



## **Title ACPA: Gathering & Caring About Each Other**

### **Gavin Henning, Vice-President of ACPA 2014-15**

The week before coming here I got excited. Every day I was a little more excited. Then when you see the Twitter feed, and you see the Facebook posts it even gets more exciting. And it's really...I was talking with somebody about this today. It's like walking down the hall and seeing somebody, a colleague you just met. I had someone who said, "I was at your program three years ago. I just want to say, hi." A good friend of mine, the only time I get to see him is at this convention, and to being able to reconnect. So, it's about seeing people reconnecting. Knowing that we are doing the same work. And, I always...even though it's about connecting with each other, our whole goal is about students...and connecting with students, and helping them feel like they matter and really helping them develop as college students.

Mentoring at ACPA is sometimes a little bit more formal. I talk with Heather Shea Gasser, she still has dinner with every single year at ACPA with her mentor from her Master's program, Paul Shang. And so there's some really strong mentoring connections like that and some that are a little bit less formal. But they all help nurture, it's all about connection and helping people move forward in their career, and even more importantly helping them find their place in the field and doing what they love.

People care and they want people to find happiness...you know...in the field. And it's actually very analogous in what we do in student affairs. And we actually use the term, "conspiracy of care". And so even though the word conspiracy seems odd and seems weird and it feels different, student affairs professionals talk about, "We care so much about students we want to make sure that everybody knows. So that if ever a student needs help we have enough professionals, residential life, student activities, counseling, where everybody is paying attention to that student. Cause we care so much. And I think that just translates into the work, I don't even think intentionally, it translates that we care so much about people. It starts obviously with students, cause that's why went into this field, but then it translates into each other. And so we really make sure we care about each other, and we see that all the time but, "Jane won't see me, why don't you go talk to her." We talk with other people to make sure that there is this support net and that people are caring to make sure that person is okay.