Tough Conversations: My ARP 623 Reflection

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TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

The artifact I selected to reflect my learning thus far in my ARP 623, Critical Leadership Issues in Student Affairs, course is the supervisor interview I conducted at the beginning of the semester. The reason why I selected this artifact is because it is important for me to be able to gather information from my supervisor, ask tough questions, and also have insight to his thinking so that I may serve as an efficient assistant director, if given the opportunity. I am currently applying for the assistant director position now available in my department, Prospective Student Services. Therefore, if offered the position, I will need to have an understanding of how Mr. Hebert conducts interviews, trains newly hired professional staff, and the time he typically gives new professionals to get accustomed into the office and campus culture. This information is crucial to me understanding the methods he already has in place so I am able to best assist him in his efforts within the center, as well as ways in which I can help improve the office functionality.

The most beneficial information I learned was how to strategically make requests for the office by aligning it with the University Strategic Plan currently in place and explaining how the request will help to achieve the goals set by the university president. Not only did I gather information regarding ongoing topics within higher education and strategies for handling these issues, I also was able to enhance my self-authorship, make meaning for my work as a student affairs professional, reflect on the challenges facing new professionals, and better understand the roles of faculty and supervisors on this process. Therefore, this assignment helped me to meet all of the course learning outcomes (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), as well as program learning outcomes (PLO 4, 5, 6, 10). If I did not have to complete this assignment for class, I would have never had the opportunity to ask the questions discussed (Appendix A), or ask follow-up questions so I could have a better understanding and background behind decisions made.
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Asking questions is definitely a way I learn how to interpret and understand information. Through this program as well as my interactions with other professional workers and faculty, I have learned there is a way to approach asking questions in order to not offend anyone in the process. Many people are extremely proud of their work and when it is questioned, misunderstood, or challenged in the slightest bit, it does not sit well with anyone. Having the opportunity to learn this, make mistakes, and gather a greater understanding of the student affairs profession as well as my role in academic affairs, I have definitely met the professional goals I have set for myself. I have much more confidence in the work I am conducting, the decisions I make, and the suggestions and improvements I would like to make within my current position. This assignment has also increased my preparation for the position I am seeking to obtain. I know I deserve the assistant director position because of my work ethic, hard work, and commitment to my department and university in which I serve, and I know I would be great at it.

Nevertheless, I have grown so much as a professional within this last two years, I am content with where I am in my professional career. I am currently undergoing receiving another reclassification as well as having the opportunity to present at more conferences which at times require traveling. The increase in my responsibility and obtaining presentation and recruitment skills are goals I set for myself before starting the program and look back to see how much I have grasped them. This artifact has helped me to reflect on my growth and my ability to hold my head up high and speak with a greater understanding of the higher education system. It has also helped me to realize that I should never stop asking questions in order to fully understand things, but having the right approach is key to everything.
Appendix A: Supervisor Interview Questions

- What do you look for in a new hire?
- How do you try to assess whether the person is going to be a good fit?
- How do you go about orientating a new employee to the job, the unit, and the institution?
- What are some unique challenges that new professionals face their first year or two in the job?
- How do you communicate your expectations to your employees?
- In what ways do you help shape the personal and professional development of the new professionals that you supervise?
- How do you evaluate the performance of a new employee?
- If it’s not working out, what do you do?