



**AACRAO**

*Advancing Global Higher Education*

# **2018 Registrar Career Profile**

**Summary of the AACRAO Career Profile Survey**

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## Foreword

As someone considering my next career focus, this report could not have been more timely. The registrar career is extremely appealing to me, as a person who enjoys a wide variety of duties and gets bored easily with the mundane. Registrars exist at that critical juncture between data, systems, policies, and, most importantly, people. It's clearly a position that appeals to a certain type of person. It's obvious from the report that registrars nearly always operate in a dynamic and changing environment. Many of the contributors to this report mentioned how the position was at the center of their institution, the "eye of the storm." This probably relates to why many contributors noted flexibility and a good sense of humor as prerequisites for success.

The profession has evolved rapidly over the past quarter century with the explosion of student data systems and other new technology. Nonetheless, my guess is some of the challenges facing a beadle of a medieval university were similar to those of a registrar today. That tie to the history of higher learning and the adventure of the changes coming ever faster today make this the most appealing academic career I can imagine. In no small part, two of the registrars I have been lucky enough to know have inspired me to prepare myself for the profession. However, this makes me an outlier, as many of the contributors' thoughts about the position can be best summed up by one respondent's phrase **"No one – seriously, no one -- plans to be a registrar."**

Fortunately for someone like me, this report reveals that there will be many opportunities to move into the field in the near future; over 2,100 vacancies are expected in the next three years in the United States alone! There are challenges in the field to be faced as well, from the need for greater training in people skills to the apparent hiring and pay disparities between men and women in the profession. Research and reports such as this are the best way to begin to identify and address those challenges. For me, this report is also further inspiration to join the profession.

Jason Brown, M.A.  
Curriculum Coordinator, Pima Community College District  
Research Advisory Board Member, AACRAO



## Executive Summary

This is the second AACRAO registrar career profile report. The first was completed in 2015 and was limited to U.S. institutions; this iteration was not. Although the respondents are predominantly from the United States, there are also respondents from Canada, Armenia, Ivory Coast, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Singapore, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates. The AACRAO career profile series consists of reports on chief enrollment management officers (CEMO), chief admissions officers, and registrars. As states in the 2017 CEMO report, the two primary purposes of this series of reports are: 1) to build a longitudinal understanding of the career profile and position responsibilities for these three positions; and 2) to provide those seeking an equivalent position an understanding of the typical career path for doing so.

We would like to acknowledge those who responded to the survey. Thanks to their willingness to share their time, demographics, career paths, and current responsibilities, this report provides a *quantified* look at the functions and career paths of registrars.

The survey consisted of five sections:

- Current position
- Career path
- Career aspirations
- Current portfolio of responsibilities and levels of involvement for each
- Demographic information

In 2015, we were fortunate to have 703 respondents. This year, 886 participated, and from them we have concluded that a registrar likely:

- identifies as a woman
- identifies as non-Hispanic, white
- is between the ages of 45 and 49
- holds a master's degree
- has been in higher education his/her entire career to date
- has been in their current registrar position less than five years
- reports to a vice president or equivalent position
- came to their current registrar position from another registrar-related position or registrar position
- serves on a wide variety of committees

More than 260 provided “words of wisdom” (firsthand comments, observations, opinions, and advice) based on their experience in the position, and 27 volunteered to provide their own story with the following themes in mind:

- “A Day in the Life”
- “My Story So Far”
- “If I Could Do it Over Again”
- “Wow, I Wish I Knew That Before Becoming a Registrar”



- “My Path to the Registrar Position”
- And other personal themes

From the words of wisdom, personal stories, and data, it is clear that the registrar position is complex, data-centric, and involves building and maintaining positive relationships throughout the institution. Registrars need to be both detail oriented and big picture thinkers, technologically savvy, and flexible. Several recommended needing and keeping a sense of humor. Not one shared a story that they had planned on being a registrar someday, yet almost all find the position and work rewarding. Many advocate seeking a mentor and also being a mentor. Select words of wisdom and personal stories are shared throughout the report, and the remainder are included in their entirety in Appendix C and D.

## Approach

The survey was delivered to all AACRAO members identified through their position title as likely serving as a registrar at their campus. To confirm the validity of the selection criterion, the first question in the survey was designed to confirm that participants were identified correctly as the registrar of their institution. We asked the following:

*“This survey is intended to gather key career profile information on the position of an institution-wide or college/school registrar (e.g., medical school, law school, college of arts and sciences). Do you currently hold the position of an institution-wide or college/school registrar?”*

This question was required of respondents, and the survey discontinued for anyone who responded “no.” Response was minimally incentivized by offering those who complete the survey a chance to win one of ten \$25 Visa gift cards.

## Characteristics of Current Position

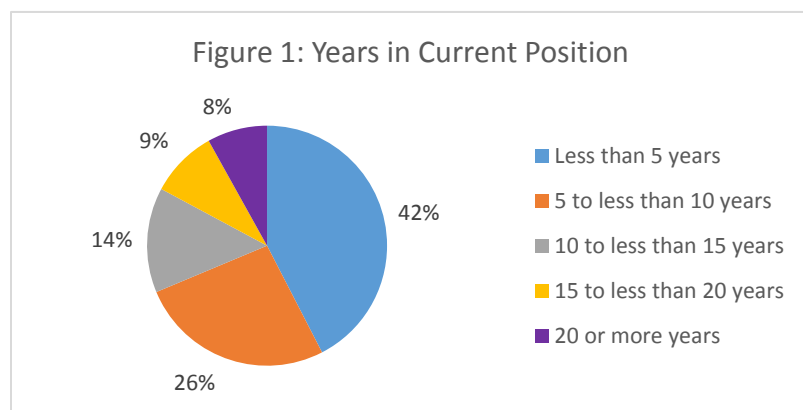
Unlike the 2015 survey, this one encouraged responses from institution-wide registrars and college-specific registrars by asking the respondent if they serve as an institution-wide registrar or a college/school registrar within a comprehensive institution. Most (85%) of participants serve as the institution-wide registrar; more than half (65%) are responsible for both undergraduate and graduate students; one-in-ten for graduate students only; and one-in-four for undergraduates. Two-hundred and thirty-two (232) different position titles were reported by the 886 respondents; the three most common are:

- Registrar (n=402)
- University Registrar (n=189)
- College Registrar (n=23)



The position typically requires a master’s degree (67%), followed by a bachelor’s (30%), and a doctorate (1%). Among the 3% who selected “other,” several listed a minimal education requirement or equivalent experience, and a couple predicted that after their retirement a master’s will be required for the next person to assume the position. Public and/or large institutions are more likely than private and/or smaller institutions to require a master’s degree. Lower division only institutions are more likely to require a bachelor’s degree as the minimum educational requirement for the position than other types of institutions.

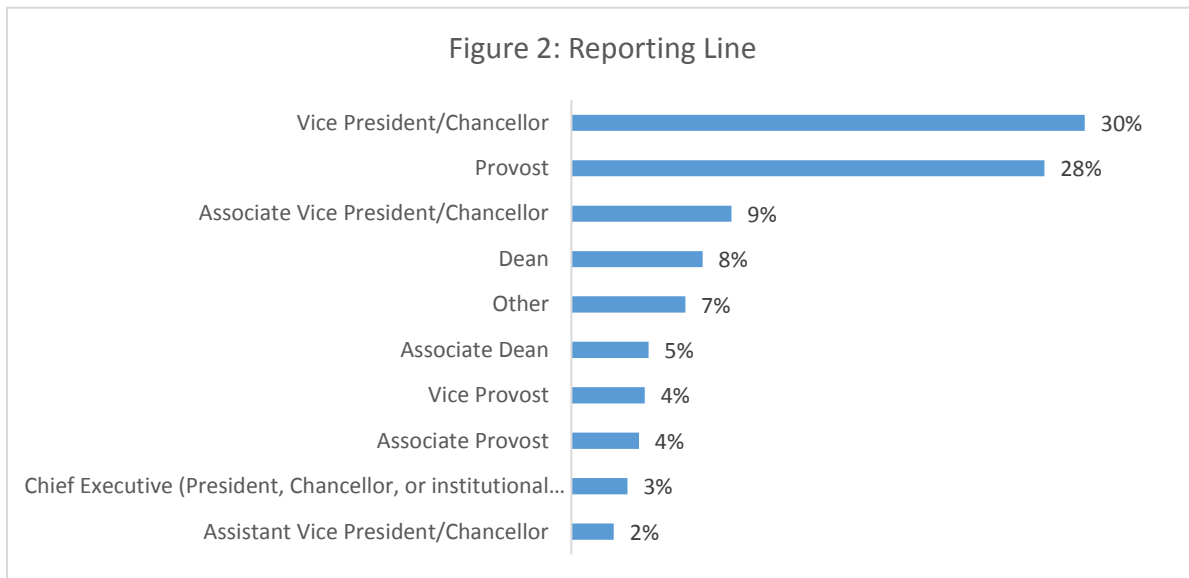
In 2015, a third had been in their position less than five years, and 13% had been in the position 20 or more years. This year’s numbers provide evidence of a fair number of retirements or position transitions occurring in the last three years. Forty-two percent have less than five years’ experience in their current position, and 8% have 20 or more years’ experience (figure 1). More than a third (37%) have worked for just one chief executive in their current position, 28% for two, 16% for three, 7% for four, and 11% for more than four.



Although the survey proffered six reporting positions from which to choose, respondents selected “other” and wrote in titles that more accurately should be reported in one of the other categories. Since the data had to be corrected to reflect these categories, it made sense to expand the selection of reporting positions to include others not originally proffered but written in by many. Figure 2 summarizes the corrected data, and among the respondents, nearly third report to a vice president/chancellor position, and 28% report to a provost. In 2015, a larger percentage reported to the provost (42%), and just 19% reported to another vice president/chancellor position. We have a statistically representative sample of U.S. institutions in both the 2015 and 2018 sample, which would imply that the apparent shift is a result of a change in institutional reporting lines and not a sampling difference.

**Just 8% of registrars are part of the institution’s executive leadership team.** However, institutions with fewer than 1,000 students are more likely to have the registrar as part of the executive leadership team than larger institutions.



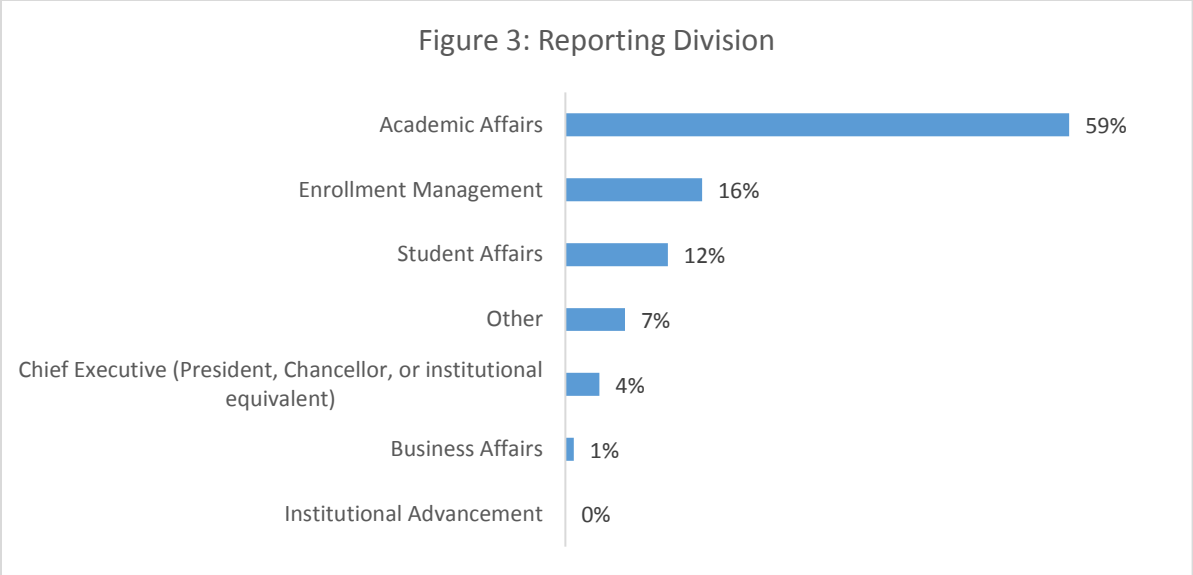


The overall percentage values displayed in figure 3 are similar to 2015 values. **Most report to the division of academic affairs** with undergraduate-only institutions being more likely than other types to have this reporting structure. The same is true for private, not-for-profit institutions. Registrars at public institutions are statistically more likely to report more often to an enrollment management division or student affairs than other types and less likely to report to academic affairs. Lower division only institutions are more likely to report through the student affairs division than others. The following reporting divisions were also provided by respondents:

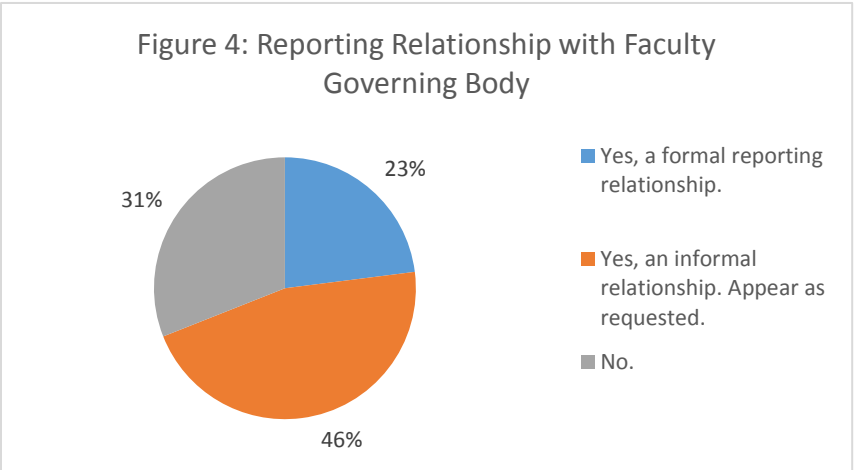
- A college within a comprehensive institution
- Student services
- Enrollment and students services
- Dual reporting divisions
- Information technology
- Student success
- University extension
- University operations
- Human resources
- Curriculum

This option to indicate a college should have been provided as a choice because we included college-level registrars in this year's target population.



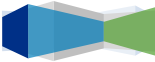


Similar to 2015, almost half have an informal reporting relationship with the faculty governing body, while almost a third have no reporting relationship at all (figure 4). Just 16% have voting rights on the faculty governing board.



*Registrars can be sucked into nearly any project on campus, so develop a strong sense of your responsibilities and maintain good boundaries - say no if you need to! Being a registrar is way beyond what some faculty and staff might perceive - we are not paper-pushers, we are change managers and academic leaders. Don't expect to do the same thing every day.*

- Deb Gannon
- Registrar
- Grand View University



## Career History and Mobility

Registrars were asked what percentage of their career has been in higher education, from what position they moved into their current role, at how many institutions they have been employed, and whether or not the size, type, and control of institutions varied from their current institution. We also specifically asked if this position was their first position in higher education.

**Nearly three-quarters (72%) report that “My entire career experience has been in higher education”**—up from 62% in 2015. Sixteen percent have moved in and out of higher education, and a surprising 12% report that this position as registrar is their first in higher education. Those that assumed this position as their first in higher education came from the following industries/professions, among others:

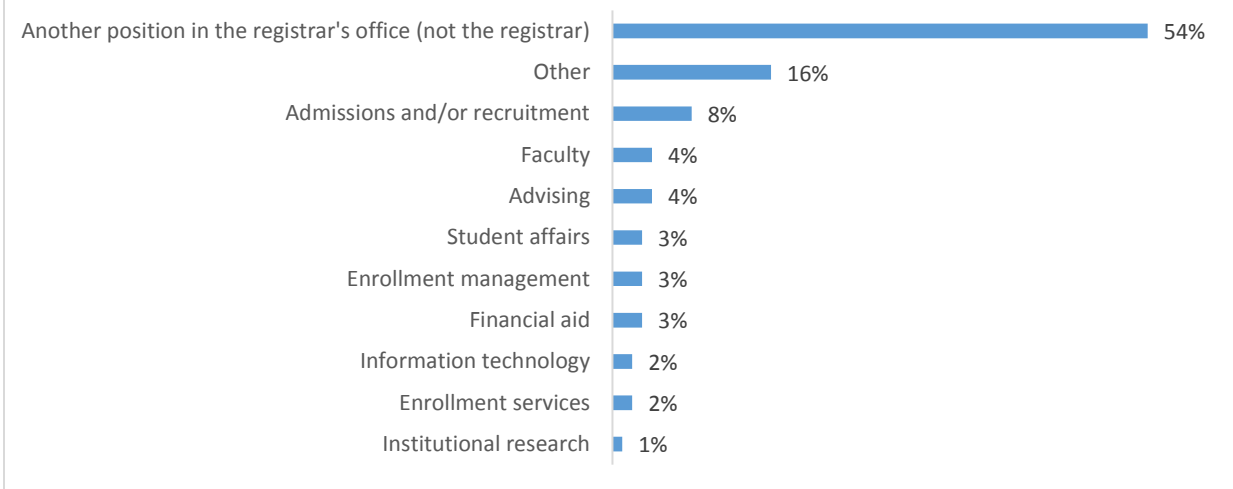
- Military
- Non-profit
- K-12
- Retail
- Banking/finance
- Medical/healthcare
- Government
- Counseling/mental health care
- Small business owner

**Sixty percent of current registrars came from another registrar position or a position in a registrar’s office.** This total is greater than the 2015 survey (49%). Just short of half (49%) assumed the registrar’s position from another position in the institution. Another 30% came from a registrar position elsewhere in higher education, and 19% came from a non-registrar position at another institution. The remaining 3% came from a position in a higher education-related organization (2%) or a position outside of higher education (1%).

If a respondent indicated that he came from “another position in the same institution” or from “a different position in another institution,” the next question prompted him to indicate the area/unit from which he left to assume the position of the registrar. Unsurprisingly, most came from a position in a registrar’s office (figure 5), followed by write-in responses (16%), and admissions/recruitment (8%).

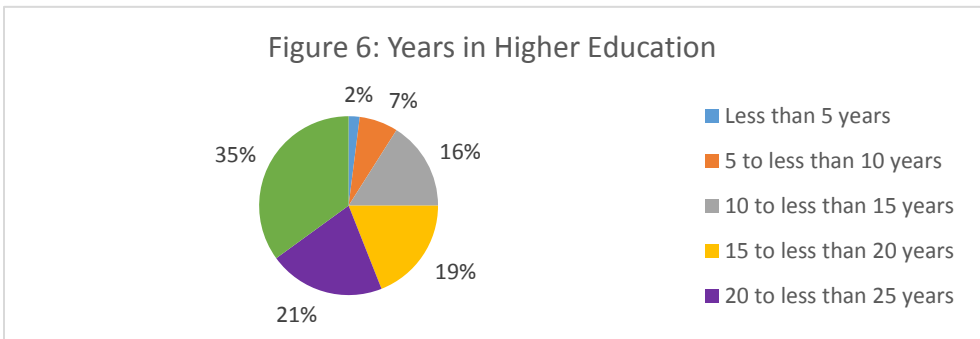


Figure 5: Prior Division/Unit



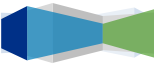
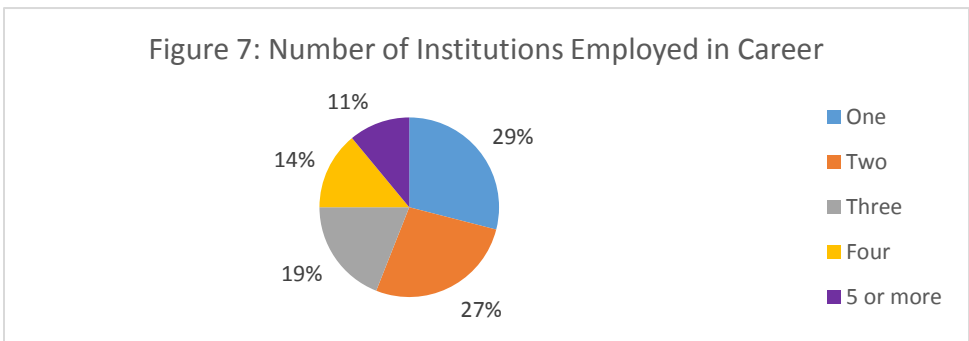
For those whom their whole career has not been in higher education (n=250), 68% have spent half or more (50-99%) in higher education, 23% a quarter to less than half, and 9% less than a quarter. More than half report 20 or more years in higher education (figure 6).

Figure 6: Years in Higher Education

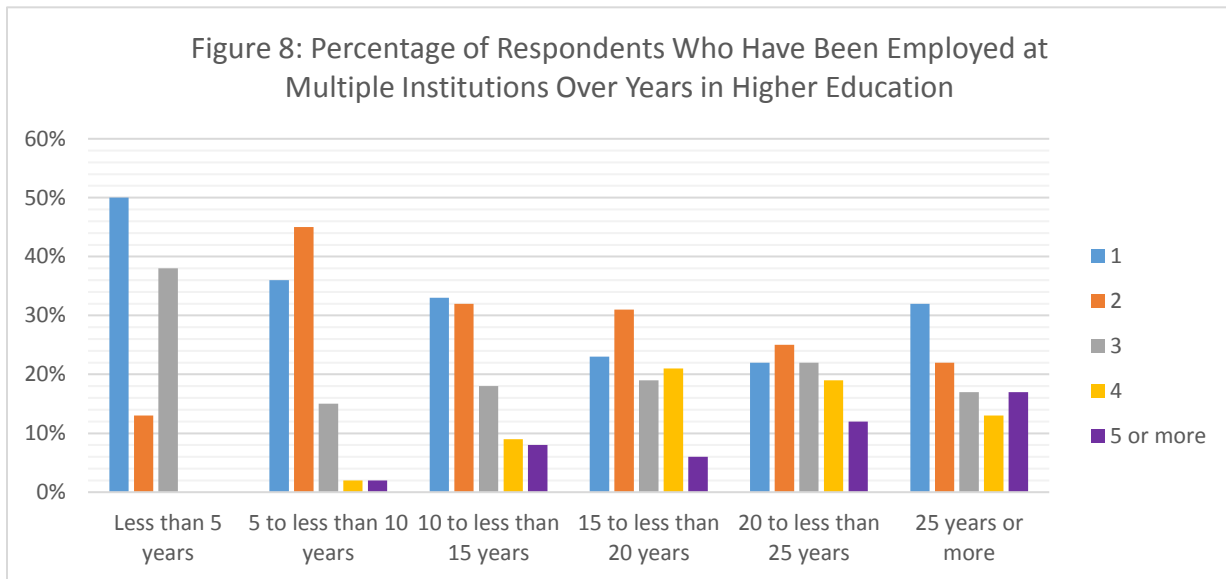


About seven in ten have worked at more than one institution, and 11% have been employed at five or more (figures 7 and 8). These data indicate the need or choice to be fairly mobile on the career path to a registrar.

Figure 7: Number of Institutions Employed in Career



**Registrars appear to be almost equally mobile between institutional types** (lower division only, undergraduate, comprehensive, etc.). Mobility across institutional control appears to be less common than between institutional types. Those employed at private, proprietary institutions are more likely to have previous experience at the same type and less likely to have experience at institutions with a different control (i.e., public, private, not-for-profit). Registrars at very large institutions (20,000+) are more likely to have previous experience at the same size institution than others are to have experience at very large institutions. For institutions under 20,000+ students, there appears to be more mobility between institutions of different sizes.



- 1) *It's okay to make exceptions, as long as you're consistent with your exceptions.*
- 2) *I like to think of our office as the referee; the rules are not OUR rules, they are the faculty (or federal or state) rules, and it's simply our job to make sure everyone is following the rules.*
- 3) *Faculty want to do really crazy things sometimes. Their intentions are often good, but they have no idea that it's not how the "real world" works. It's my job to figure out what they're trying to accomplish and then help them come up with a different way to meet that goal while still staying within the framework of established policies. You can get really creative sometimes when you take a step back and figure out how to do accomplish the same result but in a different manner.*

- Theresa Jacques
- Registrar
- Michigan Technological University



## Portfolio of Responsibilities

Similar to the 2015 survey, we asked about committee participation, priority of responsibilities, number of direct reports, and challenges. The data suggest a disconnect between the perceived importance of roles/responsibilities and/or skills (figures 9 and 10) and the most challenging parts of the position (figure 11). Human resource management and development rank last in importance yet fourth highest in challenges of the position, up from sixth in 2015. Record keeping remains the number one most important role and/or responsibility and communication the most important skill.

Figure 9: Most Important Roles and/or Responsibilities

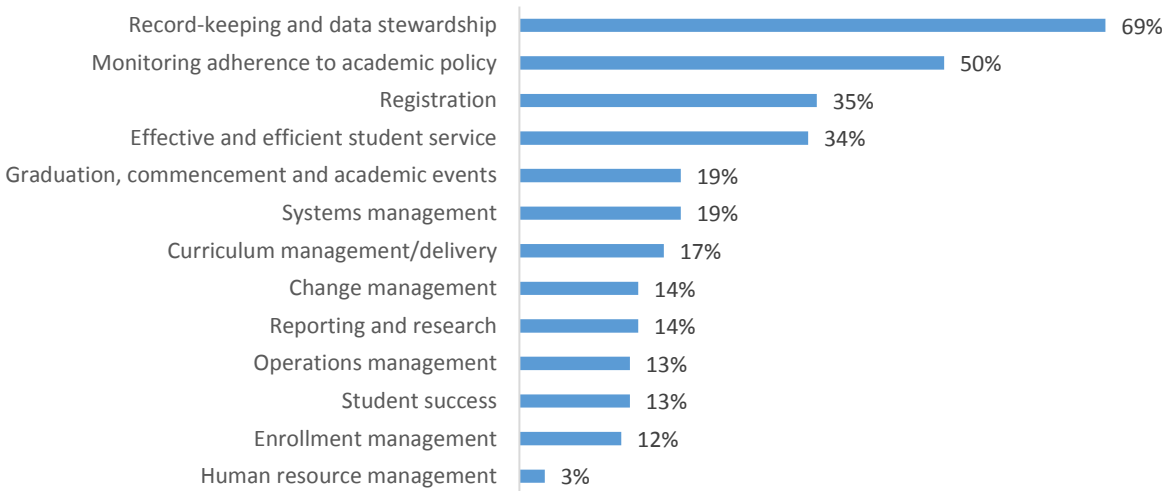


Figure 10: Most Important Skills



Figure 11: Challenges of the Position



*Remain curious re: systems, services, and the expectations of your constituencies. Recognize change is constant, and appreciate how fast change is occurring. Thus, become adaptable and flexible, with an eye toward creativity. Have empathy for the learners who are pursuing their educational goals, and keep them foremost in your mind as you conduct your professional responsibilities.*

- Tom Black
- Assistant Vice Provost and University Registrar
- Johns Hopkins University

*Know yourself --figure out, if you don't already know, your strengths and weaknesses. You don't have to be good at everything. Know your team --what are people's strengths and weaknesses. Learn to delegate. Be realistic in how long projects will take to complete. Stay informed --read updates, list serve messages, stay in touch with others in the profession. Give yourself a break --take time for you ---recharge.*

- Katherine Scoville
- Interim Registrar
- The Sage Colleges – Troy Campus

Table 1 displays a list of registrar-related functions and a descriptive label of the level of involvement for each. The questions in the survey associated with these data were designed, in part, to serve as a surrogate for asking about time-on-task for each of the functions. The highlighted cells for each row indicate the highest percentage of respondents for each function.



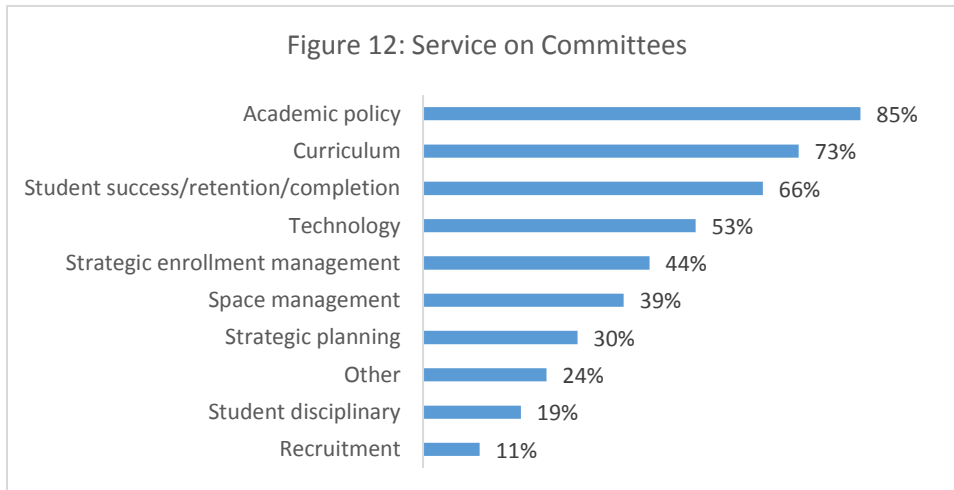
Levels of involvement are defined as follows:

- **Responsible:** not a delegated function
- **Supervise:** delegated and supervised
- **Participate:** neither supervise nor delegate but influence decisions related to that function
- **Inform:** relate information about a function but have no decision-making influence or authority
- **N/A:** none of these

Function	Level of Engagement with Function				
	Responsible	Supervise	Participate	Inform	N/A
New student recruitment	2%	4%	21%	33%	40%
Academic calendar development	52%	15%	24%	7%	3%
Ad-hoc reporting and research	30%	28%	32%	5%	5%
Athletic eligibility certification	19%	25%	13%	7%	36%
Budget development	46%	7%	20%	14%	12%
Class schedule development	22%	42%	22%	8%	5%
Commencement/graduation ceremony	29%	26%	35%	7%	4%
Curriculum/program approval and revision process	12%	16%	55%	12%	5%
Degree audit maintenance (coding)	40%	48%	6%	3%	3%
Early academic alert	10%	13%	34%	22%	21%
Enrollment reporting/research	29%	22%	32%	12%	5%
Transfer credit evaluation	29%	47%	10%	5%	8%
Transcript processing	31%	64%	3%	1%	1%
Student success	11%	12%	59%	13%	4%
Facilities/activities scheduling	7%	29%	24%	16%	24%
FERPA compliance and training	65%	17%	12%	2%	4%
IPEDES and other external reporting	16%	11%	32%	23%	18%
Non-degree admission	11%	22%	22%	14%	31%
Academic records management	58%	40%	1%	0%	1%
Re-admit processing	15%	29%	29%	12%	15%
Residency determination	15%	20%	10%	11%	45%
Student information system management and development	35%	23%	36%	4%	2%
Veterans education certification and reporting	16%	28%	13%	16%	26%
Advising	6%	12%	38%	27%	17%
Classroom scheduling	25%	45%	10%	8%	13%
Certify candidates for graduation	47%	46%	4%	2%	1%
Tuition and fees	3%	5%	17%	30%	44%



The proffered list of committee participation in 2018 is slightly different from the 2015 list. The category “other” was added this year based on the write-in responses from the 2015 survey. The data indicate a higher percentage of registrars report being part of the academic policy committee in 2018 than in 2015 (85% vs 77%). Additionally, the percentage participating in student success/retention/completion committees has increased considerably from 2015 (66% in 2018 compared to 44% in 2015). The percentage participating in the curriculum committee increased as well. However, a lower percentage indicated participation in a technology committee.



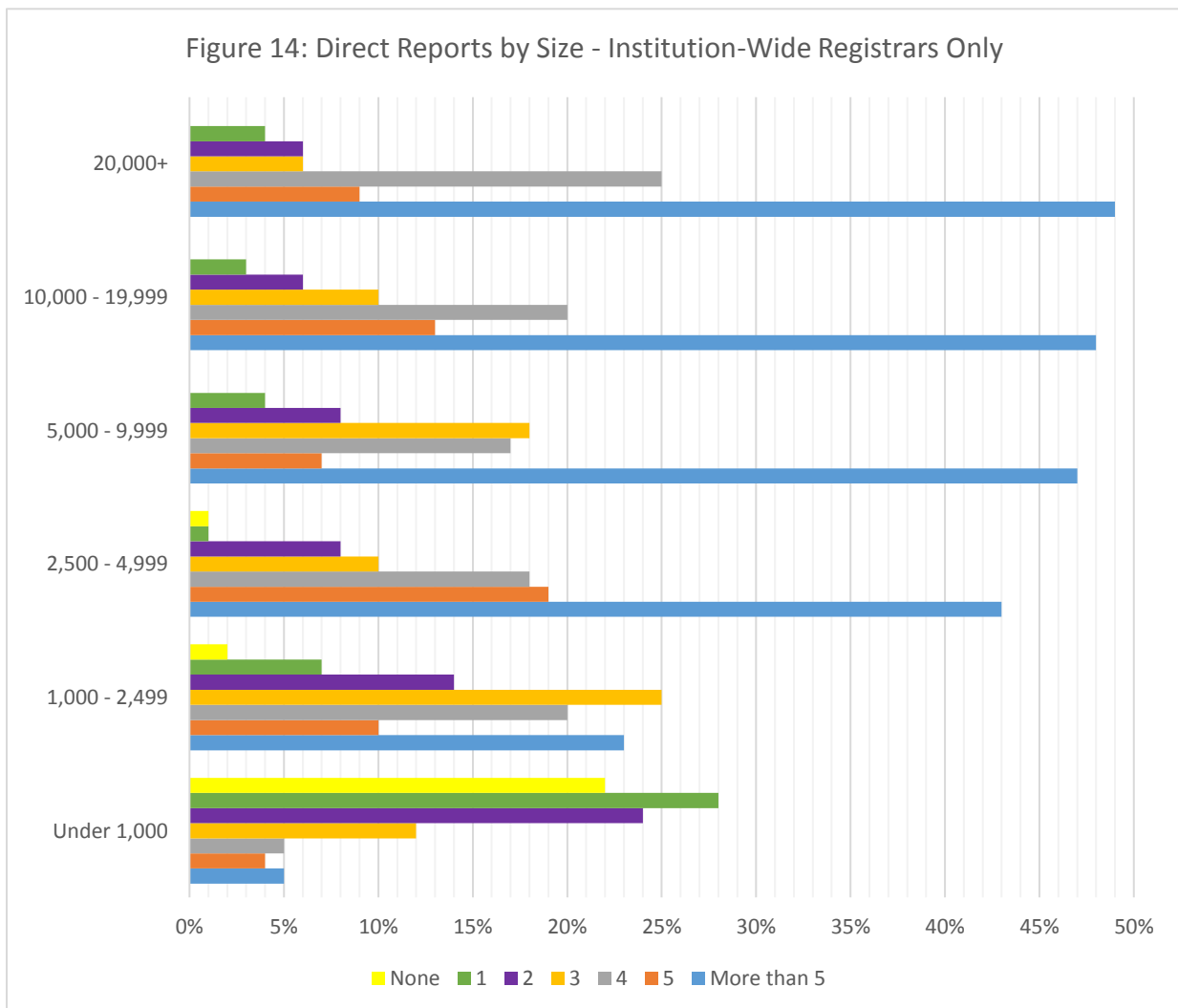
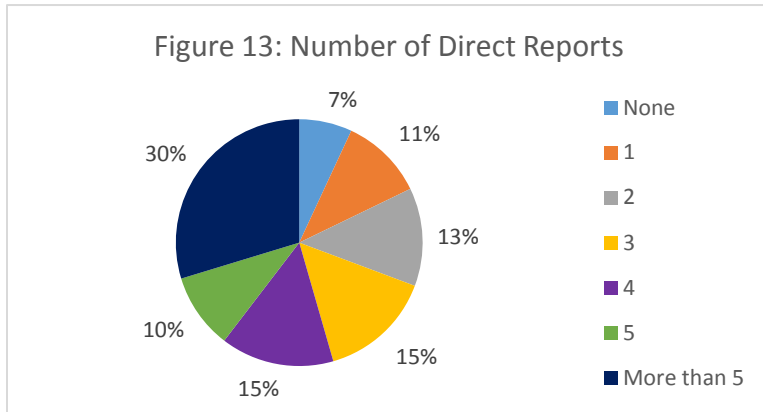
More than 200 other unduplicated committee names were provided by respondents as part of the “other” response choice (Appendix B). The top 11 provided are:

- Commencement
- Academic Calendar
- Accreditation
- Admissions
- Athletic
- Data Governance
- Graduate Council
- Academic Advising
- General Education
- Provost Council
- Assessment

The survey included the specification that a direct report is an employee who reports to no other person. Figure 13 represents the aggregate data, and in figure 14, the data is disaggregated by institution size and filtered to just institution-wide registrars. Institutions of 2,500 students or more appear to have a disproportionate percentage of “more than five” direct reports for the registrar position. Given that human resource management was reported as one of the top three challenges in the position and the variety of committees and functions



that are also part of these positions, it might behoove registrars to investigate reconfiguring reporting lines so as to have fewer direct reports. This type of change could help meet two objectives: 1) reduce the workload of the registrar and 2) provide human resource management experience to more people in the registrar career pipeline at an earlier stage in their career.



From the data, one can conclude that in general the registrar position is complex, has considerable supervisory responsibility, and participates in a wide variety of functions/committees across the institution. Simultaneously, one can also conclude that the registrar position does not have a single-fixed, or nearly-fixed, portfolio of functions or level of engagement per function that defines the role. This is evidenced by the distribution of responses across levels of involvement for each function.

*My advice is to believe in yourself and maintain your integrity and professionalism at all times. Most importantly, when opportunity presents itself, it is sometimes disguised as a challenge. Accept it!*

- Ann Marie Vickery
- Associate Vice President for Academic Services and Registrar
- Holy Family University

*I have often said, "I love being a cog in the wheel of excellence." Being a registrar isn't sexy, but it is meaningful to me to be a quietly essential and respected member of the academic community. Helping shape and carry out academic policy is extremely rewarding to me and my inner policy-wonk self.*

- Kelly Hogencamp
- Registrar
- Scripps College

*Being a registrar is an exciting mix of hard skills such as technology and policy implementation and soft skills of human interaction and leadership. It is very rewarding if you possess and can successfully deliver on this skills at a high level.*

- Nigel Marriner
- Registrar
- Buffalo State College



## Career Aspirations

Eight percent (n=69) of registrars responding to this survey intend to make a career change in less than one year; a further 31% (n=276) intend to do so in one to three years. Of the 345 slated to change employment in the next three years, 58 will seek another registrar position elsewhere (figures 15-17).

A look at the next career move data over time-to-next-move provides an insight into the possible percentage of U.S. registrar vacancies that can be expected over time. **Based on ballpark calculations, there will be more than 2,100 registrar vacancies in the United States within the next three years.** This calculation is based on the number of degree granting Title IV eligible U.S. institutions (N=6,760). However, it does not exclude respondents from outside the United States, nor differentiate between college-level registrars and institution-wide registrars. It does however exclude existing registrars seeking another registrar position. In 2015, the anticipated number was 1,672.

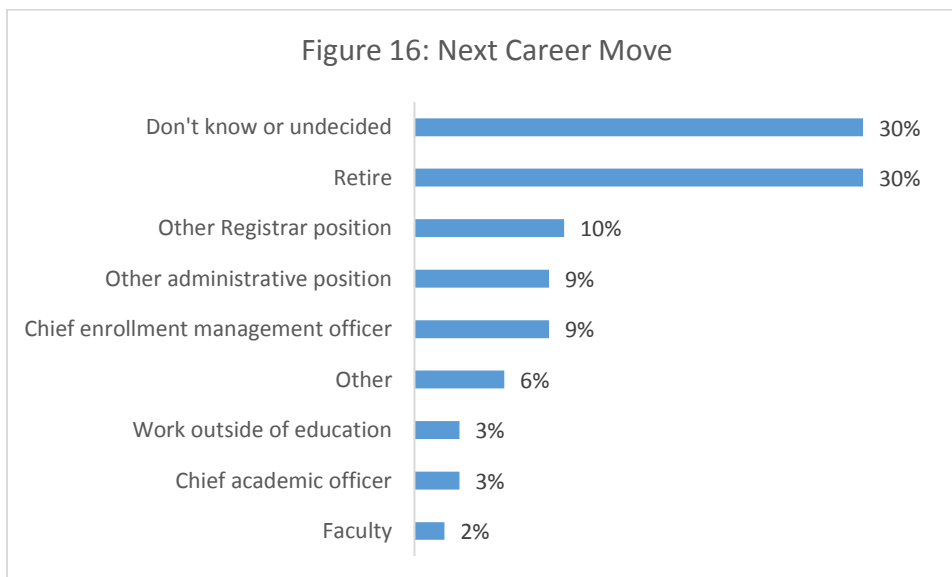
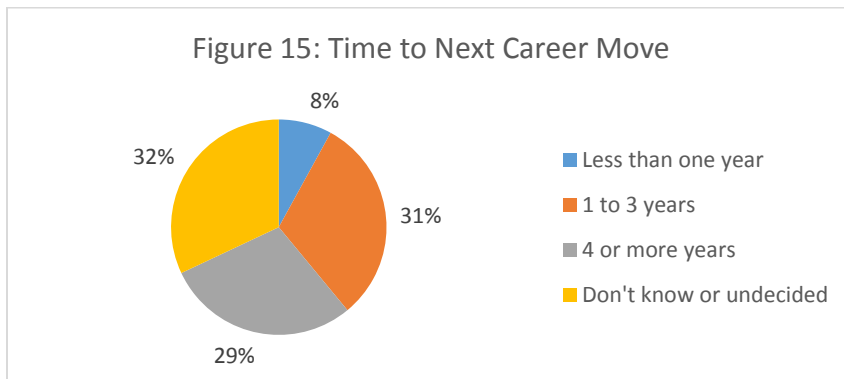
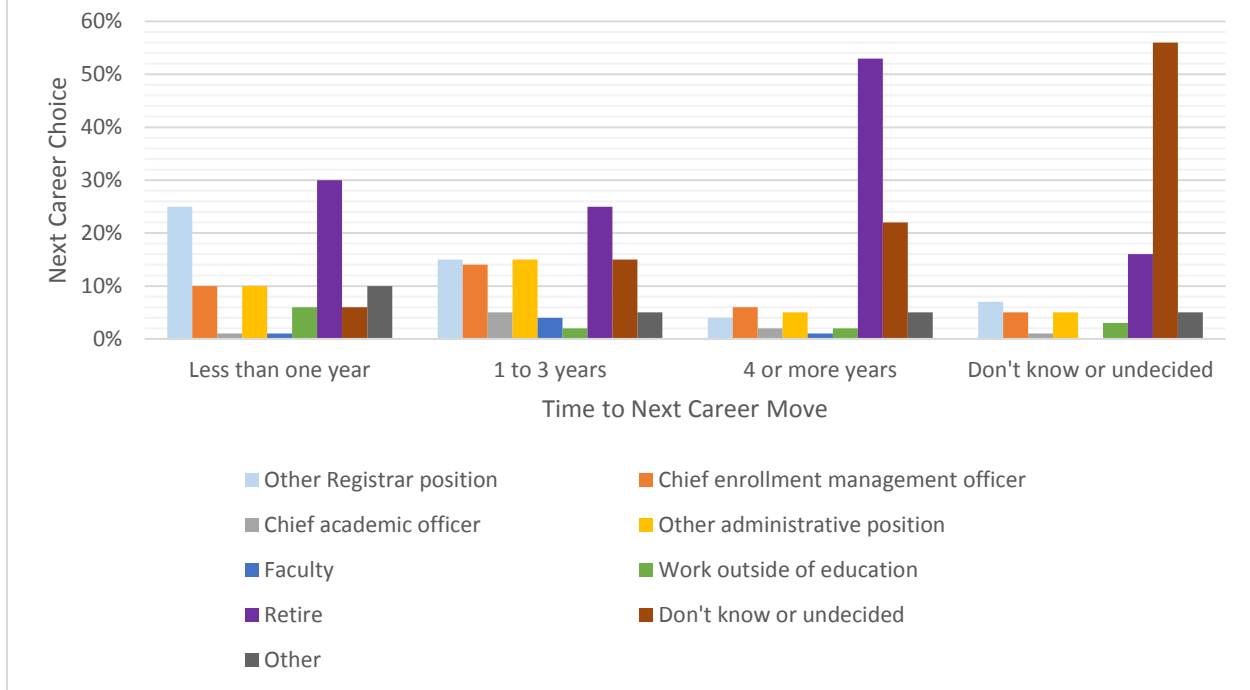


Figure 17: Time to Next Career Move by Next Career Choice



Among those who selected “other” as their next career choice, the following were among their objectives:

- Consult
- Dean position
- Anything not a registrar
- Adjunct faculty
- Elementary/secondary education
- System administrator
- “Sipping margaritas all day long on the beach in San Diego . . .”

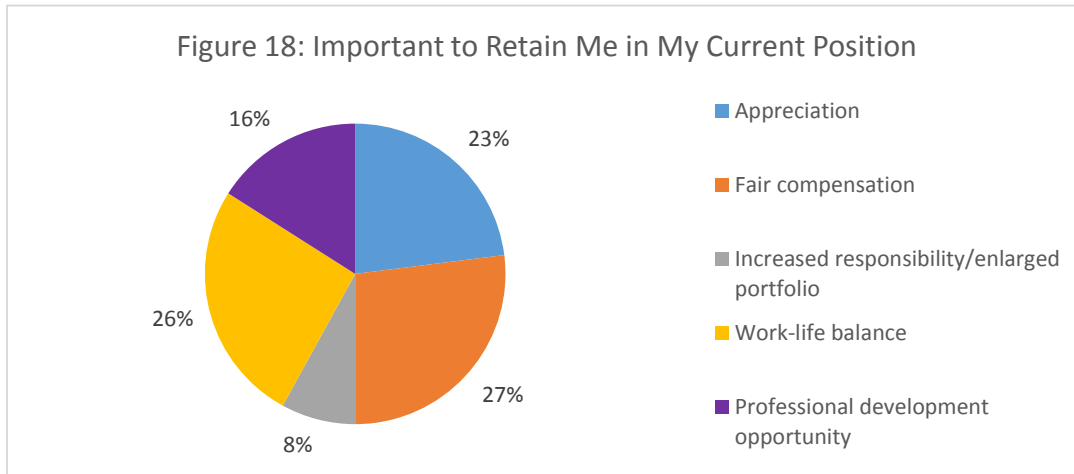
*Take the time to get to know your deans and faculty. Developing strong bonds early will help ensure you have a key strategic partner for the future. Strike the balance between respecting institutional culture and history, while keeping an eye on strategic benchmarks and how you can help your institution get there.*

- Joseph Wolk
- Registrar
- Bridgewater State University

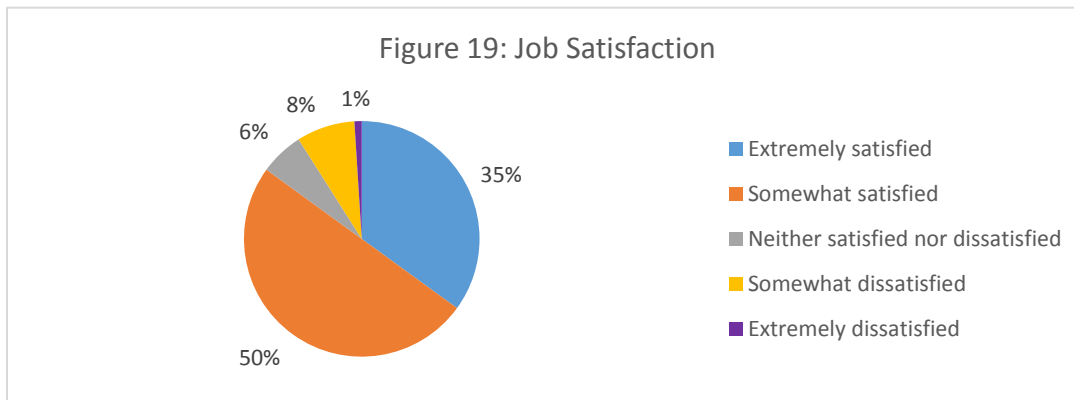


## Job Satisfaction and Demographics

Irrespective of age or gender identity, respondents selected “fair compensation” as most important to retain them in their current position, followed closely by a “work-life balance” and “appreciation” (figure 18).



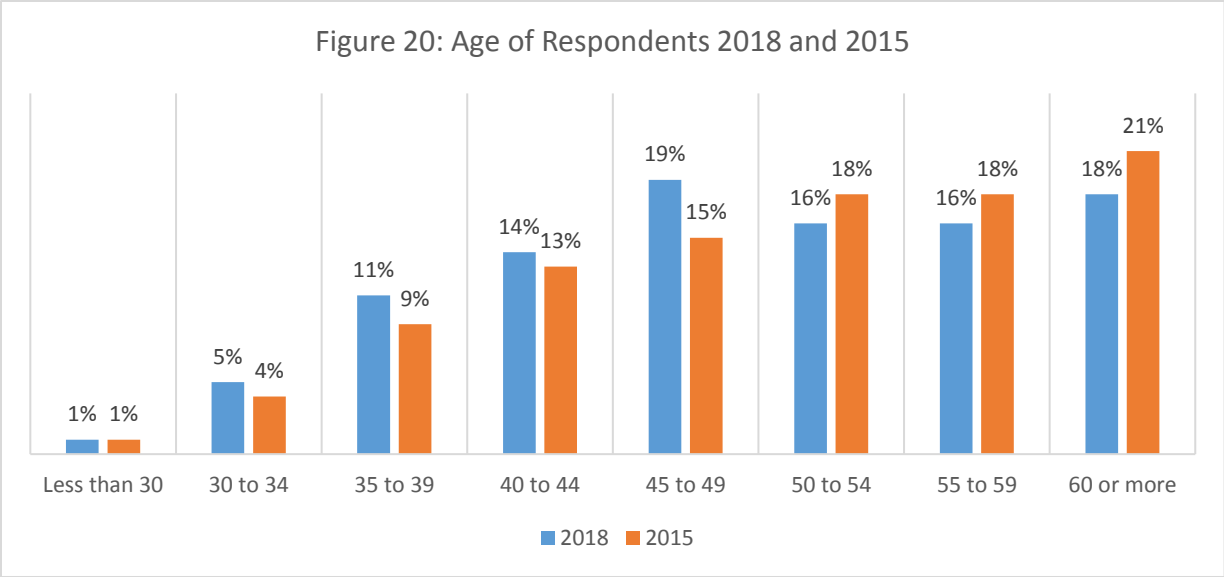
Eighty five percent are either extremely or somewhat satisfied in their current position (figure 19).



The 2018 cohort of registrars who responded to the survey is a little younger than the 2015 group (figure 20). The highest percentage age group is 45 to 49 years old (19%) compared to 60 or more in 2015 (21%). College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR)<sup>1</sup> found the average age of registrars to be 51 in its 2017 survey.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cupahr.org/>





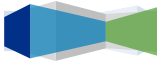
**Most identified as a woman (69%); 29% identified as a man; one person self-identified as transgender; and 11 selected “prefer not to answer.” Men are statistically more likely to be employed by comprehensive institutions than women (Table 2), and this difference may account for some of the \$10,294 (on average) gender differences in salary identified by CUPA since comprehensive institutions pay more than other institutional types.**

**Table 2: Gender Identity by Institution Type**

	Lower Division Only	Undergraduate	Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional	Graduate and/or professional	Upper division with graduate	Other
Woman	74.5%	76.3%	VV 65.9%	Λ 83.0%	0.0%	75.0%
Man	24.5%	22.0%	ΛΛΛ 32.9%	V 15.1%	100.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to answer	0.9%	1.7%	1.0%	1.9%	0.0%	25.0%
Trans* or Transgender	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

ΛΛΛ = more than expected and the number of symbols relates to the degree to which it is more than expected.  
 VVV = less than expected and the number of symbols relates to the degree to which it is more than expected.

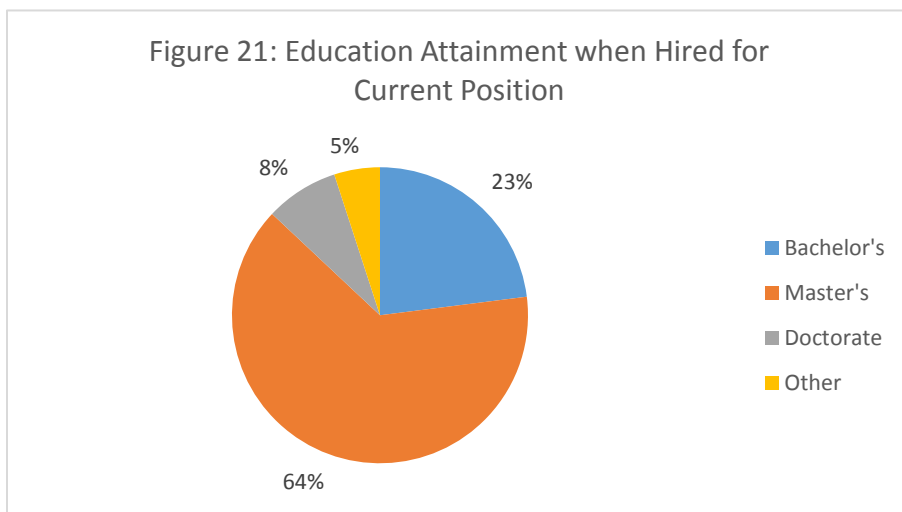
Chi-Squared Test		
	Basic	Advanced
Statistical Significance (P-Value)	Clearly significant	0.002220912
Effect Size (Cramér's V)	Small	0.116716291
Sample Size	864	



AACRAO intentionally does not gather salary information for administrative positions because CUPA completes annual comprehensive salary studies. Their 2017 *Administrators in Higher Education Salary* report contains salary data for registrars. Included below are some of the salary data points for this position by select institutional or demographic characteristics.

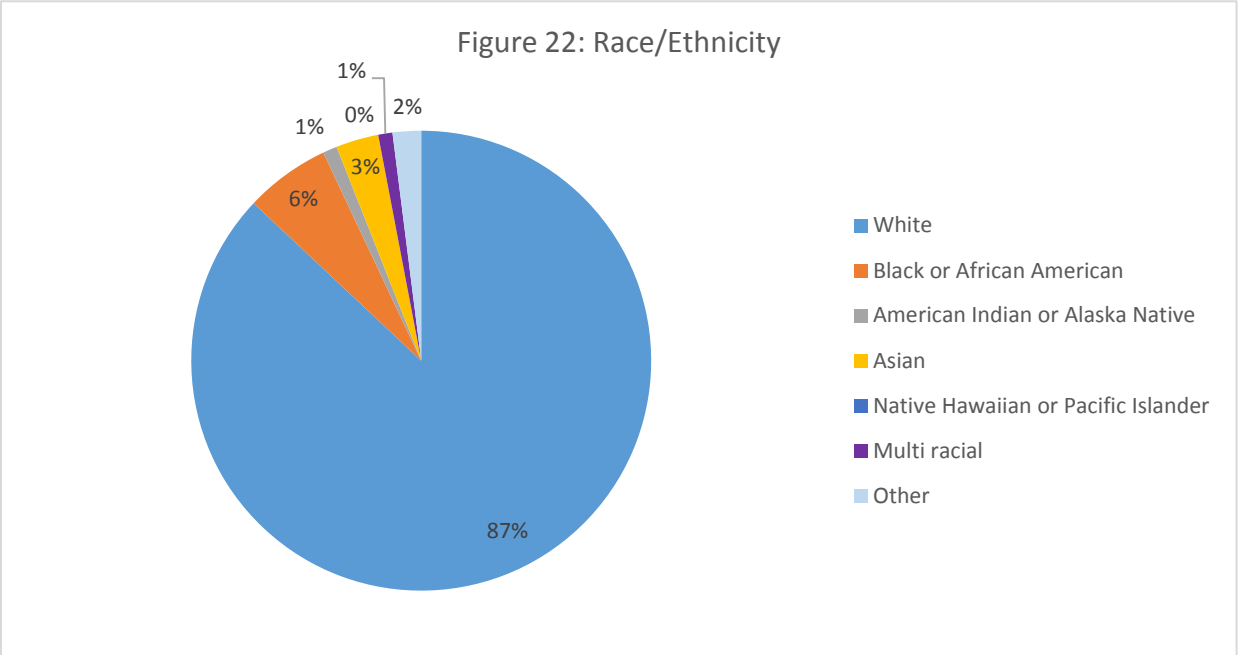
Table 3: 2017 Salary Data	
Institutional or Demographic Characteristic	Unweighted Median Salary
Public	\$91,841
Private	\$79,274
Doctoral	\$113,072
Master's	\$80,777
Baccalaureate	\$75,790
Associate's	\$77,188
Male	\$90,647
Female	\$80,353

Registrars today are likely to hold a master's degree (figure 21). One hundred and eighteen of the sample completed a degree since starting their current position, and of those, most (44%) completed a master's, 11% completed a certificate/endorsement in enrollment management, 3% earned a master's in enrollment management, and 25% completed a doctorate.



The ethnic and racial profile of the 2018 cohort is very similar to the 2015 cohort with nearly nine in ten identifying as white (figure 22). Just 5% identify as Hispanic or Latino, the same percentage as 2015.



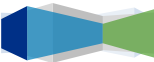


*Developing and participating in a strong professional network is of utmost importance. I participate in my state ACRAO, my regional ACRAO, and AACRAO. These are of paramount importance.*

- Rick Edgington
- Vice President of Enrollment Management and Registrar
- Northern Oklahoma College

*Learn as much as you can about how other departments function so that you can work together with buy-in.*

- Emily Hollins
- Registrar
- Shenandoah University



## Stories from the Field

The stories that follow are from current and former registrars. They volunteered to provide a deeper insight into the experience of being a registrar. Additional stories are included in Appendix C starting on page 62 and all are interesting and insightful.



## My Story So Far

Tracy L. Seffers  
Registrar

It is a recurring ~~dream~~ nightmare: It is final exam week, and I have suddenly – JUST NOW! -- realized that I have never attended the college algebra class I've been registered for this semester. Walking into the mathematics classroom, I have a feeling of impending doom. My heart is a heavy fist in my chest. I can't breathe . . .

I am convinced that this dream, which I've had throughout \*and since\* my college days, led me to become a registrar. While conducting interviews for positions within the Office of the Registrar, I have been known to say:

**“No one – seriously, *no one* -- plans to be a registrar. There is no registrar school, no entrance exams, no childhood dreaming of glory at the keyboard and committee table. You fall into the work by accident, happenstance, pure serendipity – and either you fall in love with the work, or you run screaming into the night. Either response is perfectly reasonable.”**

*As it happens*, I had in fact dreamed of a life in academia, albeit a more traditional path: BA English, MA English, and then, I hoped, my PhD in English. I prepared for a life in the classroom, teaching poetry and advising and inspiring another generation of students. Life had another plan (no surprise there): just after I completed my master's coursework, I headed to what was then West Germany to join my new husband, a sergeant in the U.S. Army. On a tour of my new military post, a recruitment ad caught my eye: field registrar at a U.S. community college serving the military community.

*As it happens*, my first work study job had been in the Office of the Registrar. My work hours were spent entering the creaking, slightly off-smelling vault to locate hard-copy transcripts for the registrar, copy them for his signature, stamp them official, and send them out. I loved the detailed work, the precision, the chance every so often to do research and solve a mystery and make someone happy.

I remembered that early job experience—and the recurring nightmare—and thought, “Why not? I can do that.” I marched into the Education Center and applied. I was immediately called, interviewed, and asked to start the following Tuesday.

*And yes, as it happens*, I fell in love with the work. That was 1988. I have been in this work for 30 years, and while I occasionally consider the wisdom of running screaming into the night, I don't. I stick, come back the next day, and see what I can do better. *What can I do*, here at the



hub of the institution, to make stronger connections between students and their faculty, their academic program, their record, and their professional goals? *How can I help* our faculty do their work better or more easily? *What can I do* to support my colleagues in our common work?

If I have a moment in those interviews, I will often share a story from my early career that almost perfectly captures our role. I was an assistant registrar in charge of registration, scheduling, catalog, and enrollment services. One small part of the job was working with the international programs office, assisting both outgoing study abroad and incoming exchange students to make sure their registration process in both directions went smoothly.

One young woman, an exchange student from Korea, had been corresponding with me for many days, increasingly frustrated that she could not make the professor of her preferred math course understand that she needed an override into his already-full class. I offered to reach out to the professor on her behalf, but before I could, the following quiet drama played itself out in my office, in that golden hour before our doors opened and our busy day began:

### **World Wide Web**

*So, before coffee had connected me to the world,  
or screen and keyboard to my work,  
the knock came, as tentative and tenacious as spider silk  
in the darkened outer office of cubicles and cubbies,  
cups and courage.*

*She spoke only halting English, but better at that  
than I might have offered in her native Korean—  
exchanging one life for another for a time, finding  
her place in this new place, all swirl and hope and exhaust.*

*She brought with her, leading him by the hand—  
an untimely young mother to an oddly-aged son with scrofulous beard—  
the visiting math professor from Russia. His English  
added up on whiteboards and datasheets,  
but few places else.*

*She needed—what did she need?  
A seat in his class. A chance.*

*I translated her brokenness  
into my flat syllables for his grasping, reshaped his struggling  
into a way forward for them both. I at the center, the hub,  
weaver finding form, magician making visible the invisible,*

*stretching forever, if needed, to connect  
one bright fragile line  
to the next.*



The task of translating needs and solutions clearly across levels and divisions –often as difficult as working in multiple languages—is as central to our work as any database or technology solution. Like this young Korean scholar and Russian professor, our constituents often *seem* to be speaking the same language, but just as often fail to understand each other or to make themselves understood. We, in our place at the hub of the institution, can and must help to bridge those divides, so that our institutions and people connect and thrive.

To my younger colleagues just entering the field, I offer this challenge: go deeper than just mastering the technology. Fall in love with the work -- the daunting, overwhelming, exhausting, endless, exhilarating, *deeply human* work. When you do, you'll have found more than a career. You will have found your calling.

You will, maybe, have made a life.



## A Day in the Life of a Registrar

Sofia Montes

University Registrar

*You're not crazy. You're not hyperactive and attention-deficient. You're not overly ambitious. You're a registrar.*

I have to tell myself these things to avoid the self-imposed perception that I must suffer from some untreatable neuroses. Despite the stigma and challenges that come with the territory, I love being Registrar. Scratch that. That's partly *why* I love being Registrar. Well...it's that and something else far better...

All too often registrars are the bearers of bad news. We are the brick walls. We are the stop signs and all other kinds of traffic barriers that send people into a bad mood or, worse yet, a public panic. I like to tell colleagues about our unique role. It goes something like this: recruitment is everyone's friend. They're the fun and creative ones! People love admissions because they get to open the door and say "Congratulations!" People love financial aid because they loan out money...who doesn't want money in college? But the registrar? Before that coveted diploma, there are deadlines, rules, regulations and consequences; but at the end of the day, we're the providers of services critical to degree completion, and we're the "tough love" every growing being can benefit from.

A day in the life of a registrar is unlike any one else's day, and it is unlike that registrar's day before or after that one specimen of a day. It is *that* unpredictable, that chaotic, and that eventful.

Today I was asked about a student wanting to withdraw. His family was there to act on his behalf because he had been injured severely in a collision. No; of course there was no FERPA release on file. The question came to me from one of our one-stop-shop colleagues, in the middle of a monthly one-on-one meeting with one of my assistant registrars, whose one-on-one I'd rescheduled twice already. Abandoning the meeting was not an option, but turning away someone needing my help wasn't either. I listen to the hot topics and concerns our assistant registrar has saved for our meeting and I send emails out as needed and as we speak to address the items she's brought up. If I don't do it then, it may not get done. Multi-tasking and efficiency *cannot* be overrated or taken for granted.

She leaves and I have four minutes before a meeting that takes one minute to get to. That means I can send two emails! I start typing. My phone rings. Scrap that thought of emailing. The call takes longer and I regret picking up, but I make every effort for that regret to go unnoticed



in my voice. We hang up after I explain to Professor Seuss that, no, it's not okay to award a grade of Pass to a student in a letter-graded course. My email goes unfinished.

I run off to my meeting and walk in tip-toeing, repeating my too-well-known apology for being late. Some attendees smile with sympathy and others smile unconvincingly. We spend the meeting discussing student success strategies and our office's role in some ongoing but relatively new efforts. As I'm listening I'm also keenly aware of the instant messages popping up on my laptop. (Did I mention my laptop may as well be permanently attached to me?) Maybe it's not the best decision to have left myself open to messages but I cringe at the thought of being perceived as more unavailable than I already have to be perceived as. I have a staff member messaging me about a student who's irate over a transcript that can't be released due to a financial hold. I assure the shaken-up team member that despite the student's anger, I will support him and he is conveying the right message.

The meeting adjourns and I'm thinking of the two especially important emails I didn't get to the evening before, so I make a bee-line to the door to exit. "Sofia!" Yes; of course he needs me for just a minute. He's had a good idea and I'm all about opportunities to improve. I listen and am thankful I was stopped; I send myself a text message to remember to follow up.

Lunch? A leftover boxed meal from another department's meeting and my half-full cup of cold coffee sound just fine for today. I sit at my desk to "do emails" and drink the rest of my coffee. I sulk at the fact that my emails have reproduced like bunnies and the twelve I left earlier have now become 62 in just a few hours. That's excluding spam and listserv and forum emails I receive. Sigh. I have to start somewhere.

The phone rings; I pick up. "Did you know Banner is down?" NO!!!! While on the phone chatting – asking the usual questions to attempt to verify it's not a matter of the user – I engage my colleagues by instant message in an effort to shave seconds of the escalation process. They're on it. I promise to follow up with my caller and quickly add a reminder to my calendar just in case things continue on the chaotic path today.

The phone rings again. A professor argues that another professor has taken her classroom and that's not possible because that classroom is always "her" classroom. I quickly go to Banner to start my inquiry and...oh, wait. I can't. Banner is down. I refer her to one of my team members, but send the staff member an instant message first before wrapping up with the professor to ensure she isn't transferred to a black hole.

Emails, office visits and more phone calls take me to the latter half of the afternoon and I'm dying for coffee again. I take my cup for a refill and agree with my vocal conscience that, yes, I should cut back on the caffeine. I also recognize however that the world appreciates me with coffee in my belly. The smell and sound of brewing yields a feeling of bliss...

It's substantially past quitting time when I hear my cell phone vibrate aggressively, although the sounds of the office could feign another time of day because there are still several folks on my



team at their desks anxious to finish up tasks and projects before throwing in the day's towel. "Hello?" "Babe, are you on your way home?" I look around and wonder if the hum of the office could pass for road noise. "No, but almost..." My husband asks but knows the answer already: I'm still at the office. We team up and decide that a dinner of baked chicken tenders (out of a frozen box) and a salad kit from the fridge will be a decent, low-commitment dinner for the family. By the time I hit "end" on the call I've gotten up from my desk and started packing my belongings.

I walk out of my office and while I pause to switch off my office lights, I look out and remind myself the office represents far more than cubicles. It represents breadth and depth of responsibility...over academic records, data integrity, academic scheduling, NCAA certification, degree auditing, Commencement planning and everything else that binds beginning-of-term processes with others mid-term and at the end of the term. The office also tells a tale of professionals who have dedicated themselves to learning, improving, and trying to offer strong customer service even on days that challenge us to do otherwise. Most importantly, the office represents the receipt of accepted students and the capacity and willingness to provide them with steady support throughout their pursuit of a degree. *That's* what it's all about.

There will never be a commencement ceremony where I don't beam excitedly at our students walking with such pride and newfound confidence, where I don't wholeheartedly value the collective efforts of our staff, faculty and administration that enable us to hand out a few thousand diploma tubes, and where I don't raise my eyebrows and widen my eyes to blink out the beginnings of a few tears when I see so many first-generation college students tightly hugging proud parents who wipe tears of joy from their cheeks.

I head for my vehicle with my office behind me but a bit of work still ahead of me. I can catch up more tonight...after chicken tenders, salad and a quick workout for the stress. One day at a time, one thing at a time...

My last email finally goes out at 12:11 a.m. That doesn't mean I caught up. It means I got out what I set to get out for the night, but there are admittedly and unfortunately many emails still unattended. It's okay. I optimistically think the next day holds a little more breathing room and a little more opportunity for email. Maybe the optimism doesn't align perfectly with reality but it carries me through to the next morning with my chin up and positive attitude intact.

At the end of the day, there aren't ten of me. Even if there were, it wouldn't be enough. And if there were, well even I admit that would be scary. While there may not be enough versions of me, I can do my best to impart my knowledge, decision-making approaches and work ethic on those professionals I work with who also aspire to reach that awesome but daunting role of Registrar, *and* who have that same passion for awarding degrees. And while a few clones could help, I find comfort in remembering that the phone calls, unplanned system outages, mountains of emails, other competing priorities – and even dinners from frozen bags – are all *truly* appreciated knowing just what I have the privilege of playing a role in every day of my enviable career.



### Success Takes Guts

Catherine Mund  
University Registrar

It takes guts to be a successful leader in higher education. While anyone can lead, a gutsy leader makes mistakes and learns a lot from each error. The classroom of my master's program and every job opportunity provided meaningful experiences, but process and theory did not teach me how to lead. My most rewarding experiences and professional growth were acquired as I moved into progressive leadership positions. Eighteen years in the industry has provided many opportunities to make mistakes, learn, and develop into a successful leader. Here are a few lessons worth sharing:

**Edit for "I."** The single greatest way to build collaboration is to edit for "I." Whether you're writing a communication, having a tête-à-tête, or contributing as a member of a formal committee, edit for "I." As a leader, your spoken and written word should reflect the department you represent; the examples that you provide should be the successes of the team and not your personal accomplishments. The most difficult people to build rapport with are those who pepper their sentences with "I." After all, where are they leaving space for anyone else? A trusted supervisor once challenged me to review my verbal and written communication, and edit for "I." The awareness and reflection that followed were transformational; this daily practice has helped me become more approachable, humble, and open.

**Fighter pilots v. commercial pilots.** Onboarding at each institution, the first few weeks inevitably included critiques that certain members of the team don't contribute enough. I refer to these critics as "fighter pilots." In the skies of their daily work, these elite aviators pull off thrilling feats; these employees help advance the processes and strategic initiatives of the department and institution. The challenge then comes in helping the fighter pilots recognize the value of the "commercial pilots" on the team. The commercial pilots comprise the majority of our teams; they get our "passengers" safely from one city to the next. Commercial pilots answer the same recurring questions with a smile and accuracy while simultaneously processing heaps of admissions applications, transcript evaluations, and graduation clearances. Without our commercial pilots achieving the core work of our departments, the fighter pilots wouldn't be able to move the institution forward. The commercial pilots need to be on time each day, opening the doors to our students. The fighter pilots need to be available off hours to test technical enhancements before they go live. A good leader values both types of team members, but the best leaders help their teams to appreciate this dichotomy.



**Equity over equality.** To truly lead, we must meet each team member where they are and develop each individual in a manner that works for them, the greater good of the team, and the organization. Every individual comes to the workplace with different backgrounds, personal goals, abilities, and strengths. Take the time to get to know each person. Ask questions, and listen for answers. What are each individual's strengths? Some team members will exude empathy by sharing the worries and concerns about team members. Others may lack empathy, but partner to deliver flawless data analyses before deadline. Some team members may have both of these strengths, or possess completely different gifts. Also inquire about each colleague's personal and professional goals. What constraints does each employee face in the workplace and at home? Assign responsibilities and develop performance plans that take into account the entire individual. While every team member deserves to be equally valued, the best leaders invest equitably in each colleague.

**Trust your team.** Finally, you'll realize no greater liberty than that which comes from trusting your team. By trusting each colleague to contribute to their fullest potential, you inspire confidence. By relying on your team to accomplish departmental goals, you establish boundaries and balance. It is in this space of trust that we can encourage one another to work smarter and not harder. Through trust, we encourage our team members to learn the answers and develop as subject matter experts. In trusting, we are able to realize work-life balance and demonstrate appreciation for one another, ourselves, and our families. By trusting your team, you become a leader who walks the talk and provides an example worth emulating. When considering the kudos that I've received from colleagues, the themes include being approachable and caring, open to new ideas and methods, and ensuring the success of each individual on the team. Higher education needs more gutsy leaders, so here's your challenge: edit for "I," identify and leverage the strengths of colleagues, and trust your team.



# Roger Williams University

## **A Day in the Life**

Daniel O'Driscoll  
University Registrar

My family and friends are fully aware that I work at a university. Yet, I am often met with assumptions that I am a professor and that I get spring breaks and summers off. I cannot blame them for not fully understanding the profession to which I am passionately committed to and have chosen as my life's work. How could I when I, myself did not know what a registrar was until I worked in academia?

As I move up through the ranks of higher education, I have a better understanding of the complexities that encompass the responsibilities of a registrar. Still, I often find myself perplexed by the breadth and levels of complicated situations that I must navigate on a daily basis in order to be successful. While it is true that I am the official custodian of student records and therefore maintain and protect student data, my day is often much more complicated than the duties that are accompanied by these tasks. I, at times, must walk students in crisis to the Counseling Center and appear before the executive board of the faculty union to respond to grievances. As a department manager, I negotiate contracts with third party vendors, meet with the Controller's Office to create (and sometimes cut) budgets and work with Human Resources to address various staffing concerns. On occasion, I can even be found serving pancakes to exhausted students at the annual midnight breakfast event during final exam week.

The role of a registrar has evolved over the last decade and encompasses all that I am passionate about: utilizing data as a tool to make informed decisions, helping students achieve success, and developing new technologies, just to name a few. While I am still responsible for student records, I also play an integral role in the university's retention efforts, assist in the strategic planning process, and provide support to Institutional Research projects and Enrollment Management initiatives. One of my most important roles is being a change agent. I am tasked with having to find new and creative ways to perform the functions of a registrar's office. This often involves having to understand systems and technology, having to get buy-in from faculty and, more importantly, buy-in from my own staff. It is expected that I implement these changes accurately, on time, and often under budget, which comes with its own challenges.

When I am not implementing curricula and programming degree audits, I am mentoring students on academic probation and resolving classroom scheduling issues. In contrast to meeting individually with at-risk students and providing space utilization analyses, I am attending Faculty Senate meetings, Curriculum Committee meetings, Academic Dean's Council meetings and Graduate Advisory Council meetings. In an effort to keep myself informed of



what is happening on a daily basis, I try to spend a few minutes interacting with my staff and work study students and observing the processes that are taking place around me. This also provides an opportunity outside of our weekly office meeting for staff to bounce ideas off me and to, of course, bring issues and concerns to my attention.

While I have never climbed a ladder, and I have never handled a hose, I spend a good portion of my day putting out fires. Whether it is dealing with an angry parent, speaking with an upset student, trying to correct a system issue, or having to change a process to conform to a new federal compliance, a lot of my energy is spent handling the smaller crises that very few people will ever know about outside of the Registrar's Office. My daily responsibilities are ever changing, and I often have to pivot my thought process on a whim so that I can resolve the issue at hand. It is for all of these reasons that I am an educator, a student advocate, a liaison to the faculty, a systems programmer, a collaborator, a problem solver and, of course, a registrar.





## **A Day in the Life**

Sherri J. Hendrix  
University Registrar

If you have never seen the movie *Forrest Gump*, you might not be familiar with the famous quote, "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get." This quote captures perfectly the image of a day in the life of a college or university registrar. We are the center of the institution from which, and through which, nearly every process, policy, and problem routes. Our work is extremely unpredictable. It requires calm yet quick thinking, wisdom, creativity, problem-solving skills, thick skin, and an ability to work with all kinds of people. Some people may assume that because the registrar's office enforces policy and keeps records, we must have a fairly stable and structured routine. However, I need only to recap the major events of this past week to illustrate the contrary.

### **Monday**

- Someone from the retention office called a meeting with me about implementing new procedure for exit interviews for students withdrawing from the university. Negotiations were unproductive. (Cut to Tuesday.)
- One of my assistant registrars was sick, and 50 of 125 letters he sent to students containing important and time-sensitive information about a placement test scheduled for next week were returned to our office with incorrect addresses. Addresses had to be corrected and letters resent. (Cut to Wednesday.)
- A student who was academically suspended for two semesters applied to be readmitted a semester early. I worked with the student to draft a petition to return early.

### **Tuesday**

- (From Monday) The exit interview discussion continued with an additional meeting with more personnel. Again, negotiations were futile. More meetings to come next week with even more personnel.
- A department chair hired an adjunct instructor living in another state who planned to teach the class using Zoom. The IT department called me wondering if my office knew anything about it. We did not. The problem? None of our classrooms have the appropriate technology to deliver a class using Zoom. Also, if we were indeed offering the course as a Zoom course, it was set up incorrectly in the schedule. Creative thinking was necessary to resolve these problems.



### **Wednesday**

- (From Monday) The assistant registrar responsible for the placement exam letters returned and realized he pulled data from spring 2017 instead of spring 2018. Retractions were sent to students who received the letter in error, and additional letters had to be sent to those left off the original list.
- Registrar's office staff meeting. The meeting went over schedule by 40 minutes.
- Meeting with the registrar's office IT support person.

### **Thursday**

- A new international student athlete was delayed due to visa issues and was planning to arrive two weeks into the spring semester. I had to work with admissions, instructors, and advisors on a registration plan that would allow him late arrival.
- NAIA recertification for spring sports.
- I advised an academic department on options to offer a student who never finished his degree program but walked in commencement two years ago. This required a review of the degree audit, student file, and current catalog requirements to make recommendations.
- I reviewed eight ITT Tech syllabi for a transfer student to determine applicability of the transfer coursework to our programs.
- I attended weekly Academic Affairs staff meeting.

### **Friday**

- I called a brainstorming meeting with financial aid and student support about possible changes to our academic status policies (probation, suspension, etc.).
- I talked with human resources on a staffing issue in my office.
- I scheduled and chaired a Start-up Success Support Team meeting for next week for a new master's program launching in May.
- I resolved an issue with a department that made some decisions that did not adhere to institutional grading policy.
- Wrote "A Day in the Life" essay for AACRAO.

Interspersed among these major events were the regular tasks of answering emails, phone calls, and spontaneous questions of staff, students and colleagues; signing petitions and requisitions; chatting with visitors in the office; and having brief fun moments with my staff.

Even though a day in my life as a registrar is fraught with arbitrary activities, multiple interruptions, and unanticipated problems, it is one of the most rewarding jobs I have ever had. It requires skills in problem solving, creative thinking, customer service, and management, and there is never a dull or slow day. I never dreamed of being a registrar, but now that I am one, I am so glad my professional journey led me here.





## **My Story So Far**

Siu Yan Scott

Registrar at the School of Medicine

I never thought I would ever end up being a school registrar. I think I only visited my undergraduate registrar's office once in my lifetime to request a transcript upon graduation in the mid-90s that I had never seen. I never really felt connected to my school, but the transcript was some sort of real connection that I hadn't thought of before. It hit me that, wow, I have an academic record forever here, and I'll always need to come back here to ask for a transcript whenever I need it.

When I first accepted the position in April 2011, I thought, "How hard could it be?" As clueless as I was, I was ready for a new challenge and growth opportunity. I can say now that my expectations have been met and even exceeded! I'm also extremely grateful to the people that believed in me and supported me throughout this journey.

A day in my life as a registrar is a day of religiously keeping my calendar updated and reviewing it constantly to know what I'm doing from one moment to the next. My email inbox is like a clogged sink with the faucet running. Every day is about trying something new to make things better, no matter how small the effort. Some days it's about solving difficult problems as quietly and efficiently as possible, and registrars can be easily unnoticed if they are doing a great job. Some days are filled with meetings after meetings with lots of talk and no final decision (yet), and other days fly by so fast I realize that I forgot to eat because a lot got done! It's been the most rewarding employment position to date, and I receive a great deal of job satisfaction knowing that it's not just a job but an important role of service as a steward of our institution's student records.

I started out as one of "those" people "that does a great job" and was willing but not ready to be a manager or supervisor and consequently felt thrown into the fire. Now, "hardened by battle" in my almost six years of experience, I'm honored to be invited to share just a few thoughts about what helps me be a successful registrar.

The idea of building professional skills has become so repetitive that the thought of it becomes overused and commonplace. The challenge of keeping the cliché alive is to keep seeking out opportunities and then identifying and making the time to try new things to continuously improve those skills. Learning is really a life-long process, and the key is to make it a regenerative process. I feel fortunate to work for an institution that acknowledges people as its most valuable asset, and I have been able to access a number of learning opportunities in communications, managing, and supervising over the years. I take at least one hour a month to



do something to develop professional skills – I read one article, watch a podcast, or attend a professional development class. Lately, I've been also reached out to our human resources professionals and asked for some "coaching" time, which has been very beneficial.

Joining AACRAO early in my career was a pivotal moment in my professional development. AACRAO opened up resources, ideas, people, knowledge, history, and trends that helped me be more strategic in thinking and consequently more focused in day-to-day activities. Being a registrar isn't about just getting the work done every day but knowing what needs to be done in the future and then working methodically to get there.

I would like to end this reflection by also underscoring the importance of relationships. In this world of technology and data management, it's easy to forget about people. But there is someone behind that email that must be answered, and although it might be the umpteenth time that you answered the question, it's their first question. Also, remember that there are others who help you get the work done, and even if you feel that you might be having a bad day, they just might be having a worse day. Relationships are key to everything we do, and it's a team effort all the way.





## **“My path to Registrar at Age 25”**

Robert J. Lenk

Registrar/Director of Institutional Effectiveness/Head SIS Administrator

When those in academics picture the face of a university registrar, often they may think of someone who is middle aged, experienced, and has worked through the ranks from being on staff, to faculty, and to administrator. What is not usually pictured is a 25-year-old “kid” with a “knack” for technology and higher education.

My story begins as a quiet, introverted, hard-working student needing a work study position to help pay for tuition at my small, private university in Oklahoma. As a child and into my teenage years my parents never pressured me to make “As” and “Bs” but instead encouraged me solely to “do the best that I possibly could.” As long as I did my best, they would be proud. Skipping forward, that encouragement to “do the best that I could do” stuck in my mind through collegiate life and work. My first work study position was to be an aid to a faculty member to help grade Scantron exams and file papers. I was dedicated to this position as best as I could, and without my knowledge, administration took notice. After a few months, the vice president of academic affairs had approached me and requested that my work study position be transferred to him. I accepted and began working in the Office of Academic Affairs. Everything I did for this office I gave 100% of my effort and quickly built the trust of the vice president. Soon after, he invited me to different faculty/staff meetings and gave me assignments that a student typically should have no business doing. However, I continued to work hard in building the respect of the vice president and the administrators around him.

The vice president realized my drive to accomplish tasks and not sit idle. When he did not have any work for me to do, he sent me to the registrar’s office to assist with data entry of transfer credits. As any member of the registrar’s office will know, manually typing in course after course can be gruesome. However, I soon developed processes to input courses more quickly. Eventually, I worked fast enough that neither the registrar nor the vice president had enough work for me every day. So during downtimes in the office, I started “tinkering” with our student information system. I deconstructed every module I had access to on my account and explored how the system worked. I found how field values were mapped and coded and what fields were mapped to different reports that could be pulled. Because I explored and learned the reporting side of our system, I was able to assist the registrar with completing a state report within two weeks that previously took roughly a month and a half to complete.

After I graduated with my bachelor’s in May 2013, the assistant registrar at the time decided to change positions. I quickly moved into the position shortly after in August. Once in the assistant registrar position, I began developing more efficient processes and systems of



accomplishing the day-to-day tasks. Again, I found myself with extra time to explore the system further with the gained access I had under the assistant registrar position. As I built up competency of our system, our head SIS administrator gave me more access to elements over time. The more access I gained to the system, the deeper I dove into learning about the system and its database framework. Eventually, I had developed more knowledge in some areas than our administrator, and a new system administrator title was attached to my name just a little after one year of employment. I continued to work hard to find new solutions using our SIS; I asked the registrar to also include me in as many university/faculty meetings that I could to learn more about the operations of the university. My registrar at the time saw my hunger for growth and knowledge and would regularly include me in her meetings, email threads, IPEDS, and day-to-day assignments.

I then started my MBA program in the fall of 2015 and pushed to complete my degree within a year and a half. During my last semester of my MBA, our registrar needed to take a position in another state. I filled in as “interim” one month following before I was offered the registrar position. My story does not end there. During my MBA program, I was able to take a SQL database course as one of my electives. I used the skills learned in this class to further my understanding of our own SIS, and was able to create rich interactive dashboards, reports, and assessment tools. Almost one year after taking the position of registrar, the director of institutional effectiveness decided to move to another position in the university. After being part of the search committee to fill this position and not being able to find a qualified candidate, I decided to propose to our presidential cabinet for my office to assimilate the office of institutional effectiveness. They accepted my proposal in the fall of 2017.

I tell my story above not to bring praise on myself for being some “amazing” person, but I tell my story to encourage the younger generation, my generation, that hard work and dedication can pay off. I have heard so many times from older generations that they look down at younger generations for being “entitled,” and honestly I would not disagree. However, I urge the younger generation to step up and prove those nay-sayers wrong. We have the ability to take hold of the torch in the pursuit of pushing higher education forward.

My second encouragement to those who are young and experienced, is to place yourself in situations that expand your knowledge, skills, and experience, even if those experiences or skills do not necessarily relate to your immediate position or day-to-day tasks. You may never know what job or opportunity may be waiting; always be prepared for the next step, even if you do not know what that next step may be.

“Blessed are those who live out their dreams. That’s the difference between listening to the knock on the door and going to answer it.” – Frank Sanders





### **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Clifford K. Dorne, Ph.D.

University Registrar

My path to the registrar's position was relatively unorthodox, to say the least. Though this point is somewhat anecdotal, it seems to me that many postsecondary registrars did not originally intend to do this type of work as they planned careers in graduate school. (The results of the recent AACRAO survey should provide more empirical data.)

I originally worked in the corrections field and, after earning two master's degrees, I earned a doctorate from the School of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York at Albany. My original long-term plan was to join the U.S. Coast Guard, but after working as a teaching fellow in graduate school, I enjoyed teaching and decided to pursue a career as a professor.

After teaching at a few universities, I arrived here at SVSU 20 years ago as the department chair in the criminal justice program and earned tenure and the rank of full professor. Not long thereafter, I served as the associate dean of the SVSU College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences, the largest of the five colleges on our campus. Subsequently, I served as an associate vice president for academic affairs, and in this capacity, got involved in strategic planning in the enrollment area. From there, I was invited to work under the vice president for enrollment management, and this led to an appointment to run the SVSU Office of Institutional Research. After the registrar announced his retirement, I was asked if I would be interested in training for that position. Essentially, I went from a faculty career path to academic administrator and, subsequently, to front-line student services. Our university president, Don Bachand, in his previous capacities as a dean and then provost, directly provided me with these administrative opportunities at SVSU for which I am profoundly grateful.

I am going on my fifth year as registrar, and I find the job extremely satisfying. I am very fortunate to work on a beautiful campus with a very collegial organizational culture. SVSU is a wonderful place to work, as I get to collaborate daily with colleagues whom I greatly respect and appreciate. Of course, the job has its challenges, and almost daily I find myself drawing knowledge from my previous professional experiences: how courses are administered and taught, protocols relating to the individual academic departments, the functions of the academic deans' and provost's offices, the work of the dean of students office, the utilization and management of data, and making student referrals for academic support services (advisement, counseling, tutoring, financial aid, etc.).

Perhaps my two favorite parts of this job involve: 1) assisting students with the services of my office, which includes helping them navigate the academic bureaucracy and 2) working as a member of a dedicated team to address challenges at both practice and policy levels. I consider myself very fortunate to have traveled this rather diverse professional path and only wish that I had known more about the work of university registrars earlier in my career in higher education. With such knowledge, I would likely have gone into this profession much earlier.





## **My Story So Far**

Carol Harrison  
Registrar

If I had to put into words my professional mission statement (and it also happens to be the vision statement of CSM), it is “Transforming lives through lifelong learning and service.” This is what community colleges are all about, and I am dedicated to assisting students.

Working at community colleges over the past 25 years has given value to me personally and professionally. I believe a community college should provide open access to higher education at a reasonable cost and take the steps necessary to ensure the students who attend the community college attain their education goal. I hope to never lose sight of the responsibility I have in serving my students. My goals to the students are to: serve every student who walks through the door equitably, engage in assisting student success, increase student degree completion, and improve college readiness.

Being a registrar has provided me with lifelong personal and professional friends. The collaborative spirit I have found with my registrar colleagues and friends has impacted me personally and professionally. I have implemented better processes in my office because of these relationships and enjoyed some wonderful personal memories. One of my process improvements was document imaging. This process improvement was acquired from a registrar colleague. One colleague I met, Steve Smith, enabled me to be a part of the founding of a regional AACRAO for Maryland and DC called Chesapeake and Potomac Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (CAPACRAO). I became the president of this organization. That opportunity never would have happened, if it were not for my relationship with Steve.

Community colleges need to find resources to assist students who are near completion of their degree. This has become a very important part of my mission as a registrar. As a community college leader, I have found resources to uncover near-completers (who often have stopped attending the college) and get them re-enrolled as well as assist near-completers who are still enrolled. I identify students who are near-completers or completers who stopped attending the college. CSM offers these students small grants to assist in completing their degree. The completers are offered an easy process to apply for graduation. Because of these efforts, over the past two years, CSM has awarded close to 200 additional associate degrees. My office identifies students who never applied for letters of recognition or certificates and automatically awards these credentials. Since 2015 this effort has awarded 1,365 letters of recognition and



1,859 certificates. During the summer of 2017, the registrar's office implemented the process of automatically awarding associate degrees. After the 2017 spring graduation cycle, 50 degrees and certificates were awarded to students. After the 2017 summer graduation cycle, 12 degrees were awarded to students. As part of this initial effort, the registrar's office reviewed 2012 to 2017 students to determine if there were any degrees or certificates that could be awarded. The grand total was 288 for this effort. For the January 2018 graduation cycle, 22 degrees were awarded to students.

If I left the registrar's office today, I can state with certainty that I left the place better than I found it! One of the greatest issues facing community colleges is student success and goal completion, and I feel over the past three years that I have assisted my institution in finding more students to boost CSM's completion rates. Positively impacting student success and goal completion at the College of Southern Maryland has been one of my finest professional accomplishments.



## **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Heather A. Chermak  
University Registrar

You often hear nobody goes to school to become a registrar. But in my case I did. Here is my story.

Upon graduating with my BBA in Management Information System from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, I struggled to find a job like most graduates. I spent a few years in retail before I found a trading position at a brokerage firm in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I learned a lot about the product we traded and worked with individuals throughout the United States. I even managed several office location moves, the big one being from Milwaukee to Chicago when the firm combined the operations of five regional firms into one. Eventually, I was managing a team of eight. However, I observed many females in the firm move into higher manager roles but wouldn't move any farther and would then leave the firm. Eight years into my career with the firm, I decided to look for another profession. What better resource to explore than the public library.

The biggest decision I had to make was whether I wanted to start over and get another bachelor's degree or build on the experience I had gained. I looked through several career books when I noticed a few brochures on top of a cabinet. The one that caught my eye was from AACRAO. The AACRAO brochure outlined the registrar position, the type of work entailed in the profession, and the type of degree required. I had found my fit. I began researching degree programs based on the information in the flyer and was accepted into the administrative leadership program at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. Three-and-a-half years later I had earned my M.S. degree and was on the hunt for a position.

Oregon State University took a chance on me. I was a sponge, absorbing all I could. During my fifth week on the job, I was presenting at PACRAO on web registration (it was new then) with Michelle Sandlin who was presenting on web admissions applications. I continued to learn and grow and develop my registrar skills. I moved to an associate registrar role at the University of Idaho, where I am now serving as the university registrar. I continue to learn every day, but I am also sharing my knowledge with others so they can grow and develop in this wonderful profession. I'm so grateful that AACRAO published that brochure and for the career I have experienced.





## **My Path to the Registrar's Office**

Keith J. Malkowski

Registrar

When asked by my children, friends, or a stranger “What is a Registrar?” I’m tempted to spin up descriptions painting the high-flying equivalents of being in the witness protection program, or other such to make even Great Britain’s most famous secret agent envious. Yet, I go to standards outlining my oversight of student records, registration systems, degree auditing, etc. To those within the world of education, I elaborate on my roles in policy interpretation, curricular consultation, and assurance in compliance with institutional, state, and federal guidelines. To senior leaders, peer registrars, and registrar staff members, I describe the role and function in terms of 21<sup>st</sup> Century approaches to the mission of the registrar’s office, leadership, visioning, human resource issues, change management, and budgeting. The truth is clearly a combination of all of the above. Clearly, it is not as enticing as my first explanation when placed side by side. Plus, a Ford Focus is a far cry from an Aston Martin.

My first confession is I received no prompting or insights for this path via any interest or career inventory exercise. Nor did any teacher or guidance counselor in high school or after whet my appetite for this career. One could correlate aspects of my undergraduate and graduate course work and degrees in history lending to certain skills and aptitudes aligning to being a registrar. Service as an undergraduate student employee at Northern Michigan University did instill a desire to work in higher education, but I don’t recall any mentor saying “check out that registrar’s office—it’s where the action is!” Working in various capacities during my graduate experience at Marquette University cemented anticipation of ultimately reaching faculty rank as a historian. Yet, after my master’s, experiences in a small family-owned business and as a long-term substitute high school teacher, among other roles, affirmed my professional desire of working in education. By 1999, I was uncertain if it would be K-12 or higher ed. Relocation back to my home state of Michigan, with a brief stint as a stay-at-home dad, brought me back to education in several part-time roles. Just as financial needs became urgent with the start of a young family, I obtained an academic advisor position with Delta College.

Over the ensuing 14 years at Delta College, I gained valuable experiences learning about advising, student aid, curriculum, transfer issues, best practices for serving diverse populations, committee upon committee assignments, student billing issues, and the list goes on. Opportunities arose for supervisory positions in advising followed by a reorganization taking me to assessment/testing services which came with the concurrent function of being an admissions advisor. I fully transitioned, several years later, to a single role as assistant director of



admissions, gaining experience with holistic enrollment initiatives. Retirement of a well-respected and long-serving registrar at Delta College presented me an opportunity to make the first self-initiated career change in a decade. Prepping with the AACRAO's Registrar 101, attending registrar-focused sessions and round-tables at my state-level AACRAO helped me formulate a concept for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century registrar's office. I made the final cut setting me on a path of great learning, complex problem solving, and new professional relationships. My years in the community college sector provided unique insights and experiences with students, faculty, administrators, and external entities. Yet, as Ringo Star sings "I get by with a little help from my friends," the registrar community possesses the most supportive professionals in any sector, and without them I would have not been as successful.

In 2015, I desired new opportunities for professional growth, and I obtained my current position as Central Michigan University's registrar. As a university registrar, the nuances of policy and implications of policy scale up. Maintaining relevance as registrar is of equal value and need as possessing knowledge and leadership on SEM strategies. As a member of key leadership groups, expectations for developing and evaluating systems, policies, and the internal and external political landscapes are essential. I realize my daily distance from serving students directly is a reality except in extremely unique or complex cases. I deeply feel this at commencement. I believe I'm doing the right work if those sitting in their commencement robes never obviously needed me, or my unit, to navigate to this moment. It is their moment, and all they need from me now is sincere applause in recognition of their achievements.





## **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Doug McKenna  
University Registrar

Looking back, you could say there were signs from an early age: the way I filed the instructions for LEGO sets by the set number. Despite such early indications, it took me quite a long time to figure out that higher education administration was my calling. And in many ways, I fell into it by accident. This is the story of my circuitous path to becoming a university registrar.

After graduating from Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Arts in English, I moved to the Washington, DC area with a bunch of friends and eventually landed a job with IBM. It was there that I began developing databases and implementing electronic workflows to replace paper-based administrative processes (in addition to my actual job responsibilities). Having demonstrated a knack for it, IBM sent me to specialized training for business process analysis, database development, and reporting.

I was promoted into a sales position in the summer of 2001 and moved to Indiana to support five upper-Midwestern states. However, when the economy contracted as a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, as the least senior person on my sales team, I was laid off from IBM in February 2002.

I didn't know it at the time, but I had just taken my first step on my path to the registrar. After IBM, I found work as a temp at Notre Dame, where my wife had begun law school. I later returned to sales with a small technology company in the area. I maintained contact with the recruiters at Notre Dame, and they eventually called me with a position that involved "database things." The position was a degree audit coordinator in the Office of the University Registrar. I had never considered working for a university full-time before this position.

In that role, I was under the tutelage of Chuck Hurley (currently the registrar at ND), who brought me up to speed on all things degree audit, student records, and working with a broad set of constituents across campus. I was fortunate to work for Dr. Harold Pace (then registrar at ND, currently registrar at Wake Forest), who embodies the idea that the registrar's office is a service office. Dr. Pace encouraged innovation and was receptive to ideas and suggestions for ways to improve or streamline administrative processes. I was promoted to assistant registrar and worked on the implementation of the Banner student information system, learning as much as I could about as much as possible along the way.

In 2006, my wife accepted a position at a law firm in Michigan, and I followed, accepting a position as an associate registrar at Michigan State University. With a budding knowledge of



student records and student information systems, I embarked on a Master of Arts degree in higher, adult, and lifelong education. Adding a study of higher education to go along with my technology and sales background, I was filling out my future registrar tool kit. I was also encouraged to broaden my professional development. As such, I wrote an article for *College & University*, attended and presented at AACRAO and MACRAO, joined and later chaired a professional activity committee, and took advantage of the opportunity to meet and learn from members of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC). I benefitted from generous professionals who were interested in sharing their knowledge and experience.

We returned to the DC area in 2010, and I made a lateral move to George Washington University, working as an associate registrar. There, I continued to hone my collaborative style, working with many varied offices across campus on a variety of projects. Some of them even within my assigned area of responsibilities! My experiences at these three institutions led me to believe that I was ready to take the next step in my career. I applied for a number of positions, was interviewed for several, and in January 2015, I became the university registrar at American University in Washington, DC. My path was shaped with mentorship and encouragement, a desire to serve, an inquisitive and curious nature, two geographical re-locations, and a lot of hard work. It can happen for you!





### *A Day in the Life*

Reta Pikowsky

Registrar

A day in the life of the registrar at the Georgia Institute of Technology is never the same. This was also true of the same role I held at other institutions. This fact, that a day in the life of a registrar never renders itself the same way twice, is what makes the job fascinating, challenging, and rewarding. Even though there are functions in all registrar job descriptions that share a common theme or note, each one—depending on the size, control, nature, and climate of the institution—is a slightly different creature.

At the Georgia Institute of Technology, I exist, as registrar, within a dynamic, creative, entrepreneurial, and competitive environment. Our students are all these things. Our faculty are all these things. They keep me and my staff on our toes. They challenge us, on a daily basis, to respond to questions accurately, fully, and in a timely way. They challenge us, on a daily basis, to respond to situations or problems analytically, thoroughly, and in a timely way. A typical day is spent dancing as quickly as we can on a number of fronts. If we use a sports analogy, it's the deliberate movement of football and the non-stop action of basketball all in one.

The questions, problems, and projects have all become much more complicated than when I started in this profession many years ago. On any given day here at Georgia Tech, my staff and I are either in direct contact with parents, or with other offices that are interfacing with parents, who want the futures of their children mapped out in detail, through to graduation, including exactly when they register for classes each term and in what ways we can guarantee them their preferred class schedules for each term. There seems no such thing as a limited-scope transaction or question these days.

In Georgia, our lottery funds the Hope and Zell Miller scholarships. One thing we can always count on, as the term progresses, is the impact of registration changes on financial aid and fee payment. I don't envy the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid trying to explain the eligibility requirements for these programs. I spend a great deal of my time working through problems with the academic advisors, financial aid staff, and bursar's office staff to ensure that we are looking at the full spectrum of issues related to changes in enrollment.

Technology is an integral and inescapable part of our lives. It has invaded almost every business process that we manage. Technology-related projects take up some of my time every day. Even



then, I cannot say that one day mirrors another. Regardless of what kinds of projects we have underway, there are different challenges, budget issues, and training or retraining of staff that can manifest themselves in all sorts of different ways. Simplicity is not a word that exists in my vocabulary much these days.

If I had to use a few choice words to describe a day in my life as a registrar, I believe I would say that it's hectic, sometimes frustrating, never boring, and always satisfying. I believe that a day in my life on campus is about making a difference. Each day I am pushed, stretched, and challenged in ways that I never imagined. I am the better for it. I hope my campus is as well.





### **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Sheila M. Jarrell, M.Ed.

Registrar and Director of Enrollment Services

Although unaware of the concept at the time, I created a one-stop shop nearly 25 years ago in a small, remote copper mining town in northern Arizona because I recognized a need to help students. My husband was stationed in Bagdad with the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office, and I was looking for part-time work when I was hired as a "coordinator" for Yavapai College. My job was to represent the college in Bagdad and to liaison with the main campus in Prescott 60 miles away. My facility and equipment consisted of an ancient answering machine, which was kept locked in a storage closet in a classroom at the local high school. My position was limited to ten hours per week during the *busiest* times of each semester. Many weeks would offer no opportunity for work. What to do with this largesse?

I began by going to each class as it met for the first time each semester, making sure that the classroom was unlocked, that an instructor was present, and resolving any other small problems that arose. Historically, much of our enrollment happened during those first couple of class meetings, as latecomers showed up to the class with friends or relatives. Students completed hardcopy registration cards and paid the tuition in the amount that I calculated. I collected those cards and money in cash or check, completed a reconciliation sheet, and sent the packet each week to the Prescott Campus for processing.

Even though I was unaware of the one-stop-shop concept, I quickly realized that there were additional services needed by that population and that an opportunity existed for increased enrollment for Yavapai College. I recruited students by setting up a table in front of the post office on the Saturday after the printed class schedules arrived each semester. I increased enrollment by setting up a table in front of (then) Valley National Bank on payday Saturdays after registration opened each semester. I made contact with prior students who had not registered in subsequent semesters, and I encouraged other students to complete degree and certificate requirements. Students were offered part-time, one-time grants at my discretion. There was an obvious need for other services as well, so I began holding GED study classes, providing assessment testing, and offering placement advising.

My efforts paid off, as Yavapai College eventually collaborated with Cyprus Bagdad Copper Corporation and leased a building to house those services. We posted a Yavapai College sign and employed two staff in part-time positions to maintain the facility. The college provided a computer and technical support, and I was then able to register students directly via our legacy



student information system. Many students, the town, and the college all benefited from our presence in Bagdad, and I learned about higher education recruiting, retention, and completion.

We moved from Bagdad soon after, and I have been the registrar at Yavapai College for nearly ten years. The basics that I learned back then still inform my work, and I will always remember the unusual way in which my career began.



## Closing

This is AACRAO's second registrar report, and we received responses from 886 individuals, 103 more than in 2015. From this data, a registrar has these characteristics:

- is likely to identify as a woman
- identifies as non-Hispanic, white
- is between the ages of 45 and 49
- holds a master's degree
- has been in higher education his/her entire career to date
- has been in their current registrar position less than five years
- reports to a vice president or equivalent position
- came to their current registrar position from another registrar related position or registrar position
- serves on a wide variety of committees

We intend to replicate this survey and report every three years, and welcome feedback on this one. Please direct any questions regarding this or other AACRAO reports to Wendy Kilgore ([wendyk@aacrao.org](mailto:wendyk@aacrao.org)), Director of Research.



## Appendix A: Participant Institution Control, Type and Size

\*The enrollment value used to delineate the institution's size category is defined as full-time enrollment plus 1/3 of part-time enrollment. AACRAO institutional size data is based on the enrollment reported by the institution to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Control, Type and Size	Count
<b>Public</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Lower Division Only</b>	<b>96</b>
Under 1,000	10
1,000 - 2,499	24
2,500 - 4,999	30
5,000 - 9,999	18
10,000 - 19,999	10
20,000+	4
<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>27</b>
Under 1,000	6
1,000 - 2,499	11
2,500 - 4,999	4
10,000 - 19,999	5
20,000+	1
<b>Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional</b>	<b>228</b>
Under 1,000	2
1,000 - 2,499	15
2,500 - 4,999	24
5,000 - 9,999	59
10,000 - 19,999	58
20,000+	70
<b>Graduate and/or professional</b>	<b>7</b>
Under 1,000	3
1,000 - 2,499	2
5,000 - 9,999	1
10,000 - 19,999	1
<b>Upper division with graduate</b>	<b>1</b>
10,000 - 19,999	1
<b>Private, not-for-profit</b>	<b>488</b>
<b>Lower Division Only</b>	<b>15</b>
Under 1,000	12
1,000 - 2,499	1
5,000 - 9,999	1
20,000+	1



<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>85</b>
Under 1,000	46
1,000 - 2,499	35
2,500 - 4,999	4
<b>Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional</b>	<b>343</b>
Under 1,000	66
1,000 - 2,499	110
2,500 - 4,999	73
5,000 - 9,999	47
10,000 - 19,999	36
20,000+	11
<b>Graduate and/or professional</b>	<b>42</b>
Under 1,000	31
1,000 - 2,499	8
2,500 - 4,999	3
<b>Other</b>	<b>3</b>
Under 1,000	3
<b>Private, proprietary</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Lower Division Only</b>	<b>4</b>
Under 1,000	3
5,000 - 9,999	1
<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>8</b>
Under 1,000	5
1,000 - 2,499	1
2,500 - 4,999	1
20,000+	1
<b>Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional</b>	<b>18</b>
Under 1,000	6
1,000 - 2,499	7
5,000 - 9,999	2
10,000 - 19,999	3
<b>Graduate and/or professional</b>	<b>6</b>
Under 1,000	4
2,500 - 4,999	1
5,000 - 9,999	1
<b>Other</b>	<b>1</b>
Under 1,000	1
<b>Individual response</b>	<b>7</b>



## Appendix B: Other Committee Responsibilities

Committee	Count
Commencement	23
Academic Calendar	21
Accreditation	11
Admissions	9
Athletic	9
Data Governance	9
Graduate Council	9
Academic Advising	6
General Education	6
Provost Council	6
Assessment	6
Academic Council	5
Catalog	5
General Education	5
Orientation	5
Veterans	5
Academic Appeals	4
Academic Standards	4
Academic Standing	4
Administrative Council	4
Compliance	4
Diversity	4
ERP	4
Institutional Research	4
Readmission	4
Student Services	4
Study Abroad	4
Academic Progress	3
Advising	3
Behavioral Intervention Team	3
Budget	3
Data Management	3
Emergency Management	3
Residency	3
Satisfactory Academic Progress	3
Student Affairs	3
Academic Leadership	2



Academic Petitions	2
Appeals	2
Convocation	2
Cultural life	2
Data Integrity	2
Deans' Council	2
Dean's Council	2
Diversity and Inclusion	2
Facilities	2
Faculty Development	2
Finance	2
Financial Aid	2
Financial Aid Appeals	2
Graduate Council	2
Graduation	2
Graduation	2
NCAA Compliance	2
Orientation	2
Parking	2
Scholarship	2
Scholarship	2
Scholastic Standards	2
Search	2
Security	2
Tuition & Fees	2
Aboriginal Education Council	1
Academic Accessibility	1
Academic Appeals	1
Academic Ceremonies	1
Academic Deans Council	1
Academic Integrity Council	1
Academic Operations Council	1
Academic Placement and Assessment	1
Academic Review Boards	1
Academic Status	1
Administration	1
Admissions	1
Applied Learning Core Team	1
Associate Dean's Council	1
Awards	1



Banner Academic Team	1
Benefits and Employee Satisfaction	1
Budget	1
Campus safety	1
Capital Expenditures	1
Chair of QEP	1
Charter Day	1
Class Schedule	1
Classroom Management Team	1
Classroom Renovation	1
College Advisory	1
College Council	1
College Secretaries	1
College Values	1
Communication	1
Compensation	1
Coordinating Council for Students	1
Core Advisory	1
Core Curriculum	1
Core Studies	1
Council of Academic Deans	1
Council on Initiative Analytics	1
Counseling	1
Course Evaluations	1
Course Scheduling	1
Courses	1
Criminal Records	1
Critical Incident Response Planning	1
Cross department collaboration team	1
Cross-Cultural Studies	1
Curriculum Innovation	1
Curriculum Support Group	1
Data Integrity	1
Data Security	1
Data Standards	1
Data Standards	1
Database Management	1
Deans and Directors	1
Dean's Council	1
Dean's working group	1



Degree Audit	1
Developmental Education	1
Disaster Recovery	1
Dispute Resolution	1
Distance Delivery	1
Distance Learning	1
District Education Council	1
Diversity and Global View	1
Diversity Collaboration	1
Efficiency/Productivity	1
eLearning	1
Employee Data Integrity Team	1
Employee Welfare	1
Enrollment Development Team	1
Enrollment Forecasting	1
Enrollment Management	1
Exchange	1
Executive	1
Executive Council	1
Executive Team	1
Extended Cabinet	1
Faculty	1
Faculty Information Lifecycle	1
Fees	1
Financial Aid	1
General Catalog	1
General Faculties Council	1
General Liberal Education	1
Global Education	1
Graduate Student	1
Graduate Student Services	1
Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA)	1
Hirings	1
Honors and Awards	1
Honors programs	1
Identity Management	1
Inclusiveness (ADA related)	1
Individually Designed Major Review	1
Information Security Council	1
Information Systems Group	1



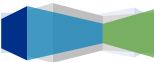
Institutional Assessment	1
Institutional Effectiveness	1
Institutional Effectiveness	1
Institutional Effectiveness/Research	1
Institutional Improvement	1
Institutional Operations Council	1
Instructional Policies	1
International Education	1
International Initiatives	1
International Student Program	1
Joint Academic & Student Affairs group	1
Judicial Oversight	1
Kingdom Week Team (student mission experiences)	1
Leadership	1
Leadership Council	1
Learning Outcomes	1
Management Team	1
Marketing	1
Math Pathways	1
Medical	1
Mental Health Task Force	1
Mentoring Team	1
Module Manager	1
Net Tuition Planning	1
Off campus study application review	1
Off-Campus Study Advisory	1
Onboarding	1
Online Education Task Force	1
Operations	1
Policy coordination	1
Prayer Team	1
President's Academic Council	1
Privacy & security	1
Pro Bono	1
Process	1
Program Oversight	1
Program Review	1
Project Simplification	1
Promotions Review	1
Records management	1



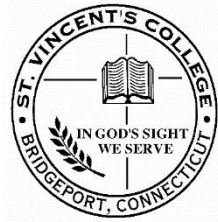
Redesign Commencement Ceremony	1
Registrars User group	1
Registry and Calendar	1
Registration operations	1
Registration planning	1
Reinstatement	1
Review Rules and Regulations	1
Scheduling	1
Senate Advisory	1
Senior Leadership	1
Serve on the new ERP roll out for Colleague / Ellucian	1
Special Course Fees and Electronic Accessibility	1
Special Events	1
Special Projects	1
Staff Advisory	1
Staff Assembly	1
Staff Handbook Review	1
Staff Senate Executive	1
Standards	1
Standards and Appeals Board	1
Status Change	1
Strategic retention	1
Student Administration Management Team	1
Student Concerns (confidential group including housing	1
Student Core	1
Student Financial Management	1
Student Life	1
Student Promotion Board	1
Student Transfer	1
System Wide Institutional Reporting	1
Tactical issues	1
Teacher Education Advisory Council	1
Teacher education/licensure	1
Textbook Affordability	1
Title IX	1
Title IX	1
Trans* Task Force (LGBTQ+)	1
Transfer	1
Transfer articulation	1
Trans-Gender	1



Tuition	1
Tuition Appeals	1
Tuition Appeals	1
Undergraduate and Graduate Orientation	1
Undergraduate Graduation and Academic Credit Appeal	1
Undergraduate Records and Certification (Academic Appeals)	1
White Coat Ceremony	1
Withdrawals	1
Workforce Development	1



## Appendix C: More Stories from the Field



### **My Story So Far**

Vinny Cataudella, Ed.D.

Registrar

As it has been for many others, my path to becoming a registrar has been rather nontraditional. I feel that in a short time, I've had quite a few unique experiences in the profession.

I got my start in higher education as an undergraduate working in student union operations. I went to graduate school convinced I'd work in student life or student activities, providing opportunities to students that were similar to the ones I had as an undergraduate. After being unable to find a job in the field for two years, I wound up taking my first job at St. Vincent's College as an admissions counselor. After being in that role for a little over a year, as part of institutional succession planning, I was offered a split role, half-time in the admissions counselor position and half-time as the assistant registrar. This was in January 2013. By February 2014, our registrar retired, and I took over.

Over the past four years, I've been a department of one. I've taken each phone call, processed each transcript request, handled every verification, seen every walk-in—all while balancing the administrative duties expected of a registrar. I've worked with four presidents, had three supervisors (two of which were presidents), participated in a ten-year reaccreditation, become involved with AACRAO (including service on the Small College Issues Committee and co-presenting a panel discussion at the Annual Meeting in Minneapolis) and now am going through an acquisition by another university. My personal life was no less hectic, as I have moved twice, bought a house, seen two of my nephews be born, been a doctoral student, adopted a dog, and met/married my wife. To say I embraced the never-ending action that comes with being a registrar is a bit of an understatement!

I'm looking forward to my professional future, as the institution acquiring my college is keeping me on to oversee the registration functions of the college in its new form. It will be a great opportunity to continue to explore the profession in a different setting within a larger, better resourced university. More generally, I'm excited to see how the role of the registrar continues to evolve as higher education adapts to meet the needs of society in very challenging times and where my path will take me next!





## **A Peek Behind the Curtain at the Work of the Registrar**

Sara Best

Registrar

Despite having worked in higher education for more than 20 years, by the time I became the registrar at Trinity Bible College and Graduate School 21 months ago, I still did not have a fully developed understanding of the role of registrar. Student records and transcripts are only a narrow slice of the responsibilities of the Academic Records Office. Join me in a peek behind the curtain at the inner workings of the registrar's office!

The registrar serves as a link between the college and numerous external entities. On the home side is the college and its administration, faculty, staff, and students – both current and past. This includes the widely-recognized registrar office duties of maintaining secure student records and providing transcripts for current and past students. Trinity is approaching its 70th anniversary. We have had thousands of students on four different campuses. Technology for recordkeeping has certainly advanced in that time; nonetheless, when a student from 1977 contacts us for a transcript, we are referring to 40-year-old paper files. Other types of requests may necessitate a journey through old microfiche. After all, our responsibility toward students does not end at graduation. We are in a lifetime commitment to each student as the keeper of records essential for employment, career advancement, professional certification, and advanced studies.

Other services for current students include: evaluation of transfer credits, organizing registration of classes, assessment of progress toward graduation, and the final evaluation and issuance of degrees. This week alone, my internal obligations have included a student who left campus without completing the withdraw process – which impacts financial aid and student billing, editing next year's academic catalog, processing applications for graduation, setting up our database to begin next term's schedule, and, since I choose to teach one class each semester, grading papers.

On the other side, the external entities consist of government departments, commercial enterprises, educational institutions, and professional organizations, each with their own competing priorities and agendas. Some of these obligations have far-reaching implications for the college as an institution of higher learning in the United States. If our registration with such bodies is not correctly maintained, we could endanger our eligibility to offer federal financial aid, veteran's benefits, or to receive international students. This week, my external obligations have included submitting paperwork to the Veteran's Administration and revising our military leave policy, following up with our third-party financial aid provider about addressing findings from last year's audit, ordering graduation gowns, and providing information for our librarian for her section of the spring IPEDs report.

This peek behind the curtain at the inner workings of the registrar's office could make the work seem rather dry and uninspiring. But that is not so. It is diverse, intriguing, creative, and most important, contributes to fulfilling the mission of our college.





### **Looks easy enough but is it???**

Kathy Callies  
University Registrar

Forty years ago this past fall, I walked onto the college campus for the first time. Never has there been a more clueless, lost freshman student! The assistant registrar recognized me from my hometown and asked, “Kathy, do you have work study?” I credibly responded, “What’s work study?” While I knew my life was going to make a turn with enrolling in college, I had no hint of just how much! It turns out I was eligible for work study and began my career in the registrar’s office at Dakota State. About mid-semester, the assistant registrar and her family were in a major car accident, and while all were able to recover from their injuries, eventually this left a real vacancy in the office. I was asked if I was willing to work around my classes and to help out during this period. This sounded great to me; it was a chance to tell others what to do and to spend the day seeing just how much could be accomplished.

Again I had to ask, “What’s supervision? What makes a great boss?”

Over the next years, I had the opportunity to take on other roles at the university including assistant registrar, director of personnel and purchasing, and registrar. Then the mission changed from its traditional footprint of a normal<sup>2</sup> school to college programs to a mission of technology and information systems in the late 1980s. With DSU’s mission change, I moved into the role of director of admissions, records and financial aid. This meant that most of the ‘we’ve always done it this way’ processes were out the window, and real strategic thinking and intentional talent mapping had to occur. We found ourselves needing to develop a team to meet the challenges we were only beginning to understand as DSU began to incorporate technology into each of its programs and processes.

It looks easy, but it isn’t. Over the course of these experiences I had worked with some great bosses – people who shared with me just how involved and dedicated one must be to be a good supervisor, a great boss to a great team. There evolved four steps to great supervision as I came to appreciate it:

- 1) **Show up:** A good team deserves to know when and how they can touch base with you as their supervisor. They need to know that their good work is going to be noted. They need assurance that any criticisms or corrections shared with them are in the framework of moving the team to become a better team.
- 2) **Listen up:** Listen even when you think you don’t have the time or energy left. The team needs to know that their thinking is important and worth your investment. Sometimes

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<sup>2</sup> formerly, a school or college for the training of teachers.



you will learn things you never wanted to know but needed to know and come to understand.

- 3) Pick it up: It's** up to you as the supervisor to carry the concerns and the great ideas forward. If you don't, this input will eventually fade out, and the team becomes like too many others that simply go through the motions and fail to put their best into what you are trying to accomplish together.
- 4) Repeat:** When you think you've accomplished all, do it all again. Good teams lead by good supervisors are constantly communicating and sharing their thinking.

Told you it looks easy- it isn't – but it is so worth the effort! I still work at this challenge every day! A good supervisor (a great boss) is just as essential to a great team within the registrar's function as it was all those years ago. Post these four steps, and become the great boss your team needs.





## **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Laura Lee Bowens

Registrar

County College of Morris

My path to the registrar position was an unconventional one. As a student, I struggled academically because of lazy study habits and wanting to have more fun than actually studying, but my on-campus jobs (residence life, orientation ambassador) opened my eyes to the world of higher education. The administrators I encountered helped me find my way and were instrumental in helping me reach my goal to graduate. After graduation, I wasn't sure what I was going to do, but I applied for a job at a college as director of residents to get "interview experience."

The same administrators that guided me toward graduation helped me prepare for my interview. To my surprise, I got the job, and from that day forward I knew higher education was my calling. I was fortunate to have a vice president who could mentor me and help me make the transition from student to higher education professional. I was hooked – I thoroughly enjoyed the students, the diversity of the campus, collaborating with others, and the opportunity to make a difference in the life of a student. I quickly realized I was in a position to help others as I had been helped; higher education was my chance to "pay it forward."

After two years as director of residents, I moved on to a different college as an assistant director of admissions. I enjoyed this position for two years, but I missed the interaction with students as this position took me off campus a lot. When a position became available in the registrar's office, I jumped at it. I wasn't entirely sure what actually went on in a registrar's office, but I was eager to learn.

Twenty- two years later I can honestly say the registrar's office was where I was meant to be. I found a career that I find challenging, exciting, and gratifying. I worked my way up from assistant registrar to associate registrar to registrar. Being a registrar is much more than being a steward of academic records, it is also being a steward of our students and a mentor to the people around us. Leading by example and being open to change are must-have traits for today's registrar. I have worked at three different colleges—private, catholic and my current position at a two-year community college—and as long as I think I can make a difference, I will continue to do what I love.





### **Who would have thought it?**

Karen A. Johnson

Registrar and VA Education Benefit Certifying Official

I had spent eight years as a bookkeeper in the accounting department of a few science-based businesses. At a super bowl party, I was told a local teaching hospital was hiring. I was called for an interview in the nursing department and later called to interview in the university medical school department. My name had been passed on to the university as a possible good fit in their administrative office. I started out working in the provost office of a local university only to pick up an associate's degree in health science so that I could work in a hospital. My main responsibilities in the provost office was to keep the associate provost calendar, complete travel plans, set up meetings, and answer calls --more administrative assistant work. Soon afterward, the associate provost turned over a project he had been working on—classroom scheduling for the medical school and health science programs. He felt as though I had the ability to assess and organize well, and it would be a good way for me to learn the university courses, faculty, and overall college structures.

The university was soon merged with another, and my responsibilities placed me in the student records office. It was not long before the provost suggested that I look at becoming the associate registrar because of my ability to adapt to student records systems with minimal training. With my husband's support, I applied. I wasn't given the associate registrar position because at the time I only held an associate's degree; but the college was willing to promote me to an assistant registrar, as I was actively completing a bachelor's degree. I continued to progressively advance in the department while advancing to other institutions...

The rest is history.





## **A Day in the Life**

Karen Donahue

Registrar

I have been with this hospital organization for approximately 30 years but have been registrar for approximately 20 years. Life has been filled with much achievement and purpose, as well as also navigating a changing world.

It is with pride we (faculty, staff, students, and administration) at Aria SON have been ranked numbers one and eight in the last nine reporting NCLEX results.

A day in the life would involve: analysis of current student records and formulation of required courses for the following term, utilized by management for the purposes of staffing and budgeting; analysis of student prior attendance at high school or zip codes for the purpose of recruitment; analysis of grade activity for the purpose of curriculum and faculty review; analysis of withdrawn and dismissed students for tweaking our admission committee requirements; and quantitative measure of varied items for purposes of meeting our administrative-guided mission statement and defined goals.

The worst days, on which I feel the most unprepared, are when I see the emotional heartache of a student whose dream was to become a nurse and whose failure in a course(s) lead to dismissal from the program. Their tears, the heartache, the lost money and time, and even their perceived shame is difficult to watch. Their achievement is our collective achievement, and their failure is also our collective failure.

The greatest day for me is not graduation; it is the day when a student seamlessly becomes a professional right before my eyes—when they wear the uniform, when their caring nature surfaces, and when they take their clinical experiences and knowledge from faculty and become that professional nurse ready to assist the world of patients who need them.

As our school is now slated to close after 115 years of successful operation, I am grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of this organization but also a bit anxious and curious about what lies ahead in my personal future.





## Gwynedd Mercy University

### **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Joanna V. Raudenbush  
Registrar

When I graduated from high school, I decided to go to my local community college in New Jersey. At the time, my friend who worked as a student employee in the registrar's office at the community college was leaving for a four-year school and thus her position was going to become vacant. She told me about the position, and I applied and was hired. I worked part time over the summer and then throughout the school year. At first, I was only answering phones and in-person questions, but as I became better at that, I started to learn a little bit about the full-time employees' tasks, and I was taught how to register students. I worked in that office for the two years that I attended classes.

When I transferred on to a four-year institution, I was awarded work study as a part of my financial aid package. Naturally, I applied to work in the registrar's office, and, thankfully, I was hired. I worked in that office during the school year, and after I went back home each summer, I returned to the community college to work in their registrar's office again.

I graduated with my undergraduate degree and started graduate school. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do exactly, but I was confident that whatever it was, I would need an advanced degree. I met my now husband just as I started graduate school and moved to Philadelphia. After graduation, I realized how much I loved working in the registrar's office. My degrees are in history, and I always loved working with records, so it was a good fit for me.

I was hired as an assistant registrar in a very small office. I learned a lot from my supervisor and began doing things that I had never done before. A job opened up at another college that would allow me to expand my knowledge of the registrar's office even more, so I took the opportunity and was hired. I learned how to schedule classes and final exams and started to get some managerial experience. At this point, I realized that my career path was leading me to the registrar position, and I wanted to learn as much as I could about the everyday functions of the office so that I could lead my staff with confidence.

When the opportunity to move up came along, I seized it. I was hired as an associate registrar at another college where I was given even more responsibility and the opportunity to learn yet another student information system. After three wonderful years in that position, a registrar position became available, and I applied. I was hired, and I have been a registrar for more than five years now. It is very rewarding to be able to tell my staff "I've done that; I know where you are coming from."





### Work Life Inspiration

Dave Sauter

Miami University Registrar

Retired

- Be a “fixer.” Don’t ignore something small, and don’t be afraid to turn over the rock to dig into the problem. (Sometimes we turn the rock back over at a future date.)
- Leave things better than you find them, and be okay knowing that your successor will make things even better.
- Recognize that we all bring personality and skills to an office, and it is the collective “we” that is critical.
- Start an idea or project early, and revise often. (How else could I live up to my “Do-Over Dave” label?)
- Never be afraid to say “I don’t know.” (There is a lot of “I don’t know.”)
- Mistakes: we all make them, and we continuously learn from them (I have learned a lot!)
- Help everyone feel good about the work they do and feel valued; from that self-worth comes a successful work family...nothing is more important.
- Smile, say hello, be calm, and when there are differences say, “Tell me more about that issue.” (I leave the “tone” out of my voice, and I am defensive only when it comes to driving!)
- Give back personally and professionally. (For example, we have a scholarship for a Middletown Campus student relocating to Oxford, now in year four, to help this student succeed.)
- Be a mentor. (In graduate school and beyond, it was Miami University Registrar Emeritus Ken Bogard who mentored me and whose retirement reception I was privileged to speak at in 2000.)

I have had a perfect, unplanned, and professional life. I am so blessed that the right job opened up at the right time, and now that “right time,” my choice, is retiring.





### **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Christopher Huang  
University Registrar

I have been fortunate to serve as a registrar for 12 years. During the first seven years of my career, I served at a small, private, Christian college. For the last five years, I have been serving at a moderate-sized, public, state university. Over my career, there have been a lot of milestones and celebrations; however, if there is one thing that if I had to do differently, it would be to do a better job of delegating responsibilities to my team.

Before I became a registrar, I worked for several small companies that did not have many employees. The company I worked for just before becoming a registrar had a staff of three: the President, a grant writer and myself. As a result, there were tasks that I had become accustomed to doing because there was no one else to do them. I found myself engaged in a lot of different projects and learning a lot about technology, business processes, reports, databases and collaboration. I believe these experiences later helped me transition into the registrar role; however, I developed some habits that were hard to break. Being able to do a number of different tasks made it difficult for me to delegate tasks to others because I was used to doing them myself. It was common for me to stuff envelopes and send out mailings, order office supplies, even send my own faxes, in addition to trying to do my 'registrar duties'. Not allowing the team members to support the office process created some tension and disengagement with the team. They felt underutilized because I had unintentionally blocked them from helping to support the office or to fulfill responsibilities for which they were hired.

Additionally, when implementing projects or new processes, I tend to be hands-on in learning the project or process completely; I learn by doing, believing that once implemented I could simply hand the maintenance of the project off to a team member and then serve as a back-up for that staff member. However, it became difficult to train team members because I was often in meetings and found it difficult to find time to train. Furthermore, I was often the 'go to' person for projects and it was hard to direct people to someone else because I was used to being the 'go to' person for our office. Since I was a 'young' registrar, I felt I needed to prove myself to the team, and my supervisor, that I could do this job. However, being the 'go to' person meant that while I was on vacation, I was still plugged into the office because I was the only person on the team that new how to troubleshoot a situation or knew how to make a process work. Delegating tasks would also lead to cross-training for the office.

It is important to have cross-training because it allows operations to continue to run even though a team member may be out of the office. This is a way for staff members to enjoy their vacations and for business operations to keep going. Cross-training also allows team members



to expand their view of work and learn different parts of the office, and can engage them more in their day-to-day work. This is also a way to create a sustainable office, in case a staff member leaves.

To conclude, if I had to do it over again, I would delegate responsibilities to my team. As the leader of the registrar's office, I have to ask myself if this task is something I need to do, or if this is something that someone else can do for me? This is something that I'm still learning to do but I believe it will result in a more engaged team, ensure that business operations will continue if a team member isn't there, and can help with better work-life balance.





## **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Sherry Gaugh

Registrar

Does anyone every wake up one morning and say, “I want to be a registrar”? To be honest, when I got my first job at a college, I didn’t know who a registrar was or what they did. Some days I still don’t.

Thirty-seven years ago I was hired at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado as a transcript clerk. My educational experience included secretarial office skills (typing, shorthand and filing) all at the high school level and my high school diploma. My duties as transcript clerk included management of all transcript requests, hand calculation of all GPA changes due to grade changes, and posting grades to paper transcripts. Little did I know how important my GPA calculation training would be.

I moved from the records office to admissions. My main responsibility was processing of all admission applications. As the application processor, I learned the inner workings of the database and how to use the database for process efficiencies. It was during this time that my supervisor took on the role of mentor and helped see the opportunities that a college degree would give me.

As I worked slowly on my bachelor’s degree, I continued my full-time employment in admissions and eventually moved to the alumni office. Timing would have it that our institution purchased Banner around this time and I was responsible for implementation of Banner Alumni. I never would have guessed, but this experience led me to my next stop, or return trip to Admissions. I was asked to implement Banner in the admissions office and manage all admissions procedures. Timing was excellent in that I was able to incorporate several Banner projects into my classroom assignments. My projects included end user documentation and development of SQL reports for admissions yields. The training was invaluable for both my job and my degree. After completing my degree I was promoted to assistant director of admission.

Don’t you find that just when you’re settled into a position and things are beginning to get comfortable, the apple cart gets turned over? After working in admissions during my second stint for 11 years, the opportunity arose to be the registrar at Fort Lewis College (FLC). It was a position that I truly never considered myself qualified for. I was the registrar at FLC for 6 years and I can say it was a position that I enjoyed tremendously. I immediately became involved in RMACRAO and started attending AACRAO. Both organizations proved to be invaluable resources rich with information, resources, and mentors.



I left FLC and spent a brief 3 years in the higher education software industry and found myself back in higher education as the registrar at San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico.

For those working their way through the ranks of administration at a higher education institution, I recommend you learn everything you can from each position you hold, maximize the education you have access to, and utilize and support the national, state, and regional AACRAO organizations. Being a registrar is a unique and rewarding job and in today's changing environment, it is extremely challenging. So I leave you with the words of Mario Andretti, "If everything seems under control, you're not going fast enough."





University of Nevada, Reno

### **My Path to the Registrar Position**

Heather Turk-Fiecoat, PhD  
University Registrar

I don't think any child dreams about being a registrar someday. Natural paths start maybe as a student employee working in admissions and records or as a student ambassador recruiting students. My journey never even hinted it would end here, but looking back it naturally led me. My story started as a flute performance major who spent 11 years playing professionally. After graduation, I became the education and outreach director for a small arts organization that had a strong community service mission with a director that made the impossible happen over and over again. In addition to rehearsals and performances, I organized outreaches to diverse communities (in the panhandle of Texas where communities of color did not mix). I learned how to bring the best out of people, facilitate conflict resolution, and most of all take whatever you are given and make it work.

While at the opera, a volunteer wrote a fabulous AmeriCorp grant for our program, but filled out the wrong one and it was a program without any administrative or program support – just college tuition awards for mentors to outreach to community centers. When my director gave it to me, I told her that it was impossible – she reminded me that nothing was impossible. I dug in and figured out all the bureaucracy around the federal regulations surrounding it, hired and trained college students and made it work. Late nights of reading and writing policies and procedures moved to helping these frustrated college students trying to use their award navigate the federal systems.

From that experience, I figured out that I love working with the college students and wanted to focus there. I became the student union schedule coordinator at the University of Nevada, Reno. One of the first projects I was handed was the purchase of a new facility scheduling system with very little direction. I knew nothing about what it was supposed to do, but I learned what to ask and made friends with the IT folks. That implementation was a small scale, but a huge shift with getting people to get rid of the paper and trust that the data would be there when they went back to it. By working through being overwhelmed, I learned security, data structure, and how to implement.

The next unrealistic project was garnering support for a new student union building, designing and building as well as opening it. We had a small staff and half went out on extended medical leave – and we promised students it would be done by a certain (again impossible) timeframe. I gained experience with working directly with regents, faculty senate, President's Office, etc. I had meetings with high level officials and was the contact person with high profile events when



we weren't completely sure the power would stay on. I learned even more intense problem-solving, the importance of lowering expectations during implementation and how to think dozens of steps ahead.

Finally, when faced with implementing Peoplesoft during a budget crisis resulting in a cut of 40% of admissions and records staff, my current boss asked me to come over to talk. I didn't really know her that well, but she had been watching me and asked me to come over to be an associate registrar – zero experience in this realm, but she knew I could learn and dig in to work. Talk about impossible.

As a registrar I use what I've learned from my diverse background every day. Everything has led me here because I took on the impossible. And here is fabulous! I feel like I was made for this career and it is a natural fit. It just took me a while to get here. Everyone always seems to have a moment when they were just in the right place at the right time – my story is full of these, but there were things that I did to put myself there that I wish my younger self knew were worth the stress and tears. You never know what is going to lead you to where you end up.



## Appendix D: Further Words of Wisdom

Included below are all of the voluntarily provided comments, observations, opinions, and advice shared by survey respondents.

You need more creativity than you might think in order to thrive in this position, particularly at a smaller institution. Coming up with solutions may require new and unorthodox ways of thinking.
You need to be detailed oriented, adaptable, and very focused.
Know the college policy, keep students first, build a relationship with faculty and understand the administration you work for and with
Trust your team; rely on your network; and attend AACRAO meetings.
Go Registrars! Education makes a positive difference in the lives of the students we serve.
Understand the history and role of the Registrar and focus on systems thinking, relationships, and communicate!
You can never be too organized.
Open and Transparent Communication is #1
Believe in your staff. Delegate and empower them to make decisions.
Be open-minded to everything and try to stay away from the old adage of this is how it has always been done. Also, be mindful that to gain experience and move up sometimes you have to move out and away from the job or institution you are at, the more experience you can gain at other types of institutions the better served you will be.
Make friends and be willing to help your peers at other institutions. You'll need help too someday. When you need help, don't be afraid to ask. Get involved with a professional association like AACRAO and find a mentor there. You won't regret it.
I don't think many head into a career wishing to be a Registrar. Most of us fall into and enjoy the field and challenge. Exposure and success to the key attributes which makes a Registrar successful is the best recruitment.
The registrar is the guardian of the records and the policies. Often under-appreciated or seen as a roadblock until there is an issue which hinges on compliance.
Maximize the capabilities of your SIS and take advantage of any and all professional development opportunities that your budget will allow.
Develop a thick skin and never take anything personal.
It is a wonderful career. Keep an open mind, talk to others in the field and do your best to maintain diplomacy under fire.
This work is not usually sought out; no one goes to "Registrar School". The work finds you. At that point, you either fall in love with the work, or you run screaming into the night. Either response is perfectly appropriate.
Attention to detail, the ability to think outside of the box, and developing positive working relationships with faculty and staff are key.
Know your data and how it is used by your student information system. Become an expert on this. You will need the knowledge to address pressing issues and to envision future opportunities. Stay informed on state and federal issue relating to higher education, and also stay informed on the changing demands being faced by an institution where you hope to become a Registrar. If you get the job, you can expect to have to hit the ground running.
Obtain some broader experience relevant to the academy - in teaching/research, student affairs, or both if possible. This can generate both understanding and credibility.
Must be flexible and adaptable to ever changing conditions.
Be sure to see the College as a whole and realize all decisions could impact other departments.
It can be a rewarding yet frustrating job. Giving advice that is not heeded. However, when a student graduates or gets their GPA above 2.0, that is rewarding.



Build relationships with faculty - earn their trust. Make the administrative tasks associated with the registrar's office easy to accomplish for students and faculty. Become the best user of your student information system on your campus. Consistently take brownies to your IT staff.
Get as much experience in each area of the Registrar's Office as possible.
Work to a mindset of "Do what is in the best interest of the student while being in compliance".
I serve as Registrar for a community college. My position is not always seen as a pivotal role in overall decision-making and processes. It is viewed as another mid-management position.
Developing relationships with faculty, staff, and students so they know they can trust you and your judgment is one of the most important thing you can do as a registrar in my opinion.
Get a position that reports to Academic Affairs.
Create a mission and vision for your Registrar's Office, make sure it aligns with the mission and vision of your institution, and make sure it's something both you and your staff support and believe in.
Be a good translator for your work - not everyone understands what you do, and to get them on board for changes and to be recognized for your contributions, you may need to outline your achievements and daily work.
The Registrar's Office must have a supportive staff team. Hiring the "best match" staff is critical: people who love to work, don't mind doing all the tasks as insignificant as it may seem, who are detailed and honest, who have an employment history, who are comfortable with and understand technology, and who love serving others.
The role of the Registrar is constantly changing. It is imperative to have transferable skills, adapt well to change and most importantly integrity.
Take advantage of every technology training that is made available to you. The more technology knowledge that is in your toolkit the more your colleagues will value your expertise.
All tasks lead to student success, appreciate your role.
Organizational skills, attention to detail, and most importantly, a desire to be of service is crucial for this position.
Apply for other jobs within the Registrar's Office so that you know more about other responsibilities and how they interact with positions within the Registrar's Office and with other positions at the institution.
Learn the basics of computer programming.
Having a solid understanding of student information system(s) is a major key to success in this role.
Know and understand the scope of the role that you are about to or are seeking to take on. There can be many surprises in this role, not the least of which is the misunderstood often underappreciated nature of it.
I think it's a challenging and rewarding career but with future budget challenges overall in higher education and all of the downfall that is created around that, I'd think twice myself before entering this career path again myself. I don't want to sound negative because I wouldn't have stayed in this profession for this many years, but it's changed so much and not for the better.
Learn how to read, interpret and apply institutional policy and become an expert on FERPA. Never forget that students are the reason we are here. Students should always be at the center of our decision-making process.
Be prepared for change while maintaining the historical elements of the academic record. When in doubt, focus on the academic record which is our primary concern.
The role of the Registrar is changing. Do your homework and be relevant in that change.
The most valuable thing I've learned as a Registrar is how to prioritize. Do that and you will succeed.
It is important to be adept and resilient in the changing landscape of higher education, especially when considering what those changes may or may not mean for the role of the registrar.
Don't give up!
Given the nature of the times, a registrar should be well versed in technology and definitely have the ability to understand and generate data.
Set an ambitious goal and commit to it.
Figure out what you do and like to do best. If you like Registrar work, do not think that a next step must be an enrollment management position which is very different. Perhaps Registrar at a larger or different type of institution might keep you interested and fresh, and help you to grow. Basically know yourself.



Learn to make difficult staffing decisions early that will surround yourself with outstanding team members and you will be successful.
Don't get in the field unless it is your passion - your calling.
Stay calm at all times and back up your opinions with established sources and/or data. People will care more about what you think when they see that your opinions are based on best-practices and research.
Be visible and approachable--especially to the faculty. Let them know that you want to help and collaborate. Spend time hiring the right individuals--not just filling an open position.
This is a tricky job. Make sure your boss understands your role-- that your post is not at the secretarial level but that yours is a professional position.
As a Registrar you will have the opportunity to multi-task daily. Whether it be military-veteran certification, enrollment reporting, graduation, registration, grading, classroom scheduling, catalog publication and student record integrity/retention and technology, solid knowledge of each is critical to a successful Registrar's Office operation.
Attend one professional conference a year to keep up with changes policies and technology. Develop excellent relationships with your IT department.
Reflecting back on "what I wanted to be when I grew up", I never considered a career in higher education, let alone the position of Registrar. My career trajectory began as a federal work study at my undergraduate institution. That position led to a full time position in the Student Records department. The words of wisdom I would give to those on the Registrar career path, are to stay current in the existing and emerging trends of the profession, remain proficient in the various systems and types of technologies that are vital to our role in higher education, understand the importance of the Registrar profession, seek out individuals in the profession that can be your sounding board or mentor, and hone your management and leadership skills (I am a big fan of emotional intelligence) so that you build a team that is cohesive, efficient, happy, and likes to work with you.
I began my career at a small public liberal arts college where the role of the registrar was very hands on. I then went to a bigger pond with a small role that grew into a big fish in a large pond with lots of responsibility and respect. I defined at that school what a registrar is and does. After 16 years, I made a conscious change to go to two small (newly created) ponds where the role of the registrar was not clearly defined. So, a small fish in a small pond. It was very hard, and for years I told myself that I made a huge mistake. I have a Ph.D. and over 30 years of experience in all areas of enrollment management, with my primary focus being the role of the registrar. But, my goal was to go into new or fledgling colleges to help give something back - to help those who may not have the same access to the education as the students I previously served. That has come at a price to my career. No one in the profession seems to understand what it takes to start from the beginning of a new endeavor with new people, no rules, and lots of collaborative input. It is hard, but after 6 years of doing this I can honestly say that it has been the best experience(s) of my life. It allows me to get to know all the students one-on-one. I am no longer relegated to days full of meetings, lots of personnel issues, and dealing only with problem people. I have questioned this decision many times and had many colleagues tell me to move on and get back in a larger school before I am no longer "marketable," but when a student comes to see me - just because, I get to go home in time to see my family before bedtime, and my weekends are not totally embroiled in work I could not get to during the week - I know I made the right choice. It has been hard work that put me back on the front lines of service. I think these paths less taken in the profession are seen as diminished, but no one should feel or treat someone who takes this path as anything other than someone who is a change agent seeking a challenge and who is not afraid to abandon the normal career path for the road less traveled.
The role of registrar will often be that of the unsung hero who finds ways to promote student learning and progression while adhering to academic policy driven by federal and state regulations, accreditation standards, and current local college administrative goals. It is one of the few campus roles that quickly sees the cause and effect of new policies and must determine how to implement those with current technology while minimizing the effects to other interdependent campus entities of recruitment, admissions, students, curriculum, financial aid, institutional research, business office, and alumni.
Do not show favoritism in your management of personnel. Don't pick sides--remain neutral. There is more to life than work.
Things are not black and white. You must think outside the box.



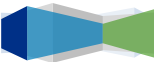
Attend Graduation/Commencement at least once a year--you need to remember why you and your team do what they do. Challenge status quo--dare to think not like a Registrar, but as a member of a Strategic Enrollment Management Team. A Registrar must remember who they sit at the table with. Being a Registrar comes with an acknowledged history within education, respect for being a keeper of the institutional identity and need to diplomatically navigate academic policy, external policies, administrative imperatives and evolving needs of students both current and past. Remember, there only a few other positions with one word titles--humbly think on that and act accordingly.
Build strong internal relationships with faculty, Deans and key administrators across campus. Partner with your IT department - treat them as valued colleagues. Take on new responsibilities when opportunities are presented and be an advocate for staff.
Review any position description carefully, looking for indications of the importance of the position within the structure of the institution. How many positions are between you and the president? What is the reporting structure? Good Luck and don't be hesitant to ask colleagues for their opinions/advice.
Listen. Just...listen.
1. Find a seasoned mentor early in your career 2. Understand organizational politics 3. Stay up-to-date on legal issues, particularly FERPA 4. Learn about budgeting 5. Have a strong ethical foundation and stick to it
AACRAO has been invaluable to me in helping me develop my sense of a professional registrar. Attend AACRAO conferences and join a committee! Take all the leadership courses you can possibly take, establish connections with everyone outside your office on campus, be visible. Understand that we aren't paper pushers anymore, we are data pushers and that we must constantly make technology work for us - understand that the we as registrars are on the fore front of technology and data security trends and we must stay ahead or keep abreast as much as we can.
Be willing to adapt to changes when and where needed. Be a team player when needed but if you need stand up for what is right and what you truly believe in even if you are on the path alone.
Reach out to colleagues at other institutions for assistance and advice. I greatly appreciate the support that those in our field share with each other.
Read, read, read, communicate, communicate, communicate. Also, stand firm - registrar's often "touch" everything at an institution and while you know you can't do everything, others quickly lose sight of that when setting their own expectations.
Don't be afraid of change. Technology is rapidly changing the work of the Registrar. Use your knowledge of data, policy and systems to innovate for the next generation of learners.
Registrar and the departments they lead are actively interconnected with Academic and Student Affairs. Building relationships with colleagues in all areas of the institution will serve one well in the role of Registrar, especially ensuring one is informed early or even included in decision-making that will impact institution policy and potentially your department's practice. Collaborative decision-making and consensus-building is a two-way street, be sure you are an active participant in whatever role you serve now, so it will be part of your character and skill-set in the future.
Obtain training that will help you see the larger institutional picture. Focusing on the traditional duties of the Registrar's Office (registration, transcripts, etc.) is no longer sufficient. Registrar's today must be masters of all trades, including technology, marketing, budgeting and forecasting, and human resources.
Keep an open mind and try to gain a broad variety of experiences in as many areas as possible. Even if record keeping is your first love, it is important to know how all operational areas work, to develop and improve interactions and develop strong working relationships within your institution.
Critical thinking, listen then respond, investigate, relationship development across campus is a must, treat students consistently fair and equitable to receive very few complaints.
You must be a lifelong learner to be able to keep up with changes in technology, the environment and society to understand how values and expectations of students change through time and how you can prepare to adapt to the changing nature of your job.
Keep learning and growing yourself professionally. Always be open with those you work with because it will only improve your job and how you run your office. Remember to always put students first and what is best going to serve their educational goals within the parameters of the academic policies and procedures at your institution.
Be positive, remain calm, start from trust, smile, be inclusive in all possible ways...and enjoy the ride!



<p>This is a wonderful profession. It provides the opportunity to apply a wide-range of skills and impact a college campus on many different levels. In this position, you can make a difference. You can be an important part of something special, the educational process. A good registrar is good at many different things. If approached with a holistic view of the campus, a registrar would never have a dull day and would influence the quality of life for students, faculty, and other staff.</p>
<p>It's a wonderful career for people who like performing a variety of types of work and who enjoy the challenge of working at the intersection of people, policy, and technology.</p>
<p>As you progress in your career, remember that the Registrar's Office has incredible power - ideally that power is used to help students. Rules and policy are important, but student success is paramount.</p>
<p>Integrity. Integrity. Integrity. The Registrar is often the institutional conscience.</p>
<p>The Enrollment Management/Enrollment Services model is an effective model, but it needs to be done with much thought and planning, and under experienced and knowledgeable leadership.</p>
<p>If there is an opportunity to be involved in governance issues take it. Often decisions come down from above that you have to enforce so it's good to be in on the decision making since you may be more familiar with the impact on the curriculum, students and you staff. We're the friendly enforcers so it's a good idea to understand what's going to be asked of us to prepare a plan</p>
<p>Seek every opportunity to learn and become an expert in student information systems. Obtain skills and tools to be able to make change and move institutions forward in staying current with technology.</p>
<p>Critical thinking and problem solving skills are the most important characteristics for someone who wants to work in the Registrar's Office. Every institution has different policies and processes, and the nature of our work is changing as fast as the technology we use, but being able to think critically to understand and solve problems that come up will always be an indispensable aspect of the work.</p>
<p>Be a people lover!</p>
<p>Soak up all of the knowledge you can from mentors.</p>
<p>It's of paramount importance to have a sense of humor.</p>
<p>I've found that a Registrar needs to have 'thick skin' to not take things personally or as a slight against the office. A Registrar needs to be able to look through the periphery in order to see what really needs to be addressed.</p>
<p>I have a blog about the registrar career called, "Who Wants to Be a Registrar?" found at <a href="https://gvmcmillan.wordpress.com/">https://gvmcmillan.wordpress.com/</a></p>
<p>Say yes to opportunities with or without additional compensation. I served as an interim registrar on two separate occasions. For a period, I held two full-time positions while onboarding a new student information system. These made me a no-brainer for the permanent registrar position.</p>
<p>There is no "school" that will prepare you for a position like this. People either love this work or really hate it. I have enjoyed the challenges that have come with the changing requirements of the role and have enjoyed the independence provided to pursue what I believe are important services to students, faculty and staff.</p>
<p>Reach out to other Registrars...manage your staff is your first job. Communicate clearly and concisely with all-students, staff, faculty...BE consistent</p>
<p>In Canada, there are only two positions required of each institution (President and Registrar) and they are legislated. I was told, by a mentor, that being a Registrar is to be lonely. Everyone at an institution, except for these two positions, has other people at their level to help and support them. Registrars have nobody to talk to other than peers at other institutions. In British Columbia, we have a Registrar Association (BCRA) that mentors each other and provides that which cannot be found within their institution. I could not have survived as a new Registrar without their support, guidance and mentorship. I have 20 years as an IT professional so falling into this position was never planned for nor was it something I thought of doing until I was sucked into the black hole of the Registrar's Office. That said, my legacy to higher ed is reconfirmed every convocation ceremony and it makes me proud of my contribution to the future of our world.</p>



<p>Here are a few of my recommendations:</p> <p>Put your staff first.</p> <p>Keep in mind that you chose to become Registrar but folks in your office may not have had any say in the matter. So, don't worry about yourself, be mindful of the needs of your staff.</p> <p>Discuss expectations for you and your staff right away.</p> <p>Delay the urge to make changes.</p> <p>Take time at the end of each day to reflect and evaluate and reframe your thinking as needed.</p> <p>Don't be afraid to act. Once you have a thorough understanding of a process and have a good solution for improving, take action.</p> <p>Be open to change. Sometimes we make decisions based on the best information available at that time and then we get new information that causes us to revisit that first decision. Shows your staff and others that you are flexible.</p> <p>Take responsibility for your actions. As the Registrar, folks will look to you to solve problems even if you did not create them.</p> <p>Balance coaching and managing. By this I mean exerting your leadership skills is the reason you were promoted in the first place. Sometimes you should make recommendations, and provide unambiguous direction, then take a step back, try to draw out the views of your staff and allow them to develop their own solutions.</p> <p>Ask questions and listen before speaking, especially with faculty. If you show that you care what others have to say, eventually they will care about what you have to say.</p>
<p>Ethics and integrity, both personal and professional, are important when performing registrar duties. The registrar upholds the integrity of the courses, certificates and degrees the institution offers and needs to be able to say "no" without fear of repercussions based on politics. Similar to the acknowledgement that no one can undermine faculty and their grading, the registrar needs the same protection and respect. The registrar upholds the integrity of the institution.</p>
<p>It is most important to be a good listener and observer (taking in the various inputs, matching it with policy and careful thought, and then contributing to a decision).</p>
<p>Be enthusiastic, honest, and as transparent as possible every minute, make something better and learn something new every day, meet someone new every week, try something new every month. We serve in a privileged and relatively unique position in higher education -- at the spoke of the wheel. Enjoy it.</p>
<p>Fine-tune your ethics and integrity, your humility, your willingness to ask questions, your ability to communicate clearly, and whichever practices allow you to remain calm and focused on your students and the bigger institutional picture. Stay organized, prioritize follow-through, and commit to learning as an ongoing process. This is challenging and endless work, but you (usually!) won't notice that because it's also very rewarding.</p>
<p>Trust, but verify</p>
<p>We are the Keepers of the Flame-no matter who or what may arise.</p>
<p>Work hard, be mindful of politics and culture of the institution. Be kind and considerate, and if you don't like your life move on and don't make it worse for others. It never turns out the way you envisioned.</p>
<p>Embrace change - the more you fight it, the more miserable you will be.</p>
<p>I have found that all institutions face the same problems and are trying to find solutions. Some have found great ways to make things work that might be applicable to your situation, so ask lots of questions all the time.</p>
<p>I am blessed to be able to "Go to work to play!" If you do not overall enjoy your job (could be tasks, people you work with, or the institutional culture), then you need to honestly assess: if you are the problem; or if you can effectively bring about change; or if you need to find a new job!</p>
<p>Expect the unexpected!</p>



One of the most important aspects of a Registrar's position (at least at a small school) is networking and making connections. The work of the Registrar's office is integral to admissions, financial aid, billing and athletics so you need to get to know those offices well and work with them to be successful.
Keep up with technology and resources students use.
If you stay flexible and engage in creative compliant problem solving to meet the diverse needs of students, have a facility for understanding and implementing policy, love detail work, and can embrace the realization that no one other than the people in your department have any idea what a registrar does, not even your boss, then this field is for you. It is energizing, creative, and different every day. Students are ever-changing, but their most basic need stays the same year to year - having their voices heard and their concerns taken seriously. After 19 years I continue to find this a fulfilling and fun career and am grateful every day that I have such a great job.
Seek to understand, partner with departments and schools across campus, and communicate excessively. Makes those around campus want to partner with you and seek you out for advice. This approach has paid off countless times!
Never underestimate the politics on your campus
Carve out time for professional development. Take the time to educate yourself on changes in policy and technology.
Be flexible and multi-task oriented. I am the Registrar and Financial Aid Officer with no assistants. I am constantly juggling to keep deadlines for both positions.
Keep learning and build a support network.
A retiring Registrar once told me that the Registrar is "the conscience of the university." That has proven true in my career.
Don't be afraid to move around to different positions or different schools. Gaining experience at different types and sizes of institutions, as well as in various areas related to records and admissions (advising, financial aid, bursar, etc.), is invaluable.
Knowing everything about everything is not important, surrounding yourself with the right team makes the difference between success and failure.
Develop a thick skin if you haven't already. Listen carefully and objectively before speaking and acting. Make connections with those in the same positions at other institutions. Allow yourself plenty of grace in your first couple of years in this role.
I have found that my experience working in various departments (Admissions, Financial Aid, and Academic Affairs) really helps me in my current role. I understand how all aspects of the university are different but interconnected and so I consult with other offices before implementing changes.
As a registrar or working in such a capacity for nearly two decades, I can sincerely state that there is never a boring day in this aspect of higher education administration. Never. Choose to be a registrar and serve your institution well and with heart. You will not regret it.
Make connections with others in Registrar positions. These people will not only be a great resource for you, but could become some of your closest friends.
You must be open minded, committed to excellence, adaptable, nimble, knowledgeable, and committed to your institution and students. You MUST have a sense of humor and a tireless work ethic.
I have found that educating, communication and relationship building are three important functions.
understanding that the type, ethics and quality of students are continuously and rapidly changing
Do not take yourself so seriously. We do an important job but be ready to laugh a lot when things don't go as expected.
Advocate for professional development opportunities even when faced with budget constraints.
Listen patiently to all concerns then provide options
Use common sense in making any decisions this job is not rocket science
I started at the bottom and worked my way up to the top. This was very beneficial to my position now. I have only worked in the registrar's office since I started my career in Higher Education. By starting at the bottom, I have been able to re-evaluate all positions to better my office in the future.
Learn as much as you can about each of the respective departments (academic & support) at your institution so you can have a holistic view of the academic structure/delivery and subsequently work to provide an environment which allows the greatest level of student success and satisfaction!



You need to be able to multi-task and smile
Be a team player and support professional development opportunities for your staff as well as for yourself. Professional development in local, regional and national organizations helps keep you enthusiastic about your job by sharing knowledge and experiences with other registrars and keeps you abreast of best practices in the field. Strive to continuously improve the services you provide to students/faculty/staff by streamlining processes and implementing emerging technological solutions. Only hire individuals with a positive outlook. Negative energy by even one staff member can be a moral killer for the entire office. Have fun!
Data analytics, data integrity and compliance are paramount for success. The Registrar also has to understand how to manage change, create opportunities for collaboration and maintain security and access to the SIS (student information system).
This job is for people with tough skin who can take the heat. It requires both firmness and flexibility, depending on the situation. People who cannot solve problems or think creatively need not apply.
Cultivate strong relationships. Take as many opportunities as you can to get to know administrators, faculty, staff, and students on your campus. Sometimes you will need to say no or stand your ground under challenging circumstances, and at some point you or someone in your office will make a mistake or an unpopular decision. If you have strong relationships, and those around you recognize your integrity and intentions, they will give you the benefit of the doubt when problems arise, or be willing to engage in a dialog when they don't understand or agree with your perspective.
The Registrar has become a project manager and an IT professional with all the changes in technology in higher education. It is no longer just scheduling classes, enrolling students, managing records and producing transcripts and diplomas for the institution. Our work is part of the strategic enrollment management of the campus. Registrars work as part of a cross functional team and those relationships and communication with other work groups is one of the keys to success.
Teach your staff to "Not make assumptions" and "to not take anything personally" and then remember that goes for you too as the Registrar.
Communication is key! When in doubt, reach out to other registrars on their best practices.
Be willing to change positions to learn the wide range of aspects that the Registrar's role encompasses. Ask questions, observe and learn. Don't be in a hurry to advance, it takes time to build a resume!
A breadth of experience in other administrative areas at a college or university will serve you well as a Registrar, where a holistic perspective of the institution is critical.
Learn constantly. Pick up technology quickly. If you can't learn new software and new regulations, deal with students, faculty, staff, and direct reports and somehow keep your cool no matter what, then pick a different profession.
Maintain student success and degree integrity as your constant touchstones - much of the rest is just window dressing.
The heart of the Institution beats at the Registrar's Office!
Enjoy the journey. Help to make the bumps in the road into bridges for the future.
There are many career paths, but each one must have the ability to understand and use technology, to manage people and tasks, and to effectively collaborate. Registrar supports the academic mission of the university, so much behind-the-scenes work, team work, and coordination are needed.
Work well with other departments. Encourage clear and timely two-way communication and consider the needs of other departments to help reach solutions that build the entire institution.
It can be very satisfying and a position where you can positively influence many aspects of the University.
Leadership theory and training is extremely helpful for the relationships registrars must have with individuals, groups, and offices.
Embrace your inner geek.
Working in a registrar's office is truly valuable experience. I applied for registrar positions before working in one (did not accept any) and I would have felt completely unprepared had I not worked for several years as an associate registrar. For those seeking to be a registrar, I strongly recommend getting experience as an assistant/associate registrar.



We are all in our current positions through fate or by accident. No one grows up planning to become a Registrar. That said, it's a great opportunity to learn, but also a great opportunity to bring fresh perspectives to your role and responsibilities.
In a supportive environment it is one of the best jobs in the institutions, you touch almost every aspect of the student life cycle and can play a very strategic role in the enrollment management process. In a non-supportive environment it is the least appealing because the role can be very operational with little autonomy and significant responsibility for processes not in your control. I am fortunate to have worked in both scenarios and appreciate the role is integral to the institution and provides incredible opportunities for professional growth.
Ask questions.
I spoke to one yesterday - Not many want to be a Registrar - it seems to be the most hated of all roles in academia. You have every constituent requiring something from you. Registrars must be able to deliver bad news, understand policy and the spirit of the policy and be willing to stand up enforcing that policy - sometimes to the executive level where you may have to decline a request. (or at least explain why that request would not be beneficial) I love being a registrar - every day is different, I help students find their way through red tape and locate their final requirements. Students receiving their credential(s) are the reason why 25 years later I am doing the same service to a university.
The role of the registrar is ever-changing. Each day brings new challenges, and you never know what to expect.
The importance of integrity and accountability as a leader.
I have found that Registrar position is for someone who is organized, diligent, customer service oriented, with a fondness for research/analysis based on documented fact.
It is important to build a good relationships with faculty and staff. It is worth the effort to talk with faculty members face to face rather than only by email. This tends to provide the faculty with a context for what you are trying to accomplish through your efforts. Be open to questioning traditions, policies, and procedures to determine if there are better ways to accomplish the overall goals of the department and the institution.
The Registrar is a person who constantly has to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships across his/her campus so keeping this in check is essential. Also, knowing that in many instances the amount of judgement calls and the ability to proactively problem solve is a major facet of this job. If you can handle both of those welcome to our world. All the rest you will learn.
Invest in your team, cross-train, and delegate when possible.
You have to enjoy not knowing what each day will bring to do well in this field.
Network, network, network...someone out there in "registrar-land" has gone through what you are trying to do - no need to reinvent the wheel! And you never know who may be your next boss!
Always have and/ or create a supporting team.
Be passionate about what you do then you'll excel
Never give up on your principles, no matter who tries to go over them. Honesty is the best policy.
A successful registrar, above all else, has to be willing to communicate and collaborate with every area on campus.
Be authentic and principled, but flexible and understanding. Resist needless bureaucracy. Know the reasons for the rules and processes that exist. Ask why they exist. cultivate relationships on campus. Be thoughtful about change, not fearful of it.
Do what you love, love what you do! Make technology your friend. Be creative and always keep the students best interest at heart - we are not only stewards of records, but also of our students.
Be flexible. Be open-minded, but always first consider the integrity of the institution and how the office of the Registrar is able to ensure that integrity for the current and future student bodies.
It is wonderful to work in a "nerve center" of the university. I enjoy the relatively fast pace of the workday and I am very lucky to have a wonderful staff. The best part of this job is when you can really assist a student within the bounds of university regulations so they can academically proceed toward the degree.
First, I don't know anyone who really has ever been on a "registrar career path". I think it is important to find things you like to do in an environment you enjoy working in with people that you respect and appreciate. That is what led me to this role and perhaps so many others in the field of higher education in general.
"You are responsible for your and your team's performance regardless of the circumstances"-Unknown



Communication is key!
Relationships....build them with as many people at your institution as possible as Registrar's work intersects with most offices on campus and doing this will serve you well.
It is important to be able to see the bigger picture while also able to focus on the smallest details.
Be open to change and embrace it; sometimes you just have to try things out and then make changes. Open communication and bring people to the table to discuss and will be your messengers. Understand how departments operate.
I recommend taking advantage of all that you can in any position you hold. Be a 'team' player with an attitude that you're willing to learn and to expand your experience within the office. Be professional both in appearance and demeanor. Be willing to go above and beyond. Know that YOU are making an important contribution to the success of students no matter what position you hold in the office. This can be an amazing career if you're willing to work hard. Also, earn that graduate degree and a doctoral degree if possible, they can propel you to that leadership position you seek. Have fun and keep an amazing 'can do' attitude.
Remember, one of the first and last employees any higher education institution needs is a Registrar. You are essential.
Higher Education can be an extremely rewarding field and as a Registrar you can directly influence the lives of students and staff members. The seismic shift in the current higher education environment is providing great opportunities for those that want to make a lasting difference in an important discipline.
Any new position, for the first 1-2 years, is quite challenging, and ostensibly overwhelming. Thus, anyone new to the field should keep that in mind. It only gets easier after year two! Pertinacity will pay off. It isn't rocket science at all, it just requires time, patience, and the intense desire to do a good and careful job.
Never be afraid to ask questions or advice of other registrars. Network with them, join ListServes, participate in conferences. No one is the expert but we all have valuable insights and experiences.
Be ready for the unexpected with the ability to think both within and outside the box.
Make sure you have a great love of students and a desire to see and help them succeed. You must also have unwavering integrity to handle often sensitive and highly confidential information. Always seek to increase your knowledge and skills and to stay on top of the changes in your profession. AACRAO is a great resource for professional development.
An aptitude for technology is very important.
Stand your ground. Be open to discussion of the letter and the spirit of policy, but don't lose sight of your responsibilities under the weight of other people's agendas.
I consider myself very lucky to have this job. I didn't plan this career path, but I've really enjoyed working in higher education for over 20 years. I started as an administrative assistant and worked my way up the ladder. Having the support of a professional organization like AACRAO and the resources it provides was invaluable in my professional development.
The Registrar Office is the one stop shop for most students and they value your ongoing great customer service.
Being a Registrar has been challenging and rewarding. I love coming to work every day! The students are the best part of my job.
This is a position that is best learned through an intentional mentoring approach - I have personally benefitted from this sort of experience and would love to have opportunity to pay back on this!
Remember that you are the steward of faculty and institutional policy. It is a constant challenge to balance the integrity of the institutional policies with the wants and needs of individual students.
be flexible and never say you can't do something--always room for improvement--and appreciate your staff with the best wages possible
Advocate for your budget to allow for annual professional development opportunities for you and your staff.
If you plan on making a career in higher education, complete your doctorate. Master technology or have staff within your office dedicated to this area. As a registrar, specifically, it is imperative to have a high level of integrity and to be able to develop collaborative relationships with a wide constituency base.



<p>Advice on compensation: No one works in higher education to get rich. Don't act like a mercenary but like a soldier who is willing to go to any battle willingly. Love what you do. Have patience and the rewards will come.</p> <p>Advice on being a registrar as a leader: More administrators, faculty, staff, and students are looking to you to lead than you think. You should be a leader and not someone who should be tinkering with the guts of a Student Information System or the minutia of small-time policies anymore. Delegate those things to your staff and trust them to deliver (as well as you used to do). You should be concentrating on major policies (or the lack thereof), major processes, student success, and overall change management. Visit each of your college's councils regularly, go to the Academic/Faculty Senate regularly whether you're a part of it or not. Listen to the faculty, students, and other administrators. Ask questions about your services, build bridges and relationships. Keep your IT close and compliment them regularly on jobs well done. Pay particular attention to your staff and their professional development. Meet with them individually on a regular basis and just ask them how they are doing and then listen. Advocate for them and their compensation. Use their potential to its maximum. Don't concentrate on whether you have enough budget to be able to do things. You can do wonders with the resources that you already have with a little imagination.</p>
<p>Engage a professional mentor along the way and take time to learn and understand campus politics. Spend twice as much time on communication than you think you need to for both your internal staff and external partners/colleagues/constituents.</p>
<p>Keep learning from others as to their institutions policies and procedures. Develop a set of mentors and use them as needed. Be open to change and lead in those endeavors....</p>
<p>Efficient and detail record keeping; maintain integrity; produce excellent work; ignore politics</p>
<p>My only concern about my current position, which I stepped down from my prior school to take is that this school has inexperienced administration which then governs the Academic Technology of the school. This hinders and actually is destructive to the growth of progress a Registrar's dept. can have. Be careful of your administration and who has governing power over your Student Management System if it is not you.</p>
<p>The University Registrar position can be the best position at the university because of the central, critical connections with faculty, students, and staff. Our peers are the best, most supportive colleagues ever!</p>
<p>I'd love to receive some words of wisdom! I am new to the registrar realm, so I don't yet have wisdom to share.</p>
<p>Seize every opportunity for leadership development including finding a mentor who is widely respected as a leader. (Hint: real leaders are always growing new leaders!)</p>
<p>A successful Registrar must have the technological knowledge to implement new systems, the ability to manage budgets, be able to serve as a leader and a mentor to their staff, deal with difficult parents and students, be able to problem solve complicated situations often on the fly, have the wherewithal to handle faculty, possess the skills to effectively communicate with all corners of the campus community, interpret and execute a curriculum all while effectively promoting student success. It's an exciting career and I can truly say that I love my job.</p>
<p>The role of the registrar can vary widely from school to school. Make no assumptions that how one position works at one school that it will be similar at another.</p>
<p>Don't believe someone who tells you there are slow times. Everything overlaps with all of the functions that are done through the Registrar's Office. You have to be able to multi-task and focus and be willing to work additional hours to get everything done.</p>
<p>Have a passion for the field that makes it rewarding!</p>
<p>The future belongs to those who manage software, rather than academic records. Without competencies in software management and data mining, opportunities for advancement will be few.</p>
<p>Love every minute and take opportunities to recognize the influence that your role has in the success of your office, your institution and your students.</p>
<p>Be a student advocate. Their success is our success.</p>
<p>Pray! Have lots of patience. Be prepared to be a problem-solving diplomatic leader willing to change while standing firm to policies and procedures.</p>
<p>I recommend the following keys to success: having strong knowledge in systems, being able to communicate and articulate well, investing in relationship building, respecting policies but understanding when to be flexible, remaining calm and consistent, and having thick skin (i.e., don't take things personally or be oversensitive).</p>



Registrar is the bridge between wants & needs of students. Registrar needs to conduct self with integrity, honesty and respect with others.
Integrity matters; work well with others because you really cannot accomplish much alone; as registrars, it's ok to say "no", but how you say it matters
Be willing to be a visionary and to realize that we are no longer just record custodians, we are part time attorneys, data experts, and third party contract navigators. Lean on each other.
Must love hard work and be student centered.
Never stop learning, keep an open mind and always be open to continuous quality improvement. Continue to develop and expand your knowledge base so that you are confident in the information you provide and serve as a positive example in your management and leadership styles.
Know what kind of environment you're looking for - some schools think of registrars as clerks; some think of them as partners, as power-players. Be sure to pick the right one for you.
You have a lot of responsibility, but it's also very rewarding. Also, maintain good working relationships with your other college departments/staff.
Take advantage of every opportunity to learn. Resist the temptation to work too many hours.
Technology awareness with the skill sets to leverage the power of technology are critical for the registrar of the 21st century
That you are called upon from all areas within the institution for advice and or feedback
Build relationships with faculty and other support offices. Be a good listener and hear out different perspectives.
Commit to it and it will bring happiness and satisfaction.
I am a hands-on manager and work side-by-side with my staff and that gives me the greatest pleasure in my job - working with good people, teaching them and learning from them every day.
Must be able to multi-task, have great customer service both verbal and via email, be able to prioritize, build a working relationship with both academics and operations departments
Follow your passions, where there is a will there is a way. You just need to be patient and do what is necessary first. The rewards will pay off.
Although the responsibilities of a Registrar can be quite broad, the records we maintain and keep must last for an eternity. Clarity of the student's academic progress in those records is essential and archiving must be thought out carefully.
Integrity is essential. You work for the faculty.
Being the Registrar profession requires thick skin, active ears, a calculated mouth, a sharp mind, a level head, cool nerves, and a good heart. If you've got all that, buckle up and enjoy the exciting and unpredictable ride.
Don't underestimate the need to be a good leader for your team.
Don't lose sight of the reason we got into this line of work: to help people achieve their educational goals and be successful. It's easy to get bogged down in the crushing amount of detail we handle in record-keeping, database management, policy enforcement and the like and then forget that we went work in higher education because we wanted to serve the common good. I remind myself of that whenever I get discouraged and always find the energy and the will to push on and tackle that next challenge.
Academic integrity, focus on student success and standards should be the Registrars motto
The work of a Registrar's Office is mission-driven and should be in service for students not self.
Attend as many meetings as possible. Ask if you can go to a large variety and take people to lunch/coffee often. It helps you to get a broad foundation for your career. Be the person that volunteers for committees you know nothing about and no one wants to be on and take on those projects. You never know who you'll connect with or what you'll learn.
Plan for the best and expect the worst! Treat everyone equal meaning if you do something for someone make sure you do it for all.
Sometimes as the registrar you have to be the adult in the room that can see all sides of an issue. Don't be timid when standing up to VP's, Deans, or Faculty Members who may not be aware of how their (legitimate and honorable) requested changes could negatively impact the academic integrity of the institution.



<p>This is a wonderful career choice! The Registrar's Office is one of the main hubs of the institution. You will be challenged on a daily basis. You will work with administrators, faculty, faculty leadership, admissions, financial aid, student accounts, retention, enrollment management, advising, etc. If you are good at your job, you will be sought out for numerous additional responsibilities that provide opportunities for professional growth.</p>
<p>The job entails detail work with big picture thinking. The more you know about your student information system the better! You will be called upon as an expert in many areas, which will sometimes require quick and informed decision making, and other times will required that you work with your colleagues to solve problems both large and small, immediate and long term.</p>
<p>Good communication and team building skills are key. If you can't work with others, you will not succeed. Professional integrity is a must. You need to be known as a trustworthy person.</p>
<p>Adapting to change and problem solving are, in my position, constants. You need to understand why things happen the way they do, what could be done to improve, and who needs to be involved in the process.</p>
<p>If you like this kind of work, you will thrive in this position!</p>
<p>To be a successful Registrar, one must have an appreciation and understanding of all areas of the College and to take on cross-divisional projects or jobs that challenge you. I started in Student Orientation, moved to Residence Life and Discipline, then Continuing Education before serving in multiple roles in a Registrar's Office. While the path seemed non-traditional, my varied experience has made me a more well-rounded and appreciative of the challenges and interconnectivity of all areas if the College.</p>
<p>Policy isn't always black and white - there is a level of gray as well. Recognizing where the 'gray' exists often allows for a registrar to find acceptable solutions to challenging situations.</p>
<p>Registrar= Honesty+ Transparency+ Dedication+ Tolerance+ Professionalism.</p>
<p>Get involved. Working with others within your institution and your colleagues within at least your state will be valuable. There is no reason to reinvent the wheel. Be willing to ask questions about best practices from other institutions. Reach out and you will develop lifelong professional relationships. Give back....be willing to share! Enjoy what you do for the students, faculty and staff you get to work with every day.</p>
<p>Higher Ed. is Higher Ed. everywhere. There will always be problems, but solutions can always be found. Stay strong and firm on policies and procedures when coming against opposition, however, always look for alternative options to defuse the issue.</p>
<p>The Registrar's profession is a unique one and if given the opportunity to serve in this capacity be sure to create a course load of Registrar friends.</p>
<p>Advance your education, even during full-time employment if necessary.</p>
<p>Memory and storytelling are the keys to success in this business. That's pretty much what we put on a transcript. Protecting the integrity of our credentials is the most important role a Registrar has. We are like the middle square on a tic-tac-toe board; if you don't land there, it is unlikely you will win.</p>
<p>Having an assessment state of mind will make you highly marketable in various roles in Higher Ed, especially as a Registrar. Being able to analyze processes and data and make decisions based on those observations will get you far.</p>
<p>While it takes many years to be an expert Registrar especially for a large campus, the intrinsic rewards are much greater than one would expect of a Registrar career.</p>
<p>Build your team carefully and do not be afraid to delegate, after all, that is why you chose them.</p>
<p>Pace yourself. This job is not for the faint at heart. You are here to enforce and contribute to policy towards the goal of student success...not establish it.</p>
<p>Don't stay in the same position too long or it becomes too easy to stay and not grow. Take advantage of tuition waiver and start early.</p>
<p>The position of Registrar means you are the keeper of institutional integrity. Be true to yourself and keep records.</p>

