

The University campus has long been the scene of some of the most progressive attitudes in our society. In recent years, change has literally become the byword of the campus. Students have indeed changed. Apathy is no longer the chief motivation in student life. This is not to say that all students on today's campus are true activists, but as E.G. Williamson states, "...current unrest may well be evidence that our students are at long last bringing onto the campus many unsolved cultural and societal and urban problems of the 20th century, urbanized United States. That is, the Ivory Tower has in many respects become, for some students, the modern Marketplace of controversy." This concern on the part of students, whether they be a vocal minority or not, has presented substantial problems for the student personnel administrator.

Increasingly, students feel they are capable of governing their own lives, and as a result, resent regulations and restrictions that limit their individual freedom. This particular development has yielded serious questioning of the role of the personnel worker and the relationship of his position to the development of the individual student.

Faculty, through moves toward greater professionalism in academic pursuit, have also come to question the place of student personnel services in an educational environment. As faculty become more dedicated to the intellectual development of the student, they see the extra-curriculum to be of decreasing significance.

Not to be minimized is the rapid growth of the university as an enterprise of our society. As the student body grows, physical facilities are expanded, and the need for staff increases, the educational picture takes on enormous complexity.

In this environment, the personnel worker finds himself in the process of re-evaluation. Change is "the name of the game." Whether he be the initiator, or at least ahead of it, or if he be propelled by it, the ability of the personnel worker to adjust to change will determine the future possibility of his achieving the goals of student personnel. The following series of interviews is an attempt to present some of the perspectives of that adjustment.

STUDENT PERSONNEL: CUSTODIAN OF BEHAVIOR?

An interview with Dr. Robert H. Shaffer, Dean of Students
by Susan Steckbeck
Dallas Bauman

The student personnel worker finds himself today in a most difficult position. As an administrator, he is seen by students as a barrier to student freedom and power that must somehow be overcome. Faculty often view him as superfluous and alien to an academic environment. Why should the personnel worker, professionally dedicated to the growth and development of the college student, be the subject of such criticism?

Dean Robert Shaffer, in an interview for the Newsletter, indicated that he felt that the student personnel worker has too long been the custodian of student behavior. Our concern for the student, and the regulations and restrictions we have placed on him, have been of an emotional, protective nature, and as a result, we have resisted developments that have tended to emancipate the student from our control. Thus, the role of the Division of Student Personnel has often been seen as, "...the censor of ideas and expression, the last rear guard to change...." This has put us in a precarious situation in an atmosphere of individual freedom. "The Dean of Students' function should never have been put in the position of being the moral judge or the keeper of the morals against other influences within the community.... There is no reason at all why we should have ever been the agency that fought against changes that faculties, for example, were persuaded to bring about."

Because student activism has often been the incentive for our own self-evaluation, we face additional problems. As Dean Shaffer states, "By failing to get the message soon enough, we have forced students to revolt and to adopt demands and tactics which are negative, whereas if we had been ahead of the game, maybe we could have effected the changes, given students responsibility at a level they would have accepted, and at which they would have performed...." without being backed up against the wall.

We now find ourselves in the very difficult position of adjusting to our changing role. Dean Shaffer stated that, while he thought it would be very disconcerting during this period of change, the future of student personnel will be brighter, and the role of the personnel worker more enjoyable and tenable once we eliminate the archaic and obsolete concepts under which we now operate.

What does the future of student personnel hold? "I think the relaxation or the elimination of the custodial functions will eliminate many of the traditionally disagreeable aspects of handling discipline in the old sense, and will give student personnel an opportunity to devote more effort to facilitating student involvement and expression at a better level than the old control concept permitted."

With the new concept, we will essentially be dealing with the new individual as he is in society--in other words, "...dealing with the college student as a young adult, rather than continuing the concept of student personnel work for an older adolescent. The one implies direction, supervision, guidance in the traditional sense, whereas seeing him as a young adult implies a facilitating role, a more permissive role, the young adult being the determiner of his own affairs. Therefore, our function is to give him the resources and facilitate his use of them to make himself the self-directing individual that we would hope an adult would be."

Where do we stand now? "It's more words at some levels than it is a realization of the concept involved, but I believe it's inevitable that the university will go out of the role of being a custodian for behavior." Dean Shaffer admitted, however, that many institutions are not ready for this transition, but added, "Any institution that thinks 'it's not going to happen here' is just wrong, because it is a fact of society. It would be much more effective to be training individuals now to be ahead of the game, rather than to wait, saying 'we don't have those problems yet,' and then when they come, be unprepared, either mentally or procedurally."

THE FUTURE OF THE STUDENT PERSONNEL STAFF

An interview with Dr. Elizabeth A. Greenleaf, Assistant Dean of Students
by Mary Alice Arnold
Jerry Butzer

On campuses across the country, the role of student personnel services is in question today. There seems to be some doubt as to what the personnel worker's position is and how the personnel worker contributes to the educational environment of the institution. One indication of this re-assessment is the widespread change in the titles that describe student personnel positions. Over the past ten years, we have seen the disappearance of titles such as "Dean of Men" and "Dean of Women." More recently, we are witnessing the appearance of such new titles as "Dean of Student Life," and more frequently, "Vice-President of Student Affairs."

At the same time that new positions have been developed, there has been a substantial change in the responsibilities of personnel staff as rules and regulations are changed rapidly. The responsibilities expected of staff for the "care" of students, and the changing needs of students, have brought about noticeable changes in the field of student personnel services.

Who is the personnel worker, and how does he function? Regardless of the title, the personnel worker still performs basic functions in four different roles: that of an educator, an adviser, a counselor, and the special services administrator.

As an educator, the personnel worker has a very definite place in higher education. He has the responsibility of helping to meet the objectives of the institution in the extracurricular life of the student, and it is his obligation as an educator to assist the student in using this time to fulfill the objectives of his college career. He must be intellectually motivated and demonstrate interest in a liberal arts education.