

## Q & A with Doug Schantz

### DIRECTOR STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES AT WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY

**FAS:** Looks like you've worked at Wittenberg for over 23 years and you're a Wittenberg graduate. You came up through the ranks in student accounts and student financial services. How has the industry changed in the last 20+ years?

**DS:** What stands out most to me is the increasing number of students we encounter who are struggling with the financial aspects of higher education. There has been an obvious shift in awareness as it relates to affordability. It's in an institution's best interest to help students overcome any financial hurdles that they may encounter. Staying within the institution's policies and guidelines, we need to find ways to be as flexible as possible when working with students and families.

**FAS:** You've seen, and been through, a lot in this business. Is there a "hot button" issue right now? If so, what is it and how might an institution tackle it?

**DS:** Finding the right balance between fiduciary responsibility and student success. Student financial services offices are where the rubber meets the road. After

the campus tour, the acceptance letter, and the financial aid package, comes the bill. As far as how to approach it, there is an ebb and flow to how that works for everyone. So long as we're maintaining financial integrity and fulfilling our fiduciary responsibilities, we should work with families. Presenting them with as many options as possible in terms of payment plans or other arrangements will help them achieve their educational goals.

**FAS:** Clearly, you have a passion for volunteering, in your professional associations and in your community. What drives you to give so much of your time outside of work?

**DS:** I have been surrounded by people who were pillars of the community for as long as I can remember - those who were doing great things with their talents, time, and gifts. Even as a young person, I quickly found myself committed to various boards and organizations that focused on helping others. And personally, I feel I got more out of those experiences because they helped to shape who I am today. In regard to higher education, I was a first generation student; the college experience was unfamiliar to me and my family. I am very grateful for



Doug Schantz is one of FAS' Student Business Services Consultants. Click [here](#) to read his full bio.

the people who helped me along the way. I'm often reminded of that when I'm helping a family or a student to navigate the financial aspect of their college experience.

**FAS:** Last week you presented/facilitated the Bursar Fundamentals Workshop at the NACUBO Student Financial Services conference in New Orleans. Aside from the workshop materials and subject matter, did you give these newbies any special advice as they're starting out in this profession?

**DS:** Honestly, much of the material covered was technical and provided a good foundation for those new to the bursar profession. I did, however, stress the importance of networking and connecting with peers. I encouraged them to tap into the valuable resources they have in their professional colleagues.

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It is not only important for everyone to garner best practices from each other but also to learn from mistakes or hurdles that others may have experienced at their institutions. Also, whether it be at the regional, state, or national level, it is always so important to get involved. Moderating or presenting at conferences can be very rewarding. In addition, serving on committees

or boards within our industry is an excellent way to get engaged and help to shape the trajectory of higher education and the impact it has on others.

**FAS:** Finally, congratulations on receiving the 2019 NACUBO Student Financial Services Award! What does receiving this award mean to you professionally and personally?

**DS:** In both respects I'm humbled and honored...and still reeling from it! Professionally, it is the culmination of all that I've done up to this point in my career. Yet, it made me realize I still have more that I want to contribute to my institution and to this profession – I look forward to what lies ahead! Personally, I believe it reinforces my commitment to giving back. And, to be the second recipient of this award, only after David Glezerman is incredibly gratifying - those are big steps to follow.

### The Final Few Nuggets from Doug:

Over the years, I have found myself getting more and more intrigued by the various legislative and regulatory initiatives impacting higher education. There are a number of channels in which that information is shared with our institutions but I appreciate the good work of NACUBO to keep us informed on what is in the pipeline, what is being proposed, and the likelihood of it passing. When something does get enacted, they are typically the first ones to respond

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with webinars or whitepapers to outline how we should implement the necessary changes to respond and stay in compliance. It is important for all of us to keep our fingers on the pulse of what's happening in our industry. NACUBO provides a plethora of resources that we should all engage with to promote successful outcomes not only for our divisions but also for our institutions.