

# INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDENT PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

## INDIANA UNIVERSITY

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# JOURNAL OF THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDENT PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

1992-1993 Edition

## CONTENTS

Editors' Comments .....	iv
Allison B. Block Lisa K. Mitchell	
State of the Program .....	vi
George D. Kuh	
The Aging Face of Education: The Adult Learner in American Higher Education .....	1
D. Rael Sanchez	
Serving Students in the Midst of Remodeling .....	10
Kristen Lane Lettington Charles Wilder Puls Heather Dawn Wallace	
The Hispanic Population: Assumptions and Realities .....	21
Allison B. Block	
Meeting Institutional Goals Through Coeducational Living .....	27
Cherie Blankenbuehler Michael Covert Michael Dean Patricia Wolfe	
Student Affairs: A Conscience for the Campus .....	36
Dr. Caryl K. Smith	

## FACULTY ADVISORS

Dr. Elizabeth Greenleaf .....	1960-1977
Ms. Wanda Deutsch .....	1970-1971
Dr. David DeCoster .....	1972-1976
Dr. George Kuh .....	1977-1982
Dr. John Schuh .....	1983-1987
Dr. Don Hossler .....	1987-1988
Dr. Frances Stage .....	1988-1989
Dr. Don Hossler .....	1989-1990
Dr. George Kuh .....	1990-1993

## EDITORS

Susan Mears, 1965  
 Bill Ehrich, 1966  
 Ann Paloney, 1967  
 Michael J. Wiener, 1967  
 Marilyn Liechty, 1968  
 Dallas Bauman, 1969  
 George C. Dehne, 1971  
 Jane A. Lundahl, 1972  
 Helen Mamachev, 1973  
 Winnifred Weeks, 1973  
 Elizabeth Brannon, 1974  
 Robert Cieslicki, 1974  
 Barbara Moudy, 1974  
 David Stacy, 1974  
 Dann Lobsinger, 1974, 1975  
 Ann Deborah Alter, 1975  
 Karen Farmer, 1976  
 Diane Burnside, 1976  
 Richard Scott, 1976  
 Susan Hopp, 1977  
 Frank Ardaololo, 1977  
 Vince Carunchia, 1977  
 Elizabeth A. Zavodny, 1978  
 Marc Kaplan, 1978  
 Jim Scroth, 1978, 1979

Laurie Bell, 1979  
 L. E. Wegryn, 1980  
 B. J. Bischoff, 1981  
 Brian Pisaro, 1981  
 Rodney P. Kirsch, 1982  
 Janet R. Wright, 1982  
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 David J. Strauss, 1988  
 J. J. Thorp, 1988, 1989  
 Patricia Harned, 1989, 1990  
 Diane Robinson, 1990, 1991  
 Anne E. Spitler, 1991, 1992  
 Lisa K. Mitchell, 1992, 1993  
 Allison B. Block, 1993

## EDITORS' COMMENTS

Institutions of higher education are in a state of perpetual motion. Student populations on our college campuses are becoming increasingly diverse, and as student affairs professionals, we must constantly adapt to meet their needs. This year's issue of the *Journal* affirms the ever-evolving nature of our work.

The following articles are a product of the authors' personal interests, professional experiences and exposure to CSPA coursework. As such, they represent a wide variety of perspectives within the field of student affairs.

Two of this year's *Journal* entries examine campus environments and the ways in which they affect students. "Serving Students in the Midst of Remodeling" examines the impact of an office renovation upon students who utilize its services. "Meeting Institutional Goals Through Coeducational Living" assesses how a non-traditional living arrangement influences its residents. The balance of this year's *Journal* focuses on the emergence of new student populations on the college campus. "The Hispanic Population: Assumptions and Realities" discusses the responsibility of student affairs professionals to better understand one of the many ethnic populations making significant inroads into higher education. "The Aging Face of Education: The Adult Learner in American Higher Education" addresses the challenges facing increasing numbers of collegians who defy the description of the "typical student." "Student Affairs: A Conscience for the Campus" explores the comprehensive roles of student affairs professionals.

We are grateful to several individuals, without whom production of this year's *Journal* would not have been possible. We thank the outstanding Review Board for their careful evaluation of articles, the authors for their enthusiasm and eagerness to incorporate suggestions for revisions, George Kuh for his continued support and training of the *Journal* staff, Geoff McKim for preparing the layout of the *Journal* and Gabino D. Zapata for designing the cover.

Finally, we express our appreciation to the Indiana University Student Association, the Indiana University Student Personnel Association, the Department of Residence Life, and generous alumni whose funding makes publication of the *Journal* possible.

*Allison B. Block is a first-year graduate student pursuing dual master's degrees in the Schools of Education and Journalism. After earning a B.A. in English from the University of California, Berkeley in 1986, she worked as a public relations executive in Hollywood and Boston and as a writer and editor at Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley. Allison will pursue a career in university publications or public relations.*

*Lisa K. Mitchell is in her second year of the CSPA program. She received a B.A. in English from Miami University of Ohio in 1989. She has served as the graduate advisor for the Student Alumni Council and as a development writer for the Indiana University Foundation. She plans to continue in university development.*

## AWARDS AND HONORS

Congratulations to these members of the Indiana University family on the following recognitions:

William A. Bryan  
Nell C. Bailey  
Paula Rooney  
Terry Williams  
John P. Downey  
Irene Ferguson-Allen  
Suzanne Mintz

1993 Elizabeth A. Greenleaf Award  
1993 Robert H. Shaffer Award  
NASPA President  
ACPA Past-President  
Raleigh W. Holmstedt Fellowship Award  
Raleigh W. Holmstedt Fellowship Award  
Dorothy Traux Award from the National Association of Women in Education (formerly NAWDAC)

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations of individuals for the 1993 Elizabeth A. Greenleaf Award and Robert H. Shaffer Award are now being accepted.

The Greenleaf Award is presented annually to the graduate of the master's degree program in Higher Education and Student Affairs "exemplifying the sincere commitment, professional leadership and personal warmth characteristic of the distinguished professor for whom the award is named." Previous Greenleaf Award recipients include Vicki Mech-Fields, Keith Miser, Louis Stamatakos, Phyllis Mable, James Lyons, Paula Rooney, Joanne Trow, Carol Cummins-Collier, Thomas Miller, Frank Ardaiole, Deborah Hunter, Vernon Wall, and William Bryan.

The Robert H. Shaffer Award is presented to the graduate of the Indiana University Higher Education doctoral program who exemplifies outstanding service to the student affairs profession. Previous Shaffer Award recipients include John Welty, David Ambler, L. "Sandy" MacLean, Thomas Hennessey, Jimmy Lewis Ross, Robert Ackerman, Don G. Creamer, and Nell Bailey.

Nominations for both awards will close on February 4, 1994. The awards will be presented at the 1994 NASPA and ACPA conferences. Please direct your nominations and supporting materials (e.g., vita) to George Kuh, W.W. Wright Education Building, Room 4228, 201 N. Rose Avenue, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405. Thank you.

## STATE OF THE PROGRAM

George D. Kuh

Greetings from Bloomington! All is going very well here, indeed. Thanks to you and other supporters of I.U., interest in our programs remains high. Last year we received more than 500 inquiries and 200 applications for admission to the master's program. Ultimately, 39 new, full-time students matriculated, all with assistantships. We anticipate a similar number for the Fall of 1993. At the doctoral level, eight new students matriculated. In an effort to provide the field with more student affairs professionals of color we have obtained funds from the Bloomington campus and the School of Education for fellowships for students committed to a career in student affairs who come from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. We hope to be able to support as many as five students per year, using a combination of assistantship funds and the fellowship program. The response to the fellowship program has been exciting, as more than 40 people have expressed an interest.

Last year I reported that Professor Frances Stage would, upon her return from a teaching assignment in the Indiana University program in Malaysia, coordinate the master's program. Fran did, indeed, return in August as anticipated. But, within a week, the Dean of the School of Education, Donald Warren, convinced Fran to accept a three-year appointment as Associate Dean for Research and Development. Fran is continuing to teach the Student Development Theory and Research course. Kathy MacKay (now Dr. MacKay) agreed to stay in Bloomington and coordinate the master's program. This past year Kathy also has taught Diverse Students, Administrative Practices, team taught (with Don Hossler) the Capstone Seminar, and supervised the practicum experience. We have benefitted immeasurably from Kathy's presence. However, she yearns for a campus leadership role in student affairs. As a result, by the time you read this we will have appointed a visiting assistant professor to teach and coordinate the program for the next few years while Fran is "on loan" to the School and Dean's Office.

Last summer Fran was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure, an overdue acknowledgement of her numerous high quality contributions to teaching and research since arriving at I.U. in 1986. Fran's publications this past year include a co-authored New Directions for Student Services volume, "Enhancing the multicultural campus environment: A cultural brokering approach," and an edited ACPA monograph, Diverse methods for research and assessment of college students. Don Hossler continues to lead the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. His regular teaching assignments include the Capstone Seminar in the master's program, team teaching (with me) the Administrative Practices class (U551), and the Higher Education Finance class for doctoral students. Phil Chamberlain continues to teach several doctoral courses, the introductory course in College and University Administration, The

College Student and The Law, and advise the Union Board. In addition to the Administrative Practices course, my teaching assignments include Introduction to Student Affairs (U544), Environmental Theory and Assessment (U549), and two doctoral classes (Higher Education Administration and Campus Cultures). I edited an ACPA monograph on student cultures which features contributions by a number of former I.U. students. Jerry Preusz continues to play the key leadership role for students and courses on the Indianapolis campus.

The Indiana University Student Personnel Association remains a robust organization, providing numerous professional development opportunities as well as social events for students, faculty, staff and others. They are planning to put together a directory of graduates, so--if you have not already heard from them--you may soon! Representing I.U. this year in the NASPA Case Study Competition were Kathleen Cappelletti, who did undergraduate work at Denison University, and Ladd Flock, who graduated from St. Lawrence University.

Perhaps the biggest news was the School of Education's move from its former site on Third and Jordan to the new Wendell W. Wright Education Building and Center for Excellence on the corner of Seventh and Rose (south of Ashton, west of Willkie North, north of Forest, northeast of Read). The Higher Education and Student Affairs program is housed on the fourth floor of the building (Suite 4228). Thanks to the good work of Joyce Register and others, we were able to provide every student in the program with a mailbox, thus creating a sense of place and ownership for our new space. We are still trying to find appropriate places to hang plaques, such as those with the names of the Shaffer and Greenleaf Award winners.

As you will recall, last year the School of Education informed us that they would no longer be able to provide the resources to publish the *Journal* but that we could once again make direct solicitations to you for such support. Last spring, several generous graduates underwrote funding for this year's edition of the *IUSPA Journal*. Please help us continue this tradition of excellence in student affairs preparation. When you send a contribution to I.U., please indicate that you wish to earmark your donation for the *IUSPA Journal*.

Most important, please stay in touch and continue recommending I.U. to outstanding prospects. We are very grateful for your continuing support.

## The Aging Face of Education: The Adult Learner in American Higher Education

D. Rael Sanchez

### Introduction

Margaret is a first-year student at a large Midwestern university and like other new students, she feels the nervous excitement that accompanies the first day of classes. Selecting a seat at the front of her first class, she looks around, feeling quite out of place and slightly intimidated by her new surroundings. While her apprehension may be typical of college freshmen, Margaret herself is not. She is 42 years old, divorced, and the mother of four children.

For fifteen years, Margaret had worked as a receptionist for a local business. Economic difficulties left the business struggling and for the first time in 25 years, Margaret found herself unemployed. After examining her options, she made the decision to pursue post-secondary education. She now attends classes full-time and works part-time.

Although Margaret may have felt alone in the classroom, she is not alone on the college campus. Indeed, the student population at colleges and universities throughout the United States has changed significantly in recent years (Clark, 1989; Hughes, 1983). Enrollment has shifted from the traditional-aged population of 18 to 25 years, to the non-traditional population of 25 years of age or older. Numbers of non-traditional students have been growing at a significant rate since the 1960's.

From 1980 to 1990, the enrollment of students under age 25 increased by 7% while enrollment of persons 25 years of age and older rose by 34% (Bowden & Heritage, 1992). According to Bowden and Heritage, in 1989 over 4.7 million students enrolling in American colleges and universities were over the age of 25. Projections indicate that by the year 2001, enrollment of this population will approach 6.1 million.

Even with the increasing presence of adult learners and the financial benefit they represent to institutions of higher education, only in the past 20 years have educators and administrators begun to seriously consider the needs and recognize the potential of adult learners on their campuses.

The purpose of this article is to examine current literature on the topic of adult learners and discuss implications. It will begin with a definition of adult learners followed by a discussion of shared characteristics and common obstacles faced by these students. Finally, suggestions for the student affairs professional interested in working with this population will be discussed.

Despite the fact that both male and female students comprise the adult learner population, it is difficult to find literature focusing specifically on males. A likely explanation for the scarcity of literature might be a predominance of

female adult learners on most campuses (St. Pierre, 1989; Terrell, 1990). As more men face socioeconomic pressures and career dissatisfaction as well as other life changes, the numbers of adult male students are expected to increase significantly, providing a rich area for future study.

### Who is the adult learner?

Numerous labels have been assigned to this population in an attempt to categorize them. Some common identifying terms found consistently throughout the literature include: returning students, returning learners, re-entry students, older students, adult learners, adult students, mature students, and empty nesters (Culley, 1989; Hughes, 1983; Miller, 1989; St. Pierre, 1989; Terrell, 1990). For the purpose of this article, the term adult learner will be used.

Culley (1989) considers an adult learner as any student whose education has been interrupted for as little as one year. In their study of non-traditional students, Bowden and Heritage (1992) defined the adult learner as any student over the age of 24 who was attending college either full-time or part-time.

According to Hughes (1983), the lack of a consistent definition in the literature makes it difficult to extract a clear picture of adult learners. Recognition of this ambiguity is critical in a review of literature on the subject. For the purpose of this article, an adult learner is anyone over 25 who has been out of school for a minimum of two years.

### Characteristics of adult learners

A common characteristic shared by many adult learners is having responsibility for oneself as well as for the needs of others. They tend to be perceived by others as generally fulfilling several roles typical of adults in our society. Margaret is a good example of someone with multiple roles: mother, homemaker, full-time student, and part-time employee. Adult learners consider their educational pursuits as only one of several competing or conflicting priorities, and often as incidental activity, though one of increasing importance (White, 1981 cited in Hughes, 1983).

Clark (1989) lists five major dimensions separating adult learners from traditional-aged students. These dimensions are: (a) chronology, (b) developmental progression, (c) motivation, (d) learning style, and (e) intellectual development. These concepts laid out by Clark (1989) are some of the most practical and complete ones which can be found in the literature. For this reason, the following section will examine and discuss these concepts.

#### Characteristics

**Chronology.** Age has been considered the most prominent difference between traditional and non-traditional students and, for many years, was seen as the only difference (Clark, 1989). Chronological differences seem to receive the most attention. Educators and administrators, however, are beginning to

acknowledge other characteristics unique to adult learners. This acknowledgment is an important first step in working with adult learners.

**Developmental progression.** Although this area has been studied for quite some time, most of the findings have been applied predominantly to the traditional-aged student. There seems to be a common assumption in America that once an individual becomes an adult they cease to develop, but Nordstrom (1989) asserts that adults continue to develop in well defined stages just as children do.

**Motivation.** For adult learners, motivation for pursuing higher education can come from many sources. It can be the need to gain skills and knowledge or information to help them compete more successfully in their work. Self-improvement and a desire to learn can also serve as motivation (Clark, 1989).

The female adult learner tends to be more self-motivated with a higher overall grade point average than her younger counterparts (St. Pierre, 1989). Those who instruct adult learners have found this to be true. For example, Culley (1989) mentioned that "without exception, adult students, most of whom are women, have been among my best students--eager, committed, motivated, bringing a 'real world' perspective to classes of 18 to 20 year olds" (p. 67). Bowden and Heritage (1992) found that adult learners tend to be more focused on their topic of study.

**Learning styles.** These vary greatly among all individuals, but some adult learners may find the structure of the classroom more intimidating than do traditional students. On the issue of learning styles, Riechmann-Hruska (1989) states that the environment is very important as encouragement or as an inhibitor of learning. She found it interesting that, although adult learners have learning style preferences, they will compensate for those preferences and learn in any situation presented to them. For example, adult learners may dislike a certain method of instruction, but will do well with most methods. Even if they dislike working in groups, they will tolerate it and be successful.

**Intellectual development.** Intelligence varies greatly from individual to individual. Still, there are some characteristics of adult learners which distinguish them from traditional students. For example, learning is affected by memory changes associated with age. As one ages, short-term memory capacity decreases (Allen, 1992). Allen states that with age, adults find it harder to organize complex materials and tend to need to apply learned information immediately. However, she also mentions that adults have a greater readiness to learn, are more likely to be internally motivated and self-directed, and tend to place a high value on personal experiences.

### Making their way to campuses

Margaret's situation is just one of the myriad of reasons that bring adults to the world of academia. Adult learners may be returning to college after a break from education or may be entering college for the first time. They may be single or married, with or without children. Many have faced life changes such as divorce, separation, or the death of a spouse. Others find themselves

with free time after their children are self-supporting (St. Pierre, 1989; Terrell, 1990). They usually place more value on attending college because they have waited longer to attend and higher education has come at a greater personal and economic sacrifice (Nordstrom, 1989).

Many of these individuals work full-time while attending classes, or part-time as Margaret does. Dissatisfaction with occupations as well as economic reasons and the opportunity for career advancement through education have all played a part in increased adult enrollment on campuses (Miller, 1989; St. Pierre, 1989; Terrell, 1990). Intellectual stimulation and self-fulfillment are two more reasons adults enter (or re-enter) college (Hughes, 1983). The desire for personal enrichment is also mentioned by St. Pierre (1989).

#### Common concerns of adult learners

Adult learners are confronting numerous barriers in the pursuit of their education. Often, men and women with families express concern about the expense and quality of day care. They also bear much of the burden of keeping the family running smoothly, making career compromises for the sake of their families, and sacrificing virtually all of their free time (Terrell, 1990). Several studies cited by St. Pierre (1989) ranked child care and family responsibilities as the number one problem for returning women.

Hughes (1983) and St. Pierre (1989) cite a common lack of self-esteem exhibited by many adult learners. In reviewing the literature on the subject, Hughes mentions that some researchers found women students voiced a greater need for student services than men. Difficulties with schedules, finances, and child care were noted by Culley (1989).

Employment and financial difficulties are also parts of the problem adult learners are facing. Often a student must choose between employment and education. In a 1991 survey conducted at Middle Tennessee State University, several students mentioned losing their jobs because specific required classes were only offered during one time period or once every few semesters (Bowden & Heritage, 1992). Financial assistance is often inadequate and many feel some form of employment is necessary to meet financial responsibilities.

#### Recommendations

With the many challenges facing adult learners, what can a college or university do to ensure their academic success? If an institution is committed to meeting the needs of this growing population, changes must be implemented. Student affairs professionals have the ability to make relevant changes on campuses that will directly impact adult learners.

The key to meeting these students' needs is individual assessment by the institution, development of an institution-specific plan, and the financial and administrative commitment to carry it out. The following recommendations are designed to give student affairs professionals practical ideas for dealing with some of the common concerns adult learners have.

#### Orientation

The importance of programs providing information to adult learners cannot be stressed enough. For years, colleges and universities have offered orientation programs for traditional-aged students, but few have offered the same type of service to non-traditional students. Traditional orientation programs are typically provided during business hours of the work week and thus, have excluded many adult learners. A practical solution would be to offer orientation sessions in the evening or on weekends (Silling, 1984). Information about child care options that has typically been excluded from traditional orientation programs should be included along with traditional components (e.g., campus tour, placement testing, academic advising, the disbursement of financial aid information). Spouses and family members should be encouraged to attend, since they will be directly affected by the adult learners' new educational obligations.

Another suggestion for an orientation program would be to adopt a semester-long model currently being used at some institutions for traditional-aged students. Students would earn academic credit and the expanded orientation could include more detailed information on study skills, time and stress management, assertiveness training, and an introduction to computer usage (Silling, 1984). It might also include a component on how to use the library, as well as other such resources available on campus.

#### Counseling

The institution should insure access to a variety of counseling resources important to the success of adult learners. Research by Hughes (1983) reveals a greater need for support services among female adult learners. The need for support services geared toward the adult learner, and especially women, is stressed by Hodgson (1989), Hughes (1983), and Terrell (1990). Therefore, counseling services to meet the special needs of this group should be high priority. They should include, but not be limited to, counseling in academic re-entry, values clarification, decision-making, assertiveness training, career counseling, study guide techniques, help with course selection and academic advising, and personal counseling to build confidence and self-esteem (St. Pierre, 1989; Champagne & Petitpas, 1989).

#### Child care

Affordable, quality child care needs to be available to students with children. Although a child care dilemma exists nationwide, for adult learners with young children, access to affordable quality child care can determine whether or not they will be able to attend college. Centers with flexible hours are desperately needed to accommodate changing schedules (Hughes, 1983; Terrell, 1990). If an institution is unable to provide child care services, there should be a sincere effort by the institution to facilitate a "match" between parent and potential care giver. It is recommended that student affairs offices serve as a resource center for child care information, linking adult students with quality child care providers in their community.

More flexible class schedules

The needs of adult learners should be taken into consideration when courses are scheduled. Increasing the number of evening, weekend, and weekly classes to accommodate job and family responsibilities is a common suggestion offered throughout the literature (Culley, 1989; Hodgson, 1989; Terrell, 1990). Too often, non-traditional students are forced to adjust their schedules around daytime classes. Terrell (1990) suggests maximizing access to course offerings through satellite campus centers as well as increasing the number of courses offered very early in the morning and late in the evenings to accommodate work schedules.

Extended hours for student services

The institution should provide access to student services beyond the traditional 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. workday. In addition to providing more flexible scheduling, institutions of higher education should extend the hours in administrative offices such as financial aid, admissions, registration, and career services (Silling, 1984). Since many adult learners are on campus after traditional hours, services need to be open evening and weekend hours. Included should be the health center, the bookstore, the computer centers, and other support services daytime students take for granted.

Financial assistance

Financial aid administrators need to become more aggressive in reaching out to non-traditional students. Frustration over the costs associated with higher education and the lack of adequate financial assistance are common to all students, but adult learners with additional family and home responsibilities may find it overwhelming. While information on financial aid and money management should be given to all students, the adult learner would especially benefit from such information. Financial aid professionals are often called upon to do presentations at high schools, but rarely do they present to non-traditional populations.

Additionally, the vast majority of academic scholarships are geared toward 18 to 22 year olds. Seldom does one encounter an academic scholarship geared toward the adult returning student. Scholarship opportunities for the academically gifted adult learner must be enhanced, if this population is to be adequately served.

Affordable campus housing

An institution should provide affordable campus housing for its adult students and their families. Many adult learners, especially those with dependent children, find adequate housing costly, especially if attending college requires them to relocate. Institutions of higher education frequently offer on-campus housing for traditional undergraduates, but have failed to do the same for non-traditional students. Since an adult learner's ability to attend college is often contingent upon obtaining adequate housing, adult learners should have the same access to university housing as traditional undergraduates. While institutions are striving to make affordable housing available, student affairs

professionals in Residence Life positions should gear programming to the needs and concerns of this population.

Other issues

The study of adult learners is a relatively new phenomena. As demonstrated in the figures cited earlier, this area promises to be one of rapid future expansion. Thus, many topics not discussed in this article remain to be addressed. Some of these topics include the need for attitudinal changes and support from faculty and staff, as well as a focus on recruitment and retention programs for adult learners.

As the American population ages, American universities and colleges must evolve to meet the needs of this population. That evolution will be shaped, in part, by the issues addressed in this literature review.

Conclusion

For twenty-five years Margaret pursued a career in the working world. Now, as a freshman, Margaret has begun her academic career. She is an intelligent and determined woman, yet these qualities alone do not guarantee her academic success. If Margaret is to meet her academic goals, she will need more than just perseverance. She will need the information and institutional support to make her educational goals a reality. More quality research on the subject of adult learners needs to be conducted. As this population increases on campuses, it is important to document changing attitudes and needs in order to adapt services and programs to those needs.

Whatever the reason, these individuals have found their way to the classroom. By virtue of sheer numbers, they cannot be ignored by college administrators and student affairs professionals. Whether returning full-time or part-time, these students are becoming more and more visible on the campuses of colleges and universities (Lynton, 1986).

The above are but a few suggestions that might be implemented to increase access and services to the growing adult learner population. As mentioned earlier, the key to meeting these students' needs is individual assessment by the institution, development of a institution-specific plan, and the financial and administrative commitment to carry it out. Only in this way can student affairs professionals hope to target the needs and facilitate the "fit" of these individuals within the world of academia.

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*Dolores "Dee" Rael Sanchez graduated in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in Communicative Disorders from the University of New Mexico. Since then, she has worked part-time toward a master's degree in College Student Personnel Administration and will graduate in May 1993. She currently has an assistantship as a financial aid counselor in the Office of Student Financial Assistance.*

*Once she graduates, Dee is interested in working with commuter students, and in developing programs and services for adult learners. She is also interested in working with students through student activities and publications. Her long-term goal is to work within the Dean of Students Office, reaching both traditional and non-traditional students. When not working, Dee enjoys spending time with her husband and her two-year-old son.*



### Serving Students in the Midst of Remodeling

Kristen Lane Lettington  
Charles Wilder Puls  
Heather Dawn Wallace

Across the United States, colleges and universities have been forced to address previously deferred renovation and maintenance (Rush & Johnson, 1990). As student service offices are remodeled, disruptions may occur in the services they provide. Nevertheless, student service organizations are responsible for continuously "maintaining and delivering services and functions to campus inhabitants" (Conyne, 1983, p. 435). This assessment addresses one remodeling project, and the ways in which it affected students' perceived ability to utilize the service.

Changing client service goals provided the impetus for the 1991-1992 remodeling of Indiana University's Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA). Previously, the office had provided in-depth services to relatively few students. Terrill Cosgray, Associate Director for Client Services at the OSFA, explained that the new service structure aimed to service "quantity with quality," to provide services to as many students as possible while maintaining an 80% satisfaction rate for those served. This revised mission required physical changes and an expanded counseling staff to accommodate a greater number of student clients. The OSFA cleared one office room of all partitions and desks to adopt a temporary setup with the goal of managing the increased traffic and the additional hope that the site's unattractiveness would compel the university to finance a full remodeling.

One large, open room housed the Client Services area during the remodeling. Folding tables with computers, adding machines, and scattered office supplies filled most of the room, while student waiting areas furnished with hard, wooden and plastic chairs occupied the remaining space. Magazines covered two tables, and another table served as a place for students to fill out forms. The carpeting was criss-crossed with various electrical and phone cables secured with duct tape. Upside-down wastebaskets protected floor outlets. At the entrance, a counselor directed students to appropriate areas; paper signs taped together and suspended from the ceiling by black yarn and paper clips helped guide their way.

The assessment team found the office to be quite uncomfortable, unattractive, cluttered, crowded, and loud. Privacy could not be guaranteed, and distractions often called counselors away from clients. The team anticipated that students would not be satisfied with the office.

The purpose of this study was to examine whether student client perceptions of this temporary environment affected their satisfaction with the office or their perceived ability to utilize office services. In general,

understanding students' perceptions may help student affairs professionals create environments that better meet students' needs. Specifically, understanding students' perceptions of the OSFA may help the office develop a physical setting conducive to the office's mission. Finally, knowledge of how students perceive this particular renovation and the ways in which it affected them may help student affairs professionals better maintain student services during similar remodeling efforts.

What follows will be a review of the literature, an outline of the assessment, and recommendations for student service offices considering remodeling.

### Literature Review

This section will focus on four themes in the literature. The importance of studying physical environments is discussed. Empirical evidence is then presented supporting the hypothesis that certain physical aspects of offices can significantly affect office users. A description of offices as either client-centered or administrative is followed by a discussion of how perceptions of the environment influence behavioral outcomes.

#### Environmental Assessment

Environmental assessments can be useful in determining the need to change environmental conditions that have created, or have the potential to create, problems for students (Evans, 1983). As Moos (1974) stated, "the arrangement of environments is probably the most effective technique we have for influencing behavior" (p. 4). Davis (1984) urged a more critical assessment of the ways in which physical settings support or interfere with the performance of necessary tasks.

Research is needed to provide increased understanding and awareness of how the physical settings affect performance and to discover how office administrators and individual managers can manipulate or rearrange the physical environment to support more efficient behavior at work (p. 281).

If student affairs professionals are to influence the ability of students to utilize campus services, environmental cues in offices such as the OSFA warrant attention.

#### Effect of Physical Characteristics

The physical environment influences which activities will occur in a given setting (Oldham & Fried, 1987; Strange, 1991) and how people within the environmental setting will react (Oldham & Fried, 1987; Thelin & Yankovich, 1987). Oldham and Fried (1987) found that employees respond negatively to offices with high social density (the number of individuals occupying a particular area), close interpersonal space, dark rooms, and few partitions or enclosures.

In light of this research, the open-office setting of the OSFA can be examined to determine if this temporary arrangement influences students'

perceptions of the office. Possible drawbacks of the OSFA's open-office setting include: lower perceptions of formality, difficulty concentrating on the task at hand because of increased distraction, noise, activity, and decreases in confidentiality as a result of decreased privacy (Banning, 1988, 1991; Crouch & Nimran, 1989; Davis, 1984; Wicker, 1979). However, open-office settings can also increase communication among staff (Davis, 1984).

Other studies have measured the effects of physical characteristics such as: ceiling height, carpeting, decor, distance between workers, spatial arrangements, lighting, enclosures, social density, furniture and seating, reception area, music, and even the name of the office (Babey, 1990; Baum & Epstein, 1978; Davis, 1984; Evans, 1983; Iwai, Churchill, & Cummings, 1983; Miller, 1981). These studies helped to determine which environmental referents of the OSFA may affect students.

### Client-Centered Versus Administrative

Becker (in Davis, 1984) related two functional methods, administrative and client-centered, to describe office environments. Administrative offices are designed around business transactions. Concerns of this type of office are efficiency and access; aesthetics and image are of little importance. Conversely, client-centered offices are 99% image. Becker notes that counselors, bankers, stockbrokers, and accountants utilize a client-centered approach to satisfy client needs for comfort, security, and confidentiality. The nature of the transactions occurring in the OSFA suggests a client-centered model. However, the temporary setup focused on efficiency, and thus could be described as an administrative model.

### Perceptions of the Environment

According to Walsh (1973), individuals are affected by the physical world through their perceptions and experiences. These perceptions of environments have been shown either to encourage or discourage interaction (Kuh et al., 1991). Since clients and counselors meet in the temporary Client Services area, efforts should be made to ensure that students' perceptions of this environment are positive.

Strange (1991) asserts that "environments are defined by the perceptions of the individuals within them" (p. 176). If the physical environment can only be assessed through the perceptions of its inhabitants, then the evaluation of the OSFA's temporary setup must be conducted from both the perspective of important physical characteristics and client impressions of those characteristics.

### Methods

The following discussion of methods for the assessment will be divided into four sections: setting, research strategies, instrument and procedure, and data analysis.

### Setting

The environmental assessment took place over a one-week period during the summer of 1992. Physical observations were conducted in the Client Services area -- a large, open room where all counselor-student interaction takes place. Exit interviews were administered in the corridor directly outside the OSFA.

### Research Strategies

Three methods were used to gather data. First, the Associate Director for Client Services provided information about the selection of the temporary setup, its relation to the OSFA's goals, and its effects, both positive and negative, on clients and client behaviors. Second, the assessment team recorded environmental referents of the office (e.g., sounds, client-counselor interaction) and studied the surrounding areas (e.g., hallways, buildings). While student interviews were conducted, physical counts were taken of the number of students utilizing the office. Finally, exit interviews were conducted with students as they left the OSFA throughout the day. Fifty students completed a questionnaire and answered follow-up questions.

### Instrument and Procedure

An instrument was developed to measure nine environmental referents: physical comfort, aesthetics, acoustics, privacy, formality, lighting, neatness, space, and distractions. This list of characteristics was created by synthesizing aspects of the office observed by the research team. In addition, literature about open-office settings helped to identify characteristics in the OSFA that may affect employees in open offices.

Students were asked to indicate their perceptions of the OSFA in each of the nine categories on a five-point semantic differential rating scale ("Structure of the Environment," 1984). On a separate three-point scale, students reported their level of satisfaction with each characteristic. Students also indicated which physical characteristics, if any, significantly affected their visit to the OSFA. After completing the written questionnaire, students answered follow-up questions about the characteristics affecting this office visit. Specifically, students were asked to provide reasons the characteristics had affected them and offer suggestions for improvement. Students were then asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the office.

In addition, respondents were asked questions concerning the length of their office visit, whether they had visited the office since remodeling began, and whether they were aware of the remodeling project. A demographic profile, including age, gender, ethnicity, and class standing was also compiled for each respondent. However, the responses to these additional questions were not utilized in the analysis of this study, because the data gathered was insufficient to support conclusions.

### Data Analysis

In order to report responses along the continuum in percentages, responses to each characteristic were divided into three categories. Numerical values were assigned to each response on the continuum (the response value).

Respondents whose response value equaled 3 were interpreted as neutral. Response values of 1 and 2 were combined, as were response values of 4 and 5 to show tendency toward either end of the continuum. Percentages for each end of the continuum were calculated, while neutral percentages are not included in this report.

Students indicated their degree of satisfaction with each characteristic as satisfied, unsatisfied, or indifferent. A response of "indifferent" suggested that a student did not have a problem with that characteristic. Therefore, responses of "satisfied" and "indifferent" were combined for each characteristic to represent satisfaction. The number of respondents indicating that a particular characteristic had a significant impact on their interaction with the office is expressed as a percentage of total respondents.

Students were asked to rate overall impressions of the office as: very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, indifferent, satisfied, or very satisfied. Responses were assigned a whole number numerical value, ranging from 1 for very dissatisfied to 5 for very satisfied, with indifferent valued at 3. A mean overall satisfaction score was calculated. The mean overall satisfaction level of those reporting that particular characteristics had a significant negative affect on their use of the office was also calculated. A mean score above 3 indicated satisfaction, whereas a score below 3 represented dissatisfaction.

## Results

The nine characteristics were evaluated to determine student satisfaction with each, as well as their relation to overall satisfaction. In recording the results, the assessment team considered whether areas met the stated 80% satisfaction goal of the OSFA. Salient aspects of analysis are outlined in this section, followed by a discussion of these results.

### Physical Comfort

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents felt comfortable, while only 16% felt uncomfortable. Eighty-five percent were satisfied with physical comfort. Although many noted the lack of comfortable chairs, only 20% of those indicating that physical comfort negatively affected their use of the office were dissatisfied with their overall experience at the OSFA.

### Aesthetics

Only 46% of those surveyed found the office unattractive. Eighty-six percent were satisfied with the aesthetics, although students commented that the office looked "haphazard."

### Acoustics

Thirty-two percent of respondents agreed that the noise level interfered with communication, while 44% did not notice much noise in the OSFA. Eighty-eight percent were satisfied with noise levels. Although some students found the radio in the office bothersome, one student noted that the radio added privacy by masking the conversations of counselors and clients.

### Privacy

Forty-two percent of respondents perceived their interaction with a counselor as private and confidential, while 32% considered their interaction open and public. Eighty percent were satisfied with privacy. Many students mentioned that they could see how privacy could be an issue, but it was not an important concern for them. However, one student commented, "It's terrible, everyone knows your financial problems."

### Formality

Sixty percent of students found the atmosphere casual and relaxed, while only 22% described the office as conservative and conventional. Ninety percent of the respondents were satisfied with the formality of the office. Perceptions of the environment as casual and relaxed resulted in feelings of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Ten percent of clients surveyed reported a significant positive effect on their use of the office. These students commented specifically that they liked the informality of the office setting.

### Lighting, Neatness, and Space

All respondents were satisfied with lighting. Thirty-eight percent found the office messy and cluttered; however, 90% were satisfied with neatness. Twenty-six percent of respondents found the office to be spacious, while 48% found the office crowded and cramped. Only 76% of clients surveyed were satisfied with the spaciousness of the office.

### Distractions

Eighteen percent of the respondents found events in the office distracting, while 60% found that they and their counselor were fully able to concentrate on their case. Only 20% of clients were dissatisfied with this aspect, citing ringing phones and counselors turning away to answer questions posed by other counselors.

### Overall Satisfaction

Eighty-seven percent of respondents reported overall satisfaction with their visit to the OSFA.

## Discussion

The following is a discussion of the findings related to satisfaction with physical characteristics, ability to utilize the office, and overall satisfaction.

### Satisfaction with Physical Characteristics

The only satisfaction rating below the 80% service standard set by OSFA administrators was space, at 76%. Dissatisfaction with space may also indicate dissatisfaction with related characteristics. For example, students' verbal responses linked space to privacy (e.g., sitting close to others while

talking to a counselor), and to physical comfort (e.g., feeling cramped because chairs were too close together). Thus, the high level of dissatisfaction may be partially explained by difficulties in treating space as a distinct characteristic.

Respondent satisfaction with formality differed from assessment team expectations. Because the OSFA deals with financial matters, similar to banking services, the team predicted that clients would expect and desire a more formal physical environment. If this were true, the OSFA setup (viewed by the majority of students to be informal) would elicit dissatisfaction. Exactly the opposite was true, however. Ninety percent of the respondents were satisfied with the informal environment, and many commented that they particularly appreciated it. This finding may indicate significant differences between student service offices and their commercial counterparts.

#### Ability to Utilize the Office

In general, few students reported physical characteristics affecting their ability to utilize the office. A small number of students indicated that certain characteristics negatively affected their ability to use the office; yet most of these students were satisfied with those same characteristics. The assessment team found these contradictory responses surprising, having expected that reports of negative effects would be highly correlated with dissatisfaction.

When posed with follow-up questions about their contradictory responses, many students reported that a particular characteristic was not currently a problem for them, but might have been problematic for others. Based on the low reports of significant effect, and the contradictions inherent in them, it was concluded that the temporary physical environment of the OSFA had little impact on students' perceived ability to utilize the office.

#### Overall Satisfaction

Of students expressing an opinion, 87% were satisfied with the office, exceeding the office goal of 80%. Given such high levels of satisfaction, the physical environment of the OSFA appeared to have very little impact on student satisfaction with the office. In fact, many students commented that they did not care how the office looked, as long as their financial aid was processed. In the eyes of students, privacy as well as confidentiality and image were superseded by function. Students perceived the office as administrative in nature, contradicting the client-centered orientation suggested by Terrill Cosgray.

#### Limitations

The confidential nature of the financial aid service provided by the OSFA posed certain limitations on this study. After discussing the assessment with the Associate Director, it was determined that the sensitive nature of financial information made it inappropriate to ask clients to disclose the reason for their visit or the type of counseling they received. Student satisfaction with the office may have been influenced by elements other than physical setting, such as the type of service received and the outcome of their visit. However,

since no indication was given regarding the nature of any student's visit to the OSFA, the assessment team was unable to determine whether a correlation existed between type of service received and satisfaction with the office.

To narrow the scope of the assessment, this project was limited to student perceptions, making it difficult to synthesize information gathered from sources other than student questionnaires and exit interviews. Counselor perceptions were not evaluated because of a potential conflict of interest; one assessor was employed by the OSFA. A more thorough assessment would include perceptions of clients, counselors, and administrators, as well as data on the number of clients served and amount of financial aid distributed.

The literature provided information only about the effects of open office settings on employee productivity and satisfaction; no literature was found referring specifically to client response in such settings. Such studies may have yielded information useful in constructing a research instrument directly related to clients' experiences in the environment.

#### Recommendations

In view of the above limitations, recommendations for further study and for remodeling student service offices are proposed.

#### Further Study

Research should be conducted that measures the effect of different office environments on clients in particular. Oldham and Fried (1987) and Thelin and Yankovich (1987) consider ways in which environments influence the reactions and activities of employees in office settings. Similar studies, if focused on client rather than employee reaction to environmental characteristics, could provide valuable information to assist student affairs and university administrators in designing office environments that would maximize both employee and student satisfaction.

Research into space utilization is one area that may provide insight into student satisfaction. It was noted earlier that student satisfaction with space was linked to privacy and comfort. A study focussing on various aspects related to space (e.g., personal space requirements, conversational space requirements, the need for privacy) would provide valuable information for the redesign of student service offices.

Furthermore, an answer to the following question would be useful: Are various student service offices more similar to each other, or more similar to the types of offices they mirror outside the college or university setting? Research comparing client perceptions and expectations among different types of offices would be valuable. The assessment team conjectured that students may expect and desire different environments in offices providing different services. If studies of office environments are to be utilized across various student service settings, more research is necessary to support or refute the assumption that student service offices are fundamentally alike.

#### Remodeling Student Service Offices

The results of this study suggest that student perceptions can play a key role in planning for remodeling in student service offices. By analyzing perceptions, utilizing them in planning, and implementing systems based on the knowledge gained, offices may continue to serve students effectively.

First, it is important to discover what aspects or functions of the office students consider most important. It became clear in the data analysis that students do not always perceive settings in the same ways that professionals do. For instance, Terrill Cosgray viewed the OSFA as client-centered, whereas student reactions revealed a more administrative interpretation. In addition, student reactions to physical surroundings may be different than outside observers (e.g., assessment teams, budget officers) anticipate. For example, while the assessment team judged the office to be cluttered, 62% of the students thought the office was neat. A relatively simple assessment instrument could provide the basic information about student perceptions necessary to make informed decisions for remodeling. Characteristics that demand attention, views of the office as administrative or client-centered, and other important factors could surface in the assessment.

If temporary office arrangements are required during the remodeling, as was the case with the OSFA, acknowledgement of student concerns can allow for a physical arrangement that is the least disruptive. Clearly, more factors influence office remodeling than student concerns (e.g., employee satisfaction and productivity, university tradition); however, those factors should have more influence over the final setup of the office than on the temporary arrangement. Offices considering remodeling should note that students can be quite flexible, especially if they feel that their needs are being met.

Finally, in the implementation stage it is important to take risks. According to Terrill Cosgray, by living "life on the edge" and implementing a temporary office setup, the OSFA served more students and exceeded the 80% satisfaction goal. At the same time, the OSFA convinced the university to allocate funding for the remodeling necessary to construct a more appealing physical environment for students and staff. By taking risks, student affairs professionals can seize opportunities to provide students with environments that more effectively meet their needs. In the case of the Indiana University Office of Student Financial Assistance, the "risky" decision to pursue a radical change despite what were perceived by administrators to be short-term physical drawbacks was appropriate and successful.

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## The Hispanic Population: Assumptions and Realities

Allison B. Block

### Introduction

*By the year 2000, the Hispanic population in the United States will constitute the largest minority majority in the Southwest, certain Midwestern states, and regions of New York and the mid-Atlantic; in California, Hispanics will likely outnumber whites (Estrada, 1988). The presence of Hispanic students on college campuses is expected to reflect this phenomenal population growth. Unfortunately, many college administrators have experienced little interaction with this population. Assumptions about Hispanic students, whether formed through exposure to literature, the news media, or other information sources, inevitably surface; many of these suppositions are laden with stereotypes.*

*Student affairs professionals can transcend these assumptions and effectively address student needs only by confronting and examining the concerns of the Hispanic population. The following paper is a personal exploration that begins by revealing the author's assumptions about Hispanic people. These suppositions are followed by an account of the author's interaction with a member of this population and a literature review exploring the significant issues affecting the Hispanic population at colleges and universities nationwide.*

It's early morning in the southern California town of La Mesa, 25 miles or so from the Mexican border. A man with skin the color of copper leans against a chain-linked fence; he rubs his eyes, then rummages through his breast pocket for a cigarette. He lights up, takes a drag, exhales, and turns his eyes away from the unrelenting heat of the August sun. Soon he is joined by five or six of his friends, ranging in age from 15 to 45 years old. All illegal immigrants, they've come to know each other through this morning ritual--hoping to be shuttled off to a day's work by an employer looking for cheap labor, before the state authorities arrive and shoo them away like flies.

Although the men speak in Spanish, even to a non-speaker the licentious nature of their conversation is clear. A bare-breasted man with tattered jeans gyrates his hips and howls; they all cackle in unison. One of the younger boys takes a swig of warm beer. When an attractive woman walks by, every pair of eyes follows her until she disappears from view. The men whoop and holler and stomp their feet. A man with a crimson scar carved into his right cheek clenches the fence and, like a caged animal, begins to shake it. A sadistic grin spreads across his wizened face, exposing a gap where his front teeth used to be.

A truck appears at the end of the dusty road; the leader of the group calls for quiet as he approaches the vehicle. Good news: work for the day. Picking strawberries for less than minimum wage. Without a moment's thought, the men pile into the bed of the truck. It's dirty, cramped, and smells of manure, but none

of them seems to care. They chatter loudly and pat each other on the back. After all, a day's work means money, and without money, they are nothing. The cash that will be in their hands that afternoon symbolizes survival; it means they've made it through another day.

As a child growing up in a predominantly white, middle-class suburb in southern California, this was the only image of Hispanic people I ever knew. Though separated by only a few miles, my world and their world were as opposite as two could be. I spoke English. They spoke Spanish. While my father worked in an office and wore a neatly pressed business suit, they worked out in the fields or in the home; their clothing was often soiled and disheveled. In my neighborhood, few families had more than three children. Hispanic families always seemed to have more children in tow than they could manage and many of the women were pregnant. Most of the American men I knew were respectful of women. Hispanic men, however, seemed macho and lascivious; they stared, snarled, or spit at women who crossed their path. The small number of Hispanic students in my school were always tardy and frequently absent; when they did show up, they usually caused trouble.

These early childhood observations led me to assume that Hispanic people were base and unrefined, with a cultural orientation that focused on the body rather than the mind, the carnal rather than the spiritual. I knew many had come to America to escape an oppressed life, to gain freedom and ultimately acquire material possessions--in short, to pursue the American dream. I never faulted them for that. But to me, they seemed to be opportunists, even parasites of a sort, eager to capitalize on all America had to give, but not reciprocate in any way. They turned their back on their provider, refusing to speak the language, to fit in. I never for a moment believed they had the same life aspirations as I did--to go to college, to become professionals. I never gave them credit for wanting more than what money could buy. Until I enrolled at Berkeley and met a young man named Jose Gamez.

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Although the campus of the University of California, Berkeley may only be a brief airplane ride from the suburb in which I grew up, the two milieus are galaxies apart. In fact, Berkeley is so ethnically diverse, that as a white person, I often perceived myself among the minority. Making my daily trek across Sproul Plaza, the nerve center of the campus, the sea of faces of people of color--African-Americans, Native-Americans, Hispanic-Americans--often took me aback. As a writing tutor in Berkeley's Student Learning Center, I had the opportunity to work with many of these populations. Jose was my first student--and he quite literally changed my life. A native of Mexico, Jose had lived in the States less than five years. While his command of the English language was excellent, his writing skills were not up to Berkeley's standards. In fact, he had failed the basic composition requirement twice; one more unsuccessful attempt and he would be dismissed from the institution without a hope of returning.

As the time approached for my first meeting with Jose, I felt a combination of excitement and dread. I looked forward to helping a student in need, but at the same time, knew I would be unable to shed my assumptions. I assumed that Jose, like many Hispanic men I had seen, would be macho; he would see me as a sexual being, someone to be conquered. Our relationship would undoubtedly be adversarial. I was skeptical of his academic abilities as well, convinced he would justify my worst suspicions about affirmative action, that he hadn't truly earned the right to be a student at Berkeley.

Jose was not what I expected. He was congenial, polite, and honest about his shortcomings; we quickly became friends. To be honest, I scarcely noticed the color of his skin. Jose talked about how his difficulties with writing really didn't interfere with his major--electrical engineering (one of Berkeley's toughest)--but that if university regulations demanded that he pass freshman composition in order to stay, that's what he would do. "I haven't come this far for nothing," he would say with conviction. Jose passed the writing requirement that year and went on to graduate. While I may have helped him with his writing, he taught me a much more important lesson about the invidious nature of assumptions. They can preclude you from experiencing some of life's most gratifying moments.

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The success of a student like Jose Gamez is as inspiring as it is rare. Research has long revealed that the American educational system is unfriendly turf for Hispanics, frequently challenging them to abandon their indigenous culture and language and adopt American ways in order to succeed, or in many cases, just survive. Of the numerous obstacles confronting Hispanic students, issues surrounding language are perhaps the most forbidding (Fields, 1988). Unlike Jose, who had a basic mastery of English, many Hispanic children don't hear spoken English until they enter the classroom, a predicament that can cause them to fall behind their normal grade levels almost immediately. A chain reaction of failure is set in motion, evidence of which can be detected as early as kindergarten. Census data reveals that in grades one through four, 28% of Hispanic students are behind; by ninth and tenth grades, the figure rises to 43% (Fields, 1988). "The educational pipeline for Hispanic-Americans is hardly a continuous conduit taking people at age five and delivering them at age 18 or 22 or 25 with the educational tickets for entry into the nation's mainstream" (Fields, 1988). Instead, it is a passageway plagued by gaps: "a leaky funnel" (p. 20).

Indeed, many Hispanic-Americans are fortunate to make it as far as high school. In 1988, the national high school dropout rate for Hispanic youths was 45% (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Annual Report, 1990). For those students who persevere, a four-year institution is seldom their first stop. For reasons ranging from proximity to their home to the need for remedial work, Hispanic students are six times more likely to enroll in community colleges with the goal of transferring to a four-year school (Estrada, 1988). But the statistics on transfers are sobering: studies suggest that fewer than 10% of



Hispanic students enrolled in community colleges actually move on to a four-year school. Alas, the ultimate goal of earning a bachelor's degree from an institution of higher education remains beyond the reach of many Hispanic students. According to the 1990 Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Annual Report, in 1987, Hispanics earned just 2.7% of all bachelor's degrees awarded.

Although no simple remedy exists for the underrepresentation of Hispanics in higher education, many scholars argue that bilingual education, or lack thereof, is at the very core of this issue (King, 1976). How can a student with little or no exposure to English be expected to learn at the same rate as a native speaker? In California, where the Hispanic population is experiencing exponential growth, a bill designed to reinstate the traditional bilingual approach--teaching students who lack English fluency academic subjects in their native language while they build English skills--is currently before the governor (Merl, 1992). Benjamin Lopez, a lobbyist for California Rural Legal Assistance, echoes the danger of the "leaky funnel" syndrome, remarking that by ignoring this large and rapidly growing population, "their future progress will lead to dropping out, to an unsuccessful job search and to a difficult adult life" (Merl, 1992, p.A4). Although the institution of a bilingual program will not solve all problems--many critics believe it actually delays English acquisition--it appears to be one of the most effective means for Hispanics to simultaneously increase their chances for success in school and cling to the culture that is vital to their very existence.

The academic deficiencies resulting from language barriers are not solely to blame for the Hispanic population's disappointing performance in higher education; a number of other obstacles hinder their pursuit. In a culture where the family is of utmost importance and financial situations are often precarious, the need to go to work to support the family can override the highest of academic aspirations. As Fields (1988) reports, Hispanic students are raised to do things for the good of the family, making it difficult for them to put themselves first, even as adults. For many Hispanic college students, family bonds are so strong that the loneliness experienced away at school is completely debilitating. Administrators often speak of the number of dropouts resulting from homesickness (Fiske, 1988). Yet another stumbling block for students is the absence of college-educated Hispanic role models. One female student lamented that prior to her arrival at college, she had never encountered a Mexican-American in a position in which she aspired to be in ten years (Fiske, 1988).

Perhaps one of the greatest hardships faced by Hispanic students once they arrive at college (and something that many non-Hispanics are unlikely to consider) is the daily predicament of straddling two different cultures. An American education--viewed by many Hispanics as a ticket out--comes with a price. Fiske (1988) recalls one student's assessment of the need to hold onto his culture while maintaining a status in American culture: "That's a big pressure...You lose your culture. You get branded as a sellout" (p.31). A large number of students, unwilling to tow the line, drop out of school entirely. Many, says Fiske, are able to balance participation in two cultures. Some join Hispanic

social or political groups and affirm their heritage as overtly as possible; others become 'coconuts'--brown on the outside, white on the inside--an action that often leads to charges of selling out. In order to better cope with this cultural dichotomy, Hispanic students cite the need for more comprehensive support systems on college campuses. Ethnic organizations like Indiana University's Latinos Unidos and academic programs such as Wayne State's Chicano-Boricua Studies can offer students a home away from home and shelter from an often inclement ethnic climate.

Despite enjoying unprecedented growth, the Hispanic population's rate of retention and academic achievement in the nation's schools and community colleges continues to lag behind its white counterparts (Rendon & Nora, 1987-88). Recent research, however, provides more than a glimmer of hope. Studies reveal that while only 21% of legal immigrants entering the United States between 1980 and 1985 were high school graduates, newer immigrant waves are substantially more urban, literate, and skilled (Estrada, 1988). The future brings with it the promise of a generation that champions education at all levels. Furthermore, there is proof that pre-college intervention strategies--those that increase the number of students who are motivated and prepared to enroll and succeed in college--do indeed work (DeNecochea, 1988). At California State University, Long Beach, a summer residential program for educationally disadvantaged minority students that offers orientation, basic study skills, intensive writing and math instruction, academic advising, and exposure to some of the interpersonal dynamics of the first year of college, has resulted in minority retention rates that surpass those of whites (Ramirez, 1987). Halcon (1988) identifies similar programs at institutions nationwide, including the Early Awareness Project at the University of Texas, the University of Colorado's Pre-Collegiate Development program and Notre Dame's National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering.

For the Hispanic population to achieve greater academic success in the future, patching up the "leaky funnel"--developing backward linkages from post-secondary schools to secondary schools and community college systems to school systems at the most primary levels--may be the most significant directive. But for student affairs professionals, it is only the beginning; they must pledge themselves to support Hispanic college students from the moment they set foot on campus to the day they graduate. Only through the persistent advocacy of academic support services, peer advising, faculty mentorship programs and career counseling, can student affairs professionals hope to topple the academic barriers and feelings of personal and cultural alienation that so often impede Hispanic students' success. With such dedication comes the hope that the Hispanic population's existing chain reaction of failure within the American educational system can be replaced by a sequence of success, in which Hispanic students become college graduates who inspire future generations.

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### Meeting Institutional Goals Through Coeducational Living

Cherie Blankenbuehler  
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A considerable amount of research has been conducted on the impact of college living environments on student development. Students who live in residence halls are more satisfied with their institution, more involved in campus activities, and earn better grades than their off-campus counterparts (Kuh, 1981). On-campus living fosters increased social interaction, enhanced self-concept, and a broadened political viewpoint; it also encourages higher academic goals (Moos & Otto, 1975). It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that relatively few studies have dealt specifically with the effects of coeducational living within the residence halls (Corbett & Sommer, 1972; Moss & Otto, 1975).

The purpose of this study was to compare the Indiana University Department of Residence Life and the Halls of Residence's goals for the coeducational living unit, Teter-Thompson-Four, with the behaviors and perceptions of the students who live there.

This paper will first provide a brief background of the coeducational living unit in Teter Quadrangle. Second, a review of the literature concerning coeducational arrangements will be presented. Third, the methods for gathering and analyzing the data are described. Finally, a discussion of results and a series of recommendations will be provided.

At the time of this study, coeducational floors were in their second year of existence on the Indiana University-Bloomington campus. It was also the second year for the coeducational floor in Teter Quadrangle. Only three other coeducational floors in the undergraduate halls existed and, like Teter Quadrangle, all housed upperclass students. The research team believed this was an appropriate time to conduct a comparison study between the institutional goals and the student behaviors and perceptions of this pilot environment. The group hypothesized there would be a very close match as a result of the influence of the environment on behavior and perceptions.

The Department of Residence Life and Halls of Residence determine the policies and procedures to be followed in housing units which students occupy. The Department of Residence Life deals mainly with student life issues, while Halls of Residence handles facilities management and maintenance of the buildings. Their combined goals, described in this paper, were designed to facilitate the development of communities which complement and support the academic mission of the institution. The goals were campus-wide and enforcement of policies was expected in all residence halls. Students may influence policies through unit agreements, community councils, and hall

government bodies. Briefly, the goals focused on creating learning environments which foster acceptance and understanding of differences among people; providing programs and interventions based on student needs; and providing a clean, safe, healthy living environment (Indiana University, Department of Residence Life Staff Manual, 1992).

### Review of Literature

Coeducational living units were introduced to college and university residence halls in the early 1960's. The general goals for such environments were to facilitate more informed male-female relationships (MacInnis, Byrne, & Fraser, 1980; Moos & Otto, 1975; Reid, 1976) and to encourage sex role exploration (Buckner, 1981). The staffs of residence life, as well as housing and operations, hoped that the coeducational setting would "lead to more mature behavior with less horseplay than is found in dorms of all one sex" (Corbett & Sommer, 1972, p. 215).

Overall, most research measuring impact on these areas is very positive. Buckner (1981) reported a strong sense of community on coeducational floors, with frequent, lively discussions about gender roles. A study by MacInnis, Byrne, and Fraser (1980) found that the students, their parents, faculty and staff, as well as the community in general, all approved of the coeducational living unit and its effects.

Research has also focused specifically on the effects of coeducational living on women. Compared with single-sex floors, coeducational living is significantly more enjoyable and satisfying for females (Reid, 1976; Moos and Otto, 1975). Specifically, women in coeducational units perceived a greater emphasis on involvement, independence, and innovation, and less emphasis on traditional social interaction (Moos & Otto, 1975). Not all of the research, however, indicated positive effects on women. According to Berg (1988) and Moos and Otto (1975) the coeducational environment may be more stressful for some individuals, especially women.

A multiple perspectives approach provided a theoretical framework for assessing the environment. Specifically, the perceptual model, the human aggregate approach, and the campus ecology perspective helped describe and analyze the coeducational floor and the students who lived there.

### Methods

Twenty-one men and nineteen women living on Teter-Thompson-Four during the Fall 1992 semester participated in the study. At the time, Teter-Thompson-Four was the only coeducational unit in Teter Quadrangle. While the majority of residents in Teter Quadrangle were first-year students, all students on the coeducational floor were required to be upper-class undergraduates. Most students who lived on the floor requested the coeducational environment. The floor was coeducational by room, with men and women from varying academic majors living next door to each other in alternating rooms. The average age was 19.8 years.

The Housing Director, Director of Residence Life, and the Residence Life Coordinator of Teter Quadrangle participated in interview sessions to gather information about the goals and objectives for the coeducational floor. An interview was also conducted with the Resident Assistant (RA) to obtain her observations as both a staff member and a member of the floor.

Participation in the study was voluntary. A floor meeting was held in early October enabling students to meet the research team and learn about the purpose and logistics of the study. All 40 students on the floor agreed to participate and said they felt comfortable having their behaviors observed throughout the semester. In late October, 31 students (77% of the floor) signed consent forms and completed a written questionnaire. Twenty students (50%) participated in a group interview session in early November.

Weekly observations were conducted in two-hour time spans throughout October and November. The researchers focused on the social interaction between floor members, the dominant behaviors of the students, and the sense of community on the floor.

Items generated for the written questionnaire were based on the aforementioned literature review, two of the authors' prior experiences as residents of coeducational floors, and the interviews conducted with the Director of Residence Life, the Residence Life Coordinator, and the Housing Director of Teter Quadrangle. Participants responded to 30 items and an open-ended question: "The most important reason I chose to live on the co-ed floor is...."

To assess the possible relationship between the students' individual personality types and their perceptions of the coeducational environment and its effects on their development, a modified form of the 1985 Holland Self-Directed Search was administered as part of the written questionnaire. This inventory offers insight into personality type.

The data from the written questionnaires was analyzed by tallying the most frequent responses by the men and the women separately. Answers to questions were then grouped into one of six areas: (a) interpersonal relations and social life, (b) programming, (c) gender issues, (d) academics, (e) maintenance, and (f) safety issues. These six areas corresponded with the goals and objectives of the Department of Residence Life and Halls of Residence. Items most frequently eliciting responses of "agree" or "strongly agree" were considered a match with the departments' goals. Items prompting the most frequent response of "undecided" were addressed during the group interview session for clarification. Items with responses of "disagree" or "strongly disagree" were not considered a match.

Content areas included perceptions of (a) interpersonal relations and social life, (b) satisfaction with programs or activities designed to meet the needs of the floor, (c) gender issues, (d) academic performance and achievement, (e) concern and care for the physical environment of the floor, and (f) safety and security of the residents. Response choices to such items were presented on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1).

The group interview was conducted in an open forum session between the four researchers and the students. Since some interview questions involved the enforcement of policies, and the researchers believed that an RA's presence

might influence their responses, the resident assistant did not participate in this meeting.

Obvious limitations to this study should be noted. The researchers were given a three-month time period to complete the entire study, therefore limiting the number of interviews and observations that could be conducted. In addition, the team did not have adequate time to include an assessment of all four coeducational units at Indiana University.

### Results

#### Holland Self-Directed Search

The Holland Self-Directed Search describes personality profiles in terms of the types of activities people enjoy. The six profiles are Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C). When ranking categories, participants often indicated a "tie" among their top choices. For some, this resulted in skewed percentages (over 100%).

Realistic activities, which include mechanical and technical tasks, were the top choice for 3%, within the top two choices for 10%, and in the top three choices for 29% of the participants. Investigative activities, which include doing research and solving math problems, were considered the most enjoyable for 6%, within the top two choices for 13%, and in the top three choices for 26% of the participants. Artistic activities, which include drama and painting, were the favorite of 13%, within the top two choices for 45%, and within the top three choices for 68% of the participants. Social activities, which include helping others, were the top choice for 71%, in the top two for 93%, and in the top three choices for 97% of the participants. Enterprising activities, which include giving talks and supervising others, were rated most enjoyable by 42%, in the top two choices of 58%, and in the top three choices of 81% of the participants. Conventional activities, which include bookkeeping and filing reports, were the top choice of 6%, in the top two choices for 13%, and within the top three choices for 23% of the participants. There were no significant differences in rankings between men and women. The dominant Holland personality type of the participants was Social, Enterprising, and Artistic (SEA).

#### Teter-Thompson-Four Quality of Floor Life Survey (TTFOFLS)

The responses to the TTFOFLS were analyzed by determining the most frequent response to each question by men, women, and the total population.

**Social Life.** Men and women strongly agree that the coeducational floor was a "friendly and supportive place to live," and either agreed or strongly agreed that it was a "very close community" and a place "where I have made many friends of the opposite sex." Overall, both agreed they spent most of their social time on the floor. Men disagreed that it was where most of their friends live, while women were undecided.

The participants were very satisfied with the social life on the floor, thus matching the Department of Residence Life's goals for social interaction. This was evident in the amount of noise that could be heard on the floor during the observations, the number of residents' doors open during the day, the number of

activities occurring, and the students' comments during the interviews. For example, one resident stated, "This is the most social floor that I have ever lived on." The level of activity on the floor varied little between weekdays and weekends. Men did not feel like most of their friends lived on the floor, while most of the women did. While the researchers were unable to conclude why this occurred, they noticed that it did not damage the overall social aspect of the floor.

The interactions of residents from opposite ends of the hall were another indicator of the floor's social nature. Traditionally, the restrooms form a barrier to communication and interaction by separating one side of the floor from the other. The observations showed that there was no such "bathroom barrier" on Teter-Thompson-Four. Many residents developed relationships at both ends of the floor.

It was unclear if the strong social aspect of the floor was due to the student composition or the fact that they had bonded together as a result of being isolated from the rest of Teter Quadrangle. They could not find another floor to pair with them at Homecoming and were joked about by residents who lived on other floors. Another factor that may have brought the residents together in a social manner was a resident who lived on another floor but spent most of his time on Teter-Thompson-Four. He constantly moved from room to room talking with residents. This behavior often encouraged others to join the conversation.

**Programming.** According to participants' responses, the coeducational floor did not meet the programming goals of the Department of Residence Life. Men and women disagreed that they have attended Teter-Thompson-Four sponsored activities or programs, and were undecided about whether the floor had "an active floor government." Men were undecided about whether Teter-Thompson-Four was "currently planning activities they would be interested in attending." Finally, although men and women disagreed about their level of involvement in planning educational programs, both agreed that residents were involved in planning social activities for the floor.

The results showed that very little planned programming occurred on the floor. The residents believed that there were lots of social activities, but not many educational programs. It was not known whether this was influenced by the residents (all upperclass students who felt that they did not need planned programming), or due to an influence of the coeducational environment. Whatever the case, the results showed that more programming needs to be done to meet the departmental goals.

**Gender Issues.** Women strongly agreed that living on Teter-Thompson-Four helped them feel more comfortable around men. Men, however, were undecided about feeling more comfortable around women. Both men and women agreed that the coeducational floor had helped them learn more about the opinions of the opposite sex, and that gender issues were discussed on Teter-Thompson-Four. Men were undecided as to how a coeducational floor had influenced their attitudes about dating, and disagreed that their dating behaviors were influenced. Women, however, agreed that living on Teter-Thompson-Four influenced both their attitudes and behaviors about dating.

Research results showed a strong match in the area of gender issues. While there were not departmental goals for the floor in this area, the researchers had several assumptions prior to the assessment. It was thought that the students would learn more about the opposite gender and as a result, feel more comfortable in relationships with them. The survey results and researchers' observations confirmed this to be true. Men and women were frequently found in the halls or each other's rooms talking about different issues. One student noted, "I think freshman guys have a lot of preconceived ideas about women that I think some women on our floor could really help change." One observation, however, was that during meal times, men generally ate with men and women ate with women. Occasionally, there would be a mixed group, but during most of the scheduled meal time observations, there was little interaction. Men often gathered to play video games before meals and then went to the dining hall together.

**Academics.** Men and women agreed that Teter-Thompson-Four was a "supportive environment for studying" and "open to forming study groups." Overall, both men and women disagreed that the coeducational floor adhered to the quiet hours policy, though the men were more likely to feel that the rule was followed. Likewise, men were unsure whether the floor was "competitive when it comes to grades," while the women most frequently disagreed with the statement.

The results showed that the floor matched the goals of the department. Recognizing the importance of grades, the students cooperated with each other when others needed the floor to be quiet for studying and fostered a non-competitive attitude that allowed them to form study groups and help each other. One area not directly related to academics but affecting residents nonetheless was quiet hours. In this area, the results showed that there was not a match between the behavior and the goals. Quiet hours were not thought to be enforced by most of the floor, except by the men who were responsible for the noise. This issue of noise could have posed a problem with academics, but the students seemed to cope with it.

**Maintenance.** Men and women agreed that Teter-Thompson-Four was "clean," "kept neat by residents," "has a comfortable lounge," "has few damages caused by residents," and was "an attractive living environment." This was also seen in observations of people keeping the bathrooms and lounge clean. According to the Housing Manager, the other four floors in Teter-Thompson had assessed a total of \$2000 in damages during the fall semester, but the coeducational floor had not been responsible for any (C. Gruber, personal communication, November 18, 1992). The students seemed to have a positive effect on each other in the area of damages and damage control. These results reveal a strong match in the area of maintenance.

**Safety.** Men and women both felt that Teter-Thompson-Four was a safe environment, and that they looked out for each other's personal safety; however, both disagreed, (men strongly), that the escort policy was enforced, and were undecided or disagreed that they confronted strangers on their floor. Men were more compelled to lock their room doors when leaving the floor, while women were undecided on the issue. The coeducational floor met the goals of the

Department of Residence Life concerning the development of a safe environment, but did not meet the goals of enforcing an escort policy.

In the area of safety, the results showed a less significant match than in other areas. The sense of security was reflected by the number of open and unlocked doors observed on the floor. When asked why they felt the environment was safe, one of the women responded, "...We have guys around that we trust." The results showed that safety was equally important to both genders.

### Implications and Recommendations

Overall the goals of the Department of Residence Life for the coeducational living unit were met and residents were satisfied with the environment and, in particular, social life, gender issues, academics, maintenance, and safety. Programming goals, however, were not met on Teter-Thompson-Four. There were no significant differences in overall satisfaction with the floor based on personality type, gender, or age.

In order to continue to meet the goals and improve the quality of life on coeducational floors, the following recommendations should be considered.

1. The results of our study indicate that the students were largely satisfied with the coeducational living environment in Teter Quadrangle. Increasing the number of coeducational units in Teter Quadrangle, as well as in other residence centers, would help eliminate some of the feelings of "being set apart."
2. The Department of Residence Life should be proactive in the establishment and maintenance of coeducational living units. Specifically, time should be given to establishing goals, training staff, and planning educational interventions on the floor.
3. More training with staff members, especially the resident assistant, could be conducted so that they can better address issues such as gender in the unit.
4. The escort policy needs to be examined to determine how it should be implemented and enforced on a coeducational unit.
5. The Department of Residence Life should not rely on the coeducational setting to facilitate growth and development by itself. The Department should provide educational interventions for residents before and after they move onto the floor.
6. An assessment and evaluation of the types of students and their motivations for living on a coeducational unit could be done so that a better match between the environment and the individual can be made.

### Conclusion

Research results reflected the need for further research on college coeducational living environments in order to best implement the coeducational floors at Indiana University. This research should be designed to find better ways to prepare the residents, the RA, and other members of the building for life

on a coeducational unit. The results showed that the environment was having a positive effect on the residents, but could be improved, especially in the area of planned programming. Overall, the residents of the floor had a very positive effect on each other and, as a result, most all of the goals of the Department of Residence Life and Halls of Residence were successfully realized.

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## Student Affairs: A Conscience for the Campus

Caryl K. Smith

\*CONSCIENCE (noun) 1a: the sense or consciousness of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or be good b: a faculty, power, or principle enjoining good acts c: the part of the superego in psychoanalysis that transmits commands and admonitions to the ego 2: conformity to the dictates of the conscience 3: sensitive regard for fairness or justice.

\*selected definitions from Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (p. 238). Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam Company, 1980.

Student Affairs is an integral element of the administrative structure of colleges and universities across the United States. Student Affairs professionals make a daily difference in the campus environment and student life by providing the services and educationally enriching programs that help students succeed. Since the early days of our profession, great emphasis has been placed upon the total development of our students' minds, bodies, and characters through systematic intervention (Young, 1993). We believe that students should assume full responsibility for their actions and decisions, and we know that they require adequate information and resources to develop fully both in and out of the classroom.

As Student Affairs staff, we must also respect the faculty, administrators, and students with whom we work (Kuh & Schuh, 1991). Our role in educating the campus should capitalize on all of our skills as leaders and teachers as we work to facilitate a healthy environment for the entire campus. But the role of Student Affairs professionals should be much more than that; we must be willing to assume the role of "conscience" to the campus. Such a conscience is needed to maintain a sense of what is right while monitoring campus commitment to fairness in the administration of college activities--both curricular and extracurricular.

It is our responsibility, as part of the "superego" of higher education, to figuratively sit on the shoulders of our campuses. In so doing we can educate students, faculty, staff, and other constituencies vital to our schools about the importance of integrity and ethics--and that values are intrinsic in the daily operations of an institution.

Student Affairs professionals can serve as a conscience by utilizing a series of reminders that reflect the nature and values of Student Affairs work.

1. Remind the campus community that students are in college to learn and develop personally as well as academically. Student Affairs professionals believe that each student is unique and that each person has worth and dignity.

We want the entire campus to accept these principles as the basis for our existence (NASPA, 1987).

2. Remind students that they will gain the most from the college experience if they are truly involved in the entire educational process, both in and out of the classroom. At work and at play, students must take responsibility for their own decisions and actions while they take risks and learn new skills. The amount of student learning and personal development achieved is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement (Astin, 1993).

3. Remind the campus community about the importance of cultural diversity in a campus environment. At the same time, a diverse, pluralistic college needs to be carefully managed in order to function well and to succeed (Kuh & Schuh, 1991). Students learn and benefit from interaction with others who have different ethnic, cultural, or religious backgrounds.

4. Remind faculty that they are role models in all that they do and say. How a student is treated in the classroom, in advising conferences, and in informal campus settings all influence how the student feels about a course, a department, and the institution as a whole.

5. Remind students that all of their college experiences are in the "real world." Contrary to the popular saying "what I'll do when I get out into the real world," all that occurs while in college is indeed "real." Students should be encouraged to take their higher education opportunities very seriously.

6. Remind the campus community that integrity and ethics are significant issues, and that expectations for behavior should be clearly stated. If inappropriate behavior occurs, all members of the campus community are obligated to handle the follow-up processes fairly and consistently.

7. Remind the campus community that health concerns are important, and that health and wellness education starts with awareness of current issues and guidelines for healthy lifestyles. Student recreational activities, for instance, provide opportunities to build teamwork and self-confidence, and to relieve the stresses experienced in an academic setting.

8. Remind campus planning units that while they are dealing with increasingly stringent financial times, they need to maintain quality resources, programs and services for students and the campus environment. The challenge lies in being fiscally prudent.

9. Remind the campus decision makers that all decisions, whether they involve a new faculty member, a building renovation project, an academic program that might be discontinued, or additions to the current fee structure, impact students.

Once we have assumed our role as conscience to the campus, we must strive to resolve problems and issues as they arise. Only through complete involvement and commitment can we succeed at what we seek--a campus environment where students can achieve their personal and academic goals. We must volunteer for the committees, boards, and task forces that do much of the background work of any institution. We need to conduct ourselves in a genuinely collegial manner with our co-workers from academic affairs, the

physical plant operations, the development office, the finance and administrative division, and the President's office.

Student Affairs professionals should work with these and other campus constituents to develop campus policies and procedures. By forming alliances, developing coalitions, building networks, role modeling, developing intentional collegial contacts across the campus, and participating in campus and community events, our voices can be heard.

1. Form alliances. Alliances are formed when parties interested in a particular topic come together to work toward a solution. Student Affairs is a partner on the campus team, and we can facilitate the development of alliances that transcend departmental and divisional boundaries.

2. Develop coalitions. Coalitions of existing interest groups or organizations may seek solutions to a common problem or issue by utilizing their shared resources.

3. Build networks. Networks involve individuals with similar interests or characteristics who are supportive of one another and pool their information and skills.

4. Support role models. An individual who has achieved the goal toward which a student is striving is an important role model. Becoming acquainted with one's role models can provide a vital support system within the institutional setting.

5. Develop intentional contacts. Faculty and staff often do not fully understand the nature of student personnel work. At the same time, as Student Affairs professionals, we may not understand the multiple expectations placed upon faculty, such as teaching, research, and service. Student Affairs staff should identify opportunities that encourage faculty involvement with selected aspects of our work. Faculty can serve on advisory boards to Student Affairs programs, work on student recognition programs, or co-present programs in living groups.

6. Participate in campus and community events. Each campus and community has a wealth of events taking place on a daily basis. Student Affairs workers have countless opportunities to participate in activities not directly related to our positions: attending a basketball game, playing in the community orchestra, or working with a service organization. By remaining involved we help others in our communities to know us and our personal talents and interests better. We also allow ourselves to learn more about our communities.

A Student Affairs professional's work is never done. Our plates are always full. There's always the next student to see, the next meeting to attend, and the next report to complete. But we have an obligation to be leaders in our higher education communities and to remind the campus that students are the people we serve. It is our role and our obligation to be a conscience for the campus in these ways and in these times.

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