Chair’s Corner

“Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” (Henry Ford)

In 1992, an insightful group of deans’ assistants from California medical schools began meeting to exchange information and ideas, discuss programs, policies, and procedures. The Deans’ Assistants Group (DAG) was formed in 1994, and membership was opened to include deans’ assistants from all AAMC medical schools.

We have come a long way from a couple of assistants sharing information all those years ago. When I joined DAG, it was encouraging to know there was a group who shared the same stresses and challenges that I was experiencing in my job. I had no idea how helpful it would be to attend a conference filled with valuable ideas and learning experiences with my fellow colleagues. The sessions and exchange of information led to not only doing my job well, but also helping me grow into new responsibilities, which in turn helped to accelerate my job title.

The bonus that I never imagined was making close, personal friendships along the way. We are the next generation of DAG. Let’s keep DAG evolving and strong. Attend a conference, join a committee, and share your ideas!

I am thrilled to be commemorating DAG’s 25th year anniversary with you! Special activities and events have been planned with giveaways and lagniappes (Louisiana’s term for a little something extra). Come join the celebration! Hope to see you in Phoenix.

Diane Gromelski
DAG Chair
Special Assistant to the Senior Vice President & Dean, Tulane University School of Medicine

Diane Gromelski, DAG Chair enjoyed some summer fun at the Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival, May 2019.
On any given day, I use spreadsheets. Tracking and logging information, distributing and collecting data. When a multitude of collaborators have to contribute information, it gets difficult to combine data from all of these sources.

SmartSheet is an intuitive web-based program that allows multiple users to collaborate on a project. I know, you’re thinking, we use Google Docs. What’s so special about SmartSheet? This program presents like a spreadsheet, but has many other features. You can change the view from a grid (spreadsheet) to cards, to a Gantt chart, to easily view your project in a variety of manners.

The program also has a forms feature. Once you set up your data columns, you can create a form based on these columns to send to users to enter data for you. Using the form feature is a bonus if you need to collect data from users from a variety of locations. Sending an individual file leaves much room for error and file corruption. Using the online based form lets the user provide the data in real time, and since it is web-based, there is no risk of file corruption.

The program allows you to create workflows within your project for ease of collaboration. You can set a reminder on particular rows, leave comments for your fellow users, or send users a request to update particular data.

There is an option to upload files to each row as well, so your spreadsheet can be used as a repository of information.

There is a free trial available, but works best with an institutional license. This program is worth the time and investment. For more information, visit their website at https://www.smartsheet.com.

We Want to Hear From You…

DAG is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. For 25 years, this organization has enabled administrative assistants in medical schools around the US and Canada to network and has provided opportunities for professional development.

The DAG Communications Team wants to hear from you! Please take a few moments to complete the Communications Survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/dagcommunicationssurvey by August 16.

The goal is to broaden the lines of communication among DAG membership by offering a variety of modalities to increase networking, provide opportunities for professional development, and to share ideas with colleagues.

If you are interested in joining the DAG Communications Committee, please send an email to jamies@bcm.edu

By Jamie Smith
Mark your calendars and get ready to celebrate! The Fall 2019 DAG Conference will be held in Phoenix, AZ Nov. 7-9, 2019. The 25th Anniversary Reception and Dinner will kick off the event on Thurs., Nov. 7 at 6 p.m. on the University of Arizona campus.

Hotel reservations are now available for the Kimpton Palomar Hotel in Phoenix. Reservation rates are $219 per night, with a $20/night guest amenity fee. The fee includes:

- $10 Daily F&B Credit
- Upgraded WiFi speed throughout the hotel’s guest rooms and public spaces for up to 5 devices (Normally a $14.99 charge.)
- 15% off Spa and Salon Services at Perry Monge Salon & Spa
- Complimentary access to EOS Fitness Club and EOS Fitness Classes
- Unlimited local and long-distance telephone calls
- Complimentary printing, faxing and copying

To register for the event, please visit [https://dag-fall2019-phoenix-registration.eventbrite.com](https://dag-fall2019-phoenix-registration.eventbrite.com). The registration fee is $460, payable via credit card or check (you will receive a separate email with a link if paying via credit card). If paying by check, please mail checks to: Dean’s Assistants Group Attn: Lisa Galbavi, DAG Treasurer MSU College of Human Medicine 965 Wilson Rd Room A118, East Lansing, MI 48824 Tax ID #74-2742851

Registration closes October 7, 2019. To register after October 7th contact Lupe Gastelum. The [cancellation/refund policy](#) is as follows:

- 3 or more weeks prior to meeting = 100% refund (on or before October 17, 2019)
- 1 week prior to meeting = 50% refund (October 18-30, 2019)
- Less than 1 week prior to meeting = 0% refund (on or after October 31, 2019)
Katie Schroeder shares the professional development presentation highlights from the spring 2019 DAG meeting in Miami, Florida.

Reflections from a Member by Katie Schroeder

As I boarded the plane in Miami to head back to the realities of work from the spring Deans’ Assistants Group meeting, I started reflecting on the great presentations from Isabel Alfonsin-Vittoria, “Examining Change and Emotional Agility”, and Dr. Amalia Landa-Galindez, “Learning Your Colors: Working cohesively with different personalities”.

Isabel Alfonsin-Vittoria presentation focused on mindset, perceptions, and reactions to change. You can have a growth mindset, “I like to try new things”, or a fixed mindset, “I stick to what I know”. Change can cause a stress reaction due it being a perceived threat. Focusing on the fear reactions of “I am not equipped for this” are THOUGHTS and not FACTS. Choose courage over comfort and engage in new opportunities to learn and grow, rather than passively resigning yourself to your circumstances.

Dr. Amalia Landa-Galindez presentation focused on the psychologist Carl Jung’s Four Colors of Energies. Identifying your own and coworkers colors can help you understand each other and communicate effectively. It is important to have different personalities and colors in the department as each one has different strengths they contribute to the team.

How do you contribute to a peaceful, productive and compassionate workplace? One thing we can change is our own mindset, approach, and reactions. Becoming more adaptable and understanding can help save time and improve collaboration throughout your department and institution.

I was able to put my headphones on and finish watching a great movie on my way home from the meeting. Life already seemed less stressful when I decided to focus on understanding that one “difficult” coworker.

More information can be found at:

https://medicine.fiu.edu/resources/employees/_assets/examining-change--emotional-agility-1.pptx

https://www.letmeinspireyou.nl/the-four-insights-color-energies/

www.paceorg.com

Seek a Promotion or a Raise?

In your career as an assistant, you may often help your boss and others track their performance in their position, and assist them in getting raises and promotions. But how to you seek this for yourself?

- Keep track of your skills and responsibilities.
Make yourself a professional portfolio, or keep your resume up-to-date with all of your skills and responsibilities. Include specific examples.
- Seek feedback
Whether it’s from your boss or a co-worker, ask for feedback on your performance. And incorporate a plan for improvement into your daily schedule.
- Do your research
What do other executive assistants in your company earn? What about in your community? Compare your skills and responsibilities with those and see if yours align with a higher pay scale.

For more tips, check out Ashley Bell’s article “The Executive Assistant’s Guide: Tips for Getting a Promotion or Raise” at

https://www.snacknation.com/blog/executive-assistant-tips/