



# The Strategic Guide to Shaping Your Student Affairs Career

*Sonja Ardoin*

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“The Strategic Guide to Shaping Your Student Affairs Career is a one of a kind resource for student affairs administrators in any stage of their career. The book is well organized around five key elements of career strategy that helpfully prompt readers to not only focus and reflect on critical stages in their career development and advancement, but also on their personal motivations and goals. This is enhanced by the inclusion of voices of current administrators who share their stories and insights to illustrate the book’s message.”— Ashley Tull, Director of Assessment and Strategic Initiatives, Division of Student Affairs, Southern Methodist University


"As a professor in a higher education program I seek activities and resources that can bookend a student’s experience in our program. I have finally found the book that will both stimulate discussion among new professionals in their first class and foster rich dialogue in their last class. Actually reading the book twice affords students the opportunity to consider the core elements of a career strategy as discussed in this text: lifelong learning, extending your experiences, planning for professional development, networking/connecting, and self-reflection. The Strategic Guide to Shaping Your Student Affairs Career will be a must read for our students.”—Audrey J. Jaeger, Professor, Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis: Higher Education, Co-Executive Director, National Initiative for Leadership & Institutional Effectiveness, North Carolina State University

This is a book for any student affairs professional who wants to strategically shape his or her career path, whether in early or mid-career, or contemplating a career, in student affairs.

By offering us the fruits of the reflective and strategic approach she has used to shape her own career, and by gathering the voices of twenty five professionals who offer the insights and advice derived from their own experiences, Sonja Ardoin has created a guide for everyone in student affairs who wants to be intentional in setting the course for their professional and personal development.

She begins by describing the changing and varied student populations who are the heart of this field, and outlines the typical organizational structures of student affairs, the range of functional areas, and how practice varies by size and type of institution. She highlights major trends, discusses the typical paths of entry to the profession, the expectations and realities of starting in a new position, the process of socialization, and the required skills and competencies.

She devotes the core of the book to the five key elements for developing a career strategy. In doing so she ranges over choices to be made about formal qualifications, and describes activities – from volunteering and committee work to conference presentations, writing and teaching – that we can use to strategically develop the proficiencies to attain our goals.

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