Parents as Partners

Coming off GW’s Colonials Weekend, our annual parent and family weekend on campus, I am reminded again of the significant role parents and other caregivers continue to play in the lives of their students. Throughout the weekend I was fortunate enough to not only connect with first-year parents and caregivers, but also to those who had visited GW two, three, and even four times during their students’ collegiate careers.

Colonials Weekend, Welcome Week, Move In, and Colonial Inauguration are some of the most critical times for us to connect with our new students and allow us to engage parents and caregivers in the life of the university on so many important levels.

Higher education and the student affairs field has moved forward from an earlier era where institutions served in loco parentis, Latin for “in the place of the parent.” Today, institutions like ours have moved to take on less of the legal responsibility of the parent or caregiver and, as such, the application of in loco parentis has largely disappeared from the landscape of higher education. While we still strive to act in the best interests of our students, we are careful to ensure balance in the authority we exhibit and take care not to assume more responsibility than appropriate.

At GW, we have exchanged that concept with the principle of “parents as partners.” This is a relevant generational shift, particularly as we see the evolving transition from Baby Boomer parents to Gen X parents, who are now raising the current crop of Millennial students arriving on campuses.

Under the auspices of our Office of Parent Services, which operates under the mantra that “parents are a priority,” we see real value in having parents and caregivers aligned with our work on any number of important levels. Through the leadership of expert practitioners like Rodney Johnson, our Executive Director of Parent Services, GW has developed a national model of parent services, and we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the GW Parents’ Association Advisory Council (PAAC) during this past Colonials Weekend.

Simultaneously, GW has also created an engagement and giving effort labeled the GW Parents Campaign Philanthropy Board (PCPB), designed to connect parents and caregivers as philanthropic partners. This effort has led to record numbers of parents and caregivers willing to give to GW, literally investing in their students’ academic success while helping GW achieve our broader aspirations.

As we engage with parents and caregivers, I encourage you to see parents and caregivers as allies aligned with our institutional priorities. With the support of GW parents and caregivers, including those involved on the PAAC and PCPB, we have been able to shape a number of important strategic enhancements at GW, most recently in the areas of career services and mental health, but also historically in areas like academic advising, campus dining, and smoking in our residence halls.

This partnership will advance even more fully in the future, as we continue to use new social media and other communication platforms to reach the more diverse set of parents and caregivers who are engaged with campus from around the world. I envision we will continue to solicit parent/caregiver input on strategic decisions around student health and wellness and housing operations, just like we ask their students for input and insights.
The Office of Parent Services (OPS) team serves as the primary liaisons to parents and caregivers of undergraduate students. The staff consists of three full-time positions, a graduate fellow, and two student assistants, who together represents a combined total of 70 years in higher education and 40 years of combined service specifically within the Office of Parent Services. Almost half of that total experience can be attributed to the Executive Director of Parent Services Rodney L. Johnson. Under Mr. Johnson’s leadership, these hard working and dedicated individuals are on the front-lines working with parents on a daily basis — answering at least 30-40 phone calls/emails a week. In addition to coordinating Colonials Weekend, and assisting with Colonial Inauguration and Move-in, the OPS staff is available to advise parents on a variety of topics including admissions, residence life, career services, health and wellness, and academics.

The Office of Parent Services engages parents as partners with the university in a number of ways.

First and foremost, parents serve as partners to GW in keeping students healthy, safe, and successful. Ultimately, explained Mr. Johnson, one of the best measures of success for keeping parents happy is keeping students happy. Mr. Johnson does not mind “helicopter parents.” He says the job of the OPS is to take gas out of the helicopter, so that by the time the students become seniors, that helicopter is grounded, and the students can take care of themselves. This is done by empowering students and parents with the information they need for the student to solve their own problems that arise. The Office of Parent Services/Parents’ Association listserv has over 12,000 subscribers and is one of the most important communication tools of the university. By communicating to both parents and students about the availability of flu shots or financial aid changes, for example, the university reinforces its message delivery to students both directly (from GW communications) and indirectly (via their parent or caregiver).

The Parents’ Association Advisory Council (PAAC) – the governing board of the Parents’ Association - provides support to GW in a number of ways: 1) by volunteering for Colonials Weekend and Colonial Inauguration; 2) volunteering and attending GW Summer Send-Offs for incoming freshmen families; and 3) attending college fairs and assisting with recruitment through the Admissions Alumni Parent Program. At least one open position on the PAAC will be reserved each year for an international parent, a direct result of GW’s strategic vision to grow its international student population.

Philanthropy and service are two additional areas where parents and the university partner. Parent giving has increased over the past year, with parent donations to the university up 272 percent. Parents contribute not only philanthropy, but also through their time and talents, such as through donations to the Red Scarf Project. The OPS has partnered with Foster Care for Success for this service initiative through which GW parents will contribute handmade red scarves to Valentine’s Day care packages for foster children. In addition, parents also contribute school supplies to the Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service to support programming like DC Reads, Jumpstart, and the Neighbors Project at our local schools and community partner organizations.

Cross-departmental collaboration is a hallmark of the OPS staff. The OPS has contacts in all university offices so that when parents call, that connection will get the question and/or concern answered. Mr. Johnson noted that parents may not always get what they want (a new residence hall for their student, a job interview for their student), but they leave their interactions with the Office of Parent Services positive and happy because they received a high-level of customer service and responsiveness.

Looking ahead, innovative communication strategies are on the horizon for the Office of Parent Services; a PAAC blog, continued social media presence, and potential web series installments for parents are just a few mechanisms the OPS plans to employ. Through their vast experience, campus connections, and service-orientation, the Office of Parent Services continues to enhance the university’s partnership and communication with parents and caregivers in new and meaningful ways.
What was one of your most memorable meals?
This simple pasta dish that I had at La Flavola in Nice, France. I was studying abroad in Nice and I happened across this restaurant on the Cours Sayela (where they have a famous flower market) and fell in love with this dish. It had a wonderful tomato based sauce that was full of flavor and topped with shavings of parmesan cheese. I enjoyed it so much I went back and had the same dish to celebrate my birthday that year. Close second, again during my study abroad, is my host mother’s pumpkin risotto which was also topped with parmesan cheese shavings.

If you could live in any city or country, where would it be and why?
I really enjoyed traveling around France and Spain, so I could probably see myself living in a southern French town, with an airport nearby so I can optimize my living location to bounce around Europe easily.

Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?
I recently tried Stand Up Paddleboarding "SUP" on the Potomac and loved it! SUP Yoga is my new favorite summer hobby.

What is your favorite dessert?
Free cupcakes from Sprinkles or Georgetown Cupcake! I follow them on Twitter to see their "secret password" of the day.

What is the best vacation or trip you have taken?
I spent summer 2010 in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina teaching English with a college service organization, and I lived with a host family. I went on to meet up with my two younger brothers for a sibling backpacking trip through Europe.

If you had to choose another profession, what would it be and why?
Trivia host at a local DC spot.

Fun Fact:
I served as a “Hall Prefect” at my boarding school. No, it wasn’t Hogwarts.

Sarah Montgomery
(montgosn@gwu.edu)
Office Supervisor, GW Housing
BA, Psychology, James Madison University

What is one of your favorite songs (and by what artist)?
Everything by Michael Buble.

New Roles:
Congratulations to Peter Konwerski. He is now Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs.

Staff Departures:
We wish these former DSA staff members well in their future endeavors:
• Kassie Chapel
• Ben Walsh
• Amanda Whipple
Staff Spotlight

Alexis Janda, Associate Director of the Center for Alcohol and other Drug Education, (ajanda@gwu.edu)

DSA: What is your role here at GW? How long have you been with GW?

Alexis Janda: Associate Director of the Center for Alcohol and other Drug Education. I’ve been here since January 2012, one year and 10 months and still going strong!

DSA: What have you enjoyed about working here at GW?

AJ: I feel respected, appreciated and valued here. I have great colleagues in DSA and feel comfortable being myself here. I’m supported and encouraged to grow.

DSA: How did you get interested in working in alcohol and drug education?

AJ: My first job out of grad school was as the Assistant Director for Programming at Fordham University Lincoln Center campus. My main role was to manage student organizations and plan/manage key events. However, 40% of my job was also meant to manage the Alcohol and Other Drug Education (AODE) program for the campus. As I settled into my position, I found myself more fulfilled by the AODE work and discovered that more needed to be done (specifically on that campus). I had multiple students telling me that they felt comfortable talking with me about alcohol and other drugs in ways they never thought possible with a university administrator. I decided that if students were telling me that I could and did make a difference in the AODE field, then that is how I should serve students within student affairs. So in a way, I feel like AODE work picked me, but as they say “hindsight is 20/20” and reflecting back on my career, I’ve been involved in speaking with students about alcohol and other drugs since I started my studies in grad school. I was a house director for a fraternity at the University of Maryland and often had conversations with Greeks about substance use. These continued as I began volunteering as a Risk Management and Policy Specialist and then Director of Risk Management for my fraternity. Talking with students about difficult topics has always seemed to just be part of what I do and who I am.

DSA: If you weren’t working in alcohol drug education or higher ed, what do you think you’d be doing instead?

AJ: Though I can see myself hating retail hours, I LOVE Bath and Body Works and can see myself being a store or district manager. I worked for the company for a few years and can sell lotion to just about anyone! I would hopefully be more involved in acting at community theaters as well. I haven’t been on stage since college (BA is in Theatre) and it is something that I hope to one day have the time to incorporate back into my life.

DSA: What do you do for fun outside of the office?

AJ: I enjoy visiting historical places and going on day trips to little towns. Watching going to movies, hanging out with my friends, playing with my cat Hugo (he’s more like a dog than a cat, he plays fetch!), and volunteering for my fraternity, Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women. Singing. I love karaoke! I don’t get to sing often and hope to someday join a choir - would like to get into the Washington Chorus. Oh, and watching Cornhusker football. Fall is my favorite season!

DSA: Do you have any regular hobbies? How did you started?

AJ: In Oct. 2012 I went to the Army Ten Miler to watch some friends run and was so inspired by the Wounded Warriors I decided that I didn’t have an excuse not to run. So I started doing 5K runs with friends and then signed up for the Nike Women's Half in April. I’ve shown myself I am capable of more than I think am, which is nice to be reminded of every now and then. I also am into Civil War reenacting. I haven’t been able to do it much since finishing college, but hope to be able to start up again in the near future. It combines camping, history and dressing up in historical garb, all things I enjoy.

DSA: You just ran the Army Ten Miler in mid-October, how did it go?

AJ: I made my goal of finishing in 2 hours. I wanted to do better, but hadn’t been sticking to my training plan, so I adjusted my expectations. I was very happy I met my 2 hour goal. Doing so has re-energized me to get back on track with my training for the Houston Half marathon which I am running in January. I’d like to PR (Personal Record) at that race and beat the time I had for the Nike Women’s Half, which was surprisingly good for my first long race!

DSA: Do you have any favorite places in and around DC that you like to visit?

AJ: Old Town Alexandria, Gettysburg, other Civil War Battlefields. Baltimore (I lived there for a year when I volunteered through Americorps) and Emmitsburg, MD.
Presentation at the National Student Employment Association Conference
By Bridget Schwartz, Associate Director, Student Employment, Center for Career Services
(baschwa@gwu.edu)
I attended this year’s National Student Employment Association conference in New Orleans on October 16-18. Two hundred student employment professionals from Payroll, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Career Centers, and standalone offices represented their universities at the conference. This extremely diverse group of individuals offered great insight and knowledge into the Student Employment field.

This year, I presented a workshop in conjunction with Liz Cobb, Senior Enterprise Resource Planning Analyst from the Division of Information Technology, titled “Improving Efficiency: How to Make Technology Your New Best Friend”. While Student Employment at GW still has room for improvement, we are far ahead of many universities with our technology and processes, and the goal at the presentation was to give others ideas about methods they could use to improve their own offices. In particular, the presentation was designed to demonstrate ways that GW has employed technology to improve efficiency and communication. We described methods of refining the student hiring process to handle increased volume and compliance issues, monitoring FWS awards, and communicating using technology. We highlighted our use of Banner, GWeb (Ban Web), Google Drive, and our custom built system, the Online Student Hire Application.

Based on the reaction of the audience, I believe that we successfully inspired others to thoroughly review their own practices, to ask questions, to strive for better methods and procedures, and to start thinking about how they can more successfully partner with other departments on campus. Liz and I look forward to continuing to work with a number of our colleagues who would like more advice on our systems.

Professional Development @ GW
Register to join the Colonial Clean Air Crew, which will be kicking off at the Great American Smoke-Out. More information can be found here.

Did you know that GW is starting a Run/Walk Club? Beginning in November, the club will meet every Monday and Wednesday from 5:30-6:30pm. Register for the group here. If you aren’t able to participate in the GW club, think about creating your own walking club within your office.

The GW Department of Exercise Science offers free yoga classes every Tuesday and Thursday from 12-12:50pm in Marvin Center 501. Please bring your own yoga mat and wear comfortable clothes. More information about the yoga program can be found here.

Looking for even more ways to grow? Join LEAD, the Leadership Education and Development Program. LEAD offers collaborative, reflective, and challenging professional development opportunities throughout the year.

Congratulations to all the DSA staff, departments, and initiatives that were nominated for this year’s Celebration of Excellence awards. 37 DSA staff members and three departments were nominated for awards. DSA also had seven Collaborative Partnership Award nominees, with the Committee on International Student Success and Smoke-Free GW coming up as finalists in that category. Special congratulations to the Committee on International Student Success – this year’s Collaborative Partnership Award winner!

Below is a list of all nominees, finalists, and winners representing DSA.

Staff Excellence Award Nominees: Michael Amesquita, Devin Belzer, Graham Bottrel, Yasmin Brittain, Rachel Brown, Amber Cargill, Jeff Dagley, Toby Davidow, Justina DeMott, Aaron DeNu, Jennifer Donaghe, Isabel Goldenberg, Rosa Green, Juliana Haigney, Elizabeth Hansen, Rodney Johnson, Jay Jones, Mike Kohn, Jeffrey Llewellyn, Lindsay McConnell, Kelly McVicar, Diane Miller, Samantha Neary, Alicia O’Brien, Katie Porras, Nancy Ross, Anne Scammon, Heather Schoff, Bridget Schwartz, Leah Small, Robert Snyder, Emma Stone, and Seth Weinshel

Student-Staff Excellence Award Nominees: Alexander Adams, Bonnie Cowan, Miranda Marchese, Matthew Wilson

Departmental Excellence Award Nominees: Center for Student Engagement, Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities, and Summer Housing

Collaborative Partnership Award:
Nominees: Career Services Council, Colonial Crossroads, Freshman Day of Service and Convocation, Summer & Conference Housing and Key Depot, and Student Health Service

Finalist: Smoke-Free GW

Winner: Committee on International Student Success

Kudos to Andy Sonn for representing DSA on the Celebration of Excellence planning committee. Thank you to all who submitted nominations on behalf of DSA colleagues, departments, and initiatives.
The Administration and Hallmark Programs (AHP) team, along with the Mount Vernon Programming Council, Office of Parent Services, Center for Student Engagement, and the Mount Vernon Campus Administration and Academic Affairs came together on Saturday, October 19 to execute a very memorable Octoberfest on the Mount Vernon Campus Quad. As part of Colonials Weekend, this event embraced the GW community, families, and neighbors.

This year’s attendees exceeded the number of attendees from previous years, with an estimated 800 GW students, parents, faculty, staff, and their families. Guests had the opportunity to relax with family and friends. Vibrant colors and endless smiles surrounded the campus quad as participants took part in pumpkin carving and painting, arts and crafts, yard games, caricaturists, balloon artists, airbrush tattoos, contests, music, an array of delicious desserts, and more! Friendly competitions included pie-eating, mummy wrapping, and multiple three-legged races. Prizes were graciously donated from Au Bon Pain, Jetties, and the GW Bookstore.

Food trucks were a new addition to Octoberfest this year, which brought one of the most popular aspects of DC to the Mount Vernon Campus. Neat Meat and Reba’s Funnel Cakes were a big hit and truly enhanced the eventful Saturday afternoon. Coca-Cola was also a great sponsor for our event and donated a great deal of drinks. Whole Foods delighted attendees with their tasty fall treats.

Feedback from the Octoberfest surveys indicate that the event helped people feel connected to the GW community. A student confessed the “cotton candy machine was great, made me feel like a kid again,” and a parent stated the most memorable part of the event was “spending time with my son.” In addition, 100% of respondents indicated that they are likely to attend another event on the Mount Vernon Campus.

We’d like to extend a huge thank you to Peter Sacco, a junior studying Human Services and Business Administration, for doing a great job taking candid shots of the event which can be viewed on the GW Hallmark Programs Facebook page! In addition, we’re grateful to the various departments and student organizations that assisted in making our event a success. Activities, academic information, and fun were delivered by Campaign GW, the GW German Club, Focus on Fall Abroad Community (FOFAC), Zipcar, GW Pipes and Drums, G Wise, GW Chapter of the National Student Speech Language & Hearing Association (NSSLHA), Room to Read, GW Roosevelt Institution, and the Women’s Leadership Program.

Our next event is Midnight Breakfast: The Land Before Finals, which will be held in the Marvin Center on December 9. We are always looking for staff to volunteer at Midnight Breakfast and more information is available on the sign-up form! In the meantime be sure to follow us on Facebook and Twitter or visit us in the John Quincy Adams House!

In addition to planning our own events, we also serve as a resource to the entire Division of Student Affairs and are available to offer consultation services and best practices for any other department’s event planning process. Don’t reinvent the wheel or learn the hard way, when you can consult with staff with over thirty years of professional event planning experience!

Save the Date!

Upcoming DSA Forums

November 15, 2013—Assessment Conference
December 12, 2013—DSA Trip to VSTC in Ashburn, VA (RSVP by November 15)
January 20, 2014—DSA Service Project with MLK Day of Service

Please watch your email for more information about these great events!
Professional Development Tip of the Month:
Identify a task you do often that you could make an improvement to. Plan on experimenting, don't expect to get it right the first time, and seek feedback from your colleagues. Prepare to receive feedback using this tool. (source: http://ode.hr.gwu.edu/learning-agility)

Conference Announcements
Registration is now open for the following national conferences:
NASPA (March 15-19, 2014; Baltimore, MD): Early Bird Deadline—January 10, 2014
ACPA (March 30—April 2, 2014; Indianapolis, IN): Early Bird Deadline—February 18, 2014

If you are interested in attending a professional conference, remember to speak with your supervisor and fill out the appropriate request form.

House Staff Recruitment Begins!
The Center for Student Engagement is beginning the recruiting process for House Staff for the 2014-2015 academic year. They are looking for nominations for students that staff and faculty believe will be a competitive candidate for the House Staff process. Please take a minute to consider nominating a student (or two!) who you think would exemplify a House Staff member. Nomination forms are due Thursday, November 15 and Information Sessions will be held November 6-21 for all interested students. If you have any questions, please email csejobs@gwu.edu.

Annual Faculty Awards: Call for Nominations
The Teaching and Learning Collaborative (TLC) is pleased to announce the nomination process for this year’s GW faculty awards! GW is truly fortunate to have distinguished faculty with diverse interests and talents.

Each year the university honors professors who have done extraordinary work with the Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Prizes for Teaching, Scholarship, and University Service, the Bender Teaching Awards and the Philip J. Amsterdam Graduate Teaching Awards. These awards are given annually to commemorate excellence in teaching, research and service at GW.

Nominations for all awards are due by November 29 and supporting materials must be submitted by January 17. All nominations must be submitted through the TLC website.

Please consider taking a few minutes to nominate an outstanding professor or colleague. The awards and nomination processes are briefly described below. For more details on nomination materials and criteria, please click on the links above.

Trachtenberg Prizes:

**Trachtenberg Teaching Prize.** This prize is given to a tenured member of the faculty who regularly teaches undergraduate students and who has demonstrated excellence in teaching. Nominations must be made by an undergraduate student via the TLC website. Department chairs will be informed about the nominations enabling them to develop the supporting materials for submission to the TLC. go.gwu.edu/teachingprize

**Trachtenberg Scholarship Prize (Research).** This prize is given to any tenured member of the faculty who has excelled in scholarship. Nominations may be made by faculty, students or administrators via the TLC website. Deans will be informed about the nominations enabling them to develop supporting materials for submission to the Office of the Vice President for Research. go.gwu.edu/scholarshipprize

**Trachtenberg Service Prize.** This prize is given to any tenured member of the faculty who has performed extraordinary service for the university. Nominations may be made by faculty, students or administrators via the TLC website. Nominators will be required to submit the required supporting documentation to the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. go.gwu.edu/serviceprize

**Bender Awards:** This prize is given to a GW full-time or part-time faculty member who has taught for at least 2 years. Nominations may be made by the candidate or a department chair, colleague or student, via the TLC website. Nominators must submit the required supporting documents to the TLC. go.gwu.edu/benderaward

**Amsterdam Awards:** Graduate Teaching Assistants may be nominated by any GW student, faculty member, department or program. Graduate students who have had at least three semesters of GTA experience are eligible for this award; instructional assistants (IAs) are also eligible if their work has been in a teaching capacity. Please submit your nomination via the TLC website. Nominators must submit the required supporting documents to the TLC. go.gwu.edu/amsterdamaward
In Case You Missed It: DSA in *George Washington Today*

- **Student Health Service, Counseling Center Will Move to Campus**
- **Student Ingenuity Fuels Sustainable Solar Table**
- **The Best Things About Greek Week 2013**
- **Student Veterans Offer Glimpse into Military Lifestyle**
- **University Recognized for Public Service**
- **GW Community Members Pledge to ‘Be Wiser’**
University Community Unites at Colonials Weekend

Rodney Johnson Reflects on Education, Career

University Prepares for Colonials Weekend

The Fray to Play New Songs and Old Favorites at Colonials Weekend

Parent Involvement Continues to Grow

'Be a Good Neighbor' Training Mandatory for Students

Request for Contributions/Feedback
Interested in contributing to the DSA Newsletter? Have feedback to offer? E-mail students@gwu.edu with story ideas, events, etc.

Help enhance the DSA Newsletter by sharing your feedback... what do you like the most? The least? What's missing? What would encourage you to read it? E-mail DSA Communications Committee co-chairs Mark Levine and Robert Snyder with your feedback.

GW Hillel Announces Plans for a New Building
News and Tips from Higher Education and Beyond

The Journal of College & Character is calling for reviewers. Reviewers for the JCC play a vital role in enhancing the quality and readership of the journal.

Reviewer Responsibilities:
- Review manuscripts in a timely and professional manner as assigned by the senior editor.
- Provide constructive and thorough feedback to manuscript authors via the JCC review process.
- Commit to a three-year appointment.

Requirements
Interested individuals should submit the following by January 15, 2014:
- Cover letter expressing interest and highlighting qualifications and abilities
- Résumé or curriculum vitae
- To submit your name for consideration, please e-mail Pam Crosby, Co-Editor, at jcc@naspa.org.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Chronicle of Higher Education highlighted the struggles of balancing growing student desire for frequent, casual communication in "When There's Too Much Communication."

Navigating the emotional highs and lows of employee engagement is discussed in The Chronicle of Higher Education’s article "Emerging From a Funk."

The Huffington Post’s "Learning And Understanding: The Power of The Residential University" discussed the tension between a growing call for non-traditional educational options and the role of the traditional residential university in society.

Inside Higher Ed examined the correlation between retaining students and encouraging their involvement in cultural activities in “Building Students' 'Cultural Capital.'”

Education Advisory Board Insight Centers

Looking for ways to enhance the impact of your behavioral intervention team? Wondering how to integrate career exploration into the college experience? Education Advisory Board (EAB) has your solution.

EAB's new insight centers consolidate our most relevant and progressive research and resources on to-day's key topics to save time and keep you ahead of the curve. Get connected to the resources that will help you:
- Better manage mental health services on campus
- Target support services and programming for special populations
- Integrate career exploration at every level of the college experience
- Support academically and financially challenged students and improve time-to-completion

Any member of the GW community can sign-up for an account on the EAB website, which provides access to EAB’s Insight Centers, vast library of best practice studies and custom research reports, webinars and other training resources, all of which are included in DSA’s membership. To create your account, visit Register for Education Advisory Board and complete and submit the form.

For more information about accessing EAB’s programs and services, e-mail Robert Snyder.