Why Weaponize When You Can Disarm?

Creating Alliances for Compliance(s)

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Why Weaponize When You Can Disarm?

Agenda

• Intro: My background and experience
• Learning about you
• Who do we serve?
• Building and repairing relationships
• Getting Support and Resources
Introduction: My Point of Entry

My professional experience informs me—
- 3 states: California, Oregon, Wisconsin
- 2 regions: WASFAA, MASFAA
- Sectors—public, private, grad/professional, CC
- Resource constraints and opportunities
- Enrollment—400-48,000
- Student populations: “traditional” and otherwise

My values guide me—
- Education as critical engine of economic opportunity
- Students are my #1 priority
Your turn!

What is your role in the aid office?

What brings you to this session?

Are there specific questions you’re hoping to get answers to here?
Know Thyself

WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?
Develop Your Brand

- Personal Branding, Office Branding
  - It’s not a logo—it’s how others perceive you.
  - Manage public perception intentionally
  - Social media—all the world’s a stage, and everything is forever
- Authenticity
- Consistency
- Story-telling
- Who do you admire and why? What is their brand? How is it expressed?
Who do we serve?

Many competing priorities—what resonates most broadly?
Who we serve--prioritize

ED/FSA
Our institution, leadership
Enrollment Management
Our financial aid office team
Campus colleagues
Donors
Students
Parents and other student supporters
Building Relationships

DEVELOP, SUSTAIN, AND REPAIR

Why Weaponize When You Can Disarm?
Share a challenge you’ve experienced that would have benefitted from better relationships with campus colleagues.
  ▶ What went wrong?
  ▶ Were you able to recover?
  ▶ Were there long-term issues?
  ▶ What did you learn?
  ▶ What questions remain?

Share something you’ve done to successfully repair/rebuild your relationships on campus.
  ▶ What went wrong?
  ▶ How did you address the issue?
  ▶ How did you reach a positive result?
  ▶ What fears/doubts did you combat?
  ▶ What was gained?
Building your campus network

**Barriers**
- Introversion
- Shyness
- “I’m too busy”
- Others’ perceptions of our offices

**Benefits**
- Build your office’s public profile
- Create allies and proponents
- Be included in key conversations
- Get more resources!
Focus on points of resonance

What can we all agree on?
- Students! (hopefully)
  - Supporting success
  - Reducing debt burden
- Institutional points of pride
  - Mission, vision, values
  - Shared goals
  - Community values

Communicate to connect
- Listen, be curious, learn, share
- Be positive; assume good intent
- Understand motivations, values
- Be solution-oriented
- Explain complex concepts simply
- Use storytelling
- Invite questions, answer thoughtfully

Why Weaponize When You Can Disarm? 2023
Getting & Staying Connected Socially

**Settings**
- Campus events—commencement, gatherings for faculty and staff
- Governance committees
- Hiring committees
- Campus leadership initiatives
- Sportsketball
- Student performances/shows

**Activities**
- Volunteer (yay for structure!)
- Committee work
- Create a structure for social activities:
  - Coffee
  - Lunches
  - Happy hour
  - Walking/biking/running, etc.
Share Your Expertise, Instill Confidence

- Campus forums, conferences, in-services, poster sessions
  - Present on topics of broad interest:
    - Financial aid basics
    - SAP
    - Loan debt, default, repayment, forgiveness
- Connect with the academic enterprise
  - Look for opportunities for research-practice conversations and collaboration
- Offer stand-alone financial aid learning opportunities
- Invite colleagues outside of your office to financial aid trainings/webinars
What Not to Say—Know Your Audience!

- **Don’t complain** about workload
  - Instead, how do avoidable burdens impact your ability to serve **students**?
- **Avoid politics**—**never assume** you know others’ views
  - Don’t lose your audience, practice **pivoting**
- **Avoid financial aid-ese**—don’t be a financial aid Vulcan
- **Don’t denigrate** anyone
- “**No**” and point to **rules, staffing**
  - Try “Yes, under these conditions” or “here are some alternatives”
- **I told you so**
Sometimes things don’t go well! We’re human.

- Make it right—if you messed up, offer a sincere, unqualified apology.
- If you’ve been wronged, take it upon yourself to start the conversation.
- Be proactive in seeking opportunities to rebuild trust and collaborate.
Getting Support and Resources

- Construct an argument focused on the intended outcome
- Focus on how your ask benefits students
- Use storytelling
- Offer multiple ‘price points’ and outcomes
- Tie the envisioned outcome to strategic priorities
- Customize the message to your audience
- Leverage relationships for support
- Be intentional in demonstrating success with resources allocated
Never Let A Good Crisis Go To Waste!

Find a silver lining in every situation—highlight office needs & contributions

- COVID/HEERF
- Program Review
- Audit Finding
- Default Rate
- Negative Press
Discussion: Problem-Solving

- Share your success stories and best practices!
- Share challenging situations you’d like to workshop
Reflections and Thanks

Additional questions & thoughts?

What will you take back to your office?

Who will you connect with?

I hope you’ll share your successes!

Reach out anytime—
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LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.