10 QUESTIONS WITH ...

Zachary N. Clark

Director of Student Activities and Assessment
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

1 Leadership/management book you are currently reading?

I'm enamored with "Off-Centered Leadership: The Dogfish Head Guide to Motivation, Collaboration, and Smart Growth" by Sam Calagione, founder and president of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery in Milton, DE. I'm a huge craft beer nerd, and I love the key mantra he shares: collaboration. We can learn much from the craft beer movement and its environment of working together (both internally at individual companies and externally in the profession), which creates a culture of impactful communication, trust and alignment with values.

2 What recent campus program most exceeded your expectations and why?

While comedy might do well at most schools, IUP students have never really supported a campus comedy series – until this year, when STATIC (our campus programming board) did their homework and sold out two comedy events. Last fall, we welcomed "America's Got Talent's" Drew Lynch and this spring, we welcomed "Broad City's" Ilana Glazer. Both were amazing and the crowds had a blast.

3 Favorite campus program in your entire career and why?

I have two. In April 2011, we hosted IUP SexFest, an evening of educational and culturally enriching activities centered around sex featuring an hour-long keynote by acclaimed sex educator Sue Johanson from Oxygen's "Talk Sex with Sue Johanson." That was her very last public appearance before retiring. The second is our annual STATIC Cookout, our large end-of-the-year campus carnival and cookout that's held on the last Sunday in April. Thousands from the IUP campus community attend, representing our student body's unity.

4 Three things on your desk right now you couldn't live without for work?

- My favorite pen, which writes beautifully and is weighted perfectly.
- Framed photos of my mom and my partner, Karen. It's always reassuring to have their smiling faces nearby.
- My Dunkin' Donuts iced coffee cup, since most of my blood is made up of medium dark roast iced coffees with caramel swirl, black, less ice.

5 Best teaching tool for your students?

Experience. The experiential learning offered to student programming board leaders by way of brainstorming, planning, promoting, managing and evaluating events is the best pedagogical tool I can provide them. This is pre-professional work to help them fine-tune "soft skills" (communication, listening, conflict resolution, decision-making, teamwork and collaboration), develop a repertoire of experiences and résumé-builders, and create networks across the music and entertainment industries.

6 Technology that most benefits you at work?

GroupMe is invaluable to our executive board members, and our use of mobile-friendly surveying options, especially those available on Qualtrics, IUP's official survey tool, is generating better-than-ever data.

7 Most challenging aspect of your job?

Achieving work-life balance. Across higher education, budgets are slimmer and organizational charts have been trimmed to save on salaries and benefits. Where there were once four jobs, now there is one. This hinders our ability to disconnect at the end of the day, or limit the number of 16-hour days in a week.

8 Tip you can share for balancing work with a personal life?

Self-care is very much neglected, but at the end of the day, turn off your phone and silence your email notifications. Those messages will be there in the morning. On a Saturday you actually have off, spend time with friends or loved ones. Put some physical and mental distance between you and your campus. Do whatever it takes to ensure your physical, mental and emotional health.

9 Best programming advice you've ever received?

A former supervisor and mentor (who retired after 35 years) once quipped it's sometimes "A-OK" to let your programming board fail at something so they can know how failure made them feel. When I share this with other student affairs educators, they're often shocked. But, in that failure, they learn much about real life and how the world actually operates. They learn new skills quickly, build stronger team relationships, and think more quickly on their feet in the future.

10 Something unique about your programming board?

STATIC appears to be pretty typical, but there are some really cool, unique qualities about it when compared to other programming boards. It's relatively young, formed by combining two pre-existing boards, The Entertainment Network (TEN) and Black Emphasis Committee (BEC), in May 2016. This allowed us to form a new group from scratch, keeping what worked and discarding what didn't from the previous boards. STATIC allows us to remain nimble in an ever-evolving campus activities market. It's very operationally centered, devoting resources to fine-tuning its operations. Artists, vendors and agencies often compliment us on events that run as fine-tuned machines. Finally, STATIC enjoys a high level of respect and autonomy from the university without undue oversight given its strong track record of high-quality, well-managed events.