



UCA CSPA CLASS OF 2015

# UCA CSPA THE KNOW

## SUMMER 2015

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CSPA ANNOUNCEMENTS

## What's New?

This was a big year for the University of Central Arkansas CSPA program. With the graduation of the 2015 class, the CSPA program has now graduated over 200 students. From having started with a small cohort of just six women, the program has really taken off since its founding in 2001 under the vision and leadership of Drs. Charlotte Cone and Tom Pilgreen.

When considering the success of the program, recent support of the program cannot be overlooked, however. In 2006, supervision of the CSPA program was moved from the graduate office to the College of Education and is now housed comfortably in the Department of Leadership Studies under the guidance of Department Chair Terry James. The faculty in Leadership Studies have been a great compliment to the needs of the CSPA program and its faculty.

With three faculty members teaching on a permanent basis in the CSPA program, the program is now very well-supported to deliver its curriculum. The three faculty members include Dr. Susan Barclay (Program Coordinator), Dr. Patricia Smith (one third-time appointment to the CSPA program/two third-time appointment as the Assistant Dean of the Schedler Honors College), and

Dr. Jesus Cisneros who will be joining the faculty this Fall.

The program continues to offer ample opportunities for students to gain on the job experience through a growing variety of graduate assistantship experiences, but in 2005 the program also added the opportunity for students to study abroad. The CSPA program has designed a two-week study abroad experience to give students the opportunity to gain a better understanding of diverse cultures and the international student experience. Funds from the Charlotte Cone Scholarship fund are now available to students who need financial support; and in 2014, the first funds from this account were used to help students study in Qingdao and Beijing, China.

The level of stability and growth being experienced by the CSPA program has it focusing its efforts on reconnecting CSPA alumni. Homecoming and reunion activities are among the things the CSPA program has in store. Keep up to date with any announcements by following us on [Facebook](#) under *University of Central Arkansas CSPA Alumni* group or on [Twitter](#) @CSPA\_UCA.

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## Coordinator Corner

by Dr. Susan Barclay

When asked to write a piece for the newsletter from the perspective of the CSPA Program Coordinator, I began to reflect on the three-year whirlwind in which I have found myself. When I came to UCA in 2012, I had just graduated with my doctorate and was a beginning a career as a faculty member. This “new adventure” came on the heels of a 26-year career in the corporate sector. I was excited about this next phase in my life and, in particular, the CSPA program at UCA. With a master’s in mental health counseling and a doctorate in higher education, I saw the CSPA program as a perfect blend of my two discipline areas.

After two years as co-coordinator of the CSPA program, I assumed full responsibility in 2014. Assuming full responsibility allowed me a more holistic view of the program and with that came a vision for the future of the program. Not that I envisioned a wide stroke of changes necessarily; however, I imagined a few tweaks here and there to strengthen and expand the program. How exciting to learn that others (faculty and department chair) had similar ideas in mind.

As you know now (because you have been in higher education long enough to realize!), change is a slow progress. If you want to accomplish anything quickly, higher education is not the arena in which to do that! However, I maintain the vision and couple that with the hope I am experiencing as we anticipate the arrival of the newest CSPA faculty member: Dr. Jesus Cisneros.

Dr. Cisneros comes to UCA and the CSPA program from Arizona State University (ASU), where he just completed his doctorate in Education Policy and Evaluation with an emphasis in Higher Education. He completed his master’s in higher education administration at Texas A&M. Dr. Cisneros is

passionate about matters related to the Latino population and undocumented immigrants. That passion led him to cofound DREAMzone, “a comprehensive professional development program at Arizona State University that provides student leaders, staff, and faculty with knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to respond effectively to the presence and needs of undocumented students” (www.

<http://unitedwedream.org/jesus-cisneros-arizona/>). For more information on this initiative, visit

<https://sts.asu.edu/DREAMzone>. Dr. Cisneros and his cofounder received the Clinton Global Initiative University award for their excellent work.

Dr. Cisneros will prove an excellent addition to the CSPA family for several reasons. He brings levels of diversity to the department and the program that we have not experienced before but definitely needed. He hails from an area of the country (New Mexico and Arizona) that may prove beneficial for recruiting purposes. Mostly, he brings a youthful freshness and energy that excites me. Dr. Cisneros is student-centered, and I believe he will bring some great ideas that will inform the program. He will be instrumental in providing illuminating perspectives as we revisit the program and contemplate changes. Minimally, I sense a level of CSPA program stability that has been rare since I arrived in 2012.

I described my experience over the past three years as a whirlwind and, indeed, the roles of faculty member and program coordinator have been fast paced. However, I would not have it any other way. I believe the CSPA program at UCA is one of the best in the nation. You, the alumni of this program, are a testament to that. The work you are doing on college campuses around the world speak

## NEW FACULTY ALERT!!!

Dr. Cisneros joins us from Arizona State to bring his expertise and energy. Welcome to the program Dr. Cisneros!

To check out more about Dr. Cisneros visit:

<http://unitedwedream.org/jesus-cisneros-arizona/>

to the excellence of the program and the faculty who educated and trained you. Thank you for making CSPA proud – keep up the good work!



## 2015 Graduate Perspectives

**M**y first class was on a Saturday morning, I read the chapter the night before, I had my professional clothes laid out, I got up extra early to ensure that I could find the room and wouldn't be late. I walked into the room with my bag, books, and paper eager to embark upon this journey, only to find out that I was the new girl in a classroom full of friends and coworkers. Dr. M started talking about the different types of budgets, auxiliary, capital, expenses, and much more, all of which went right over my head. For the 9-5 class we got an hour break, I remember sitting in my car on the phone with one of my mentors crying my eyes, out telling her that I couldn't do this and I needed to come back. I went on to finish that first day of class and I knew on that very day, that I was in for a challenge. I worked harder that semester than ever before in my life: I didn't sleep, I dropped a class, and I was struggling to fit in with either of the cohorts that I was taking classes with.

I saw two things that semester, the 2nd years preparing to graduate and the 1st years trying to keep their head above water. That became a familiar site, watching one group leaving and one group coming, I never felt like I fit into any group. I found myself always trying to fit in or bridge the gap between myself and my cohort members or simply just trying to find my place in the midst of it all. While it wasn't always the most enjoyable component of my experience, there were many positive moments that came from my "hybrid" experience. I've made so many connections with individuals from each cohort and, in addition to that, I got to see how to do things and how not to do things. I had so many examples laid before me, and as I got more

comfortable, my classmates started taking me under their wings. I started getting invited to study groups, programs in the halls/complexes, and eventually I found myself making friends.

While it would've been difficult to make it these two and half years without friends, it would have been impossible to make it without Dr. M and Dr. B. They saw me struggling me, and they just poured into me without hesitation. I had never know professors to be so invested in their students, but whether I had a question at 9:00am or 9:00pm they've always been a text away. I wouldn't have made it in this program without them, their commitment to us as students is beyond measure. They teach us, mentor us, counsel us, and push us, and they're flexible because they know that no matter how much we think we do, we don't have it all together. They are the glue that hold this program together, and I can say that because I've seen two cohorts leave, and two enter.

Coming into this program in the middle of an academic year was tough and it was hard, I often say "if I could go back I'd do it over again," but as I prepare to leave, I take that statement back. These last two and half years have been full of disappointment and triumph, struggles and joys, victories and defeats, but more than anything these last two and half years have changed my life. I pushed through when I wanted to quit, I wrote exceptional papers, I failed quizzes, I pulled all-nighters, I made friends and life-long relationships, and I grew up here. I'm forever grateful to my experience at UCA!

By Brittany Jackson, Alumni, Class of 2015

## Congratulations!!! Class of 2015

Crystin Amato  
Cristina Araujo  
Jaclyn Austin  
Amber Bagwell  
Samantha Collins  
Veneta Graham  
James Gray (JD)  
Tranquility Gordon  
Adam Iserman  
Brittany Jackson  
Rachel Jordan  
Myron Kuykendall  
Janelle Lemish  
Linnsey McFerguson  
Stephanie Metke  
Rachel Moore  
Stacey Moran  
Joshua Rauls  
Sydney Spradlin  
Doug Tate  
Michelle Zengulis

**G**reetings! My name is Adam Iserman, and I am a proud member of the most recent, 2015, graduating CSPA cohort! Like some of the cohorts before mine, members of my cohort were faced with the ultimate question...to go Team Comps or Team Thesis. I, along with three other brave souls, decided to go Team Thesis. When I made the commitment, it seemed like a decision that I would immediately regret. However, it proved to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my academic career.

One of the major reasons I chose to come to UCA was because the CSPA program offered the option of taking a comprehensive exam or writing a thesis. While searching for a program, I knew I was leaning towards a thesis; however, I did not want to commit to a program that was strictly thesis. What if I couldn't find a topic I was passionate about? What if I realized that I despised research and writing? I didn't want to be stuck! The CSPA program allowed me that flexibility, that safety net, in case I decided to go the comprehensive exam route.

At the beginning of Research Methods, (one of everyone's favorite professors) Dr. Tom Pilgreen asked the class what kept us up at night. At the time, many of my cohort members responded: job search. However, as I reflected on the meaning of his question, I knew Dr. Pilgreen was making us think and reflect on what drove us, what motivated us, what we were so passionate about, that literally kept us up at night. For me, I immediately thought of an undergraduate professor who said that the job of a resident assistant was the equivalent of flipping burgers at Burger King. As a former resident assistant, this grabbed my attention in a not so positive way. I had been an education major and a resident assistant. In my two year tenure as a resident assistant, there had been countless times I had walked out of an education class, headed back to my hall, and applied the student development theory I had learned to the residents that I lived with. I had experienced first-hand the positive, educational impact that resident assistants could have on the growth and development of college students. It was at that moment, I

had my topic for my thesis, *The Resident Assistant – Resident Relationship: Measuring Relationships within Residence Halls*.

For my thesis, I ended up using and learning some statistics that seemed well over my head. There were times when I thought my committee members were speaking a different language. However, as the old saying goes, growth cannot occur without challenge. Through the guidance from faculty, textbooks, and even some YouTube videos, I began to wrap my head around that data analysis process. My thesis definitely challenged me in more ways than one. Though I learned more about student development theory, the resident assistant's role in higher education, and the importance of the relationships our students create while in college, the greatest learning occurred for me through the process as a whole. Writing a thesis forced me to think in ways I had never thought before. There was laughter, there were tears, my significant other even found a few grey hairs on my head. However, in the end it was a truly amazing experience. The love, support, and encouragement I received from my cohort, Dr. Susan Barclay, and the rest of the CSPA faculty was truly astonishing. For those entering the program and considering a thesis, I would tell them I would make the same decision all over again. It will come with struggles that will test you; however, in the end it will be one of the most rewarding experiences!

By Adam Iserman, Alumni, Class of 2015

## Theses Defended in 2015

Dorsett, G., *International Students as Customers: Quality Expectations and Perceptions*. [Quantitative].

Gordon, T., *The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Students' Motivation to Attend College*. [Quantitative].

Graham, V., *Types of Relationships and College Student Academic Success*. [Quantitative].

Iserman, A., *Resident Assistant-Resident Relationships: Measuring Relationships within Residence Halls*. [Quantitative].



# GASP UPDATE

by Nate Cochran , GASP President

The Graduate Association for Student Personnel, known as *GASP*, is the graduate student organization for the College Student Personnel Services and Administration (CSPA) Master's program. The purpose of this organization is to provide those interested in the field of Student Affairs with academic and professional development, social enrichment, and an opportunity for community outreach designed to enhance the educational experience.

This organization brings together university students interested in student services, administration, staff, and faculty who share a special interest in student development. This student lead organization provides the opportunities and resources for CSPA students to push themselves further as new professionals and learners.

Currently this organization is run by four of the CSPA students (pictured below). Nate Cochran is the President (far right), Jordan Habenschuss is the Vice President (second-from-left), Sherita

McGee is the Treasurer (third-from-left) and Brandyn Jordan is the Professional Development Coordinator (far left).

The CSPA students have the drive to become the best Student Service graduates in the nation. Due to that ambition, we use GASP to create the opportunity and financial means to attend various conferences workshops, providing us an unparalleled chance to network and learn further outside of the classroom. In fact, many of the CSPA students have received full time professional and or internships through these networking opportunities.

GASP has also started Professional Development workshops where each month we present or invite guest speakers to work on an area of need for the students. It is a way for us to assess what we may be missing from our graduate assistantship or CSPA and provide a way to fill the holes.

GASP also has a very fun side. We plan several events to make the year more enjoyable. Graduate school is

already very difficult, so to throw on top a graduate assistantship makes it very stressful. We need ways to blow off a little steam every once in a while so we will go explore Arkansas or find cool events that are not related to graduate school.

On top of that we use GASP to help bridge a relational gap between non-housing assistantships and housing assistantship, and also the gap between 1<sup>st</sup> years in the program and 2<sup>nd</sup> years in the program.

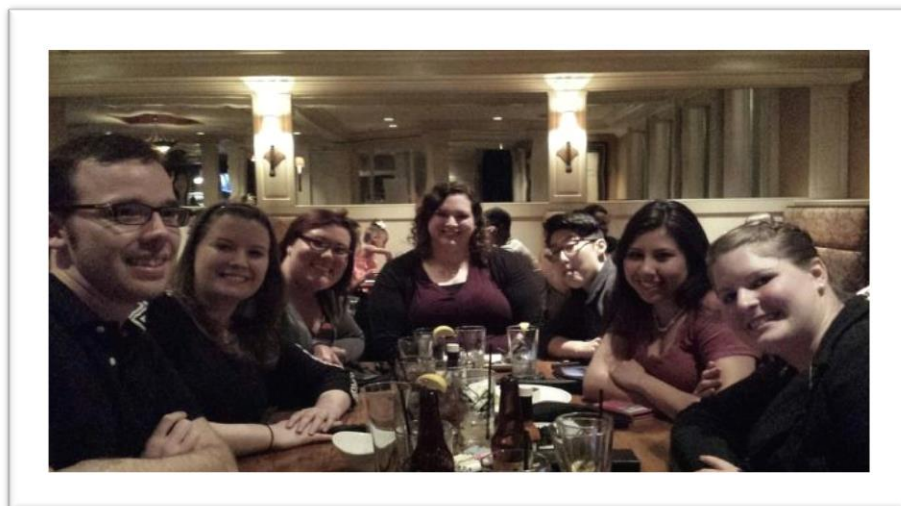
Each year it is a challenge to form bonds between these groups, and we set off to improve this each fall. GASP has provided us the proper ways to help close those gaps and because of this we have grown strong as a united body.

Currently we are sad as we have just hosted the closing banquet for all the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> years of the program. It was full of tears and laughter as we made parting goodbyes. However, the now new 2<sup>nd</sup> years look forward to the future as we will be welcoming in the new coming 1<sup>st</sup> years this fall as the 2<sup>nd</sup> years once did for us.



# Year in the Making 2014-2015





# First Year Take

by Catherine Buercklin

When I was first accepted into the CSPA program at UCA, I was excited to start a new journey in life. I was in my third year out of college and the prospects were not looking good. I kept bouncing around different retail chains and didn't feel like I was reaching my full potential. I attended a small liberal arts school in Arkansas, and I was still in contact with a few faculty who gave me sound advice on what to do next. The Dean of Students told me I should seriously consider going into the student affairs profession and mentioned the program at UCA. I thought to myself, "What do I have to lose?"

Once I began the courses, I had a moment of crippling doubt. I looked around at my fellow cohort members, many of whom had multiple years of experience in residence life, and realized I didn't know anything about this profession. Zip. Nada. People kept referring to things like "ACPA," "ACUHO-I," "TPE," and "NASPA." All I kept thinking was "why so many strange acronyms!?" I didn't know any of the lingo, and that, coupled with my limited knowledge of the student affairs profession, made me second guess my decision to begin this process.

Then, my outlook began to change. Our cohort got closer as we toured different institutions around Arkansas and bonded over what we saw as "difficult" coursework. My contacts within the profession grew. The alumni supported us by performing mock interviews and giving us advice on how to market ourselves when we meet other professionals. Things were falling into place. For the first time since graduating college, I finally felt like I was heading in the right direction. I felt like I belonged.

I'm thankful I found this program and that the alumni base keeps in constant contact with us, handing out advice and tracking down potential job offers. It has been a stressful, but great year. I have learned a lot about the profession and, more importantly, about myself. I can't imagine myself being anywhere else or with a better group of people.



## *Internship Sites for Class of 2016*

Catherine Buercklin- Valdosta State, Housing & Res. Life  
 Robert Butler- University of Central Arkansas, Upward Bound  
 Nate Cochran – Saint Louis University, Housing & Res. Life  
 Jordan Habenchuss- University of Central Arkansas, Housing & Res. Life  
 Daynica Harley-University of South Florida, Housing & Res. Life  
 Brandyn Jordan-University of Central Arkansas, Leadership Studies/  
 Housing & Res. Life

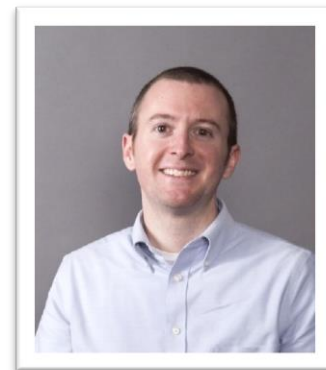
Brittany Lemke-University of Central Arkansas, Housing & Res. Life  
 Sherita McGee-Jackson State University, Associate Vice President for  
 Student Affairs/Dean of Students Office  
 Kayla McIntosh-University of Central Greensboro, Housing & Res. Life  
 Di'Anka Moton-Academy of Art University, Housing & Res. Life  
 Briana Williams- University of North Texas Health & Science, Office  
 of Student Development



## CSPA Alumni...Where Are They Now?

Zachary Perrine graduated from the CSPA program in 2007. He is currently employed at Pulaski Technical College as the Director of Advising and Career Services. He has been in that role for the last year and a half. Zach's proudest moment in his career so far, was being able to transition from Residence Life to Academic Advising. Zach said "I was fortunate to have a wonderfully diverse experience as an Area Coordinator at Hendrix, one that as able to provide me with relevant experiences that could translate to advising. Mostly, I was lucky Amanda [Doyle-Herwatic] went out on a limb to hire me!"

In reflecting on what he got out of the CSPA program that he still uses in his current role, Zach says that "Dr. [John] Smith's Budgeting class has proved to be incredibly beneficial in my current role. I'm still try to document like crazy thanks to Dr. Purviss. Just being around Dr. Cone cemented the concept of 'service' for me. From my entire CSPA experience I try to keep the student experience in front of my decision making. I have also benefited from the strong networking our program provides. Literally every position I've had can be tied back to a CSPA alumni." Zach specifically wanted to thank CSPA alumni Monelle Wells, Jessica Eiland-Cates, Amanda Doyle Herwatic, and Carmen Robinson for opportunities they helped him achieve.



When not working in advising and career services, Zach says he is a member of Lakewood United Methodist Church and has a 6 month old daughter whom he spends most of his free time with. Zach plans on starting his doctorate within the next year. He credits some great mentors with giving him the encouragement to one day achieve the dream of being a president or chancellor at a community college.

In closing, Zach shared that he hopes "everyone gets to find their place the way I have. I really believe in the mission and purpose of two-year colleges and am thankful every day for being able to do what I do. I'm happy to be a part of the UCA CSPA family. That experience created the necessary foundation for me to be successful. Dr. Charlotte Cone, Dr. John Smith, Dr. Ernie Ness, and all of our faculty members were so wonderful. As a cohort we all learned so much from each other as well. It's crazy how much we've all grown since 2007!"

**If you are an alum of the CSPA Program, drop us a line at [psmith@uca.edu](mailto:psmith@uca.edu) to give us an update on where you are now.**

Jenny Yokem Kyle graduated from the CSPA program in 2010. She originally came to UCA from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She has been at the University of Arkansas for Medical Services, College of Nursing since 2013, initially as the Director of Admissions, but in 2014 transitioned into the role of Director of Student Services. Jenny says she takes great pride in "working in a small program, I am able to be involved with students from the time they are a prospect to the time they graduate. Seeing my first group of prospective students walk across the stage this past May to receive their diplomas was so rewarding!"

In reflecting on what she got out of the CSPA program that she still uses in her current role, Jenny says "a large part of my position is dedicated to working directly with students to advise them as to career options within the field of nursing. I utilize skills from my career counseling curriculum more than I ever could have imagined! Understanding student development has contributed to my ability to work successfully with a range of students from a variety of situations, backgrounds, and educational levels. Building a team and network have also been so very important for me in the past several years. UAMS is working to implement new processes campus wide by means of a new student information system. Assessment has been an integral part of this process. I cannot stress how important positive leadership, team work, and evaluation have been to this process. Collaboration has been key! These are all skills and traits that I was able to hone while completing my graduate degree at UCA."

In addition to her full-time role as the Director of Student Services, Jenny also serves as the Veterans Affairs Student Liaison, team leader to the UAMS GUS Student Information System Implementation Admission Team, and serves as a committee member on the UAMS Recruitment and Retention Committee and the UAMS Graduate Program Specialty Coordinator Committee.



Jenny plans on continuing her education at some point and has looked into EdD programs. In her free time, she loves spending time with her husband-Jason, two beautiful children-Abbott and Bennett, and three dogs-Percy, Molly, and Murphy.

**P**atricia "Pat" Coats graduated from the CSPA program in 2009. For the last three years, she has worked as the Coordinator for Academic Support Services for the University of Mississippi (OleMiss).

When talking about what makes her the most proud, Pat described how she "was able to guide a first generation transfer student from the Mississippi Delta through the admissions process. She doubted herself through the entire process because no one in her family has ever graduated from high school. Here she was with an Associate's degree, and wanting to attend OleMiss which was not heard of in her household. She graduated with honors and she told me that she would not have been able to accomplish her dream without the encouragement and mothering I gave her. I also encourage her to apply for a Master's degree which she is currently working toward. This is why I left corporate America after 27 years. I believe the accolades from my students is one of the highest acknowledgements I could receive in higher education."

She credits the Counseling Process and Skills course she took at UCA with helping her be successful in her role. Pat says her goals for the future "are to be a lifelong learner, a model administrator and volunteer in my community. I also want to inspire every student that I come in contact with, to make their aspirations and goals of earning a college degree become a reality and not just a dream." In her free time, she volunteers at the Memphis Union Mission, St John's Soup Kitchen, Mid-South Convoy of Hope, and Stop Hunger programs.



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**A**ndrew Wiemer is a 2006 CSPA graduate who came to UCA from Doane College in Crete, Nebraska. He is beginning his fifth year as the Director of the Butler Center for Service and Leadership at the University of Miami. His responsibilities include administrative oversight of 40+ Service and Leadership Organizations, Alternative Break Programs, Service and Leadership Living-Learning Communities, Campus Wide Days of Service, Clinton Global Initiative University, Leadership Retreats and Symposiums, along with engaging students to help support non-profit organizations in the Miami Dade Community and throughout the world.



Through this work, he has been instrumental in collaborating closely with students, faculty and community partners to develop and implement effective civic engagement and leadership programming. Andrew says his proudest moment in his career so far has been "serving as the Co-Chair for the annual Clinton Global Initiative University meeting at the University of Miami this past March. This meeting brought together 1,100 students, university representatives, topic experts and celebrities to discuss and develop innovative solutions to pressing global challenges. It was by far one of the most impactful experiences I have had during my career... One exciting thing that happened was that I had the opportunity to personally meet and visit with President Clinton and Chelsea Clinton."

Andrew says that he always keeps his Green Student Services book by his side and still uses it today for random things he needs to look up. He stated that "one important component that I learned was the time I reflected on an area I needed to improve upon for one of the courses. The area I had chosen was being assertive. After reading a book and reflecting, this was an important step in many of the decisions I make today as a professional. It is still something I think about regularly when approached with situations."

Andrew has found many ways to stay involved in the community of Miami and throughout the field of student affairs. At the University of Miami he has had the unique opportunity to Co-Chair our LGBTQ Task Force and created the LGBTQ Faculty Staff Employee Network. He has also volunteered his time as the adviser for the undergraduate LGBTQ group called UPride. Through this work, he's been able to accomplish many great strides for the University of Miami. These past few years, he's been able to implement the first Lavender Celebration for Graduation, established a LGBTQ faculty/staff and student mentorship program, created the IBIS Ally Network for Faculty and Staff, hosted an Orientation session for new LGBTQ students, helped UM participate in the Miami-Dade Pride Parade, and developed a very close relationship between the University of Miami and Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. On campus he has had the opportunity to serve on many of our scholarship selection committees along with serving on the Sexual Violence Task Force and the Civic and Community Engagement Task Force. Outside of the University of Miami he has been involved with many national organizations including NASPA, Campus Compact, and Miss America Scholarship Organization – Miss Florida.

Professionally, Andrew aspires to continue to enhance the student experience for LGBTQ students at the University of Miami by improving the campus climate. Within the next academic year he hopes to create Gender Inclusive Restrooms and help create a LGBTQ Center in the future. Also, he hopes to continue to lead as a national model for Civic Engagement and implement new programs that develop students into active citizens of the global community. Personally, he hopes to begin identifying doctoral programs and enroll in the next academic year.