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MOVING TOWARDS PROFESSIONALISM: AN ANALYSIS OF FACULTY AND STUDENT PERSONNEL OCCUPATIONS

SUSAN L. SCHRADER

Although professionalism is an end toward which all occupations strive, there seems to be some difference between occupational groups regarding the degree of professionalism they embody; some are the epitome of professionalism (medicine, law, and theology), others are interstitial, and some are not considered professional at all. The discord that surfaces between faculty and student personnel workers in the university setting is a result of many factors. It is my premise that the major influence underlying the elements of discord between faculty and student personnel workers is professionalism--the uncertainties and assumptions associated with it and their effects on each group. By thoroughly examining professionalism as it relates to student personnel workers and faculty, a more systematic understanding of the rift between the two groups will be feasible.

Professionalization is a process by which an occupation becomes a profession. There are three steps in this process. The first is a "public service" vocation where the motive involves the betterment of mankind. The next step is the "highly specialized area of service as well as intellectual specialization of operational skills. Finally, a profession emerges as the third step (Bulger, 1972). A profession ultimately is:

an organized group which is constantly interacting with the society that forms its matrix, which performs its social functions through a network of formal and informal relationships, and which creates its own subculture requiring adjustments to it as a prerequisite for career success.