Choosing a Career in Student Affairs

Paige Haber-Curran, Ph.D. & Shannon R. Dean, Ph.D.
Texas State University
• Have always valued education

• Active student leader in college

• Desire to make a difference

• Attended master’s program in Student Affairs

• Worked in Residential Life, Student Activities, and Student Leadership Programs

• Ph.D. in Leadership Studies with an emphasis in Higher Education

• Texas State University

• Loved learning

• Knew I wanted to teach

• Resident Assistant in college

• Attended master’s program

• Worked in Residence Life, Service learning, Leadership development, Academic advising, and International student life

• Ph.D. in Counseling & Student Personnel Services

• Texas State University
What interests you in a career in student affairs?
A career in student affairs

- Is rewarding and meaningful
- Allows for variety in job responsibilities and roles
- Encompasses a vibrant work environment
- Provides you opportunities for lifelong learning & continual personal and professional growth and development
What is student affairs?

People who work in student affairs provide services, programs, and resources that help students learn and grow outside of the classroom. Student affairs professionals:

- Enhance student learning
- Guide academic and career decisions
- Mentor students
- Help students develop skills
- Counsel students through crises
Functional Areas

- Multicultural Programs
- Student Activities
- Greek Life
- Residence Life
- Recreation/Fitness Centers
- Financial Aid
- Women’s Centers/Programs
- Student Unions
- Judicial Affairs / Student Conduct
- Student Organization Advising
- Admissions
- First Year & Transition Programs
- Transfer Student Services
- Alumni Programs
- Student Government Advising
- Leadership Development
- Underrepresented Student Support
- Service Learning & Community Service
- Student Learning Assistants
- Academic Coaching & Success
- Career Services
- Study Abroad / International Programs
- Wellness Programs
- GLBT Student Services
- Support for students with Disabilities
- Veterans Programs
- New Student Orientation
Graduate Program Types

- M.A., M.Ed., M.S.- oh my!
- Student Affairs
- Student Affairs in Higher Education
- Higher Education
- Higher Education Administration
- Educational Leadership
- College Student Personnel

Different Emphases:
- Student Development
- Counseling
- Administration
- Policy

Watch out for:
- Educational Leadership (Principal in K-12!)
Questions & Things to Research

1. What is the curriculum?
   Hint: Look at the courses required and offered.

2. Is there a capstone requirement?
   Thesis?
   Comprehensive Exam?
   Portfolio?

3. What type of jobs do students obtain upon graduation?

4. Are there assistant positions?

5. How many students are in the program?
   Class size is important for graduate learning!

6. How is the program designed?
   Is there a set course sequence?
   Is there a cohort model?
   Must students be full time?

7. Are there opportunities to engage in research?
Practical Experiences

• Graduate Assistantships (part time work in the field on campus)
  • Often come with a stipend
  • Some programs offer tuition assistance/ remission as well

• Working full time while attending school

• Internship opportunities
  • On and off campus

• Get internship experiences now!

• Emphasis on theory-to-practice to the classroom
Tips for Applying

• Get Diverse Experiences!
  • Get involved
  • Volunteer

• Research!
  • Read as much information as you can about the program online
  • Ask your mentors and advisors to recommend programs
  • Determine which programs you are interested in applying to
  • If you have time & resources, visit programs and sit in on a class
More Tips

• Get Organized!
  • Identify application dates
  • Plan your GRE testing date
  • Identify on-campus interview & preview dates
  • Let your recommenders know the timelines as soon as possible

• Prepare!
  • Spend ample time working on your application materials
  • Get feedback on your statements of purpose, resume, or other materials
  • Emphasize your strengths and how you will contribute to the program in your statement of purpose
Graduate student tips

• Consider how your values line up with the institutions you’re applying to
• Start applications as early as possible and make sure your information and transcripts are ready
• Keep yourself organized when applying and make sure you’re keeping the names & contacts of those who you have connected with for later use
• When you’re interviewing, take every opportunity you have to learn about the campus and school – you are making sure the program is a great fit
• Do your research on the schools you are applying to - look at mission statement, social media sites, and talk to people – this can help you figure out what the campus culture will be like and if it fits with what you’re looking to experience
• Make sure you know how graduate school will be financed
• It’s okay to be proactive when you apply – make sure you follow up with the programs you applied for to see where you stand in the process
Resources

• American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
  • http://convention.myacpa.org/tampa2015/program/next-gen/
• National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
  • http://www.naspa.org/careers
• TACUSPA
  • http://www.tacuspa.net/
• Careers in Student Affairs
  • http://www2.myacpa.org/career-development/careers-in-student-affairs
• Directory of Graduate Programs
  • http://www2.myacpa.org/career-development/directory-of-graduate-programs
• NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program
  • http://www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/professionals/nufp
• Careers in Student Affairs
  • http://www.naspa.org/careers
• Directory of Graduate Programs
  • http://www.naspa.org/careers/graduate/graduate-program-directory
Texas State University

• Student Affairs in Higher Education
• M.Ed 2-year program
• Cohort model
• Two full-time faculty & Adjunct faculty in Student Affairs
• Graduate Assistantships
• Two Internships
• Theory-to-practice
• Holistic application review

• http://www.txstate.edu/clas/Student-Affairs.html

eat 'em up, cats!
Contact Us

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Any questions?