



Podcast: Student Affairs One Thing

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Summary: We chat with Dr. Josie Ahlquist, a digital engagement and leadership speaker, consultant and author.

B E G I N T R A N S C R I P T

Stuart Brown: Welcome to Student affairs One thing, a podcast that asks a simple question of seasoned student affairs professionals - what is one thing you have learned that has helped shaped your professional career? I'm your host Stuart Brown, founder of StudentAffairs.com, one of the most accessed websites by student affairs professionals. On our pages we have the most cost-effective job posting board, listing hundreds of open student services positions, a wide range of webinars and a virtual exhibit hall.

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On today's episode, I am very pleased to have Dr. Josie. Ahlquist. Josie is a digital engagement and leadership speaker, consultant and author. She has been in the field of student affairs for just about 20 years and giving you a couple of extra years, sort of like a golden parachute, will give you a few years to add to your years of service. So welcome to the program.

Dr. Josie Ahlquist: Thank you so much for having me. I'll take a parachute any day.

Stuart Brown: So Josie, what is your one thing?

Dr. Josie Ahlquist: My one thing is to declare what you want. So I started my path on college campuses and my last institution I was at before going rogue as a speaker and consultant was at Loyola Marymount University. And the way that I would declare what I wanted, especially with my career path, is planting seeds of my own interest and ideas to my supervisor that eventually resulted in more responsibilities, promotions and title changes that I would pitch and present to him.

Those types of skill sets were especially helpful once I left onto my own career path after getting my doctorate. That is I had to start to advocate for myself. So declaring what you want also means telling people that you know who care about you, but also to yourself, these ideas that you have in your head and getting them out into the world. So to become a speaker, it was as simple as posting on Facebook. I want to speak at six campuses in the next six months. Who wants to see my face? And it resulted in 12 speaking engagements. Not all were paid, but it was that inclining of interest and inquiry to put it out into the world using a tool like Facebook or Twitter.

So in both those examples, it's giving yourself credit for the ideas in your head and then starting to communicate them even if you don't have the degree, you don't have the experience - yet letting your director know, your supervisor, this is where I'd like to go in my career. And putting it out there on social media or even an email to say, gosh, this is where my heart strings are pulling me; let's let the universe do a little work for me. And I have been always pleasantly surprised what the universe is returned.

Stuart Brown: So what it seems that what you're saying is if you're in a position and saying higher ed, that it's good to be in the position to do, do your job. But also, I guess I don't want to put words in your mouth, but don't be afraid to ask your supervisor or to have that dialogue, maybe that continuous dialogue about what you're looking forward to do, that you just don't have to always sit back and go along for the ride.

Dr. Josie Ahlquist: Absolutely. Another example was in my doctorate, it was one of my advisors that I said, you know, I'm thinking of other options outside of staying in my full time position and what other, you know, part time things could be out there. And he said, we always have funding left over for graduate assistance. And we were able to find me a GA within the next semester just by kind of just sharing even really introductory ideas of a future path. So I guess I would just want people to know, you don't have to have the whole plan figured out, just including other people in your initial ideas and again, giving yourself credit to put some of those out there to see who else might be connected and wants to support you.

Stuart Brown: And I think you also need to be comfortable in your own shoes to do that because not everyone is able to put the word out, but to for those individuals that do feel that comfort level to go for it and maybe you might not always get what you want or you might not go in the direction, but at least the word is out. And I can imagine even at a small institution, if word gets out that this is what I'm looking for or if there are things that people know about, that they might reach out towards you directly.

Dr. Josie Ahlquist: Absolutely. So making it realistic, right? My Facebook post about wanting to do six talks in six months, it wasn't 'I want to make \$60,000 from speaking engagements in the next six months.' Even though sometimes it is fun to see someone declare 'I'm going to become a college president someday', you know, and even though that might not happen for a decade or so, uh it's also how I found mentors and sponsors to be a published author that I started to kind of share a little bit on Twitter ideas that I had and you know, I had a colleague reach out to say, you know, I published plenty with this stylist publishing - can I put you in touch with who my editor was and I didn't post those tweets thinking I'm trying to find a publisher, I'm just starting to share some ideas that I have right now.

Stuart Brown: So I guess if we wanted to sum up this is if you have ideas, don't be afraid to share them, because you don't know where that will lead you and it might lead you in a direction that you are thinking of going, or as in your case, it led you to a different direction.

Dr. Josie Ahlquist: Absolutely!

Stuart Brown: Well, Josie, I want to thank you for sharing your one thing, I think it's really important for people to realize that they don't just have to sit in their positions and do the job that as long as you feel comfortable as you are willing to maybe take some steps in a direction that you might be uncomfortable with unfamiliar with. You don't know where that will lead you.

Dr. Josie Ahlquist: Yeah, declare what you want to sit with that and be empowered with that.

Stuart Brown: OK, I'm writing that down now - declare what you want.

I want to thank Dr Josie Alquist, a digital engagement and leadership speaker consultant and author for being on this episode of Student Affairs One Thing, a podcast that asks a simple question of season student affairs professionals - what is one thing you have learned that has helped shape your professional career?

I've been your host, Stuart Brown, the founder of StudentAffairs.com, one of the most accessed websites by student affairs professionals. I hope you will join us next time for another episode of Student Affairs One Thing.

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