
Magis:
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The mission of *Magis: A Journal of Student Development*, published by students in the Student Development Administration Program at Seattle University, is to create the premier forum in Jesuit higher education for dialogue, committed to academic excellence and integrity, on the practice of student affairs as inspired by the long tradition of Jesuit Catholic education, and directed toward creating a just and humane world through quality service in education.

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The Editorial Board of *Magis: A Student Development Journal* consists of graduate students in the Student Development Administration program at Seattle University (SU). The Board has been established to control all aspects of the publication process and to ensure the quality and professionalism of the journal.

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Magis: A Student Development Journal welcomes traditional or non-traditional scholarly submissions addressing issues in higher education and student affairs. The Editorial Board specifically seeks manuscripts presenting new programming ideas, original research, and those that explore current events, issues, and concerns in the field. The opinions and attitudes expressed in the journal do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board, nor are they representative of opinions shared by the Student Development Administration program, the College of Education or Seattle University.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."-
John Quincy Adams

To be a leader in student affairs, professionals must endlessly support students, tirelessly work towards the betterment of student services, and intrinsically have the passion and value systems in place to dedicate themselves to their craft. As students in the Student Development Administration program at Seattle University, we are privileged to be surrounded by these types of leaders. With the constant support of these mentors in our program, we pursue the acquisition of knowledge through literature, through discussion, through internship, through reflection.

As we continue on the quest to produce the premier forum in Jesuit higher education for dialogue, committed to academic excellence and integrity, on the practice of student affairs as inspired by the long tradition of Jesuit Catholic education, we are proud to publish Volume 3 of *Magis: A Student Development Journal*. Through this journal, we aim for the true meaning of magis – to do more. In doing more, we become more and in becoming more we equip our students and colleagues to be more.

It is with the spirit of the Jesuit more and with the dedication to educating the whole person that I am honored to unveil the first *Magis* journal in hardcopy format. With the Jesuit mission and values in mind, we present our peers, new professionals, and seasoned mentors with thought-provoking and engaging manuscripts. As Editor-in-Chief, I welcome you to not only consider the perspectives presented by these authors, but to take time to reflect on the implications they have for your service and dedication to college students. With this desire to keep learning and growing, we pause and reflect on the work of our mentors at SU and our esteemed professional colleagues around the world. With the intent of merging the academic rigor of such journals as ACPA's *Journal of College Student Development* and NASPA's *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* with the Jesuit values and identity present in our work, we pledge to continue to dream more, learn more, do more, and become, more.

- Kristina Mieszcanski

MAGIS

ARTICLES

Sharing Stories, Understanding Selves: A Glimpse into the Values of Ethical Decision Making

Robert Kelly, Ph.D.

This manuscript is an excerpt from a larger study regarding what senior student affairs administrators (SSAOs) identify as critical values in ethical decision-making. Through an interpretive approach, narrative inquiry, SSAOs were invited to share professional stories about ethical decision-making. There are two dimensions of ethical decisions. The public side that is shown to others and the private side that silently tests the individual. This private side, through the dialogue of data collection, was exposed and summarized in this study. This interpretive study explored the values, not often discussed openly or shared with others, ten SSAOs considered in ethical dilemmas. The story of one of those SSAOs is shared here.

Brooks (2001) argued that the meaning derived from life, daydreams, and an individual's sense of self are narratives constructed as stories. He maintained that individuals use stories to better understand themselves, their motivations, and the motivations and actions of others. This manuscript looks at the story of a senior student affairs officer.

A few years back I spoke with several senior student affairs officers and asked them to share with me the stories that illustrate how they discern in an ethical dilemma. Their stories were rich and powerful and I share only one with you in this manuscript. Right now, higher education is faced with a myriad of complex issues and the ethics of our senior leaders are critical to our success.

The foundations of ethical standards lie in the decision-making process for each individual (Badarraco, 1997). Often, however, the values, assumptions, judgments, observations, and beliefs remain unspoken and are invisible. Still, determining ethical values is a difficult process. In an effort to be ethical, what one thinks about, how one thinks about it, and the stories one reflects on may be as important as the choice one eventually makes (Brown, 1990).

Dr. Robert Kelly is the Vice President for Student Development at Seattle University. In his role he provides leadership for the advocacy, development and coordination of co-curricular initiatives, services and activities to promote the academic, personal and professional development of all students. Prior to this position, he served as Assistant Vice President at Seattle University, Associate Dean of Students at The University of Vermont (UVM). Rob received his Ph.D. in Higher Education from the University of Maryland, his master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration from UVM and a Bachelors degree in Political Science, from Loyola College in Maryland. Dr. Kelly's research focuses on administrative ethical decision-making in Higher Education and the ways in which college students' experiences with diversity prepare them for active citizenship and leadership.

The work of Beauchamp and Childress (1979) served as the foundation for Kitchener's (1984, 1985) research on ethical principles and decisions in student affairs work. Kitchener maintained that ethical decision-making was dependent upon the situation and the particular facts of that situation. Thus, an ethical decision in one scenario might not be the ethical decision in another because the rules, principles, and theories for justification differ.

Wiley (2000) examined the ways in which ethical behavior influenced the careers of higher education professionals. Wiley found that when colleges and universities have institutional leaders who are successful in identifying ethical considerations in teaching, curricular and administrative issues, those institutions are more nimble and can adapt to change more quickly than institutions without such leaders. Wiley concluded that higher education is in need of educators who possess the aptitude to evaluate and confront the myriad of ethical issues faced in the modern college and university.

Additionally, there are other studies that examine ethical decision-making in student affairs administration. Copeland (2000), Young and Elfrink (1991), Gardener, (2002), Margolis (2001) and Lampkin and Gibson (1999) argued that the stories of the past are the concepts in student affairs administrators' hearts and souls that allow professionals to make meaning of the world.

Let me share with you a glimpse into the heart and soul of Dr. Tina Collins of Saint Bellarmine University. Tina has been Vice President for Student Affairs for four years at Saint Bellarmine University, a cosmopolitan university in the heart of a city. After struggling to settle on a dilemma to share, Tina went on to offer that she is beginning to struggle with the feeling that her fellow vice presidents and the President don't truly know enough about her to fully understand her. She stated:

> I hate who we have become in higher education. We don't share enough of ourselves with the people with whom we spend so much time. I have done everything in my power not to forget who I am, who I really am and where I came from, and yet, I don't share that with others. And then I wonder why they don't understand me or why I think the way I do.

I acknowledged Tina's thoughts and she composed herself before she began explaining her dilemma regarding a student discipline matter.

"I Felt Pretty Useless"

Tina said that she believed that she should be an advocate for students and she has never questioned her commitment to the profession. However, she confided that she does struggle with advocacy when students do something that is illegal or what she considers to be immoral. She

continued by stating her belief in growth, development and rehabilitation and finding ways to still advocate for students in challenging times. This advocacy role, however, is what she believed blurred not only her lines of judgment but also that of her President.

The dilemma started with three students and their role in stealing from a department on campus. One student had the combination to a safe in the administrative office. This student would observe a manager put money in the safe each night, file the appropriate forms, and record the transaction in the computer. After the manager would leave each night, this student would open the safe, change the forms and the computer record log.

This thievery continued for over three months until the stealing was eventually discovered by a graduate assistant in the office. As the full scope of the theft was illuminated, it was discovered that three students, not one, were involved. One student was involved in stealing the money from the safe. Another student was involved in rewriting a computer program to hide the missing money, and a third student was involved in ignoring the appropriate measures that would have prevented this type of incident from occurring.

I inquired as to why she shared this as a dilemma and she commented that the heart of the dilemma is what came after the students' identities were revealed. She explained that one student's father was the CEO of a large international company which employed thousands of people. The second student was the niece of a member of the Board of Trustees and the third student was the child of Tina's close and personal friend.

What complicated the matter further was that the President of Saint Bellarmine University wanted this matter to disappear. Tina offered that few people, other than the President, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the director of the department where the money was stolen, and the Director of Public Safety, knew of the incident. Upon reading the report, Tina recalled the President called her to say that the students should be put on probation until graduation and that needed to be the end of the matter. Tina asked if they could discuss this during her meeting with him later that day and he agreed.

At the meeting, Tina expressed her displeasure with a probationary sanction and said that she wanted the students to learn from their indiscretion. She shared:

> The President said this is what he wanted done and that is how things are going to be. I was so angry and I was not going to let that be the end of the conversation. Then, the president stood up and said, "This is what I want you to do. This is how I want it handled. You will write this letter. You will sign it. We will all move on from this. And I don't want to hear another word about it. If I do, you will regret it."

During this heated meeting, Tina recalled that she felt powerless and even scared. She had never been threatened before. Further, she believed the threat was unwarranted because all of the students were in positions to repay the money. For her, the dilemma was an issue of growth, education and preferential treatment because these students had connections. I asked her if she had ever managed a situation like this before and she replied:

> I have had presidents direct me to do something I didn't think was particularly right, but never before to this magnitude and he threatened me. I felt pretty useless because if a decision is going to be made at that level, I have to question the purpose of my job…the purpose of my position in this organization. What does this say about me as a person, my values, my profession, and my calling? This happens all the time in admissions, but to actually threaten me…I felt sick.

I inquired as to what Tina decided to do and she informed me that she took a calculated risk. She chose to tell her close friend about her daughter's behavior. She said that she wanted to tell her friend because she valued their friendship. Tina believed she had to make a decision that was both personal and professional. "When I designate a person as a friend it is one of the most precious things to me. I could not look her in the face and NOT tell her." Tina offered that she does not call everyone a friend. For Tina, honesty in friendship is a value that is paramount. Additionally, Tina believed that her friend would have been angry if Tina had not called.

Tina had prepared herself, after informing her close friend of the incident, to walk into the President's office the next day and tell the President that she would not comply with his directive. Tina shared with me a note she had written as talking points for her meeting with the president. It read:

> I cannot do what you have asked me to do and therefore you need to give me the opportunity to resign and help me find another job or help me find another job and I will resign from this post when I get it. However you want to play it, we will. But I will not allow you to intimidate me out of doing what I think is right. And how dare you threaten me. I am a Christian woman, who is good at my job and I am a tenured professor to boot. I make good money, really good money and you will not threaten my livelihood.

In the end, she did not have to use these talking points with the President. She did tell her friend about the incident and Tina felt that her friend addressed her daughter, who was involved in the incident, in an appropriate manner. What Tina did not expect was that her friend was going to call the other parents of the students involved in the situation. When Tina arrived at the President's office, he greeted her warmly and surprisingly apologized for his behavior. Although Tina recalled the President sharing that he was surprised she did not listen to his directive, he

was impressed that she did what she believed. The President complemented her on coming up with the solution of telling her friend who would then inform the other parents.

Appreciative of his comments, Tina offered that she was still angry. Angry at the "kinds of games" played in higher education, angry at herself "for not standing up earlier," and angry that her "colleagues knew so little" about her and what she holds important in her work. Tina believed that she had let herself down and noted:

> My problems stemmed more from my religious background than from something that I had learned in the academy. I felt guilty because "technically" I did something that probably wasn't very ethical; I shared that student's information. I wouldn't cover up. I wouldn't hide. And those values are important to me in my religion but not so much at work…but one has to trump the other. Again, it's what I learned as a part of my religion and not what I learned as a part of my role in the academy.

Tina offered that another underlying value that made this situation a difficult one was that she wanted the President to see her as competent to handle this issue. She believed her reputation was at stake. Regarding the President, she said, "I think he only saw me in situations where I was doing everything I can to help students. I felt defensive that he did not see more. I suppose looking competent is a value I may hold too dear." I asked Tina if the concept of looking competent was connected to her ethnicity and she paused and offered that it is her race, but it is also her gender.

Tina shared that she believes student affairs leaders are sometimes apologetic for the values of truth, process, and religion. Still, she reiterated that senior student affairs officers need to not be apologetic for the values they hold as individuals. She continued by stating that if she had done a better job of sharing who she was as a person, the President would have seen the dilemma from her point of view.

> It would have helped him to understand me. I still don't think it would have changed his decision to want to get rid of the situation. It might have changed what he ultimately asked me to do, and I do think it would have helped him to understand why I didn't want to do it. I don't think he ever really understood. That was almost a year ago and it still bothers me…I am not sure why.

Tina ended our conversation by commenting about how her ethnicity and religion is a factor in decision-making. She discussed the concept of shame and how many churches and many people in her community have moved away from discussing shame. Although she claimed she did not want people to live in fear, there was a part of feeling shame that highlighted a value

that could provide a foundation for ethical decision-making. She closed our interview by offering the following summary of how she saw herself. She revealed:

> All I'm trying to say is I received a solid foundation at home, which was reinforced in my community church, which was reinforced in my high school, which gave me a real sense of who I was, where I had come from, what I needed to be thankful for, and what my obligations were once I was able to leave that environment. I think we need more of that today…it would help all of us.

I expressed how much she helped me by being so clear about what undergirds her decision-making process.

"No, He Did Not Just Talk To Me Like That"

Although Tina struggled with choosing an ethical dilemma, she identified the issue of reputation as a strong consideration in ethical decision-making. Her dilemma revolved around how to appropriately address the misconduct of well connected and high profile students, especially given that the President threatened her into covering up the situation. Equally as strong in her decision-making were the themes of faith and spirituality, power and powerlessness, and integrity and humanity. In fact, all four themes emerged again, many times in our conversations. Tina stated that her strong belief in God and formal structures of religion and faith aided her to get through this particular dilemma and "hard times," in general. Tina also mentioned feeling power in standing up to the President and powerless from the President's directive. She relied on the values of integrity and humanity to finally make her decision. Tina did this by staying true to what she believed was right and valuing the students involved in the situation enough to see to it that they be held accountable for their actions in order that they might grow and develop from the incident. For Tina telling her friend the truth was critical to her decision-making.

Summary

Senior student affairs officers consider a wide variety of ethical values and principles in administrative work: faith and spirituality, power and powerlessness, reputation and livelihood, and integrity and humanity. The story above is only one of many stories from our vice presidents and deans. And as illustrated in the story presented, the relationship between the president and the senior student affairs officer is vital to the success of the overall student affairs program. Last, although not a conclusion but rather a by-product of the process of narrative ethics, I confirmed that stories and past incidents play a significant role in the ethical decision-making processes of senior student affairs officers.

I am excited about the future of student affairs, as I believe this educator is an example of the thoughtful, reflective, and soul-driven leadership in the field of student affairs today. Elkins (2003) wrote:

> In taking on the various roles that we accept (or have pushed on us) we filter what we see and hear in a way that flattens our perception and impoverishes our story. Performing a role, defining ourselves by the parameters of a role, living as if we are a role, can devalue as well as enrich our stories…Being a person, having a life to live, with hopes, fears, and dreams is more than any role or set of roles can prescribe. Roles may describe what we do but it is stories that embody our lives. We need stories because life fully lived does not lend itself to description and definition, or to abstract theories (¶ 2).

I include this quote from *Imagining Our Lives as Stories* because it exemplifies what I learned about myself, the role of the senior student affairs officer, and ethical decision-making. I was able to see the important ways in which this professional considers ethical values and principles of her position through story. I am very much appreciative of this glimpse into her life.

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Keeping Up with the Green Revolution

Dayspring Schlachter

Sustainability is an increasingly important issue within higher education, and many colleges and universities are taking steps to develop programs and long-term goals that address this issue on their campuses. One significant step taken by many institutions has been to hire a sustainability coordinator. This paper argues that structural changes are needed for these coordinators to effectively work interdepartmentally and offer a cohesive vision for sustainability. Current statistics and examples are cited. Explanations for why current programs may not be working and what needs to change are offered. Higher education has a responsibility to respond to environmental concerns, and to do so successfully, colleges and universities must empower sustainability coordinators with adequate resources and credibility.

How relevant is long-term environmental sustainability in higher education? Is the "Green Revolution" just a passing fad, or will it bring significant structural changes to colleges and universities? An increasing number of institutions are recognizing the value of developing clearer visions for sustainability on their campuses. Across the nation, institutions are introducing programs focused on "green" building (utilizing energy-saving technology and environmentally-conscious building materials), composting food waste from dining halls, and reducing water and energy usage. Many institutions have hired sustainability coordinators to work specifically on these initiatives. But is this enough? How can sustainability coordinators overcome political barriers and work interdepartmentally to implement campus-wide initiatives? Currently, most colleges and universities that have sustainability officers have housed these staff members within the facilities department, concentrating efforts on energy efficiency and recycling. Yet sustainability cannot be contained within one isolated position. Long-term change requires an interdepartmental vision that incorporates sustainability into every aspect of an institution's mission and goals.

Dayspring Schlachter will complete a M.Ed. in Student Development Administration from Seattle University in June 2009. Currently, she serves as Assistant Residence Life Coordinator at Seattle Pacific University and has a background as a small business owner. Dayspring's interests include sustainability within higher education, connections between spirituality and sexuality, and women's identity development.

The effectiveness of sustainability coordinators is severely limited by current structural realities, and until these organizational issues are addressed, coordinators will be ill-equipped to face the political challenges that come with working collaboratively toward their goals.

Much has changed regarding institutional responses to environmental concerns within higher education during the past decade. Sustainability has moved from being a trendy issue at "liberal" West Coast colleges, to a national concern that institutions across the nation are beginning to address. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) conducts an annual survey of sustainability officers at colleges and universities, providing information on the roles, salaries, and positions of sustainability coordinators nationwide. The 2008 AASHE survey reported that over 90 percent of respondents' positions had been created in the past ten years. Currently, there are over 150 sustainability coordinators at colleges and universities, and that number continues to grow each month (AASHE, 2008). The majority of these sustainability coordinators are housed within facilities departments, while just less than 31 percent work under an independent sustainability office (AASHE, 2008). While it is a positive progression that more colleges and universities are hiring sustainability coordinators, these officers continue to work under the umbrella of facilities, which limits their ability to address issues outside of their department's range of oversight. Meanwhile, other groups on campus that are concerned about environment issues, such as science classes, and student clubs and organizations, are working separately from one another. What is lacking is a central person or staff group who can offer a more cohesive long-term vision for sustainability, bringing groups together to work toward a common purpose.

Research on sustainability trends in higher education confirms that current "green" efforts have not been incorporated into most institutions' broader mission and goals. The National Wildlife Federation's recently released *Campus Environment 2008* report is based on research conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International and offers a national report card on sustainability in higher education. The study compares 2008 results to data from its 2001 survey, highlighting "green" trends within areas such as transportation, landscaping, recycling, and energy efficiency. Based on the fact that most sustainability efforts at colleges and universities thus far have emerged from facilities and operations departments, this statistic is not surprising. It is the facilities department that oversees landscaping, recycling, and energy

efficiency, so, new sustainability coordinators often will be charged with tackling these areas. Yet focusing primarily on operational concerns may leave other important areas overlooked.

According to the *Campus Environment 2008* report, higher education's weakest link has been sustainability education. Colleges and universities have failed to incorporate environmental lessons into their overall curriculum and to educate faculty on new sustainability research and principles. Furthermore, the number of environmental studies degree programs has dropped significantly. In 2001, two thirds of the colleges surveyed offered majors or minors in environmental or sustainability fields (Carlson, 2008). The 2008 report showed that currently only half of those same institutions offer these majors. So while the number of sustainability coordinator positions is increasing, academic programs are lagging. One might think that increased awareness of sustainability would lead to further popularity of environmental studies programs and student organizations, yet this has not been the case. Why? Colleges and universities lack cohesive leadership teams that network across campus, communicating their institution's vision for sustainability and evaluating academic, operational, and co-curricular programs in light of these values and goals. Sustainability coordinators are the crucial link to integrating a sustainability mission into all aspects of an institution. Just as multicultural affairs offices have become a central locale for addressing diversity within hiring decisions, student life, and academic affairs, likewise sustainability coordinators should offer resources and support for environmental concerns. While higher education has made great strides in "greening" their operations, the inherent nature of sustainability calls for a more holistic and integrated approach.

Sustainability coordinators cannot simply be instructed to partner with other departments on campus; they must be given the resources to do so. Organizational structure significantly impacts a group's communication and efforts. People generally respond best to guidance from their superiors or other people seen as experts within their field. Conversely, people may disregard instruction or evaluation that comes from a person perceived as overstepping the boundaries of their role. For example, faculty members often do not appreciate input on classroom instruction and curriculum development that comes from student affairs professionals. Academics may view student affairs professionals' concerns or expertise as limited to the realm of co-curricular programs. Academic administrators, however, have a much stronger voice in curriculum and instruction on their campuses. Likewise, sustainability coordinators that are housed within the facilities department have little credibility to offer feedback to strategic

planning committees or advisors of student organizations. If sustainability coordinators are tasked with working departmentally and integrating sustainability principles into the institution's long-term vision and plans, they must work closely with high-level administrators and be given the resources and independence to be effective in their role.

Emory University, a private institution in Georgia, exemplifies this integrative approach to sustainability within higher education. The director of the Office of Sustainability Initiatives coordinates efforts to incorporate sustainability into the operational, academic, and community outreach functions of the University. The director reports to both the Academic Provost and Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration. By partnering with both the operational and academic branches of the university, the Office of Sustainability Initiatives has been able to gain credibility and network across campus, developing new programs and initiatives. The key sustainability initiatives highlighted at Emory include green building, energy conservation, sustainable food, commute options, and curriculum and research. By including curriculum and research within its key initiatives, the Office of Sustainability is able to cross over departmental divides and cast a cohesive vision for sustainability.

Not everyone supports the integration of sustainability into higher education. A June 2008 *Washington Post* article points out that concern for the environment has waxed and waned within higher education over the past decade. Sustainability may be a hot button issue at the moment but, "for those who are skeptical about global warming and think that the current trend is often too alarmist, the changes carry risk. 'It discredits science,'" said Richard Lindzen, a professor of meteorology at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. 'It's propaganda,' he added, with opposing viewpoints rarely explored" (Kinzie, 2008, p. A01). Like Professor Lindzen, some individuals in higher education believe that environmental issues have become politicized and should not increasingly influence administrative and academic decisions. Yet Stephens, Hernandez, Roman, Graham, and Scholz (2008) counter that human society faces unprecedented challenges in the realms of environmental, societal, and technical change that began in the early 1800s with increased industrialization. It is society's responsibility to recognize our global impact and respond to these challenges. As places of "knowledge production, knowledge perpetuation, and knowledge dissemination" (Stephens et al., 2008, p. 320), colleges and universities have the unique opportunity to be change-makers within society, advancing sustainable education and initiatives.

Higher education's response must be more than political rhetoric, however. Colleges and universities must generate long-term visions that incorporate sustainability into all aspects of their mission, goals, curriculum, and operations. The past decade has shown that the "Green Revolution" is far more than a passing fad. Sustainability is becoming a highly relevant national issue, and if colleges and universities fail to make structural adjustments that make room for new leadership, attempts at addressing environmental concerns will remain fractured. Empowered sustainability coordinators, given adequate resources and credibility to do their jobs, are the crucial link to fusing efforts across campus. Colleges and universities must take responsibility for their impact on the environment and for their role in educating the next generation of change-makers who will continue to work toward sustaining a healthy planet for our future.

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Advising for a New Generation

Rachel Smith

In today's educational marketplace, where students are viewed as consumers, colleges and universities compete for undergraduate business by providing the best educational experience possible. This means developing and expanding student services, such as academic advising, in order to improve retention rates of the undergraduate population. Enhancing academic advising services by utilizing a combination of professional and faculty advising can make dramatic improvements in student retention. It is important for colleges and universities to dedicate resources to create a cohesive advising system that prevents misinformation, and increases degree completion, as well as student satisfaction.

A typical day in my line of work consists of helping students who want to change their major, add a second major, add a minor, withdraw from a class or fill out a late add form. I also help students plan a two or four-year class schedule, answer questions about prerequisite classes, study abroad opportunities, summer school options and much more. As an academic advisor, I help students navigate the undergraduate labyrinth of core and major requirements, direct them to university resources, inform them about internships or other opportunities that could assist them in the future, and help fill out the correct paperwork for various changes to their academic records. Academic advising ranges from providing basic information about classes and university policy to guiding and mentoring students through their academic career. Some universities hire professional advisors who are well versed in university policy while others allocate the responsibility to faculty members.

Unfortunately, many faculty members do not receive the proper training for advising students and can end up making costly mistakes to the students' academic progress. Academic advising is an important task that takes time, training, and dedication. However, "most colleges and universities do not tie advising performance by faculty to promotion, tenure, salary increase, or any other tangible reward" (Vowell, 1995 as quoted in Swanson, 2006, p.7).

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Consequently, many faculty members do not devote the time or energy that is necessary to provide students with the best possible advising experience. Even though faculty advising may not always be up to par, a high-level of contact between students and faculty can "help students be more motivated and involved with their academic work" (Swanson, 2006, p. 6) which can increase degree completion. This is why it is necessary for universities to utilize a combination of professional and faculty advising along with proper training and professional development.

Challenges in Academic Advising

Today, many universities are facing budget cuts and increased pressure to raise their national ranking. With these challenges in mind, it is rare for a university to focus on academic advising. Many academic advising programs tend to be neglected regarding university budgets and are most likely the first programs to be cut. However many studies have shown that "effective academic advising is recognized as a key to college student success and academic retention" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991 as quoted in Swanson, 2006,p. 13). Academic advising is an important part of student retention; however, its lack of organizational consistency and faculty training makes for difficult implementation.

Academic advisors also face challenges working with today's millennial generation. These students typically have high expectations for the services they receive. Many argue that our "culture has produced college students who are comparison shoppers with high expectations and short attention spans" (Propp & Rhodes, 2006, p. 46) which has created a trend of students as customers. The parents of millennial students are also highly demanding, involved, and want what is best for their son or daughter. This often comes to fruition when parents try to accompany their child to an advising appointment to make sure they get into the right classes. Of course, this conflicts with many policy and legal issues such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). In order for academic advisors to be successful, they must "understand the Millennial generation and, perhaps first, learn how to deal with this generation's parents" (Swanson, 2006, p. 12). Academic advisors constantly face new challenges with each class of incoming freshmen. Although academic advising still has many obstacles to overcome, it remains an essential service to provide students.

The Importance of Advising

A survey of student retention conducted in 2004 by Habley, McClanahan, and the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), evaluated 82 retention interventions and

found that three programs made the greatest overall impact on undergraduate student retention. These programs included academic advising along with freshman orientation and learning support centers. Of the 1,061 two and four-year universities surveyed, 13.1 percent stated that freshman orientation and learning support centers played an equally important role in improving student retention (2004, p. 6). Respectively, 12.6 percent felt that academic advising interventions greatly increased student retention (2004, p. 6). It is clear that these programs, working together, significantly decrease the student dropout rate at colleges and universities throughout the country.

The survey also recommended numerous ways to improve existing academic advising services. These recommendations included "advising interventions with selected student populations, increased advising staff, integration of advising with first-year transition programs, academic advising centers, and centers that combine academic advising with career/life planning" (Habley & McClanahan, 2004, p. 6). Along with improved retention rates, academic advising programs have been especially successful with helping at-risk students.

Many at-risk students look to academic advisors to help guide them through their first year of college. Frequently, at-risk and first-generation students lack the "knowledge of the social, cultural, and institutional structures in the college environment" (Vivian, 2005, p. 341). This lack of knowledge about the college environment can make students feel alienated, confused and lost at their institution. Academic advisors, however, can help "students break down problems into manageable segments, so that obstacles do not seem so overwhelming" (Vivian, 2005, p. 341). Academic advisors can act as mentors for these at-risk and first-generation students and guide them towards a path of academic excellence.

Advising Models

While there are multiple academic advising models, only the shared-supplementary and shared-split models utilize both faculty and professional advising. The shared-supplementary model consists of faculty members who are assisted by professional advisors. This can mean a walk-in advising center or professional advisors who help train faculty advisors. One of the most common criticisms of advising from faculty is that "little is done by their institution to facilitate training for academic advising" (Swanson, 2006, p. 13). This model provides students with access to faculty members while also providing vital information to faculty through professional

development and training opportunities. Professional development can include legal information or specific computer software training that help advisors track their individual students.

Another advising model is the shared-split model. This is where students are assigned a professional advisor until they complete their general requirements and then switch to faculty advisors for the remaining two years of their academic program. This model can be very helpful, especially for students who do not yet have a declared major. Often times, undeclared students are "assigned randomly to faculty. Often these faculty members were among those least interested in providing academic advising" (Swanson, 2006, p. 13). Providing professional advisors for students with undeclared majors can help improve retention rates and student satisfaction at many universities.

Improving Academic Advising Services

While each institution of higher education has its own advising model and philosophy, there are steps that an institution can take to improve its advising services. First, it is imperative for each institution to provide adequate training to professional and faculty advisors up-front. Policies can become distorted, especially at large universities, if each department or school is interpreting a policy in a different way. This causes inconsistency among advisors and confuses students. Second, universities must continue to provide professional development for academic advisors. New situations arise everyday and advisors must learn to deal with each new encounter, whether it is new policy or working with millennial students and their parents. Lastly, universities can utilize new approaches to advising such as one-stop centers, walk-in hours or web advising. These new programs and approaches to advising can be implemented in congruence with current models without requiring a university to restructure its current system.

Conclusion

It is evident that academic advising is fundamental to student success. These services provide students with guidance about major requirements, institutional policies, career planning and more. Students seek assistance from academic advisors when they are facing difficult decisions about their educational careers and other life choices. Although academic advising services at some institutions are not up to par, improvements are not difficult to make. Implementing a shared-supplementary or shared-split model can improve student access to advisors, which can increase student retention. Investing in advisor training and professional development can reduce the amount of misinterpretations or miscommunications among policies

thus improving degree completion rates. Higher education is an ever-changing landscape and academic advising is becoming an increasingly important service that helps students maneuver through the maze of requirements and policies. Dedicating resources to advising services will help improve degree completion, student retention, and most importantly student satisfaction.

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Pedagogy of Liberation

Ashley Gonzalez

My being is waiting to be liberated
The appetite for knowledge is insatiable
Help me break the boundaries that have dulled our minds and numbed our bodies;
Keeping us chained to a mundane life
To an oppressive way of un-living that has created horror and hysteria

We are but seeds ready to sprout
We are but naked trees struggling to bare fruit
A butterfly unconscious in its cocoon
Blinded by external viruses that train us to be receptacles

You do not own me and I do not own you
No longer will we let each other suffer for our own egos
We must heal together the wounds of colonization
The colonization of our minds
The colonization of our beings
The colonization of our consciousness

There is no beginning and no ending to you and me
I begin where you left off and you finish where I start
We are not all-knowing messiahs that are immortal
Instead, we have been blessed with the ability of thought and inquiry

My mind awakens and I feel for once that I am alive
I feel human
I see God
Give me your perspective
I will give you my perspective
Let us create a new perspective
I need you and you need me

Reflect me with me
Dialogue with me
For we are in a state of incompletion and fellowship must be restored
Let us create a new state of consciousness
Help me make sense of reality in order to create a new one
Because the exchange is enlightening

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Let education be the ideological catharsis that enables us to become
To place flesh on the bones that can support our souls
And propel us into action
In order to become authentic in our current state of melancholy

Students are the teachers
Teachers are the students
Exchanging from soul to soul
A chain of internal reactions that sings throughout our beings
Yet we are nothing without the symphony
And the symphony is nothing without the single voice

I do not know the entire map
And you do not hold a master key
I do not know every path in the forest
Just as you do not know every tree in the woods
Yet we all feel the harsh winds that blow at night

There is no greater love than the exchange
There is no greater tool than communication
And there is no greater responsibility than to liberate

Utilizing Improvisation in Higher Education

Colin Stewart

Improvisation is a tool that student development professionals can use to engage students in active learning. The tenets of improv can be utilized to inform how student development professionals work with students and each other in a practical way. The purpose of this article is to explore the connection between improvisation, higher education, and student development.

Both professors and student affairs practitioners are consistently searching for effective ways to engage student learning and development. Improvisation is a tool that can be used to educate and engage those students. While most would refer to "improv" or "improvisation" as "making things up as you go," improvisation has been defined as intuition guiding action in a spontaneous way (Crossan & Sorrenti, 1997). Additionally, Spolin (1963) states that the main objective of the games associated with improvisation are to solve a problem (p. 5). In most cases, improv can be viewed in a performance style format where the improvisers are acting out structured games to entertain an audience. Perhaps the most well known form of improvisation can be seen on the television show *Who's Line is it Anyway?* where actors perform short-form improv games. While improv typically is only used for entertainment purposes, if one looks deeper, there is much more to learn. Improvisation is the perfect blend of personality, creativity, and adaptation. After years of working with both my peers and students to develop our skills as improvisers, I started to notice a strong parallel between improvisation and the field of student development. After I noticed this connection, I began to wonder how improv could be used to inform our practice as educators. Throughout this paper, I will discuss the strong parallels between student development and how the tenets of improv could be used to inform how one approaches working with students. There are several parallels between the skills participants learn in improv, the realm of higher education, and student development.

Colin Stewart graduated from Seattle University with his M.Ed. in Student Development Administration where he continued to explore his passion for improv. He held an assistantship in the Vice President of Student Development's office, and had internships in the Department of Recreational Sports, Student Activities, and was a graduate intern for NACA. He is currently a Residence Life Coordinator at Regis University in Denver, Colorado.

There are no scripts or guides for a person's life, nor are there scripts in improvisational theatre (Moshavi, 2001). During improvisational scenes, exercises, and games, the participants are creating and recreating experiences. These activities are similar to experiential learning. The educational theorist Kolb (1984) supported this when he suggested that experiential learning is "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). The difference being, in most cases, improvisational activities are executed in an outrageous and humorous fashion. For most improvisers, their top priority is to have fun and entertain, but through these silly games, truly great and transforming experiences seemingly happen with ease. You can be taken to places you never imagined, provide social commentary for the world at hand, and find the beauty in simplicity. Those who participate in improv typically come together as a team with a purpose to develop their skills and characters and the way they play the game, as well as entertain an audience.

Improv can be utilized to bridge a connection between emotional health and student development theory. Adam Toth, a student improviser, mentioned that in his experience, improv has been a "really good de-stressor, it just relieves a lot of stress, it helps my academics, and it is like a human-sized stress ball" (A. Toth, personal communication, November 14, 2007). Furthermore, Molly Dugan, a student development professional, suggested that improv was a "really good way to let loose and just be really goofy" (M. Dugan, personal communication, November 14, 2007). In most cases, students don't have a chance to relieve stress in a healthy way or explore the cause for stress. Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggested that when it comes to managing emotions, many students "struggle with frustration, fear, boredom, or desire, without ever exploring the sources of these feelings" (p. 83). Improv provides a venue for students to explore those feelings in a safe, fun, and engaging way. During a typical improv practice or a show, the director will usually explore why certain choices were made throughout the skits. Through these conversations, the participants are provided a safe venue to work through their choices and reflect upon their motivation and rationale behind decisions that were made, things that were said, and why they said them. In this process of reflection, one has the opportunity to make some connections to who they are and why they make certain decisions.

Improv proves to be an opportunity to expand one's personal development while enhancing their intellectual competence. Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggest that "intellectual competence involves using the mind's skills to comprehend, reflect, analyze, synthesize, and

interpret" (p. 83). Throughout most improvisational formats, the different skills of comprehension, reflection, analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting all happen in various ways. For example, Steve Lombardi, a student improviser, said "I feel more confident speaking in class about topics and improv helped me to think on my feet and helped me tap into my creativity" (S. Lombardi, personal communication, November 14, 2007). In most improvisational scenes, there is an unusual problem that the participants are trying solve. Furthermore, the different rules and formats used in improv combined with the adaptation used during a practice or a show enable the participant to go through many different processes at lightening speeds. The multiple education theorist, Gardner (1987) defined intellect as an "ability to solve a problem or fashion a product which is valued in one or more cultural settings" (p. 25). Improv finds value in the most extreme circumstances and combines many of Gardner's linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic domains of intelligence. For example, in a simple improv scene, an improviser would use their spatial skills to set the stage, their bodily-kinesthetic skills to move around that stage with grace, and both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to drive the interaction in the scene. Although only four of the eight multiple intelligences are mentioned in this instance, others are readily exhibited in scenes depending on the rules, problem, or goal.

After reflection upon my personal experience and interviewing seven fellow student improvisers, I found that the skills that one learns in improvisation spill over into the way they live their life. That ties back to the work done in higher education. In the last section, I will explore how some of the different tenets of improv can be utilized to inform how student development professionals work with students and each other. Those tenets include: saying "Yes, And," letting go of boundaries, decision and meaning making, and having fun.

Tenets of Improv

Saying "Yes, And"

One of the main rules of improv is to say "yes, And." This concept is all about supporting another's idea by taking it the next level. This is an essential skill to life, teamwork, and working with others. Individuals who practice "yes, and-ing" are likely to improve their interpersonal communication skills (Crossan, 1998). Both in improv and in conversations with students, this doesn't necessarily mean one would always say the words "yes, and" or blindly agree with everything that is said, rather it suggests not always saying no or shutting a student down. For

example, in an improv scene, if someone suggests there is a mythical dragon on stage, one shouldn't deny the dragon's presence. Instead, the responding performer should embrace the dragon, ask to take the dragon for a ride, battle it, or even take it out for a movie. It doesn't matter what is suggested as long as the improviser accepts the offer that his or her counterpart made and adds to it. The same goes with how higher education professionals interact with their students. If students express an issue or an idea, one shouldn't say no, but take their idea to the next level and explore the different possibilities. How many times do students present unique ideas that are often strange or unfamiliar? I would say more often than not, students suggest ideas that are going against the grain and higher education professionals must use this skill of saying "yes, and" to support them and lead them to the next level.

Letting go of boundaries

Improv brings everyone to the same level by providing a venue for the participants to be vulnerable, trust in, and rely on each other throughout the scenes. On an improv team, typically there are no stars. One doesn't play for themselves, but for the good of the team, the show, and the scene. Often this means individuals are making direct choices to better serve the scene (even if that means not being on stage). There are different roles, strengths, and weaknesses directing how a team operates, but once the team steps on stage, (ideally) all should be striving to bring up the other members of the team for the betterment of the scene. For instance, a participant might step into a scene with an idea of how one foresees something playing out, but another player can say something to take the scene in a completely different direction. A good improviser must follow the new direction so as not to jeopardize the integrity of the scene by holding onto their old ideas. Changes can also happen when an audience member makes a suggestion. Viewers will say a simple word or a unique location to start a scene and the improvisers will take it in a completely different direction than anyone could have predicted. Unexpected twists also happen when working with students. Student development professionals too, should aspire to develop a great deal of trust and let go of their boundaries. Educators are there to empower students to make choices and should trust they're going in the right direction. Because that direction might end up somewhere different than planned, one should aim for grace and humility. For example, when working on an idea for a program, a student affairs professional might bring this idea to the students, the coordinator of the program shouldn't be surprised by the students adding their own perspective on how they see things playing out. Rather, the educator has a choice to accept and

build on their suggestions, even if it is different than the original idea. Furthermore, there are often times when student affairs professionals are trained on a process and when following that set process, something will quickly step outside the bounds of the procedure and force one to react to get to the end goal. In those cases, the professional running the process will have to be creative and meet the student where they are in order to get to that end goal.

Decision making and meaning making

Improvisation is about making choices. Once on stage, players are constantly making quick and bold decisions to drive the different relationships and scenes. Playing to the top of one's intelligence best serves the team, the audience, and self. For example, many improvisers have their set fallbacks or crutches in which they will lean on when they get uncomfortable. An improviser might illustrate this by always bringing in a mythical dragon when they lose focus. The dragon might not have anything to do with the original scene, but it is simple, safe, and involves little risk to the player. However, a growing improviser should push through any discomfort to make decisions that challenge both themselves and their team. With those decisions comes the opportunity to find connections and meaning. Most of the time, when improvisers say something, there is a meaning behind it. For instance, at the beginning of a show, there might be a word drawn from the audience that will be utilized throughout the entire show. The improvisers will strive to interweave that word through the different scenes to make it engaging and entertaining for the audience. Because of this, when working with others, one must constantly be listening, watching the other improviser's body gestures, and anticipating where they are going. When working with students, it is important to listen to what they are saying, how they are feeling, and explore why they are making decisions. Student affairs professionals should strive to explore where students are going and what it will take to get there in order to meet students' needs and support them along the way. Furthermore, one has the perfect opportunity to live out their mission by interweaving it with how they work with students.

Have fun

For some, having fun is one of the most difficult tenets to master. Both in improvisation and student development, it is necessary to find humor. Witztum et al. proposed that humor has a positive impact on various physical, physiological, and psychopathological and social functions (p. 224). However, caution must be taken with improve. Witztum et al. suggested that gauging one's understanding and appreciation of humor "depends on various factors, such as an

individual's social-cultural and ethnic background, lifestyle, and day-to-day experiences, and overt and covert levels" (p. 224). Furthermore, Malone (1980) suggested that humor is a "double edged tool" (p. 357) having the potential to hurt or better a situation. Taking that into consideration, it is amazing to have an experience where everyone is contributing, getting along, and laughing along the way. In theory, when educators create this type of environment, participants would be more likely to have fun. It is important to note that just like life, improvisation is never perfect. In an improvised scene, there is always a different choice that could have been made, but in giving one's all and having fun, it achieves something else all together. Having a positive outlook on how one works and lives extends to student affairs as there is always a different direction, choice of words, or constructive advice that could have been given. In this field, professionals should aspire to be flexible and approach some situations with a smile. After all, laughter is often the best medicine.

Closing

Looking at my own experience, I have worked with both my peers and students to develop their improvisational skills and I have seen myself grow developmentally along the way. If I look to how improv has poured into my life, I am able to apply the improv tenets with ease. I find it easier to come up with multiple solutions to seemingly impossible conflicts. If I ever catch myself shutting down someone's suggestion, I push myself to practice the concept of saying "yes, and." I also search for the meaning by which decisions are made by asking questions and approaching situations with humility. I also remember to approach some situations with a smile, because there are often times where I run into circumstances where I don't know exactly what to do, what to expect, or how to approach it. Only through looking through the lens of humor am I able to navigate through certain situations with ease. There still might be some who question how something as silly as improv could be used to influence higher education practices. For them, I would suggest trying the skill of "yes, and" to explore the possibilities.

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The Importance of Service Learning in Higher Education

Brian Anderson

Service Learning in Higher Education is an integral part of a student's development and educational experience. By incorporating service learning into the classroom, students increase their knowledge of the local communities around them; then bringing that knowledge back to their coursework, students are able to understand the connections of their local experiences with the theories they learn in the classroom. Having institutional buy-in demonstrates to the students the importance of this process.

In the Fall 2006 edition of *Perspectives*, James Schall, SJ, states that "very few, if any, 'ivy-clad towers' remain in academia today. 'Tis a pity" (p. 44). He continues by explaining that mandatory volunteerism and service learning experiences keep students from gaining enough classroom and book smarts or "gown" experiences. These experiences, instead, focus too much on learning solely about the community around them or the "town" experience. For Schall, higher education institutions exist for the advancement of intellectual pursuits, not for connecting those pursuits to local activities or initiatives. This argument is off the mark in today's educational system where applying classroom experience is necessary for new professionals. The following will show that multiple examples from various institutions allow for local "town" experiences to expand the theoretical "gown" experiences. At Seattle University (SU), as for example, service learning is utilized throughout several courses.

Students do not learn solely within the classroom, learning happens everywhere. It happens sitting at a desk within a four-walled classroom; it happens building houses for Habitat for Humanity; it happens standing next to your mother when she shows you how to measure a cup of flour for chocolate cookies. Education cannot be stopped. As student development administrators, it is imperative that we find the most effective ways for students to learn, process, and apply the information that they receive within their years at a university,

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because each student learns differently and we cannot expect all students to retain information by tests alone. By collaborating with faculty to create meaningful experiences around volunteer efforts, different opportunities for learning can occur, which will bring students out from their "ivy-clad tower."

Service learning takes many forms. Simple volunteer activities such as collecting canned goods and clothing during the holidays is a basic step toward expanding on education, but this only scratches the surface. While these activities are necessary for community health, they also give credence to Schall (2006), as these experiences exist without a developmental approach or facilitated learning. Instead, by creating activities that expose students to the social injustices in the world around their university, students begin to understand the many layers of society. One way is through immersion trips to low-economic neighborhoods and regions of the city or country. By adding a deeper element, such as reflective journaling, mentoring with community mentors, or nightly debriefs, the students have tangible reminders of their experience when they return to the classroom to deconstruct the activity. To use a hypothetical example, if the class is on teaching pedagogy, the students could take the theories they've studied to a local school. After their classroom experiences, the instructor could lead a facilitated discussion or ask students to keep journals about the experiences that are presented to them.

For a more specific example, at SU in a Master's of Business Administration course on leadership skills and team development, the instructor integrates service learning to sharpen the students' ability to create "team effectiveness to a real problem" (Weis, 2000). Throughout the course, students are placed within contrived situations, such as the classic human knot icebreaker, to test team skills and strategies with the understanding that they will create and perform a service learning project by the end of the course. Without the service learning component, real life situations for team building skills would be left to the students own experiences without the added opportunity where the professor can act as mentor and guide.

Another relevant example is within a graduate finance course taught at SU. In this course, students are told that their service project "must involve either setting up or modernizing the [non-profit]'s accounting system or converting an existing manual system to an appropriate computer system" (Weis, 2000). Again, we see that in order to maximize the students' experience in the classroom, they are given a real world problem to solve. The added benefit in this situation is that the non-profit agency comes away with a product that will enhance their

performance. For the master's candidate, they are adding to their resume and their toolkit of skills when searching for a job.

A second lesson from this example is that students must identify with the project or community that they are serving. Having the students find an agency that has a need that they can fulfill will give the students a deeper level of commitment and connection to the people who need their services. Without that connection, students will not invest in their education and learning experience beyond looking at the situation as a class requirement. By creating a computer system that the non-profit will use, a lasting benefit to the agency exists and students can return to the agency and see their service work still in use, thus creating a connection between the university and the community.

Another graduate course at SU called *Social Justice* incorporates social change through service-learning activities. While Schall's (2006) article calls for a return to the "ivy-clad towers," this course pushes the students to leave the towers to affect positive change around them (p. 44). In this course, students work with their professor and the assistant director of the Center for Service and Community Engagement. Students seek out local agencies to find a social justice issue to investigate and then write an advocacy letter of support to that agency. Here, classroom discussions are put into action and, instead of keeping the discussions esoteric and theoretical; the students have a tangible result from their course that can be used in future work situations.

Personally, during my undergraduate years, I experienced service learning first hand. I took a course on peer mediation. There were 23 students in the class and we spent our first fall semester learning how to mediate conflict. We studied different philosophies behind the approach as well as reflected on our own conflicts within our lives and how mediation might have bettered the situations. The most crucial part of the course was our service learning experience within Indianapolis Public School #34, also known as James Whitcomb Riley Elementary. This K-5 school had children mediating conflict between each other. While these conflicts centered around the stealing of soccer balls and playground equipment rather than roommate disputes and other college-age personal drama, these students were able to teach and demonstrate how to execute skillful mediation. Furthermore, working alongside these youth allowed us to gain practical skills around the mediation techniques we were studying. As I look back and reflect on that experience, I have come to realize the importance and necessity for

service learning within collegiate classrooms. By incorporating service learning into the curriculum, I learned to move theory into practice as well as advocate for community needs.

Let's bring this back to Schall's (2006) article. As students bring these "town" experiences back to the "gown" of the classroom, their perspectives will be broadened by the professor through class discussion. This is crucial as some students may not have the capacities yet to understand the greater culture around them. With the classroom discussion, use of reflective journaling, and the deconstruction of the experiences and activities that transpired, the professor will show how their one "town" experience is prolific around the world. This allows for a broader learning environment as well as intellectual growth within the classroom. Yet further steps can be taken to ensure wide-spread institutional support.

The implementation of service learning can vary in appearance. However, in order for it to become effective on college campuses and move away from Schall's (2006) beliefs, it must become institutionalized. Institutionalizing service learning would mean establishing an office to organize and support service learning, it would mean developing community partners to develop long-lasting relationships, and it would mean facing barriers internally that would inevitably change the campus culture. In their article, Cuban and Anderson (2007) state that service learning must diffuse "throughout the university and formal curriculum to the point that it becomes a normal part of the culture, even enhancing it" (p. 145). By doing so, service learning embeds itself into the culture and as students enter the university, they understand that it is something to expect and take part in. Furthermore, the community contacts that are created can expand to global partners so that students can experience local and international social justice issues, such as poverty, third world indebtedness, or healthcare.

Service learning in higher education is a crucial part of educating students on the social injustices of the world around them. By incorporating service learning into the classroom experience, students gain practical knowledge and skills around the theories and concepts that are presented inside the classroom. Done properly, each student will come away from the course having gained knowledge from the professor, their peers, and their community. They will not lose the "gown" of the college experience, but will gain insights into the towns of the world.

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Career Success Begins in College

Larissa Leifer & Kristina Mieszcanski

The authors are both graduate students in a Student Development Administration program. Both grew up in different states and attended undergraduate institutions for different reasons. Coming from middle-class working families, both authors were on academic scholarships and both held part-time jobs throughout their collegiate careers. Synthesizing their employment experiences and national research on student employment, the authors will present the argument in support of college students working part-time jobs during their undergraduate education. For the purpose of this paper the authors define a job as either a part-time job (5-20 hours/week), an internship, or compensated student leadership role (whether that is hourly, scholarship, or stipend).

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."
-Thomas Edison

Why do students go to college? Perhaps it is to gain experience, to get an education, to meet new friends, to get away from the rules of their parents, or simply to have fun. Maybe it is because it is the natural next step in life, or because one aspires to be the first person in their family to graduate from college. But more than anything, in times of economic turmoil, millions turn to higher education as an avenue to future employment and projected financial stability.

College provides the opportunity to learn a specific discipline (or a variety of disciplines) and be more prepared for the real world – getting a job, paying bills, living on ones own, and being a responsible adult. For the most part, graduates hope for a perfect job – one that is a good fit and will pay the bills. However, there are steps that must be taken in order to obtain such a job after graduation. One of those crucial steps is holding a part-time job during one's academic tenure in college.

Larissa Leifer and Kristina Mieszcnaksi will both be graduating in June with M.Eds in Student Development Administration from Seattle University. Larissa currently holds a graduate assistantship in Career Services and is Vice President for Community Development for the Graduate Student Council. Her current interests are residence life, student activities, and leadership development. Kristina is an Academic Coordinator in the International Studies degree program and serves as Publications Chair for the Seattle University Student Development Association (SUSDA). She hopes to continue her career in academic advising, new student orientation, or first-year experience programming upon graduation.

One Author's Experiences

As the daughter of a farmer in Eastern Washington, I came to know the true meaning of the word "work" – long days, sweat, manual labor, and lots of responsibility. From the age of five I have, in some sense of the word, worked. My family owned an iris farm and I can recall as a young girl taking a bulb, dipping it in bleach and placing in a row to be planted. As the years went on my responsibilities increased. Soon I was digging the bulbs, helping customers and taking orders. These responsibilities continued to grow until I wanted to learn a new meaning of work. Thus, I pursued a lifeguard position at our city pool and worked there for two summers until I left for college. There I learned that work didn't always have to be manual labor, but it could at times be relaxing and enjoyable.

My persistence to work did not stop when I left for college. There was never a question of whether I would attend college, it was more about which university was right for me based on community values and location. Upon my arrival to campus, I networked with an Admissions Counselor and landed a job in the Admissions office within the first two weeks of school. After a few years, I realized the importance of expanding the spectrum of my responsibilities and skills, as well as getting out of the campus bubble, and found myself working three other jobs throughout the course of my college career—coaching, food service, and retail. Along with each of these, I also held campus leadership positions culminating as student body president my senior year. Each of these experiences played a part in developing and enhancing my skills and abilities, making me a well-rounded future employee. My job opportunities not only provided me with professional experience, but allowed me to expand my network, learn skills such as time management, financial management and communication, and build my resume in the process.

A Different Author's Path

I was extremely privileged to attend a private, Catholic high school. My parents sacrificed to pay college-like tuition in order to provide me with a sound, college-preparatory education. As high school graduation neared, the majority of my classmates were busy preparing Ivy League applications. As an only child of parents who had never stepped foot inside of a university classroom, I was left to the direction and support of high school career and guidance counselors to reaffirm my desires to pursue higher education. It wasn't really a question; I was always going to college, my parents and I just didn't exactly know how.

My collegiate career led me to a medium-sized, in-state institution four hours from my home town – the only university to offer me a full academic tuition scholarship. My parents paid for my on-campus housing and everything else was up to me. Having held a part-time job since I was 15, there was never a question of whether I would work during college. Two months into my first semester, I began working at the university advancement office fundraising for various events and co-curricular causes. That blossomed into a position teaching half a dozen first-year experience courses, working as an orientation leader, being promoted to orientation program assistant, and working for the Parents' Association throughout my four years in college. These experiences not only provided me with money to enjoy my collegiate experience outside of the classroom, but taught me the valuable skills of time management, keeping a budget, and fulfilling one's responsibilities.

The Value of Student Employment

The traditional college years are a time of development and growth academically and through co-curricular activities. Research shows college student employment has been increasing steadily for at least four decades. In 2005, 57 percent of all college students were employed during their undergraduate education and in an unstable economy, more students are turning to part-time or even full-time positions to supplement their education:

> In the current economic climate in which higher education is often under funded, tuition rates are increasing, and financial support for college students is dwindling, it is reasonable to consider this climate's potential impact on students. Decreases in financial aid and increasing tuition rates mean more students may be working more hours (Miller, Danner & Staten, 2008, p. 675).

For some, student employment pays for books, housing, or portions of tuition, for others, employment is driven by a desire to network and make friends. Regardless of the reason, for many, the outcome is the same – an increased transferable skill set, further-defined interests and abilities, and perhaps a future job or more clear career path.

The Importance of Transferable Skills

Having an interest in something does not always equate to possessing the skill set needed to turn those interests into a career. That is where real world job experiences can help solidify a student's interests. "All jobs are part of your career path. Early jobs help [students] identify what types of work fit with [their] skills, abilities, and interests" (University of Puget Sound, n.d.). Working as a server or telephone fundraiser didn't lead either one of us to the career path we are

on, but it provided us with essential transferable skills including customer service skills, the abilities to multi-task, and an appreciation for daily jobs often taken for granted.

> Many skills employers are looking for are transferable between jobs. Employers are more inclined to hire graduates who have experience in the workforce, even if the jobs are unrelated to the field for which the candidate is applying, the candidate has developed competencies and transferable skills (University of Puget Sound, n.d.).

Thus, regardless of one's major and intended career path, it is extremely important that every college student have at least one job experience during their college years. However, it is important to reiterate that a job does not necessarily mean working 40 hours a week. In fact, there is a point when the number of hours worked moves from being beneficial to counterproductive (Lewis, 2008). Research indicates that, "students…who work longer hours in off-campus employment tend to be less involved in campus life, less likely to interact with faculty, and more likely to have lower grade point averages (GPAs) than are those who work fewer hours" (Miller et al., 2008, p. 675). Likewise, working more than 20 hours per week can have adverse health effects for some students, "binge drinking, less sleep, and lower academic performance were significantly associated with working 20 or more hours per week. Those variables were not associated with working fewer than 20 hours per week" (Miller et al., 2008, p. 675). Therefore, it is important to distinguish that when working around 20 hours per week, undergraduate students can gain knowledge and experience leading to personal growth, professional formation, and career development. Furthermore, Cheng and Alcantara (2007) found that "… 32 percent of the 149 seniors interviewed attributed work as being instrumental to their leadership development and personal growth" (Cheng & Alcantara, 2007, p. 303).

Personal Growth

The first and most broad area gained from student employment is personal growth. Through experience, we believe there is a great deal of personal growth in holding a job, with the understanding that one gains skills that will not only be helpful in a career but also in life. Under the area of personal growth we have identified and chosen to highlight six main areas of development: empowerment, time management, financial management, interpersonal skills, understanding of values, and finally a great understanding of responsibility.

Empowerment

For many students, college is not paid in full by their families, guardians, or grants and loans. The monetary portion that is earned in a job empowers students to help contribute to their

school bills and/or gives them extra spending cash to use at their disposal. Also, a job can give students the feeling of personal ownership to have responsibilities and have a sense of accomplishment. Likewise, having a job can increase the feelings of independence and maturity for college students as they begin to become self-sustaining individuals.

Time Management

Holding a job for 5-20 hours a week can be quite demanding, but will encourage students to learn time management skills, set priorities, and to be intentional about getting their work done. When there are external responsibilities and loyalties to supervisors and places of employment, it becomes essential for students to set schedules for class time, work, homework time, as well as leisure activities, in order to remain successful inside and outside of the classroom. These are important characteristics to adopt for life.

Financial Management

Earning money not only creates a sense of pride but it can teach students to budget and be financially responsible. Learning the value of a dollar is never so prevalent as when one sees the hard work put into each dollar and how quickly that money can come and go. Becoming wise with finances is extremely important, and there is no better time to do so than in college and during times when the price of attaining a degree is increasing. In 2007, students in the state of Washington graduated with an average of $19,000 in debt. Nationally, students owe approximately $85 billion in outstanding loans (Gordon, 2007).

Interpersonal Skills

Learning and knowing how to work with people are among the best skills one can develop. A job can give a student the opportunity to be surrounded by a diverse group of people, work under a supervisor, possibly work with customers, and perhaps supervise others. This type of environment will help in expanding a person's customer service and communication skills, which are transferable to any future career.

Understanding of Values

A work environment can help a student gain a better sense of self – including their values and work ethic. Knowing one's personal values and what they want out of an organization can be very helpful in finding that future organizational fit. In order to establish these values, it is important for students to reflect upon different work options and how those experiences led to

the formation of personal value systems. It is with these principles and ideals that students can synthesize their employment and education into a career path that fulfills their whole-being.

Sense of Responsibility

Acquiring a sense of responsibility is key to growth within one's job while continuing one's education. This entails being responsible for the specific duties one is given in a position, such as punctuality, respectfulness, and an awareness of what is going on in the organization. Having more responsibilities leads to empowering one's sense of self and belonging and increases the skills which one can present to future employers.

Professional Formation

There is a certain level of respect and maturity that is required to succeed in each and every job; these characteristics will carry over to other aspects of professional formation inside and outside of the classroom for the duration of one's life. This formation comes to fruition inside of the classroom in terms of academic performance and increased grade-point-average (GPA). "The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which is run by the U.S. Department of Education, found that students working 15 hours weekly have a significantly higher GPA than both students working 16 or more hours and students who don't work at all" (Hammond, 2006, ¶4). Outside of the classroom, this aspect of student employment increases the creation of one's professional persona, networking abilities and eventual personal and professional references, gaining real world experience and developing a resume.

Career Development

Career Development can be a misunderstood concept, but what it entails is a greater understanding of one's career path and how one is pursuing opportunities or experiences to assist in being more aware of what one wants out of a career. In reality, most college jobs are a chance to make money, get involved and perhaps connect one's education with practical experiences – experiential learning. Even so, these experiences could assist in giving a student a better understanding of one's calling. Research by Cheng and Alcantara (2007) shows that students reported the following benefits of working while in college:

1. They have gained financially from work as well as a sense of financial independence.
2. They have learned job-searching skills and become aware of the job market much earlier than their nonworking peers.
3. They have gained access to the world beyond the campus gate and sharpened social skills in the workplace.
4. Work has taught them how to discipline their daily life and better manage time.

5. Work has helped shape their academic and career interests.
6. Work has greatly enhanced their self-confidence. (p. 307)

Conclusion

As graduate students, four months away from entering the workforce, we are living examples of the importance of student employment. Through leadership positions and part-time jobs during our undergraduate studies, we were able to define our own value systems, continue to build transferable skills, and establish our chosen career paths. Without these work experiences and the mentors gained along the way, neither one of us would have found our passion for student development. Therefore, the benefits of having a job – personal growth, professional formation and career development – far outweigh the experiences gained solely inside the classroom. Students need to take full advantage of every opportunity they have to learn and develop before they enter the workforce. A college job, internship, or student leadership position is a perfect opportunity to help in the journey to career success.

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Developmental Advising in a Prescriptive World

Kristen Campbell

The academic advising process is typically divided into two categories: Developmental Advising and Prescriptive Advising. As the profession of academic advising grows there is more emphasis placed on the developmental process of advising, or advising as teaching. However, developmental advising is a time consuming process. Time is not always available for advisors to adequately explore the developmental process with a student as advising loads continue to increase. However, there are many aspects of developmental advising that can and should be incorporated in the time an advisor has with a student.

Burns Crookston (1972) is often seen as one of the first to describe the two facets of academic advising. The first type, prescriptive advising, focuses on making the decision while the second type, developmental advising, focuses on the decision making process. Developmental advising uses a series of open-ended questions that encourage students to make decisions about the content of their degree plan. This form of advising also asks students to question the reasoning behind the decisions and work through the process. Crookston argues that academic advising needs to be focused on more than helping the student choose a major or an occupation. He stated that academic advising "is concerned not only with a specific personal or vocational decision but also with facilitating the student's rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness, and problem-solving, decision-making, and evaluation skills" (p.12). This facilitation is the responsibility of developmental advising.

Since Crookston's (1972) article on academic advising as teaching, there have been several definitions of developmental advising that have incorporated aspects of student development theory.

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Gordon and Habley (2000) defined developmental advising in this way:

> Students are developmentally advised when advisors focus on growth that instills the following in students: 1) awareness of the relationship between education and life, 2) the ability to set realistic academic and career goals as well as a program to achieve them, 3) awareness of life extending beyond the college years (pg. 84).

This definition ties together the concepts of involving the student in their academic and career goals and relating education to life outside of the institution. Developmental advising is about checking-in with students to make sure they are making these connections between education and real life, thus extending the responsibility of decision-making to each student individually.

It seems natural to find the link between student development practice and developmental advising. However, Lynda Fielstein (1994) recognized that "in my zeal to believe that students wanted advisors to take a developmental approach, I failed to remember how essential some of the prescriptive activities are…[prescriptive activities] are actually critical building blocks that enable developmental advising to evolve" (p. 77). It is necessary to acknowledge the fundamental place that prescriptive advising has, primarily as an introduction and foundation to the advising relationship with students, as well as the potential format students look for when they first meet with their advisor. Some students seek out prescriptive advising ("Tell me what classes to take to graduate"), but it gives an advisor a chance to encourage the developmental process and ask students to think about why they are taking particular classes. In this way even the prescriptive pieces of academic advising can be done developmentally:

> …participation in planning, with the accompanying tasks of identifying a mission and objectives, considering alternatives, and arriving at an informed decision, can be a growth experience for students. Planning implies involvement. When advisers encourage students to plan by asking open-ended questions about the students' futures, their majors, and selection of courses, they encourage students to become involved in their academic futures (Frost 1991, p. 20).

Advising in Practice

Though many professionals agree that advising becomes more meaningful when it focuses on the teaching process, it seems that theory and practice are not quite in sync (Frost, 1991). The common challenge to developmental advising is lack of resources. Time often demands that an advisor makes a choice between the quality developmental advising time with one student or shorter prescriptive advising; making it is possible to meet with more students. The question that needs to be addressed is how to do effective developmental advising with limited resources of space and time.

Starting with Crookstone (1972), developmental advising materials indicate that developmental advising is an all-or-nothing approach. Developmental advising is best facilitated by using open-ended questions and methods of coaching students through the decision making process. However, even if there is no time to work with students through the whole process, asking open-ended questions is still an opportunity to get students involved. It may even encourage more of the developmental process if students return home to think about the choices they want to make, instead of making quick decisions while in the advisor's office.

It is important to involve students in the creation of their goals for many reasons. Having students participate in the educational planning process engages them in active learning, a theory Blimling and Whitt (1999) defined as one of the seven principles of good practice in student affairs. "Using active learning invites students into the center of learning and educational practice…it teach[es] students to weigh options, make informed judgments, and take responsibility for the consequences" (p. 41). Allowing students to make the decisions about which classes to take and what areas of academics to pursue allows them to create ownership of

their plan. Prescriptive advising gives students the list of classes to complete while developmental advising gives students choices and asks them to decide what path to take.

Also included in Blimling and Whitt's seven principles of good practices in student affairs is forging educational partnerships. These educational partnerships include working with cross-campus resources in addition to academic departments and faculty. "To be most effective, academic advising should be seen as an effort that is thoroughly coordinated with other units of the college or university to help students gain self-sufficiency and develop fully" (Gordon & Habley, 2000, p. 30). There is a vast knowledge base involved with academic advising, thus being able to create partnerships is essential to creating additional time that the advisor can spend utilizing the developmental processes. Creating these partnerships is important whether or not faculty members actually advise students. Frost determined that "various types of contact on campus are important in causing students to persist, and interaction with faculty outside the formal boundaries of the classroom seems to be particularly significant" (Frost, 1991, p. 10). Faculty participation in activities outside of the classroom creates valuable interactions that form relationships essential for students' future academic development. Faculty members have additional academic expertise that professional advisors do not necessarily posses. This knowledge can effectively supplement what a professional advisor is doing with a student. Students are able to turn to faculty for recommendations for future academic work, for mentorship, and for connections within a discipline. Faculty should be involved as, "effective programs join the expertise of faculty and student affairs professionals for maximum benefits to students" (Frost, 1991, pg. 18). Faculty involvement would then create additional time for the professional advisors to spend working with students on other aspects of development.

Conclusion

Given the critical role that academic advising plays in the relationship a student has with an institution, it is important to broaden the scope of advising to developmental approaches. Involving the student, asking open-ended questions, and using the advising time to teach students how to think critically and accept responsibility for their educational and life choices are keys to facilitating the process. Effective advising programs see advising as a process; it is a "relationship with both a direction and a purpose" (Frost, 1999, pg. 17). Developmental advising is a process of growth, and as the name suggests, development. Advising helps teach students how to set goals and make appropriate plans, providing direction for both academic and co-curricular purposes. It is important that the focus of developmental advising not get lost in the prescriptive process; it does not need to be an all or nothing approach to advising. There is always time to at least ask questions that get the developmental process started with the intention to follow-up with students thereafter. Creating this rapport with students will hopefully help them gain attachment to the institution and therefore have a hand in increasing retention.

However, there needs to be more research about advising processes, focusing on the connection between advising and retention. Assessment also needs to be done to evaluate the effectiveness of both prescriptive advising and developmental advising in achieving the goals of both the institution and the advising profession. As advisors are asked to do more with less, it is essential that they can incorporate developmental advising in the most effective way possible. That can only happen with evaluation and assessment, while exploring new ways to developmentally advise in a shorter amount of time.

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Thank You For Not Grading

James Policar

This paper presents opinions as to why letter grades should be discontinued as an assessment method for work completed in Student Development Administration graduate programs. It is the author's opinion that letter grades are an inferior evaluative method when compared to more in-depth written evaluations from professors accompanied by personal reflections from graduate students. The paper is comprised of observations made as a graduate student and is augmented by observations of professionals practicing as student development administrators.

This opinion essay is from a graduate-level course in Seattle University's Student Development Administration (SDA) program. Specifically, the course has been designed to take a deeper look at leadership and governance issues in higher education. Taken in full, this assignment comprises fifteen percent of the grade in the course. For that reason, I am motivated to earn a high grade on this paper because it will have a lot of influence on my overall grade in the class and some bearing on my future career prospects. It's not that I don't derive enjoyment in learning more about my chosen field of study, but the grade is what I am thinking about, and I know most of my classmates are probably thinking about the same thing. That is one of many reasons why I think that grades should be removed from all graduate-level student development administration preparation programs.

While grades should not be the primary motivator for how assigned coursework is performed, they often are. As the due date for the first draft of this paper approached, our professor assigned a reading illustrating the characteristics of a good opinion essay. We deconstructed the essay piece-by-piece in order to identify the reasons for its effectiveness: begin with a captivating title, move on to a personal story, enter historical information and a short rebuttal against your opinion, close with a flourish and – voilà – your paper is now complete.

James Policar is a recent graduate of Seattle University's Student Development Administration masters program. He is a passionate supporter of higher education, especially in terms of accessibility, affordability, and accountability. James is currently enjoying his role as a scholar-practitioner in the field of higher education advancement and student affairs.

Following a recipe might be a wise choice for baking lasagna, but I would hope to be trusted with creating my own academic work. By all accounts, I know my professor trusts me to be innovative, but there is reason in conforming when grades are at stake and a verified structure has been identified.

As I have learned through the work experiences I have had in graduate school and apart from graduate school, innovation is an essential component to the success of any organization. It is what allows an organization to distinguish itself from all others, which is especially important in the field of higher education where competition for resources is strong. Although there are times in which it makes sense to leverage work that has already been done by others, there are also times in which it is necessary to break new ground. Experimenting with an original idea as a new professional might have good or bad consequences, but experimenting as a graduate student with original ideas should only have positive outcomes when accompanied by meaningful evaluations from educators and thoughtful reflections on the part of students.

Grading as an evaluation method for coursework is inferior when compared to receiving a more thorough written evaluation. A good evaluation will give graduate students positive feedback on things they have done correctly, clarifying questions and providing suggestions for tidying up loose ideas, and advice on areas that do not lead to any conclusion. Graduate students who become used to the idea of receiving well-rounded feedback from professors and supervisors will be motivated to improve and continue work on promising leads. Additionally, graduate students will find encouragement in the critique their work receives and which is necessary for shaping their own distinct style. Conversely, receiving a letter grade with few or no comments does a student no favors, except to give them a vague notion of whether or not they are on the right track. As Robert Marzano (2000) writes in *Transforming Classroom Grading*, "a single letter grade or a percentage score is not a good way to report student achievement in any subject area because it simply cannot present the level of detailed feedback necessary for effective learning" (p. 106).

Receiving a more thorough evaluation is only half of the process by which a student can make meaning of work they have done. The other half of the process is reflection done by the student. In the SDA program, reflection is a key component of all courses I have taken. I have been assigned a variety of reflective exercises and can say with certainty they have resulted in me being more grounded in the thoughts and ideas I possess. Additionally, these reflections have

encouraged me to think about the resources I have which support and enable me to do my work. I would offer that graduate-level student development administration preparation programs are on the right track with these kinds of reflections, with the exception being that students often receive grades for their reflections. Writing a reflection should be conducted in a space where one feels free to critically examine and think about the work one has done and where it might lead. Encouragement is helpful to be more authentic where authenticity is lacking, or to dig deeper where depth is absent. Receiving a grade for this type of effort undermines the experience, however. Reflections are now associated with the stress of receiving a grade and thus many students are more mindful of their professors' expectations in writing their reflections than they are of performing a thorough and meaningful examination of their work.

Promoting thoughtful student reflections is one way graduate programs help students develop the skills necessary for successfully performing as professionals in the future. A cursory examination of the characteristics institutions of higher education seek in their employees shows that they align well with skills cultivated in graduate school. Student development administration professionals must have a desire to meet social and educational needs, curiosity and habits of inquiry, good interpersonal relations, the ability to solve problems, and multicultural competencies. Regarding the desire to meet social and educational needs, graduate students display this wish by the work they do in the classroom, the experiences they have outside of the classroom, and the fact that they are willing to assume financial debt in order to pursue an advanced degree. Promoting curiosity and habits of inquiry are best served by the educators in their capacity as role models. In my current institution, the educators are passionate about their chosen field of study and continue to push boundaries in terms of scholarship, service, and teaching. Positive interpersonal relationships stem from experience with a wide variety of people, which is why graduate programs hope to create diverse cohorts and recruit educators from a variety of backgrounds. Developing the means to effectively solve problems comes with deliberately designing curriculum that encourages students to examine available resources and rely on their own abilities to create new solutions to a wide range of issues. Finally, cultivating multicultural competencies comes from experience with a healthy and challenging curriculum and the chance to engage with the community at large.

Because students in the field of student development administration have shown the desire to attend graduate school and participate in the designed coursework prepared by their

professors, they should be allowed to pursue their work in ways that are most significant to each individual. Each of the skills mentioned in the previous paragraph will be fostered in a program that has a good curricular foundation that motivates students independent of grades. Introducing grades into the program suggests graduate students need additional incentive, but the motivation is already there for students and graduate school is the time to learn how to be increasingly responsible in shaping one's learning experience. If students choose to avoid their responsibilities they will discover their shortcomings during in-class discussions, teacher evaluations, and in their reflections.

The opposing side of my argument is that grades do serve as a motivating force for students to complete assigned coursework and take away much of the guesswork as to whether students will or will not fully participate. Most reasonable students will participate when grades come into play because of the detrimental effect associated with poor grades. For most graduate students, their entire educational careers have been accompanied by grades. Therefore, the question is how students will respond to not receiving grades when they matriculate to graduate school. For many students it will be a burden that is lifted and give them room to pursue knowledge for the sake of becoming experts in their field of study. However, others will view the absence of grades as an opportunity to get out of doing their best work. In either case it is a choice students will have to make on their own, creating a sense of responsibility and self-reliance that will serve them well in future roles.

The fact of the matter is that grades have no real value when seeking employment, for example, I have had the chance to read over a handful of resumes of some top student development administrators at my current institution. What stood out were the experiences they had as graduate assistants and interns, their work history, and their academic focus. In terms of this paper, the other thing that stands out is not one of the resumes included grade point averages received as graduate students. Furthermore, whenever I meet current professionals at networking events or career fairs they are quick to ask about my interests, work experience, and research, but I have yet to be asked about my grade point average.

For all of these reasons I am firm in my conviction that grades should be removed from all graduate-level student development administration preparation programs. Grades should not compete with learning as the primary motivator for completing coursework, especially since innovation is usually the first to suffer. Employing the use of thorough evaluations and

reflections will provide more useful feedback for students. The skills we will need as professionals are successfully being developed in our programs, independent of grades. Although the question of motivation is significant to the tradition of education, graduate students must be trusted to be responsible for how they engage their education in order to create positive experiences useful in their future roles as student development administrators.

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Professional Development in Student Affairs

Denise Carl

The student affairs field continues to make strides to achieve and maintain its status as a mature industry both inside and outside of academia. However, as a profession there is no requirement to participate in professional development. This is a major shortcoming of the field. Participating in professional development provides numerous benefits for students, institutions, and personnel alike. A move toward required participation in professional development would have many far reaching, positive impacts.

If you asked a person who works in student affairs if they consider themselves a professional, most would say yes. However, unlike doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants, and many other professionals, student affairs personnel do not have a barrier to entry through a required degree level, nor are they required to stay current in the field by participating in professional development. Some suggest that learning on a continuing basis is an obligation of a member of a profession (Janosik, Carpenter, & Creamer, 2006, p. 128). Professional development would benefit the institution, the students who attend those institutions and the individuals participating in it. It should be mandatory for all student affairs professionals to participate in credit-earning, annual professional development.

Who a professional is and what professional development is, need to be defined. The definition of a professional is not entirely clear and depends greatly on what source is consulted. For the purposes of this essay, a professional will be defined as:

> A member of a community that shares goals, supports members, stakes out boundaries and sanctions. There is also attention to socialization and regeneration, including a reasonable consensus on appropriate preparation and an organized conception of career-long learning (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007, p. 268).

There are many avenues one could choose to pursue in order to obtain professional development. The four primary types of professional development that are discussed in student affairs literature include:

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participation in professional associations, professional writing, staff development programs, and attainment of terminal degrees (Lagana, 2007, p.330). There should be a system established requiring student affairs professionals to participate in a certain number of accredited professional development opportunities every year.

Professional development should be mandatory for several reasons, one of which would be that institutional support would increase if all professionals were required to participate. Support could come in many forms: paid time off to attend conferences and workshops, monetary support through covering fees, offering free or discounted tuition, creating agreements for discounted tuition at other area institutions, or providing institutional memberships in professional organizations. Creating this support would help to ensure that professional development funds exist and are maintained. It has become apparent that in times of cuts, professional development is one of the first items to be eliminated from institutional budgets. When there is a possibility for persons to learn how to operate more effectively, in turn saving the institution money, eliminating professional development funds may not be the most fiscally responsible option for institutions. While undoubtedly this would create more expenditure initially for an institution, the benefits would outweigh the costs.

Personnel that participate in professional development will be able to support students more effectively. It is in everyone's best interest to stay fresh and competitive for the sake of the students. Students have the right to expect that they are receiving the best service possible. Every higher education institution has a unique culture already established, but it is imperative that these institutions continue to evolve along with the new generations of incoming students. An example of the value of staying fresh can be seen when professionals do not stay current with generational norms, they may find it difficult to relate to and anticipate the needs of changing demographics. While there is some value in suggesting that programs are developed for students to adapt to and understand a certain institution's culture, it does not eliminate the need to evolve to ensure that students continue to relate to and find value in what is offered at the institution.

Postsecondary schools that have staff who continue improving themselves professionally benefit as well. These institutions can remain competitive in the school selection process if they stay current with the trends of incoming classes by providing the programming and services that both parents and students are expecting. Through professional development training, colleges and universities can learn about other unique student programs that peer institutions are offering.

These trainings can also be an opportunity to learn about pitfalls a new program may expect to experience. This creates more efficient development of new programs. This efficiency helps to support the idea that there is benefit to the individual and institution participating in professional development, which, in turn, benefits the students that attend the institution.

Student affairs personnel who participate in professional development will personally find benefits as well. Most individuals working in student development believe in the value of education and understand that obtaining a master's degree is often necessary for advancement into higher-level student affairs positions. However, once a graduate degree is obtained, there is nothing requiring further professional development. "Professional development can be a source of renewal, a symbol of resilience and an opportunity to develop intellectually, as well as professionally, and to remember the value of the university" (Bryan & Schwartz, 1998, p.12). Not only is professional development invaluable for the individual, it can also benefit the individual's institution by creating a supportive network. This supportive network could be utilized to help problem solve in technical situations, such as interpreting federal policies and regulations. Creating an outlet to collaborate with persons who work at another institution can be invaluable in the small, unique, offices common within the world of higher education.

As institutions begin to require and encourage personnel to participate in professional development, student affairs organizations will play a large part in the process of creating intentional professional development opportunities. I think the benefits would be great for professional organizations as well. This could be the stimulus that would combine American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), which would help eliminate unnecessary replication. The Task Force on Certification by ACPA and NASPA's proposal on a National Voluntary Registry indicates that there is a movement towards professional development that can be accounted for (Janosik, Carpenter, & Creamer, 2006, p. 129). I believe that all student affairs professionals can benefit from participating in one common professional organization. In fact, a Blue Ribbon Task Force has been appointed to address the idea of combining ACPA and NASPA (Blimling, 2003, p. 581). This suggests that the idea of combining these organizations is not that abstract.

The new national association could be the keeper of credits earned and the status of its members. Requiring credit to be earned for student affairs professionals to maintain their standing within the profession would encourage greater accountability and quality of

presentation of workshops, lectures and posters at all levels of professional organizations. Accountability would occur since these programs would be vetted by the organization to assign the credit value. The responsibility of determining the quality of workshops should fall on a national association's shoulders. According to a study by Janosik, Carpenter and Creamer (2006) that surveyed members of ACPA, the 2,346 respondents supported mechanisms that would allow them to earn continuing professional education credits, record their professional development activity and receive recognition by their associations (p. 141). The large number of respondents is a clear indication of the desire of professional members to have more intrinsic and extrinsic accountability around their development. Accountability of professionals falls in line with the push to create more accountability in higher education across the board (Schmidtlein & Berdahl, 2005, p.75).One common area of scrutiny that higher education faces is the cost of educating one student. As student affairs professionals become more credible, the costs associated with the services provided by these persons will receive less criticism.

A movement toward required professional development would help to establish credibility for student affairs professionals on campus. Often student affairs professionals complain about the lack of respect given to them by the faculty of their institutions. Student affairs personnel cannot expect to be considered on the same level as a tenured professor without a higher barrier to entry and establishment of continued professional development. Tenured professors have earned an advanced degree, provided service to the community that they are in, and have contributed to the advancement of their field through research. While I do not believe that student affairs should be held to the same hiring standards as faculty, I do believe that some increased standards should be mandated. These increased standards could only help to further the profession, the communities, and the institutions that student affairs professionals serve.

Higher education claims to be a mature industry (Levine, 1997, p. 274). If we are to be legitimately recognized as a mature industry, we must behave as one. One way we do not behave accordingly is the fact that we lack a specific body of knowledge for student affairs professionals. Requiring professional development is one way we can help ensure that all student affairs professionals are comparably educated and committed to life-long learning. While creating a mandatory system of professional development will undoubtedly cost money, I believe the stability, continuity, accountability, and satisfaction amongst student affairs professionals that would be created through professional development would greatly outweigh the costs.

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Hope's Legacy: Thoughts on the Lessons Barack Obama Offers Tomorrow's College Student

Michele C. Murray, Ph.D.

The 2008 presidential election gave the nation not only its first Black president but also a new vision of leadership. Campaigning on the promise of change and a message of hope, Barack Obama won the hearts of a people, especially the young. College students of today and tomorrow can look to Obama's example for a new model of character and for effective approaches to leadership, diversity, power, and privilege. The lessons they learn, with the help of student affairs professionals who mentor them, with help them transform the hope Obama espouses into a new reality.

"Hope Won". This was the message emblazoned on t-shirts that hit the streets on November 5, 2008. The reckless expectation of the previous day had given way to joy and elation, relief and satisfaction, and the very air seemed electric with possibility. The United States of America had elected Barack Obama as its 44th president, and a political celebration like none other I remember had begun. For nearly two years Obama campaigned on the promise of change, the promise of a better day. He captured the imagination of a nation at a crossroads. For those who voted for him, Obama's victory as the nation's first Black president was a personal victory as well. Indeed, hope did win, and along with it a new vision of leadership for the 21st century.

Regardless of one's political beliefs or affiliations, Barack Obama's style of leadership deserves notice. For those who are called to work with and mentor college students, attention to Obama is warranted. After all, his message of hope and change ignited a generation of young people who are now, or soon will be, students on our campuses. For these young people—some who voted in their first presidential election and others for whom Obama will be the first president they *really* know—the world of possibilities is different now than it was just a few months ago.

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Obama represents a new standard, a new yardstick against which to measure character, leadership, and approaches to diversity, power, and privilege. The following represents a few of my own observations and reflections on Obama's public life and the lessons they have to offer to current and future college students and those who will guide their growth and development.

Character

Throughout the primaries, the short-but-intense presidential campaign, and even in his first months in office, Obama has displayed a remarkable steadiness of character.

Commentators ribbed him for his coolness, and his opponents seemed frustrated at their inability to outwardly ruffle his feathers. To my eyes, this was a demonstration of personal and professional discipline, but more than that, it was evidence of integrity to the highest degree.

All at once, Obama was idealistic yet grounded. His visions for a nation that actually lives up to its founding principles were not silly or puerile; they were inspiring. He appealed to the better angels of a people who are bound together by Jefferson's self-evident truths of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." His message appealed in part, I am sure, because of his depth and breadth of knowledge but also because of the authenticity with which he communicated it.

Believe me: young people were paying attention. The students I spoke to over the last year admired the strength of Obama's character. They saw him as a model for how they might conduct themselves, whether or not they agreed with his specific political views. Obama's public example provides a tangible reference point for principled integrity, and students of today and tomorrow can relate to it in a powerful way.

Leadership

In several interviews, Obama identified Abraham Lincoln as one of his heroes. He mentioned reading Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals* (2005), an historical analysis of Lincoln's leadership in assembling his executive cabinet. Obama seemed to devour the lessons in Lincoln's choice to surround himself with experts who were sure to supply opposing points of view. Like Lincoln, Obama has appointed a team not for the benefit of his ego but for the benefit of moving a country forward.

Service, not self-adulation, seems to be at the core of Obama's leadership. In this way he stands apart from so many other public figures who dominate national and global headlines.

From his earlier days of choosing community organizing over high-powered law, Obama's professional life validates the proposition that each of us is called to utilize our skills and talents to the benefit of a greater community. Student affairs professionals and university faculty tell their students that leadership of this type reaps its own rewards. In Obama's case, one of those rewards is election to the highest office in the land.

Diversity

A spontaneous response to an Obama stump speech led to a motivational campaign slogan. "Yes, we can!" came to represent certain determination that change through hard work was possible. More than that, though, it also came to symbolize that the United States, despite its debilitating history, could overcome its bigoted and violent past to elect its first Black president. Of course on November 4, 2008, the campaign slogan transformed into the sounds of triumph: "Yes, we did!"

This unprecedented achievement has lulled some into the false security that we now live in a post-racial nation, that we have reached the mountain top, that we have overcome. Do not be fooled. The same election process that resulted in a Black man reciting the Oath of Office on the Capitol steps before millions also hosted a disgraceful display of racially-motivated jabs and slights. Our cultural issues with race are not eliminated simply for the fact of the 2008 election results. If anything, the election process highlighted the strong undertow that continually threatens to pull us under.

The politics of identity loom large, and often unchecked. Race was not the only lightening rod. Hillary Clinton suffered obvious and cutting gender bias; and when someone erroneously categorized Obama as a Muslim, not only did the statement hang in public discourse for nearly seven months, but it did so as if belief in Islam unequivocally disqualified him for the Office of President. No. We do not live in a post-racial, post-gendered, post-religious society.

I raise these points not to discourage but to offer a much-needed realism. College is still the most influential environment for learning how to live peaceably and collaboratively in enrichingly diverse communities. Given the tendencies of some to believe that the hard work is behind us now, student affairs professionals will need to redouble their efforts to educate students to become competent and compassionate citizens of a multicultural nation and world.

Power and Privilege

Americans were not the only people anxiously awaiting election results on November 4th. Scenes from Nairobi, Jakarta, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, and Paris indicated that citizens of the world were hanging on the outcome as well. Although I cannot say with certainty, it seems to me that our neighbors to the east, west, north, and south were hoping for a new administration that would have a more realistic appraisal of the United States' standing in the world.

If Obama believes his new job is as "leader of the free world" or "leader of the most powerful nation on earth," he does not project that belief. Instead he touts a delicate navigation of the nation's power and privilege. His writings and public statements underscore the responsibility and accountability that power and privilege bring. In many ways, this approach is in stark contrast to previous generations of national leadership.

Again, in this aspect Obama presents an example worthy of consideration. As students pass through our doors on their way to professional accomplishment and community contribution, we will serve them well if we linger over the topics of power and privilege. Both are realities. The question is not whether to have power and privilege, but how to wield them so as to bring about a more just and humane world.

Closing Thoughts

Hope is at once sobering and intoxicating… sobering because it highlights the gap between what-is and what-could-be, intoxicating because it inspires confidence that what-could-be is possible to achieve. College students for the coming years will be beneficiaries of Obama's brand of hope. The work before them will be to transform hope into reality, to convert what-could-be to what-is. The process will be long, so the work before us is to provide them with the tools to meet the challenges ahead with determination, savvy, and a sense of humor.

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