

Hitting Refresh on Career Advancement and Job Searches

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DENISON

Agenda

- The Financial Aid profession
- Advancing through Financial Aid positions
- Transitions to Director
- Assessment/Before You Search
- Skills Assessment
- Resume
- Networking

What do you love about FA?

Student Aid Professionals



What my family thinks I do



What my students think I do



What society thinks I do



What my boss thinks I do



What I think I do



What I actually do

Work Environment Financial Aid

- **School Type**

- Large public – state university or community college
 - Large staff
 - BIG volume of everything – students, phone calls, visitors, loans
 - FA jobs are more specialized
- Small private, non-profit
 - Small staff
 - Jack of All Trades
- Proprietary /trade schools – for-profit
 - Smaller school and staff – maybe one-person shop!
 - Some could be clock-hour – different rules

- **Business Model**

- Enrollment Management
- Finance and Administration

My Journey

28 years in financial aid

- Work-study student
Private college
- Financial Aid Counselor/AD
Public college
- Student loan servicer rep
Great Lakes Higher Ed
- Assistant/Associate Director
- Director of Financial Aid
10+ years at private



Positions in Financial Aid

Climbing the FA Ladder

- Work-Study Student
- Financial Aid Coordinator
- Financial Advisor
- Financial Aid Counselor/Jr/Sr
- Assistant Director
- Associate Director
- Director



Financial Aid Specialists

- One-Stop-Shop rep
- Scholarship coordinator
- Loan Processor
- Verification Specialist
- Default Management
- Customer Service Rep

Essential Skills – All FA Positions

Hard Skills

- Education earned/degree
- Competence/experience in financial aid
 - Processing aid/loans
 - Verification
- Making presentations
- Analyzing data

Soft Skills

- Customer-service oriented
- Empathetic
- Counseling & Problem solving
- Efficient and flexible
- Detail-oriented
- Team-player

How to get Promoted

- Excel in your current job without reminders
- Become an expert in a particular FA area
- Take initiative for job/process improvement
- Volunteer
 - Campus contributions
 - Professional orgs – share knowledge and best practices
- Train
 - Conferences/workshops
 - NASFAA credentials
 - In-house Training - co-workers, student workers and peers
- Ask your supervisor / suggest job or responsibility changes

Characteristics Managers Notice

- “Exceeds” NOT “Meets” & “Above and Beyond”
- Positive Attitude
- Team Player - Are you a Go-To Person on Campus?
- Is this Your Job or Profession?
- Soft Skills matter more in hiring and promoting



Am I Director Material?

- Self-assessment – Myers-Briggs, DISC
 - Consider your career
 - Personality and work assessments
 - Myers-Briggs
 - DISC
 - Strength Finders
 - Leadership style
- Peer/supervisor assessment – 360 review



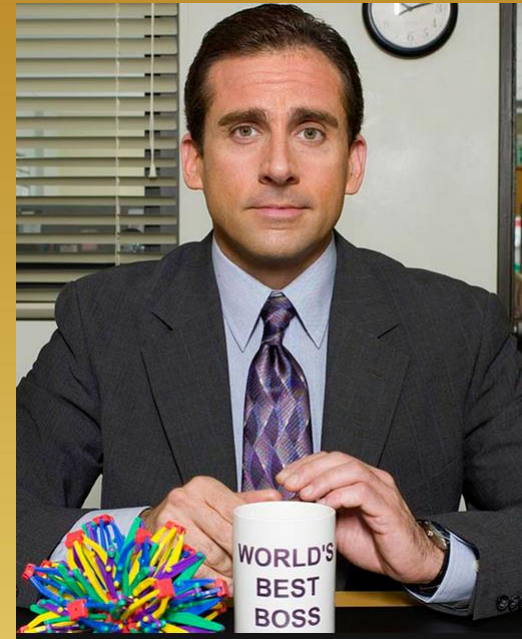
Transitions to FA Director Role

- HUGE STEP
- Management of aid office
 - Operations
 - Staff training and development
 - Technology – document management, systems set-up, testing
- Institutional Mindset
 - Budgeting institutional aid & controlling discount rates
 - Recommending financial aid policies
 - Working with campus consultants
 - Implementing changes
 - Managing up
- Institutional surveys and reports – IR work
- Campus liaison for all things FA related



Characteristics of a Good Director

- Leader/Coach/Supervisor
 - People and positions
 - Master of Delegation
- Thoughtful Visionary
 - Streamline Operations
 - Building your Team
 - Think outside the box
- Analytical skills
 - Interpret and report data
 - Ability to understand and implement regs



Related Professions

- Department of Education – policy or training
- Financial Aid systems analyst
- Financial Aid consultants
- NASFAA policy team
- Personal Finance Coach
- Student Loan Servicers/Lenders
- College Access Groups
 - IKIC/OCAN/NCAN
- Enrollment Management



Assess Your Situation

- What do you love (or not love) about your work?
- Who are your Supporters? Mentors? Detractors? PITA's?
- What are the possibilities at your current organization? Have you ASKED?
- What are the (non-compensation) benefits of your workplace that you (may) take for granted? Are there developmental opportunities outside of your organization that your organization will fund?
- What is your current ratio of good/bad days?
- Is it February or the Holiday Season or your Birthday Week?

Before You Begin Searching

- Assess Developmental Needs/Skill Gaps (and be honest!)
- Check with your college/grad schools for resources
- Ensure your Resume & LinkedIn Profile are current
- Assess (and Access) your Network

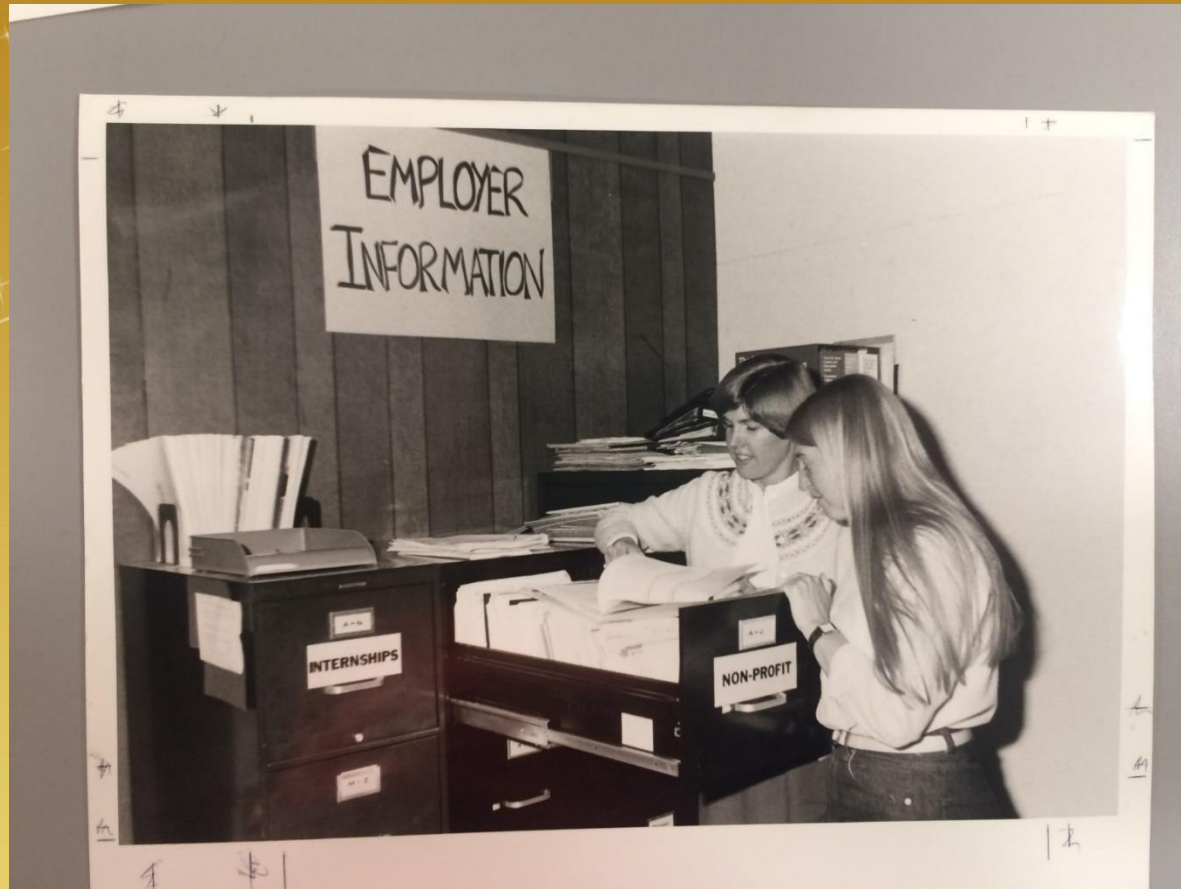
POWER OF OUR PAST FORCE OF OUR FUTURE



**OHIO ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS
50TH ANNIVERSARY**

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This isn't the 1980's!



**OHIO ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS
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So Many Opportunities!



LinkedIn	8,459,200 total
Indeed.Com	217,224 Finance
	135,586 Ohio
	5485 Financial Counselor
	946 Financial Aid
	59 Financial Aid Director
Glassdoor.com	207,240 Finance
HigherEdJobs.Com	454 Financial Aid
OASFAA.ORG	17 Financial Aid

Job Search 2018

- Balance of networking vs. searching vs. targeting
- Variety of Ways to apply– resume, LinkedIn/Glassdoor, etc.
- 4 Generations competing for jobs
- Social Media presence matters

But Small Things (Still!) Matter

- Firm Handshake
- Eye Contact
- Language
- Thank You Notes
- Social Media



Career Exercise

- Pick a partner
- Write down jobs/careers you could do instead of Financial Aid (Two minutes!)
- Share with your partner
- Add to your list

Resumes

Not Much Time to Make an Impression



Recruiters take an average of **6 seconds** to scan a resume.

Source: TheLadders

Resume

- It is about the READER – NOT YOU
- Hiring managers are reviewing quickly; Catch their attention
- Details/Design and Artistic-never ending
- ~~Absolutely~~ Absolutely no errors

Bullets – Make Each One Count!

- Talk with students about financial aid
- Counsel 2000 students about their financial aid package
- Advise 2000 applicants and current students on their financial aid package annually, contributing to a 56% yield rate and a 87% retention rate.

Networking

Where do you start?

MAKE A LIST:

- Who do you already know?
- Who do you want to know?
- Take advantage of every opportunity; organized networking events, the person next to you on plane, conferences, friends, friends of friends, friends of relatives, alumni from our schools
- Professional communication via email, phone or in-person

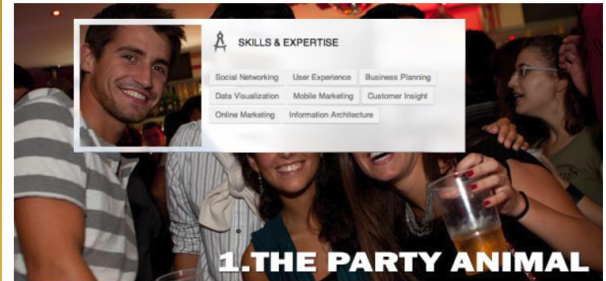
Networking – The Basics

- LinkedIn profile should be up to date
- Resume should be updated and ready to share
- Have your “Elevator Pitch” ready.
- Networking is not about asking for a job, this is a relationship built on mutual trust.
- Ask yourself, “What do you want to know more about?”

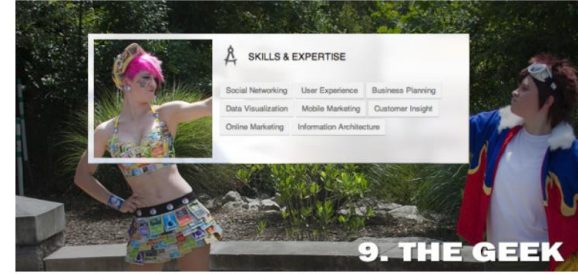
LinkedIn Basics

- Upload a quality and professional photo

THE PARTY ANIMAL



THE GEEK



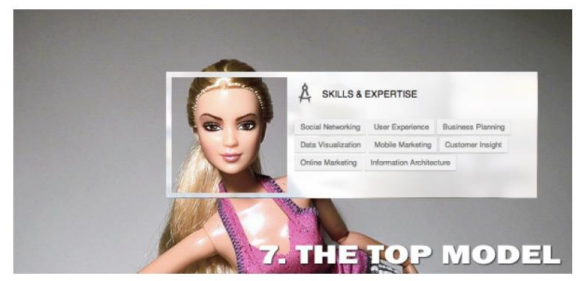
THE DARK SIDE



THE ADVENTURER



THE TOP MODEL



THE CHRISTMAS HAT



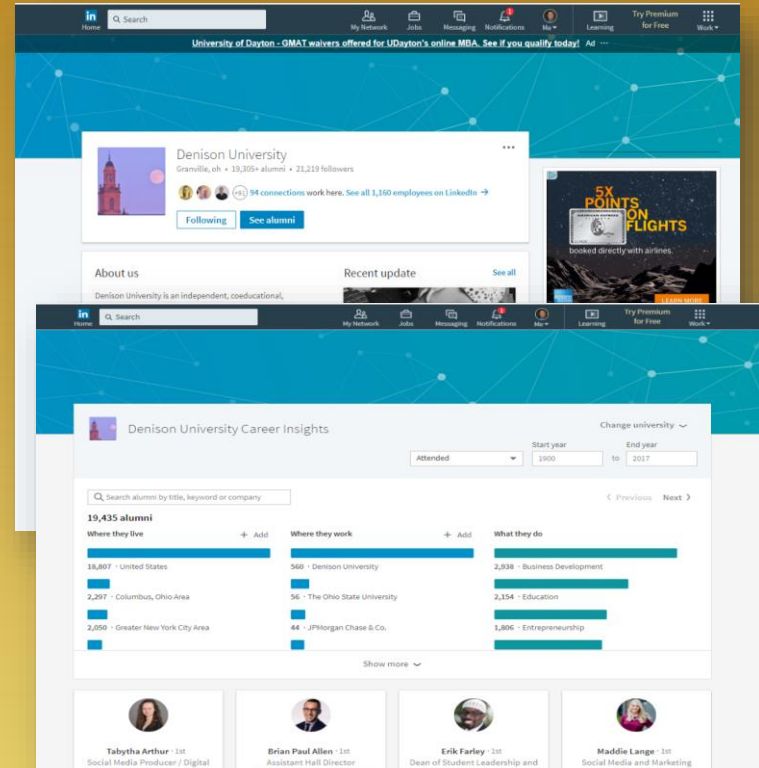
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/10-worst-linkedin-profile-pictures-ever-giorgio-minguzzi/>

LinkedIn Basics

- Upload a quality and professional photo
- Headline and Summary: Briefly communicate your background and plans for future
- Experience: Focus on accomplishments and include deliverables
- Leverage projects to show what you can do/have done
- Seek recommendations

Finding Alumni on LinkedIn

- Search for “X University” in the Schools section
- Click on the See Alumni button
- Sort by location, company, industry, etc.



What Should I Say?

Initial Outreach

- Establish your connection
- Make a reasonable, but specific request (i.e. learn from your experience at organization X)
- Suggest a next step (i.e. 20 or 30-minute phone call next week)

Actual Conversation

- Prepare, demonstrate that you have done some research
- Think about what you are trying to better understand
- Ask for other contacts/ideas
- Follow-up!

Moving Forward

Write down three things you will do next to either
Advance your Career or begin the process of
Identifying your next opportunity

Skills Exercise

- Pick a partner
- Write down the skills you have gained in your current and previous role (One minute)
- Say them out loud to each other (One minute each)
- Add to your list

Skills You Probably Have

- You can “Do Math”
- Critical thinking
- Financial analysis
- Diplomacy and customer service
- Work with others (admissions, etc.)
- Influence
- Presentations

Networking Exercise

- Write down names of people in your network (whether or not you are still in touch with them) (3 minutes!)
 - Family members
 - Friends – high school, college, grad school
 - Friends' family members
 - Colleagues (past and present)
 - People who share common interests (i.e. sports league teammates, choir members, religious affiliations, community service organizations)
- Circle the names of 10 people you could/should reach out to in the next month



Questions?



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