

NASPA NC

October 2021 Newsletter





A Look in the Rear View: Reflections on a Career in Student Affairs by Dr. Penny Rue

As I approach retirement, I am delighted to reflect that my journey both begins and ends in North Carolina. Fifty years ago this fall I was a freshman at Duke, reveling in the freedom, inquiry, and friendship that is the first year of college. My first leadership role was as an orientation leader helping new students find their place, and I was hooked. Like many of you, I was mentored by outstanding professionals, which led me to my incredibly meaningful career.

My first job post-Masters was at UNC-Chapel Hill, first as a live-in residence life professional, and later as the Counseling Center Assistant Director for Outreach. In the intervening years I have loved every job I've had, especially the one from which I retire, Vice President for Campus Life at Wake Forest University.

When I think about what has sustained me across these many decades, first, it is the way that I have been strengthened by the deep relationships that we form with our students, the privilege of being, as Marcia Baxter Magolda writes, good company for the journey. The second—I have been sustained by the rhythms of university work. We're tied to the timeless rituals of an academic calendar, with its predictable beginnings and endings--yet also the newness of novel projects, fresh challenges, & new events. So basically, in normal times, each September is like another, but no two days are the same.

Much of what I have learned about leadership has come from watching leaders I admire, and also from learning from my own mistakes. Recently, a Facebook post asked, give your best advice to your student self in four words. I knew just what to write: "It's not about you." Getting out of your own way as a leader is of paramount importance. Whether it's ego, or perfectionism, or the need to achieve, if the focus is on you, you can't really meet others where they are.

The work of Peter Bloch on *Stewardship* resonates with my approach to leadership: how to be deeply accountable for the results of an organization without controlling others, defining purpose for others, or taking care of others. This approach honors people's autonomy and fosters authenticity, which is essential to trust.



Along the way I learned a few leadership basics: *People care about what they've helped to create*, so make any planning process bottom-up and inclusive.

Trustworthiness is essential—you need to *do what you say you'll do when you say you will*. I learned to take careful notes, prep for meetings, and branch beyond my defined job responsibilities to establish myself as “go to” person, capable of bringing a diverse team together to get something done.

I use the term “sideways leadership” to capture the very real phenomenon that leadership can and does come from anywhere. In our world especially—where front line staff work most closely with students and exercise independent decision-making all of the time—I count on staff members throughout the organization to see themselves as leaders. I particularly resonate with Brene Brown's concept of [daring leadership](#), where we are called to be awkward, brave, and kind.

I've loved every job I've ever had, and I don't think any role is more important than another. So wherever you sit, think about your agency—what can you do from your vantage point to make the world, or your community, a better place? And how can you find your daring leadership to help make it so?



Learn more about Dr. Penny Rue and her career [here](#).

Member Spotlight - [Erin M. Bentrim, Ph.D.](#)



Senior Education and Training Specialist - Anthology, Inc.

NASPA NC Board Member

Where are you from?

I was born in Ohio, but my family moved to a few different states when I was growing up. I attended middle school and high school in Greenville, SC so that is probably where I spent most of my “growing up” years.

Why did you decide to pursue a career in higher education?

I knew I wanted to obtain a master’s degree after I finished my BA. I decided against law school and a friend pointed me in the direction of the M.Ed. program in Student Personnel Services at the University of South Carolina. I read the course descriptions and had that aha moment. Like many student affairs professionals, I started my career in Housing and Residence Life as a live-in coordinator of a two building complex. After about 6 or 7 years of student affairs work, I obtained my Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Research. I went into Institutional Research for a while but found my true passion as a Student Affairs Assessment professional.



After 15 years of working primarily on a college campus, I just joined Anthology, Inc (a higher education tech company) as an Education and Training Specialist for Assessment.

Why did you join NASPA?

I joined NASPA in 1992 as a first-year master's student. My supervisor at that time was very involved in professional organizations and I am quite grateful that he led me to NASPA. It has been a wonderful networking opportunity and has allowed me to share my skills outside of my "day job".

What are you most looking forward to in NASPA NC?

I'm truly excited to be a part of the group and to be serving as a member of the communications team. I'm most looking forward to watching NASPA NC grow and develop. We have enormous talent in the state.

What is the last book you read?

My taste in books is pretty diverse and kind of all over the place. My last two were *The Selected Letters of Laura Ingalls Wilder* (Anderson, 2017) and *Clean Meat: How growing meat without animals will revolutionize dinner and the world* (Shapiro, 2018)

First concert?

This will give me away as a true child of the 80s. Howard Jones and Nik Kershaw performed together and that was my first concert. I can't believe I just admitted that.

What is one thing that not many people know about you?

I have been volunteering as a Cabarrus County Guardian ad Litem for about 5 years now. Guardian ad Litem are appointed by a judge as an advocate or the "voice" for children who have been deemed abused, neglected, or abandoned. If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, I encourage you to investigate the GAL program in your area. ([North Carolina Guardian ad Litem \(volunteerforgal.org\)](http://NorthCarolinaGuardianadLitem.org))





Updates from NASPA NC Professional Development Committee

Fall Virtual Drive-In Postponed

The committee has decided to postpone the virtual drive-in to a later date. Please stay tuned for further updates.

Monthly Workshop Series

The professional development committee will be hosting our virtual lunch workshop series in again for our colleagues to come together to talk about trends and issues happening in our profession. Registration information will be coming soon for our November workshop.

What's Happening on Your Campus?

We want to hear from you! Do you have professional development opportunities to share with our NASPA colleagues? Submit them on the form below to be added to the monthly newsletter.

[Professional Development/Event Notification Form](#)



Higher Education and Student Affairs News You Can Use

Click on the article links below to learn more about current trends, issues and best practices in higher education and student affairs.

['Playing Long Ball'](#)

[Reinventing Fall Weekends for Parents and Alumni](#)

[Congress Weighs in on College Athletes Leveraging Their Brand](#)

[Senators Discuss Their Proposal that would Repair the Infrastructure of HBCUs](#)

[Revamping Higher Ed's Mental Health Policies](#)

[Using Texts to Support Students Through Covid-19](#)

[Podcast: Transforming the Campus Experience Series](#)

[Students Struggling With Mental Health Often Confide in Professors. They Want More Guidance on How to Help](#)

Wellbeing Tips for Coping with Pandemic Flux

In their August 2021 Washington Post article, authors Dr. Amy Cuddy and JillEllyn Riley wrote about [Pandemic Flux Syndrome](#). As most colleges/universities returned to in person instruction and full campus life, a mixed sense of hope, excitement and anxiety came with students and faculty/staff. With the fall semester being half way over now, all of these feelings continue to fluctuate on a regular if not daily basis. Seeing this kind of article appear within the last few months in popular higher education media outlets has not been uncommon. As we hear of stories of staff morale lowering, burnout increasing, and staff leaving higher education all together, this kind of article feels more and more like just our steady current state of being.



So how do we as student affairs continue to support our own families (for some of us also managing kids returning to in person school), support our students and find time to make wellbeing a priority for ourselves? There is no simple answer here. However, as we enter into flu season, live with the continuation of the pandemic, and live in a world that continues to be hard in many ways, we know that prioritizing and maintaining a wellbeing practice is critical to our lives. Having a wellbeing practice makes us better colleagues, partners, parents, friends, caregivers and helps us be more present for our students.

Below are 5 wellbeing tips that if done on a regular basis, can help sustain us during this difficult time, through the end of the semester and beyond.

1. Make sure you are well nourished throughout the day. Don't skip meals. Have snacks. [Practice intuitive eating](#)
2. Create a sleep routine and stick to it. Maintaining a healthy sleep habit can increase our immune system. Adults should aim for an average of 7 - 9 hours of sleep each day. [Sleep](#) is necessary for survival and helps keep our nervous system functioning.
3. Drink water. Staying hydrated on a regular basis is a challenge for many people. Myself included. There are many [benefits](#) of drinking water such as helping with brain function and delivering oxygen throughout the body.
4. Move your body. There are so many [health benefits](#) to moving. Whatever brings you joy in moving your body, do that.
5. Close your computer. Find time for off screen connection. Human beings are built for in person connection. Make sure to find time to (safely) connect with your supportive community in person.

Not feeling well impacts all the people who we live with, love, and work with. We can't pour from an empty cup. So spend time figuring out how to build small moments of wellbeing throughout your day. Your family, friends, and colleagues will notice it and be thankful for it. More importantly, so will you.



Marian Trattner (she/her)
Assistant Director of Wellbeing, Health Promotion
Wake Forest University

Graduate Program Highlight



My experience within the MHE has been very rewarding. This program has pushed me as both a scholar and professional in higher education. I have been exposed to so many different areas of higher education and met very valuable mentors within the field. The connections and relationships that I have created here at Elon will last beyond my time in the MHE.

Tori Masinsin, Class of 2021

Elon University's [Master of Arts in Higher Education](#) (MHE) builds on the strength of Elon as a national leader in active and engaged learning. Students are immersed in the study of higher education in a student-centered environment rooted in hands-on, experiential learning with a global perspective. MHE students have the opportunity to learn and practice principles of effective education, strategic leadership, ethical decision making, and social justice advocacy. MHE faculty are full-time professionals who draw upon their extensive higher education experience to bring course material to life. Graduates leave the program as visionary professionals prepared to assume a variety of leadership roles in diverse institutions of higher education.

The MHE program is a full-time, two-year, 36-credit program. In a small cohort of twelve, students move through an intentionally sequenced curriculum and set of professional activities, including: a paid half-time apprenticeship, two internships, a capstone project, and funding to support engagement in regional and national professional development opportunities. A unique feature of the MHE program is a study away experience in the winter term of the second year. There is no additional charge for this global experience. For more information on the Elon MHE program, please contact MHE Director, Dr. Rozana Carducci (rcarducci@elon.edu).

Elon is the national leader in academic programs
that "Focus on Student Success."
— U.S. News & World Report

 elon.edu/mhe

Featured Job Postings



- [Associate Director of Campus Recreation - UNCW](#)
- [Assistant Director, Transition Programs - ECU](#)
- [Assistant Director, Integrative Student Services - Student Organizations and Activities, School of Business - Wake Forest University](#)
- [Director of Student Health Center - UNC Charlotte](#)
- [Community Director, Department of Residence Life and Housing - Wake Forest University](#)



Are you interested in becoming more involved with NASPA NC? Do you have content (job postings, articles, upcoming events on your campus, etc...) you would like shared in our newsletter? Would you like to connect with our board members to provide ideas and recommendations for the future? Email us at ncnaspa@gmail.com.