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6-22-2020

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University Park, IL,
June
22,
2020

GSU Connections: Stefany Sigler



In her first professional role, Stefany Sigler is already winning awards for guiding and advising college students as they navigate the sometimes rocky road toward completing their degrees. The winner of the Outstanding New Advisor Award from NACADA, a global community of academic advisors, Sigler says that every day, she draws on her experience—both inside and outside the classroom—at [Governors State University](#) (GSU) where she earned her [Bachelor of Arts in Psychology](#) in 2015. Here's how her time at GSU helped forge her path to Senior Academic Advisor at Nevada State College (NSC).

Great start: Dual Degree Program

A student at [Joliet Junior College](#), Sigler had always wanted to go to GSU for its close-to-home location and its small classes. Then she discovered the [DDP](#), the unique program that supports students as they complete their associate and then bachelor's

degrees. With encouragement from GSU Transfer Specialist Jenaia Harris, Sigler successfully applied for the GSU [Honors Program](#) Scholarship, receiving full tuition and fees for two years. She also was named a Lincoln Laureate in 2014.

Extremely motivated to give back, Sigler became a DDP [Peer Mentor](#), a first step toward guiding others. “Jenaia took time to get to know me. I was a first-generation college student, and she was instrumental in helping me understand how college worked,” Sigler said. “I used to do presentations with her at JJC. We’re still in touch.”

Working with Peer Mentor Coordinator Roshaunda Ross, Sigler began supervising other peer mentors. “We held training workshops. And I got experience hiring people,” she said of the skills she would later bring to her career position at NSC. “It was a huge professional experience. I learned so much from Ro,” she said.

After Graduation: Grad School

After a conversation with DDP Director Jessica Specht, who was then a career counselor, Sigler realized all her positive experiences at GSU pointed to a profession: academic advisor. “When you hear ‘college,’ you think of professors,” she said. “But there are a lot of people who help you outside the classroom.”

Sigler headed to North Central College, where she earned a master’s degree in leadership studies. “I could only go if I got a graduate assistantship, and I managed to get one at the Dyson Wellness Center because all the seeds were planted at GSU,” she said. “I’d taken advantage of the free counseling at the Counseling & Wellness Center. I’d changed my major to psychology. And I helped supervise the Peer Mentors.”

Lessons from Faculty Still Apply

Sigler says she draws daily on material she learned at GSU, from her class on personality theory with [Dr. Timothy Pedigo](#) to her capstone course in psychology with instructor M. H. Hill.

At NSC, Sigler also draws on GSU coursework as an instructor for the College Success course. This fall, she will also teach Introduction to Leadership, an unusual course for an academic advisor to teach. Sigler said the relationships she has forged with faculty have led to this opportunity. “NSC opened in 2002, so it’s still a young school. We’re just starting to teach a leadership course,” she said.

Super Connection: The President

In her honors classes with [Dr. David Rhea](#), Sigler embarked on a leadership legacy project that involved updating the regalia worn by honors students during commencement. The experience enabled her to work with [President Elaine P. Maimon](#), who approved the gold medallions suspended from an orange sash. “That was an amazing experience for an undergraduate to **have the kind of access to the president**,” Sigler said.

What’s next?

Sigler said she's enjoying building her current position at Nevada State. "I'm trying to become an expert at my role," she said.

A Word to Current students: Connect!

Sigler encourages current GSU students to "take advantage of every moment and every connection. You never know where you'll end up."