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Nominations for both awards will close February 3, 1997. The awards will be presented at the 1997 NASPA and ACPA conferences. Please direct your nominations and supporting materials (e.g., vita) to Bruce Jacobs, W.W. Wright Education Building, Room 4228, 201 N. Rose Avenue, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405. Thank you!

THE FUTURE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS IN A POST-MODERN ERA

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Guest Author

Modern assumptions about knowledge and the purpose of universities are under attack from all sides. In this essay, four postmodernist attacks on higher education are identified, and three currents of change resulting from these pressures are discussed. Consideration is also given to how student affairs can respond constructively to these changes.

After more than 30 years in student affairs, most as a chief student affairs officer, Bryan decided to resign and join the faculty. As we sat speaking in hushed tones in the corner of a nondescript reception at an uneventful professional meeting, he shared his frustrations about student affairs and the state of higher education. Bryan's son recently graduated from college and planned to pursue a master's degree in student affairs administration. Bryan didn't know what to tell his son. He asked me what I thought. I was quiet while I searched for an answer.

Modern assumptions about knowledge and the nature and purpose of the university are being attacked from all sides. Postmodernism is the source for many of these attacks, as I argue in the first section of this paper. Next, I outline three currents of change resulting from these pressures. In the final section, I focus on how student affairs can respond constructively to these changes.

POSTMODERN ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Postmodernism¹ is a perspective reflected by a “set of attitudes and efforts designed to modify and correct modern ideas” (Elkind, 1995, p. 11). These

¹Postmodernism refers to a perspective or philosophical approach. Postmodern refers to an era or historical period.

modern ideas are based on the assumption that human progress is promoted through rationalism, humanism, scientific method, democratic organizations, and, above all, individualism. These ideas are and have been the foundation of Western knowledge. Postmodernists challenge these ideas by attacking the hierarchies of modern life and the structure and meaning of the language we use to conduct our daily lives. Bloland (1995) argues that the postmodernist attack on modernist culture "calls into question higher education's legitimacy, its purpose, its activities, its very *raison d'être* ... [and] ... presents a hostile interpretation of much of what higher education believes it is doing and what it stands for" (p. 522). A frequent method of challenging modernist ideas is through language usage. Changing the nomenclature for racial referents to *European American*, *African American*, or *Native American* is one form of challenging the word concepts used previously to describe these groups -- *White*, *Black*, *Indian*. Substituting referents to cultural origin instead of color has a subtle, equalizing influence. Other challenges to modernism come in the form of revisionist history, hate-speech codes, and deconstruction of written work to uncover hidden assumptions that represent a particular system of reasoning.

Although the postmodernist's perspective is antithetical to the modern institution of universities, universities are the source for most of the dialogue about it and have become the target for those who take issue with this perspective. One reaction to postmodernism comes from social conservatism. Adherents to this position describe higher education as fractionalized and depersonalizing. The attacks on higher education have come in the form of higher education reports, criticism of the moral and ethical climate of campuses, and attacks on faculty tenure, faculty teaching loads, and the curriculum. Bloland (1995) describes the social conservative position as a desire to return to an idealized traditional world of homogeneous values, clear hierarchical structures, and a stable, safer, and more predictable way of life. These beliefs are frequently rooted in "religious fundamentalism and political conservatism" (p. 543), which is now setting much of the agenda for higher education (Healy, 1996).

Two examples illustrate this reaction: (a) In Tennessee, proposed legislation would require that evolution be taught as theory rather than fact, (b) In Utah, state senators wrote higher education officials to protest gay and lesbian sensitivity training for teachers. The senators stated that "P.C. [politically correct] dogma is not what the majority of Utah taxpayers want

taught" ("State Legislators Are Protesting," 1996, p. A33). The first example shows an attempt to equate a fundamentalist Christian belief (scientific creationism) with empirical research (evolution); the second challenges the postmodern effort at reconceptualizing language descriptors for marginalized groups. Both demonstrate attempts to exercise control over universities' autonomy in setting the curriculum and thereby defining knowledge.

A second postmodern influence in higher education comes from science and technology. Lyotard (1984) argues that, in a postmodern world, science and the scientific method are delegitimized as just one more metanarrative equal to other theory constructs such as scientific creationism and "new age" sciences. Sciences come to be judged by efficiency and effectiveness, eventually declining in status to the level of a technology. What emerges from this demise of the scientific narrative and other grand narratives is universities that function as instructional centers to train a workforce to meet the needs of a world economy of multinational corporations. Lyotard (1984) views higher education's only reason for existence in a postmodern world as a contribution to a performance-based economy. One's worth in the postmodern university is judged by productivity -- the capacity to deliver efficient, effective, low-cost education -- and knowledge becomes that which is technically useful and can be transferred easily into computerized information.

Over time, technology becomes more important than the narratives that form the canon of Western knowledge. Knowing how to access information replaces mastering or comprehending the information. In a recent national survey of teachers in grades 4-12, 75% of the respondents ranked achieving computer literacy (technology) as more important than knowing the works of Shakespeare, Plato, or American authors such as Hemingway or Steinbeck (Riechmann, 1996). Finn, a research fellow at the Hudson Institute and a former official of the U.S. Department of Education, said in response to the survey: "Teachers have been brainwashed by the political-correctness crowd [postmodernists] to think that anything associated with 'classics' is tainted as 'dead, white, European male' imperialism" (quoted by Riechmann, 1996, p. 13A).

A third postmodern attack comes from reformers. Levine (1996) believes that the current reform movement rattling higher education began in about 1983 following the publication of the federal report *A Nation at Risk*. It was followed by *Involvement in Learning* (1984), *To Reclaim a Legacy* (1984),

Integrity in the College Curriculum (1985), and *Higher Education and the American Resurgence* (1985). More than two dozen of these national reports on education appeared between 1980 and 1985 (Gamson, 1987). Distinctions among different types of institutions were not made, and the reports were filled with volatile terms such as *crisis*, *decline*, and *disaster*. Directed to state legislators and university governing boards, the reports were intended to stir public opinion and create major changes in higher education (Trow, 1987). The reports supported the conservative agenda of the Reagan Administration's Secretary of Education, William Bennett, and of others who sought reform in higher education's postmodernist, politically correct, liberal environment, which allegedly had entrenched itself in universities since the educational reforms of the 1960s.

A fourth attack comes from state budget constraints and a bevy of media stories about sexual harassment by professors, faculty research on medieval Italian marble formations, six-hour teaching loads, and students' complaints about instructors who could not speak English. Legislators began asking awkward questions about graduation rates, faculty teaching, availability of classes, and language skills of teaching assistants from other countries; the answers they got caused them concern. Erosion in support for higher education by legislators and other community leaders followed. Encouraged by the media, they adopted the belief that higher education was mismanaged, wasted state resources, and lacked accountability (Breneman, 1993; Harvey, 1996; Mahtesian, 1995; Wadsworth, 1995).

The transformation of science into technology, reform attacks, conservatism, and budget constraints are forces imploding the boundaries that have separated universities as distinct academic communities. These forces have paraded themselves as progress, accountability, and efficiencies. The effects have been dramatic. What has emerged from this debate is a changing view of the role of higher education in society. It is a move from universities as the sources for truth and knowledge to universities as the source of a trained workforce to meet the needs of a world economy. Higher education's special status as a keeper of legitimate grand narratives of Western civilization and as a sanctuary for scholarship, teaching, and service is in transition.

REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

All essays of this type hold the author's hidden assumptions, as does this one. One of mine is that most universities, by themselves, change very little. Innovation, improvements, discovery, and enhancements are commonplace in this environment. But the mission, organization, hierarchy, purpose, and curriculum remain fundamentally the same. Students change; faculty do not. Administrators come and go to meet the changing needs of the university and the temperance of the public and political landscape. If this sounds cynical, it is not meant to be. Indeed, one of higher education's great strengths is its slow, methodical, and at times plodding attempts at change. It is this resistance to change that explains in part why attempts at reform are in themselves unsettling to higher education.

Two forces within universities resist these calls for change: (a) academic fundamentalism, or the institutional press for scholarship and recognition as proven methods of getting tenure and (b) what I call administrative whiplash, a condition administrators get from years of being pulled one way, yanked another, and then suddenly jolted by an unforeseen crisis that overloads their sense of civility and enthusiasm for innovation or change. Administrative whiplash leaves a stiff neck, cautious movements, and a tendency to move in the direction of least resistance. When forced with the choice between changing or proving there is no need to do so, most faculty and administrators get busy on the proof -- usually by forming a committee.

It should then come as no surprise that change in higher education is more likely to come from external sources. People who have found models that seem to work well in business have faith that greater productivity, efficiency, and cost savings would be realized if higher education followed their example. "Total Quality Management," "Continuous Quality Improvement," "Management by Objectives," "Organizational Development," and "Reengineering" are a few of the tombstones that mark ill-fated attempts to recast higher education in a corporate model. Those who don't run universities see it as easy; those who do, know it is not.

Many forces are working on this river of reform in higher education. The ripples on the surface are easy to see. I have tried to look below the surface to identify currents in the river that will alter its course over time and influence student affairs. What is important about efforts to reform higher education is

that these efforts have moved higher education into a period of transition. Reform periods historically last about 15 years (Levine, 1996), with varying periods of transition into and out of reform. The question is, How will these forces affect student affairs? Three currents of change have emerged in this transition period that will influence student affairs: (a) demand for accountability and efficiency, (b) forces of student disengagement, and (c) increasing pressure to reform the moral and ethical climate of universities.

DEMAND FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

In spite of all of the education reports and criticisms, the public remains confident in higher education; policymakers, the media, and business leaders have significant reservations. However, both community leaders and the general public agree on wanting an accountable system that produces qualified graduates, useful research, and affordable access to education (Harvey, 1996; Wadsworth, 1995). These factors have resulted in the establishment of productivity measures, cost-cutting, outsourcing, and student aid reform.

Productivity

Texas, Florida, Arkansas, South Carolina, and Tennessee are among the Southern states currently using productivity measures to evaluate the performance of tax-supported colleges and universities (Farrington & Robinson, 1996). Productivity measures include items such as credit hour production, faculty teaching loads, graduation rates, and number of non-English speaking teaching assistants. Nedwek (1996) reports that, in Missouri where productivity measures are linked to financial incentives, state institutions are rewarded \$1,000 for each African American student who graduates from a "critical field" or scores above the 50th percentile in a nationally-normed test such as the Graduate Record Exam.

Few, if any, of the productivity indicators address contributions made directly by educators in student affairs. Absent are questions concerning leadership skills, interpersonal skills, psychosocial development, or other benefits associated with the out-of-class experience. If student affairs' educational efforts are considered, it is in relationship to how satisfied students are with an educational service. In other words, education is being defined by measures attributed to the teaching experience of the classroom. By omission, student affairs is devalued and the boundaries of education are limited to the

classroom. When the humanizing experiences of college that build social trust and character are ignored, students become products to be shaped more efficiently and effectively for a postmodern world economy.

Pragmatically, institutional priorities follow from funding priorities. If the classroom experience is the only contribution to education evaluated, then only the classroom efforts stand to be rewarded with additional funds to further education.

Cost-Cutting

By being held to the same budgetary constraints placed on other state agencies throughout the 1990s, higher education has had to face greater financial accountability (Mahtesian, 1995). Medicare, Medicaid, corrections, and K-12 education have forced states to reorder their budget priorities. In the process, higher education has lost out. As other portions of state budgets increased, higher education's portion declined by over 2% from 1980 to 1992; and in 1993, 75% of the states failed to appropriate enough money for higher education to keep pace with inflation (Mahtesian, 1995).

Colleges and universities responded to budget constraints with tuition and fee increases. They increased an average of 6% for Fall 1995 -- more than twice the rate of inflation (Gose, 1995) -- and approximately 7% since 1983 (Evangelauf, 1994). Backlash to these increases from students and the public discouraged governing boards and state legislators from further raising tuition and fees (Crenshaw, 1995; Folkenflik, 1996). Instead, they began instituting the postmodern business strategies of downsizing, cost-cutting, and outsourcing.

Student affairs programs rely heavily on revenue from student fees and receipts. Residence halls, health services, student activities, student union programs, and student recreation programs are usually funded in this way. Given the productivity and accountability issues confronting higher education, student affairs programs may become more dependent on these funds. In Germany and other Western European countries, the state pays for classroom instruction and research, and students pay for all other programs and services. Budgetary constraints, coupled with classroom productivity measures, may lead to this funding model for many American universities.

Outsourcing and downsizing

Mismanagement, waste, and an overabundance of unnecessary employees are central in the public's image of most governmental agencies (Carville, 1996; Limbaugh, 1993). This perception has led to a belief that letting private enterprise take over various university functions will lead to greater efficiency and cost savings for taxpayers (Healy, 1996). Support for this belief among trustees and entrepreneurial legislators comes from books such as *Re-engineering the Corporation: A Manifest for Business Revolution* (Hammer & Champy, 1993) and media reports of downsizing and privatizing at major multinational corporations such as Xerox, IBM, and AT&T.

Privatization, or outsourcing, is not new in higher education. Food service, bookstores, maintenance, and printing are frequently outsourced. What is new is the presumption that outsourcing is inherently better than having the university provide the service. Unheard of ten years ago, college health services, college counseling centers, and career planning centers once managed by student affairs are among areas being outsourced to "for profit" corporations.

Under some circumstances, outsourcing may decrease costs and increase efficiency. But, it can also lower quality and present other problems. In studying outsourcing of college counseling centers, Phillips, Halstead, and Carpenter (1996) found that universities outsourcing their counseling centers expressed concern over the loss of control, response to and management of crises, and transportation of students to off-campus counseling locations. A common source of dissatisfaction was that counselors under outsourcing spent more time on therapy and less time on providing "a broader array of counseling, psycho-educational, and student development services" (p. 58) that enhance the educational climate of institutions and offer preventive interventions.

Student Aid Reductions

Increased pressure to balance the federal budget forced an examination of federally subsidized student aid programs. Among the bad ideas surfacing in 1995 were taxing colleges and universities for the loan programs they administer, increasing interest rates on PLUS parent loans, eliminating the

student loan grace period, and capping expansion of the Direct Student Loan Program -- delivering billions of dollars to the hands of bankers (Riley, 1995).

In 1997 the Reauthorization Act for student aid will be reviewed by Congress. Efforts to address the federal debt and balance the budget leave little room to speculate about increasing student aid. The most favorable scenario for higher education may be retaining the programs it currently has at the same rate of funding. The more likely scenario involves some cut in federal support.

Because student affairs administrators usually administer financial aid programs on campus, changes in student aid regulations significantly influence their daily work. For those student affairs administrators not directly responsible for the administration of student aid, diminished resources in student aid will affect access to higher education by those least able to pay and will influence the number of part-time students, the number of hours students work, the number of students working, the length of time it takes students to complete a bachelor's degree, and the ability of students to pursue graduate work, particularly in high-cost programs such as medicine and law. The indirect effect is diminished access to college and closer scrutiny of any student fee or tuition increase.

Most students receiving student aid actually borrow the money through federally supported student loan programs. In the past two years, money available for student loans increased by 50% whereas that for Pell Grants remained the same. In the 1995-96 academic year, Pell Grant funds increased modestly. Approximately \$26 billion was available for loans, whereas only \$5.7 billion was available for Pell Grants (Gose, 1995). How much more debt through student loans can we ask students to assume upon graduation? The heavy emphasis on loans discourages from a college education those least able to pay because of the heavy debt they assume.

FORCES OF DISENGAGEMENT

Technology

Student affairs has never been at the "cutting edge" of technological innovation. Given the choice between being high-tech or high-touch, student affairs has worn the latter as a badge of distinction. When pushed to

participate in their own universities through student information systems, electronic mail, and the ever-increasing technological sophistication of students, student affairs educators were dragged into the new age of technology. The implications for student affairs are many. High-tech security systems for residence halls, sophisticated job-search programs over the Internet, interactive video-conferencing for job interviews worldwide, and computerized counseling programs such as "Ask Uncle Ezra" at Cornell University and "Ask Uncle Sigmund" at Appalachian State University are some of the commonplace examples of technology in student affairs. Orientation programs on CD-ROMs, electronic admissions, and distance learning only marginally expand this list.

The real implication for higher education, and thus student affairs, is that technology is fundamentally changing the relationships of students to the university. Recently, Morrison (1996) asked a group of higher education administrators what implications for higher education would emerge if a major software company, like Microsoft, joined with a provider of educational materials, like Disney, and a telecommunications company, like AT&T, to produce and sell educational training modules. A host of implications were generated, including the possibility that a 4-year academic degree might be offered over the Internet, with students never having set foot on the campus that awarded the degree.

This possibility raises an important issue. If college administrators, faculty, and higher education policymakers see a college education merely as the accumulation of academic credits and as a process of credentialing, the outcomes related to student affairs programs will be absent.

The Internet may become one of the best teaching tools available, and use of it for classroom instruction increases daily (DeLoughry, 1996). The number of Internet users worldwide has grown from approximately 5,089 in 1988 to approximately 6.6 million in 1995 ("Anniversary Issue," 1996). Jones (1995) believes that this new technology is spawning a "cyber society" of "close" remote relationships, which may lead to a renewed sense of community. If true, we would be switching from community in contact to community in isolation. The Internet and similar technologies are "radically 'privatizing' and 'individualizing' our use of leisure time . . . at the cost of positive social externalities" (Putnam, 1995, p. 75), which come from personal interaction with others. Human relationships that decrease in time and

increase in space offer a good definition of disengagement. The need for the high-touch expertise of student affairs educators may become more important in the postmodern university but less available.

Increasing Segmentation of Student Groups

The college population of today is more racially and ethnically diverse than at any time in the past. This diversity will increase throughout the foreseeable future (National Center for Education Statistics, 1994). Within the continental United States, states with the highest percentage of college students from underrepresented groups include New Mexico (38.7%), California (35.6%), Texas (30.8%), Mississippi (29.9%), and Louisiana (29.3%). New York, Florida, Maryland, Georgia, and Illinois follow closely, with percentages ranging from 26.2% to 24.9% (National Center for Education Statistics, 1994). A state's racial composition significantly influences the racial diversity of that state's public universities. For example, based on projections from California's K-12 enrollment, White students will account for only 25.9% of that state's college enrollment in 2020; 48.2% will be Mexican American or Hispanic, 19% Asian American, and 6.9% African American (Munitz, 1995).

One result of increasing diversification on campus has been a move toward increased segmentation of students. One good example of this comes from the University of Michigan, where gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) students have organized themselves into 22 separate student organizations. They include organizations for GLB Hispanic students, GLB African American students, African American lesbian women, and others (Gose, 1996). Levine (1994) reported that his research on college campuses showed an increase in this segmentation among the college population. Where once there was one biology club, now several exist, including ones like a "biology club for women of color."

Pluralism, or the increasing segmentation of the student population, may serve important psychosocial needs for traditionally aged undergraduates struggling with normal issues of identity formation. Institutions have addressed the increased diversity and demand for more pluralistic environments in a variety of ways. Some have expanded or developed offices in student affairs areas focused on diversity and multiculturalism. Large institutions, such as Ohio State, have offered separate specialized offices

within student affairs for African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, Hispanics, and GLB students. Each of these segmented communities may emerge as an area of specialized knowledge and research within student affairs.

Disillusionment of Students

Today's college students have been characterized as self-oriented, pseudo-conservative, competitive, situationally ethical, and high-tech oriented (Bradford & Raines, 1992). Other descriptive features of the current college generation include a fear of being unemployed, anxiety about living in an economy where they are doing less well than their parents, and a feeling that the previous "baby boomer" generation robbed them of opportunities for success (Levine, 1993). Each generation of students presents its own set of challenges for higher education. For this generation, Zollo (1994) suggests that it might be dealing with cynical cohorts of students out to gain a competitive advantage regardless of the ethics involved -- in other words, survival of the fittest.

Social Activism

Activism may be cyclical, occurring in cycles of approximately 15 to 20 years (Levine, 1980). These cycles are characterized by a phase in which the interest of the individual is placed over the interest of the community, followed by a phase in which the interest of the community is placed over that of the individual. Students should be entering a period of activism characteristic of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Levine & Hirsch, 1990). Signs of an increase in student activism are present. In 1990, 7.1% of first-year students believed it was likely or very likely they would participate in a protest or demonstration in college. This compares with 4.1% to 4.7% in the late 1960s (Astin, Korn, & Riggs, 1991). However, by 1995, only 5.2% of new students believed they would participate in a protest or demonstration. These findings are consistent with a dramatic decline in interest about political issues, currently at its lowest level since data were first collected (Astin, Korn, & Riggs, 1996). Of course, these data show only what freshmen believe they might do, not their actual level of social activism, and reflect opinions only from students attending those institutions that chose to participate in the survey in a given year.

Social activism may be a function of the campus culture. The top ten activist campuses in 1995 were the State University of New York and the Universities of California at Los Angeles, Colorado at Boulder, Hawaii, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Wisconsin at Madison, Cornell, Michigan State, and Rutgers ("Top 10 Activist Campuses," 1995). All of the institutions are large research universities, and over half have a history of activism.

Civic Disengagement

Putnam (1995) observed that membership in the Red Cross, parent-teacher associations, Boy Scouts, and similar civic organizations has declined significantly during the past 15 to 20 years. Consistent with students' low interest in politics, "Americans' direct engagement in politics and government has fallen steadily over the last generation" (p. 68). Because social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated, the lack of engagement by students in the important normalizing experiences of association in colleges could undermine the social trust, collaboration, and broad-based sense of self derived from collective associations.

Pavela (1995) points out that the long-term consequences of a social system based on disengaged, isolated individuals competing for survival include a diminished capacity for empathy, duty, fairness, social trust, and satisfying relationships with others, plus increased cheating. Student affairs may be in the best position to address these concerns through group associations, leadership programs, and similar forms of involvement that draw students together.

INCREASING PRESSURE TO REFORM THE MORAL AND ETHICAL CLIMATE OF UNIVERSITIES

In recent studies, researchers have found drug usage among high school students to be increasing and the use of marijuana, hallucinogens, amphetamines, and other controlled substances to be increasing among college students (Hanneberger, 1994; Levy, 1995; Wechsler and Associates, 1995). Although rates of alcohol consumption among college students appears to be relatively stable (Presley, Meilman, & Lyerla, 1995), the newest concern is "binge drinking" (Wechsler and Associates, 1995). For several years it appeared that both drug usage and alcohol usage were declining (Johnston,

O'Malley, & Bachman, 1990). Now the increases appear to be moving toward levels not seen on college campuses since the 1970s.

A host of other demoralizing issues have barraged college campuses: sexual harassment, acquaintance rape, hate speech, academic dishonesty, campus violence, and the increase in the psychopathology of students seeking counseling. All continue to challenge educators in student affairs and the basic civility of college campuses.

Hoekema (1994) claims that student affairs is partially to blame for what he describes as a moral vacuum on many college campuses. Using college residence halls and information from various campus disciplinary codes as examples, he criticizes the academic community for abandoning its historic role in establishing clear values, categories for desirable and undesirable behavior, and a political position for addressing each of these. Among the worst offenders in the moral decline of college campuses are college residence halls that, in his opinion, lack both privacy and common standards. He criticizes residence hall policies that place together students with opposing views on sex, alcohol, drugs, cleanliness, personal rights, and other values. The result is a peer environment that gravitates to the lowest common denominator of behavior -- an environment in which residence life staff believe everyone has the right to do whatever he or she wants, as long as it does not hurt anyone else.

Part of the criticism being hurled at higher education is that student affairs, among other areas, fails to set moral and ethical standards and promotes a liberal, postmodernist agenda in conflict with "traditional American values." Typical of the conservative rhetoric heard about higher education are the comments of Sowell (1995), an economist and senior fellow at the conservative Hoover Institute. He writes:

Freshman orientation is treated as an opportunity to have spokesmen for homosexuals, radical feminists, environmentalists, and other causes get a shot at a captive audience. Conversely, views to the contrary are not only screened out but shouted down, whether originating on campus or in lectures by outside speakers The question is not why alumni are trying to restore some integrity to colleges. The question is why it took them so long to act. (p. 130)

He goes on to villainize higher education by claiming that "many Americans who love their country have no idea of the depth of the hatred of this country and its values by large numbers of academics" (p. 130).

This kind of volatile rhetoric is frequently discounted in the academic community as misguided, uninformed, right-wing barbarianism. But many outside the academic community hear this criticism. It is in the court of public opinion that higher education may need to present its case. Unless it makes a conscious effort to combat some of these strong and conservative views, it may find itself struggling in the legislature and among governing boards in a McCarthy-like atmosphere where guilt has been decided and the discussion focuses only on the remedy.

WHAT CAN STUDENT AFFAIRS DO?

Given the increasing pressure for accountability, increasing student fragmentation, and changing moral and ethical climate, what can and should student affairs do?

Reexamine the Student Affairs Mission

The most significant change in the direction of student affairs since *The Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937) came when student affairs' work was redefined as promoting psychosocial and cognitive growth and development in students (Brown, 1972; Miller & Prince, 1976). A spectrum of developmental theories entered the dialogue about student affairs in higher education.

Only recently, Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers (1994) challenged many of the core assumptions about student development. They concluded that student development was a failed strategy that separated student affairs work from the central mission of the university. After the cries of heresy subsided, and the cracks in the wall of professional identity and pride were patched, some continued to question the role of student affairs. The publication of *The Student Learning Imperative* (American College Personnel Association, 1994) added to the dialogue. Although not a direct challenge to student development, it critiqued student affairs and pressed for more attention by education in student affairs on student learning outcomes central to the academic mission of universities. The National Association of Student

Personnel Administrators (NASPA) in the same year released *Reasonable Expectations* (Kuh, Lyons, Miller, & Trow, 1994) which reaffirmed the need for student affairs to examine its role in higher education and to focus on (a) teaching and learning, (b) curriculum, (c) institutional integrity, (d) quality of institutional life, and (e) educational services.

The most recent questions about the role of student affairs have come in a NASPA document entitled *Propositions* (Whitt, 1996). The author offers a series of propositions and questions about student affairs' role, mission, and purpose. A reading of it causes the most committed of student development advocates to pause and reflect on what student affairs organizations have and have not done and what they need to do to participate fully within the changing academic community.

What is remarkable about the recent flurry of reports and recommendations for expanding or at least redefining the role of student affairs is that the student development "paradigm" went virtually unchallenged for almost 20 years. With the exception of the critique of student development offered by Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers (1994), none of the other documents directly challenge the dominant student development philosophy. Authors of the recent documents suggested expanding the concepts of student development to become more inclusive and suggested that student affairs align itself more closely with the central learning objectives of higher education. It is too early to tell what effect this reform movement in student affairs will have, but the political climate and the reform efforts throughout higher education indicate that at least the vocabulary student affairs educators are using to explain their work is changing and that the dialogue is new. From my perspective, the mission of student affairs should contain a set of principles for good practice. Among these I would include accountability with faculty for student learning, student involvement in the university community, and the creation of a moral and ethical climate that enriches the lives, character, and development of our students.

Improve Research in Student Affairs

Because of its historical relationship with counseling and psychology, student affairs has focused on individual students and their development. Other ways of understanding the student experience need exploration. Social constructivism is one such approach. It focuses on connections between the

personal and social life rather than decontextualized accounts of psychological problems. In other words, in social constructivism the social, rather than the personal, becomes central to defining the acquisition and meaning of knowledge (Lyddon, 1995). This theory may be better suited to understanding how engagement develops and how moral and ethical climates evolve.

Although psychosocial and cognitive development theories have played dominant roles in student affairs research, the instrumentation and practical applications of many of these theories have lagged behind. In applied fields such as student affairs, not only must the theory be clear and concise, but inexpensive and reliable assessment instruments must be available. More low cost, computer-scorable instruments are needed. Without easily accessible instrumentation to measure development within a particular theory, access is limited to people with specialized skills.

A large volume of research describes what students learn in college. Little of it shows how student affairs programs and personnel directly influence those student outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Most of student affairs' claim to influence on educational outcomes is inferential and indirect. For example, living in a college residence hall is one of the best predictors of who will graduate (Astin, 1993; Pascarella, Terenzini, & Blimling, 1994). But what is it about living in a residence hall that makes this difference? We need to demonstrate how specific actions, activities, programs, and services relate directly to educational outcomes such as graduation rates, communication skills, critical thinking, and ability to function in a global community. Then these findings need effective dissemination. Terenzini (1995), in a speech before the Association for the Study of Higher Education, criticized higher education researchers for their failure to make their research meaningful and accessible to higher education policymakers. Too often, educational decision makers reach important policy decisions based on popular myths about higher education (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994). A library full of research of the influence of out-of-classroom programs on student learning is not helpful if no one reads it or knows about it. New forms of communication such as the new magazine *About Campus*, published jointly by the American College Personnel Association and Jossey-Bass Publishing Company, may offer student affairs one such avenue to enter the dialogue about what influences student learning in college.

Change the Moral and Ethical Climate

Higher education was founded for the purpose of developing in students both intellect and character (Blimling & Alschuler, 1996). In recent years, a focus on the latter has been sacrificed to the notion that higher education should help students clarify their values but should avoid teaching specific values or character traits such as honor, integrity, trustworthiness, and compassion. Cole (1995) points out that the idea of not teaching values and character is a break with the teaching traditions of philosophers such as William James and Alfred North Whitehead who regularly shared their values with their students at Harvard University. He believes that the lack of such teaching is a major contributor to the moral and ethical decline on college campuses.

Boyer (1995) agrees. He argues that schools should function as communities committed to common principles that instill character in students. The principles he suggests are honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, perseverance, and giving. Pavela (1995) would add to these academic honesty, civility, and respect for freedom of thought and expression.

Saying that these virtues should be taught in higher education is the first step. The next is to make systemic changes in the functioning of university communities to create an environment supporting these values. Tolerance for academic dishonesty, disrespect between students and teachers, and a general lack of civility must be changed. Student affairs can begin this process through the establishment of programs that orient students to the values of the community, promote values education, support honor codes and other codes of conduct that set standards, and support the setting of clear expectations for all members of the university community -- students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

CONCLUSION

Predictions are only projections of present occurrences placed in the context of the possible. If you want to know the future of higher education, look behind you. The past may be the best predictor of what lies ahead.

In the past few months, I have thought at length about my friend Bryan, his concern about the direction of student affairs, and the advice he might offer

his son. I believe I would tell him that if a measure of a person's life is the challenges overcome and the contributions made, then great opportunities await him in student affairs. The transition through postmodern attacks on higher education call for new visions, new methods to realize those visions, and proven successes. It is in understanding and managing these multidimensional issues that the real issues for student affairs and higher education exist.

A colleague recently described to me a classroom building on his campus built during the early 1980's in a period of crises over energy. To maximize energy efficiency, the building was built without windows. Although efficient, the building lacks aesthetics, stifles its users, and leave students with a constrained and claustrophobic feelings. Without windows, there is no view of the world outside, no fresh air, and no sunshine entering the building. Such buildings frequently become what engineers call "sick buildings" because the lack of light and fresh air breeds mold and bacteria and retains noxious odors, all of which cause the buildings' users to become ill.

My fear is that if efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability become the building blocks of reform in higher education, we may reconstruct higher education as a building without windows -- efficient, but lacking the humanizing experiences that are the heritage of a college education. Radical reforms toward efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability could restructure higher education as a sick building.

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