

## Dr. Dan Johnson

Dean of Student Life, Financial Aid,  
New Student Services, and the  
Student Complaints Officer



**Jessica:** How does your role(s) serve students?

**DDJ:** I work with a great group of staff and colleagues who are intent on providing opportunities for student leadership, student development, student engagement, student activities, student friendly financial aid services, and onboarding and outreach services that help assist our new students in transitioning to college. The services we provide in the various departments, for which I happen to be the administrative lead, are geared to facilitate a successful experience for students enrolled in South Seattle College.

**Jessica:** How long have you been an Otter?

**DDJ:** After being a Spartan, Sasquatch, Red Devil, Ranger, and Triton; the otter mascot is something I have yet to become accustomed. So I'll say I'm a South Seattle College Employee in my 5th year at South...otter?

**Jessica:** What do you love about South?

**DDJ:** What I love about being an employee at South is the people; the students, staff, and some of the colleagues that I have at South. I am a people oriented person and feel loyal and committed to student success and all sincere college staff that are committed to this effort. I love seeing and facilitating the success of students.

**Jessica:** What is something that you are enjoying doing right now?

**DDJ:** Jessica, during these times of isolation I have been really strapped to find much that I like to do. I take an occasional drive down to the water, participating in staff meetings where I get to see your smiling faces, and having conversations like we are doing right now. Another pleasure is to watch a constant parade of birds that come in regularly [to my bird feeders], that's an enjoyment for me. Except the ones that continue to crash through my window in an attempt to join me in my Zoom meetings.

**Jessica:** Could you share something you learned, that you wish you knew sooner in your academic career?

**DDJ:** I would have to share two things. First of all, one is that despite my protestations, it doesn't cut it anymore just to have knowledge, you need an advanced degree. I feel there were numerous occurrences where my knowledge or experience validated my worthiness for certain opportunities. Those opportunities were not realized until returning to receive advanced degrees. I was smart before the degrees, ha ha!

The main thing for me and my academic career, I would have loved to be more immersed in African American history. I found out things that should have been taught to me in African America history way too late in life. But for me, we need to know all cultural [histories]. Knowing your history and knowing that women and people of color are just as much of a contributor to the greatness of the country as anyone else, gives [students] that confidence and pride [to take ownership of their education].

**Jessica:** Anything else you would like to share about yourself?

**DDJ:** The only other thing I would like to share with students is my availability. Students need to know I am a dean that is accessible and approachable. My student servant background is predicated on my willingness to be there to help students advance through their educational careers and assist with any problems or issues they may encounter. As a student advocate, which I have always been, I am committed to helping students navigate tough situations in their college experience.