

PART 1
WHAT
I HAVE
LEARNED:

insights

FROM LEADERS
IN THE
PROFESSION

I embarked on this article with the idea that we could all benefit from the wisdom of those who are leaders in college career services and early talent acquisition.

We are taking a different approach with this article. It is our hope that you smile, you laugh, you connect, you empathize, you reflect, and you are inspired by these personal musings. Based on a long-running segment in Esquire magazine, this compilation features insights from some of our association's legends.

Please enjoy!
—Imants Jaunarajs

O. RAY ANGLE

NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2014
Assistant Vice President for Career & Professional Development,
Gonzaga University

Necessity is the mother of invention, and to everything there is a season. In 2014-15, I piloted an online career coaching service. I learned a ton about online meeting platforms, computer peripherals, lighting, sound, and soundproofing. But, interest in online career counseling from students was mediocre at best, and the service was discontinued. Fast-forward to 2020 and the global pandemic. I had some mad skills in my back pocket about



how to offer services online and was able to hit the ground running.

If it seems too good to be true, it is. Approach with caution and ask lots of questions.

Pilot it! If you think it is a good idea, then give it a shot through a pilot. Over the years, I've been convinced that a program or service would be interesting and successful. But instead of going "all in" on the initiative, I've been cautious enough to recognize that I could be wrong. It's always a good thing to "give it a whirl" before making a long-term commitment. If it's successful, keep moving forward. If it flops, cut your losses and move in a different direction.

Just when you think you've seen it all ...In our profession, it can seem like we've seen everything but, to quote Bette Davis, "Fasten your seat belts. It's going to be a bumpy night." I've had 1) a student's hair catch on fire in my office, 2) a student expose himself to a recruiter at a career fair (that made national news), 3) two U.S. presidential candidates take over my career fair venue and lunch space, and commandeer my employer parking lot, and 4) the FBI perform a search of a staff member's office. Variety truly is the spice of life, and this profession is full of it, but the spices can sometimes have some surprisingly high Scoville ratings. Keep calm and drink milk.

Receive by giving, or it's better to give than to receive. As I turn the corner on my 34th year of working in college career services, I am keenly aware that my professional life is coming to an end. That's not bad, it just is. However, over the past few

What is a leader? With the understanding that any parameters would be limiting, NACE established criteria that focus on formal and specific types of recognition of leadership. The leaders featured here have served as president/chair of the NACE Board of Directors, been inducted into the [NACE Academy of Fellows](#), and/or have received the [Kauffman Award](#) or [Mackes Leadership Award](#). Using 1990 through present day as the timeframe, nearly 50 individuals met those criteria and were invited to submit their guidance. Many thanks to those who agreed to take part. In fact, due to the robust response, we are running their guidance in multiple parts. (Note: Watch for Part 2 in the Winter 2025 issue of the *NACE Journal*.)

Recognizing leadership: We encourage you to nominate your colleagues for the [NACE Academy of Fellows](#), [NACE Kauffman Award](#), and/or [Mackes Leadership Award](#) to recognize their leadership.

years, I have been measuring my value less by what the profession has given me but by what I've given to the profession. I am blessed beyond measure every time I invest in the professionals who will lead the future of career services. Teaching at NACE's Management Leadership Institute has been a professional highlight for me, and I hope that my work in mentoring new professionals will be the hallmark of my career.

Hold on by letting go. Early in my career, I held on to things tightly with the fervor of Gollum holding onto his precious. As I became more confident and comfortable in my leadership abilities and more compassionate toward my colleagues, I began to recognize that we are all on a journey together and that we are not always going to be perfect. It was then that I began to grow as a leader and, I believe, that my work became more meaningful and impactful.

Understand that vendors are in it to make money. That's why they are called vendors. It's not a bad thing, but it could go sideways. Always understand how vendors make money, how they are funded, and how they maintain an ethical compass while doing so.

Reflect before responding. When faced with negative feedback or infuriating news, our gut instinct can be to fight fire with fire. But when our blood starts to boil or our tempers start to flare, it's important to develop the habit of stopping and creating time and space before responding. In the light of a new day, things always seem less serious. And, the down time gives us the opportunity to look for nuggets of truth in any situation. Early in my career, a supervisor gave me some negative feedback in the form of constructive criticism. It made me angry. I didn't lash out in response but stopped to consider the truth in her comments. I used that truth to develop a skill that has served me well

professionally. In turn, I've trained countless others in how to develop that skill and earned thousands of dollars as a side hustle. If I had responded in anger or discounted the feedback entirely, I would have missed out on a very important growth opportunity.

HAROLD BELL

NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2023
Senior Career Services Director,
Spelman College

PREVIOUS ROLES:

Recruiter, Consulting Services Practice, Ernst & Young
Outplacement Director, Nations Bank Corporation
Manager of Recruiting and Student Development, INROADS

How you do what you do matters.
I once had a performance review

meeting in which I felt my manager was giving me unfair and unwarranted feedback. In the midst of the conversation, he said something very profound, "How you do something is just as important as achieving the result."

Sometimes your career is like an EKG reading—a series of ups and downs or peaks and valleys. When you find yourself in the "valley," remember: "Everything will be all right in the end. If it's not all right, then it's not the end." The up-and-down movement of the EKG reading means you are still alive, much like peaks and valleys we experience in our lives. If you give up and flatline, you are "dead" in your tracks.

Learn, don't lose. Rejection in a job search can be disheartening. Some people will say, "You win some, you lose some." Shift that thought to "You win some, you learn some." You can never lose if you stay on a perpetual path of continuous learning. It's the key to staying relevant.



When learning a new skill, remember: “Practice makes you better, not perfect!” Pursue a healthy growth-mindset of being better, not perfect.

The largest room in any structure is the room for improvement.

Relationships are what count. Most people say, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” I’ve come to realize that it’s not what you know, nor who you know, but who you know who knows what you know and who likes you. And “like” is the most powerful part of the statement.

As you climb the ladder of success, don’t be a public success and a private failure at home.

Relationships are the essence of life. They will take you places that your intellect never could and bring meaning and value to your life.

The platinum standard of recruiting is not leading with your brand but allowing leaders who represent your brand to build relationships and trust with students who identify with a person and not a logo.

Career planning is a lifestyle for a lifetime. Never get too comfortable in one spot—everything around you is moving at the speed of life.

DAN BLACK

PRESIDENT, NACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2013-14

NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2018 KAUFFMAN AWARD, 2021

Global Leader, Talent Strategy and Organizational Effectiveness, EY

Remember why you decided to join the profession. At its heart, recruiting is about helping other people, and the best recruiters and leaders I know signed on to do just that. When you are overloaded with emails, technology issues, administrative tasks—anything



that makes you question if it’s worth it—just think back to what brought you to the field, and it will put your mind (and soul) at ease.

The journey of 1,000 hires starts with one offer. Hot take on an age-old proverb, but it still hits home the same. If you’re in recruiting long enough, eventually the volume increases and the enormity of the task at hand will seem overwhelming. But the art (yes, art!) of hiring early career professionals is to focus on one candidate at a time, make it personal, and make their experience exceptional. If you can do that, the scale will follow.

Start with the willing. No good and innovative idea goes unpunished (or overanalyzed), particularly in corporate America. If you want to try something new—something you think can really make a difference—then find someone in your organization who is willing to partner/sponsor/pilot with you and give it a go. Once you’ve built a reputation as someone willing to take risks and shake things up, you’ll find more and more people who are willing to stand with you.

Be exceptional at what you do, every day. A good friend once told me that most important part of *doing* a job is actually doing it. Too many people are focused on what’s next—their next role, the next promotion, the next employer—and it’s a distraction

from being really good at what you’re doing *right now*. I’ve held six distinct leadership roles during my recruiting career, and I didn’t “apply” to or seek out a single one of them. My performance and approach to my current job was all the resume I needed.

Seek out mentors and role models who are different from you. Some of the best advice and guidance I’ve received in my career was from people who had a completely different style, background, and/or approach from my own. That perspective, and the reminder that there are many different ways to see and do things, has been invaluable in my leadership journey.

“Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.” Definitely a favorite quote of mine, courtesy of Oscar Wilde. As you go through your career, remember that you can take a job or a role that was previously held by someone else and still make it yours. Bring your full self to everything you do, and dare to be different.

PATRICIA CARRETTA

NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2001 KAUFFMAN AWARD, 2005

Assistant Vice President, University Life, George Mason University (Retired)

Associations provide the best professional development opportunities. I often advise people new to the profession that the best professional and leadership development opportunities will be found within their associations. I was fortunate to have access to associations at the state, regional, and national levels, and was welcomed into and offered meaningful experiences to expand my knowledge, gain access to mentors and friendships, and develop my professional skills and leadership



capacity. Most rewarding has been serving as a steward in formulating strategies to actively engage practitioners. Being part of the task force that created NACE's Management Leadership Institute (MLI) was a defining moment for me—more valuable than any previous professional development experience. So many of the MLI participants have gone on to serve in leadership roles. Even in retirement—thanks to NACE's expansion of membership to retirees—I find myself in the role of steward: planning and facilitating activities for retired and pre-retired members to learn from one another, engage, give back, and be recognized for a lifetime of service.

We need to live our values. They are key to making meaningful and purposeful decisions. I learned from experience. As I finished my sophomore year undecided about a major and worried about college debt, I dropped out and took a position providing customer service. Within a few months, I awoke one morning feeling physically

ill at the thought of going into the office. This was one of those transformative moments. I asked myself “What was so awful about the job?,” then “flipped the coin” to identify the opposites—the values and work conditions that were missing and essential to me. In my coaching work with students and mentoring of colleagues, clarification of values and finding or creating ways to live those values are essential. And as a leader in the profession, I have strived to live those values.

After 43 years in career services, I made the decision to retire, but not without some trepidation as I contemplated questions for which I had no ready answers: Who will I become in retirement? To what will I redirect my attention, talents, time, and energy? What will be sources of fulfillment? How can I figure this out? Like the many people who sought my guidance over the years, I turned to an expert on navigating transitions. With her support, my journey into and in retirement has been a continuous

discovery and affirmation of my deeply held values, strengths, and what brings me joy. She helped me find the courage and will to confront and let go of limiting beliefs, and inspired me to seek experiences that align with my values.

A passion or interest you had as a child may be a clue to a quality or strength that will serve you well. For me, it was putting together the pieces of puzzles. Many of the initiatives I managed or contributed to in my various roles in career services and in our professional organizations involved taking a concept or idea, building the framework, and then figuring out how all the pieces come together to create the whole. As a child, I worked the puzzles alone and felt dismay when discovering a piece or two were missing. But as a career services professional, I found that teamwork and collaboration produced a framework that could accommodate the many pieces while also holding space for pieces that were missing. In both our personal and work life, there are always a few missing pieces. But we should feel joy and satisfaction in what we have created and in the resiliency of the framework.

I received a gift from my vice president that beautifully captured my sense of purpose and served as a reminder of my passion for career services—a papier-mâché lady flying with the aid of an umbrella created by artist Sarena Mann. For me, the lady and her flying apparatus for catching the wind—an umbrella, balloons, ribbons, kites—represent the belief that with a little help and awareness of strengths, we can all soar toward our career destination. Whether teaching, coaching, or mentoring students, staff, or colleagues, for me the ultimate joy and rewards of being a career services professional is encouraging them to recognize and use the gifts they have. Over the years, I acquired many of Sarena's flying ladies, and when I retired, I passed them on to my direct reports.

ANDREW CEPERLEY

PRESIDENT, NACE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS 2012-13

NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2016

Andrew T. Ceperley & Associates

PREVIOUS ROLES:

*Associate Provost/Consultant, Career
& Professional Development, Loyola
Marymount University*

*Assistant Vice Chancellor and
Director, Career Services Center,*

University of California San Diego

*Associate Dean and Director, Career
Center, Santa Clara University*



We gain personal and professional wisdom by observing and adopting the behaviors of the tone setters we admire in our careers. These influencers provide us, in real time, practices we can't gain from a training program or leadership book.

Still waters run deep. The people on our campuses who make the most profound impact are often not the show ponies but the humble producers, the colleagues who see a gap in our service and mobilize others to fill the gap and improve the student experience.

“No” today doesn't necessarily mean “No” tomorrow. I've always kept a special “tickler file” of innovative ideas I came up with when doing random things—walking, hanging out with friends, eating, and drifting off to sleep. Some of those ideas never

landed. The budget was tight, I didn't sell it effectively to the boss, or there were other campus priorities. But a reasonable percentage of those ideas found life when the climate was more agreeable. Returning to my tickler file, I found again and again that sometime there is the right time for the right idea, even when we least expect it.

Get stuff done. All the campuses I have served, both large and small, share a tendency to slow the pace of innovation. Shared governance and strict hierarchy may be hallmarks of our campus cultures, but they also create what authors Thaler and Sunstein call “sludge”—all the process, paperwork, and often needless steps that take a brilliant idea and reduce it to administrivia. Still, through all the red tape, if we are relational, persistent, and creative, we can streamline by cutting through the sludge and producing something that adds real value.

Hanging with students is worth the time. When I was interviewing for a career center directorship, I was warned by members of the search committee that I would be so involved in administrative duties that it would be hard to find the time to be with students. That didn't sit well with me. I wondered how I could effectively lead a team of career practitioners if I never met with students. So, I took the lead of other NACE leaders I admired and ensured that I carved out the necessary time to more intentionally understand and respond to the student reality.

Don't underestimate the power of the resume review. I'm convinced that part of the reason I landed in career development is because of the first resume critique I received in my undergraduate career services office at Virginia Tech. My one-page resume was typed carefully on my electric typewriter, and when I sat down with a career counselor to review it, I was greeted by an enthusiastic interest in what I had accomplished and sage

advice about how to enhance the document and move it from good to better. I left his office with hope, with a plan, and with a new awareness of the value of career services.

Find play in the work. Working for a college or university is actually pretty cool. We are surrounded by interesting people—our colleagues, faculty, alumni, parents, and students. And regardless of what our HR-approved position description reads, we have so much flexibility to create new programs, services, and resources. Best of all, our work doesn't have to be drudgery. It can be fun, if we make the choice to enjoy it.

The four agreements—as discussed in *The Four Agreements*—are inspired. I was late to the game in reading Don Miguel Ruiz's *The Four Agreements*, but the author's words now have a place of honor on my white board in my coaching studio. As Ruiz reminds us: 1) Be impeccable with your word. 2) Don't take anything personally. 3) Don't make assumptions. 4) Always do your best.

Avoid “whine” festivals. Our midday rituals are important—whether hitting the gym, taking a walk, or enjoying a meal. Lunching with griping colleagues to regale one another on how screwed up our organization is may provide the quick high of “miserable loves company” but sucks the energy out of the rest of our day. Sure, every so often, it helps to vent to a trusted colleague, but when complaining morphs into a regular practice, it's time to seek out healthier energy.

Practice non-attachment. It's easy to get consumed by our work. Sometimes, we love it so much, it feels like part of us, and when we see in real-time the impact our efforts make in the lives of students, it creates a spectacular wave to ride. But when the wave comes crashing to the shore, as it sometimes does, our attachment to our work and its outcomes can become clingy. Among the wisest skills we can

develop is not to become disillusioned and detached during these times, but rather to practice a more neutral non-attachment. We care for the work and the contributions we make, but we don't attach our heart and soul to the outcome.

MANNY CONTOMANOLIS

**PRESIDENT, NACE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS, 2008-09**

**NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2011
KAUFFMAN AWARD, 2014**

*Associate Dean for Academic
Engagement, Harvard University*



Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Despite higher education's reputation of being slow-moving, circumstances, especially in career services, can change quickly. You need to focus yourself and your office team on being nimble and responsive, anticipating trends, and getting out ahead of the wave. Be open to changing approaches and shifting paradigms as needs and circumstances warrant. I've always believed that people—and organizations—are either moving forward or sliding back. There is no stuck in neutral. Don't be afraid to fail forward. As long as you can learn from your mistakes and adjust accordingly, you will always be moving in the right direction.

Understand the difference between leadership and management. These terms are often used interchangeably and incorrectly. You lead people; you manage things. People are the most critical component of our work. No one wants to be managed. People respond best to effective leadership. Invest in people, and choose your team wisely. Always surround yourself with the most talented people and find team members who complement your style and strengths and help offset those things you may not be as good at doing.

Demonstrate thought leadership. Thought leadership simply

means your institution views you as someone who can contribute to the conversation, someone who is aware of the trends and emerging practices and can relate and apply them to the institutional circumstances. Thought leadership reflects your expertise, your ability to work productively with others, and your ability to stay abreast of the relevant data and information. Doing this and sharing relevant insights within the institutional community is one of the most effective ways of demonstrating that thought leadership.

Know where you are going. One of the most important aspects of leadership is visioning and setting goals and priorities. This is true for you at the individual level, of course, but critical in leading an office or a team. Always be inclusive in the visioning process and always work to frame your vision and goals—and the impact they are designed to achieve—in simple direct ways, easily understandable to people outside our field. The corollary to this, of course, is always to be able to answer the questions often posed by leadership and key stakeholders: What kind of support do you need to be successful and why? How do we know you are being effective in your work?

Stay aligned with institutional leadership. One of the biggest problems I have seen in my consulting work with career services organizations is when an office director and team believe they are doing good work, but institutional leadership views that performance differently. This disconnect can become problematic; the best way to navigate those waters is by sharing your mission, goals, and outcomes broadly. Seek feedback. Test your assumptions and understandings with your supervisor and others in the institutional leadership community. Strive to bridge gaps in understanding and differences in priorities by sharing information, data, and analyses that help institutional leadership better

understand the potential challenges and can play a role in helping you and your team address them.

Learn to lead up. Often, in focusing on our office team, we may lose sight of the importance of developing the best possible relationship with our immediate supervisor and others on the leadership team. To maximize that relationship, you need to focus on certain things: Know what matters to your supervisor; fill in any gaps your supervisor might have in information, context, or strengths and preferences; do more than is necessary; commit to being a problem solver; protect your supervisor and leadership; and accept that you will not always get your way.

Build an institutional community and an ecosystem of partners and services. No leader and no office can be successful without partners and collaborators. If you always keep the focus on what benefits the learner and focus on impact more than on who gets credit, or program top-billing, you stand the best chance of not only being impactful but building your personal and office brand in positive ways.

Know the field, but reflect the institution. There is no one best and universal way to do things in career services, since institutional circumstances—mission, goals, history, resources, organizational structures, and so forth—can be so very different. Invest time and effort in staying abreast of developments in the field and benchmarking against best practices, but always focus on the needs and circumstances of your institution. I've learned more, by the way, from benchmarking against institutions and programs unlike those in my typical institutional comparison group.

Nurture an analytical mindset. In today's world, data-driven decision-making is vital. Try never to lead a conversation with, "Well, I don't know, but anecdotally I can tell you ..." Strive to focus on the key goals and issues facing your office, and develop assessment

tools that measure activity and impact. The best way to acquire incremental resources and support, for example, is by using data to clearly define the problem—or opportunity—and what the specific outcome will be because of that incremental investment.

Develop and nurture your professional network. Any success I've enjoyed is attributable in some way and to some degree to my network of mentors, supporters, advocates, and collaborators. You build that network by getting involved professionally, volunteering for committees and project assignments, nurturing relationships, and sharing your thoughts, ideas, and challenges with others. Write a blog, offer to speak about different topics, be active in professional communities, and develop specific areas of expertise you can leverage for visibility and connections.

CHRISTIAN GARCIA

MACKES LEADERSHIP AWARD, 2024

Associate Dean and Executive Director, Toppel Career Center, University of Miami

Be open to new opportunities and experiences. I entered the world of career services reluctantly. In fact, I used to think it was dull. Boy, was I wrong! When life had different plans for me, requiring a quick pivot, this is where I landed. Twenty-three years later and counting, I am still excited and fulfilled by the work we do and the impact we have on students' lives.

Stand up for what you believe in. I am unapologetic when it comes to standing for and supporting minoritized groups. There have been many instances where I have felt judged and even excluded for speaking my truth and challenging systems and structures



that hurt or exclude people. Would I have done things differently? No.

Leading means getting out of the way. I firmly believe that one of my primary responsibilities as the leader of career services is to get out of the way of my team. I do this not because I'm disinterested but because I trust in the people we hire and want to see them flourish. I'm also there to knock down any barriers preventing them from succeeding.

Don't ignore those who ignore you. After 23 years of doing this work, one thing has remained constant: Those who don't engage with us are the loudest dissenters of career services. And you can't ignore them.

Dare to be out in front. When you're an "ideas guy" who likes to take risks and try new things, the systems and structures in place are often not running at your pace. I've learned to control the things I can control and be happy when I see those systems and structures catch up.

Involvement opens doors. Getting involved in this profession beyond my institution has offered me countless opportunities, personally and professionally. Through professional associations, I met two of my closest friends; these are individuals who have been there for me in the light and dark. Being involved regionally, nationally, and globally has also opened many doors for individuals on my team.

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ROXANNE HORI

NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2020
Founder, Next Act Partners

PREVIOUS ROLES:

Associate Dean, NYU Stern
School of Business

Associate Dean, Corporate
Partnerships, Kellogg School of
Management

Vice President, The Northern Trust
Company



Observe those who are successful.

Perhaps one of the most important things I learned early on in my career is to observe the behaviors of others who are successful, how people respond to them, and how they are perceived.

After college, I worked in professional services firms; in both organizations, I worked with senior leaders. I was very green. I observed how these individuals communicated. I didn't do a lot of things right when I was getting started, but never did any of my bosses "rake me over the coals;" instead, I got guidance and some good-natured ribbing. I took those lessons and applied them as I progressed in my career.

Be kind. This costs nothing and gets you a lot in return. When you are genuinely kind to others, your reward

will come when you least expect it. It might be a smile or thank you when you're having a tough day.

Treat others with dignity and respect. This goes beyond kindness. The CEO of the bank I worked at said that a core value for us was to treat each other with dignity and respect. It seems like such a little thing, but it has never left me. Think about it: Does it make sense to treat the hourly wage worker differently than you or me?

We all put our pants on one leg at a time. In one job, I had the privilege of working with the CEO and some of his direct reports. We traveled to different campuses to generate interest in our opportunities. This was a little nerve wracking for me as a young campus recruiter, but what I learned was that although I was low in the organization's pecking order, we're all just humans. I always treated them with the respect they deserved, but I quickly learned that they saw me as an expert in campus recruiting and looked to me for guidance on what they should be doing. The lesson learned is that at our core, we are more similar than not and put our pants on the same way—one leg at a time.

They can't hate you if they know you. This is what I told a fellow M.B.A. careers director when asked why I spend time with students. Career services offices are a lightning rod for a lot of angst. Employment outcomes impact ratings. An economic downturn seems to be the office's fault. An office becomes more human if the people in it are known to the students. When this happens, it is easier for students to think about the people and how those individuals are their ally, not working against them.

Be open to new ideas and people. In the field of recruiting and career management, we have a unique opportunity to meet many different types of people. Take advantage of the special seat you're in and all the people you meet. You don't have to

agree with their point of view, but use it as an opportunity to broaden your perspective and learn.

Embrace change. Being flexible and open to what comes your way will make you a better leader and team player. Years ago, a role I was convinced to take was eliminated. I wasn't terribly surprised, but it wasn't great news. That change led to my taking on the role of leading recruiting for the IT group, which eventually led me to leading the larger recruiting organization. IT was not a group I was looking to work with, but it was by far one of the best jobs I had. Because of that role, I developed a deeper interest in the tech world, which served me well later in my career.

Take on the uncomfortable. Sometimes, you must do something that pushes you out of your comfort zone. Seize the moment. There is a great learning opportunity with discomfort. There were different times when I had to have some very difficult conversations with employees. I received great coaching and then had the conversations. Were they fun? No! What I learned was I could do it, and it wasn't as hard as I thought. I became a better leader and coach.

Give a little, get a lot. Organizations need volunteers to help them get their stuff done and to grow. Volunteering some of your precious time, regardless of how often or how much, is good for everyone. It's a great way to meet new people, learn about how something/someplace operates, and make an impact. The rewards I have reaped from sharing my time cannot be quantified. What I've gotten out of it is an expanded perspective, people I can tap into when I'm facing a challenge, and an abundance of good friends.

In the end, I guess what I've learned is to pay attention. There are so many "small" things happening around us that are important. Take advantage of them. They could be your competitive advantage.

JENNIFER LASATER

PRESIDENT, NACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2020-21

KAUFFMAN AWARD, 2024

Vice President, Student and Career Advancement, Purdue University Global

It's all about relationships. Our work is critical and essential, but most of our success is tied to our relationships, those we build with our students/graduates, employer colleagues, and partners throughout the university. It's essential to ensure that we're constantly building and maintaining those relationships over time. Additionally, knowing the difference between empathy and sympathy is vital as a leader.

Set the example, and celebrate everyone's wins. It's essential to

set an example, work together, and celebrate our wins as a team. Your reputation will follow you in your career; consider how you present yourself in various situations and how your interactions speak of your intent. You want to be someone people look forward to working with on a team or project.

Create opportunities. Through great partnerships come great opportunities. Take time to ensure that you're not constantly reacting to things but instead creating and innovating. It's essential to create opportunities for people to advance—and not only for our students but also for our respective teams.

Connect the dots. Throughout my career, I've always enjoyed "connecting the dots" on a project or initiative. My top strength is that I'm a "maximizer." I enjoy reading, reviewing data, and building new projects and initiatives.

I've realized that over the years many of my "wins" have had to do with "connecting the dots" between various strategic initiatives or connecting people and projects.

"Be curious, not judgmental." You know this quote if you've watched Ted Lasso, and it's a great piece of advice. Ask questions, get inspired by others, and keep moving forward. Don't get bogged down in negativity by judging others or questioning their worth. Everyone has dealt with impostor syndrome at some point. Be known for being someone's supporter and source of encouragement; don't add to someone's self-doubt.

Recommended authors: Brene Brown, Adam Grant, Daniel Pink, Malcolm Gladwell, Daniel Coyne, Liz Fosslien and Molly West Duffy, Carol Dweck, Mark Sanborn, Randy Pausch, Ann Patchett.



TIM LUZADER

PRESIDENT, NACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2004-05

NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2010

Executive Director, Career Success, Purdue University (Retired)

It's important to know where you are heading. It was really important for me as a new director to learn the overarching strategic direction of the university and areas within it. A significant portion of my first few months of service to Purdue University was spent conducting a listening tour with college deans and other senior administrators. They understood that I was new to the university and to this department head position. Subsequently, with no threat of defensiveness on my part, our conversations were especially candid and very helpful for future planning. It was also an opportunity for me to



share insights about the distinctive competence of career services professionals and university career services delivery in general. Another objective for me was to gain buy-in on a vision of what career services on campus could be if appropriately resourced.

Students as the primary constituency of the career center. Adopting an effective student-first strategy for service delivery required me to learn and teach others that meaningful engagement with other stakeholders was necessary. It was a given that our office would continually seek ways to effectively communicate with our students and serve their career development and employer/graduate and professional school engagement needs. However, I gained an even greater appreciation for the value of strong relationship building beyond the walls of the career center. Our active student referral network involving advisers and faculty members was reinforced by our office's stellar reputation as a helpful place for students. We also rolled out the proverbial red carpet to organizations that recruited our students for internships, postgraduate employment, and advanced study. Knowing that hiring demand was cyclical by nature, our goal was for

the university to always be on the short list of recruitment destinations when economic conditions required a reduction in the number of universities recruited. While these were mostly data-driven decisions, we learned that relationships really do matter and often made a difference.

Build your case to accomplish significant change. I learned that developing a compelling case statement for significant change requires patience, perseverance, and attention to emerging trends. Consequential changes that our office experienced included a significant expansion and upgrade to space, a realignment of reporting within the university structure, and the generation of additional revenue streams supporting career services. While the core work was accomplished in how our case was presented, there was also significant risk-taking involved. Learning when to push the case hard and when to back off became very important. Of course, success also boiled down to the relationships forged with both influencers and ultimate decision-makers.

Our profession abounds with collegiality. When entering the career services field, I had no idea how significant my relationships would be with those who I engaged beyond campus. There is clearly a special bond amongst career services and employer contemporaries. I feel deeply blessed to serve in the profession that I have loved for nearly 43 years and spanning five large public universities in the East and Midwest. Whether I was closely associating with national thought leaders or engaging new professionals, the common thread among nearly all of us was our commitment to helping students become professionals. This love of facilitating personal growth in young, college-educated adults establishes among us a high level of camaraderie and trust that can exist for decades.

DAVID ONG

**PRESIDENT, NACE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS, 2021-22**

Talent Acquisition Consultant

PREVIOUS ROLES:

Vice President, Talent Acquisition,

Maximus

Manager, College Recruiting,

**Citigroup Corporate and Investment
Bank**

Senior Manager, College Recruiting,

Capital One

Understand what makes for a good college recruiter. I've hired college recruiters from a wide variety of backgrounds, such as career services, college admissions, workforce agencies, sales, and human resources to name a few. The common denominator: the ability to influence a student's opinion.

Don't hire yourself if you want a diverse workforce. A significant number of hiring managers have told me that they know 10 minutes into an interview whether they want to extend an offer to the candidate. I have found that in most of those cases, the hiring manager is looking for a clone of his/her/their self. Not coincidentally, several of those managers wonder why their teams aren't more diverse!



Go for process over perception. I've been complimented a lot over the years about how my teams and I must be terrific judges of character when it comes to hiring early career talent. I have to burst their bubble by telling them that the foundation to judging character is built on a tried-and-true selection process.

KATHLEEN POWELL

PRESIDENT, NACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2016-17

KAUFFMAN AWARD, 2022

Associate Vice President for Advancement, William & Mary

Be curious, and be a lifelong learner. If you think you know it all, you're wrong. You haven't learned everything you can learn. Also: Don't be afraid to ask questions, but make sure they aren't questions you could answer yourself with a quick search on Google.

Take ownership of your career. Don't expect someone to tap you on the shoulder, tell you that you are amazing, and move you up. Position yourself for opportunity, and unpack your experiences. Were you in the right place at the right time? If not, why? How can you change that?

You have to have "fire in the belly." It's so important. You have to be able to understand your value and articulate that. Not your perceived value, either—it has to have meat on the bones. Look at how you present yourself, how you present your narrative, how you present your value.

Manage your expectations, and don't compare yourself to others. You have to walk before you run. Being awesome isn't enough. You have to demonstrate and build your reputation and skills.

Listen. People will say things to and about you that don't feel good. Hear



them out. Find out what is stoking that criticism. You can learn from it.

When opportunity knocks, answer! When someone gives you an opportunity, go for it. Consider what you can take away from the opportunity.

"It's not what you are that holds you back, it's what you think you are not" is one of my favorite quotes. This is very true in career development in our work with students, but also in

the profession. Impostor syndrome is real! Don't be your own worst critic. Don't sell yourself short. Tell yourself that you can. Be willing to take a leap of faith. Ask yourself, "What is the best thing that can happen?"—not what's the worst. Having a positive mindset is important.

Embrace humor. You have to have some lightness in your heart, in your day.

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VANESSA STRAUSS

PRESIDENT, NACE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2005-06
NACE ACADEMY OF FELLOWS, 2012
Senior Advisor to the CHCO, Human Resources Organization
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation



Surround yourself with “hungry” people. This advice came from my first boss out of college, and it’s true! Surround yourself with people who have as much passion as you do, who care as much as you do, and who want to contribute. Listen to them. It doesn’t matter if you have different ideas from them: That passion makes a big difference.

“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.” Dr. King said this, and my father took it to heart and shared it with me. Together, we can make things work. As a leader, you don’t have to dictate.

Build relationships. NACE has given me lifelong friendships, not just in early talent recruiting but in career services, too. I was an introvert when I got out of school. One day, I went to a meeting hosted by a regional association (full disclosure: I went because I wanted to visit the location!). I was the only federal government employer there. This was a huge turning point for me. The regional association president introduced me to a career services

practitioner located in D.C., and she and I became lifelong friends. What I learned was that I could contribute, that I can learn from colleagues on both sides of the profession. We can step outside of the box and learn from others, share ideas, and get their input. I’m happy to say that many of my professional relationships became personal relationships and that I’ve met a lot of amazing people who are so inspirational and important in my life.

Get involved. There are so many things you can do to become involved in the profession and NACE. You don’t have to take the lead, either. Being a member of a committee or group, instead of the lead, for example, is just as important and fulfilling. You can make a difference, and you can still do your “regular” job.

Step outside of your comfort zone. This was a big deal for me—that I could use different ways to accomplish my goals. Think about what you can do to make something better. As part of this, talk with the people you have hired, with those in your programs, and with those who applied for a job but didn’t come on board. Ask them what worked and what didn’t work. Listen.

Be genuine—and don’t be afraid to share your opinion.

Always share with your management. Talk about your successes, failures, and how and what you have learned. And, when you’re talking with your manager, don’t just bring your idea—back it up. Explain how this program might work, what the

budget would look like, how it could improve things. Show you have a plan.

Ask for what you need to make your program a success. This is related to sharing with management. Back up your request with data.

Don’t work with just the elite schools. There are great candidates everywhere.

One roadway doesn’t cover everything. There is a lot of great information out there, so follow your own path. Also, remember that what works for one person or organization doesn’t work for everyone. You don’t have to adopt the whole model—maybe one piece will work for you.

There are two quotes that I’d like to share:

- “The true mark of a leader is the willingness to stick with a bold course of action—an unconventional business strategy, a unique product-development roadmap, a controversial marketing campaign—even as the rest of the world wonders why you’re not marching in step with the status quo. In other words, real leaders are happy to zig while others zag. They understand that in an era of hyper-competition and non-stop disruption, the only way to stand out from the crowd is to stand for something special.”

—Bill Taylor, from

[*Do You Pass the Leadership Test?*](#)

- “You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.” —Eleanor Roosevelt



Imants Jaunarajs serves as the assistant vice president for the Division of Student Affairs at Ohio University. He oversees career services, the Center for Student Engagement & Leadership, sorority and fraternity life, and event services. With 20 years of experience in university career centers, he is a creator of innovative and outcome-driven career readiness best practices, including brain-based career development (BBCD) and leadership coaching (an executive coaching model for students). He is the author of *Brain-Based Career Development* and *Goal Pursuit for Students, Staff, and Organizations*, both published by NACE. Jaunarajs earned a Bachelor of Arts from Earlham College and Master of Arts from Western Michigan University.