

**2007 ACPA/NASPA  
Joint Meeting**



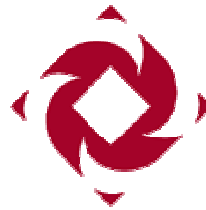
**Our Power and  
Responsibility to  
Shape Education**

# Avoiding the School of Hard Knocks: Acquiring the Essential Skills You'll Need to Become a Successful Chief Student Affairs Officer

Orlando, FL  
April 3, 2007

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# Who We Are



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- Dr. Evelyn McDonald
  - Christian Brothers University
- Mr. Jim Doyle
  - DePaul University
- Mr. Kevin Keegan
  - Brailsford & Dunlavey

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# Presentation Outline



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- Who We Are
- Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs
- Inventory of Skills Needed in Student Affairs
- Professional Preparation
- Wrap Up
- Questions

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# Who We Are



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- Dr. Evelyn McDonald, Christian Brothers University
  - Vice President for Student Life
  - Former Dean of Women/Dean of Students
  - Former Registrar and Director of Financial Aid
  - International education in US, Scotland, and Ethiopia
  - Over 30 years in Student Affairs
  - Ed.D in Higher Education Administration

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# Christian Brothers University – Overview



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## Campus Bio



- Committed to preparing students of all faiths and backgrounds to excel in their professional and public lives
- Grounded in the LaSallian educational tradition
- Urban institution in the heart of Memphis
- 1,800 students from 19 states and 22 foreign countries
- 4 colleges (Liberal Arts, Sciences, Engineering and Business)
- Academically rigorous with 50% of students coming from the top 10% of their high school classes



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# Who We Are



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- Mr. Jim Doyle, DePaul University
  - Vice President of Student Affairs at DPU since 1982
  - Former VPSA at Creighton University for 10 years
  - 39 years in Student Affairs
  - Significant quality of life master planning and facility development experience
  - Faculty member – Higher Education Administration

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# DePaul University – Overview

## Campus Bio



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- Mission-driven institution focused on teaching and providing educational access to everyone
- Nation's largest Catholic university with over 24,000 students
- Students from all 50 states and 100 countries
- Seven campuses throughout the Chicagoland area
- Nine colleges and schools with over 200 programs
- Recently ranked #1 by the *Princeton Review* in the “Diverse Student Population” and “Happiest Students” categories

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# Who we are



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- Mr. Kevin Keegan, Brailsford & Dunlavey
  - Vice President at B&D
  - Former Associate VP of Student Affairs
  - 20 years of management experience in Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services
  - Master planning and project management experience within higher education and at other non-profits

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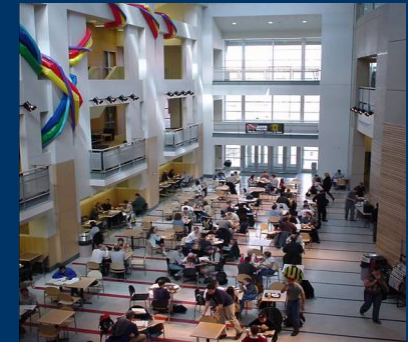


# Brailsford & Dunlavey – Overview



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- Role – Planners and Program Managers
- Focus - “Quality of Life” strategic enhancements
- Services – Over 350 higher ed projects including:
  - Strategic & master planning
  - Campus edge development
  - Student housing
  - Student centers / unions
  - Recreation centers
  - Athletic facilities
  - Academies / private schools
  - Community development
  - Stadiums / arenas



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# *Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs*



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- Why do people go into Student Affairs?
  - A few possible reasons:
    - Are stimulated by the college environment and culture
    - Had great personal experiences as students
    - Profession's core values align well with personal ones
    - Have a passion for student engagement and mentoring
    - Want to manage area(s) of personal interest
    - Are attracted to the diversity and dynamism of the academy
    - By accident!

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# *Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs*



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- What keeps us in the profession:
  - Fulfilling our role as partners in education
    - We've had an effect on both in- and out-of-classroom learning
  - Witnessing and empowering personal student achievement
    - We've seen countless students achieve personal & professional success
  - Initiating and/or improving student services
    - Removing the impediments to learning has been a priority
  - Shaping institutional strategic planning
    - We've been able to influence the institution's long-term course
  - Improving the quality of life of students
    - We've championed significant physical improvements on campuses

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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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## ■ What we've managed:

- Intercollegiate athletics
- Student housing
- Career planning
- Financial aid
- Financial accounts
- Campus ministry
- Multicultural student affairs
- Academic advising
- Bookstores
- Campus recreation
- Food service
- Leadership institutes
- Registrar
- Admissions
- Student activities
- Dean of students
- Student life
- Campus security
- Counseling services
- International student services
- Disability services
- Cultural centers
- Student government
- Conference services
- ID card services
- Parking

There's more but you get the idea

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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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## ■ The CSAO's daily balancing act:

### Administrative responsibilities

- Campus crisis resolution
- Financial management
- Strategic planning
- Facilities management
- Human resource management
- Contract administration
- Legal issues
- Fundraising / development initiatives
- Campus politics navigation
- Safety / security concerns

### Student responsibilities

- Student success initiatives
- Diversity & cultural initiatives
- Student activities management
- Student leadership development
- Student conduct & behavioral issues
- Counseling, advising, mentoring
- Teaching & academic partnerships
- Student wellness & welfare issues
- Family financial & domestic issues
- Student employment management

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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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## ■ The CSAO's daily balancing act:

### Administrative responsibilities

- Campus crisis resolution
- Financial management
- Strategic planning
- In many cases, few others outside of Student Affairs feel a responsibility to manage these issues
- Fundraising initiatives
- Campus politics navigation
- Safety / security concerns

### Student responsibilities

- Student success initiatives
- Diversity & cultural initiatives
- Student activities management
- Student leadership development
- Student conduct & behavioral issues
- Counseling, advising, mentoring
- Teaching & academic partnerships
- Student wellness & welfare issues
- Family financial & domestic issues
- Student employment management

*You must effectively manage all issues even if some are less interesting*

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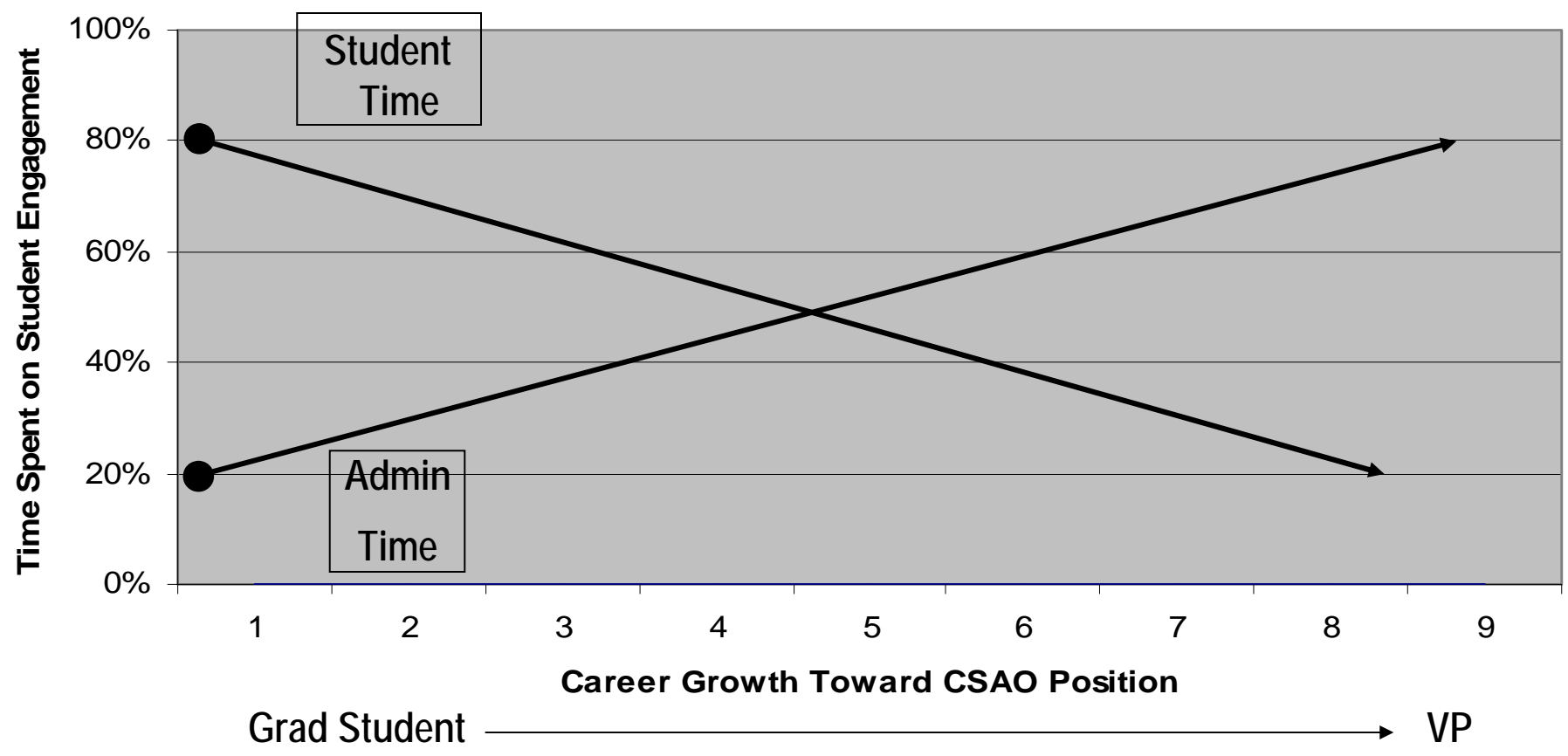
# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



## Reality of today's CSAO's commitments

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### Student Engagement v. Administration Time



# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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## ■ The changing nature of Student Affairs

### ■ 1977

- Many of you weren't even born!
- Jimmy Carter is sworn in as president
- Drinking age is 18 in many states
- *Rocky* (the original) wins best picture
- Fiber optic cable is used for the first time to carry phone calls
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Apple II computer goes on sale
- Notre Dame wins the national championship in football
- Elvis dies in Memphis



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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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## ■ How students have changed:

1977

- Baby boomers / first generation students flood colleges
- High school educational preparation is far different
- Limited diversity awareness & appreciation among students
- Homogenous faculty & staff
- Post-Vietnam War realism
- High tech was an electric typewriter!

2007

- Higher ed access & affordability are major issues
- Technology explosion (cell phones, IPODS, facebook, XBox, etc.)
- Higher on-campus lifestyle expectations (single rooms, rec centers, food, etc.)
- Family legacy of access to college
- High consumer & entitlement expectations
- Helicopter parents
- Chronic mental health & behavioral issues

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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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## ■ How the CSAO job has changed:

1977

- SA on the academy's fringe
- Narrower SA roles (Dean of Men)
- Title IX is relatively new
- In loco parentis is the norm
- Quality of life issues not a priority
- Limited outside regulation
- SA assessment / research is limited
- Less complex administratively
- "Campus" was well defined

2007

- SA is more critical to, and respected within, the institution
- Greater collaboration with academics
- Significant resources to manage
- Research and assessment-driven
- Highly diverse campuses
- Safety / security issues dominate
- Greater expectations & accountability
- Increase in adult students

*Student Affairs has changed significantly, often well ahead of other areas*

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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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- The changing nature of Student Affairs
  - Increased opportunities to fulfill role as educators
    - Academic collaboration and partnerships; out-of-classroom learning opportunities
    - Awareness and appreciation initiatives
  - Increased complexity of divisions, even at smaller institutions
    - Resource management (human, technological, facilities, financial) is increasingly crucial due to scarce institutional allocations
    - Enrollment management (admissions, cost, student aid, access) are main drivers
  - Increased compliance and accountability requirements
    - Legislation (Homeland Security, Cleary Act, Crime Reporting Act, SEVIS, etc.)
    - Greater attention to student success through collaborative efforts

*Pace of change may accelerate even more. What will SA look like in 2037?*

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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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- What you might manage as a CSAO:
  - A large Student Affairs division today:
    - 25,000+ highly diverse students AND 50,000+ parents
    - Multiple campus locations, including international and virtual ones
    - Divisional budget in excess of \$100 million (without intercollegiate athletics)
    - 24 x 7 x 365 operations
    - 6,000+ students living on campus
    - 300+ full-time and 1,000+ part-time employees
    - Over 50 facilities with well over 2 million square feet of space being managed
    - 200+ student organizations

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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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- What you might manage as a CSAO:

- A small Student Affairs division today:

- Many more CSAO career opportunities available
- Fewer filters between students and the CSAO
- Greater opportunity to become exposed to other college areas
- Resources must be well managed because every dollar counts
- “Jack-of-all-trades” ability & disposition are crucial – “It’s not my job” is always the wrong answer
- Competition for students is intense so the student experience is crucial
- May be easier to affect change but consequences are more noticeable
- Smaller scale but all the student issues are still there

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# Scope and Scale of Today's Student Affairs



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Still interested in being a senior Student Affairs professional?

If Yes —————>

Stay seated

If No



# *Inventory of Skills Needed in Student Affairs*



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## ■ The tool kit essentials - top 10 attributes:

1. Professional ethics
  - Nothing is more important to professional credibility and success
2. Personal traits
  - Personal stamina, humor, work ethic, “can do” attitude, respectful of all
3. Foundational understanding of students and the student experience
  - Colleges and universities exist because of, and for, students
4. Professional studies
  - Understanding the academy and the role of Student Affairs within it is crucial
5. Strategic planning
  - If you fail to plan you plan to fail

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# Inventory of Skills Needed in Student Affairs



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## ■ Tool kit essentials - top 10 attributes:

### 6. Leadership competencies

- Adaptable, team leader, partnership builder, good communicator, innovative, decisive

### 7. Managerial discipline

- Plan then act - “Disciplined people who engage in disciplined thought and who take disciplined action.” (J. Collins, *Good to Great*)

### 8. Human resource management

- People are your most important – and challenging - resource

### 9. Financial management

- Like it or not, it always involves money

### 10. Facilities management

- Students’ quality of life is fundamental to institutional sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

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# *Inventory of Skills Needed in Student Affairs*



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- How are these traits exhibited in the field?
  - A healthy Student Affairs division has:
    - Proactive leadership
      - Are effective divisional AND institutional leaders
      - Have the right people on the bus who are then held accountable
      - Confronts the brutal facts and uses them to effect change
      - Manages up well
    - Good planning that leads to action
      - Plan → assign resources → implement → assess → report → start over
      - Walks the walk
    - A highly adaptive and flexible culture
      - Appreciates the fluid and dynamic environment of higher education
      - Understands that Student Affairs and students are change agents on campus

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# *Inventory of Skills Needed in Student Affairs*



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- How are these traits exhibited in the field?
  - A healthy Student Affairs division has:
    - Excellent stewardship
      - Can do more with less, without being asked
      - Knows all available resources (financial, human, physical) and uses them efficiently
      - Acts strategically and not simply to respond to short-term pressures
    - Collaborative decision making that operates across the institution
      - Decisions are reached collaboratively yet decisively
      - Significant student and other stakeholder engagement
    - Character
      - Manages complex issues without compromising professional and personal ethics
      - Doesn't take decisions personally
      - Accepts that things will go wrong but plans to prevent them from doing so
      - Works deliberately to develop professionally

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# *Professional Preparation*



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- How do you acquire the 10 attributes?
  - Four professional development necessities:
    1. Academic preparation
    2. Experiential learning
    3. Mentorships and acquisition of expert resources
    4. Body of knowledge development

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# Professional Preparation



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## ■ How do you acquire the 10 attributes?

### 1. Academic preparation (Master's in CSP):

#### ■ Strengths:

- Philosophical grounding in student development is solid
- Foundational studies cover many topics
- Research techniques and methodologies are well covered
- Exposure to many professional areas occurs
- High-level understanding of responsibilities (finances, facilities, etc.) is achieved

#### ■ Gaps:

- Translating theory into practice is challenging, particularly for multiple SA disciplines
- Width and depth of education on operational / managerial issues is limited
- Business applications aren't major curricular components
- "Hands-on" use of practical managerial and operational tools is limited

*How do you fill in the gaps?*

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# *Professional Preparation*



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- How do you acquire the 10 attributes?

1. Academic preparation (Master's in CSP):

- What would you have done differently to fill in your gaps?
- What additional preparation do you think you need at this point in your career?

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# Professional Preparation



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## ■ How do you acquire the 10 attributes?

### 1. Academic preparation – take courses outside your discipline:

#### ■ Priority 1:

- Accounting
- Finance
- Human resources law
- Higher education law
- Business law
- Strategic planning
- Organizational development
- Master planning
- Facilities management

#### ■ Priority 2:

- Project management
- Contract management
- MIS
- Change management
- Fundraising for non-profits
- Marketing
- Public service

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# *Professional Preparation*



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- How do you acquire the 10 attributes?
  1. Academic preparation – three suggestions:
    - Complement your foundational studies with professional and technical skills
    - Take courses in the actual discipline, not just courses within CSP or Higher Ed Administration
    - Get your doctorate

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# Professional Preparation



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## ■ Why do you need additional preparation?

### ■ Financial Acumen

- Revenue & expense understanding
- Planning / pro forma development
- Budget management
- Stewardship

### ■ Strategic Planning

- Syncs division with the institution
- Aligns resources with goals

### ■ Marketing

- Grows or sustains operations

### ■ Development / Advancement

- Fundraising
- Grant writing

### ■ Facility Management

- Planning & operations
- Repair & replacement
- Facility capital projects (new & old)
- Effective & convenient service delivery

### ■ Information Technology

- Staying current is a huge challenge
- High tech v. high touch tension

### ■ Legal

- Compliance
- Employment law

### ■ Human Resources

- Performance management

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# Professional Preparation



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- How do you acquire the 10 attributes?

## 2. Experiential learning:

- If currently in a degree program:
  - Work at internships / externships that really get your hands dirty
  - Find part-time employment in more than one area, preferably in both academic and student affairs' departments
  - Get “apprenticeship” training even if it means working for free
  - Become active in other non-higher education enterprises (i.e. K-12 schools, civic organizations, churches, etc.)
    - Sharpen your skills while practicing on someone else
    - Learn while helping worthwhile causes
    - Meet new professional colleagues
    - Expand your network

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# Professional Preparation



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## ■ How do you acquire the 10 attributes?

### 2. Experiential learning:

- If already working full time:
  - Learn beyond the requirements of your current position
  - Volunteer for university committees / task forces outside Student Affairs (i.e. HR, Admissions, Security, Financial Aid, Facilities, IT, etc.)
  - Secure a split assignment (i.e. 50/50 time split with 2 departments)
  - Become active in other non-academic enterprises (i.e. schools, civic organizations, churches, etc.)
  - Shadow internal professionals (business or facilities manager)

*The key is to engage in unique, quality experiences while simultaneously getting better at existing job requirements*

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# Professional Preparation



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## ■ How do you acquire the 10 attributes?

### 3. Mentorships / Expert Resources:

- Find one or more mentors:
  - Identify people who can commit quality time to your development
  - Find mentors from whom you can learn, not just ones who can open doors
  - Look for people with diverse and deep backgrounds
- Begin developing a personal pool of experts:
  - Internal institutional experts
  - Professional association resources
  - Business partners (bookstores, food service, facilities professionals)
  - Consultants (planners, architects, bankers, attorneys, etc.)
- Use your collegial network:
  - Informal peer review or audit

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# Professional Preparation



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## ■ How do you acquire the 10 attributes?

### 4. Body of knowledge development:

- Expand your professional organization membership – examples
  - NACUBO (National Association of College and University Business Officers)
  - NACAS (National Association of College Auxiliary Services)
  - SCUP (Society for College and University Planning)
  - CUPA-HR (College and University Professional Association for Human Resources)
- Attend and participate in conferences / meetings
  - Regional associations and meetings can be great, economical resources
  - Get involved, don't just join
  - Use them to expand your professional network
- Commit to learning the necessary tools
  - Technology solutions (CRM, PeopleSoft, Excel, Project, etc.)
  - Learn the codes and language of other professions

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# Professional Preparation



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## ■ How do you acquire the 10 attributes?

### 4. Body of knowledge development:

- Professional development & life-long learning
  - Stay current - read and research both in and outside your discipline
  - Require everyone in the division to share their learning opportunities with others
- Enroll in certificate programs / workshops
  - Financial Aid
  - Property management
  - Fundraising
  - Construction management
  - Human resources
  - Information technology
  - Real estate
  - Marketing

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# Professional Preparation



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- How do you acquire the 10 attributes?
  - Unique areas within Student Affairs:
    - Some things you just won't understand until you have significant exposure to the issues:
      - Certain departments (i.e. intercollegiate athletics) – very challenging
      - Campus politics – they are so unique to each campus
      - Campus crises – no two are alike
    - How do you handle these?
      - Plan well
      - Apply common sense
      - Follow institutional rules
      - Seek good advice and counsel
      - Recognize imperfect outcomes



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# Wrap UP



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The last word:

*Always ask yourself if you still like working with students. If the answer is ever no for very long, change careers*

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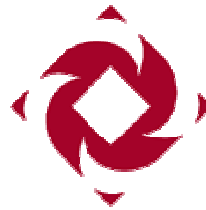


Our Power and  
Responsibility to  
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**Avoiding the School of Hard Knocks: Acquiring the Essential Skills  
You'll Need to Become a Successful Chief Student Affairs Officer**

For an electronic copy of this presentation, please contact:

Kevin Keegan

Vice President

Brailsford & Dunlavey

1140 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 400

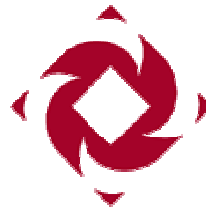
Washington, DC 20036

202-289-4455

[kkeegan@facilityplanners.com](mailto:kkeegan@facilityplanners.com)

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