

Sharing the Commonwealth

An e-newsletter published by the Pennsylvania College Personnel Association

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Spring Has Sprung!

Matthew R. Shupp, PCPA President, Penn State Brandywine

Hello PCPA Members! Spring is in the air...a welcomed change compared to the winter that we experienced! And just as the seasons change—the ground thaws, trees begin to bloom, flowers bud—I am reminded of all of the exciting changes taking place within PCPA and the ever-changing dynamics that face (some would say “plague”) higher education. Rising tuition as a response to the current economic crisis continues to haunt us as we are constantly being asked to do more with less to serve our students. However, it is during these most challenging times that we should take time to celebrate the small victories. We all know what they look like: a “thank you” from a student or colleague, a new job, a published article, a well-received presentation, a random act of kindness...

I am reminded of a conversation that I recently had with a colleague. We spoke at length about our desire to contribute to our profession through professional organizations but lamented over the lack of time (and, truth be told, energy!) after spending lengthy hours keeping our respective offices “afloat.” I’m sure many of you can relate. We only have 24 hours in the day: no more, no less. However, I encourage you to stay active in PCPA and encourage a colleague (or two) to join our wonderful organization. I truly believe that higher education will continue to excel due to professionals such as ourselves gaining the necessary experience from organizations such as PCPA.

I’d like to personally thank both Dan Kennedy (President, 2008-2009) and Terry Wigle (Past President) for their commitment to PCPA as well as their guidance as I assume presidency over this fabulous organization. I’d also like to thank all of our newly elected Executive Board members, especially Jessica Koval, President-Elect 2011-2012.

Keep changing our students’ lives.

Matthew R. Shupp
President, PCPA

Thanks!

Terry Wigle, PCPA Past- President, California University of Pennsylvania

Greetings fellow PCPA members. It is hard to believe that another year has gone by so quickly. As this will be my last “President’s Message”, I would like to thank the Executive Board for their service to the organization and the membership for their participation. Having worked with such good people made my job all that much easier. And as long as good people give of their time and get involved, PCPA will continue to be a prosperous organization.

As we look forward to the future, I am confident that our organization will experience growth and development, especially with the energy and enthusiasm of our new president Matthew Shupp. Matthew has already outlined several things that he would like to accomplish in his tenure as President and I look forward to supporting him in helping our organization grow in my new role as Past-President. I hope that as the spring semester comes to a close that you are able to recharge, reflect, and persevere with all you do to make an impact in student’s lives.

Thank you!

Terry Wigle
Past-President, PCPA

Executive Election Results!

Election results are in! Congratulations to the newly elected board members:

Jessica Koval - President-Elect
Kate Linder - Constituencies Commission Chair
Stephen Nugent - Professional Development
Commission Chair
David Watters - Two-Year East Member at Large

Board Meeting Briefs

Submitted by Charmaine Strong, Seton Hill University

Due to the extreme winter weather conditions and several meeting cancellations, the Executive Board Meeting was conducted via conference call on 22 March 2010. Following are the highlights:

- ❖ 2009 Conference budget/evaluations are being finalized.
- ❖ Conference 2010 chair is Jenavia Thompson-Weaver, Community College of Philadelphia. The West Chester Holiday Inn is the conference site; dates are Sunday, 17 October – Tuesday, 19 October. **SAVE THE DATES!!**
- ❖ Election information currently online. Discussion of how to encourage more members to consider running for office. Will continue to personally approach people.
- ❖ Executive Board moved to prohibit the President, President-Elect, and Past President from participating in the Grady Roberts Writing Award. Dr. Roberts was consulted.
- ❖ Total assets of \$16,517.20.
- ❖ Current membership is 153. Members at Large will work with constituents who have not renewed membership. Telephone contact to be initiated; standard questions to be asked; Wufoo will be utilized to record responses. Also suggested that the Membership Chair compile a three-year trend report and standardized report dates be implemented so that metrics can begin to be developed.
- ❖ Constituencies Chair, Kate Linder, reported that a Health Care Bill just passed this morning.
- ❖ Fall Keystone was successful with a modest profit realized; Spring Keystone cancelled.
- ❖ Dan Pretz, Graduate Student Liaison, although soon graduating, proposed a number of initiatives. He is also searching for a replacement.
- ❖ Summer Book Club initiative discussed. Current Professional Development Chair, Mary McGinnis, will connect with the Faculty Liaison for input and the new Professional Development Chair will be involved in a future discussion of this initiative.

Grady and Mary Roberts Graduate Student Writing Award

The Pennsylvania College Personnel Association is pleased to announce the Grady and Mary Roberts Graduate Student Writing Award. **Specific guidelines and requirements are available at the PCPA website (www.pcpa.net).**

The purpose of the competition and award is to encourage and recognize scholarly writing by graduate students about contemporary issues, topics or practice in Student Affairs. Students who are members of PCPA and enrolled in masters or doctoral programs are invited to participate. The award is donated by Dr. Grady H. Roberts Jr., past president of PCPA, in memory of his parents. The winner will be announced at the Annual PCPA Conference in October. The award is \$1,000, one of the highest awards given to graduate students in our profession.

All entries must be postmarked no later than June 1, 2010 and sent to:

Dr. Linda Hall PCPA Faculty Liaison 206 Stouffer Hall, IUP Indiana, PA 15705

Making the Most of Your Professional Development

Dina Liberatore and Tracy Shadowens, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park

Whether you are new to the field or a seasoned veteran, it is important that you dedicate some time and resources to your professional development. Professional development (PD) consists of activities that help you define and enhance a skill set that will allow you to better perform your current position or to move up into your future position. These activities include attending conferences, serving on committees, advising student organizations, and so much more. The opportunities are endless but the opportunities do not always fall into your lap; sometimes you have to go and search for them. Below are some steps to help you make the most of your professional development.

Develop a Plan

The first step in making the most of your professional development is to develop an action plan. Ask yourself where you want to be in three to five years and determine what skills you need to learn in order to get there. Look at a job description for a position that interests you and work on making yourself the most marketable candidate possible. If your current position is where you plan to stay for a few years, what skills do you need to enhance to be the best you possible?

To develop your own PD Action Plan:

- Ask other people what they have done for PD
- Assess your needs and interests
- Look at other schools and other position descriptions
- Look at your own institution's suggested PD plan.

National versus Regional versus Local

There are professional development opportunities all around you; you just need to decide what level of involvement and interaction works best for you. Should you join a national organization? Is a regional flavor what you need for your PD? Are there opportunities in your local community? Here are some things to consider when deciding if you should pursue professional development on a national, regional, or local level.

National:

- Provides networking opportunities with people from all over the country. This option is great if you plan to move around during your career.
- Attending national conferences can come with a heavy price tag and often require membership fees.
- National conferences pull in the heavy hitters in the field. You are likely to interact with Chief Housing Officers and see keynotes delivered by famous people.

Regional:

- Provides networking opportunities with people from within a region (usually several surrounding states). This option is great if you plan to stay within a specific area of the country during your career.
- Regional organizations are often part of a national organization.
- Regional conferences may offer sessions on topics that apply to your specific area of the country such as laws, campus culture, and regional celebrations.

Local:

- Provide networking opportunities with people from either your state or your university. This option is great if you plan to stay at a particular university or in a certain state during your career or if you are new to the area and need to develop local contacts.
- Many people who are new to presenting and networking feel comfortable starting on a smaller, more local scale.
- Local conferences tend to be more affordable. Travel costs are often lower.

Presentations

In addition to attending conferences, presenting at conferences and training sessions also makes for wonderful professional development opportunities. Build your experience and confidence by starting small. Leading sessions for students and colleagues, such as community building activities or training programs, is a great way to practice and gain valuable feedback on your performance. From there, continue to challenge yourself by reaching out to a broader audience at larger conferences or step out of your comfort zone by tackling a new topic or interest.

When considering what to present at conferences, a few general tips and questions should get you started:

- Plan early! Find out when the conference is and when the call for programs is due.
- Find someone you enjoy working with! You may find that you'll be a lot more comfortable presenting if you are working with someone you with whom you are familiar.
- Brainstorm!
 - What are you interested in/passionate about?
 - What do you do well that you want to share with others?
 - What do you want to learn more about?
 - What do you think that other people might be interested in?
- Develop learning outcomes and a brief summary of what your program entails. Catchy titles are great, but program reviewers want to see that you have already put some thought into your presentation before you submit your proposal.

Show Me the Money

Investing in your professional development is an investment in your future. Your university may provide you with some funding and several organizations offer scholarships or grants for people attending their conferences. Recently, some universities have had to freeze travel because of the economic crises but this doesn't mean you have to stop developing professionally. Attending conferences isn't the only way to make the most of your professional development. Use the resources that are available close to home. Try advising a student group, teaching a class, joining a department or campus-wide committee, or take a course that your college or university offers to increase knowledge and skills.

Volunteerism and Service

Another great way to gain professional development experience and to boost your resume is through volunteerism. Service to your institution is obviously important, but service to your community is often under-rated.

Here are some important factors to consider when volunteering:

- How much time can I give? Time commitments vary and many organizations have both can be short- and long-term opportunities.
- What fields do I want to make a difference in? Service is a great way to achieve personal goals and ambitions, and there are opportunities in a variety of fields to consider, such as working with senior citizens, animals, and children, in health-care, for the environment, and for charitable or fundraising organizations to name a few.
- What do I hope to gain from this opportunity? Benefits of volunteering include meeting people outside of your institution, developing new skills, exploring personal interests, being a role model of civic engagement to your students, and making a difference in issues that are important to you.

Conclusion

Whether you decide to attend a conference or take a class related to your interests, volunteer in your community or get more involved in your institution through advising or committee work, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT! Keep track of your professional accomplishments as they happen in an Excel file, on a notepad, or on a white board so that you'll always have a list available for when you need to update your resume or submit information to your supervisor.

In conclusion, it's important to note that these ideas are really the tip of the iceberg, but it's up to you to develop your interests and make your goals a reality. When it comes to your professional development, you are the only one who can make the right decisions for you.

Membership Update

(as of April 29, 2010)

Submitted by Amber Valentine,
Indiana University of Pennsylvania



PCPA Current Membership

Database = 157 (+12 since 12/09)

Listserv subscribers = 145 (+12)

Institution Type

Two Year CC	17
Four Year Public	78 (+8)
Four Year Private	58 (+4)
Other	4

Membership Type

Emeritus	4
Associate	10
Regular	99 (+12)
Student	44

Membership At-Large Representation

Two Year East	6
Two Year West	11 (+1)
Four Year East Private	30
Four Year West Private	31 (+4)
Four Year East Public	37 (+7)
Four Year West Public	42

Expiration Dates

October 2010	126
October 2011	14
October 2012	6
October 2013	3
October 2015	1
October 2017	1
October 2019	1
Emeritus	4

Employment Opportunities in Pennsylvania

Looking for Higher Ed employment opportunities across the state?
Below are a few postings that have found their way to job search
websites in recent weeks.

[Associate Provost / Dean of Students](#)

Widener University; Chester, PA

[Assistant Vice President](#)

Temple University; Philadelphia, PA

[Coordinator/Assistant Director of Student Affairs for Campus Life](#)

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine; Philadelphia, PA

[Assistant Director – Academic and Career Services](#)

Gannon University; Erie, PA

[Campus Dean for Student Affairs](#)

Harrisburg Area Community College ; York, PA

[Admission Counselor](#)

Albright College; Reading, PA

[Director of Student Activities](#)

Bryn Athyn College; Bryn Athyn, PA

[Director of Major and Planned Gifts](#)

Gettysburg College; Gettysburg, PA

[Employment Specialist](#)

Community College of Allegheny College; Pittsburgh, PA

[Director of Residence Life](#)

Chatham University; Pittsburgh, PA

For a more comprehensive
listing, visit:

[HigherEdJobs.com - PA](#)

[StudentAffairs.com - PA](#)

[Academic360.com - PA](#)

[ACPA - National](#)

[NASPA - National](#)

[InsideHigherEd.com - National](#)

Do you know a potential PCPA member?

Forward a copy of this newsletter to him/her, along with a personal invite to join Pennsylvania's premier professional organization for College & University professionals and paraprofessionals.

God, Gays, and Public Institutions: Preserving Religious Freedom, First Amendment Rights, & the Celebration of Sexual Diversity

Kate Linder, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

On April 19, 2010, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Christian Legal Society vs Martinez*, a case which originated six (6) years earlier at the University of California's Hastings College of the Law. The conflict began when the Christian Legal Society was denied the university recognition it sought because the group violated the college's policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of religion and sexual orientation. Although its meetings are open to all students, the group disallows voting membership and leadership to students who are not Christians and/or who are sexually active gays and lesbians. To be group leaders and voting members, students must also sign a statement of faith. The Christian Legal Society sued the University of California's Hastings College of the Law citing violations of its right to free speech and freedom of religion and association. The Supreme Court decided to hear the Christian Legal Society's appeal after lower courts ruled in favor of the Hastings College of the Law. Should the college be required to recognize a student organization that won't allow full membership benefits to all students? Should a group have the right to restrict its membership to individuals who hold common values and beliefs that align with its core mission? Is there a difference between denying full membership rights to individuals based on their status versus their beliefs?

When the Supreme Court issues its decision this summer (probably in June), the results will provide the answers to these questions. Public higher education institutions should take note and review/revise their process for recognizing student organizations as necessary.

Closer to home in Harrisburg, PA, the Independence Law Center is issuing challenges to various colleges and universities citing the potential for violations of students' free speech. According to its website (<http://independencelaw.org>), the Independence Law Center defends citizen rights to exercise religious and other First Amendment freedoms. In particular, the Center is interested in insuring that individuals' rights to freedom of religious expression, association, and display of religious symbols are protected. Similar to the organization F.I.R.E. (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, see www.thefire.org), the Center is functioning as a catalyst for review of institutional policy and practice. Again, the question for public institutions to answer is if their policies and practices protect freedom of speech, religion and association and create environments where all students feel welcome and heard.

Whether it is in regard to speech issues or the recognition of student groups, there is natural tension between some religious convictions and the celebration of sexual diversity on campus. While advocates for either perspective may have a passionate desire to silence the voice of the other, colleges and universities must be environments that promote awareness, education, and dialogue. Students, faculty, and staff should be encouraged to communicate divergent perspectives more often, not less often. Constituents should have ample opportunity to demonstrate civility in the midst of passionate discourse and to practice listening and developing empathy and understanding. These qualities are lacking in many of the national debates occurring in the political arena and are sometimes completely absent in anonymous postings on social networking sites. With some practice and the embrace of the free exchange of ideas, perhaps public universities can model civil, open debate for other areas of our culture while preserving religious freedom, first amendment rights, and the celebration of sexual diversity.

Sources: www.SupremeCourt.gov; www.Chronicle.com/Supreme-Court-Appears-Split/65169; <http://independencelaw.org>; <http://thefire.org>

Pennsylvania College Personnel Association Executive Board 2010

President Dr. Matthew Shupp	Communications Commission Chair Bryan C. Koval	Historian Dr. Dwayne Hilton	Member At Large Four-Year Private, East Lynn Burke
President Elect Jessica D. Koval	Constituencies Commission Chair Kate R. Linder	Professional Development Commission Chair Stephen Nugent	Member At Large Two-Year, West Kelly Carpenter
Past President Terry Wigle	Membership Commission Chair Dr. Amber N. Valentine	Member At Large: Four-Year Public, West Tedd Cogar	Member At Large Two-Year, East David Watters
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Treasurer Joe Puzycki	Graduate Student Liaison Daniel Pretz	Member At Large Four-Year Private, West Tedd Cogar	
Past Officers Advisory Committee Todd Eiker Mary Lou Kennedy	NBCC Coordinator Tom Steiner		

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Help our online social
networking community grow!

**Have something you would like to
see published in the next newsletter?**

Send it to Bryan Koval, Communications Commission Chair

bck134@psu.edu