

It is a pleasure to come before you in the presence of all of these beautiful Professional Administrators to celebrate our successes. You know, When Natalie first asked me to speak, I thought what in the world was she thinking. But then I thought, what in the world was I thinking when I said yes. I immediately thought of all the Administrative Professionals she could have asked; why would she choose me? But then I said, Why not me! You see, before I became a member of the PAUMCS, I was hesitant about joining because I thought that it was like your usual club membership: you join, you pay your annual membership fee, you would attend monthly meetings, and maybe annual meetings if it was in the budget. Prior to working for the UMC, I was an Administrative Professional in corporate America and was a member of the IAAP (International Association of Administrative Professionals) where professionals from around the world came together to define, promote and improve the accessibility through networking, education and certification. The association was great, but it was more about networking than anything. I wanted more. When I came across the Professional Administrators of the United Methodist Connectional Structure (PAUMCS) website and read the mission statement, to provide administrative professionals a supportive base for unity and fellowship and to promote individual growth, professional development, continuing education, and spiritual enrichment, I immediately realized that being an Administrative Professional is more than just networking. It is about embodying and living out the spiritual enrichment of an administrative professional and having that supportive base of unity and fellowship any time I need it. It was the mission statement alone, that I knew what I wanted and needed to become more than “another” member was here.. The tools and time that you invested in each of us for the certification course requirements, i.e., the online classes, Q&A sessions and the personality assessments

that grouped us with the appropriate individuals for our group assignments were beyond my expectations. Throughout the certification process, you made us feel empowered, engaged and equipped with the necessary tools.

I am truly blessed to be an executive assistant to the Care Pastor and the Missions Director at Impact. I feel these two areas carry out the work ascribed in the Sunday worship experiences. It is through pastoral care and missions where you interact with those most in need, be it social, physical, economic relational and of course, spiritually. It's where you have the opportunity to coordinate missions trips, serve at homeless shelters and where you are at ground zero on creating annual Harvest Fest, (a night of fun filled rides, food and treats for the community in October), monthly Care nights (spiritual time to nourish the mind and soul through prayer and monthly topic discussions), and so much more.

I believe the Care and Missions ministries comprise teams that touch the lives of our attendees and the community the most beyond the Sunday worship experiences. The list goes on and at times it can be taxing, but at the core of it all is my own personal belief in service now supported by my involvement in this organization.

Service is a part of who I am and have done for years, but the added skills and information I have attained since joining this group has helped me to understand my role better; to engage more effectively; and to utilize resources that I did not necessarily access in the past.

We are all empowered by being CEOs of our area of our respective churches/organizations. Even though our roles are very task oriented to somebody or someone or the division of the church, we have to really feel empowered, excited, enthusiastic and feel enthralled about what we are doing. Our jobs are important in the body of Christ because we are the ones that keep things together. We must be spiritually fed through professional development, continuing education and spiritual enrichment. We are the key to running the office and without these components, we can't do our jobs effectively. PAUMCS is an organization that keeps us informed of the latest happenings in the UMC via live Q&A sessions, online classes and discussion forums. When I joined PAUMCS, I had to take an assessment test prior to taking classes. We were assigned group projects and the assessment allowed us to be paired with individuals that closely fit our personality. I was both nervous and excited to know who I would be paired with. I couldn't have been happier to have Mitch Nimmo and Jane Spann a part of the team. From the first day we met via conference call, I could feel that we were spiritually connected; they became my family. We decided to do our project on planning a capital campaign. Our mission was to implement a capital campaign to raise funds for the renovation of a sanctuary to accommodate the ministry focus for future generations. While our views were different, we all brought great ideas to the table and worked hard to see that the project was done in a timely manner, by taking authority and responsibility. Being empowered is knowing how important you are but also taking it to the next level. Take your responsibility serious. Take what you are doing in your church and have the authority to do to make sure that you are operating out of excellence.

We must be engaged. In order for us to work more effectively we have to be committed.

Commonly, we have a more difficult time visualizing our role in the bigger picture of the church, and it can be challenging for us to feel that we are developing professionally unless we are offered validation, authority, and opportunities. We are critical to the success of our churches. We provide vital support services for nearly everyone both internal and external. We are the main points of contact for our members, and the impression we make often has a lasting impact. We want to feel pride in the church we work for, we want to be appreciated for what we do, and we want to be truly interested in our jobs. As we were preparing for our presentation, we wanted to make a lasting impression for all who were on the call. Each component represented a critical step needed to implement a successful campaign: fundraising, tracking and communication and celebration. We had to decide what fundraising effort would attract members of the church who would be willing to invest their money and time making pledges. It gave us the opportunity to showcase our talents, hoping that everyone that was on the webcast would take away something that they would later find beneficial for them to use if they were starting up a campaign. We were engaged throughout the project and excited about the role that we each played during the process.

We must be equipped spiritually and have the necessary resources to help us complete projects on time. A lot of times when you are learning lessons, it is years before you have an experience that causes you to use the skills that you've learned. In this case, we had a real-time experience with our lessons and it was a blessing. Our team was tasked with creating a capital campaign as our project and one of our team members, Jane was facing a critical health situation. We

realized and understood clearly that it was our responsibility to move the project forward and pick up her tasks as needed but also to help her as much as we could spiritually to address the health situation she was facing. Spiritually praying for each other and supporting each of us through both the good and bad times. We tried to have conference calls once a week to work on the project but Jane wasn't able to call in. You see, Jane has cancer and sometimes didn't feel well especially on the days she had chemo. We weren't sure if she would be able to help with her part of the project so Mitch and I stepped in and started working on her part. We had to delay doing our presentation on the day assigned and were given additional time to complete the tasks. We would reach out to Jane but she was not available. Thankfully, we had the necessary resources to finish the project because of the information Jane provided during the earlier phase. Finally, the day before we were to give our presentation to the class, Jane came through. You see, these things happen in our everyday responsibilities. We have to be to flexible and willing to step in and take on additional tasks at any given moment.

In closing, let's continue to celebrate our success by empowering, engaging and equipping others for the call to join PAUMCS, because we are the necessary individuals that complete the vision of God for the church.