



**Podcast:** One Thing – New Professional

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**Summary:** We chat with Jahmil Effend, Assistant Director of Student Engagement at Quinnipiac University.

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**Stuart Brown:** Welcome to Student Affairs One Thing - New Professional, a podcast that asks a simple question of new professionals in the field - what is one thing you've learned you feel will help you as you move forward in your career. I'm your host, Stuart Brown, the developer of StudentAffairs.com, one of the most accessed websites by student affairs professionals. On our pages, we have the most cost effective job posting board, listing hundreds of open student services positions and a wide range of webinars. I want to thank our sponsor Alcohol101+, a cost free digital alcohol education program developed by Responsibility.org. Designed to be used by colleges and universities, the course includes interactive and quick paced programming covering core alcohol education topics through an administrative dashboard. The program contains tools for institutions to easily roster students, track progress and analyze student metrics. To learn more about Alcohol101+ visit <https://www.alcohol101.plus>.

On today's episode, I am very pleased to have Jahmil Effend, Assistant Director of Student Engagement at Quinnipiac University. Welcome to the program Jahmil,

**Jahmil Effend:** Thank you, thank you. I'm happy to be here.

**Stuart Brown:** So Jahmil, what is your one thing?

**Jahmil Effend:** My one thing is it's something I learned pretty quickly. It's to commit. One of the things that young professionals often struggle with is committing, staying at one place. Staying at a location in really investing time and energy into one spot. I graduated from my graduate program at Central Connecticut State University in 2020 at a very interesting time in the world, obviously, and when I started my first job I started during the pandemic. So I stayed there for around 11 months. The first seven were all virtual. And it was really difficult to say I was going to stay there forever. I couldn't see it as home and some other life events led me to getting a new job and starting a new position. But I had to look back at sort of my resume when I went to apply for the job I'm currently in at Quinnipiac and I reflected on the fact that I hadn't stayed at a position for more than a year. Almost none of the positions that had been in.

So when I was a graduate student I worked as a residence hall director. I was Assistant Resident Coordinator at University of Saint Joseph and I was there and I loved it, I enjoyed the people, but I wasn't getting paid what I wanted and I also wanted to get some other benefits that came with our graduate program. So I found myself 11 months in looking for a new job and then getting a new graduate internship before my second year of my grad program. And I got to that new internship at Eastern Connecticut State University. Loved it. Enjoyed being in student activities, was the place I wanted to be, but I was entering that second year of my grad program and I was looking for positions and looking for new jobs, looking for places to be. And then I found myself once again leaving.

Then seven or eight months of being in the position, had started applying, gotta position early to start at Emmanuel College in Boston and there I was gone and once again and I found myself unable to really connect with any of the institutions. I had connected with people and individuals but I hadn't been the grad that was there for two years, I hadn't been able to help mentor people in my grad program, I was just learning and then I was gone. When I got to Emmanuel, I got promoted to Associate Director and right after I got promoted, I was leaving and I hadn't had the opportunity to really build up our student activities office. So coming to Quinnipiac, one of the things that was really important to me was making sure that I committed.

That I stayed and then, I can't lie, I started in March of 2021 and by March of 2022 I had started. I started thinking like is there other opportunities? I see other people getting jobs. I see other postings. Was there an opportunity to leave here? It took me really reflecting and talking to my supervisor and kind of being honest and

vulnerable with the fact that it was hard for me to see myself staying in one location, talking about the benefits of staying, what that can mean. The fact that just because there are opportunities out there, it doesn't mean that it's time for you to go. As a new professional, just seeking opportunities, seeking potentially more money and other opportunities and other places and spaces, I found myself really reflecting on what was important.

**Stuart Brown:** I find it interesting because during the pandemic and sort of afterwards, there are a lot of articles about individuals your age that are always looking for greener pastures and if they don't get what they want. I'm moving on. Do you feel that there was something because of the pandemic or it's just that you're always thinking what's behind that next building? What's out there that might satisfy me as opposed to, it seems what you're saying now is, while you might have had those impulses, you kind of step back to say, you know what, I need to maybe plant some roots at a school for some time, maybe not 10, 20, 30 years, but to get myself acclimated within the environment, have a track record and then decide, okay, am I going to stay a little longer or, yes, it's time to start looking elsewhere.

**Jahmil Effend:** I think that a lot of it comes down to, at least in my generation, I guess it's seeing that opportunity in other places. Everything else looks shiny when you're looking at your own, your own situation and also not being able to see all of your seeds grow. So we get to a location, we plant seeds and we hope that things will work out. But we don't want to see it through because it's taking too long. It's taking too long to get recognition. It's taking too long to make connections. It's taking too long to feel like I'm making a difference in this community and I think that it's easier to say this place, this environment isn't for me than it is to say, let me figure out my place in this environment, let me figure out what area I can carve out to make a difference here. So we go to a new location, we go to a new job, we find a new supervisor, we find a new situation and then we end up back in that same space saying I don't feel like I'm making the difference I can make. I don't feel as connected to the team.

One of the things for me, especially coming to Quinnipiac, was wanting to be a part of a team and wanting to feel connected, I hadn't felt that at my previous institution and I was still struggling to allow myself to be vulnerable there because I was so used to leaving and I think being able to commit and being able to say I'm going to be here, I'm going to be a part of this unit, I'm going to be a part part of this campus life structure, it's made the difference at least for me to be able to actually invest, to share more about my life, to connect with my co workers on a deeper level.

**Stuart Brown:** I think one of the things that I'm getting from your one thing is that you have to be a little vulnerable to make a commitment to envelope yourself within the institution and I'm going to say, as someone of a different generation, that that when I first started off, I knew I wasn't going to get maybe the salary increases, the recognition that you have to work for that. And it seems now after a couple of positions, that's what is sort of going through your head. Like instead of upping and looking for that new job it's like, okay, let me do what I need to do at this institution to make it more of my home.

**Jahmil Effend:** Exactly. You want to make it home. And it's allowing yourself the freedom to make it home and doing that means you have to say I'm going to be here, that I'm not leaving. That no matter what opportunities come available, I'm going to stay here and make this work. I had a supervisor when I was at University St. Joseph that really spoke to me about that at one point. He said, like you want to make sure that wherever you go, that you stay, that you become a part of the fabric of that place, at least for a little while until you can have that opportunity to go somewhere else. But unless you can see a graduating class through, it's hard to to really speak to your programs, to be able to speak to the the impact that you've made over the course of time because we all make impact over a short course of time that one year that we interacted with a student. But it's really how do you have that sustainable structure? How do you know that structure is sustainable if you only did it for one year and it only worked once?

**Stuart Brown:** As someone who has run many job searches, when I get a resume that is 11 months here, one year there, one year there, that's sending up red flags to me as someone looking to hire because we're going to invest all this time and energy and then this person's gone in a year or two. So I think that's something else for individuals like yourself and maybe people in your grad program, others listening to this is you don't have to stay at a job forever, but you do want to have some track record because people are looking at those things and you don't want to be pushed aside for a job that you might really want because you know, you've been in and out of positions.

**Jahmil Effend:** It's being willing to commit. Being willing to say like you can invest in me. It makes a huge difference. I know coming here, I wanted to be someone that you can invest in. And a year in, I was like, is this place a place I want to be forever? But I love the culture, I love everything about the campus and I'm still questioning that. So it took reflecting and then saying no. I'm going to be here. I'm going to make sure that everyone knows that too.

**Stuart Brown:** So Jamil, you don't have to do what I did and spend 32 years at the same institution.

Jamil, I want to thank you for sharing your one thing. I think it is, it's very important for individuals like yourself, students and grad programs right now to really think about that. That yes, you want to find that program that's going to be a good fit, but you have to really invest yourself in the institution. It's not the institution is always going to come to you. What can you do once you are there.

**Jahmil Effend:** Absolutely, thank you so much for having me on. I definitely appreciate it. And yes, make sure you can commit, make sure you invest, make sure you become a piece of the campus. Don't see it as something that's temporary because it really does follow you forever.

**Stuart Brown:** You have been listening to the Student Affairs One Thing New Professional, a podcast that asks a simple question of new professionals in the field - what is one thing you have learned, you will feel will help you as you move forward in your career? My guest today has been Jahmil Effend, Assistant Director of Student Engagement at Quinnipiac University. I'm your host, Stuart Brown, the developer of StudentAffairs.com, one of the most accessed websites by student affairs professionals. I hope you will join us next time for another episode of Student Affairs One Thing - New Professional.

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