



July 29, 2019

TO: NASPA Foundation Board

FR: L. Lincoln Johnson, University of Washington

RE: 2019 Pillar of the Profession Nomination
Paul R. Bennion, The College of Idaho (Caldwell, ID)

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Paul Bennion, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at The College of Idaho, clearly embodies the spirit of and criteria for the Pillars of the Profession distinction and I am honored to support his nomination. Rarely I have witnessed a colleague so utterly focused on student success, his community, giving back to the profession, and enhancing the student experience.

With some trepidation and nervousness, I entered my first NASPA event 10 or so years ago (I believe it was the Region V SSAO Retreat) and I was immediately greeted, welcomed, and embraced from a cadre of regional colleagues. Paul was the first one to introduce himself to me and immediately introduced me to others. The atmosphere provided by Paul and several others (several of which are Pillars themselves: Wendy Endress, Mike Segawa, Kari Ellingson, Barb Snyder) is the reason why I began volunteering with NASPA and, more importantly, they helped me realize that I might be okay in my new campus role.

Paul has served NASPA as a leader and volunteer in a variety of roles. Within NASPA V, he has served as the Regional Vice President, Senior Student Affairs Officer Liaison, Western Regional Conference (WRC) Chair, and Idaho State Membership Coordinator. Currently, he is co-leading the 2019 WRC Senior Student Affairs Officer Institute and has just accepted the opportunity to serve as the Co-Chair of Programs for the 2020 WRC in Anaheim, CA. Beyond Region V, Paul is a member of the James E. Scott Academy National Board, a NASPA SERVE mentor, and a member of the NASPA Foundation Board of Directors. What is easy to see is his commitment not only to his region but to NASPA more broadly. Because Paul is exceedingly humble, he would never mention that he was chosen by his Region V peers to receive the Fred Turner Award for Outstanding Service to the Profession in 2013, but I will gladly proclaim it on his behalf.

With regard to his NASPA volunteer work, Paul offers his keen intellect and reason to assist in solving problems and finding solutions. He remains consistently generous and diplomatic in encouraging new and continuing volunteers to share their voices, opinions, and perspectives.

If one ever gets the chance to visit with Paul, you'll quickly hear about the College of Idaho and the great work of its campus community. Paul brings a very high quality of leadership to his students, peers, and colleagues., and offers a voice of calm, humor, common sense, and reason to his duties at the College. Furthermore, Paul shares a commitment to the success of students and a personal and professional drive that places the beyond-the-classroom experience front and center every day.

Paul is a tremendous friend colleague and I look forward to continue learning from and working with him for many years to come. He is a shining example of what it means to be a dedicated higher-education citizen and, most importantly, brings an unrelenting focus and commitment to students and their success. Based on his contributions to NASPA and his institution, it is my honor to support his nomination as a NASPA Pillar of the Profession.

Thank you for your consideration.