

# Vincent Simonelli

## CUSTOMER CLOSEUP

Vincent Simonelli, Director of Student Loans and Collections for Boston University, is a man of many interests, great charm, and unlimited enthusiasm for life. When we talked with Vincent recently, he had just celebrated his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the University and had been honored the day before at a reception attended by 50 of his fellow employees. Despite a quarter century of service, Vincent is still excited about his job and his employer.

He describes the University as a large, urban campus in the middle of Boston, surrounded by museums, theaters, and history. From his office, he can look out the window and see the MIT campus across the river in Cambridge. With 92 colleges and universities in the Boston area, Vincent describes the city as “alive with college students.” Not only is it a vibrant area for students, but Vincent is also energized by working there.

As Director of Student Loans and Collections, Vincent is responsible for student loan administration, customer service (BU is a modified customer), collections activities, accounting, and reporting. He is also the chief compliance officer and works hard to make sure the University adheres to all federal regulations and legal requirements.

He has a dedicated staff, and they help the department meet its goals year after year. He is motivated to ensure that working in collections and student loans is a positive experience for his staff of thirteen. Since BU handles customer service for its borrowers internally, Vincent tries to minimize the stress often associated with collection activities so his staff does not get overwhelmed. “I want them to know they can come to me if they need to vent,” Vincent said. It

must be working because his office has very little turnover. The collections and student loan managers have each been with Boston University for 24 years, and there is very little turnover in other positions. Although he attributes his staff’s longevity to the working environment fostered by the University, Vincent’s support of his staff goes a long way in keeping his staff intact.

Maintaining perfect books is another important aspect of his job and one that he finds gratifying. “We are audited all year long with one big audit coming at the end of the year. We are very proud of the fact that our auditors have never identified any problems with our figures,” said Vincent. “It is what we are supposed to do,” he added.

Boston University’s relationship with Campus Partners began 20 years ago. With a myriad of institutional loans, BU was looking for a servicer that could handle all their campus-based loan programs. “When we were looking at servicers, we had two questions. Will our figures be correct and will we stay in compliance? Our numbers always have been good, our reports are always clean and easy to read, and we have never had to worry about compliance issues since choosing Campus Partners,” Vincent related. This is no small accomplishment because as Vincent notes, “We are militant about compliance.”

Vincent attended the University of Miami, graduating with a double major in Psychology and film. After graduation he returned to Boston taking a job at a local bank. There due to the accidental closing of a vault door on his thumb, he began his career in Collections...he could punch buttons on a phone, but he couldn’t count money. More importantly,

however, he met his future wife, Carol. A year later, following a life-long dream, he moved to LA where he took a job at a major credit card company where he collected money in the evenings and peddled screenplays in the daytime. After a year of “knocking on doors” he returned to Boston. He took a temporary job at BU and, shortly thereafter, married Carol, with whom he had maintained a long distance relationship. Over these last 25 years he has stayed at BU and progressed through the ranks to his present position.

Being at Boston University has not kept Vincent from his dream of becoming a published author. He has written two mystery novels, *The Shooter* and *The Solar Antiquities*, which are available through amazon.com, and is working on his third novel. He has also written two screenplays, one of which involves skip tracing, but has no plans to write a book about student loan processing. After all, with BU’s extremely low default rate, he could not very well write a book entitled, “My Default Rate is Murder.”

Vincent and Carol have been married for 25 years, and have a 10-year old son, Matthew. Vincent takes fatherhood very seriously, and coaches Matthew’s basketball and Little League teams. At the time of this interview, the family was planning a trip to Disney World, to celebrate their anniversary, which will be Vincent’s 34<sup>th</sup> trip. He is a big fan of Disney’s customer service and the dependability of the brand to provide an entertaining experience for families. Like Disney, Vincent has created a dependable brand that BU borrowers can rely on while their loans are in repayment.