

Ashley Adams, Campus Programs Coordinator

Profile Story

With her door wide open, Ashley Adams' office in Student Life is cozy, comfortable and welcoming. A couch with University of Northern Iowa purple and yellow pillows sit nestled within the cushions, autographed posters from campus events in addition to quotes from powerful leaders line the walls and coloring utensils neatly organized sit in a mug atop her desk.

"My original plan was to be a high school history teacher," says Ashley Adams, Campus Programs Coordinator at the University of Northern Iowa. "I loved teaching, but I also realized through my clinicals that I did not like teaching high schoolers. Luckily the graduate assistant from my campus activities board, the year I was president said, 'you know, you're pretty good at this, maybe you should try this for a living.'"

Being in student affairs had not yet clicked in her mind as a realistic job for the future. "You think of careers as doctors, lawyers, things that kids talk about when they're younger that they want to be." said Adams.

Adams' position in the Office of Student Life is split between a multitude of organizations and responsibilities. 40 percent of her time is devoted to being the advisor for Campus Activities Board (CAB), a student-led organization that hosts weekly events for students across campus, 40 percent being the advisor for Service & Leadership Council (SLC), a student and faculty based organization that teams up with the community to assist with volunteer events, 10 percent are other duties as assigned and the last 10 percent is being a Maucker Union employee helping with specific tasks.

"A lot of days are comparable to being a best day," says Adams. "More recently, a current executive member that I work with on CAB did not have very much confidence

in themselves and they weren't getting a lot of respect in their committee. We talked about conflict management and so that person stepped up, addressed the conflict in the committee and then came back the next day with a huge smile of their face and was like, 'that was so much easier than I ever thought it was.'" She continued with a proud smile, "When a student takes a piece of advice that's going to benefit them and help with grow, that's always a good day."

Adams' ability to help others and put them before her own interests is unique. She is an Adult Child of an Alcoholic meaning she grew up with her dad being an alcoholic and her uncle also being an addict. As for where that characteristic to help others comes from, she says "I know that there is a root of it that comes from wanting to fix and make things better from my childhood and the household I grew up in." Additionally, she attributes some of it from her own professional development and her love of autobiographies, especially stories about women empowering others. Adams said, "You can never be perfect and you as a person constantly need to grow. You need to develop and evolve in order to be a better person."

Rest assured, Adams' door in the Office of Student Life in Maucker Union will be open the next time you walk by. If you get the chance, stop in and say hi, she'd be happy to chat.

"I get excited by watching you succeed. I just have to sit here, listen and talk to you guys, hang out with a pretty awesome group of students and then you all succeed," Adams says with grin. "What could better? It's the best of both worlds!"