

## A Personal Note from the President



Wilson Wong,  
CEO, Plaid

In an advanced technological age, in which the pacing of life is faster than ever before, a good working knowledge of how people function is paramount for the future success of our young people. For the generations of people weaned on sophisticated technology, the life lessons of humanity may come slow. Plaid is dedicated to providing knowledge and understanding for growth and development – so people can become better versions of themselves.

The initial focus of Plaid is the students in higher education, along with the institutions and organizations that support them. This August we were honored with the opportunity to speak at the Fraternity Executive's Association conference in Indian Wells, CA. The response and interest

that everyone showed was moving and overwhelming. Thank you.

For the next months, we will be contacting and having conversations with our new friends from FEA. We were also excited to present to Executive Directors at the National Panhellenic Conference in St. Louis in October. As we continue to create and develop programs and services, we will send out newsletters to inform you of what we are thinking and doing. In the meantime, please don't be a stranger and contact us to have a conversation about a topic that is very near and dear to our hearts – working together to help our young people in being better.

## Plaid begins work on FEA Curriculum



Plaid is pleased to announce its selection as the partner that will work with the Fraternity Executives Association on its endeavor to develop industry education and curriculum for its membership.

Utilizing the expertise of former fraternity and sorority executive directors Dave Westol (Theta Xi), Melanie Schild (Kappa Delta) and Mark Anderson (Sigma Chi) alongside Dawn Watkins and Chris Hanes (Plaid), Plaid will partner with FEA staff and leadership to bring industry specific education based on FEA's core competencies to both mid-level and executive-level fraternity and sorority staff in both online and in-person formats.

"After a lengthy review and interview process, FEA is excited to partner with Plaid on this important project for FEA members. The team Plaid has assembled for this project is top-notch and the Board was pleased that Plaid can handle everything from the curriculum development to utilizing their own Learning Management System."

Plaid and FEA look forward to unveiling this educational opportunity to FEA's membership at FEA's annual meeting in San Antonio in July 2013.

## HOLISTICS: The Four-Year Personal Development Program

HOLISTICS is a four-year transformative learning experience that emphasizes self-awareness and personal development. The program specifically targets undergraduate men and women who are seeking to become better in and of themselves, in their relationships with others and in their contributions to their organizations and greater society.

### Why the need for self-awareness and personal development?

There are three types of relationships in life: one's relationship with self, with other people, and with the things we do. Self is the common denominator in all relationships so if perception of self is off then every other relationship will be eschewed. Achieving self-awareness and committing to personal growth and development is critical to success in relationships and life in general.

Self-awareness and personal development are especially important during one's undergraduate years. The ages of 18-22 are an important time of growth and development but it can be an awkward transitional period as undergraduates seek to define their identity, develop relationships and find their place in an ever-changing world. One often hears about "the First-Year Experience" but colleges and universities have struggled to identify an experience that stresses development throughout four years of college. With an emphasis on understanding oneself as part of a larger community, this program positions fraternities and sororities to recruit members who seek a holistic experience and retain them throughout their undergraduate years.

Self-awareness and personal development are now widely recognized as critical factors for success by employers, academicians, managers and others. As such, self-awareness and personal development are included in the Student Learning and Developmental Outcomes created by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) (NASPA & ACPA, 2004). Self-awareness and personal development are also included in student learning outcomes created by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS).

### What are the benefits to organizations that use HOLISTICS?

While the benefits to HOLISTICS participants are clear, it should be noted that there are benefits to the Fraternities and Sororities that offer HOLISTICS as well. These include:

- Being able to offer programming that helps achieve the vision/mission of building better men/women
- A differentiating factor in recruitment and expansion
- A differentiating factor in fundraising (as an educational program, HOLISTICS is eligible for Foundation funding)

For more information on HOLISTICS please visit us online at <http://beingplaid.com/what-we-do/holistics/> and contact Dawn Watkins, Ph.D., Vice President of Client Engagement at [dawn@beingplaid.com](mailto:dawn@beingplaid.com).

## Plaid's Mission

Plaid is a professional consulting company specializing in all aspects of personal and organizational development.

## Being. Better.

We believe in helping individuals become better in-and-of themselves, in their relationships with others and in their contributions to their organizations and the world. On an individual level "Being. Better." involves individuals becoming self-aware and committing to personal growth and development.

On an organizational level "Being. Better." involves organizations being true to their organizational culture and focus in order to achieve and maintain a high level of performance.

[www.beingplaid.com](http://www.beingplaid.com)

## Learn More Today

For more information on HOLISTICS please go to <http://beingplaid.com/what-we-do/holistics/> and contact Dawn Watkins, Ph.D., Vice President of Client Engagement at [dawn@beingplaid.com](mailto:dawn@beingplaid.com).

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## Happy People Succeed



### Happiness helps you work for your future

Published on August 8, 2012 by Art Markman, Ph.D. in *Uterior Motives*  
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One of the big changes in psychology over the course of my career has been the increase in research on positive psychology. When I was a graduate student, there was a lot of work on stress and mental illness, but few researchers spent much time studying happy people.

Quite a bit of research has examined influences of positive affect on thinking. Positive affect is the broad term used to describe the variety of positive feelings that people experience. For example, work by Alice Isen and her colleagues found that positive affect made people more creative and more likely to be helpful relative to a neutral mood.

What happens over a long period of time, though? It is possible that the benefits of being happy persist over the long term and happy people are the ones who make the most of their lives. It is also possible that there are benefits to being happy in the short term, but not in the long term. Perhaps people who are uncomfortable with their life as it is now are more likely to pursue educational and career opportunities to improve themselves than people who are happy.

So what happens?

This issue was explored in a study in the August, 2012 issue of *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* by Claudia Haase, Michael Poulin, and Jutta Heckhausen. In one study, they analyzed data from a long-term series of questionnaires given to high school students as they prepared to graduate and in the period just after graduation. At each of the six time periods, students rated how much positive and negative affect they were experiencing. They also rated how much they were devoted to working hard for their future occupation. Students also rated how many internships or apprenticeships they applied for and how many they received.

For each time point in the survey, the researchers used statistical analyses to predict the degree of effort people were putting in toward their career. Obviously, the best predictor of the amount of effort you are putting toward developing a career is how much effort you have expended in the past. Once you control for past effort, though, the next best predictor is the amount of positive affect you experienced in the past. The amount of negative affect you experienced did not predict effort significantly. A similar pattern was obtained for analyses of the number of apprenticeships applied for and obtained.

Overall, when people are happy, they put in more effort to create a better future for themselves than when they are not happy.

Why does that happen? Putting in effort for the future is a risk. That effort may not be rewarded. In order to feel confident that the effort will be repaid, you have to believe that your effort will overcome the obstacles to success. Positive affect helps people to believe that obstacles are surmountable and that effort put in for the future will lead to success. Without that positive affect, people are less confident that it is worth it to work hard for their future.

## Why is strategic planning important?

Published by Mark Anderson, Plaid Associate & Counsel at Handler Thayer

Strategic Planning is an organization's process of defining its direction and making decisions on allocating its resources in pursuit of its strategy. But why is having a direction important?

Without a plan that provides direction, organizations are like a ship without a rudder and, in the case of a fraternity or sorority, your team of staff and volunteers will just bail water. As Lewis Carroll (author of *Alice in Wonderland*) said, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there!"

Until all the members of your organization can uniformly answer - where the organization is going; what it wants to accomplish, and with whom - no one could say any result is better than another.

At Plaid, we recommend you give your organization, your staff and volunteers the tools they need: your board the ability to leave the organization in a better position than it was when they began; your staff to feel they're making a difference; and your organization an opportunity to make a more significant impact on its members and in the communities you serve.

Make a commitment to a strategic plan, carry it out and watch your action plans unfold. It can and will make all the difference in the world!



### Art Markman, Ph.D.

Art Markman, Ph.D., is Annabel Irion Worsham Centennial Professor of Psychology and Marketing at the University of Texas at Austin. He got his Sc.B. in Cognitive Science from Brown and his Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Illinois. He has published over 125 scholarly works on topics in higher-level thinking including the effects of motivation on learning and performance, analogical reasoning, categorization, decision making, and creativity. Art serves as the director of the program in the Human Dimensions of Organizations at the University of Texas. He is currently executive editor of the journal *Cognitive Science* and a member of the editorial board of *Cognitive Psychology*.

Check out Art Markman's latest book at <http://www.smartthinkingbook.com>

## Meet Our Plaid People



### Mark Anderson (Sigma Chi)

Plaid Associate & Counsel  
at Handler Thayer



### Chris Hanes (Phi Kappa Sigma)

Partner and Chief  
Learning Officer



### Melanie Schild (Kappa Delta)

Plaid Associate and  
Executive Director of Pilot  
International, Inc.



### Dawn Watkins (Delta Delta Delta)

Partner & Vice President  
for Client Advancement



### Wilson Wong (Phi Kappa Sigma)

President and Partner



### Chris Woods (Kappa Alpha Order)

Graduate Intern

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