

LEADERS & INNOVATORS

Let everyone know they matter

By Joan Hope, Ph.D., Editor

Connie Shipman Newsome, M.P.A., Ed.D., strives to let everyone she crosses paths with in her work know they matter. That includes the faculty; administrators at all levels; students, regardless of their year or class rank; team members; and support staff. Being able to support those



Connie Shipman Newsome, M.P.A., Ed.D.

people in the campus community is one of the reasons Newsome really enjoys her work as Registrar at the Campbell University School of Law in North Carolina.

If someone comes into her office, it's a safe space for them, even if they don't need anything from her and just came in to breathe, Newsome said.

One of Newsome's favorite quotes says, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." She practices

servant leadership in her personal and professional lives, with the goal of making an impact as Registrar and in professional organizations. She currently serves as Vice President at Large for the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and Assistant Executive Director for the National Network of Law School Officers.

Newsome came to Campbell as Registrar in 2014 after discovering a passion for higher education and working for DeVry University's online division. When she started at Campbell, she was excited about the opportunity to work with graduate students, and she wanted to work at an organization that has a reputation for caring about the community where it is located.

Although Newsome enjoys interacting with students, many of her efforts have focused on helping them be more independent in their interactions with her office. Some of her accomplishments she's most proud of include:

► **Making the office paperless.** Having worked in the online division of her previous institution, she had experienced the benefits of forms being available online. Her office was moving forms online as time allowed, but the pandemic made the project a priority. Now all forms are available in PDF format, and students can access them through a folder on the intranet. Completing the project was "a point of joy for me," Newsome said. She still has paper forms available for students who prefer them in hard copy.

► **Creating easy access to unofficial transcripts.** When

Newsome started at Campbell, students did not have a self-service option to request an unofficial transcript. She worked with IT to create an option for students to request and download transcripts. Later, the school added a student portal, so they moved the unofficial transcript request option into the portal.

► **Simplifying the ranking process.** At law schools, rankings using semester and cumulative GPAs are very important, Newsome said. The school uses the Colleague student information system, and officials at Ellucian connected Newsome with a consultant who could create a package to produce the rankings every semester. "It has been a game changer," Newsome said. It saves her hours of work each term.

Self-advocate and give back

As Registrar in a small office, Newsome has written proposals for the staffing and tools she needs to be successful. For example, she started in the office with no staff, and was able to add an assistant, first part time and then full time.

She also sought the knowledge and help she needed through professional organizations. When Newsome was new at Campbell, she got involved in the National Network of Law School Officers. That organization provided her with veteran colleagues who could offer guidance, and the organization was helpful to her for establishing processes. As positions opened up in the organization, she became increasingly involved.

She found AACRAO to be a good source for professional development, and started off her deeper involvement on a committee. When a colleague nominated her to be Vice President at Large, she accepted the nomination and was elected to the role that started this spring. She's currently working on determining where she wants to make an impact, as the at-large position does not have a designated focus area.

"I do believe self-advocacy. It helps one progress toward one's happy place at work," Newsome said. "Advocacy is made easier when you have an administration who supports professional development and involvement with organizations that are relevant to your field," she added. She credits J. Rich Leonard, Dean of the law school, and the associate deans she has reported to for enabling her to be involved in the professional organizations to such an extent.

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