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As metropolitan institutions move into the next decade we will face our greatest challenges, including the management of political and economic change and the integration of cultural diversity. In this article, the authors describe the metropolitan student populations of the nineties. They also provide a student affairs response to the change in gender and ethnic minorities which is addressed through programs and staffing alternatives. There is also a need for the integration of metropolitan institutions and their urban environment that is critical for the continued success of enriched opportunities for our students. To incorporate this integration, an outreach program model is presented that assists the student life professional. Both graduate preparation and staff development programs are outlined and suggestions are presented regarding the needs of the diverse student population on metropolitan campuses.

The Challenge for Student Life

The two key words for administrators in the areas of student life and student affairs on metropolitan campuses are *change* and *diversity*. As the present minorities become the new majority and campus cultures change, programmatic and staffing changes in student programs will be needed. Expanding student diversity will enable many metropolitan institutions to become valuable cultural centers not only for their own campus population but also for their communities through partnership with the metropolitan area in which the institution is located. The challenge to change and diversity will be the focus for all of student affairs, especially the student life units that deal with out-of-the-classroom experiences. The recent "College Experience Study" conducted by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the Lilly Foundation included outstanding examples of out-of-the-classroom learning environments in 14 prominent colleges and universities.

The identification of the "new student" in *Beyond the Open Door* and in *Commuting Versus Resident Students* marked the beginning of the inclusion of nontraditional students into the mainstream of student personnel efforts. However, the national student personnel associations have only, within the last ten years, addressed the need for networking, workshops, special task forces, and research targeting student affairs staff employed on metropolitan campuses.

The formation of the "urban" consortium in 1986 by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, together with NASPA, served as the cornerstone for fostering collective interest and collective data in student affairs. Then, in 1989, NASPA formed an urban university task force and network to recognize the emergence of metropolitan universities. In

addition, Wright State University hosted in March 1990 the first Metropolitan Universities Student Initiatives Conference.

This article includes several considerations for the student life professional at the metropolitan university. After a description of the rich diversity of student populations found in today's metropolitan universities, the article describes components of a student affairs response to managing and developing this diversity. These components include the integration of student cultures and community throughout metropolitan universities, a strong orientation effort for first-time students, and a well-planned and creative outreach strategy. The authors also include a student life outreach model, to challenge student life professionals. Finally, the article addresses the need for more research and emphasis on metropolitan issues in graduate preparation programs and staff development.

The Diversity of the Student Population

The diversity of student populations at metropolitan universities is clearly indicated by the 1988-89 *Report of the Urban Thirteen Plus*. At the 15 member institutions, the fall enrollment in 1988 of over 300,000 contained 10 percent Black, non-Hispanic students; 3 percent Hispanic; 3 percent Asian and Pacific Islander students; less than one percent American Indian and Alaskan native; and 3 percent nonresident aliens from 158 countries. Sixty-two percent of the students were women; 49 percent attended classes after 3 pm; and only 7 percent lived in campus housing. A College Board Study of ten major metropolitan universities reported that 30 percent of the students enrolled were over 25 years of age and had families and other responsibilities in addition to attending classes. Seventy percent had full-time employment.

The high percentage of women among the students at the "Urban Thirteen Plus" is due, in part, to the convenient location of the institutions in large population centers, flexible class scheduling, comprehensive program offerings, and successful recruitment program initiatives of these metropolitan universities.

Among the female students are older women who, like their male counterparts, bring with them special characteristics that add to the complexity of the challenges to be addressed.

Older students, regardless of gender, come to the academic experience with attitudes, values, and life expectations that are quite different from those of the traditional college student. These differences pose challenges for academic programs as well as for cocurricular activities. Several kinds of psychological problems may be more prevalent within this group of students: depression, problems with self-esteem, anxiety over function, and physical problems. Experience has shown, however, that this population is also often highly motivated, goal-oriented, and academically successful.

By the early part of the next century, the Hispanic population is projected to increase to 18 percent (from 6 percent) and ethnic and racial minorities will comprise one-third of the nation's population. This should lead to further growth of minority enrollment in metropolitan universities. Blacks are currently the largest component of this enrollment, but striking change has taken place in recent years. In the 1980s four out of five black students in higher education were enrolled in predominantly white institutions, whereas in the past the majority of black students attended historically black colleges.

The dramatic changes in enrollment patterns at metropolitan universities, together with the need to continue to increase student diversity so as to reflect the nation's demography, will require substantial institutional adjustments to accommodate ethnic and racial minorities—and indeed any nontraditional group of students. However, that does not appear to have happened as yet to an adequate extent. Surveys show that minority students generally perceive the institutional climate as being inhospitable, nonresponsive, and insensitive to their needs and concerns. Many among them claim, with some merit, that institutions are more concerned with the public relations aspects of peaceful co-existence among student groups than with adapting to the needs of minority students. To attain an illusion of harmony, the cultural interests of black, Hispanic, and Asian-American students are not given equal attention in the central program planning for out-of-class activities. As a result, these students may feel isolated, unwelcome, and alienated.

Many minority students are the first in their family to attend college. They approach the collegiate experience with abated pride and enthusiasm, with feelings of insecurity and apprehension, and with a desire for acceptance and integration into the life of the university. Lack of responsiveness to these concerns can hamper these students' involvement in institutional life and lead to self-imposed isolation and group separation.

Many Hispanic students face the additional problem that too little attention is paid to the great diversity among them. Hispanic is a collective term which includes Mexican/Chicano (60 percent), Puerto Ricans (14 percent), Cuban Americans (6 percent), and other Hispanics (20 percent). Student programming must reflect the special needs, concerns, and interests of the diverse groups within this population. It is important that student affairs practitioners understand and dispel some of the pervasive myths about Hispanic life and culture by facilitating programming that will portray the rich and positive aspects of the culture. Bustamante, Carlson, and Chavez have detailed many of the myths and suggested programming strategies that will draw positive attention to the heritage of Hispanics.

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Nationally, the Asian-American population has achieved the highest percentage increase during the last ten years—a trend that is quite likely to continue. Students from this population have many different cultural origins and bring to the campus a diversity of attitudes, customs, and values. Student affairs practitioners face special challenges in dealing with the heterogeneity of this student population.

A Student Affairs Response

Student affairs practitioners may initially be overwhelmed by the diversity of their student body and the implications for integrating each minority group into the fabric of institutional life. One approach to making the task more understandable and manageable is to accept this definition: minority students comprise a category of individuals whose racial, educational, social, cultural, and economic experiences vary significantly from the majority student population.

Armed with a workable definition, student affairs professionals can proceed to set in place structures, programs, and processes by which diverse student populations may interact with each other, learn and benefit from each other, and become enriched by their interaction. Representation of all constituent groups is essential for effective multicultural programming. Student affairs professionals should employ institutional research to identify the various ethnic and other minorities on campus and make certain they are actively involved in every aspect of student programming. Student appointments to university committees should reflect a sincere commitment to openness to a wide range of ideas and opinions shaped by diverse cultural experiences. An effective student affairs division and student life program is guided by the accurate assessment of the needs of the diverse student population.

Building Community Across The Campus

It is important for any student life department on a metropolitan campus to do everything possible to integrate activities and programs with academic units, student service areas, and local nonuniversity entities. This requires the articulation and communication of clear developmental concepts, as well as the creation of programs that will enhance and integrate the holistic development of students across targeted populations. The thread of student life activities should extend throughout the university so as to strengthen students' affiliation and involvement.

It is also the responsibility of student life professionals to educate the entire academic and staff community regarding the diversity of students admitted. A clear message must come from the university's chief executive officer regarding quality of student life, as well as support and direction from all persons in leadership roles. Strategic plans of metropolitan universities

must include attention to the quality of life for all students. A careful plan which provides for the full development of people, programs, and facilities so as to maximize student life takes visionary leadership, a creative staff, a supportive academic community, distinguished marketing skills, and flexible hours of service.

Orientation

The orientation process begins with outreach prior to students' arrival on campus. The initial association and impression of an institution on students is vital for a positive student life connection in a metropolitan institution. This first contact should set the stage for clarifying what an institution can do for the student developmentally, academically, and holistically. For this purpose, it is imperative that orientation sessions are established to meet a diverse student population. These programs should include the families of nontraditional and adult students, because the support of family is vital to the success of the busy metropolitan campus student. Hectic work schedules, family responsibilities, and financial stress make it critical to have a thorough orientation session. Understanding of the university community and available resources often makes the difference between the student who survives and the one who fails in higher education. The high percentage of blue-collar, transfer, and first-generation college students reinforces the need for a friendly and effective orientation.

Many institutions now require for all first-time students an extended orientation course, which presents an excellent opportunity for establishing a student life connection. The shared responsibility by faculty and staff for teaching the course often creates a new appreciation and respect for the nontraditional student, as well as the professional in student life. The actual dissemination of materials related to student life during these sessions helps to create enhanced relationships between faculty and professional staff.

Student life staff can assist faculty and student leaders to join forces and work toward the same desired outcome. Institutions have a responsibility to include and recognize at the outset faculty who assist in promoting student life efforts. Once a relationship is established, student life professionals need to keep faculty interest alive by sharing information and including them in student life activities. This process of building relationships between faculty and student life on a metropolitan campus is extremely important for student success.

Outreach Activities and Services

Once the orientation of new students is completed, student life leaders need constantly to monitor the unit's programs and activities to assure that they respond to the diversity of the metropolitan consumers. The students

at most metropolitan universities have not yet challenged the activities provided through required student fees, but this acquiescence is likely to change in the years ahead. Metropolitan students in the 1990s will become more demanding with regard to the appropriateness, quality, and cost of the services, activities, and facilities available to them. The idea of consumer-driven services, instruction, and recreational programs is new to higher education and should be discussed at all levels of the university. The governing boards, faculty, and professional and support staffs all need to become versed in consumerism and customer relations.

The student affairs staff in metropolitan universities will have to strive to achieve a proper mix of opportunities for recreational, social, and intellectual stimulation for the diverse cultural elements on the campus. *Future Perfect* by Stanley Davis is a valuable resource tool for metropolitan campus student life practitioners. Its estimates of time, cost, and service speak directly to needs of the multifaceted metropolitan student body in the decade ahead.

The need to balance the diversity of the student population and the delivery of student life activities within the framework of limited resources can be expressed schematically by the diagram on figure 1. It illustrates the need to develop a combination of targeted cultures, facilities, special events, self-directed interest groups, special services, and traditional approaches in order to reach the heterogeneous and often elusive student population on metropolitan campuses. A mixture of campus experiences is important so as to ensure the opportunity for change, growth, and new relationships. One important component can be provided by traditional experiences that exist on all campuses, such as student organizations, publications and governance units, intramural athletic programs, and even fraternities and sororities. These as well as student programs centered around special events such as Martin Luther King's birthday, celebrations, convocations, and major athletic events all provide opportunities for all constituencies in the student body to affiliate with other students on campus.

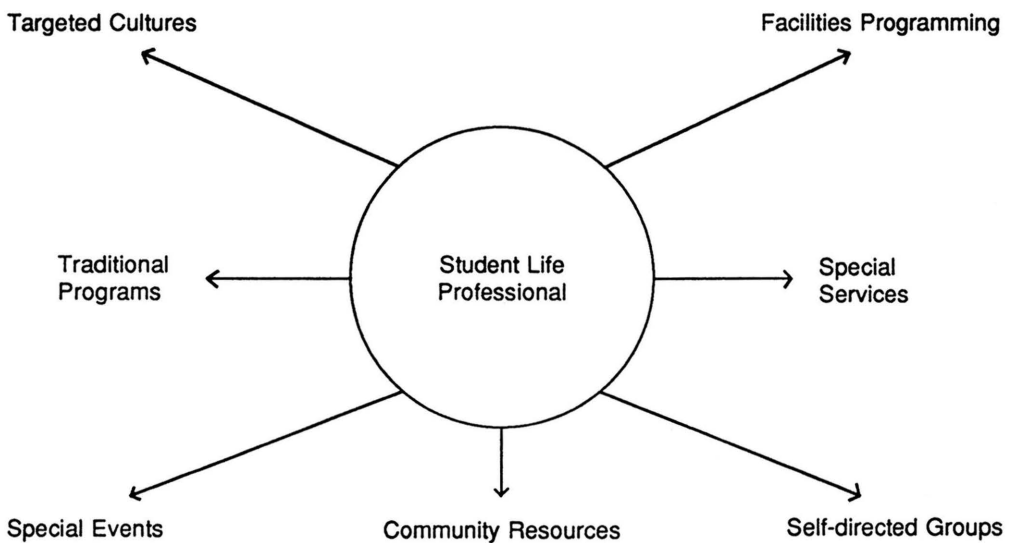
A high proportion of students at metropolitan universities commute, and most of them work part time or full time. This situation creates a crucial need for centralized facilities that combine space for activities and food outlets, as well as student services. Student centers which most often house cafeterias, fast food shops, vending machines, bookstores, specialty shops, student life units, and lounge space, become the focal point on most campuses. Even uninvolved students will usually find the student center early in their tenure and be exposed to student life opportunities. Indoor and outdoor recreational and athletic facilities serve as excellent resources for student life development on urban campuses. These resources and outlets are the best areas to advertise and perform student life activities.

Satellite centers for career workshops and special interest sessions could easily be housed in foyers of facilities such as a student center, college of education lobby, or outside courtyards. The creative and bold programmer who takes the message to the students will reach a more diverse group outside the walls of the assigned office space.

Campus student life professionals will need to foster and structure various self-directed student groups. This principle holds true for any campus but is especially important on metropolitan campuses. The need to affiliate with others is a common one but difficult to satisfy on many campuses. Once a group has recognized a common thread of interest such as outdoor activities, political concerns, religious interests, and hobbies, it is important to assist them by providing space and structure whenever possible.

The need for special student services on metropolitan campuses will increase as the new decade unfolds. The increased demand for child care services is one example of a special service that will be an issue. The needs of evening students also require attention by administrators across the campus. This silent group accounts for a large percentage of paying customers who have, for the most part, been ignored in the past. It is important to keep the day and evening students' needs balanced in planning for the coming years.

Figure 1
Metropolitan Campus Student Life Outreach Model



**Metropolitan students
in the 1990s will be
more demanding.**

A further outreach component of the model deals with targeting the various cultures on metropolitan campuses. A student's peer group may heavily influence the quality of his/her college experience. Organizational efforts of ethnic minorities should be facilitated, encouraged, and supported. Special cultural interests are an expected focus of these organizations, but interests can be broadened through the creation of coordinating mechanisms which link the groups. Special funding mechanisms can encourage joint sponsorship of activities and programs that may reflect the unique cultural interests of the participating groups or be of shared interest, such as health and environmental concerns.

Student activities calendars must include the special dates of the various student groups. Celebrations and observances should be supported and coordinated with other activities to encourage general student participation. Student life programmers on metropolitan campuses need to understand the plurality of cultures on campus. Special programs for international, minority, or older students will open windows of opportunity for these targeted groups and for the healthy acknowledgement of cultural differences.

A unique feature of metropolitan campuses is their ability to integrate community and university by utilizing the resources provided by their metropolitan surroundings. One of their strongest recruiting tools is the opportunity for students to attend and participate in cultural, civic, political, social and personal development events available in the urban setting. Too often metropolitan student life administrators fail to capitalize on the numerous opportunities found within the immediate community. Student life operations and programs can be greatly expanded by exploring partnerships with local community leaders and social agencies. To allow a student to graduate from a metropolitan institution and never partake in the richness of the city environment diminishes a student's educational experience.

The metropolitan outreach model is cited to illustrate the need for creative and planned programs for a new and diverse student population of the 1990s. The model combines the traditional outreach efforts with new targeted groups.

Challenging Student Life Professionals

Population shifts and increased emphasis on cultural diversity and exchange will require student personnel professionals to be versed in understanding today's and tomorrow's metropolitan students. An increased understanding of the developmental needs of minorities, women, nontraditional and international students, and people of color must become an

integral part of graduate programs for individuals who wish to pursue a career on a metropolitan campus. This need cannot be accomplished with one general course or guest speaker. About 43 percent of current college students are educated in metropolitan institutions. Yet, only one existing graduate doctoral program has a direct emphasis on the metropolitan student personnel perspective. This program was started in 1988 at the University of Louisville. In 1987, the *Directory of Graduate Preparation Programs in College Student Personnel* cited 52 institutions that met American College Personnel Association Commission XII Standards for Preparation Programs. However, only seven of those 52 schools offered a course on metropolitan institutions. Eleven had course content on adult development or learning, and only one institution listed a course on women in administration or women in higher education. Five programs offered courses on multicultural counseling or ethnic diversity.

These facts indicate an obvious deficiency in existing programs that prepare individuals for work at metropolitan institutions. A partnership between the graduate faculty in student personnel programs and the leadership in student affairs units at metropolitan institutions is critical to providing opportunities for students interested in working on a metropolitan campus. A connection with metropolitan agencies to complement the curriculum, along with student affairs experiences, would provide the best learning base for student affairs practitioners in the decade ahead.

The professional development component for student affairs staff already working on a metropolitan campus is a second area that needs to be addressed. Because of the lack of adequate course offerings and direction in the area of metropolitan education, most practitioners have had to rely on professional associations and workshops to gain insight into the creation of enriched out-of-the-classroom experiences on metropolitan college campuses. One can hope that recent efforts by new and established professional associations will provide the assistance and support to student affairs personnel working on metropolitan campuses.

The cultural changes of the nineties will demand academically competent, adequately experienced, and bilingual individuals in student affairs units. The growth in Hispanic, black, and Asian populations in the next decade will also bring about the need for a diverse group of role models, and metropolitan institutional leadership will need to be sensitive to diversity in student affairs staff. This effort again should begin with outreach to the undergraduate student leaders who may be interested in a career in student affairs at a metropolitan institution. The issues of role models *and* graduate preparation changes need to be addressed now to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

**Metropolitan campuses
can integrate community
and university.**

Recommendations

Out-of-classroom student life can make a significant contribution to metropolitan universities if the institutions adapt themselves to meet the needs of their diverse student populations. The following areas should be addressed:

- Student affairs professionals on metropolitan campuses must begin to research and write on the topic of out-of-the-classroom experiences.
- Student affairs professionals should survey and assess the current and projected needs of cultural diversity on their campus.
- Student affairs workers must take leadership roles in informing institutional administrators about the necessity for planned changes in allocation of resources and staff in order to meet evening, part-time, adult, and cultural diversity needs.
- Metropolitan students and staff leaders need to be sensitized to become consumer conscious. An integration of all efforts should be centered within student affairs.
- Student involvement in campus life is feasible and important at metropolitan institutions.
- Programs designed to bridge the student life component with metropolitan communities and appropriate agencies within cities need to be established and used to enrich personal developmental opportunities for students.
- Future expectations for higher education on metropolitan campuses will be met only when graduate training programs make changes that prepare student affairs professionals to work in the urban environment.
- Leadership within student affairs will need to employ a culturally diverse mixture of skilled professionals who mirror the metropolitan campus student population.

Suggested Readings

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