

Student helper

Johnson-Sage gives a helping hand

Marcia Johnson-Sage remembers visiting the Student Life Office as a student on campus in the early 1970s. A freshman, she was called in for not living in a residence hall — something clearly against student guidelines.

Johnson-Sage explained to the dean that she was living off campus because of a bad on-campus living experience at another campus. Impacted so strongly by the experience, she threatened to quit college if she had to live in a similar situation. The dean listened, evaluated the situation, and Johnson-Sage was allowed to stay. More than 30 years later, she draws from that experience when listening to students and their problems.

Despite the ever-changing crises she's asked to address daily, Johnson-Sage, currently interim assistant dean of students, wouldn't want it any other way. "I love my job," she explains. "I thoroughly enjoy working with students to help them get through college no matter what crisis they may be facing."

Johnson-Sage thrives on the daily challenges. "You never know what's going to walk through the door," she notes. On any given day, she hears about an array of student concerns — homesickness, depression and class workload to name a few.

"I do a lot of referrals, directing students to offices on campus that are able to help," she says, noting that she often walks students to where they can find help. "I don't tell students exactly what they should do, but I do provide them with options so they can make the best decision for themselves."

Johnson-Sage says one of her favorite parts of the job is working with returning adult students — something she was about 10 years ago. After taking classes in the early '70s, she quit college and began working on campus as classified staff, first as a typist, eventually a program assistant. She didn't complete her bachelor's

degree until 1997. Four years later, she completed a master's in college student development and administration.

"Hiring Marcia from the classified ranks and facilitating the completion of her master's degree and subsequent hiring in her current position was the very best professional decision that I have ever made," says Mick Miyamoto, Interim Dean of Students. "I also know that each and every student whose life she has touched would unequivocally agree."

For her extensive work with students and colleagues, Johnson-Sage was selected by her peers to receive the 2005 Academic Staff Excellence Award.

Johnson-Sage takes pride in her never-ending effort to improve student life on campus. "I continue to work to move the campus forward in sexual assault awareness," she explains. "We are still working on this issue. But, hopefully, the numbers will go down once there is



The Marcia Johnson-Sage file

- **Interim Assistant Dean, UW-L Student Life Office. Student Services Coordinator. Has worked in the office since 1999.**
- **Office support worker on campus from 1973-1999 in various offices and for numerous programs.**
- **Campus volunteer, including Academic Staff Council, Campus Sexual Assault Awareness Group, World Without Violence Committee, LaX Link Peer Mentoring Committee and more.**
- **Graduate of UW-L twice: a bachelor's in English with a minor in sociology, 1997; master's in college student development and administration, 2001.**

more awareness about assaults."

A desire to continuously improve has kept Johnson-Sage visible on campus. "I believe students are best served and supported through collaboration among departments, units and members of the campus community," she says. "I have consistently made the effort to be on committees, meet other staff, be involved in events, and make my knowledge and talents available to help whomever I can in an effort to contribute to the excellent services provided by UW-L."

While students are fortunate to have someone like Johnson-Sage to turn to, she shares in that feeling. "I'm a very fortunate individual to be able to have worked on this campus, doing what I really enjoy doing," she says.

—Brad Quarberg, *University Relations*