



for the **RECORD**

January 2019 Vol. 6 No. 1

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Sue Shepard, OACRAO President

Happy New Year and welcome to 2019. The weather has been fairly kind to us so far and I am crossing my fingers for a little snow, but minimal frigid temperatures. I hope all of you got to enjoy your holidays away from the office and share with friends and family.

Your board has already been working away planning opportunities for all our members. One of our new endeavors will be offering webcasts in an effort to reach more members and provide convenience. These will be in addition to our onsite workshops. We are also reaching out to OACAC to see if we can collaborate in some way to better meet the needs of our admissions personnel. New committee members are being welcomed to our various committees and we are excited to get to work on the upcoming slate of sessions for our annual conference in October at Salt Fort Lodge and Conference Center. Remember the conference is a little later this year so mark your calendars for October 9-11, 2019.

The first board meeting will be January 18, 2019. Watch for the February newsletter as I will share all the great work that has been completed so far to plan for 2019 activities. Enjoy January!

 **OACRAO**

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Call for UPDATES! Submit news to Justin Weimer
(weimer.58@osu.edu) by the end of the first week of the
month for that month's publication

What level of Customer Service are you providing?

Jayme Arnett-Technology Analyst and Communication Supervisor
Ohio University

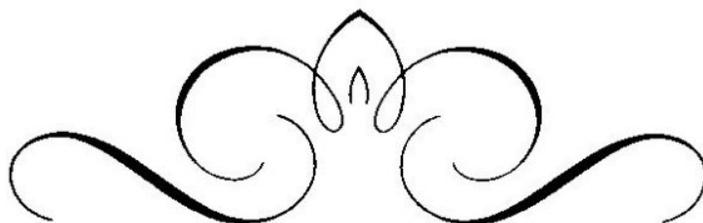
How do you define good customer service? Do you want your institution to be known for having the nicest people or the most knowledgeable? I would advocate the winning formula is to have nice *and* knowledgeable people. The facts are clear, good customer service, even in Higher Education, matters. It's more than a friendly smile and cheerful tone, it's about forging long lasting relationships between the student and the institution.

Students that receive a high level of customer service, when dealing with everything from admissions to course registration, are more likely to remain enrolled in their institution. Today's students are more discerning, price-conscious, and outcomes-oriented than previous cohorts. Whether you're calling your current students Gen Z, iGen, or the Centennial generation, they have higher expectations when it comes to service and quality than ever before. Today's students have almost complete freedom of choice between the difference colleges and universities in the market, especially with the rise of online education.

Debated throughout the years is the notion that students are not "customers". My goal is to not persuade you one way or the other. If you're a faculty member, you have a logical basis to follow the student model. After all, if your student earns an "F" grade, you don't want to entertain the idea that "the customer is always right". If you're working in an administrative unit like the Registrar, Admissions, or Financial Aid, it's equally easy to argue that students pay for a service the institution provides, thus making them more like customers. Whether we call it customer service, excellence in teaching, or the student experience, it's all about putting the learner at the center of operations. Personally, I prefer Robert L. Lenington's approach, author of "Managing Higher Education as a Business". He weighs in on the debate by saying, "A unique feature of higher education is that the students are both customer and the product of the business".

So, what are the basic tenets of the customer service paradigm your institution should model? Here are several to consider: Treat students with dignity and respect. Give students clear directions on how to solve their problems and issues. Be responsive to students and their parents. Finally, give timely answers to students' questions and provide regular feedback on their progress. At Ohio University, we want every employee, regardless of their level of student interaction, to know we exist to serve students. We solicit feedback, especially when it hurts, and we're willing to change processes to improve.

So, develop a service strategy, to build or change the culture. Recognize and incentivize stellar customer service performance and don't forget to share feedback with staff periodically. In the ultra-competitive race to attract retain students, commit to be intentional about measuring the service your institution is providing.



Save the Date!



What: Ohio Small College/University Registrar Meeting

When: Friday, March 15, 2019

Where: Mount Vernon Nazarene University

Time: Registration at 9:00, Begin at 9:30, Done by 3:00

Provided: Continental Breakfast, Lunch, Good Conversations & Time Away

More details will follow on the OACRAO Listserve!

OACRAO PLANNING MEETING

Friday, March 22, 2019

More information to come!

Contact Bob Bulow
(bulow@ohio.edu)

with questions

TAKE ME BACK... CONTINUED!

Registrars and the Gifts of Imperfection

Mary Holland, Associate Registrar
Wright State University

In October 2018 I made personal history by presenting at the OACRAO annual conference *flying solo*. As an introvert, I've been gradually working up to this for several years, finding colleagues to co-present with on topics I selfishly wanted to learn more about. In recent years I've been pondering the unique culture of a Registrar's office and how leadership theories might apply differently to a collection of detail-oriented, perfection-driven, introverts (mostly). I suppose this is what brought me to my topic, "Registrars and the Gifts of Imperfection." How are behaviors we think are helpful, perfectionism in particular, actually getting in the way of office success?

According to Brene Brown, perfectionism, a self-destructive and addictive belief system, keeps us from putting our (imperfect) selves and our (imperfect) work out there for others to see, keeps us from growing and learning, and keeps us from reaching our potential due to fears of shame, judgment, and blame. Fear of failing, making mistakes, and disappointing others impedes learning and hampers success. In contrast, being vulnerable and embracing our imperfections opens us to learning and growth. Brown identifies Courage, Compassion, and Connection as the gifts of imperfection.

In a similar vein, Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck has identified two types of mindsets: fixed and growth. Those with a fixed mindset believe that intelligence, personality, athletic ability, and creativity are innate abilities that can't be changed very much. Whereas a growth mindset sees these as qualities that can be de-

veloped and cultivated through effort, strategies, and with help from others. The fixed mindset pretends at perfection, protecting a self-image as smart by not asking questions and hiding setbacks. Meanwhile the growth mindset finds setbacks motivating and informative. What mistake did I make today that taught me something? What did I try harder at today? What skills do I have today that I didn't have last month?

Recently I found myself struggling to build a multi-sectioned lecture/lab co-requisite relationship in Banner. My internal dialogue was filled with self-judgment and criticism. "I'm embarrassed. I should know this. I'm developing Alzheimer's. What a loser, an imposter. They sure made a big mistake when they awarded me this Ph.D. I can't ask or I'll look stupid. I'll just set it aside for now..."

What could I do instead? Question my extreme self-judgment. Acknowledge these seem more complicated than the usual co-requisites. I've been able to understand other complex relationships in the past. Ordinary people run into snags but through persistence, resourcefulness, and effort, they can deepen their understanding. Think: "I haven't solved it YET. I'm going to put myself out there and give it a try. It's OK to ask others in the office for help."

Afterwards, congratulate myself on my process and improvement and my willingness to be vulnerable. No matter how I learned it, I am building my understanding of Banner corequisites and my learning is making my brain grow. It is creating more, tiny connections. With my stronger smarter brain, perhaps I will find the next challenge easier.

This year I gathered my courage and finally took the leap. I followed Brown's and Dweck's advice and allowed myself to be vulnerable and imperfect. I treated the conference presentation as an opportunity to learn and grow. The OACRAO members in attendance were kind, gracious, and curious to explore our unique Registrar-psyche together. The dialogue was truly exhilarating. I will surely do it again and I hope if you are an introvert, too, you will open yourself to the possibility of growing your public speaking persona with OACRAO. I have found it a wonderful, nurturing environment in which to stretch.

