

emotional stability, and a sense of meaningfulness. In other words, this person sees a situation accurately, is free from emotional distraction in relation to the situation, acts appropriately, and sees the entire episode as part of a meaningful life gestalt" (p. 39). The key to this rich multidimensional education is to focus on students as learners and as agents of their own development.

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*Student affairs practitioners today must often face difficulties related to the promotion of multiculturalism while maintaining individual rights and freedoms with a college population.*

## Meeting the Needs of All Students and Staff Members: The Challenge of Diversity

Mary F. Howard-Hamilton, Rosemary E. Phelps,  
Vasti Torres

Colleges and universities have struggled to find a method that makes the writing and enforcement of institutional policies, procedures, and practices inclusive of everyone's rights and feelings. This is an arduous task, given the fact that so many different constituencies make up our campuses. Each of these groups desires the protection of its own issues as well as a clear understanding of how these issues should be addressed.

Issues related to role and function are often at the forefront for student affairs practitioners when dealing with campus diversity. Student affairs practitioners are generally responsible for the development and implementation of university policies that may have a direct or indirect impact on students from various backgrounds. Although policies provide an operational framework, with guidelines for students, faculty, and administrators, they also inadvertently maintain the status quo through policies that do not adequately address the needs of all students. This can in turn lead student affairs practitioners to ethical concerns, conflicts with student development theories and their own professional values, and questions of person-environment fit.

It is generally accepted in our field that every practitioner is responsible for promoting diversity. This includes an understanding of current diversity issues and the historical context of these issues. Often we direct diversity-related issues to a designated individual or department and do not assume the personal responsibility required to foster an environment conducive to all students.

This chapter will address how all these concerns converge in daily student affairs practices in two broad areas: laws and regulations, and promoting diversity. Legislative directives, current laws, and the most recent research on the topic will be addressed in each section.

## Laws and Regulations

Several significant legislative actions and laws affect all constituents on a college campus, especially diverse populations. These include affirmative action, the civil rights codes, the First Amendment, the Americans with Disabilities Act, financial aid (minority scholarships), and sexual harassment regulations. Interpretations of these laws and regulations differ, depending on whether the institution is public or private.

**Affirmative Action.** It would be difficult to discuss diversity on our campuses without discussing affirmative action. The federal government's original goals for affirmative action concentrated on two outcomes: to end future discriminatory practices and to counteract discrimination from the past (Kaplin and Lee, 1995). Today these two goals are interpreted very differently from their initial conception in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Whether involving issues of hiring staff or admitting students, affirmative action is as controversial as ever. We will not focus on the specifics of the law but rather on affirmative action's effects on minority staff members and students. As of this writing, several states are reconsidering their interpretation of affirmative action policies. Our interpretation of regulations, executive orders, or court decisions may apply only to certain states.

A review of the recent literature on affirmative action as it relates to employees of higher education institutions reveals that nearly all cases are brought by majority (white) employees claiming reverse discrimination and preferences based solely on race. In issues of hiring, the courts seem to be applying the Weber test (Weber v. Kaiser Aluminum Co., 1979) to determine if an affirmative action plan falls within Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Weber test consists of three factors, all of which must be answered in the negative: (1) Was there an imbalance between the number of qualified minority workers and all workers in that particular employee category? (2) Were the rights of other employees hindered unnecessarily? and (3) Were the affirmative action measures temporary? These three factors leave much to interpretation; therefore, they should not be taken solely at face value. For example, in some cases the courts found that academic positions that do not open up regularly should not be designated for minorities because doing so would hinder the career opportunities of others unnecessarily, thereby violating the equal protection clause of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Kaplin and Lee, 1995). What has not been considered in the student affairs literature is how these cases affect minority staff members. Do these cases create an environment of complaisance, an assumption that if you are a minority you have been hired because of your race and not your skills? It is important that stu-

dent affairs divisions consider how their hiring practices affect both white and minority staff members.

The literature on affirmative action and the admission of students into institutions of higher education is plentiful. The string of cases chipping away at affirmative action is growing. In *Podberesky v. Kirwan* (1994), the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the University of Maryland and canceled the university's race-based scholarship program. More recently, *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996) altered the belief about affirmative action that had been set by the Bakke case (1978). In *Hopwood* the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that colleges were no longer allowed "to justify using racial preferences to achieve a diverse student body" (Jaschik and Lederman, 1996, p. A26). After the Supreme Court let the *Hopwood* case stand (Lederman and Burd, 1996), many institutions outside the purview of the Fifth Circuit began to redefine their admission policies to avoid finding themselves in court in their own circuit.

How have minority students reacted to this situation? Some observers feel that the ruling sent out "a strong if unintended message to minority students: You aren't welcome on our campuses" (Healy, 1997, p. A28). The acceptance rate at the Law School at the University of Texas at Austin would seem to bear this out: only one black student accepted admission to the law school for fall 1997 (Haworth, 1997). As a result, the state legislature in Texas has become involved in the admissions policies of its public institutions of higher education. Clearly, the outcomes of the Hopwood decision can send unwelcoming messages to minority students on our campuses. Mandates that only test scores or empirical measures be used as acceptance criteria may work against minorities and women. Broader admissions criteria, by contrast, would enhance the opportunity for a campus to have a more diverse student body

**Civil Rights Codes.** Seven federal statutes prohibit discrimination against certain groups of people and require affirmative actions on the part of the institution (Gehring, 1993; Barr, 1996). The statutes are Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Sections 1981 and 1983 of the Civil Rights Act of 1966, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Here we will discuss Title VI, which forbids discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, or color, and Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. Section 504 is described later in this chapter. Information on the other statutes can be found in Kaplin and Lee (1995, 1997).

Higher education institutions receiving federal financial aid assistance are required "to follow not only the programmatic and technical requirements of each program under which aid is received but also various civil rights requirements that apply generally to federal aid programs" (Kaplin and Lee, 1997, p. 544). Title IX applies only to educational programs receiving federal financial assistance, whereas Title VI applies to all programs receiving such assistance.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states, "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination

under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." The most famous Title VI case was *Bakke* (1978), in which a white medical school applicant was denied admission because the institution had reserved a specific number of spaces for people of color. "The Supreme Court held that an admissions quota violated Title VI, but institutions could consider race as one of several factors in their admissions decisions" (Gehring, 1993, p. 283).

Another frequently debated issue under this law is the presence of historically black institutions of higher education. In the case *United States v. Alabama* (1991), the issue of de jure segregation was debated. The plaintiffs, a group of African American citizens, "argued that the state's allocation of funds to public colleges perpetuated racial segregation because the black colleges received less funds for research or graduate education" (Kaplin and Lee, 1997, pp. 557-558). They also argued against the current curriculum at the predominantly white universities due to their refusal to teach courses related to black culture or history. This omission in the curriculum has a deleterious effect on black students (Kaplin and Lee, 1997). The case is still pending and has been remanded to several courts for interpretation.

Because we are still considering innumerable cases two decades after the inception of the law, Kaplin and Lee (1997) believe that "the desegregation of higher education is very much an unfinished business" (p. 559). The authors note that institutions should move with caution and sensitivity when administrative enforcement of Title VI is necessary. "The challenge is for lawyers, administrators, government officials, and the judiciary to work together to fashion solutions that will be consonant with the law's requirement to desegregate but will increase rather than limit the opportunities available to minority students and faculty" (p. 559).

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 requires that institutions provide "reasonable opportunity for women and men to receive athletic financial assistance in proportion to the number of female and male students participating in the intercollegiate athletic program" (Barr, 1996, p. 137). Title IX also includes sexual harassment based on quid pro quo and harassing behavior that creates a hostile environment (Barr, 1996). In the case of an intercollegiate men's swimming team being eliminated but not the women's team, *Kelley v. Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois* (1993), it was found that there was no violation of Title IX because "participation by men in athletics was proportionately larger than their enrollment in the university while women's participation was less than proportional" (Barr, 1996, p. 138).

A case involving sexual harassment, *Lipsett v. University of Puerto Rico* (1988), a medical student who was dismissed charged that her classmates harassed her and she was denied certain responsibilities because of her gender. The trial court awarded judgment for the university due to "alleged academic misconduct on the part of the plaintiff" (Kaplin and Lee, 1997, p. 563). Given the complexities of Title IX and its inclusion of sexual harassment, it is imperative that institutions review their guidelines on sexual misconduct among faculty, staff, and students. Furthermore, intercollegiate athletic pro-

grams should engage in a review process that includes legal counsel, administrators faculty, and staff to ensure equal access to athletic scholarships and programs for women and men.

**Financial Aid (Minority Scholarships).** Much emphasis has been placed, on the use of minority scholarships to increase the number of minority students attending institutions of higher education. Because minority scholarships are merit-based, they often serve as a tool to attract qualified minority applicants to one school over another rather than to increase the number of minority students actually participating in higher education. Podberesky (1994) changed how minority scholarships can be used, but what do we know about the effectiveness of minority scholarships?

Research studying high school and beyond indicates that academic ability is the strongest predictor of college attendance regardless of socioeconomic status and financial aid offers (Hansen, 1982). The potential influence of financial assistance on college attendance is not as critical for high-ability students as it is for middle-ability students. Federal financial aid is considered an important aspect of promoting educational equity and equality of educational opportunity (Astin, 1982). For good or bad, the cycle of minority enrollment rates seems to parallel changes in federal financial aid policies (Orfield, 1992). If the economic cycle does not permit institutions of higher education to meet the full financial needs of its students, it is likely that minority enrollment will drop.

**First Amendment Rights.** The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution "permeates almost every aspect of student affairs administration" (Gehring, 1993, p. 287). It states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble; and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Many students, faculty, and administrators feel that the First Amendment's free-speech clause is vital to the pursuit of truth and knowledge and should provide for unrestricted and uncensored dialogue, no matter how potentially explosive the comments may be; conversely, "others argue that speech hurts and colleges and universities should regulate certain kinds of speech in order to maintain a more civil environment" (Hodges, 1996, p. 58).

The amendment can open doors for some and close doors for others around the issues of intolerance, bigotry, hate speech, and insensitivity to others on college campuses. Palmer, Penney, Gehring, and Neiger (1997) found that very few campuses have revised their codes of conduct to address the issue of hate speech and hate crimes. Furthermore, very few senior student affairs officers who participated in their study were familiar with the findings and outcomes of recent Supreme Court decisions regarding hate crime and speech incidents on campus. The cases Palmer and colleagues referred to were *PA.V v. City of St. Paul* (1992) and *Wisconsin v. Mitchell* (1993), which were not committed on university property but are significant for hate crimes and speech on campus because "the legal principles enunciated by the Court have direct relevance to postsecondary institutions" (p. 114).

The hate speech incident surrounding the case of *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul* occurred on June 21, 1990. Several teenagers burned a cross inside the fenced yard of an African American family (Heumann and Church, 1997). The Minnesota Supreme Court reversed the local St. Paul ordinance "that prohibited the placing of symbols, objects, or graffiti on public or private property where there was knowledge or reason to know that it would arouse anger, resentment or alarm in others on the basis of considerations of race, color, creed, religion, or gender" (Minn. Leg. Code 292.02). The ordinance disallowed speech solely on the premise of the topic the speech addresses. Therefore, if a college or university has rules "prohibiting speech or symbolic expression based solely on the content of that expression" (Palmer, Penney, Gehring, and Neiger, 1997, p. 114), it may be in violation of the Constitution.

In *Wisconsin v. Mitchell* (1993), it was found that "an individual's First Amendment rights were not violated under a state law that increased penalties for crimes that were motivated by bias" (Palmer, Penney, Gehring, and Neiger, 1997, p. 114). This ruling could be adapted and applied to colleges and universities in situations where students are victimizing others on the basis of their sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, religious preference, or other categorization.

Many administrators and lawmakers felt as though the *St. Paul* case dealt a deadly blow to the confrontation and eradication of hate speech on college and university campuses (Heumann and Church, 1997). An example of an individual abusing minorities under the auspices of free speech and faculty tenure can be seen in recent comments by a University of Texas law professor, Lino A. Graglia. Professor Graglia stated that black and Hispanic students can- not compete with white students and that in their cultures, "academic failure is not looked upon with disgrace" because "the cultures from which those students emerge did not emphasize academic success the way other cultures did." Students of color "should enroll in the best educational institution for which they meet the ordinary admission criteria" (Mangan, 1997, pp. A33-A34). Graglia's statements inflamed students at the University of Texas, who instigated a protest rally and demanded the professor's firing. Institutional leaders did arrange a press conference and public meeting 'condemning Mr. Graglia's remarks and reiterating the university's commitment to diversity' (p. A33). Although no lawsuits have been filed regarding this issue, the comments made by the law professor illustrate the conflicts involved with free speech and hate speech and their effect in creating a hostile environment for students.

Unfortunately, faculty, staff, and students on our college campuses make potentially offensive statements all the time. Students who are incensed by such statements are further frustrated because the speakers are protected by the First Amendment. It is up to institutions to move swiftly to hear student grievances, publicly state that the views of the individual in question do not represent the entire academic community, and arrange for both sides to be heard.

The escalation of campus hate speech may in part be a backlash against the strides that have been made by women, people of color, gays, lesbians, and

bisexuals, and other formerly slighted groups in transforming curricula and changing admission procedures (Heumann and Church, 1997). Supporters of speech codes assert that "these marginalized groups are caught in a bind; as their assertiveness increases with their numbers, they are forced to deal with an increasing number of attacks" (p. 5). Thus the establishment of speech codes that are constitutionally sensitive to First Amendment rights could provide an opportunity for egalitarian rules on college campuses and secure a niche for mutual respect in the academy.

**Americans with Disabilities Act.** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended states, "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." This law requires that colleges and universities make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in housing, admissions, student activities, career guidance, counseling, and other activities (Barr, 1996). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to all institutions, public or private, with more than twenty-five employees, regardless of whether they receive federal aid (Barr, 1996; Kaplin and Lee, 1997). The ADA focuses on physical and program accommodations for people with disabilities. It is important for student activities administrators and others involved with programming or facilities open to the general public to consult with legal counsel to ensure equal access for all individuals under ADA regulations.

A significant Supreme Court ruling in this area can be found in the case of *Southeastern Community College v. Davis* (1979). In this case, the Court held that if a "qualified person is able to meet all of the program's requirements in spite of handicap(s).... exclusion does not imply discrimination" (Barr, 1996). "The Supreme Court took another stance on Section 504 in relation to individuals with contagious diseases in *School Board of Nassau County v. Arline* (1987). "The Court held that a teacher with tuberculosis was protected by Section 504 and that her employer was required to determine whether a reasonable accommodation could be made for her" (Kaplin and Lee, 1997, p. 570). In another case, *Doe v. Washington University* (I 99 1), in which a dental student was dismissed because he had AIDS, duty to warn was addressed as other statutory protections for students and staff with contagious diseases under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Finally, in *Tanberg v. Weld County Sheriff* (1992), the plaintiff proved intentional discrimination under Section 504 and was given compensatory damages (Kaplin and Lee, 1997).

Many student affairs administrators and faculty often overlook persons with disabilities on college campuses. Not until we are confronted with a disabled student do we truly realize the needs of this population. For example, when a deaf student enters the classroom or a sponsored program, the instructor must be particularly sensitive to how lectures are delivered, the necessity of providing an interpreter, and the use of colloquial terms that may not translate easily into sign language, among other accommodations. Student affairs

administrators should budget for interpreters, audiovisual devices, and other special equipment for persons with disabilities when planning programs, conferences, or musical events. Beyond its value in the equitable treatment of students with disabilities, heightened sensitivity to these issues can prevent possible expensive litigation.

The ADA also encompasses discriminatory practices against individuals with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS. Campuses should set up committees to address the rights of college-age students with HIV under Section 504 and the ADA. Campuswide HIV/AIDS awareness programs should be implemented to educate faculty, staff, and students on both prevention of the disease and dealing equitably with students with HIV or AIDS.

**Sexual Harassment.** Sexual harassment falls within the purview of either Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Kaplin and Lee, 1995). The most important aspect for all student affairs professionals to know is that the employer can be held responsible for the actions of its agents and supervisory employees under the sexual harassment guidelines set forth by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Even if the actions are forbidden by the employer, the employer can still be held responsible (Perry, 1993).

Although public awareness of sexual harassment has increased in the past few years, studies show that higher education institutions continue to provide a fertile environment for this type of behavior. A survey of chief student affairs officers found that 66 percent of them had experienced an increase in student reports of sexual harassment incidents (Gallagher, Harmon, and Lingenfelter, 1994). A national study of faculty members found that one in seven female faculty members reported being sexually harassed, while only one in thirty-three men had similar reports. These statistics illustrate that sexual harassment is still a major problem for women in higher education. The reasons for the continued harassment of women are numerous and studied under various models (biological, organizational, or sociocultural) that consider a variety of factors (Dey, Korn, and Sax, 1996). What is imperative to consider is the effect sexual harassment has on students and staff.

Women who have been sexually harassed "are much more likely to hold negative views of institutional norms such as respect for others, fairness toward women ' and manner in which the campus administration operates" (Dey, Korn, and Sax, 1996, p. 166). This effect can cause increased stress, health problems, and decreased job satisfaction (Terpstra and Baker, 1986). Though not supported by later studies, Paludi and De Four (1989) argued that because racism and sexism seem to intersect, women of color may be at higher risk of being sexually harassed. Dey, Korn, and Sax (1996) found that though Latina and Native American women were more likely to report incidences of sexual harassment, further analysis controlling for confounding variables showed no significant differences between women of color and white women. It is reasonable to think female students are experiencing similar reactions to sexual harassment.

Many institutions have formal statements regarding sexual harassment, but few have made concerted efforts at educating their employees and students about sexual harassment and its consequences. Sexual harassment policies should be complemented by educational efforts. A policy alone does not change behavior. In a study at the University of Massachusetts, it was found that "educational efforts effectively increased female undergraduate awareness of the university's sexual harassment policy and grievance procedure and also raised their awareness of the illegality of sexual harassment" (Williams, Lam, and Shively, 1992). This study also observed a decline of reported sexual harassment behavior by faculty and staff, thus indicating a potential change in behavior. It should be noted that the university had also offered intense educational efforts aimed at faculty and staff to inform them of the consequences of sexually harassing behavior. In addition to advocating the adoption of a formal sexual assault policy, these studies indicate the need to change the climate for women within higher education. Changing an institution's climate is neither easy nor automatic; the change must be intentionally conceived and carried out (West, Reynolds, and Jackson, 1994).

Not always addressed in student affairs literature is the issue of dual relationships between staff members and students. Student affairs departments have a mix of members from other university units, young professionals (usually live-in staff), and peers. The fact that many young professionals are close in age to the undergraduate students with whom they work creates an environment that can be fertile for inappropriate behavior. This behavior is not always adequately addressed. In addition, paraprofessional staff members should be given clear guidelines when considering relationships with their residents or other students they supervise. Few seasoned professionals would condone relationships between staff members and undergraduate students under their purview, but few seem to address the issue. The University of Virginia published a formal statement addressing the inappropriateness of intimate relationships between faculty and students within their purview. Formal statements addressing intimate relationships are few. Though not all of these relationships might constitute sexual harassment, avoiding talking about them may contribute to a climate in which inappropriate sexual behavior seems to be permitted.

**Public Versus Private Institutions.** Perhaps the greatest confusion about diversity in higher education revolves around whether private institutions are subject to the legal provisos set by the federal and state governments. Statutory rights, particularly in the area of discrimination, can be enforced against private institutions by the federal government and to a lesser degree by state governments (Kaplin and Lee, 1997). Specifically, federal Title VII prohibitions on employment discrimination are applicable to private and public employment relationships.

There are also several common law theories applicable to private post-secondary institutions that protect individual rights (Kaplin and Lee, 1997). Under contract theory, the most prominent, students and faculty are deemed

to have a contractual arrangement with the private school. Whether the contract is expressed or implied, the legal rights can be reviewed in the courts if the contract is broken.

Public and private institutions differ when the issue of religious beliefs and activities are addressed. Public institutions must maintain a neutral stance and not favor or support religion over nonreligion or vice versa (Kaplin and Lee, 1997). Conversely, private institutions have no obligation of neutrality; indeed, these institutions are protected from government interference with their religious beliefs and practices.

The First, Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution provide the framework for the application of constitutional law to higher education. "A public institution's authority is derived from its statutory or constitutional entitlement. In private institutions, authority to act is derived from the institution's articles of incorporation, charter, or license" (Bar-r, 1996, p. 127).

It is important to note that even though the federal Constitution does not apply directly to private schools, this does not mean that individuals working for or attending a private institution "have no legal rights assertable against the school" (Kaplin and Lee, 1997, p. 47). There are other support mechanisms for a person's rights, and they are similar to those found in the Constitution.

### **Promoting Diversity: Practice and Applications**

Continuing evidence supports the assertion that university and college campuses are not conducive, growth-enhancing, or healthy environments for many students. Members of various underrepresented and minority groups (racial and ethnic minorities; gays, lesbians, and bisexuals; students with disabilities; nontraditional students) voice specific concerns regarding quality of life issues; unwelcoming and hostile campus climates; safety issues; insensitive, inappropriate, and discriminatory behavior by students, faculty, staff, and administrators; lack of diversity; lack of relevant and inclusive curricula; alienation and invisibility; and lack of access to information and resources. Many of these areas in which students express concerns are within student affairs divisions (residence halls, financial aid, admissions, campus police). Thus the need for training programs to address multicultural issues and prepare culturally sensitive and skilled student affairs practitioners seems compelling.

Unfortunately, many student affairs training programs mirror university and college campuses in that the same issues are evident. In fact, several authors (Barr and Strong, 1988; Smith, 1989) delineate the difficulties in bringing about change and being more inclusive in higher education.

**Role of Preparation Programs in Promoting Diversity.** Training programs have ethical and professional responsibilities in preparing practitioners who are able to work effectively with diverse populations. Professional organizations (including the American College Personnel Association, the American Counseling Association, the American Psychological Association, the Council for the Advancement of Standards, and the National Association for

Student Personnel Administrators) have ethical codes and standards of conduct that address issues related to competency and working with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Thus there is an ethical responsibility to be competent and to provide culturally appropriate services.

Another professional and ethical responsibility involves the changing demographics of our society and institutions of higher education. There is a need for practitioners who are skilled, can help promote meaningful interactions among students, and can help all students develop to their full potential. Unless there is both understanding and acceptance of the experiences of individuals from diverse backgrounds, these goals will not be reached. As student affairs professionals and practitioners, it is important to grow professionally. There is the opportunity for growth to occur through self-reflection, increased awareness, and new insights when interacting with others who are different.

In one of the few studies examining college student affairs master's program diversity training, Talbot (1996) used a multimethod approach to examine students, faculty, and curriculum in eight of the largest student affairs graduate programs. She administered two surveys, the Diversity Survey and the Curricula and Training Survey, in addition to conducting thirty semistructured phone interviews. The purpose of Talbot's study was to ascertain students' perceptions of the quality of diversity training in their master's degree graduate programs in college student affairs. Talbot's sample, drawn necessarily from the student population in these programs, consisted predominantly of white, middle-income, heterosexual students whose neighborhoods of origin were exclusively or predominantly white. The nonrepresentativeness of the sample has implications for the student affairs profession specifically and higher education generally. This sample is relatively homogeneous, indicating the perpetuation of a nondiverse student population in college student affairs programs, which in turn leads to a nondiverse group of student affairs professionals and faculty. Thus providing more student diversity in student affairs programs seems to be a key to long-term changes in the profession. In the semistructured interview responses, students indicated that the greatest impact in terms of diversity training resulted from personal interaction, hands-on experience, and experiential education (Talbot, 1996). Once again, student diversity seems to be an important element for diversity training.

Another aspect of Talbot's study examined students' perceptions and assessment of their diversity training. According to Talbot (1996), only 50.2 percent indicated that diversity was mentioned in their interview or discussed before entering the program, only 31.5 percent felt that their program emphasized or prioritized diversity, and only 33.4 percent rated the overall level of diversity training in their programs as high or very high. These numbers clearly indicate the need for improved diversity training. In addition to student diversity, diversity training is also an important factor in bringing about substantive changes. The results of Talbot's study raise two related issues: (1) the need for a strong programmatic emphasis and (2) the need for diversity coursework and teaching. In many student affairs programs, diversity training (if offered at all)

is relegated to a single course. When this occurs, stereotypes about diversity are reinforced and conveyed to students. Some of the messages that are conveyed include ambivalence, compartmentalization, and the idea that diversity is an area to be studied rather than lived. To counterbalance such messages and stereotypes, there is a strong need for programmatic emphases (inclusion of diversity issues in the entire curriculum, didactic as well as practica and internships; recruitment and retention of a diverse student body, with involvement from all faculty; a diverse faculty, with all faculty addressing diversity issues).

Faculty in graduate preparation programs may exhibit discomfort when discussing issues related to multiculturalism (Talbot and Kocarek, 1997). The professorate in student affairs consists primarily of white heterosexual males who teach a student population predominantly comprised of white women. This lack of diversity among a cohort that will be responsible for a diverse body of students should be addressed by faculty that are "able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and behaviors that enhance and embrace issues of diversity" (p. 285).

**Core Competencies.** Student affairs practitioners should be confident and competent to understand, communicate with, and collaborate with diverse groups on their college campuses. It is essential that the student affairs core competencies be integrated into the mission and goals of graduate preparation programs and administrative departments. The seven competencies necessary for effective student affairs practice are theory and translation, administrative and management skills, helping and interpersonal skills, assessment and evaluation, teaching and training, ethical and legal experience, and multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills (Pope and Reynolds, 1997). Pope and Reynolds suggest that to explore multicultural issues more fully, this information should be deliberately incorporated into coursework and training workshops. This would be a major step in the direction of providing understanding and support for underrepresented groups in institutional policy.

**Teaching.** Although diversity coursework is essential, it must be recognized that teaching such coursework can be very challenging. In several respects it is more difficult than any other type of coursework offered. The content is often controversial, emotional, and personal. Thus it may be difficult to teach the course in a strictly neutral manner. Tatum (1992) discusses student resistance to learning about race and racism in the context of racial identity development. Students may be defensive (if dealing with transference issues, for example), and class composition and student expectations can influence the classroom climate. To be a culturally sensitive helper, you must focus on attitudes, knowledge, and skills. To address all three areas with students who are at different developmental levels is an enormous task for one instructor in one course. Instructor modeling is another aspect that can set diversity coursework apart from other courses. It can be helpful for students to see what can happen in a culturally sensitive interaction. Having students witness such interaction can enhance their diversity training.

Instructor dynamics are also important in teaching diversity coursework. Instructor readiness, naivete, style of teaching, and personal characteristics all

have an effect. Instructor readiness refers to one's mental, emotional, and academic preparedness to teach diversity coursework. In terms of academic preparedness, group facilitation skills and conflict management skills are often needed to teach such coursework effectively. Instructor naivete involves a lack of awareness of the issues involved in teaching diversity coursework. Style of teaching recognizes that instructors generally structure and teach diversity coursework in a way that fits their comfort level in dealing with diversity issues. Personal characteristics include ethnic and racial identity development, gender, teaching experience, and age.

**Role of Administration in Promoting Diversity.** Throughout this chapter, statements have been made regarding the role of student affairs practitioners in promoting diversity on their campuses. Even though many institutions of higher education are bound by constitutional regulations, this does not exempt student affairs professionals from shaping "a campus community that promotes diversity, civility, and free speech" (Varlotta, 1997, p. 123). Suggestions for student affairs administrators and faculty to lead the way in promoting diversity issues and freedom of speech and in implementing policies that protect the rights of underrepresented groups are delineated as follows:

1. Evaluate the mission statement and policies of the institution to determine whether they are inclusive of issues related to diversity and to students from diverse backgrounds. Assess policies with regard to all forms of diversity. Draw up an institutional values statement that clearly articulates a "respect for human dignity of all members of the academic community and appreciation of the diversity that exists within that community" (Palmer, Penney, Gehring, and Neiger, 1997, p. 121).
2. Be aware of local, state, and national issues that can affect persons from diverse backgrounds. Provide opportunities for dialogue about these issues.
3. Be familiar with the recruitment policies of the institution. Evaluate them in terms of appropriateness and sensitivity to diversity issues.
4. Be familiar with the retention and persistence rates of students from diverse backgrounds.
5. If you do not have a sexual harassment policy in place, create a mechanism to promote awareness of sexual harassment and provide information to students and staff on the procedure to file a grievance. If you have a sexual harassment policy in place, review the policy regularly and the educational efforts made to disseminate information about the policy.
6. Create a mechanism whereby entry-level professionals and paraprofessionals are made aware of the unique relationship they have with students. Discuss ways to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of diversity.
7. Clarify the meaning and scope of diversity as it relates to your campus and its student population.

8. Recognize that sensitivity to diversity issues may mean being an advocate for individuals from different backgrounds who have different value systems.
9. Assess campus climate with regard to diversity issues.
10. Be aware of equity issues. Understand that "treating everyone the same may not lead to equity
11. Within a historical context, evaluate how specific policies may be perceived by members of diverse backgrounds. Work within that framework to provide sensitive and appropriate policies and interventions.
12. Recognize that diversity issues must be examined from both the individual level and the institutional level.
13. Recognize that within-group diversity exists and cannot be ignored.
14. Be cognizant of your own attitudes and beliefs about diversity issues. Understand how these attitudes and beliefs can affect your interactions with others, your perceptions and attributions, and your interpretation of policies. Student affairs administrators should engage in self-exploration of their own personal beliefs, values, and conflicts regarding diversity, free speech, and codes of conduct (Varlotta, 1997) without being ethically neutral or ethically prescriptive (Lyons, 1990).
15. Provide workshops and symposia for students, faculty, and administrators on laws and regulations affecting colleges and universities. Include training workshops on legal issues in student affairs for residence hall staff, orientation counselors, publication boards, student organization leaders, and advisers to keep them apprised of regulations that may affect their responsibilities and functions. Devise and implement disciplinary policies and procedures that promote reporting and ensure expedient action within acceptable constitutional limits (Palmer, Penney, Gehring, and Neiger, 1997).
16. Design and implement student affairs educational programs that promote interpersonal understanding, cooperation, conflict resolution, and crisis intervention (Palmer, Penny, Gehring, and Neiger, 1997).

The implementation of any institutional policy, procedure, or program involves a team of individuals willing to advocate for change and to develop a clear mission. All students, faculty, and staff should be protected and supported by their respective institutions. Conversely, prohibiting the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and issues of importance to our society is antithetical to the premise of higher education as a free marketplace for ideologies and philosophies to be developed. Staying abreast of laws and current cases will help student affairs administrators meet their mission and goals of integrity, impartiality, responsibility, and equity (Barr, 1996).

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*Although student affairs administrators might be primarily interested in exploring ways to solve ethical issues concerning sex, drugs, alcohol, academic dishonesty, and violence, the answers are often less important than the ethical standards or core values that guide decision making in our changing professional climate.*

## Navigating the Changing Climate of Moral and Ethical Issues in Student Affairs

*Gregory S. Billing*

Recently, a first-year student called to complain about his roommate, also a freshman, who wrote to him prior to the fall semester and disclosed that he was gay and would conduct himself accordingly. The student who received the letter was a fundamentalist Christian. Although the fundamentalist Christian student was not particularly concerned that he would become the subject of interest for the other student, his strongly held religious beliefs prevented him from associating with homosexuals. His request to the university was simple: he wanted a room change.

The university had a policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Residence hall occupancy was overassigned, and no option existed to move the student to another room. Switching roommate assignments might have seemed a simple solution, but was it ethical? Administrators steadfastly refused similar requests based on race or disability. As in this case of two competing claims for rights-religion and sexual orientation-the student affairs administrator is frequently called on to make an ethical or moral choice.

Hundreds of issues like this, and many far more complicated, are among the ethical and moral dilemmas student affairs administrators routinely confront in working with students. I suspect that today's students bring more of these issues to college than past generations did. Adult freedoms extended to students exceed those of past generations. Peer norms concerning sex, drugs, alcohol, academic dishonesty, and violence, coupled with institutional reluctance or inability to confront these behaviors effectively, pose difficult moral