

Leadership in the Financial Aid Profession

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What is a Leader?

A person who influences a group of people towards the achievement of a common goal*

*Definition found on the Internet at the following website address: www.vtaide.com/gleanings/leader

How do you define a leader?

- ▶ Definitions of a leader will vary among individuals
- ▶ No leader will have all desired qualities
- ▶ Strong leaders will focus in and capitalize on their true strengths

Critical Leadership Skills

- ▶ According to the book "You're The Director" published by NASFAA, the following are critical leadership skills:
 - Ability to communicate
 - Willingness to seek input
 - Providing balanced and timely feedback
 - Capacity to embrace change

Characteristics of a Leader

- ▶ Achiever
- ▶ Disciplined
- ▶ Consistent
- ▶ Responsible
- ▶ Communicator
- ▶ Competitive
- ▶ Self-assured
- ▶ Organized
- ▶ Learner
- ▶ Analytical
- ▶ Strategic
- ▶ Connected
- ▶ Honest
- ▶ Stable
- ▶ Visionary
- ▶ Compassionate
- ▶ Focused
- ▶ Charismatic



Strengths & Weaknesses

- ▶ Important to know your own strengths and weaknesses
- ▶ Do those around you perceive your strengths and weaknesses in the same way?
- ▶ Knowledge of strengths and weaknesses important in building team
- ▶ Focus on strengths of team members to build their confidence levels

Why be a Leader?

- ▶ Networking
- ▶ Being in “the know”
 - Hearing things first and often
- ▶ Develop skills for your own workplace
- ▶ Earn respect back on campus
- ▶ Serve as a good role model
- ▶ Resume builder

Learn about the Organization

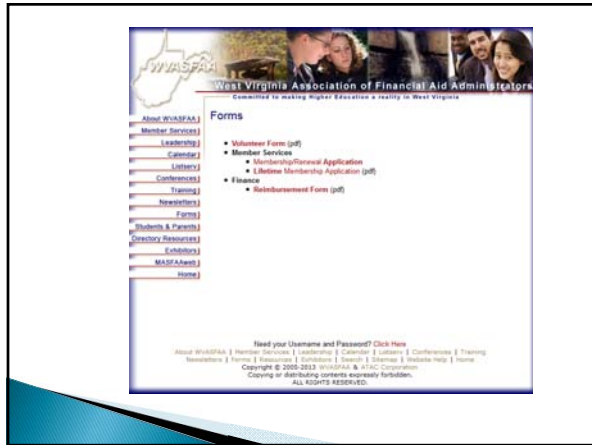
- ▶ Mission Statement
 - Overall goals of the organization
 - Identify within yourself how you fit into this mission
- ▶ Bylaws
 - Legal context of the organization
- ▶ Policy and Procedure Manual
 - Day to day operations of organization

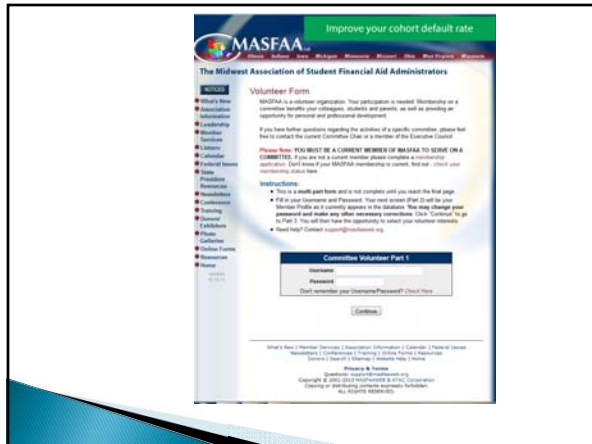
Getting Involved

- ▶ Start small – committee member or moderator
- ▶ Always obtain your supervisor’s permission
- ▶ Inquire about the time commitment
- ▶ Do your part – hold true to any commitments you make

Methods of Volunteering

- ▶ Can you volunteer through the organization's website?
- ▶ Paper volunteer forms available at a training or conference
- ▶ Reach out to the committee chair or a member of the organization's leadership team







Encouraging Volunteerism

- ▶ Make it easy to volunteer
- ▶ Actively engage with those who sign up to volunteer
- ▶ Clearly define duties and time commitments
- ▶ Break up assignments into manageable pieces
- ▶ Conduct meetings via conference call and use electronic means of collaboration to reduce financial and time barriers

Leadership Development

- ▶ State Leadership Symposia
 - Self nomination or invitation
 - Beginner or advance level
- ▶ MASFAA Leadership Symposium
 - Nomination by state presidents
- ▶ NASFAA Leadership Symposium
 - Generally state leadership

Committee Member to Committee Chair

- ▶ Next logical step in leadership progression is to assume chair role
- ▶ Inquire about the time commitment
- ▶ What is your reputation on the committee?
- ▶ Is the current chair moving on?
- ▶ Notify the person selecting chairs of your interest

Moderator to Presenter

- ▶ Start small through collaboration
 - Panel member
 - Co-presenter
 - State vs. Regional Conference
- ▶ Know your materials
 - Anticipate questions
 - If regulatory presentation, ask a federal trainer, respected colleague or NASFAA for assistance
 - Accurately depict your session in the description

Serving as an Officer

- ▶ Do you meet the eligibility criteria established for the office?
- ▶ Inquire about the time commitment
- ▶ Being asked vs. self-nomination
- ▶ Which office best meets your skill set and experiences?

Working Your Way To The Top

- ▶ Why can't I just start at the top?
 - No experience – meaning you don't know how the organization conducts business
 - No history – time spent rehashing old issues
 - Alienation of others – especially if you have never been involved or served locally

Being a good steward to the organization

- ▶ Know your job description
- ▶ Read meeting materials ahead of time
- ▶ Attend meetings and pay attention during those meetings
- ▶ Meet commitments

Duties of Care, Loyalty and Obedience

- ▶ Standard expectations of being a board member of a non-profit board
 - Care – attend meetings, read reports, know about the organization
 - Loyalty – acting in the best interest of the organization
 - Obedience – making sure that your organization is following all laws and that there are enough resources allocated for the organization to accomplish its mission

Actions Speak Louder than Words

- ▶ Remember that you represent all of the following if you are a leader in an organization:
 - Yourself
 - Your Institution
 - Your Organization
 - Your Profession

Exit Strategy

- ▶ Life Does Happen
- ▶ Action required dependent on timing
- ▶ Communication is Key
 - Notify leadership immediately
 - Decide on duty reduction or complete exit
 - Lack of action is not a viable option!

Importance of Leaders

- ▶ Guide the execution of an organization's mission and strategic plan
- ▶ Carry the organization into the future
- ▶ Recruit new leadership

Recommended Reading

- ▶ “You’re The Director: A Guide To Leadership In Student Financial Aid” – published by NASFAA
- ▶ “Strengths Based Leadership” – authored by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie

Aaron’s Challenge

- ▶ Become a committee member or moderator in WVASFAA this year
- ▶ Run for a WVASFAA office
- ▶ Many opportunities to be a part of MASFAA this next year with the conference in Charleston!
