



**Podcast:** One Thing - New Professional

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**Summary:** Host Stuart Brown chats with Dr. Samantha Friar, Director TRiO-Student Support Services at Elgin Community College.

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## B E G I N   T R A N S C R I P T

**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 have 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. On today's episode, I am very pleased to have Dr. Samantha Friar, TRiO Student Support Services at Elgin Community College. And we're going to talk about this. But when I say Dr. Samantha Friar, and some listeners might be going, ‘Wow, a new professional with a doctorate?’ So Dr. Friar is, I'm going to say, tangentially connected to new professionals. So we're going to talk about that in a minute. But anyway, welcome to the program.

**Dr. Samantha Friar:** Thank you, Stuart for allowing me to be a guest on your podcast this afternoon.

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

**Dr. Samantha Friar:** The one thing I have to say that's been successful in my leadership career is transparency with my team and with my colleagues in the profession of student support services as well as student affairs.

**Stuart Brown:** Is there a story behind that transparency? Something within your career or in your background where you had that epiphany, that transparency? Yeah, that's my one thing.

**Dr. Samantha Friar:** Absolutely. So when I transition into my current role as director of student support services at Elgin Community College, I like to say acquired a team of folk. And with that, I learned that in my role, it's so significant to be transparent in terms of program development, where we are in terms of the program, the services that we provide to those students that are part of TRiO's student support services programs, as well as how we communicate with one another. I found that the action of transparency is so significant within the department in developing folks and training and development of the staff in my department. And so being able to have those open and honest communication and honing in on some of those significant items that we may need developing in and honing in on those areas of strengths for the team members. And doing that through transparency has been so successful in the work. It has made my job easier, too, as well.

**Stuart Brown:** When you've been working with your team or even before you came to the school, was there some event that you realized that transparency is something I need to embrace because of something might have happened that you were involved in or part of, or you observed that transparency was maybe not happening where it should have been.

**Dr. Samantha Friar:** It's more of an observation of the work. We are in our biweekly staff meetings. It is so important that folks understand what the mission and the goals are, what we want to do, right? What we're attempting to do, what we're trying to do, and outcomes as such. And so when I recognize that folks were asking, going, crying about the same thing that I may have discussed previously. And then I go back and I look at minutes and I go back and I look at notes from previous meetings and I recognize, perhaps I wasn't clear, perhaps I wasn't transparent enough in my communication. And so with that, it eliminates the consecutive and the consistency of repeating information or the repetitiveness of questions. And so not a negative thing, but it was a time that I paused and had some self reflection to make sure that that clear communication and transparency was taking place.

**Stuart Brown:** When you talk about transparency, is that also about making sure that the communication is where you want it to be? So it's almost like transparency communication. So there are no people that might be on a different page or approaching something from a different viewpoint.

**Dr. Samantha Friar:** Absolutely. Absolutely. Coupled. Transparency and communication, coupled for sure.

**Stuart Brown:** Samantha, before we started to tape today, we talked about your role because you're not a traditional new professional, maybe two or three years in the field, and you're not seasoned. You have components from both vantage points. So can you talk about, maybe for individuals that are new professionals or looking for that information from someone who is more starting out in the field, things that you have learned in your role as the more new professional as opposed to leaning towards more the seasoned professional?

**Dr. Samantha Friar:** That's such a great question because for me, I've learned and the advice I would give to new professionals is to be invested in your people, invest in your team. That can be spending time in your biweekly or weekly staff meetings, individual meetings, their professional development, but invest in your folks. And you want to grow leaders. I often tell my team of managers, I want you all to be so great, will you replace me? And I transition into another position. And I think that's important. And we have those conversations weekly and daily in our individual meetings when I meet with my managers in my department who oversees the work of Trio Student Support Services. I develop them in a way where they're able to replace me. I invest in my folks professionally in terms of training and development. And so what I would tell our new professionals is to take a look and do an inventory, a people inventory of your folks, the folks that you're leading, and make sure that you equip them and make them so good in terms of their leadership, where they one day will replace you.

**Stuart Brown:** Since a lot of people listening to this podcast are going to be more just beginning in the field, this is something I think that they can file in their back pocket because as they progress up the chain of command. And I think it's actually when we talked about all these different one things, transparency, communicating, looking at individuals as potential leaders, they all wrap together as one. You can't separate them. You really want them as one type of defining trait for individuals.

**Dr. Samantha Friar:** I agree with that. I also would say to our new incoming professionals and professionals who are new to their craft and new to their positions, you have to be comfortable in your position and your role enough to get to the point where you're investing in your team members, where you're investing in those future leaders. And so you have to be self aware. You have to understand and know your craft. And then you have to be willing to share your craft and your knowledge capital with others. And so once you are able to understand who you are and who you are as a leader, you become a transparent leader. You become an effective communicator, and then you'll begin to stufflessly invest into your department, into your team members.

**Stuart Brown:** Samantha, I want to thank you for sharing your one thing. I think it's very important for individuals to realize that you want to be transparent. You don't want to just be hiding things, not revealing everything. That the more transparent you are, the more that you're going to have your team or your colleagues trust you, support you than if you're this person of mystery.

**Dr. Samantha Friar:** I like the way you said that we have to humanize where we are. I just had a conversation with another leader today, and we talked about the effects of humanization. It's okay to show that you may be a little upset. It's okay. Just do it professionally. But humanize yourself within those roles. Let your folks know that you do have emotions. It's okay to show those emotions when we are in leadership because oftentimes we have to be straight face and sometimes even stern. But to be human is so significant.

**Stuart Brown:** You have been listening 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?' My guest today has been Dr. Samantha Friar, TRiO, Student Support Services at Elgin Community College. 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.