



Navigating Workplace Politics 101:

How Student Affairs Professionals Navigate Workplace Politics While Balancing Authenticity and Well-Being at a Private Catholic-Affiliated Institution

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Abstract & Research Question

Student affairs professionals are faced with choices that they must make that affect students, and there are times when they have to carry out decisions with which they may not agree. There appears to be a lack of research on this topic, so the significance of this study is to close the gap in the literature. The question of this research is: how do student affairs professionals navigate workplace politics at a private, Catholic institution while balancing being their authentic selves and practicing well-being?

Literature Review

Tooms, Lugg, and Bogotch (2010) demonstrated that fit has marginalized “the other” and elevated stereotypes within the workplace. This pressure to fit in and fit within an institution’s cultural norms is important to consider, because the politics of attempting to fit in can deteriorate a person’s attempts at authenticity and well-being.

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Selected References

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- ★ Tooms, A.K., Lugg, C.A., & Bogotch, I. (2010). Rethinking the politics of fit and educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 46(1), 96-131. doi:10.1177/1094670509353044

Key Themes in Findings

- ★ The importance of building positive relationships in the workplace
- ★ Participants’ perceptions of the environment and actions of others matter
- ★ Participants want to be able to use their voice and present themselves in a way that aligns with their values
- ★ Separating oneself from work is important for well-being

Recommendations for Future

- ★ More research into how identity and events in the world affect workplace politics, authenticity, and well-being
- ★ More research into how power affects workplace politics
- ★ More research into what workplace politics looks like at other institutions

Methodology

- ★ Phenomenology
- ★ Semi-structured interviews with eight student affairs professionals
- ★ Criterion sampling: student affairs professionals at a Catholic private institution