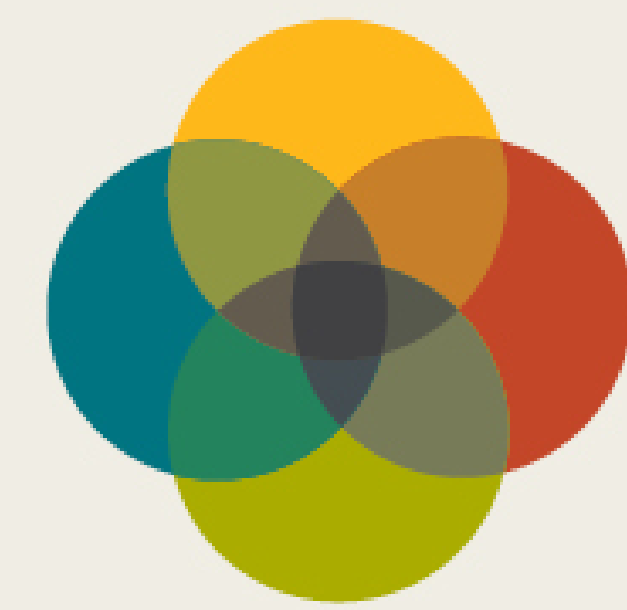


## ABSTRACT

My project is a compilation of research I have collected about the different career paths regarding a career in College Student Affairs. Many of the people in Student Affairs today have discovered their passion for this field throughout their time in college, and I can personally attest to this. Of course there are people that work at universities besides just professors, but how have these professionals developed their careers to do so? Careers in Student Affairs range from working with residential life, student involvement, financial aid and admissions. Some students, including myself, have become interested in this field by their time working as a Resident Advisor. This desire to want to help students grow academically and personally can be turned into a career by pursuing a graduate degree in Higher Education, Student Affairs, College Student Personnel, or another similar program.



# DISCOVERING CAREER PATHS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

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## FUNCTIONAL AREAS

- Admissions
- Academic Advising
- Career Services
- Counseling Services
- Discipline & Judicial Affairs
  - Financial Aid
  - Greek Affairs
- International Student Affairs
- Leadership Development
- Multicultural Affairs
  - Orientation
- Residential Life
- Student Activities

## WHAT IS STUDENT AFFAIRS?

Student affairs is a major part of the higher education experience that is hidden from the public. Although it may be a field that is less traditional, it is a diverse career that is dedicated to the social, psychological, ethical, cognitive development and well being of university students. Learning is not restricted to just a classroom and teaching opportunities exist everywhere. Student affairs professionals encourage and promote these interactions. Some of the core concepts of this profession are understanding and respecting diversity, supporting student's needs, and belief in the worth of individuals. This profession is a way to shape the lives of university students.

## EDUCATION & PLACEMENT

Most positions at a higher education institution require at least a Masters degree in Higher Education, Student Affairs, College Student Personnel, or similar program. There is no preference on what the undergraduate degree is in and any Bachelors degree is acceptable. Usually, graduate school involves an assistantship in a field that you are interested in pursuing. This allows graduate students to apply the knowledge they learn in class in practical situations. A unique aspect of this field is the prominence of placement exchanges in order to find graduate schools and jobs. Oshkosh Placement Exchange (OPE) is an annual conference that provides college and university employers the opportunity to meet and interview candidates from across the country.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

Here are what some Student Affairs professionals at Ferris had to say:

"My job is best described as supporting and challenging Honors students to make the most of the requirements and opportunities in the program. I provide specialized academic advising adapting our program requirements to every major on campus. In practice, I try to be a resource, and person who can help empower students to solve any problem that comes up." —Charlie Malone, Honors Advisor

"I've developed the mindset that at any minute of any hour on any day I may receive a phone call to respond to an emergency. In between the student emails, departmental task forces, and meetings, I am now ready to respond to pretty much anything and most phone calls of strange behavior does not phase me. However, I spend most of my day sitting with students individually and talking about their behavior, future plans, and campus involvement." —Dan Chou, Hall Director

"Student affairs at Ferris State University impacts the personal and professional development of students daily. Having been in housing, admissions and academic advising, I take all of the skills learned in those areas at Ferris and my Educational background to help students navigate the higher education process. On a typical day, I can be providing academic advising, interviewing, referring students to campus resources, such as tutoring or personal counseling." —Angie Mishler, Director of Student Academic Affairs for the College of Engineering Technology

## WHY DO PEOPLE PURSUE A CAREER IN STUDENT AFFAIRS?

A career in student affairs seems like the opportunity to be a college student forever, right? Student affairs is usually not a career that people go into college expecting to pursue, rather it is something that is chosen from the experiences they have had as a college student themselves. Adaptability, enjoyment of helping others and leadership are common traits of students affairs professionals. Some of the people going into the field have had a mentor in college that inspired them to pursue this field. On the contrary, the inspiration to pursue this field could also be the opposite because perhaps the mentors that had in college were not ideal and they want to support students how they wish they could have been supported themselves. They could have a desire to change the campus environment, and student affairs is the pathway they chose to do so. Additionally, there are diverse departments and functional areas of practice, and this wide range of choices is enticing.

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