

I'm retiring. It's bizarre.

In May, I will have spent 27 years in the WIU CSP Program. I've seen a lot: 6 Presidents, 5 Vice Presidents for Student Affairs (now Success), 6 CSP Faculty Co-conspirators, and over 1000 students. I also worked with Jill Bisbee in starting the first Hybrid Master's Degree track at WIU in 2014 and recently started the Educational Leadership: Organizational Justice, Equity & Inclusion Doctoral Program.

The numbers, however, don't tell the story. Tom Cody used to say that "numbers don't lie." Well, if they don't lie...they also don't tell the truth. As mainly a qualitative researcher most of my career I believe the story is much more rich, beautiful, and accurate in capturing the essence of my lived experience: relationships, audience, context, and narrative arch.

Overall, here's what I've learned: I'm wildly unfinished and relationships are where "its" at and what I remember most.

And my memories begin and end with students. Jill Bisbee can verify that whenever we think about our mission and strategic moves forward, the program's North Star Metric is student success. I generally don't trust bureaucracies, administrators, or pretty much anyone with formal power; I trust in the curiosity and liberation potential in students.

I've had the pleasure of working with Tim McMahon, Dea Forney, Chase Catalano Leila McCloud, and now Julie Brines as faculty colleagues. I have memories of each cohort and particularly the CSP Graduate Assistants (e.g. Dan, Mike, Vince, Jackie, Megan, Melissa) Teaching Assistants (e.g. Autumn, Emily, Jessy, Cara, Greta, Sage), and students with whom I published and/or presented (Vern, Brett, Marlon, Justin, Chris, Sage, Rachel, Ian, JT, Jessica, Danielle, Katie, Tiffany, Stephanie, and Z). Many CSP alums have also gone on to make amazing contributions, from promoting equity and inclusion to leading a life that stands in stark resistance to neoliberal commodification. The leadership impact that you have on your communities continues to inspire me and gives me hope moving forward.

I don't know what the future holds, in part because I want to focus on mindfully being here and now. My least favorite interview question is "where do you see yourself in 5-10 years." Also, when I travel, I like to follow my intuition and needs in the moment. However, I know I will continue to be involved in politics and scholarship. I am currently chairing or serving on 22 dissertation committees and I would love to teach as an adjunct. I also hope to continue consulting with Dr. JQ Adams and a team of young scholars. I plan to travel (Italy, Alaska, and Africa over the last 3 years) and watch a stupid amount of Cardinals baseball.

Thank you to everyone who has tolerated my teaching and in turn taught me to become a better listener. Thank you for teaching me, I feel like I owe you tuition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Adams". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Tracy" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Adams".