

Personal Mission Statement

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As my graduate student journey begins to wane, the birth pangs of my professional career have already begun. I am currently in search of an entry-level hall director position, looking in the upper Midwest and Mountain West. In that position, I would like to supervise a student staff of resident assistants, sit on departmental and university committees, and engage in some form of formal classroom instruction or facilitation. As I continue to discern my career path, I remain interested in returning for a terminal degree, though not necessarily in Higher Education and Student Affairs. The purpose of a terminal degree would be to enter the faculty world following the completion of that program. This statement of mission, then, is intended to guide me in over the next ten years, to wherever life takes me.

I have engaged in several values exploration and identification activities throughout my graduate experience, both as a facilitator and participant. Through these experiences, I have found my top personal values and beliefs to be consistent, and ones that drive my decisions, actions, and relationships with others. My top values are positivity, adventure, learning, community, and spirituality. My values, over time, have had their own seasons of waxing and waning, but my commitment to self-awareness and values authenticity has not changed.

There are systems, throughout time, that have significantly impacted my own values development. The relationships I have developed and maintained throughout time have had significant impacts on my values authenticity. My parents, who raised me, have had the greatest influence on my development. I was raised in a home that encouraged optimism, adventure, and education. It was stressed throughout my childhood that academic pursuit and success should be of utmost importance to me. At the same time,

my parents had instructed each of my teachers up to the fourth grade that I should not be given high praise on my academic endeavors. This was done with the hope that I would learn to be humble about my intellectual abilities, and to create a desire to always strive to do my very best. The results of this developmental tactic can be seen in the relationships, activities, choices, and priorities of my personal life.

Besides my parents, the two greatest influences in my development were working at a Boy Scout summer camp for eight years, and attending Saint John's University (SJU) during my college years. By way of living and promoting the ideals and values of the Scouting program in daily life, I learned early in my youth about values congruence, authenticity, and responsibility. I was surrounded by peers and leaders who lived the Scout Law, who committed to being trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. I was surrounded by mentors who reminded me to do a good turn daily, to do my best. When I began at SJU, I soon realized that the lessons and values of Scouting were not incongruent with the Benedictine Values. Thus, in the most developmentally significant times in my life, my systems of values and beliefs were holistically reinforced by environments that were, in themselves, positive and values-based.

Each personal value has its own origin and story, but each personal value is part of the holistic being that is Corey Friend. I cannot trace the origins of my value of positivity, except to say that it is inherent in nature. Over time, it has remained a cornerstone in my life, and is perhaps a meta-value, guiding and influencing all other values in my life. The significance of it, and presence in my life, is that a positive attitude and outlook on life has helped me find good in even the worst times. The

Benedictine influence is significant in my value of positivity, as Benedictine monks wear black habits to remind themselves daily of the finality of this world. When a Benedictine monk dies, the funeral and following ceremonies are jovial and celebratory. Though that can be seen as morbid and contradicting, I see it as a daily reminder to find the blessings in each day, to remind myself that there is a greater existence waiting for me, and that even in death, there can be happiness and joy.

My value for adventure is a direct result of the trips that have taken place in my lifetime. Growing up, my family went on annual summer road trips and my Scout troop went on camping trips around the American Midwest, helping to build a foundation that enjoyed traveling. As I grew financially and personally independent, I began to take greater, longer trips both domestic and abroad. My passion for adventure is a result of wanting to see and experience new places and events, a result of wanting to be surprised and awed by uniqueness. My sense of adventure, even today, is most fueled by traveling, but even graduate school has been an adventure, in the sense that it has continued to shape me and grow me through its new events and experiences.

Closely related to my desire to see and experience new things is my desire to learn new things. Learning has always been a passion of mine, and adventures have often been great catalysts for learning. As stated earlier, my drive for learning is a direct result of the parenting tactics enforced by my parents. I realized early on that education was a gateway to improvement, and successful learning was a path toward acknowledgement and appraisal. Thus, out of my sheer childhood desire to be appreciated and praised, I continue to seek ways to prove my academic abilities and successes.

Before starting at SJU, I most likely would not have included community in my top five personal values. However, after having it so prominently integrated into every aspect of my undergraduate experience, I now see the inherent value and promise of putting community into practice. As I have continued through graduate school, my ability to connect with students, create healthy rapport, and implement theory to practice is most easily done in a residential community. Looking forward, I expect that my interest and engagement in community will continue to be fulfilled through residential experiences, and eventually in the classroom.

Finally, my commitment to spiritual development has been a lifelong value, and though it has seen strong points and weak points, it has withstood time as a primary value of mine. Just as positivity is a value that intertwines and engages all other values, spirituality is a rock in which all other values are built. Though I would never consider myself an evangelical spiritualist, my relationship and commitment to spirituality and spiritual exploration is strong nonetheless.

Though these are five separate values, they all come together to form a coherent, whole philosophy and approach to life. I use my values of positivity and spirituality as cornerstones for all other values. I believe that I can find the positives in any situation, and have faith that any situation I encounter will transpire precisely as it's meant to. Using that framework, I engage in adventure, learning, and community. Through it all, my philosophy is to do the best I can, to be open to new experiences, to be helpful and courteous to those around me, and to do it all cheerfully and friendly.

While considering my personal and professional values, I had a difficult time distinguishing the two. I pride myself on being consistent in all manners of life, so that

the Corey Friend you meet in the academic or work environment is the same you'd meet in a social environment. I do, however, have values that are more appropriate in a professional setting than a social setting. Those values are commitment to student development, commitment to integrity, commitment to a strong work ethic, commitment to professional development, and commitment to diversity.

My commitment to student development is most evidenced in my approach to building rapport with my students. I believe in providing my students with the greatest levels of empowerment possible. I also believe in meeting my students where they are at, in investing in those relationships to help find areas of strength and weakness, and in using theory when appropriate to guide my interactions with students. Ultimately, though, my approach to student development is heavily influenced by my own student affairs mentors, who believed in providing me the greatest levels of trust and empowerment as they could.

My commitment to integrity is again influenced by my personal values systems, including parental, Scouting, and Benedictine. I believe in the need to be honest, to being trustworthy, and exhibiting strong moral principles. I believe that this is an incredibly important value for the field of higher education and student affairs, as we are the role models and examples for our students. Again, my mentors were the best role models I had for integrity. During my senior year, working for the Dean of Students and Assistant Dean of Students, allowed me to take part in implementing developmentally sound, but unpopular policies on campus. Through it all, the Dean of Students and Assistant Dean of Students ensured that their decisions were the right ones for the holistic wellness of the students, and stuck with the decisions, as unpopular as they were.

My Scouting background again influences exhibiting a strong work ethic. With the motto of the Boy Scouts of America being ‘Do your best’ I was ingrained as a child with a motive of doing quality, hard work. My parents reinforced this with the conventional phrase, “If you don’t have time to do it right the first time, when will you have time to do it over?” The result was the creation of a work ethic that values doing a job well, and taking time to ensure that it’s done well the first time. This has proved especially beneficial in my current internship, as I have a supervisor that values high quality work and time efficiency.

Prior to this year, I would not have included commitment to professional development as a professional value. However, after veering outside of the assigned class and internship readings, I have begun to see tremendous value in committing myself to furthering my knowledge of student affairs as a field, as well as functional fields and topics in student affairs. Conducting my own research on leadership development theory, cognitive development theory, and a soon-to-begin series on sustainability in higher education. As a way to stay current on issues and trends in higher education, I have committed myself to furthering my knowledge on issues and trends that I currently find engaging.

Finally, I believe in a professional commitment to diversity. As someone who came from a relatively homogeneous environment, I am still developing my own multicultural competence. However, I still see a need for student affairs professionals to commit themselves to developing their multicultural competence, and at the same time commit themselves to supporting and encouraging their students to develop their own multicultural competence.

Whereas several personal values act as cornerstones and foundations for my system of values, my professional values come together in a coherent and whole system, each part constituting the whole. In all things I aim to be self-aware, engaging in consistent reflection and committing myself to processing and making meaning of my experiences and environments. The ultimate goal, then, is to reach a level of awareness and consistency that allows me to be the most holistically well and prepared professional I can for my students.

My graduate school experience has played a significant role in clarifying my purpose in life, my calling, and my vocation. Student affairs has provided me an arena to use the transferrable and direct skills that I have accumulated throughout the years, including my time as a camp counselor, student, and volunteer abroad. After experiencing a tumultuous first year of graduate school where I truly questioned if I was called for higher education, there have been a multitude of experiences and revelations this year that have solidified my passion and interest in the field.

I recognize my desire to engage in and support an environment where learning and development is present and championed, as in higher education. I am enthused about the prospect of working with students from all age groups, as I have an affinity for connecting with people across the ages. I am drawn to a field that is constantly changing, that expects innovation, and encourages self-development, as higher education does. Finally, I am passionate about empowering students, encouraging their development as leaders and human beings, and watching them persist and succeed.

Through it all, I recognize that I will not be enthusiastic about living-in as a hall director infinitely, but do not yet know how to bridge the time as hall director to

beginning a doctoral program, and after that the faculty world. I am also cognizant that this is a field that is time and energy demanding, and that at some point in the next five to seven years I would look to begin taking steps toward family life. I know that, should that be possible, I will need to find a much more defined balance between work and life. Finally, I worry about the ever-growing need for student affairs practitioners to provide well-defined outcomes and assessment for all activities carried out. My greatest fear, in that point, is that the aura and majesty of trusting the process will be neglected and abandoned.

Yet, as I move forward, I recognize that I am interested in a position that values and encourages student affairs staff members to be active in their positions, both as supervisors and developmental practitioners. I am excited at the prospect of serving on departmental committees, as well as the potential of continuing my own personal and professional development by serving on university committees. As a professional in the field, I truly believe in the transformative power of higher education. I believe in authenticity, values congruence, and the synthesis of academic and co-curricular arenas. Finally, I believe that the institution should encourage and celebrate lifelong learning, diversity, and student development.

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Learn

ADVENTURE

POSITIVITY

Spirituality

Community