



# Advancing the Mission

BY FRANK LAMAS

**N**ASPA has been my professional home throughout my 30-plus years in student affairs, and I am honored and humbled to serve as the new chair of the NASPA Board of Directors. NASPA's leadership and educational curriculum have helped me to become the professional that I am today. Through my service to this great organization, I hope to give back and help others benefit as I have from its many programs and services.

Today, NASPA has reached an exciting point in its growth, and it is on the cusp of launching a new strategic plan to guide its activities for the next three years. The organization has taken steps to strengthen its position as the leading voice of the profession, as a major player in the public policy arena, and as a collaborator with student affairs professionals worldwide. Our organization has a strong vision and is dedicated to improving the profession and ultimately fostering student success.

As a member of the NASPA board for the last four years, I had the unique opportunity to be part of a team that crafted and launched NASPA's two most recent strategic plans. These plans focus on the organization's mission and align goals and initiatives to better serve NASPA members. The new strategic plan will continue to move the organization forward well into the future.

As board chair, I am committed to advocating for the NASPA membership and giving members a strong voice in the future direction of the organization. We must live in the present, look to the future, and be ready for whatever lies ahead. History tells us that all members of the profession must be nimble, results-oriented, and ready to serve the profession and students as new developments come to the forefront.

I will work to help ensure that NASPA focuses attention on several key strategies. I look forward to working with NASPA President Kevin Kruger, the NASPA volunteer leadership, and the dynamic NASPA staff to further our association and profession. My top 10 list of priorities for NASPA includes:

- Encourage members to have a **voice** within the association.
- Work to position NASPA as a leader with a **strong national presence**.
- **Lead public policy** for student issues in higher education.
- Continue to provide added **value** to NASPA members with dynamic and innovative professional **programs and services**.
- Share evidence-based practices, knowledge, and resources for **research topics** such as student success, equity, diversity, inclusion, salary information, and other important subjects that have an impact on our work.



NASPA members engage in interactive learning at the 2014 NASPA Annual Conference.

- Continue our commitment to be an **inclusive** organization for all members. As members make professional transitions and job responsibilities change, NASPA must be able to meet all members wherever they are in their career journeys.
- Create stronger **connections** between practitioners and faculty members in student affairs preparation programs.
- Use **technology** to create programs that can be streamed through different forms of media to serve members wherever they are in the world, and leverage multiple platforms and media for the important work we do on our campuses.
- Promote NASPA as a **global** student affairs organization.
- Develop **partnerships** with international organizations that connect with student affairs.

Many complex and difficult challenges face higher education, but boundless opportunities exist each and every day to transform the lives of students. Together with NASPA, we can lead student affairs into the future and continue to do the work we are so passionate about with integrity, courage, and wisdom. Let us be bold enough to initiate change where needed and to give each student a life-changing experience.

I welcome the opportunity to serve my profession, my peers, and the association as chair of the NASPA board. The board, staff members, and I are committed and excited about what the future holds and about implementing the new strategic plan, which will guide the association in supporting those who serve both students and institutions of higher education.

Given recent events impacting our society, this quote, attributed to businessman Frank Outlaw, seems particularly relevant:

*"Watch your thoughts; they become words.  
Watch your words; they become actions.  
Watch your actions, they become habits.  
Watch your habits, they become character.  
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny."*

NASPA's destiny is a very positive one! **LE**

*Frank Lamas is the incoming chair of the NASPA Board of Directors. He is vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at Fresno State in California.*