Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University

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The Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University is Published annually by the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University with support from the Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) program. The Journal is produced to provide an opportunity for HESA M.S.Ed, Ph.D, and Ed.D students and alumni to publish articles pertinent to the field of student affairs. The primary sources of funding for the Journal are alumni donations and support from current students within the HESA department. The important role that each of these contributors has played in the production of this edition is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated.

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Letter From the Editors: The Year of Attacks on Diversity and Equity

Imani Belton, Olivia Copeland, William B. Walker Jr.

With great excitement, we present the 2022 edition of the Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University (SPA at IU Journal). This publication is a collection of scholarly work related to higher education and student affairs (HESA) written, edited, and published by students and alumni of the master and doctoral HESA programs at IU. 2022 marked an attempt to "return to normal," with institutions across the U.S. welcoming students back to campus and to the classroom. Though operations returned to "normal," student affairs professionals faced the aftermath of years of disruption; this aftermath required immense care, leading professionals to approach their work in new, more intentional ways.

The first edition of the SPA at IU Journal was published in 1967, featuring articles on various topics that provide current students with a time capsule on relevant issues in student affairs throughout history. The SPA at IU Journal also helps record significant milestones in the programs' histories. For instance, in the 2022 edition, we announce that Dr. Alexander McCormick retired in the winter of 2021. Serving as Senior Associate Director for the Center of Post-Secondary Research and Director for the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Dr. McCormick advanced the survey through major revisions and helped NSSE maintain its position as a nationally recognized assessment tool. Dr. McCormick also taught courses in Educational Policy Studies and the HESA programs. After Dr. McCormick stepped down, Drs. Cindy Ann Kilgo and Jillian Kinzie assumed leadership of NSSE in 2022, serving as interim co-directors. Drs. Cindy Ann Kilgo and Jillian Kinzie were also promoted to Associate Professor with tenure and senior research scientist, respectively. Other HESA faculty have also taken important leadership roles across the university. Dr. Lucy LePeau was selected to serve as the inaugural faculty fellow overseeing the Board of Aeons in the Office of the President, beginning in August 2021. Dr. Vasti Torres was named the Executive Associate Dean for the School of Education in 2021 and began this role over the summer of the same year. We also recognize significant milestones for Indiana University broadly. Dr. Pamela Whitten was inaugurated in November of 2021, the first woman president in Indiana University's 202-year history.

While there are many positives to highlight in and around the IU community, we must acknowledge the changing social contexts that affect all our higher education work. Since January 2021, more than 40 states have proposed bills to ban "critical race theory" in education. Additionally, as the editorial board is working to publish this edition of the SPA at IU Journal, draft opinions of the Supreme Court's decision were leaked with intentions to overturn Roe v. Wade. Furthermore, states like Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill and Texas's directive preventing gender-affirming care are attempting to limit the rights of LTGBQ+ individuals across the nation. However, there were also historical moments of good during this time. Following her confirmation in April 2022, Justice Kentanji Brown Jackson will become the first Black woman to be on the Supreme Court in the summer of 2022. She enters at a time of great importance as many cases related to the rights of marginalized communities sit before the court. Though occurring in society broadly, these important events are immensely influential on higher education - with direct threats to funding and academic liberties and cascading effects on the communities that enter higher education. We maintain our commitment to publishing scholarship on the experiences, needs, and triumphs of marginalized communities in higher education.

The 2021-2022 academic year saw institutions tackling the return to campus, trying to integrate tools and lessons learned from the pandemic. As an editorial team, we continued our practice of offering digital training for the journal review board and included a training session for all prospective authors. This

choice allowed us to reach potential authors and reviewers who did not share our geographic location or who needed the flexibility to receive the content. SPA at IU Journal continues to be a developmental process for all students involved. This edition showcases numerous scholarly collaborations and authors who submitted multiple pieces throughout the past two years. We are proud to be a vital feature of the scholarly growth and conversation of our IU HESA community.

Keeping the changes from last year, our submission categories were broader and allowed a greater variety of manuscripts to be submitted. These broadened categories encouraged various submissions from which thematic elements concerned with diversity, equity, and community emerged. With the presence of these overarching threads, we are pleased to present this year's theme, "Diverse Students and Practices." The 2022 edition marks the fifth year we have included a Contemporary Issues and Opinions section where we feature editorial-style writing. Pieces in this section of the 2022 edition provide a diversity of opinions, from sanctuary campus designations to addressing the needs of international students. This edition also includes multiple featured articles exploring the role of historically Black and multicultural greek-lettered organizations. We also have the pleasure of publishing multiple scholarly papers which explore contemporary conversations about language use, burnout, and socio-cultural conversations.

As the editors of the 2022 edition of the SPA at IU Journal, we would like to thank the authors who participated in this edition of the journal by submitting and editing their pieces throughout a semester where we all were tasked with returning to "normal" operations. We also offer our thanks to those who served on the journal review board. Without the critical feedback of the review board, the 2022 edition would not have come to fruition. Finally, we would like to thank our advisor, Dr. Lucy LePeau, for supporting and challenging us as we sought to make changes and additions to the journal. Several months of dedication from each of the parties mentioned are required to ensure that the SPA at IU Journal upholds the HESA legacy of scholarship each year, and the commitment does not go unnoticed.

Lastly, the Journal would not be possible without the continued support of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University, financial contributions from alumni, and additional resources from the HESA program. With this support, the SPA at IU Journal can provide a unique opportunity for master's, doctoral, and alumni HESA students to experience the publication process and showcase their scholarship. We hope you are as excited to read the scholarship presented in this year's Journal as we are to deliver it to you. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the 2022 Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University!

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State of Higher Education as a Profession

Imani Belton, Olivia Copeland, & William B. Walker Jr.

Left and right, there are announcements, statistics, and stories about practitioners across the nation exiting their career paths. Specifically, in higher education, many have decided that what once was a passion area for them is no longer because of money, relationships with coworkers, or even institutional values. In addition, many issues have now been exacerbated amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, and some practitioners have decided to move on. With these issues in mind, the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University (SPA at IU) Journal editorial board decided to come together and garner responses from practitioners in the IU HESA community. The SPA at IU Journal editorial board received 23 complete responses. Responses were collected through a survey format. All practitioners were asked the following questions:

- 1. What primary skills are required of new practitioners entering your functional area? Why? How has this changed through the Pandemic?
- 2. What would you want people of other functional areas to know about how your work has changed through the Pandemic? What kinds of collaborations would you like to see in the future?
- 3. What kinds of initiatives have you, your office, or your institution done in light of the Pandemic that you think is noteworthy to share with others? What has worked well?
- 4. What lessons from the Pandemic will you take with you to other roles or professions, if you are not staying in higher education?

With these questions in mind, responses were split by functional area. Functional area was divided into eight categories: housing, advising, diversity, equity, and inclusion, academic support programs, admissions, student conduct, university administration, and the professoriate of higher education and student affairs. If the functional area was not listed, practitioners had the opportunity to add their functional area and continue to answer the survey questions. Experiences from responses range from first-year practitioners to retirees. Below, readers will see how practitioners of student affairs and higher education practitioners within the IU HESA community responded to questions prompted to them. The reflections offered below derive primarily from responses received and reviewed by the SPA at IU Journal editorial board. In this way, emergent themes are limited only to the specific institutions that responding practitioners listed. Nevertheless, as emergent student affairs practitioners, we hope to shed light on some of the contemporary issues of higher education and the unique solutions implemented to solve them.

Housing

With the Pandemic creating unique challenges in addressing student needs, housing practitioners saw significant shifts in the logistical coordination of housing services and students' developmental progress. The shifts in service – from virtual events with residents to meal delivery – required great care and coordination; however, practitioners responding to our survey felt that other offices/functional areas on their campuses did not understand how the Pandemic uniquely affected their work. This lack of awareness translated to uneven safety and caseload management, causing housing practitioners to take on new levels of work compared to pre-pandemic levels. Though challenges faced those in this functional area, many lessons were also seen as potential areas for housing practitioners to flourish and grow.

For example, practitioners were adamant about developing reciprocal relationships to understand the importance of inter-office connections. These reciprocal relationships allowed housing practitioners to understand the work done in other functional areas. Doing so may strengthen a new housing professional's understanding of campus resources and create collaborations that balance the

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responsibilities of supporting students. On the personal approach side, practitioners felt that flexibility and tenacity were required equally. Because higher education contexts have shifted considerably under the Pandemic, housing practitioners responding to our survey stressed the importance of adapting to a new population of students who are not as prepared as previous cohorts. While these work-related skills are essential, respondents working in housing also emphasized taking care of themselves. Like students, housing practitioners experienced significant strain and should regularly attend to their well-being.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

According to Jess Hoopengardner (HESA Master's, '21), Associate Director of Inclusion and Diversity at Virginia Tech University:

"The pandemic and the BLM protests in Summer 2020 have supercharged a lot of DEI efforts."

Thus, there has been a need to over-communicate more for practitioners working in DEI to ensure underrepresented students can feel like they belong on their campuses. While other practitioners and campus partners want to address issues across campus, DEI practitioners have to work overtime to deliver DEI programs that are not from a deficit-based approach. In addition to offering workshops or practices that typically would have been in person are now online, and practitioners are finding it harder to get students, staff, and faculty to engage in these efforts due to Zoom burnout.

Following this, practitioners who work in diversity, equity, and inclusion are being hit slightly harder because they are typically the first people called to address local and national news. Understanding that their identities may also be impacted when assisting with these efforts is vital to help reduce the stress and burnout of these individuals.

Admissions

When it comes to admissions work, the day-to-day activities of survey respondents did not change. However, the increased use of virtual webinars for prospective students presented challenges for prospective students and staff. In addition, while maintaining programs online was not easy to balance access and burnout. These challenges make the importance of flexibility and caring for other people as humans first and employees second a top priority. Beyond this need for flexibility entering practitioners should bring knowledge of applicable laws and policies (e.g., FERPA).

Additionally, according to practitioners working in admissions, new practitioners should be student-focused, provide excellent customer service, work well with data, and possess good communication and critical thinking skills. As indicated by practitioners in the field, these skills are necessary because students are no longer okay with the cookie-cutter visit. Instead, students want individualized visits that require more collaboration between campus partners. Thus, student affairs practitioners in the world of admissions must be mindful of the unique needs of students considering cost, ranking/reputation, culture, curriculum, practical options, and scholarships.

Advising

As one of many student-facing areas, the practitioners from the field of advising had much to say about the state of higher education. Regarding responsibilities, the skills to remain successful in advising have changed to include counseling skills, communication skills, cultural humility, the ability to collaborate across campus, learn, interpret, and apply multiple policies, and work with lots of ambiguity to advocate for yourself more. These skills were necessary because the Pandemic forced advisors to allow students to meet them in more modalities than one (via phone or zoom). In addition, the Pandemic magnified students' academic, social, financial, and mental health issues. The adjustment to online learning was hard for students. More specifically, junior year transfers and continuing students did not have the same support as first-year students. To address this, advisors across institutions turned to both inperson and Zoom-in drop-in and appointment options for students. Additionally, leaders could work remotely to conduct virtual advising sessions through tech assistance (funding Wi-Fi hotspots and laptops).

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Furthermore, the increased use of technology tools such as Microsoft Teams and case management system, Starfish were used to continue supporting students. Finally, colleagues with serious health concerns were allowed to work from home even more. With these challenges in mind, collaboration emerged as the prominent theme for moving forward successfully. Specifically, practitioners across functional areas need to work together more effectively to ensure that students are referred to the appropriate resources when needed.

Beyond this, survey respondents working in advising agree that practitioners need to ensure that students receive access to support promptly. Advisors are now mindful of a variety of different things that concern students. For instance, advisors are knowledgeable that more students considered time off and took time off from the fall of 2020 to the spring of 2021. While on the other hand, some students desire to extend their graduation date to make up for the experiences they lost due to the Pandemic. Beyond this, more students express a strong desire to pursue more online courses to keep schedules balanced. Specifically, the Pandemic has shown students that these courses can be delivered online and that there can be flexibility with college coursework. Therefore, online coursework is projected as "ideal" moving forward. Furthermore, students who might have withdrawn in the past due to a crisis are inquiring about options for taking part-time or online coursework. Finally, as reflected in responses from Kyle McCool (HESA Master's,' 05), Senior Director of Academic Advising at Webster University, while some students are not considering new pathways or options, others are pivoting toward liberal arts degrees such as English.

University Faculty

In addition to the previously listed functional areas, we also received feedback from faculty members who categorize themselves as members of the field of student affairs. Although faculty members observed different practices, they were forthcoming about the need to adapt inside and outside the classroom. For instance, faculty members indicated that flexibility was needed for just about every component of the course, including the modality of the course, due dates for assignments, and attendance. Furthermore, as the COVID-19 Pandemic continued, faculty members needed to apply the pedagogical change to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students. These pedagogical changes included rethinking some courses to incorporate universal designs for learning.

Additionally, professors incorporated more wellness practices into the classroom because of these changes. Finally, although the COVID-19 Pandemic required professors to make some changes, the consensus among faculty members is that professors did not experience the overwhelming increase in work and were far less rolling than student affairs colleagues. This sentiment was echoed by Catherine Clark (HESA Ed.D, '93), a professor at Appalachian State University, who wrote:

"[Student affairs practitioners] needed far more support than I did."

Conclusion

With the COVID-19 Pandemic in mind, we shed light on how the student affairs/higher education profession has evolved over two to three years. As evident in practitioners' responses, change was unavoidable. Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, student affairs and higher education leaders were forced to reevaluate the deliverance of critical services and the skills needed to deliver such essential services. Regardless of what work practitioners were conducting, the ambiguity of the Pandemic created inevitable challenges. For instance, leaders within the profession saw students withdraw from institutions. Additionally, leaders faced the challenges of finding accessible ways to provide resources and support to students outside of standard practices. Although the obstacles created concerns for leaders, the challenges were addressed creatively and leveraged the benefits and strengths of unique individuals and departments across the country. From students withdrawing from the institution to pedagogical changes to more excellent wellness practices, leaders of the higher education enterprise found success. Although success is defined broadly, it is possible through collaborative efforts that create interdimensional solutions to current and future challenges.