

arrangement has been created, engendering the cooperation of university administrators, Greek leaders, and chapter members.

SUMMARY

According to Jacoby and Burnett (1986), "Commuter students represent both a plurality and an enigma in contemporary higher education. Too often it is assumed that traditional planning, policies, and programs, which have evolved to serve residential students, will perform equally well for non-residents" (p. 1). Thus, developing and implementing educationally sound alcohol abuse prevention programs in the Greek system on an entirely commuter campus present a significant challenge.

Solving the problems associated with college students' drinking is now more critical than ever. Prevention contracts can help reduce the tension that arises when addressing alcohol-related problems within the Greek system. Although not a panacea, prevention contracts can be a step in the right direction.

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Managing a Student Affairs Team: It's a New Ball Game

Robert C. DeWitt

The author reviews a number of reasons why the student affairs profession has changed so dramatically in recent years, and offers recommendations for responding to the changes.

Recently, I spent an evening on campus with a group of students, faculty, and staff reviewing the credentials of freshmen seeking admission to a sophomore Honor Society. It was an enjoyable and productive discussion, one I believe can serve as the foundation of many student development models. Current members of the Society articulated their views on prospective members based on interviews and their personal experiences with the new students. The members also met with faculty and staff on a one-to-one basis, and I believe each of us left the room having shared a positive experience. In completing the exercise, we all socialized over pizza, with some of us then attending a cultural program on campus later that evening. Sitting at that program, I was amazed that I had actually been rejuvenated by the evening's events. Although, as a chief student affairs officer, I spend many evenings on campus working on staff evaluations, discipline cases, or strategic plans, I believed that night I had made a direct impact on the lives of students-something that has become a rare event for me.

During graduate school we learn about counseling theory, different areas of student affairs, and the organization of higher education. Many recent changes

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in higher education, however, have made this type of training inadequate for effectively managing a student affairs division. We still need skills for interacting with students, but a greater emphasis must be placed on other areas in order for graduating student affairs personnel to handle the changing environment of higher education in the United States. Why has the student affairs profession changed so drastically in the last ten years? Some of the reasons for change, as well as recommendations for addressing contemporary issues, are presented below.

One of the critical areas of concern for higher education has been the projected decline in traditional high school students. Issues such as recruitment and retention have now been combined into the field of *enrollment management*. Campuses concerned with enrollments and dwindling resources have been forced to shift resources to this area. Student affairs staff members are usually charged with either directing this effort or becoming involved with some aspect of the recruitment and retention of students. Small campuses have had to reallocate staff and finances from traditional student services so that more time and energy are devoted to enrollment management. Instead of spending time with student groups and programs, many of us attend recruiting functions or implement strategic plans. Retention activities have focused on academic support services instead of the more traditional cocurricular activities or leadership programs.

The second change to which student affairs professionals have had to adjust is the growing importance of the campus learning center. Students are being admitted to colleges and universities with good high school records, but preenrollment testing shows they are deficient in one or more areas and may be unable to succeed without remedial help. A strong student activities program has been documented to improve student satisfaction and retention rates. Still, with more students entering college with deficient academic skills, the emphasis on retention must begin with remedial courses, monitoring of academic progress, and increased reliance on testing and study skills courses. Students can attend quality social programs, leadership development experiences, or career development programs, but if they cannot pass an initial English or math course these and other activities become secondary in the retention effort.

A third area of change is in the treatment of the "problem student." A problem student is one who has been involved in either a serious discipline or emotional problem, or both. The apparent increase on campuses of students with serious problems may be the result of more general societal changes. Nonetheless, reliance on due process procedures and the threat of lawsuits have resulted in universities proceeding cautiously when dealing with problem students. This results in enormous amounts of staff time and resources dedicated to working with university attorneys, parents, and mental health centers, in addition to the volumes of paper work emanating from such efforts. Student affairs staff must also now spend time developing crisis intervention guidelines and involuntary withdrawal procedures or updating campus codes of conduct.

A fourth change requires that the student affairs administrator be knowledgeable about budgets and strategic planning. This is now an integral part of managing any division, and is a direct result of the limited resources

available to colleges and universities across the country. Student affairs professionals must develop strategic plans and creative budget proposals that demonstrate how our profession is integral to the university's mission. The chief student affairs officer must develop strong relationships with the campus president, chief academic affairs officer, and faculty in order to be effective. Student affairs divisions must become proactive and produce innovative research clearly documenting the importance of the services we provide. We must also learn to effectively market our divisions to university communities and find creative means of developing cooperative programs with our academic counterparts that improve retention rates and support the universities' academic missions.

A fifth change in colleges and universities is the increase in the number of committees formed. We in academia share a unique work environment—the governance of a college is controlled by a variety of internal and external groups. At times, this gives the appearance that we are afraid to make a decision unless by committee. The process is sometimes frustrating, but is something we must learn to deal with effectively. Even though we have the expertise in student affairs and think we know what is best, as student affairs professionals we must be open to criticism and critique from students, faculty, and other staff.

A sixth change deals with the diversity of the student population we serve. Today more minority, adult, women, and part-time students are attending college. They have special needs and diverse values which we must address. We cannot do this alone; we need the assistance of the entire campus if we are to implement successful diversity programs.

Finally, we must be concerned, as a profession, about professional development, staff morale, and salary scales. Staff morale and effectiveness are especially critical components to address. With limited resources, student affairs staff are being left behind in terms of merit increases and professional development opportunities. It becomes difficult to expect top performers to excel and have positive attitudes if we cannot provide proper incentives for them. Employees' quality of life must also be addressed if we hope to recruit and retain quality individuals in our field. If we do not address these concerns, not only will our profession suffer, but the students we serve will get less for their tuition dollars.

Given these changes, managing a student affairs team is a new ball game. In order to better prepare for the future, we must address these areas and not be afraid to make changes of our own. One of the top priorities must be to review the master's and doctoral programs that prepare student affairs professionals. We can no longer accept individuals from programs that focus solely on counseling skills and the review of student affairs areas. We must encourage the leaders of graduate departments to provide students with both theoretical and hands-on experience with, among other issues, enrollment management, strategic planning, dealing with problem students, diversity, budgeting, and working in committees with our academic counterparts and students.

Second, professional organizations such as NASPA and ACPA must provide professional development opportunities to assist in training our staff and in encouraging graduate student educators to evaluate their student affairs

preparation programs. Professional organizations must also be more aggressive in stressing the importance of our profession in the university hierarchy.

Third, NASPA and ACPA must provide guidance and research documenting that the student affairs profession is losing quality people to business and industry. This becomes increasingly alarming at national convention placement centers when there are more jobs available than candidates to fill them. Action must be taken to recruit and retain qualified individuals committed to the profession. For this to occur, we must continue to express need for the resources required to attract quality individuals to the field. Additionally, we must recruit professionals with diverse backgrounds so they can serve as role models for the changing student population.

Fourth, our profession must continue to provide quality and practical research documenting our existence. Too often we are perceived as taking resources away from other campus departments, especially in the academic arena. Student affairs divisions are also sometimes portrayed as only concerned with "fun and games." We must therefore market our services and cooperate with all areas of the university if we are to excel in any location. Student affairs professionals must be perceived as equal partners in the education process and must stress the importance of a complete education for the students enrolled at our campuses.

Finally, many of us enter this field to assist students in their development both in and out of the classroom. Unfortunately, we are forced to spend considerable amounts of time on enrollment management, staff morale, evaluation, strategic planning, and problem students. It seems that we spend 90% of our time with 10% of our students. We must not forget, however, about working directly with students and their programs as our profession changes. It is still the reason we exist.

BOOK REVIEWS

Mac A. Stewart

Responding to the Needs of Today's Minority Students
(*New Directions for Student Services*, No. 38)

Doris J. Wright, *Editor*
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987

Student affairs administrators are expected to assist all students in reaching their maximum potential. This lofty goal can only be achieved if student affairs staff members can recognize and nurture elements of cultures not their own in individual students. And if such cultural values are to be nurtured, then administrators must recognize and respond to them in positive and productive ways.

This straightforward nontechnical book is part of the *New Directions for Student Services* series published by Jossey-Bass. The editor, Doris J. Wright, a psychologist in a university counseling center, skillfully discusses the psychosocial needs of minority students on a predominantly white campus. *Responding to the Needs of Today's Minority Students* is thus a welcome addition to the literature on cultural diversity in higher education in general, and student services in particular.

The book consists of seven chapters. In the first, Wright provides a historical overview of minority students' participation in higher education, discusses their special needs, and appraises current student development theory designed to meet these needs. Student affairs administrators have often responded to minority students as though they are homogeneous. Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 discuss the unique needs of black, Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian students respectively, emphasizing the heterogeneity not only among these groups, but within each group. The reader is left with a clear directive