

Leadership Interview

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Leadership Interview

Counselor educators are also called to be leaders in the field. Counselor educators are also aimed to help new professionals learn about the field. As part of this course, I conducted an interview with someone I have had the privilege to get to know at a conference as well as part of a committee. This paper will have a summary of the interview as well as my reflections on the interview and what I gained from it.

Summary of Interview

I had the opportunity to interview Dr. Bridget Glass, the program director at South University and the upcoming secretary for the Florida Mental Health Counseling Association. Apart from that she is also the current social media chair for the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. I had the privilege to meet Dr. Glass when participating in the public awareness committee which she was chair of at the time. While being chair she showed me the importance of being involved and advocating for the profession. I also got to meet her at the Florida Counseling Association where she presented on bi-curious trauma for professionals. In all my encounters with her, even in this interview, I have seen her at work as a leader, advocate, and a counselor educator and have seen her great passion for the profession.

In the interview, she shared how her current position as a program director was something she simply fell into, not something she was seeking. She reported she is the one in charge of all self-studies for accreditation for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and that she oversees the entire program. Dr Glass expressed the importance of leaders to take their positions and projects seriously. She reported that prior to taking her position, the CACREP accreditation had lapsed for the school's program. She reported part of it was because of COVID, however, it was also because the previous leaders

were not committed to the program which meant the program suffered. She reported when she took the position, she was not aware that she had to bring the Counseling Education and Supervision program from the floor up. She reported she was able to do everything within the year and a half, which was the next CACREP visit. She reported it was a challenge but that is what leadership is sometimes about.

Dr. Glass shared with me how a leader can transform an atmosphere, and this includes the students. She shared that the students of the program have told her that the atmosphere of the program has changed she started working there because now they feel supported and able to ask questions and clarifications. She reported she lets students know that they can come to her if they have any questions and concerns, or if they want to learn more about the field. She reports that she has learned to always be available for students. She discussed the importance of advocating for the profession and helping students and new professionals understand the importance of it as well.

Dr. Glass was not only a blessing because she was willing to share her love for leadership and advocacy with me, but she was also willing to share some recommendations on how to be a leader and grow as one too. She informed me that sometimes a person falls into leadership positions, and it is important to ask for help, guidance, and when needed say no. I also learned the importance of networking and asking to volunteer. One thing she told me was to reach out to the organization and aim to build my skills as a leader, always accepting feedback to further grow as an individual and a leader.

Reflection

I really enjoyed interviewing Dr. Glass. As I listened to her answers within our discussion, I was able to see the passion she has for her counselor educator role as well as for the

profession. She continued to tell me the importance of being a role model for students to see what leadership is and how to get involved. One thing that she said to me that makes me want to keep, is that a good leader is always willing to know when to say no. This is something that she not only told me, but something I saw in play when she stepped down from the public awareness committee. Her drive and passion were what led me to put my name on for the position which I currently hold.

Leadership is something that makes a person grow and learn, and this is something I also saw with Dr. Glass. She spoke about not knowing how to get the program up and running again in a school that had lost their accreditation with CACREP, however, reported that sometimes the best thing to do is to ask for help, which is something I am learning. I enjoyed hearing about accreditation and creating the program, as well as how to ensure students engage in research, advocacy, and leadership. I also learned that she presented herself to be a transformational leader by giving feedback to students and delegating. I also noticed how she was able to transform a program that did not feel supported to a program that feels like a family in unity.

Hearing her story was fascinating but I felt as if she had too much to do. I even brought that up to her. Having to make sure all courses are scheduled, checking student progress, seeing if any students have fallen behind and helping them catch up in the program, and creating the courses and syllabi, all sounds like a lot of work. Apart from that job as a program director, she participates in leadership positions in professional organizations, while teaching two courses, researching, publishing, and presenting. I know I love to do many things at the same time, but that is too much. However, I know she delegates and asks for help when needed and has learned to say no. Something that I did learn is that time management and organization is key to a successful leader. I can say that it sounds busy, but a part of me finds it exhilarating and exciting.

Conclusion

This assignment was helpful to gain knowledge from someone already in the profession. Considering that one day I hope to be a leader in the field, I really enjoyed talking to Dr. Glass and learning so much about leadership from her. It was great to not only learn but be able to network with her as a peer rather than a student. I am excited to gain a new connection. I really learned a lot in this activity and hope to continue learning by opening myself further to asking these questions to other fellow counselor educators.