightning strike. I will never forget how overwhelming the sadness that permeated campus was.

Professionally, I took mental note of the students who were outwardly starting to go through the steps of loss/grief; some students lingered in depression; some got to anger very quickly.

That day was very long, including seeing the local news articles continuing to tell their version of what was happening.

Later that day, when I got to my desk after the announcement I received a message from a colleague in higher education. The message started, "You are in charge of the accreditation process for the College, how did you mess that up??!!"

A Perspective, Cont'd

From Page 15

Now, I know, they were joking, possibly trying to lighten a mood, however in that moment, on that day, it hurt.

Logically, I knew I was not the cause of the loss of accreditation for the College, I am not that powerful. There were many complex and complicated reasons that events had transpired as they had and my individual management of the self-study process did not have anything to do with the final decision; plus I did not have the opportunity to complete the comprehensive report; I was only about 80 percent done when in December 2018, NECHE deferred our site visit to Spring 2020. But I digress. I felt a sense of ownership of SVC and wondered if this was how others in the field were going to see me. I avoided social media all day until about 5pm when I had over 20 direct messages from colleagues in the region giving support and asking how they can help – news spread quickly. At that point, I felt a little bit of positivity and decided to make an announcement on my personal Facebook about the college closing. I received countless messages of support and I want to thank you all again in this article, I appreciate the kind words that were sent to me!

The last two and a half months of Southern Vermont College are a blur of memory. There were moments that were nearly business as usual and moments that were surreal; things I remember clearly and things that have become just part of the jumble of emotion and activity.

On the day of the announcement, every employee received a letter from Human Resources stating that “your last day may be determined to be on or before May 24, 2019.” The uncertainty of that was unnerving as you did not really know when your last day of work was going to be. I felt as long as there were students, I would have my position but that was not guaranteed, and I had no idea what that would mean for the individual members of my team. On the day of the announcement, the Admissions Counselors and out-of-season athletic coaches were let go; they wouldn't be needed – we no longer had a future to prepare for. It was a harsh truth that made things real and immediate.

The night of the announcement there was \$10,000 worth of damage done to the College property. While I did expect conduct to rise a little the amount of damage in one night was not predicted. I also expected alcohol and drug incidents to increase so we planned more programming and resources around AOD awareness. In looking back at the data, our AOD incidents did not increase in numbers compared to the previous two spring semesters.

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A Perspective, Cont'd

From Page 16

Surprisingly, I was thanked by students for continuing with the conduct review process, still holding students accountable for their choices, treating them as what they were – students in college.

In fact, students held each other accountable more than they ordinarily would have – more evidence of our staff's success in building the kind of community we had planned. Our programs and events were still happening as scheduled, plus RAs and SGA were really there for the students, providing mentoring and support. My instructions as per the "closing plan" were to keep the student experience as normal as possible. Meaning until the end of the semester we were still a college in session and we were going to act like it.

I did have an understanding that vendors may choose to not want to contract with us or cancel contracts as financial obligations were an issue. Ultimately, we were able to hold all events/programming as scheduled which was a success in and of itself for the student experience. Shout out to FUN Entertainment – thanks Ken!

Now, on the flip side, it was odd that in the Spring semester we were not doing RA selection, housing selection, planning the events calendar for Fall, nor planning for closing move-out in the same way - every room would be checked-out in the moment the student was leaving, no express checkouts, and damage billing was not going to be done – but at the time that was a secret.

Students were getting frustrated that classes were being cancelled or that some faculty were not teaching subject matter and just talking about the college closing. Students were tired of the focus of all conversation being on the college closing instead of on the present, on the classes still in session and the educations still being pursued. After a week or so, it got better, we had to emphasize that everyone was going through this process and it was difficult for each individual in their own way - faculty, staff, and students.

One of the toughest aspects to experience was how angry some faculty and staff were about all of this and the emails going around on faculty/staff email list that were not positive and tearing down Administration, the President, and the Board of Trustees. Where students had acted out their displeasure by lashing out with campus damage, employees acted out their displeasure verbally, blaming and slandering. Some SVC faculty and staff were so angry yet at the same time were so supportive of students, it was a juxtaposition of feelings, emotions, and behaviors.

Yes, some of that anger was projected at me as Senior Leadership and that was not fun. Ultimately, I knew it wasn't personal but it still stung to have once friendly colleagues and then to become a target of resentment, anger, and blame. Everyone was worried about their futures as students were, beginning job searches without knowing for sure when they would lose their jobs. Beyond the obvious loss of income, loss of unseen benefits that college employees count on, tuition remission, professional development, the things that they were promised were very suddenly gone.



Additionally, the President and Cabinet were very transparent about the real possibility that the College may run out of money before graduation, meaning a day could have come when we would not be able to pay people for the work they had done. This produced even more anxiety and distrust. It did not happen but until that decision was ultimately known, two VPs resigned (due to ethical reasons and related to finances) and then a law firm with a Chief Restructuring Officer was brought in to manage the College. Everything was in upheaval.

For me it was hard to watch, hard to participate day to day, hard to come to work knowing what I would face each day. I struggled to exist as a professional and student support system and also personally -- when the two VPs resigned, my friends (*we have known each other for 10 years*), *who I had lunch with every day, were no longer a part of the College community and my everyday SVC experience. I understood and respected their position and supported them, I would have done the same if in their shoes. Simultaneously I felt increasingly lonely and isolated as I searched for ways to keep myself and my staff working.*

Part of my responsibilities were with risk management and keeping the Community safe. Starting the day of the announcement, we started a guarded check point and log of those entering campus. This joint venture by Campus Safety and Student Affairs was all about keeping the campus safe. The feedback from the students was they liked the check point as it added a safety measure while feedback from faculty and staff was that they did not want it as SVC is a safe place; it was one more disruption in what they had always believed to be true. As part of the risk management team, we decided the check point was necessary and we kept it in place until graduation.

Not everything was so negative, one of the main focuses for all of us, was to help students find their next educational home. NECHE requires there to be a plan in place for all academic programs along with a primary "teach out plan." A teach out plan is an agreement with an institution on enrollment requirements, credit acceptance, financial considerations, etc. The primary teach out plan will also be the institution that will take all academic records. Our Senior-level Admissions staff became the Transfer Services Office, which had one sole purpose - to help each student transfer. Transfer Services called institutions that students were interested in and helped the students understand the transfer process. They also set up College Fairs and invited colleges every week to be on campus to recruit our students. Transfer Services set up over twenty teach out plans and contacted hundreds of colleges and universities on behalf of students. I am proud of the work they did for our students. Additionally, faculty and staff were helping students make connections through their own networks to help students find their next step. Every day I was working on Dean's Letters of Recommendations and transfer forms. It was an entire college endeavor to help our students through this process. Another positive aspect was we were able to award Associate degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies. This meant that our sophomores and juniors could walk across the commencement stage with a degree from SVC. Our Dean of Faculty worked hard with faculty chairs to do the degree audits to see if students had met the Interdisciplinary Studies requirements.

A Perspective, Cont'd

From Page 19

I have been asked a lot about what I will take away most from this experience, during the last few months of the college, my response had been the resiliency of the students. I watched a student body go through the loss, grief, anger, acceptance and then thrive in deciding their next educational step. The power of the student community was amazing, they came together to help each other, they held each other accountable, and supported each other. I will not forget watching that happen within the student body.

The last week of the semester was difficult for so many reasons, but the main reason was my Student Affairs team was let go. My assistant had already left and the Friday before Saturday's graduation, I said goodbye to Health Services and Counseling Services. The live-on staff was to move-out on Sunday. I felt I had the best Student Affairs team anyone could have and I was sad to see them leave.

Graduation day was bittersweet. I was so proud of the SVC Community and getting to see the students walk across the stage but at the same time, it was just sad. Being a part of the platform party, I watched the audience, the graduating students, faculty and staff - it was tough to keep a smile on during the ceremony. And having now seen the photographer pictures of the day, I'm not the only one who wasn't smiling in the pictures.

After the ceremony, I went to my office and then I watched the last of the students move out of the residence areas, said goodbye to the remaining RA staff members, and then said goodbye to my live-on staff. I went home and felt numb. I had not really allowed feelings or emotions to be real as I was so focused on everything that had to be done for others over the prior weeks.

I was able to work the week following graduation, which consisted of boxing up student files, organizing all Student Affairs material, organizing keys, and being one of the last people left on campus. It was so quiet in the Residence Hall that also housed the Student Affairs offices. The Director of Campus Safety, his staff, and myself were the ones left "down the hill" from the Mansion. Sodexo was cleaning out the equipment from the dining hall. It then came to be the end of the last day and it was time to turn in my keys to the Director of Campus Safety. We hugged, said goodbye, and then I drove off-campus; again, I just felt numb.

Fortunately, the next week was RELI (Regional Entry Level Institute) which gave me purpose for the week. I was a faculty member this year for RELI 2019. I can say that that experience gave me so much professionally and personally. I felt vulnerable, which was a new feeling for me, as I found myself crying when speaking about the college closing. I am not typically someone that is overwhelmed by emotion, especially in a professional setting, but I could not help it. I felt raw and sad about no longer having a job, not being a part of a college community, and feeling a little bit of a lost sense of purpose.





A wonderful aspect to RELI, other than getting to have awesome mentees and meeting new colleagues from MACUHO region plus spending time with NEACUHO colleagues, was the support from the co-directors, faculty and participants. Everyone allowed me to feel how I was feeling and I didn't feel judged for getting emotional at times. To be honest, I took more from the RELI experience than I thought I would. Thank you RELI co-directors, faculty, & participants for making that experience awesome for me!

During my job search and interviewing process, on numerous phone, skype, and in-person interviews, many people asked about my experience with the college closing, just after they expressed sympathy. I would always give the response about student resiliency, but after reflection and some time passing, I have found that that response does not really tell about my experience. I realize now, how much I was affected by it all. Now that a few months have gone by, I decided that I could actually write about my experience and that maybe others would want to read about it. I cannot believe I am going to say this, but as I am sitting here, I can appreciate the experience of SVC closing. I learned a lot about navigating relationships through a difficult process, learned about myself professionally and personally, plus realize how much I appreciate now having this experience. I hope it never happens again but I know what growth can come from the experience. In this article, I tried to be honest, candid, and remember it truthfully – to give a true sense of my perspective of a college closure. Thank you NEACUHO for all your support through this experience!

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Your role in strategic planning for your future

By Myra M. McPhee

We know that a sense of belonging is closely tied to comfort and success. As college administrators, we help students find community and connect with others in hopes they form meaningful bonds to their friends and to the institution. We challenge them to get involved. Getting involved empowers them to make a difference.

My top 5 CliftonStrengths themes are Futuristic, Strategic, Significance, Activator, and Focus. I am always thinking about the future, hypothesizing about possible next steps, and dreaming about larger budgets for my department. My mind is always racing with programming ideas and student success strategies. And just like you, I am also very busy doing all the necessary things that the day-to-day grind requires us to do. On a good day, it might be answering 80 emails. On a bad day, it might be back to back threatening phone calls from parents. The type of busy that we experience can easily cause burnout or bitterness. Some of us can recognize those signs. Some of us cannot.

About a year and a half ago, I came face to face with a harsh truth. I was spending way too much of my personal time thinking about my department's future. My long-term professional development was no longer on the back burner; it was off the stove, packed neatly away on a high, dusty shelf. I was overfeeding the activator and focus parts of myself with the whirlwind pace and high demands of my job. But, when it came to my personal and professional development, I was starving my futuristic and strategic impulses. I challenged myself to address this issue. I needed to start pouring into myself the way I was pouring into my students, staff, and department. The interesting side effect of working on yourself is that you have to add more work to your already full plate. It means more late nights (I typed this article at 12:27 a.m.), an adjustment of my priorities, and some real sacrifices. I recognize that all of you cannot make the same choices I've made. But, I want you to know, you may have more options for professional and personal fulfillment that you are currently considering.

I am relatively new to NEACUHO. Thanks to people like Vinnie Birkenmeyer and Tommy Tressler-Gelok in the Metro NY district, I keep getting called in and welcomed. This past spring, I was appointed to one of the Co-Chair roles for the Strategic Plan Task Force. My Co-Chair, Rose Piacente Waples, Ed.D., and I are working with six Sub-Chairs, their working groups, and Tyler Miller in a consulting role. Together we will review and learn from the past, discuss the present, and plan for the future of NEACUHO.

The Strategic Plan Task Force has members from more than 25 different colleges and universities. The six working groups are analyzing reports and the last strategic plan. They are also developing timelines and discussing their mission. They are working towards developing recommendations that will shape the next five years of our organization.

Through this process, we are learning more about NEACUHO, other schools, each other, and ourselves.



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Applying for this role was my attempt to add balance to the stressful, demanding nature of my full-time job. It was my way of finding a sense of belonging in a field that I have worked in for more than 15 years. I knew this experience would challenge me in hard, but necessary ways. Having the trust of David Grimes, the past presidents, and the E-board has been exactly what I needed to equip me with the tools to silence the imposter syndrome that interrupts my thoughts. Collaborating with such passionate and skilled professionals has already been very rewarding. Taking on more work often sounds like a recipe for disaster, but this has instead been a recipe for confidence and camaraderie.

If you would like more information on the Strategic Plan Task Force, please attend one of our conference sessions when you see it listed or email me at mmcphoe@sarahlawrence.edu or Rose at rwaples@reslife.rochester.edu. We would love to hear from you.

~ Myra M. McPhee is the Director of Residence Life at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY

ListServe Digest

Topics and their originators from the NEACUHO ListServe

Bunking Bed Procedures and ladders policy	Kara Curcio	curciok@wit.edu
Housing Deposit Refund Policies	Kevin Long	longk1@wit.edu
Use of Emergency Pull Cords in ADA Rooms	Theresa Capelo	tcapelo@rwu.edu
RA Contacts and Compensation Packages	Beth Moriarty	bmoriarty61@bryant.edu
Methods of Recycling on Campus	Max Koskoff	koskoff@hartford.edu
RA Hours/Compensation	Colleen Debeasi	Colleen.DeBeasi@hult.edu
Professional Live In/On Benchmarking Survey w/ Results	Chuck Crawford	cecrawford@plymouth.edu
Hall Director Placement Decision Making Criteria	Sheila Morgansmith	Sheila.morgansmith@uconn.edu
RD Collateral Assignments and Hour Breakdowns	Jennifer Maitino	jmaitino0615@post03.curry.edu
Summer Live-In Bridge Program Processes	Veronica Hills	VHills@goodwin.edu

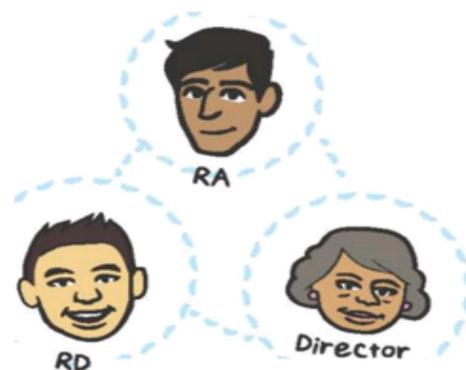


Graduate Housing Benchmarking Form	Sarah Fabianski	sfabians@ur.rochest.ed
Sharing Assistant Director Level Position Descriptions	David Grimes	dgrimes@newschool.edu
Ideas for Innovative Meal Plans on Campus	Stephen Nason	snason@unity.edu
Addressing Day Guest Sign Out Policies	Alister Englehart	aenglehart@iona.edu
RA Room Cost and Reimbursement/Billing Process	Dennis Macheska	mach44512@aol.com
Single Accommodation Process and Charging	Torrie Lewine	lewinet@elms.edu

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Quiet Hours Details and Policies	Pejay Lucky	plucky@fairfield.edu
Programs, communities, or initiatives geared toward	Vincent Birkenmeyer	vbirkenmeyer@pace.edu
Tracking RA and Resident Communication and Connections	Marimar Perez	mperez@iona.edu
Student Staff Evaluation and Rubrics for Selection	Colin Seifrit	Seifritc@franklinpierce.edu
Permitting String Lights in Residence Halls	Matt McGrath	mmgrath6@suffolk.edu
Expanded Occupancy Triple Price Differentials	Amelia McConnell	Ame- lia.mcconnell@simmons.edu
Guest Policies on Campuses without Front Desks	Matt Foster	mfoster@wpi.edu
RHA and Hall Council Constitution Sharing	Stephanie Ketterl	sketterl@sjfc.edu



2019 Annual NEACUHO Conference Reflection

By: Chasity Wilson



I attended my 2nd NEACHO conference this year, excited to present to my peers on effective means of taking care of ourselves in our professional roles within Housing or other areas across the region. My situation was unique this year because while I was attending on my own, the social networking of the conference provided some limitations to me as an expectant mom.

I was able to enjoy time volunteering and meeting members of the conference committee, having engaging conversations with people in similar positions and years of experience. I gave back to the region by volunteering, participating in the basket raffles and purchasing from the Legacy store. I participated in social activities suitable for my situation like the tarot reading, photo booth, and paint night.

Most impactful however, was connecting with friends one whom attended my session last conference, and then others I met through her. We spent meals and social time together - and the only challenge was when there was free alcohol but no

“virgin accommodations” outside of soda, for individuals who didn’t drink or couldn’t drink for whatever reason.

This really gave me pause thinking about how in our field we treat social drinking as an almost necessary means of celebration. This was evident at our happy hour, our awards banquet, and even reflected in some of the basket raffles. Important to note, this experience isn’t limited just to social opportunities at a conference either. Hopefully, non-drinkers (for whatever reason) will be considered in future planning of social activities or compensated meals provided by vendors.

This is not to say I am opposed to happy hour or bar availability when celebrating - because I would have dabbled if able. I just found it interesting to see things from a different side and it made me think of those affected similarly due to personal choices or even sobriety that no one would have any way of knowing about. *I appreciate any opportunity to think about inclusion differently in any space.*

Overall, the NEACUHO conference experience this year, though limited due to personal reasons, was a good one. My presentation was well received and I enjoyed the conference overall. I was able to think critically about things I had not previously thought about before. The Desmond Hotel was beautiful and presented a memorable venue for engaging with colleagues across the region. Here’s to looking forward to further inclusion, innovation, and new discovery at Niagara Falls in 2020!

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