



The Strategic Guide to Shaping Your Student Affairs Career

By Sonja Ardoin

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This is a book for any student affairs professional who wants to strategically shape his or her career path?and will be particularly helpful for people in early or mid-career, or contemplating a career, in student affairs.

By engagingly offering us the fruits of the reflective and strategic approach she has used to shape her own career, and of the theoretical and practical approaches she has undertaken to map out the culture and dynamics of student affairs, and by gathering the voices of 25 professionals who offer the insights and advice derived from their own experiences, Sonja Ardoin has created a guide for everyone in student affairs who wants to be intentional in setting the course for their professional and personal development.

She begins by describing the changing and varied student populations who are the heart of this field, and outlines the typical organizational structures of student affairs, the range of functional areas, and how practice varies by size and type of institution. She highlights major trends, discusses the typical paths of entry to the profession, the expectations and realities of starting in a new position, the process of socialization, and the required skills and competencies.

She devotes the core of the book to the five key elements for developing a career strategy: Lifelong Learning, Extending Your Experiences, Planning for Professional Development, Networking/Connecting, and Self-Reflection, and provides advice on the job search, from application through interview. In doing so she ranges over choices to be made about formal qualifications, and describes activities – from volunteering and committee work to conference presentations, writing and teaching – that we can use to strategically develop the proficiencies to attain our goals.

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Editorial Review

Review

"From the point of view of someone in his first year in Student Affairs, Sonja's book provides honest guidance about what it means to be a new professional. Sonja presents theory and practical insight on how you can create and take advantages of opportunities that will enhance your career, and addresses many of the challenging experiences you will face when starting out. Reading this manuscript while I transitioned into a full-time position was extremely fortuitous." (Thomas Harwell, Resident Director at Boston College)

"Ardoin and her coauthors invite readers into a learning partnership to navigate becoming a student affairs educator. [Her] emphasis on bringing one's personal authority to career planning is a central theme of the book. Ardoin advocates professionals taking responsibility for their own growth and development and approaching their careers with intentionality. To assist readers in taking up the invitation, she provides a concrete career strategy that includes five components: lifelong learning, extending your experiences, planning for professional development, networking and connecting, and self-reflection. The book explicitly addresses balancing intentionality and flexibility in advocating these strategies as processes for continued growth. Ardoin emphasizes personal authority in her focus on developing one's individual style for how to plan, strategize, network, and reflect. She recognizes that career planning is not a one-size-fits-all process and provides good questions, worksheets, and resources throughout to help focus self-reflection, assessment and personal stock-taking.

Ardoin and her colleagues offer good company for readers in various stages of student affairs careers to recompose meaningful work and adult lives." (Marcia B. Baxter Magolda)

"As a professor in a higher education program I seek activities and resources that can bookend a student's experience in our program. I have finally found the book that will both stimulate discussion among new professionals in their first class and foster rich dialogue in their last class. Actually reading the book twice affords students the opportunity to consider the core elements of a career strategy as discussed in this text: lifelong learning, extending your experiences, planning for professional development, networking/connecting, and self-reflection. *The Strategic Guide to Shaping Your Student Affairs Career* will be a must read for our students" (Audrey J. Jaeger, Professor, Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis, Co-Executive Director, National Initiative for Leadership & Institutional Effectiveness)

"*The Strategic Guide to Shaping Your Student Affairs Career* is a one of a kind resource for student affairs administrators in any stage of their career. The book is well organized around five key elements of career strategy that helpfully prompt readers to not only focus and reflect on critical stages in their career development and advancement, but also on their personal motivations and goals. This is enhanced by the inclusion of voices of current administrators who share their stories and insights to illustrate the book's message." (Ashley Tull, Director of Assessment and Strategic Initiatives, Division of Student Affairs)

"This book fills a huge hole in the field of student affairs?namely, helping graduate students and new professionals chart a path for their career. The writing is crisp and clean, and very easy to read. By taking a strategic approach to identifying career goals and planning a deliberate approach to one's own professional development, Dr. Ardoin's book is a clear and useful guide to the profession. It will be very useful in teaching graduate students how to think about the future, but is also useful as a guide for the new professional in their first or second job who is thinking, 'What is next and how do I get there?!' A great

contribution by Ardoin and her many contemporaries who share their own stories of success." (Robert A. Schwartz, Professor of Higher Education and Chair, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies)

About the Author

Sonja Ardoin is a learner, educator, and facilitator. Currently serving as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Boston University, Sonja originates from "Cajun country" and began her higher education career as a first generation student at Louisiana State University, earning a B.S. in Secondary Education. She later attained a M.S. in Higher Education and Student Affairs from Florida State University and a Ph.D. in Educational Research and Policy Analysis from North Carolina State University. Sonja's career path includes experience in student activities, leadership development, community engagement, fraternity and sorority life, student conduct, and academic advising. Sonja stays engaged in the field through presenting, facilitating, and volunteering with national organizations such as NASPA, ACPA, LeaderShape, Zeta Tau Alpha, Lambda Chi Alpha, and College Summit. Her research interests include college access and success, low-income populations, leadership, and career strategies; she authored *The Strategic Guide to Shaping Your Student Affairs Career* (Stylus, 2014). Sonja enjoys traveling, dancing, reading, writing, sports, laughing, and spending time with people she loves.

Marcia B. Baxter Magolda is Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership at the Miami University of Ohio and a nationally recognized author and speaker on student development and learning. In 2007 she received the Association for the Study of Higher Education's Research Achievement Award for her outstanding contribution to advancing student learning. Her scholarship addresses the evolution of learning and development in college and subsequent adult life, and educational practice to promote self-authorship. Her seventh and eighth books respectively are *Authoring Your Life and Development* and *Assessment of Self-Authorship*.

Users Review

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