

A Summary of Learning in My First Year

Kyle Hamlin

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

A Summary of Learning in My First Year

Over this past year of the graduate program, I have been through a lot and have learned many things about myself and student development. I experienced some low periods in my life where I was battling depressive times and handling what I was given, and I have been on big highs in different areas. I had to endure through the entire first year of my graduate program being virtual and working in an online format doesn't work for the way I learn or engage. I started the year living at home in Washington State and found a new graduate assistantship halfway through the year that brought me down to San Diego where I got to do in-person work even though my coursework was still virtual. This move came with positives and negatives. I finally had the opportunity to explore San Diego and find places that I enjoyed and that made me happy but also experienced moving out of the only state I have ever lived in and the farthest I have ever lived from any family or friends. In the spring semester, I was enjoying life and learning more things that I really enjoyed. I know that I am where I am meant to be now.

After completing the first year of the program, I feel like I have at least experienced all the program learning outcomes (PLO's) that have been aligned with this program. Some PLO's have been interwoven in more areas than others, but I have experienced at least a little bit of each. The PLO's that I feel I have gotten a strong sense of are PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 3, PLO 4, PLO 6, PLO 7, and PLO 8. All of these have had some interaction with an assignment or project I have completed in my courses or in my individual interactions outside of the classroom space. I didn't mention PLO 5 as I have not had much experience yet on assessment work but know that a lot of that will be coming in the next year. I know, from discussions with the outgoing graduate cohort, that I will be engaging in a year-long assessment course to learn how to perform a needs

assessment in an area or program on a college campus, and I hope to be able to gather some assessment knowledge out of this course. I also want to explore PLO 4 more in my internship and full-time work I plan to through this next year. I plan to learn how to best support students from an equity lens to see what is needed for specific student groups by implementing student councils with organizations to allow for more cross-organization discussion and planning.

Processing through the goals I had set for myself at the start of this program, I reflect on where I have started and where I am now. Looking back on these goals, I realize that I didn't have a direct goal of where I wanted to end up. Some goals I made were too generic and others were realistic at the time but have become less realistic as the program continues. The goals that I had set for myself in the program are:

Completed?	Goal
Yes	"to use consistent reflections to get a better understanding of who I am as a student affairs professional in fine-tuning my leadership strengths and weaknesses through this program."
Not Yet	"to work with at least 4 different functional areas or departments in student affairs while in this program."
Yes	"to complete PELSA Program Learning Outcome 6 before the completion of this program; which states that I "utilize scholarly literature on student success to inform practices that advance access and equity in postsecondary institutions" (PLO 6)."
Yes	"to be actively involved with the program by holding a position on the Student Advisory Board."
Yes	"to build upon my network by adding at least one professional at SDSU, UCSD, and CSUSM, with people in all functional areas of the field."
Yes	"to filter my options of functional areas down to at least 3 different options."
Not Yet	"to start major research in the field or in an area of the field that I can help influence."
Not Yet	"to leave a lasting impression or change in the SDSU community."

Knowing which goals I have completed, and looking at the ones I have yet to complete helps guide me in what I need to do in my last year of this program. I also took the time to reflect upon my goals and re-evaluate what my goals are. I Will modify some of my unmet goals to make them more attainable and measurable, as well as add some more goals to complete before graduation.

References

Masters of Arts in Postsecondary Educational Leadership with a Specialization in Student Affairs. (2014). Retrieved May 5, 2021, from https://interwork.sdsu.edu/main/ma_student_affairs