

How My Graduate Assistantship Has Aided me in Higher Education Feedback

Kyle Hamlin

Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education; San Diego State University

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If asked what I learn from my graduate assistantship, I would respond that I am learning how I engage with students. I am not one to instantly think of the feedback I receive from the students I supervise, but after some reflection on my engagement, I get to look back at my feedback from my constituents and learn to adapt how I engage moving forward. In my graduate assistantship, I supervise a desk of about 40 Desk Assistants, and part way through the year, they get to evaluate me on my supervision and other skills such as approachability. I try to engage in a way that is equal to all of the Desk Assistants, but have realized now, after receiving this feedback, and combining with other ideas discussed both inside and outside of class, that I need to be engaging with individuals in an equitable manner – that I need to engage with each individual in a way that works for them and helps them feel valued and honored. From this feedback, I am able to continually reflect on my engagements and make sure that I am ever growing and becoming a better supervisor and a stronger student affairs professional.

This artifact I have decided to present, I am showing my vulnerable self, the aspect that is told by other individuals and not by myself. A story of who I am to some of my students and how they see who I am and how I engage around students. These responses are how these individuals see me in the work setting but are telling this story with brutal honesty and allowing for growth of the receiver overall. The downside to this feedback response is that it is completely optional – so only students who are at the extremes will usually respond. With this, I only had about 1/10th of my staff provide feedback, and only ½ of those provided additional notes or comments. As seen in the artifact, one of my staff members said “Kyle has been a great FDSM to work with! He is very approachable and clear with his expectations when working the desk.”

where the other desk assistant stated that “I feel like my boss is sort of cold to me and treats me differently than some of the other staff members, which is odd considering I feel I am one of the harder-working people at this job. I come into work when asked, do exactly as I'm told, engage with the residents, everything. I feel like there is almost some kind of favoritism at play in this job. He can also be quite unapproachable at times.” The issue I run into is that both of these are contradictory but lead me to growing and engaging with my staff in an equitable manner so that they each are getting the engagement they need.

Reflecting on my time through my graduate assistantship, and what I have experienced, I can note where I engage on student learning and development, apply self-awareness and self-regulation practices, vary my leadership approaches, engage in meaningful outcomes-based assessment, communicate ideas effectively, and employ equity-mindedness when working with the students I supervise (PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 3, PLO 5, PLO 7, and PLO 8). Specifically, I plan to engage in consistent evaluations and feedback so I can continually grow as a professional and so that I can become a stronger reflective learner. I need to be able to adjust my leadership approaches as I would my engagement approaches as it pertains to meaningful and productive dialogue with my students I supervise and engage with on a daily basis (PLO 3). The more I work in this area, I feel more energized to explore student development (PLO 1) and help communicate effectively with students and with those who I supervise (PLO 7) as it comes to student engagement.

Reflecting on my revised and original program goals I had set, I have not completed any that I had set for myself through this artifact or my work outside the program. If I were to look at my previous goals, that I had set for myself at the start of the program, I would say that I had

reached my goal of making a lasting impression, yet at the end of the first year, I had revised my goals, and that goal is no longer applicable. I would share that I think this artifact, and my work in my assistantship has helped me become more aware of my communication styles and how I need to approach students in an equitable manner. From receiving this feedback, and working with my supervisor, I am now working through what this looks like and how I can positively impact student's lives.

References

SDSU PELSA. (2021). *Curriculum*. ARPE | College of Education | SDSU.

<https://education.sdsu.edu/arpe/ma-student-affairs/curriculum>