



Podcast: One Thing - New Professional

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Episode Title: 4. Clark Futch

Summary: We chat with Clark Futch, Assistant Director for Career Services at Saint Leo University.

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Stuart Brown: Welcome to the Student Affairs New Professional One Thing, a podcast that asks a simple question of new professionals in the field - what is one thing you've learned you feel will help you as you move forward in your career. I'm your host, Stuart Brown, the developer 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 and a wide range of webinars. I want to thank our sponsor Alcohol101+, a cost free digital alcohol education program developed by Responsibility.org. Designed to be used by colleges and universities, the course includes interactive and quick paced programming covering core alcohol education topics through an administrative dashboard. The program contains tools for institutions to easily roster students, track progress and analyze student metrics. To learn more about Alcohol101+ visit <https://www.alcohol101.plus>.

Stuart Brown: On today's episode, I am very pleased to have Clark Futch, Assistant Director for Career Services at Saint Leo University. Welcome to the program, Clark.

Clark Futch: Happy to be here.

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

Clark Futch: The most important thing to me and my course so far has been mentorship, finding someone in every stage of my life to push me and make me better. Not only that, but I also see in the future where I'll be able to be a mentor to others and I think that's how higher education continues to hold onto some of those things that we've been trying to keep in our industry for a long time.

Stuart Brown: Would you like to elaborate on that and if you have a story behind why you feel mentorship is your one thing.

Clark Futch: I think the story starts with actually my neighbor and I think most people at some point in their life has had a mentor maybe in high school, college and their job, now maybe unofficially, maybe officially and my mentor his name is Jason and he has nothing to do with any of my career. Yeah, he was not in higher education, he didn't go to Florida, he didn't follow a lot of the same things I did. He wasn't in a fraternity, he didn't travel a lot, he was in a very different space. But one thing he did do is every time we met he constantly challenged me and I remember I would come home whenever I would get the chance from U. F. And I would talk to him about what I was focusing on and he would challenge me and what I was thinking. I thought that was the most impactful thing and over the years, for the past 10 years now, every time that we meet he constantly asked me those questions those kind of hard questions that you know is this, is this really something that you want to continue to do? Are you doing the right thing and he always challenges me in that way and I can't thank him enough for being there and making sure that I'm pushing as hard as I can to be the best person I can be, but also to continue down the path that I need to be.

I had an experience on the road where I was working at Stephen .F Austin State University and this is in Nacogdoches, Texas. Interestingly enough, I was working with the chapter there of our fraternity when I was working for our headquarters as a consultant that was very small. They didn't really have much going on, but the group of students that they had there, the young men there for some reason, really took a liking to the things that I had to say. And so much so that recently one of them reached out to me and let me know that since I had left that position several years ago, he had taken on that role now and what I was doing at the time, and a lot of that had to do based on the things that I had said unknowingly to him at the time that ended up making a huge impact in his life and being a mentor to him when I didn't even know that I was,

Stuart Brown: I think there are two interesting things that you brought up. One with your neighbor, I think that demonstrates that you don't necessarily have a mentor that you pick out. That sometimes the mentorship comes just out of the blue from places you don't know, and I think it's interesting talking about your neighbor that is bringing up things that maybe a more traditional mentor might not bring up, you know, sort of just the regular student affairs things, you know, showing you the ropes, helping you advance in your career. But here's someone that's coming out from a different vantage point, but it's just as meaningful as, again quote, unquote, a more traditional mentor.

Clark Futch: He pushes not only my job boundaries but my spiritual boundaries, how I work with others, how I work with my family, how I interact with people around me and you can kind of have that tertiary level connection with someone like that, that's not necessarily in your profession.

Stuart Brown: Then the other point that you brought up is you don't always know that suddenly you're a mentor. So with those students that you worked with from the way you're describing, I don't think you went in there thinking okay, I'm going to be a mentor to these young men. It's just you're doing your job wherever interactions and they sort of responded to that where they felt comfortable reaching out to you, fill that mentor role. So sometimes it's just thrust upon us.

Clark Futch: I remember their advisor had contacted me after the last visit I had made there and he had spoken extremely highly of me at the time and said that the group really enjoyed me, but I had since forgotten about it and only two months ago did this individual, he reached out to me and let me know that everything he had done up to this point and the job that he had taken was because of me and you just don't know when things like that are going to happen.

Stuart Brown: So I'm gonna actually end our discussion about mentorship now because I've spoken to other people for this podcast and they've talked more the traditional route. So I don't really want to pursue that line of inquiry because I'll leave that for a different episode, I think you really have brought out two different points of mentorship which is important for new professionals to think about. It could be that next door neighbor, that person down the street or at your gym wherever and also that we have to be, I guess, aware of our actions because we might be turning into a mentor without really knowing it. So in our interactions with students and maybe colleagues that are younger than you, just to be aware of what we're saying and doing because you never know.

You have been listening to the Student Affairs One Thing New Professional, a podcast that asks a simple question of new professionals in the field - what is one thing you have learned, you feel will help you as you move forward in your career? My guest today has been Clark Futch, Assistant Director for Career Services at Saintt. Leo University. I'm your host, Stuart Brown, the developer 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 the Student Affairs One Thing New Professional.

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