

Leadership Exchange

SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT

VOLUME ONE • ISSUE THREE • FALL 2003

Out of the Closet and Into the Cabinet

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
Senior Student Affairs Officers

New SSAOs
Surviving the First Year

Assessment
More Than Plug 'n Play

From the Top
An Interview with the
Reverend William C. Gipson



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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the start of a new academic year! September always brings a sense of renewal and hope for a successful year ahead.

This summer was filled with reminders of the work that is so much a part of our campus lives, particularly the sensitive issues surrounding diversity. Two Supreme Court decisions handed down in June are especially significant to the future of our institutions and to our professional associations. The decision preserving affirmative action is cheered by most of the higher education community as recognition of the positive force of diversity on our campuses. The advancements resulting from affirmative action policies, including employment opportunities for underrepresented groups, the inclusion of women in campus programs through Title IX, and the creation of nondiscrimination policies that removed barriers for all types of students, have enriched and enlivened our campus environments.

In addition, the Supreme Court's decision to preserve the privacy of individuals was a direct breakthrough for members of our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) communities and for all citizens. Many articles have been written about how far this decision will open the door in defense of gay and lesbian rights. On our campuses, the ruling may be alternately hailed or reviled. As senior student affairs officers (SSAOs), it is our responsibility to address the issue, regardless of our personal or professional feelings.

What will these decisions mean in the long run for our campuses? How will we respond with admission and employment practices? Are there policies that we need to review and/or change to comply with these rulings? What other issues of diversity might arise in the future, including the decreasing number of male students attending our institutions? How will the changes in immigration laws affect our ability to enroll international students or the ability of U.S. students to study abroad? Our responsibilities to ensure diversity are far from over and, in many ways, are just beginning.

As SSAOs, we share a commitment to adhere not just to the letter of the law, but also to its spirit. Diversity concerns—racial, ethnic, geographic, sexual orientation, or gender related—are integral to our education and development agendas. These issues will remain at the forefront and will guide us in fulfilling our primary objectives as administrators and as developers of students ready to take their places as citizens in a global community.

This issue of *Leadership Exchange* reviews and analyzes many of these compelling issues and more. As we move ahead this academic year, SSAOs must work together to address them. A more noble agenda is hard to imagine. I look forward to working with you as we undertake these challenging tasks.

Karen L. Pennington
President

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4 + 2 = Success

When it comes to improving performance, managers have no shortage of tools and techniques from which to choose. The big question remains “What tools work best?” A groundbreaking study involving more than 50 academics and consultants analyzed 200 management techniques employed by 160 companies over 10 years.

Their findings demonstrate that basic business practices really make a difference and suggest a “4 +2” formula for business success. The organizations that consistently outperformed their industry peers excelled in what the authors call the four primary management practices: strategy, execution, culture, and structure. Those primary practices were complemented by two of the following four secondary management practices: talent, leadership, innovation, and mergers and partnerships. An organization that consistently follows this “4 +2” formula has a better than 90 percent chance of sustaining superior performance.

—*Harvard Business Review*,
July 1, 2003

Down with Multitasking

The pervasiveness of technology in the lives of managers and consumers has created a subculture of “always on.” For all the efficiency gains that it seemingly provides, the constant stream of data available through a host of sources can interrupt not just dinner and family time, but also meetings and creative time.

For some people, turning off is proving very hard to do. Edward M. Hallowell, a psychiatry instructor at Harvard, and John Ratey, an associate professor at Harvard and a psychiatrist with an expertise in attention deficit disorder (A.D.D.), are among a growing number of physicians and sociologists assessing how technology affects attention span, creativity, and focus. The researchers have their own term for this condition: pseudo-attention deficit disorder. Its sufferers do not have actual A.D.D., but influ-

enced by technology and the pace of modern life, have developed shorter attention spans. In effect, the shorter attention spans lead to the rise of multitasking.

According to research compiled by David E. Meyer, a psychology professor at the University of Michigan, multitaskers actually hinder their productivity by trying to accomplish two things at one time. Meyer has found that people who switch back and forth between two tasks, like exchanging email and writing a report, may spend 50 percent more time on the tasks than if they work on them separately and complete one task before starting another. The allure of multitasking can be deceiving, says Meyer. While it may offer a guise of productivity, a “macho” show of accomplishment, or provide a big rush, managers who multitask are actually “making themselves worse businesspeople.”

—*The New York Times*, July 6, 2003

Monitoring Marijuana Use

Several surveys indicate that teen use of marijuana has declined, signaling a shift away from recreational use. According to the University of Michigan’s *Monitoring the Future Survey*, 48 percent of high school seniors from the class of 2002 tried pot, down from a peak level of 60 percent in 1979.

In 1999, 20 percent of teenagers responded in a Gallup Youth Survey that they had tried marijuana, down from 38 percent in 1981. Gallup Youth Surveys also show overall teen usage dropping almost 50 percent in the past 20 years.

An October 2002 *Time/CNN* poll showed that nearly half of Americans (47 percent) have smoked pot at least once. Gallup polls indicate that the same proportion of 18- to 29-year-olds and 30- to 49-year-olds say they have tried the drug (46 percent and 48 percent respectively), though the number dips considerably for older Americans (14 percent of those over 50).

—*American Demographics*, June 2003

The Need to Win

One of the most common challenges that successful people face is the need to win, says Marshall Goldsmith, corporate America’s leading executive coach and founding director of the Alliance for Strategic Leadership. Whether the issue is trivial or important, they want to win.

Research confirms that the more we achieve, the more we tend to want to “be right.” At work meetings, we want our position to prevail. In arguments, we pull out all stops to come out ahead. Even at the grocery store, we are constantly scanning for the fastest check-out line.

At the same time, Goldsmith says, the higher up you go in an organization, the more you need to let other people be winners and not make it about winning yourself. For bosses, that means choosing words wisely when giving encouragement and staying away from the word “but” as in “great idea, but...” For employees, it means being confident about your expertise. Stand up for what you know and what you believe.

—*Fast Company*, August 2003

Connecting with Generation Y

Attik, a marketing group in England, suggests three new rules for winning the loyalty of Generation Y consumers that could have implications in promoting your campus activities or your institution. The firm recently was hired by Toyota to promote Scion, its newly launched car brand targeted to a younger audience.

First, keep the respect. You need to care about their opinions—the younger adults of Generation Y are more respectful than the generation that came before them.

Second, keep an array of options. Don’t choose spokespeople who you think represent Generation Y. Gen-Y consumers want to see an array of personalities—variety is completely acceptable to them.

Third, keep it quiet. Gen-Y consumers like to discover things on



their own. That doesn't mean that they don't want to be marketed to, but it should be on their terms and in places they frequent.

—*Fast Company*, July 2003

A Question of Privacy

The chips are already falling in response to Supreme Court decisions in June allowing race to continue to be considered in college admission.

Voters in California this fall will decide on the Racial Privacy Initiative. If passed, it would bar state and local government entities from maintaining databases related to citizens' race and ethnicity—except where the federal

government requires it—even collecting such information on forms involving school enrollment, job applications, and government contracting. Signs indicate that many people are increasingly reluctant to give up such information about themselves, and early California polls indicate that the initiative has the backing of 48 percent of the state's voters, even though many also say they are unsure of its details.

Students are not legally bound to answer race and ethnicity questions on admission applications and a growing percentage are not reporting such information. Nearly 18 percent of those who took the SAT in 2002 did not respond to questions about their race and

ethnicity, up from less than 10 percent in 1997. Meanwhile, at the University of California at Berkeley, 9.5 percent of students offered admission for this fall provided no ethnic data, up from six percent a decade ago. Johns Hopkins officials estimate that one out of five of its applicants does not reveal his or her race or ethnicity and say that most of the "no reports" appear to be Caucasian and Asian-American students who apparently believe that reporting their race will factor against them.

—*The Wall Street Journal*, June 30, 2003

2003-2004 NASPA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR

Visit www.naspa.org or call 202-265-7500 for more information on any these programs.

October 20–November 7, 2003
NASPA/ACPA Student Affairs
E-Learning Series
Implementing Evidence Based Approaches to Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention

October 24, 2003
NASPA Drive-In Assessment Workshop
Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

October 26–28, 2003
NASPA New Senior Student Affairs Officers Institute
Westin Embassy Row, Washington, DC

October 31–November 1, 2003
NASPA Drive-In Assessment Workshop
University of Washington, Seattle, WA

November 10–December 5, 2003
NASPA/ACPA Student Affairs
E-Learning Series
Working with Asian American College Students

December 1–19, 2003
NASPA/ACPA Student Affairs
E-Learning Series
Using Policy to Create Change – Alcohol and Drug Prevention

December 4–7, 2003
Change Management and Fundraising: Critical Issues in Advancing Student Affairs and College Unions
An Institute for Union Directors and Mid-Level Student Affairs Administrators
Sponsored by NASPA and ACUI
Hilton Sandestin Resort, Destin, FL

December 11–13, 2003
Envisioning the World: Campus Community & Global Transformation
Sponsored by NASPA and CIIS
Loyola University, New Orleans, LA

January 11–14, 2004
The January Institute
James E. Scott National Academy for Leadership and Executive Effectiveness
Where Do We Go From Here? Looking to the Next Five Years
Sawgrass Marriott Resort,
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

January 12–30, 2004
NASPA/ACPA Student Affairs
E-Learning Series
Weaving a Web of Leadership

January 14–17, 2004
NASPA Alice Manicur Women's Symposium
Sheraton Sand Key Resort,
Clearwater Beach, FL

January 14–16, 2004
Innovative Leadership Practices for Diversity: A Leadership Institute for Mid-Level Administrators
Sponsored by NASPA and NCBI
Columbia University, New York, NY

February 3–21, 2004
NASPA/ACPA Student Affairs
E-Learning Series
Leadership for Diversity Institute: Creating a Campus to Which People Want to Belong

February 23–March 12, 2004
NASPA/ACPA Student Affairs
E-Learning Series
Developing an Online Orientation



Out of the Closet and Into the Cabinet

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
Senior Student Affairs Officers

BY KRISTEN A. RENN

The presence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students is now a fact of life on college campuses. Increasing numbers of “out” LGBT student affairs professionals, those who are open and forthright about their sexual orientations, fill the field’s ranks from entry level to middle management. Like NASPA’s GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender) Knowledge Community, LGBT caucuses or standing committees are common features of most student affairs professional associations and conferences. Why, then, are there so few identifiable LGBT senior student affairs officers (SSAOs)? Equally important, why should it matter?

An abundance of literature supports the common sense notion that a range of diversity among institutional leaders benefits both the organization and its members at all levels. The presence of an SSAO, commonly known to be LGBT, sends a message to the campus community that LGBT people are welcomed, trusted, and respected. It also sends a message that LGBT administrators have important contributions to make across functional areas of the institution, not just in areas designated as “politically correct” or “multicultural.”

Further, the presence of LGBT senior administrators conveys to LGBT new professionals, graduate students, and others that they do not necessarily have to choose between being open about their sexual orientations and aspiring to the highest levels of student affairs administration. Just as the increased presence of people of color and women in senior positions has influenced the dynamics of individual institutions and of the student affairs profession, the increasing presence of LGBT SSAOs will influence the landscape of higher education administration.

If these influences are considered desirable and we observe significant numbers of visible LGBT professionals at lower levels of student affairs administration, why are there so few out LGBT SSAOs? I propose that the answer lies in a complex array of individual and institutional factors operating in the context of the student affairs profession and the social construction of LGBT identities. These factors combine to create the conditions for LGBT invisibility at the highest levels of postsecondary administration, where there are, in fact, a number of SSAOs with gay or lesbian identities who have, for a variety of reasons, elected to keep their public and private identities separate. This article offers a discussion of several of these factors and their implications for the profession.

Four LGBT-identified SSAOs agreed to answer questions about their professional experiences for this article. These SSAOs were given the option to use real names or pseudonyms. Jonathan Poullard, associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students at California State University-San Marcos, and Karen Whitney, vice chancellor for student life and diversity and dean of students at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), agreed to be identified. An SSAO at a regional comprehensive university elected to use the pseudonym Jane Doe and an SSAO at a liberal arts college is referred to as John Smith. These four SSAOs represent gender, racial, and geographic diversity, as well as varying degrees of being “out of the closet” professionally. It would be impossible, of course, to represent the full diversity of all LGBT SSAOs, but these four professionals provide a window on the experiences of this group.

The Nature of LGBT Identity

LGBT identity, unlike some other minority identities, is one that can be either concealed or revealed by the individual. This quality is a double-edged sword. The ability to “pass” as heterosexual in professional contexts is offset by the continuous need to come out in new professional settings if one’s LGBT identity is to be known. There is a difference between being gay and being known to be gay. Arguments exist on both sides of the issue of whether an individual’s sexual orientation ought to be strictly a private matter. The assumption that, unless indicated otherwise, everyone is heterosexual and traditionally gendered necessitates coming out as a personal, political, and professional strategy to obtain equitable treatment in the workplace.

The nature of LGBT identities requires a series of decisions throughout a career that lead either to the public knowledge that one is LGBT or to an unknown public perception of life outside work. LGBT professionals decide time and again whether to maintain the separation between work and their LGBT identities or to assert LGBT identities in the work context. This is true on job applications (Do I put my LGBT articles on my resume or not? Do I mark female or male if transgender is not provided as an option?), in job interviews (They are not supposed to ask about my spouse, but they just did. How shall I respond?), at new jobs (Will I tell my colleagues that I have a partner? How will they respond if they find out I was once a different gender?), and with promotions (Will this be when they ask if there’s anything they “should know” before making me vice president?).

Whitney’s experience illustrates these decisions.

There is a difference between being gay and being known to be gay. Arguments exist on both sides of the issue of whether an individual’s sexual orientation ought to be strictly a private matter.

“In every context, I am very out at IUPUI. When I applied for my current position, I included my GLBT community work on my resume. When asked during the interview why I was interested in the position, I said one of my interests was to relocate to Indiana to live closer to my partner’s parents. So, from the search and selection stage, I have been out.”

For some aspiring SSAOs, LGBT identities and work are not intimately related and it may not make sense to raise identity issues in the professional context. Yet, for others, LGBT identities are so related that it would be impossible not to make the explicit connections. An analogy might be one’s faith tradition. For some professionals, religion is not related to career. For others, deeply held beliefs and values are inextricably linked to choices and decisions made in the context of student affairs leadership. One approach is not more correct than the other, but the latter requires the professional to make a decision about whether or not to make others in the work setting aware of the unseen identity. Ultimately, these decisions shape a career trajectory in ways that may enhance or inhibit opportunities to achieve a senior position.

Individual Choice

How individuals choose to manage their public identities varies. Poullard says, “I’m out in every aspect of my professional life. I don’t announce to entering students during orientation that I am a gay man, but it is common knowledge that I am.”

Doe, on the other hand shares, “Discussing my sexual orientation is not on my ‘to do’ list, but I never deny it, if asked.”

Smith’s career included a number of positions at Christian denominational institutions, where as a “generally conservative person in many ways [I] was most comfortable keeping my personal and public lives separate.” He did not come out to colleagues, students, or supervisors.

Individual decisions regarding coming out are shaped by a number of factors, including politics, personal styles, and partner and parenting statuses. Partnered LGBT professionals face the same challenges of managing dual-career relationships and families as their partnered heterosexual colleagues. For LGBT student affairs professionals, the presence of a life partner prompts additional decisions about how out to present oneself in a variety of settings.

Doe says, “My partner is probably invisible to those who do not have an interest in me personally and that is fine with my partner and me. If people have an interest in my personal welfare, my situation is apparent to them.”

Whitney takes a different tack, saying, “I always introduce my partner as my partner to everyone—students, faculty, and staff.” Partner status, family background, and a host of other personal characteristics influence decisions about behavior in the professional realm.

Again, there is no one correct approach, but the apparent dearth of LGBT SSAOs is, in part, the result of individual experiences and decisions.

Institutional Climate

Institutional factors also play a role in the visibility of LGBT SSAOs, including campus climate, leadership, and employee benefits. Institutional leaders who support administrative efforts to increase visibility of “unseen” differences such as social class, ability, faith tradition, gender identity, and sexual orientation foster a campus climate that promotes human diversity in all its dimensions. Out LGBT professionals are more likely to seek positions and be hired at institutions that welcome them and value their experiences and perspectives as LGBT people.

Poullard reflects this attitude. “My identity is an asset because it colors how I see and experience the world, and how the world sees and experiences me.

“My mother used to worry that I would not get a job because I was out,” he says. “I would tell her that if I didn’t get a job because of my sexuality, then that particular campus was not where I belonged.”

Doe elected not to tell her institution’s president that she is a lesbian, concluding, “It wasn’t relevant because he had checked with people with whom I had worked and had not been deterred in hiring me.”

LGBT SSAOs acknowledge potential limitations placed on their careers by institutional factors. Poullard says, “As an associate vice president, I recognize that some folks may try to hold me back from becoming a vice president.” Doe reflects, “I have not suffered blatant discrimination but suspect [my orientation] may have limited my opportunities.”

Career mobility may be further limited by the lack of domestic partner benefits at an institution. An LGBT person may forego a promising professional move because accepting the position would mean losing access to health insurance for a partner.

Variations in institutional climate, leadership, and policy contribute to the invisibility of LGBT SSAOs, just as they contribute to the visibility of increasing numbers of LGBT student affairs professionals.

The Student Affairs Profession

Arguably, student affairs is a welcoming profession for gay men and lesbians. Values we espouse—promoting the development of the whole person within diverse communities of learners—are congruent with a professional climate of respect for one another as individuals and colleagues. Indeed, many LGBT new professionals credit their decisions to enter the field, in part, to acceptance by student affairs staff at their undergraduate institutions. LGBT identity is seen by some SSAOs as contributing to career success.

Whitney offers, “In terms of my career development, my sexual orientation has been a complete asset. Learning how to survive and thrive in a society that holds mixed views regarding sexual orientation shaped my views regarding social justice,” she says. “Being a lesbian has profoundly affected my understanding and philosophy of human identity and has shaped my work as an educator.”

Although Smith is not openly gay on his campus or in the profession at large, he says that gay and lesbian visibility in NASPA and other associations made him question if he would take a different approach to his identity and career if he were starting as a new professional today.

Student affairs is not an entirely welcoming profession. Poullard remembers: “I will never forget being a young professional and being told by my supervisor that I would not get very far in this field because I was ‘too Black and too gay.’”

“To say the least, I was disappointed by her comment, but not surprised,” he adds. “This comment came during an exit interview as I was leaving to assume the role of assistant dean of students. I told her that if I had to be in the closet to excel in this profession, then I would never become an SSAO and that would be fine with me.”

The supervisor was wrong. Not only is Poullard an institutional leader, he is a leader in the field. Even so, it is clear from this example that professional culture in student affairs plays a role in mediating the visibility of LGBT people at all career levels, including SSAOs.

Conditions for Career Success

Given the need to assert LGBT identity over assumptions of heterosexuality, individual characteristics and experiences, variations among institutional climates and policies, and mixed messages circulating in the student affairs profession, the question “Why so few visible LGBT SSAOs?” holds no simple answers. The conditions must be right across all areas – and must be sustained throughout a career – to support the professional development and upward mobility of LGBT student affairs administrators. As is often the case in promoting positive conditions for an under-represented group, the outcomes of a positive professional culture for LGBT people will likely benefit all aspiring SSAOs. Among these conditions:

- Institutional policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital/partnership status, as well as programs that educate campus constituencies on the benefits of diverse work and learning environments.
- Professional culture within student affairs that promotes leadership development of diverse populations across all levels of experience (graduate students and new, mid-career, and senior professionals).

- Institutional and professional climates that support the decisions of LGBT SSAOs to come out publicly if they choose and that do not penalize LGBT aspiring SSAOs if they came out earlier in their careers.

The decision to come out or not always rests within the individual. We can improve the climate of our profession and of our campuses to create conditions under which the decision to come out or not becomes one of genuine free choice, not one made out of fear of losing or limiting a career in student affairs. ♦

Kristen A. Renn is an assistant professor of higher, adult, and lifelong education and coordinator of the student affairs administration master of arts program at Michigan State University. She earned her Ph.D. in higher education at Boston College. Previously, Renn was an assistant dean in the Office of Student Life at Brown University where she coordinated LGBT programs and services. She is a member of the National Consortium of LGBT Campus Resource Center Directors, the Leadership Team of NASPA's GLBT Knowledge Community, and the ACPA Commission on Professional Preparation. Renn's publications include Women in Higher Education: An Encyclopedia (2002, co-edited with Ana Martínez Alemán) and Mixed Race Students in College: The Ecology of Race, Identity, and Community (forthcoming from SUNY Press).



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY.

Surviving the First Year Challenges for the New SSAO

BY TRACY M. TYREE

The time had come. I was getting restless in my current job and needed to begin thinking about my next step. Was I ready? Could I do it? Was the time right to consider becoming a senior student affairs officer?

As I often do, I turned to my father, a retired community college president, for advice. I had been a director of student services for several years. I had met all expectations at that level, but I was unsure of what else I should have or could have done to ready myself to become a dean of students or a vice president of student affairs. My dad responded, “Sometimes you don’t know, you just have to do it.”

I took the leap and in September 2002 began my latest role as the dean of student life at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania. My excitement was mixed with apprehension about this new undertaking. When I learned of the NASPA New Senior Student Affairs Officers (SSAO) Institute, I thought it would be a great opportunity to learn from experts what to anticipate in this new endeavor. Forty-seven new SSAOs joined a seasoned group of faculty in Washington, DC for the October 2002 Institute.

Just one month into the job, I can still remember how new and green I felt among my Institute peers. As our second academic year as SSAOs begins, my colleagues from the 2002 New SSAO Institute join me in this article to offer a collective view of our first-year experiences.

Learning the Ropes

Recognizing that I learned more this year than possibly during any other single year of my life, I asked my colleagues to identify their greatest challenges or steepest learning curves.

First, it comes as no surprise to seasoned SSAOs, but those of us new to the job discovered the extraordinary amount of work it takes to be an effective SSAO. The range of responsibilities, extent of demands, complexity of issues, and multiplicity of constituents who want “just a minute of your time” can be overwhelming.

Balancing complex roles is further complicated by the steep curve involved in learning the culture, climate, key processes, and players in a new environment while making critical decisions at the same time. Several deans acknowledged how vitally important it is to become quickly acquainted with one’s senior level peers as well as the student affairs staff. Strong and comfortable relationships with presidents and chief academic officers are especially important, since one of these two individuals typically serves as the SSAO’s supervisor.

Second, communication is crucial in building all relationships. Indeed, part of my success in forging these relationships has been to ask questions with an institutional focus in mind and to keep the president and other senior officers on campus informed of key developments in my division. Moreover, when responding to my president’s offer of the dean position, I was forthcoming that there would be situations that I had never before experienced and I questioned his level of support for a first-time dean. He was quite affirming in his willingness to support me through the learning process and was committed to my success in this new position.

A third significant learning experience is the challenge of working in environments rooted in tradition and established routines. It is difficult to be the new senior person in a group of long-time colleagues. The new deans recognize the importance of determining when to honor “the way it has always been done” and when to try something new. Developing trust and establishing credibility are important first steps to creating a more welcome response to change. Staff members must believe the new dean or vice president is capable and well intended. They need to become familiar with his or her style (especially when it is different from the former SSAO), and they must begin to realize success as a team.

Finding the Right Management Style

Fortunately, the steep learning curve is offset by the rewards realized in the first year on the job. Almost unanimously, the new SSAOs feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment from working with a team to strengthen their student affairs programs, bring about change, and make a difference in the lives of students.

Simply but powerfully stated, one dean acknowledged that one of the greatest rewards is “just being here—being a chief student affairs officer and one of a small group of senior staff making decisions for the university.” For all of us, it is exciting to be exposed to the complexities of our institutions, to gain a greater understanding of the big

The range of responsibilities, extent of demands, complexity of issues, and multiplicity of constituents who want “just a minute of your time” can be overwhelming.





picture, and to actively participate in processes that influence the direction of the institution.

A key to success in realizing these rewards is establishing a leadership and management style that creates an enthusiasm and an environment for change. Most of the new SSAOs relate that they have been successful relying on the styles that were most comfortable to them upon entering their positions.

A counseling background helped one dean in his work with younger staff, parents, and students. Another dean found it necessary to be more flexible to easily adapt to a variety of situations and circumstances and to be consistent in communication. “Calm” and “firm” were the two adjectives one vice president used to describe his style. And, without a doubt, combining collaboration with empowerment is very helpful in building rapport, creating community among staff, and establishing credibility as the new kid on the block. The one respondent now serving his current institution in an interim dean’s role while maintaining his previous full-time position suggests that he has not changed his approach to leadership and management, but is still trying to determine a style best suited for an SSAO.

Expanding Experiences

Realizing that it is not necessary to reinvent one’s style when rising to the next level was affirming for most new SSAOs. Still, they would like to have known certain details before beginning their jobs. One dean believes she would have benefited from having more institutional knowledge up front. Working for the first time at a larger institution with a more decentralized administrative structure, she would have been more comfortable in her new role sooner had she better understood the

university’s structures and processes. Moreover, for SSAOs supervising functional areas with which they have no personal experience, a broader knowledge of student affairs would have been helpful. Although it is virtually impossible to have worked in all of the areas a dean or vice president is likely to supervise, my new colleagues recommend taking advantage of every opportunity to branch out, collaborate with other units, and establish a familiarity with a breadth of student affairs areas.

For example, I currently am responsible for our university’s health center. I quickly let the director know that I would need her help to learn the area. One year later, I am more knowledgeable, but still learning. In the process, I have developed incredible respect for the director’s work and we have established a terrific relationship.



Handling Stress

Given the consuming nature of student affairs work, I asked my new SSAO compatriots what they do to relieve job stress. Professionally, it is important to have fun as a student affairs staff. We have learned that we should model stress relief for our employees and our students and make an effort to spend time together as a staff, often over a meal outside the work environment. Not only does socializing help us decompress, the time together assists in building community within the student affairs staff. Outside of the office, it is important that we not take ourselves too seriously, keep our jobs in perspective, and balance our work with other important priorities in our lives. All of us share a sense of hope that we will find more down time in our second year. I join all of my new SSAO colleagues in sighing with great relief that the first year is over and in welcoming our status as sophomores. ♦



UPCOMING INSTITUTES

The James E. Scott National Academy for Leadership and Executive Effectiveness is sponsoring two upcoming institutes. For more information, visit www.naspa.org or call 202-265-7500.

- **October 26–28, 2003**
New SSAO Institute
Washington, DC
Professional development for recently appointed SSAOs
- **January 11–14, 2004**
The January Institute
Sawgrass, FL
*Where Do We Go From Here?
Looking to the Next Five Years*

Tracy M. Tyree is the dean of student life at Susquehanna University, where she also teaches as a member of the faculty. She previously worked in student and academic affairs positions at Mercer University, the University of Maryland, and Lynchburg College. Her scholarly interests include student leadership development and liberal learning. Tyree will serve as director of the 2004 NASPA New Senior Student Affairs Officers Institute.

Leah Ewing Ross, former director of the James E. Scott National Academy for Leadership and Executive Effectiveness, collaborated on this article.

LESSONS LEARNED BY NEW SSAOS

- **Pick your president or the person to whom you report carefully. Be sure that you share similar philosophies about education, student affairs, and students.**
- **Commit to developing a strong team and help staff members emphasize their strengths. Hire good people and empower them to do their best work.**
- **Create a vision for student affairs and get your staff invested in your vision. Communicate a clear and consistent message that includes the entire division.**
- **Embrace the “walking around” philosophy of management. Visit staff members’ offices and talk with them about what they do and gauge their responses to you. Staff members at every level of the organization need to feel that they are important and what they do is of value to the institution.**
- **Establish a presence on campus. Eat in the dining hall and attend athletic events, student performances, and faculty meetings.**
- **Maintain your professional relationships and involvement. Take advantage of professional development opportunities, including workshops offered by the James E. Scott National Academy for Leadership and Executive Effectiveness.**
- **Establish mentoring relationships — learn from those who have been there. Do not be afraid to ask questions and admit uncertainty with someone you trust.**
- **Keep abreast of current issues, trends, and best practices. Read, listen, and learn.**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY.

Assessment of Student Learning and Development

MORE THAN A PLUG N' PLAY

BY MARILEE J. BRESCIANI

You have heard it before. You may have even said it yourself, "I don't have time to do assessment. Just give me the form to complete or tell me which box to check. I just want to be done with it." These words used to raise my eyebrows, but now I just smile.

Every student affairs professional I know is overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated. I truly understand that the last thing you and your colleagues have time for is another responsibility. Yet, one could argue that assessment is not an added responsibility and that high-quality programming has always required an evaluation component to learn if that programming has been effective (Upcraft and Schuh, 1996).

This article explains why engaging in assessment is worth your consideration and investment and why assessment requires meaningful reflection, not just a fill-in-the-blank response.



What is Assessment?

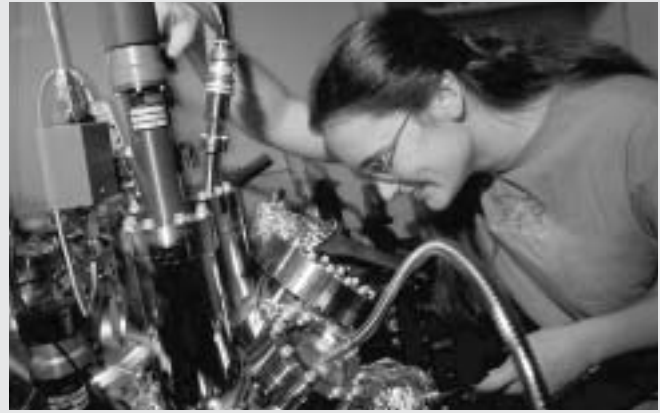
Palomba and Banta (1999) define assessment as the “systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.” To engage in assessment, simply ask yourself the following questions (Bresciani, 2002) about any of your programs:

- What are we trying to do and why are we doing it?
- What do we expect the student to know or to do as a result of our program?
- How well are we doing it?
- How do we know?
- How do we use the information to improve?
- Does that work?

These questions may seem very simple. When we are busy, we rarely take time to reflect on what we are trying to accomplish. Merely setting aside the time to think about the reasons behind our programs and evaluating end results can immensely improve our day-to-day thinking about assessment. There are some who would advocate that the evaluation process can be completed quickly and dumped into a form. In reality, meaningful assessment requires insightful reflection and an investment of the self.

What and Why?

Many professionals do reflect on “What are we trying to do and why are we doing it?” as they formulate missions and goals for their programs. If assessment were that easy, two boxes from a standard form could be supplied—one for mission and one for goals. You could pop answers into them and continue. However, thoughtful answers can truly inform your missions and goals and ensure that what you have articulated accurately reflects what you wish your programs to accomplish.



Student Outcomes

Assessment, as you know, does not stop with identifying your mission and goals. The next tough question is “What do we expect the student to know or to do as a result of our program?” While many times the next box to complete asks how we are going to accomplish the stated mission and goals, assessment takes it one step further by asking you to articulate your end result. In other words, if you plan six workshops on leadership development, what will students who attend one or more of those workshops be able to do and what will they know as a result of their participation? Again, assessment asks you to articulate the identifiable, observable, or measurable end result of that program. That measurable end result is called an outcome.

You can always plug in some outcome-like words for a report, but identifying the actual result of a particular task requires reflection. If you are trying to create leaders from your workshops, how do you know the workshops have been effective? How do you know that the participants can examine issues, communicate the problems which were synthesized from the review of information, garner resources for the solution, and influence decision makers to pay attention to the debate?

Many programs improve after meaningful consideration of the question, “What do we expect the student to know or to do as a result of our program?” Resources may be reorganized and time may be reallocated when it is discovered that programs are missing significant pieces of information or include largely irrelevant sections. Programs have been reduced from 15 to six annual workshops because program managers recognized that valued content could be delivered more efficiently and effectively in a restructured format.

Intended Results

After articulating outcomes, the next logical question is “How well are we doing what we said we would accomplish?” Merely posing this question causes reflection and invites professionals to examine their programs and to identify opportunities to capture evidence. Many times, what students should know and do as a result of the program are not communicated in a measurable manner. The end results of programs reside in the unattainable, unidentifiable, ineffable

realm. Answering the question “How well are we doing?” (e.g., outcome) causes reflection on the end result of a program, what the result will look like, and how professionals will know it when they see it.

The conversations that emerge from identifying the end result cause many professionals to refine their outcomes as they begin to discuss what each intended result looks like. Many derive lists of criteria or rubrics identifying valued and desired learning and development traits in students. Such conversations encourage program refinement to ensure that the criteria linked to the end result are delivered somewhere in the program.

The answer to the end result question assumes that professionals will build data-capturing devices into the body of the program, thus ensuring the collection of evidence. This step typically requires some additional reorganization and reworking of services. You can see why filling in a template with a pull-down box is not necessarily the most effective assessment planning process.

Data Collection

Similar to the question “How well are we doing?” is the question “How do we know?” The “how do we know” piece infers that evidence gathered from the “how well we are doing” step is analyzed and interpreted. Many professionals fall down at this step and do not always plan the time to look at the data and reflect on what it is demonstrating. It is easy to plug the numbers into a spreadsheet and then slide them into a canned report. It is quite another process to look at what the data is saying and to determine if a program is working.

It may be necessary to seek assistance in interpreting the data—this can save you time and should be planned for if needed. While statisticians are available on most campuses to run analyses, interpretation of that data is often difficult for an outside contractor. You know your program best and you know what you are trying to accomplish. The statistician can tell you if you are interpreting the numbers correctly, but you must apply that interpretation to the “how do you know” question. Otherwise, the meaningful portion of assessment—the application of evidence to decisions about outcomes—may fall apart.



Program Improvement

If you are conducting assessment and have used a template in which you have entered words and numbers with little reflection on their meaning, you most likely will be very frustrated at this stage of the assessment process. As you can see, for assessment to come full circle, reflection is required at each step of the process. All of the time you have invested begins to pay off.

At this stage in the assessment process, you must document the decisions you have made for a particular outcome based on the evidence you have collected and interpreted. Here is where you begin to come full circle, often referred to as “closing the loop” (Maki, 2001). You make decisions to either change the “why” or “what” of the program and document your plans to refine the implementation or assessment process. It is also the place to celebrate your accomplishments.

You can slap a decision into a template, but if it was a decision you knew you would make before gathering any assessment data then why waste your resources on the assessment process? Make decisions as a part of the assessment planning process and then design your evaluation methods to determine whether those decisions were effective.

Does It Work?

Finally, the question of all questions, “Did the changes you made based on your assessment evidence work?” This does not mean that you need to assess the same things every year. Once you make a decision to change something in a program, the ability to make a change and to see the effects of that change will take time. Immediately reassessing the outcomes may be a waste of resources. Completion of this portion of the assessment template is very difficult without reflection.

Reflection and Resources

The need for reflection is the primary reason why assessment can not be a “plug-n-play.” It is difficult to place the end result of meaningful reflection in a box. Many professionals need help understanding how to engage in the assessment process.

There are a number of informational resources to assist you with the assessment process. If you need more time, there is no such thing. You may need to reallocate time spent on other activities to time spent on assessment. In addition, you can leverage time and expertise from your students—both student leaders and those students who cause you to question why you are in this field.

Banta, Black, and Kline (2001) write that student affairs professionals “need to provide credible evidence of the value and effectiveness of their programs. More importantly, assessment is a means of discovering new information about our programs that will help us improve them.”

Think of assessment as discovery and improvement. Understanding how to develop your program not only requires meaningful reflection on “why” and “what,” but also careful planning. While there are many tools and templates to assist you in implementing your program and its evaluation, those tools have little value to you, your program, or your students if you simply pick them up and drop them into place with no regard for your institutional culture and climate. Reflection is inevitable. Done well, your investment in assessment will have many valuable uses. ♦

For additional information and resources, Marilee J. Bresciani can be reached at Marilee_Bresciani@ncsu.edu. She is currently director of assessment for undergraduate affairs at North Carolina State University and teaches assessment courses in the department of adult and community college education. Bresciani is co-editor of the assessment section of NetResults, NASPA's E-Zine, and serves on the editorial board of the NASPA Journal. She is also a managing partner in an international assessment and enrollment management consulting firm.

FROM THE TOP

An Interview with the Reverend William C. Gipson

University Chaplain and Special Adviser to the President, University of Pennsylvania

BY NANCY GRUND



The Rev. William C. Gipson has served as university chaplain and special adviser to University of Pennsylvania President Judith Rodin since 1996. Gipson is the fifth university chaplain since the office was established in 1932 and is the first Baptist and African American to hold the post.

As university chaplain, he supports the educational mission of the university by implementing and encouraging programs and activities that focus on theological perspectives and moral and ethical issues. Gipson works closely with the Penn Religious Communities Council and serves as the administrator of religious life on campus. He meets regularly with 17 recognized religious student groups on campus and with the campus' inter-denominational chaplains.

The Office of the Chaplain and the university are recipients of a second multi-year grant from the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund to organize and implement collaborative projects with local schools, communities of faith, and neighborhood organizations to strengthen the larger West Philadelphia community and to bring two key institutions—communities of faith and schools—into closer working relationships with the university.

Previously, Gipson was associate dean of religious life and of the chapel at Princeton University and served as an assistant minister at the historic Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Rochester, New York.

He earned his bachelor of arts in journalism from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and his master of divinity degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

How would you describe your primary responsibilities?

“There are three primary dimensions to my job: the religious life of the university, the connection to our neighbors in the community, and my responsibility to the president of the university.

First, we are proud that Penn is a non-sectarian institution. But non-sectarian does not mean that the university is without the presence of religion. We attract faculty, staff, and students from a wide variety of religions, who study, conduct research, live, and learn side by side. I work with all of the traditional and nontraditional religious and student groups to ensure that all students have a place for prayer, study, fellowship, and interaction across boundaries. Four new groups, including the Hindu Student Council and the Penn Sikh Students Organization, have formed since 1999.

Second, we are an urban research university in the heart of a great American city. The University of Pennsylvania is an important part of West Philadelphia. Several years ago, we met with pastors and other religious leaders in the community to discuss major issues such as access to healthcare, addiction, and preventive health measures. That conversation set us on course for some important partnerships.

Through Programs in University/Communities of Faith, Schools, and Neighborhood Organizations (PUCSFN), a program run through the Penn School of Arts and Sciences in collaboration with the Office of the Chaplain and the Center for Community Partnerships, we now coordinate and collaborate programs with our West Philadelphia neighbors representing 150 communities of faith. Each semester some 24 undergraduate interns and a graduate student coordinator are assigned to administer PUCSFN projects.

We have installed nearly 75 out-of-service computers donated by the University of Pennsylvania in after-school labs

at community churches and mosques. Our students keep them running and, at the same time, integrate them in youth activity programs. Through local churches and mosques, our students are teaching seniors to use computers and to access email. One pastor called us to say that he cannot get an 82-year-old woman to stop sending him email. We have also sponsored one-time programs on issues such as gun violence. Our undergraduates gain valuable experience by participating in these programs—it is not just about kids doing good, it is an important co-curricular experience.

Third, the day after President Rodin invited me to accept the position of university chaplain, she called to say she wanted to ratchet up the appointment and to make me a special advisor to the president. I report to both the president and the provost. President Rodin looks to me to help her keep a good pulse on the development of students around spiritual, interfaith, multicultural, and multiethnic concerns. In addition, I staff a trustee committee and serve on the university council as one of her appointees.”

What advantages/disadvantages come with a direct reporting line to the president?

“Anyone reporting directly to the president and provost has a certain amount of visibility and that visibility can help advance the set of assignments he or she has been given. This can be a disadvantage because some may assume the Office of the Chaplain is already fully developed and that our program is where it needs to be. My staff and I have to work through that assumption and demonstrate that we are still building our program and that we have not yet arrived. We need partners across campus to strengthen our efforts.”

How do you view your role?

“I identify myself as a pastor. Because of my own religious tradition and the people in the church and the academy who mentored me, I do not feel any real tension between my pastoral role and my administrative role. I grew up in southern Black Baptist churches in which it was not unusual to have a pastor who was on faculty at a college or a deaconess who was director of student affairs at the junior college down the road.

The president views me as an adviser. She knows that she can call on me for advice on campus issues or concerns of special interest to her. We sit down and speak one-on-one. Based on our conversations, she may make certain recommendations regarding campus issues. If disagreements occur among different factions on campus, I can offer counsel. In times of crisis, I serve as a sounding board and a participant in responding to individual and campus community needs.”

How do you define spirituality on campus?

“My counterpart at the University of Southern California, Rabbi Susan Laemmle, asserts that there are clear markers that spirituality promotes the experience and the expression of

connectivity, integration, and wholeness. To the extent that we can acknowledge the importance of these markers and place them in the context of intellectual exploration in an academic setting, we can advance our spiritual development work on college and university campuses.”

How do you account for an increased interest in spirituality among students?

“From reading current literature on the topic and observing and talking to students, I think one of the reasons we are now able to verify increased interest in spirituality and religious life among college students is the fact that the field of spirituality is wide open. With more diversity across race and gender and more diversity among religious traditions and spiritual paths, students are increasingly discussing spirituality in their late-night talks along with issues such as love, family, and money. There is no longer institutional dominance of one faith and there are so many religious affiliations today in addition to Protestant, Christian, Jewish, and Roman Catholic.

Students today are suspicious of electoral politics and hand-me-down doctrines. They need to connect with their deepest selves and others on their own terms. I hear it in their rap music and read it in their columns in the student newspaper. They are raising important questions about meaning, authenticity, and social responsibility.”



From your perspective, how does spiritual development fit into student development theory?

“Patrick Love at New York University wrote a piece (“Defining Spiritual Development: A Missing Consideration for Student Affairs,” *NASPA Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 1, Fall 1999) that raises questions about the role of spiritual development in student affairs. He argues that we have been neglectful of spiritual development among undergraduates, at a time when more opportunities should be available.

At Penn, we believe it is important to recognize that, in addition to cognitive development, students experience an holistic expansion in every dimension of their lives, especially during their undergraduate years. Part of identity formation is making a connection with one’s own authentic self and one’s own spiritual identity. We are just now starting to pay close attention to this spiritual dimension.”



What initiatives have been undertaken on your campus to further develop students' sense of spirituality and give them avenues for spiritual exploration?

- “One of the most popular programs coming out of the chaplain’s office is the “What Matters To Me and Why” program, which started at Princeton in the late 1980s. It provides an opportunity for students to engage with senior faculty and administrators outside their official duties. Participants have ranged from the university president to the head coach of the men’s basketball team. Over a casual meal, administrators and faculty members answer questions from students about values and meaning.
- We have developed a Religious Activities Common. The university is the only colonial school that did not begin as an institution to prepare young men to be pastors. The university had no chapel, commons, or university space where religious groups could come together. In 2001, we acquired space that we share with the Graduate Student Center in a former fraternity house. Now Muslim students have a place to pray, Hindu students have a place to do yoga, Evangelical students have a place to conduct Bible studies, and I have a place to sit with students and have meaningful discussions, eat more pizza, and catch up on their busy lives.
- We are working on a Vocation Series that began last semester. Last spring, our speakers included Brian Mahan, assistant professor of Christian education at the Candler School of Theology at Emory, who spoke about vocation and ambition and Patrick T. Harker, dean of the Wharton School, who spoke about vocation in the business world.
- We are looking for a quiet green space on campus to create a labyrinth or a place where students can take time out from their very hectic schedules and this academically demanding environment.
- We have established a Religious Life Liaison Program in which we sponsor undergraduates who serve as our ears and eyes in each of the residential facilities. They pay particular attention to what their peers are talking about — the hot topics of the day. The liaisons help us develop programs that are timely and relevant and that integrate our office into the myriad activities in the college houses.
- PRISM (Programs in Religion, Interfaith, and Spirituality Matters) is a larger, broad-based campus student interfaith group formed in 1997. Student group members organize the annual PRISM Week, a festival of music, food, panel discussions, guest speakers, and films.

- Last year, we commissioned an artist to lead us in creating a piece of artwork to commemorate September 11, 2001. *Hands of Hope* signifies how people reached out to one another to make connections after the events of September 11. Some 600 students, in a wonderful exercise in spirit and community, cast their hands in plaster and painted casts. The casts, to be hung in a campus dining hall, are symbols of peace, hope, community and mutual support.”

How do you coordinate and collaborate with the student affairs office at your institution?

“The vice provost for university life and I meet formally twice a year to review religious life on campus in general terms. She truly appreciates religion and spirituality as important components of student life. If there is a crisis and we must respond, our offices have a good and trustful relationship. In fact, she initiated a Thanksgiving dinner for our international students and recruited my office to be her partner in this event.

The latest trend in spiritual and religious life is to partner with other units and with all denominational leaders. Wellness is now a significant part of spirituality and the vice provost has looked to our office to take wellness farther down the path. She sees the Office of the Chaplain as a resource and a partner in her work.”

How can student affairs administrators become more involved in these spirituality awareness activities on their campuses?

“The Office of the Chaplain must do a lot of preparation before students arrive on campus. Any office on campus can help support the development of spirituality in students. We need to get information out there in much the same way that we share information on other topics through the Internet and publications. That information signals to students that we are interested in developing the whole person.”

What does the future hold?

“We are trying to shape young people into competent, wise, and empathetic leaders who will take citizenship responsibilities seriously and eagerly pursue them. More and more students want to establish meaningful values and commitments in their own lives. They also want to follow career paths that complement these values and commitments.

In the popular music students listen to, in the books they read, and in all of their activities, students may not talk about God with a capital G as in my generation, but the presence of spirituality is there as an important life force. And it is gaining more of a presence on college and university campuses.”



Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation

BY PETER LAKE

The law of discrimination based on sexual orientation is complex and hotly contested. The Supreme Court has recently decided two cases on the topic. The Court ruled that the Boy Scouts, as a private association, can exclude homosexual men from the organization. In a separate decision, the Supreme Court ruled that states cannot single out private sexual behavior (sodomy) by homosexuals for punishment. Both decisions could have wide implications—from the legal right to fire employees for sexual orientation to the legalization of same sex marriages.

The legal issues of discrimination based on sexual orientation are often divisive and difficult to predict. In relation to short-term trends, I can confidently state that anyone who foresees the end of sexual orientation discrimination issues any time soon is hoping for too much.

Let me share a few thoughts about the law of discrimination based on sexual orientation. First, the law regarding students and employees is heavily contractual. If you promise that discrimination based on sexual orientation will not occur in your environment (your board or accrediting authority may require you do so), you will likely have contractual responsibilities to live up to those promises. The promises may be found in your student handbook, employee handbook, and your policies. One of the most central and legally significant issues in sexual orientation litigation is breach of contract.

Federal discrimination law does not protect sexual orientation as it does gender and race issues. However, an assertion that an employer does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation can, in fact, create rights for the employee. Some jurisdictions have statutes or ordinances dealing

with sexual orientation issues in the workplace.

As a result of recent rulings, new questions have been raised about an organization's liabilities. Are these statutes valid after the Boy Scouts case? What is the difference between working for the Boy Scouts or a factory or a college? The law's real strength lies in asking and formulating these types of questions.

Certain constitutional issues arise in public institutions. All students have the same free speech and associational rights and all students share equal access to funding for student organizations. Students have a right to a fair disciplinary process and should not be singled out by sexual orientation for separate treatment regarding grade disputes or policy violations. The bottom line: extend the same constitutional rights to all students.

Students, of course, do not have a constitutional right to force an institution to take a particular perspective. This is the most significant aspect of the Boy Scout decision and holds true for sexual orientation and non-sexual orientation cases alike. Private institutions are not bound by constitutional standards, and there is some division of opinion on whether private institutions

have similar requirements as public institutions under legal theories not grounded in the Constitution. Are colleges like the Boy Scouts? If the Boy Scouts had a clear antidiscrimination policy for sexual orientation, the case never would have gone to the Supreme Court. But what about institutions that require applicants to sign an oath that they disapprove of the homosexual lifestyle? Does the Boy Scouts case settle this issue for applicants or students? The Supreme Court may go back to the well on these issues and may surprise us once again.

As always, toughly contested legal cases often raise questions that the law alone cannot answer. For example, the Supreme Court has admitted the limited ability of the law to create a fair and equal workplace for women. The law can do only so much.

The real issue lies in the kind of culture that exists on your campuses and the desired culture. No set of legal rules can, by themselves, ensure a culture of sexual diversity. All colleges have a duty to test these issues and refine responses and to defeat ignorance in the process. My prediction is that in the next century the debate will yield some interesting and possibly unexpected perspectives.

Peter Lake, professor of law at Stetson University College of Law, is co-author of The Rights and Responsibilities of the Modern University (Carolina Academic Press, 1999). An expert in higher education law and policy, Lake sits on several boards including The Center for Academic Integrity and the review group of The Higher Education Center.



Managing Parental Involvement

BY JON ELDRIDGE

In the Spring 2003 *Leadership Exchange*, Peter Lake writes, “students are not children, but they need and want structure.” A similar statement could be made about parents. Parents are not our students, but they need and want information.

Parents are paying increasing attention to their children’s educations, and at small colleges especially, both students and parents have come to expect more personalized attention. Tim Millerick, vice president for student affairs and athletics at Austin College in Austin, Texas, refers to this trend as the “Investment Quotient.” Millerick believes a lifetime of investing time, money, and influence in their children “leads parents to think they should continue to do so for their children.”

Shaping Parental Involvement

We may sometimes dread the parental phone call, yet there are many reasons to foster parental involvement. How can we work to positively shape increasing parental involvement? Effective strategies for fostering and managing partnerships with parents depend on institutional type and culture.

Does your campus enroll many first-generation college students? Are your students typically of the traditional college age or older? Do most students’ families live nearby or out of state? Do most students receive need-based financial aid or are they predominantly “full pay”? A clear picture of these and other demographic issues will inform an appropriate institutional approach to engaging your parent body.

Does your campus have a comprehensive, coherent institutional plan for working with parents? It can be a public relations disaster if your development office conducts a phone-a-thon with parents shortly after tuition bills are mailed. Who is responsible for coordinating mailings, email, and other

communications from various departments?

Many smaller campuses do not have the luxury of an Office of Parent Programs. If your institution fits into this category, the answer to the question, “Who on campus is responsible for communication with parents?” is all of us.

Student affairs professionals are best suited to lead institutional efforts to coordinate parent engagement. Parents want to know that their children are in good environments. They also want to know what to do if their children are struggling in some way. Alumni and development officers may have little knowledge of these subjects, yet are often charged with overseeing parent programs. Collaborating with other campus offices may create additional headaches, but the payoff of an integrated institutional approach to communicating with parents is worth the extra work and can reap additional benefits in fostering longer-term institutional support from parents.

Partnering With Parents

It is important to empower our staff members to develop partnerships with parents. These partnerships may come in the form of enlisting parent participation on policy review committees or in orientation. The more opportunities for positive partnerships, the less likely that parental involvement will become adversarial.

Our partnerships with parents are, of course, more limited than those we share with students. The more information we volunteer proactively about counseling services, advising, and our

Information Fosters Involvement

Basic programs or publications can foster parental involvement, including:

- Parent handbook highlighting institutional expectations, descriptions of key offices and procedures, the academic calendar, and emergency campus contact information
- Parent page on institutional Web site linking to appropriate pages, such as financial aid, housing, career development, and readings on cognitive learning, issues facing college students, etc.
- Parent orientation focusing on institutional culture and structure, student expectations, communication and its limitations (including FERPA, the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act), and “letting go”
- Letters and electronic newsletters to parents throughout their children’s college careers
- Parent councils, whether fundraising, friendraising, or advisory, to lend structure and focus parental energy
- Parent clusters, composed of appropriate college staff, to coordinate institutional interactions with parents

institutional procedures, the easier it is to respond appropriately to questions that pertain directly to a student’s educational record. Developing clearly defined partnerships in which parents can play positive, supportive, and appropriately limited roles can greatly improve the quality of the college experience for many students.

Jon Eldridge is dean of students at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. He is currently the NASPA Region V Small College and University Knowledge Community Chair and the Small College Knowledge Community Web administrator. He also serves on the Knowledge Community leadership team. Eldridge previously worked in student affairs at Central Washington University, Colorado State University, and the University of Washington.



Online Student Services: Where is Your Campus?

BY KEVIN KRUGER

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reports that 78 percent of four-year public institutions and 97 percent of all higher education institutions with enrollment of more than 10,000 students offer distance education programs. Recent discussions within the distance education community point to two surprising developments. First, enrollment in distance education classes, or virtual classes, is dominated by campus-based students. Distance education programs commonly report that up to 85 percent of students enrolled are traditional-age, residential college students who have chosen the convenience of online education over campus classes with faculty present.

Second, distance education programs are building and creating sophisticated student services components to complement their online course offerings. These online student services have developed as marketing strategies to distinguish programs in a competitive marketplace and in response to student demand. Students enrolled in distance education programs want the same 24/7 access to services they enjoy with online course content.

The provision of student services to diverse student groups is not a new development. What is new is the breadth of these services and the move from the “administrative core” to traditional student affairs functions such as orientation, community building, counseling, career development, and job placement. Daryl Burnett, who has coordinated the IBM Innovations in Student Services Conference, describes the “administrative core” as including admissions, registration, financial aid, student records, and class scheduling.

With the advent of campus-wide Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)* database solutions such as Peoplesoft, SCT, Datatel, Oracle, and others, inte-

grated Web access is much more manageable and more prevalent. Despite this progress, Kenneth Green writes in the *2003 Campus Computing Survey*, “Considering the wide array of electronic commerce and electronic service options routinely available to students and faculty in the consumer and corporate sectors, it’s clear that the campus community is still roughly two years behind in its eCommerce/eService offerings.

“At the end of the day the benchmark is still Amazon and other consumer sites that are all too familiar to students and faculty, and that offer a far richer array of information and services than are commonly available on most campus Web sites,” Green offers.

Beyond the Administrative Core

The development of sophisticated student services is lagging even further behind, although significant innovations in traditional student affairs areas are being developed both as home-grown applications and commercial solutions for this growing market.

WCET, the cooperative advancing the effective use of technology in higher

education, is a leader in advocating for the development of student services that go beyond the administrative core to include functions such as orientation, counseling, tutoring, and career development. In July 2003, WCET launched EduTools for Student Services (www.edutools.info/student/index.jsp), an online tool that allows users to compare commercial products that provide solutions in academic advising, admissions, orientation, counseling, assessment, tutoring, and career planning.

Home-grown solutions are emerging within most distance education programs. Online orientation is the most common, providing virtual tours, advising, registration, and overviews of campus policies and resources. Mira Costa College in Oceanside, California offers an online orientation rich with media and audio files that include a quiz that must be completed to register for classes (http://teachinggear.net/orientation/launch/launch_flash.php).

The career development and planning area is benefiting from some of the most sophisticated technology developments, largely due to the entry of companies such as Monster.com and Experience.com into the college marketplace. These programs offer job placement services and tools for career exploration and resume development.

Even counseling services, historically based on the one-to-one clinical model, are now available online. The program “Go Ask Alice” developed by Columbia University (www.goaskalice.com), provides students with opportunities to discuss a wide range of psycho-social issues through an asynchronous discussion format. Campuses such as Cosumnes River College in Sacramento, California, Brenau University in Gainesville, Georgia, and California Virtual College (CVC) all provide either live or email contact between students and trained counselors.

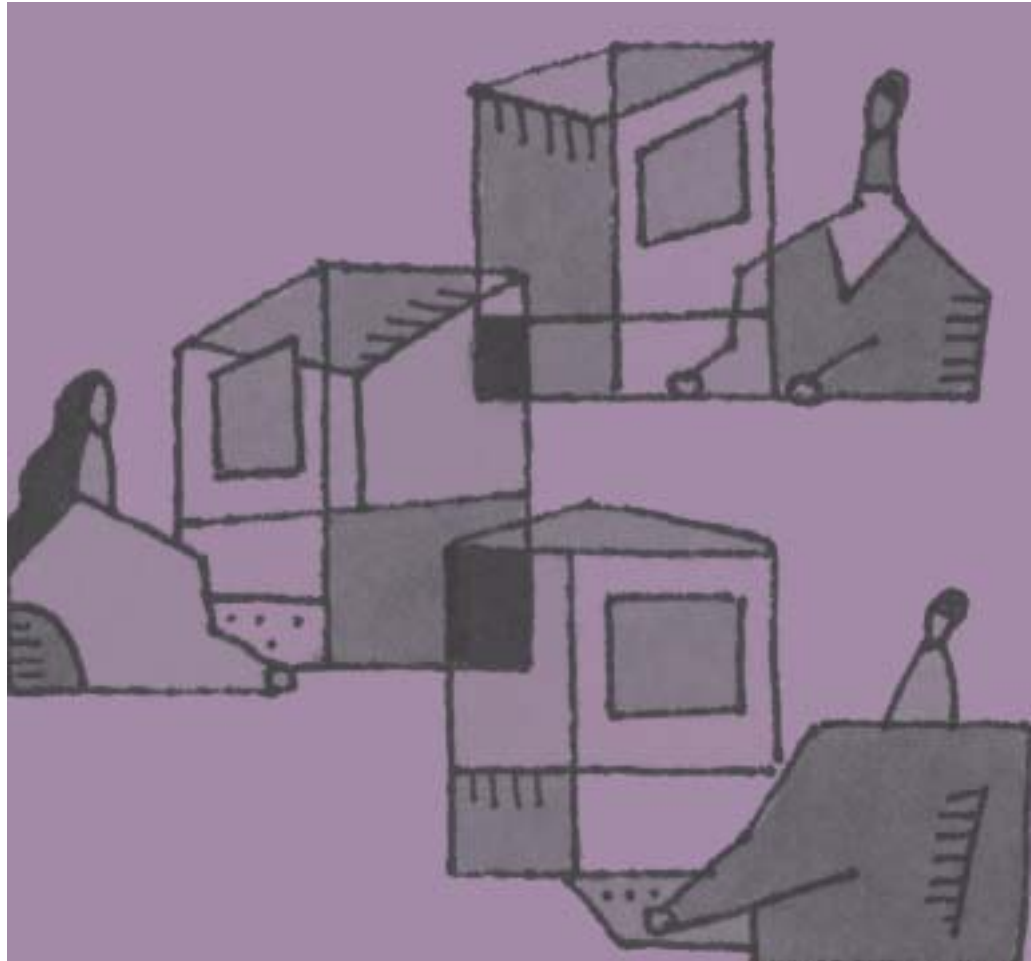


SSAO Involvement is Key

Will these online student services ever replace the face-to-face interactions that are the hallmarks of traditional student affairs work? Probably not, but as the nature and delivery of college education continues to evolve, senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) must closely examine alternative delivery systems for their services. This is the greatest challenge for student affairs because, in many cases, online student services are developed without the involvement of student affairs professionals. SSAOs must begin communicating with their distance education colleagues in the planning process for online student services to ensure successful and consistent implementation.

*** Enterprise Resource Planning is designed to integrate all university departments and functions onto a single database so that departments can share information across functions.**

Kevin Kruger has served as the associate executive director of NASPA since 1994 and also directs the NASPA Center for Technology in Student Affairs. Prior to NASPA, he served as the associate vice president for student affairs at University of Maryland, Baltimore County.



BEST PRACTICES IN ONLINE STUDENT SERVICES

Darlene Burnett in *Innovations in Student Services*, published in 2002 by the Society of College and University Planning (SCUP), provides a framework for developing best practices in online student services.

- Service perspectives are shifted 180 degrees when the institution views all services from the external perspective of the student/customer instead of the internal perspective of the institution.
- Processes are redesigned from the student/customer perspective.
- Barriers to information are removed by providing integrated information access to disparate databases for both staff and students.
- As the institution learns more about the expectations of students and the needs of staff, an evolving student service model is planned to provide those services.
- Organizations recognize that significant changes in the delivery of services must be strategically planned and have the full support of and participation by the executive team.

ONLINE STUDENT SERVICES RESOURCES

WCET www.wcet.org/projects

EduTools www.edutools.edu

Flashlight Program for the Study and Improvement of Educational Uses of Technology <http://www.tltgroup.org/programs/flashlight.html>

Beyond the Administrative Core <http://www.edpath.com/wcet.htm>



Canada Responds to Growing Number of International Students

BY BRIAN SULLIVAN

International student enrollment in Canadian colleges and universities is increasing dramatically. In 1990, some 57,000 international students attended all types of educational institutions in this country. By fall 2001, that number had increased 128 percent to 130,000 students, 70 percent of whom were enrolled at a university or community college. Several institutions have experienced international student growth of 15 to 20 percent in the last year alone. What is behind this growth trend and what challenges does it pose?

Sources of Growth

Even before the events of September 11, 2001, a number of factors had contributed to the growth in international student enrollment. Canadian colleges and universities had a lot of catching up to do, as the percentage of foreign students enrolled in postsecondary institutions was lower than most other nations that are major players in international education. In the mid 1990s, Canadian colleges and universities began to make significant new investments to strengthen recruitment, admission, and support of international students. At the same time, internationalization of campuses was promoted as an important educational objective for teaching, research, and community involvement. Revenues associated with the increased tuition rates (up to full-fee payment) for international students are being used to support incremental gains in educational resources, from faculty and staff recruitment and retention to new equipment and facilities.

More recently, the Canadian government has made important policy changes to support increased international student enrollment. New regulations have been introduced by the Office of Citizenship and Immigration,

eliminating the mandatory study permit requirement for international students taking courses of six months or less, to ease student movement to Canada.

While increased investment, focused recruiting, and policy and procedure changes have contributed to the international student growth trend, the Canadian government's decision to resist reframing international education as a national security imperative has enhanced the country's relative attractiveness and accessibility as a North American provider of higher education. To this point, Canadian institutions have not implemented interview requirements nor contemplated exit immigration monitoring – two policies that seem to discourage potential applicants to colleges and universities in the United States.

Admission

Undergraduate international applications at the University of British Columbia have nearly doubled in the last two years to 5,350. Currently, some eight percent of the University's students are international and the number of international registrants has increased 37 percent since fall 2001. A broader range of countries are represented in the applicant pool and the language proficiency and credential demands are increasing faster than are the resources available for traditional file review. "Be Where Students Are" is the new imperative, which includes Web-enabled admission processes, bilateral arrangements with selected secondary schools, and enrollment planning targets that offer international students admission as soon as possible in the recruitment cycle. At the graduate level, automated credential conversion packages are now in use.



Dynamics are changing in many classrooms and the curricula and faculty must respond.

Displacement

There is mounting criticism, in concert with rising grade point average cutoffs for domestic admission, that Canadian students are being displaced by international students. Institutions are moving toward full-fee, pay-as-you-go approaches for international undergraduates, in part to offset this concern. In addition, partnerships are emerging for international institutions to assist in financing construction of additional residence space on the Canadian partner's campus to ensure accessible housing for both international and domestic students.

Finances

Experience demonstrates that some international applicants need financial assistance. International tuition revenues are being redistributed in the form of need-based scholarships for international students. Emergency loan funds are also in place. The federal government has recently relaxed restrictions on local employment of international students to assist them in financing their educations and to further a sense of community connection.

Orientation

Practical handbooks delivered on the Web and coordinated, institution-wide orientation programs are proving critical as departmental or degree program publications and orientations lack consistency, comprehensiveness, and essential institutional messages about internationalization. Parent involvement is also increasingly important. In many cases, international orientation programs occur for several days before the general orientation begins and are led by trained senior student leaders (international and domestic).

Well-being

Health care services, health insurance programs, personal and relationship counseling, and nutritional requirements for international students are constantly adjusted and strengthened. Many institutions are allocating a share of international tuition dollars directly to these and related student development and academic support services.

Academic Experience

Diversity begets diversity, including variations in work habits, attitudes toward faculty and peers, the value of knowledge, and attribution of sources in coursework. Dynamics are changing in many classrooms and the curricula and faculty must respond. More staff training to support the growing international community is occurring at our institutions. Staff exchanges with international partner universities are also increasing.

Involvement

We want our international students, like any students, fully engaged in learning within their college or university communities. Guarantees of on-campus housing and more campus employment opportunities support this involvement. Through dialogue with students about their experiences (face-to-face discussions and surveys), by listening carefully, and by inviting them to help shape institutional responses, institutions can create positive environments for engagement. International student commissions as part of existing student government bodies also promote engagement.

Student Success

Many of the strategies post-secondary institutions have developed to meet the rapid growth of international students in Canada have much in common with the strategies student services professionals advance to meet the needs of any student. "Make the Big Small," "Be Where Students Are," "Serve Beyond the Expected," and "Learn From What We Do" are all approaches that characterize our work in supporting students and their successes. Whatever the political context, Canadian and U.S. postsecondary institutions have much to share to help each other fashion the learning and living environments that all students deserve.

Brian Sullivan has been vice president for students at the University of British Columbia since 1999. He has served as a NASPA regional board member and been active in NASPA's International Symposium since its inception.



Dreams, Nightmares, and Pursuing the Passion: Personal Perspectives on College and University Leadership

(NASPA 2003)

BY SHANNON ELLIS

Vice President for Student Services, University of Nevada, Reno

Shannon Ellis' manuscript chronicles her first year as a newly appointed vice president for student services, a journey that is at times humorous, self-deprecating, frustrating, and sad, yet always thought-provoking and inspiring.

Ellis' experiences are not only beneficial for aspiring and established senior student affairs officers (SSAOs), but for all professionals. Personal journal entries, used sparingly, document the author's state of mind and her reflections provide humble advice and guidance to the reader.

Ellis conveys her experiences on several levels. First, she addresses the daily tasks or practical considerations of the SSAO role. She offers time- and resource-saving suggestions for administrative duties such as leading committees. She cites the expectations of making financial contributions to the institution, attending funerals, giving speeches, and wrangling over office space. She offers her perceptions on budget management and reductions and facilities management.

Second, Ellis offers personal insights for cultivating work relationships and encouraging communication. She discusses the importance of working together with the president, colleagues, staff, regents, legislators, and legal counsel. She offers helpful perspectives on the art and science of negotiating, building trust, and empowering staff by sharing authority. Ellis gives many examples of her style of leadership, including her desire for "quick wins"—opportunities to stimulate change for the student body or staff that demonstrate her commitment.

Third, Ellis offers planning tactics. She communicates the importance of establishing and sustaining a clear vision and strategic priorities to shape the environment and keep it ripe for innovation. Throughout her journey, we watch her struggle and overcome obstacles as she is constantly challenged to implement her goals.

Finally, the reader follows Ellis' growth as she personalizes her role and niche within the institution. In the first pages, Ellis addresses the chaotic and exhausting job-as-life demands of the position. Later, she struggles to establish her own processes and rules. She learns to solicit advice, ask questions, and ultimately develop her own vision.

From her initial job application to negotiations for her position through the conclusion of her first year, Ellis provides a clear account of her vice presidential transition. Having twice made such transitions, I would have benefited from her perspective as a guide, roadmap, and point of comparison.

Ellis' manuscript helped me validate and confirm my own leadership styles and techniques. The book also prompted reflection on my current practices and approaches to leadership, planning, political positioning, and relationship building. Finally, I came away with an appreciation and respect for the author's wise and thoughtful approach to her professional journey.

March 30, 1999. Being a vice president at a mid-sized land grant institution is hard work.

I love it. I can do it fairly well and better as time goes by.

Excerpt from *Dreams, Nightmares, and Pursuing the Passion: Personal Perspectives on College and University Leadership*

Submitted by Mark Shanley, vice president for student affairs, Northern Kentucky University. He previously served as senior student affairs officer at Truman State University and assistant vice president and dean of student development at the University of South Carolina. He has been active professionally in NASPA and ACPA throughout his career, and currently serves on the board for the James E. Scott National Academy for Leadership and Executive Effectiveness.



Perhaps K-12 Collaboration is in Our Future

BY GWENDOLYN J. DUNGY
Executive Director, NASPA

As many of you know, I have been on a five-month education leave in Mexico. In April, after about two weeks of Spanish language classes, I returned to the United States to attend a board meeting for another organization.

As I prepared for the meeting, the television was tuned to “The Today Show” and Ricky Martin was singing in Spanish from his new CD, “Tal Vez.” I was sure that when I returned to Mexico I would hear the Martin songs all the time. Surprisingly, the only time I heard the song “Tal Vez” was from two young children who were eager to earn tips for entertaining local bus passengers. Unlike Ricky Martin and his high-tech equipment, the young musicians used sticks and blocks of wood as instruments. As I listened to them, I thought about the potential of children and how education nurtures their talents and energies.

Tal vez, meaning perhaps or maybe, makes me think of life’s possibilities. Perhaps is a visionary word that motivates leaders to make the impossible or improbable a reality. Few leaders have more experience achieving the improbable than senior student affairs officers (SSAOs). What would happen if student affairs professionals could begin student development education with very young students who are most eager and ready to acquire the skills that lead to positive learning and development experiences?

Currently, student affairs accepts a large responsibility for cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal competencies as student outcomes. While it is certainly not impossible for student affairs to make positive contributions to these student outcomes, we are at a disadvantage because of our limited access to students at critical developmental

times in their lives. Perhaps if student development education began in elementary school and was promoted on a continuum throughout a student’s education, successful outcomes would be more attainable for larger numbers of students.

I have been thinking about early student development education for some time and have written and spoken about collaborative work among high schools, families, and student affairs. Good ideas must be planted in good soil at the right time to have an impact. With the current national focus on the quality of schooling and student success in K-12; the dramatic growth in the number of charter schools; the increasing frequency of cities connecting failing or flailing public schools to colleges and universities; and, most impressively, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s National School District and Network Grants Program to transform the American high school experience, perhaps the time is right to pursue early student development education.

Just as music, movies, fashions, and other trends are imported from one country to another, perhaps ideas about connections between elementary and secondary education and colleges and universities in foreign countries can be adapted in the United States. In Mexico, the best private universities connect to K-12 schools that function under the same auspices and with the same missions as the universities. For example, Tec de Monterrey, a superior private university in Mexico, has

established its own high schools. The SSAO at Tec de Monterrey also directs the university’s high schools. The expectation is that students who attend these high schools will be prepared and qualified for acceptance into Tec de Monterrey.

The university’s 33 campuses forward its responsibility in the “formation of habits, attitudes, and values that lead to commitment, respect, and responsibility for society.” This university measures its success by how students contribute to the community and how many students become leaders in distinguished organizations throughout the world.

It is unreasonable to expect that the cognitive and developmental outcomes of education rest with faculty and student affairs when our contact time is so limited. Yes, students are learning and developing in K-12 and many schools do an outstanding job. However, without deliberate planning and collaboration over an extended period of time with specific outcomes for assessment, coherence is non-existent and the results are far from optimal.

You may perceive this view as idealistic and impractical considering current responsibilities and fiscal constraints. But I say to you, perhaps we can break the mold.

Would feeder schools in your community be open to student development education that addresses the ultimate outcomes of higher education?

I encourage you to think beyond the temporal constraints of traditional college years and to consider what, in the final analysis, are the most important contributions student affairs can make to student learning and development outcomes and what are the most effective ways to accomplish them. Tal vez ...



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