

December 7, 2016

TO: Professional Development Grant Committee/Academic Affairs

FR: Dr. Christopher L. Giroir, Assistant Professor for College Student Personnel

RE: Final Report for Professional Development Grant

I was fortunate to be awarded funds to cover my expenses associated with attending and presenting at the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators'-(NASPA) Regional conference (Region IV) in St. Louis, MO, on November 15-17, 2016. NASPA is one of the largest professional conferences in the higher education/student affairs discipline and it is a true honor to be selected to present at the first ever Region IV WE (West and East Division) conference. There were over 1,000 participants attending the 3 day event.

ATU granted me \$825 to help cover some of the expenses associated with the conference. I was fortunate to have a program entitled, "Sunglasses, Contacts, Bifocals, and Readers: Looking at Parents through Different Lenses," selected to be included in this year's program selections. There were over 500 program submissions, however only 100 were actually chosen to be presented. I was co-presenting with Dr. Beth Giroir, who has worked with family relations at Arkansas Tech.

The program was designed to educate higher education professionals about best practices that are commonly used when it comes to interaction with today's college parent. Parents are sometimes seen as a hindrance and overstep their boundaries with their college aged children, but we were hoping to change this opinion with our presentation. This presentation was aimed at looking at parents from a different lens and how we can partner with parents to help their student be successful with their college studies. It is important to realize parents take on many roles at our institutions and we shared what those roles are and how can we interact positively with these roles. We shared the 2015 results from the national survey of college and university parent programs to review what expectations parents have of college administrators and discussed ways many institutions are meeting these needs/demands. What I found to be the most beneficial part of the session was during the open discussion about successful family/parent programs and events on college campuses across our region. I know that I took notes and plan to share those notes with our colleagues in our student services area.

The program was a success. We discovered we were the only program session focused on parents and family relations and those attending shared their appreciation to us for offering the session. Participants were asked to share feedback on an evaluation form and that information was given to us upon the conclusion of the conference. The evaluations indicated participants in attendance were pleased with the information presented and gave high marks of success. We had a few individuals request a copy of our presentation so they could take it back and share with their colleagues.

In closing, I would like to say "thanks" again for your support in my professional development. As a faculty member teaching future student affairs professionals, attending and presenting at conferences provides me with exposure to the latest research and "best practices" in higher education. Not only did

I have the chance to present a program at NASPA, but I was able to connect with some of our alumni who are now working in the field at the conference. In addition, I made great contacts with other faculty members to collaborate on potential research topics and publications.