

## Goal Statement

As an undergraduate student earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, I had every intention of becoming a psychologist. However, while completing two immensely enjoyable internships in the field, I realized that I no longer desired to pursue this as a career. Although I valued assisting people in bettering themselves, I found that the field did not call for the formation of more personal relationships or engaging in mutual mentorship with clients to the level that I desired and had experienced through interactions with fellow students as a Resident Assistant. As a result of this realization, I decided to apply for a Hall Director position after graduation. Over the course of my first semester in the position, I discovered that student affairs provides so many of the rewarding opportunities that I had been seeking in a job, including: variety in daily responsibilities, interactions with colleagues and supervisors who support my work and challenge me to develop professionally, the ability to work both independently and collaboratively and, most importantly, the potential for long-term relationships where I am able to witness and guide the professional and personal growth of those around me. A number of experiences have contributed to my decision to pursue a career in the field and helped to clarify the path towards accomplishing my goals.

My professional work has challenged me to develop competency in multiple areas of student affairs, including administration, judicial affairs, career and academic counseling, and crisis intervention. I thoroughly enjoy the variety and complexity of these responsibilities. As a supervisor of my student staff and a Hall Council advisor, I have helped to cultivate student leadership and personal growth. The changes in many residents throughout each year are remarkable, and I feel privileged to be in a field where I can witness and assist in students' holistic development process. With some students, I am able to further these roles to build a more personal relationship of mutual mentorship, allowing for significant growth experiences for me while I guide them towards their personal goals. Through this work, I have been positively challenged in ways that I had not anticipated and have gained as much, if not more, from my interactions with students as they have. I look forward to continuing this during assistantships or internships as I further my education.

I have also enjoyed involvement in collateral assignments in my department and across campus, particularly in the area of diversity education. Together with Concordia's Residence Life Social Justice and Diversity Committee, I have augmented discussion and knowledge of multicultural issues by organizing several new events and incorporating relevant information into current communication channels. My interest in advocating for underrepresented groups has also been strengthened by personal involvement with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and the National Education for Women's Leadership Program. These involvements have enabled me to become a more informed leader and educator for my campus and the larger community. I have a passion for engaging students in conversations and leading dynamic experiences targeted at increasing their awareness of social justice issues, as this area of education has an immense impact on their ability to responsibly engage in the global community after college.

My experiences as a delegate and committee member of UMR-ACUHO have also helped to solidify my decision to pursue student affairs. As a result of these opportunities, I have grown

personally and professionally by witnessing the importance of collaboration and sharing resources while gaining a broader knowledge of current issues and practices within the field. This has allowed me to better serve my campus and its students. I look forward to continuing my career in a field with a strong network of professionals dedicated to promoting learning, community involvement, and positive change.

My responsibilities and involvements during my undergraduate education, as a community volunteer and Hall Director have shaped the goals that drive me forward in my career. Through studying student affairs in the Adult and Higher Education Program at Northern Illinois University, I hope to further my knowledge of the field to better understand the theoretical and historical context of the profession. This will allow me to be a more valuable resource and educator for the students with whom I work, effect positive change on campuses, and make notable contributions to the field. I particularly value NIU's theory to practice program with well-rounded class offerings that combine knowledge of theory and multiculturalism with administrative competency and counseling skills. I eagerly anticipate expanding my knowledge and breadth of experience with various departments through assistantships, practicums and internships during my graduate education so I may fully understand the variety of support our profession provides to students. Working alongside accomplished practitioners will help me to capitalize on my new understanding of student development to effectively challenge and support students and coworkers.

I am also drawn to NIU's program for its emphasis on social justice and issues of difference. I look forward to engaging in opportunities such as the African-American/Latino American Research Symposium that will increase my own understanding of multiculturalism so that I may achieve my goal of becoming a practitioner who advances student knowledge of diversity issues while advocating for more welcoming and inclusive campus environments. Specifically, I am interested in how targeted diversity and social justice education plays a role in the first year experience. I would also like to explore how the on-campus living experience is affected by a student's cultural viewpoint and how this intersects with utilization of other campus resources. I am eager to explore these topics through research and classroom study as a graduate student at one of the nation's most diverse institutions.

At this time, my primary interest within student affairs is residence life for its incorporation of multiple areas of the field and high degree of interaction with students. However, I am excited to expand my knowledge and breadth of experience with other departments through assistantships and internships. My other interests include leadership and service, academic counseling, career services and multicultural education. Through my past work with these areas I have realized my enthusiasm for guiding student development, which has led me to my decision to pursue graduate studies. I am confident that NIU, with its theory to practice program and emphasis on diversity, would be a place where I can contribute a unique perspective and benefit from working alongside skilled faculty and practitioners. I look forward to being challenged to accomplish my goals and discover my potential, and I know NIU will provide me with the education and experiences necessary to become a responsibly engaged student affairs professional.