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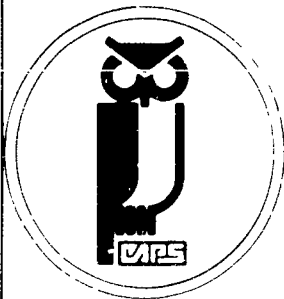
ABSTRACT

This information analysis presents descriptions of some of the major current issues in student services at various types of institutions of higher education. Issues are categorized as institution-based, student-oriented, and profession-based. Institution-based issues examined include excellence and access, enrollment management, academic support services, student financial assistance, learning and physical disabilities, legal and liability concerns, substance abuse education, child care, counseling and career development, health concerns, residential life and student activities, and recreation and athletics. Student-oriented issues discussed include stress in the academic environment, the emphasis placed on job preparation, special needs of minority students, part-time students and adult learners, and student attitudes and values. Profession-based issues are considered in the areas of professional preparation of student services personnel, staff development, and accreditation. Following each issue is a set of questions that may contribute to further consideration of the issue by readers. A section on future trends provides a brief summary of matters that student services professionals may anticipate in the next few years. References are included. (NB)

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STUDENT AFFAIRS:

ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND TRENDS

Arthur Sandeen

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by
Arthur Sandeen

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Introduction

Student services now represent one of the major administrative components of colleges and universities. Most of the traditional programs remain, such as personal counseling, student activities, and campus discipline, but many additional responsibilities have been assigned to student services administrators in recent years. It is now quite common for the student services division to include enrollment management, intercollegiate athletics, campus recreation, student housing, academic support services, campus transportation systems, health services, financial aid, child care programs, and campus security. A marked increase has occurred in the emphasis on fiscal management, and many student services administrators are engaged in revenue producing activities on their campuses to support their various programs.

With the broader scope of activities within student services, large numbers of well-trained specialists have entered the field. With so much diversity, no single educational point of view about student services can be accurately applied to all colleges and universities. While some may seek to impose an orthodoxy on the student affairs field, most recognize the impossibility of doing so. The emphasis in a student services program is primarily a reflection of the goals and purposes of the institution of which it is a part.

The increased responsibilities of student services divisions have made their programs more visible on and off the campus, and in a consumer driven period, have made them subject to more scrutiny than ever before. Student services programs are still largely supportive in nature, but they are not often tucked away in a corner of the campus. Many of the functions now assumed by student services staff place them and their work in the main arena of their institutions. This is especially true in the growing number of colleges and universities where effective programs in admissions, retention, and financial aid are critical to the survival of the institution.

As student services programs have grown, professional activities in support of the various specialties in the field have expanded. Professional associations representative of student services areas, from orientation and financial aid to academic support services and placement, have sponsored dozens of conferences, seminars, publications, and other activities. The student services field is still relatively young, dating its origins to the beginning of this century. The first major publication that attempted to define the nature of student services for the higher education community appeared in 1937, when the American Council on Education called a group of educators together in Washington, DC. Their

report, "The Student Personnel Point of View," (ACE, 1937) became the landmark document in the field and helped to guide the development of student services programs for many years. It stressed the education of the "whole student" and urged institutions to coordinate the delivery of services for the benefit of students. On the fiftieth anniversary of this important document, the American Council on Education and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators invited a group of educators to write a new statement for the field. Reflecting the current diversity and extensive development of the field, the new report is entitled, "A Perspective on Student Affairs" (NASPA, 1987). It emphasizes student services' strong link with the host institution, the assumptions and beliefs that serve as a foundation for student services professionals, and relationships with other academic, financial, and development leaders within the institution. The new statement recognizes and celebrates the diversity of approaches to the delivery of student services programs.

In this paper, descriptions of some of the major current issues in student services are presented. Some generalizations are necessary, due to the many different types of institutions (two year, four year residential, four year urban-commuter, multiversity, etc.) and the different approaches that various colleges and universities may take to the field (for example, administrative, developmental, or counseling). Issues are categorized as institution-based, student-oriented, and profession-based. Questions are also presented that may contribute to further consideration of the issues by the reader.

Institution-Based Issues

Excellence and Access

Reflecting the same broad concerns that led to the publication of the major reform reports of the past four years (Boyer, 1987; NIE, 1984), the debate about excellence and access has pervaded the work of student services professionals. The educational and social objectives of the institution play a major role in its decision to use its resources for academically gifted students, or for the purpose of increasing access to a wider spectrum of students. Student services professionals, especially those in admissions and financial aid, have often been caught between competing interests on this critical issue. Faculty, parents, governing boards, alumni, legislators, and major donors have entered this debate, and often it is the task of the student services professional to mediate among these groups while at the same time administering the institutional program. A few institutions have the luxury

of plentiful financial resources and an abundance of highly talented applicants; they are the envy of most, but nevertheless are embroiled themselves in internal debates about the excellence and access issue. The great majority of colleges and universities are not very selective in their admissions policies, but yet the issue of "what students should be sought" is a controversial one. Colleges may want to place most of their resources on the recruitment of minorities to improve their commitment to access, yet they may be facing financial pressures to meet an enrollment target that may conflict with this goal. At the same time, the faculty may be pressing for available resources to be allocated to academically gifted students. The student services professional is expected to resolve this issue, and to conduct a program that meets the college's objectives.

The major questions facing student services professionals on the excellence and access issue are:

1. How should the college's policy be developed and who should participate in the consideration of that policy?
2. What resources are available for the implementation of the policy, and who will be responsible for them?
3. How will the results of the policy be evaluated, and who will be responsible for this evaluation?

Enrollment Management

As pressures have mounted on institutions to select the type of students considered desirable, or necessary for financial survival, the emphasis upon "enrollment management" has become very evident (Hossler, 1984). This has often resulted in a new department, usually consisting of admissions, recruitment, financial aid, orientation, and retention, under overall direction of the student services division. Its mission is to deliver the correct number and type of new students the institution has decided it wants, and then to establish programs and policies that will retain these students. The emphasis is clear on producing the targeted numbers, and in their efforts to reach these goals, student services professionals are likely to find faculty, alumni, and other administrative practices and traditions that may not be supportive of these goals. Effective experience in human relations and decision making are necessary for student services staff working in enrollment management. It is also the responsibility of student services professionals in this area to develop policies and implement them in ways that do not compromise the ethical

standards of the institution. When institutional survival may be at stake, the temptation to make exaggerated claims to prospective students may be strong. Academic standards and other institutional policies may be relaxed to retain students in similar situations. Student services administrators may be faced with pressures from various groups on these matters, and may have found the standards of good practice suggested by the Carnegie Council (1979) to be very helpful.

Questions that student services professionals face regarding enrollment management are:

1. How should the goals of the enrollment management effort be communicated to faculty, staff, alumni, and the governing board?
2. How much authority should student services professionals working in enrollment management have to change institutional policies and practices?
3. Who will establish the academic and other criteria by which students will be recruited and retained?

Academic Support Services

As institutions have expanded access, as diversity has increased, and as retention has become a priority, academic support services have grown rapidly. Many students enter colleges and universities with underdeveloped academic skills, especially in reading and mathematics. In order for these students to compete successfully with more adequately prepared students, colleges and universities have established extensive academic support services for them. Often these services are organized into a "learning center" to achieve a coordinated approach for students seeking assistance. Testing, academic advising, counseling, and academic skill development are usually the components of such a center, and it is frequently the responsibility of the student services division. Staff who work in these centers interact frequently with academic departments, and other student services professionals in such areas as admissions, counseling centers, and residence halls.

Student services administrators responsible for academic support programs may find some organizational overlap with other campus offices, and differences of opinion about how much policy independence these offices should have. By their very existence, these programs imply special support and consideration for the students served. Faculty and staff who desire uniform policies that apply to all students are likely to challenge these programs. Student services staff responsible for academic support services also need to be

sensitive to the ways in which these programs are viewed by the student body in general. Seeking the support and participation of established student organizations can contribute in positive ways to the willingness of individual students to use these services. If there is a negative stigma attached to the academic support program, the student services administrator faces a difficult obstacle to overcome.

Academic support services require significant financial resources in personnel, educational materials, and equipment. Student services staff responsible for their operation will often find themselves in budgetary debates where the needs of this program must compete with other institutional needs. Such debates are often complicated by the lack of agreement among higher education leaders as to the criteria for measuring the success of academic student services.

Student services professionals responsible for academic support services are likely to be concerned about these questions:

1. How extensive should the financial resources be that are dedicated to this function?
2. Who should decide if the service is serving the institution's goals, and what criteria should be used for this decision?
3. How much flexibility can the institution tolerate in the application of its academic policies and procedures?

Student Financial Assistance

In the past twenty years, no other student services function has grown more in size or importance than student aid. Once only an ancillary service that issued a few scholarships to needy or talented students, student aid now affects millions of students, and is the most frequently debated higher education issue in the Congress each year. Student aid is probably more critical to the survival and success of colleges and universities than any other student services function (Fenske & Huff, 1983). On many campuses, more than fifty percent of the students are recipients of aid, and the way the various programs are administered affects the size, quality, and composition of the student body. It may also have an impact on the quality of student life and the academic majors students choose while at the institution.

Since student financial aid is so critical to the institution, there are many pressures on student services administrators regarding the conduct of the programs. On large university

campuses, the individual colleges and the graduate school may want to control their own student aid policies and programs. On many campuses, student services leaders have found it possible to establish student aid policy committees which provide an opportunity for the many groups who have a stake in these programs to participate in the decision making process. As state and federal reporting requirements have increased in aid programs, the demand for accountability on the part of student services professionals has become very high. This has resulted in needs for additional personnel and computer resources for all colleges and universities, and student services staff responsible for aid programs have had to become strong advocates for additional institutional resources. As the costs of higher education continue to increase, concern and anxiety on the part of families also have increased. Thus, it has been necessary for student services professionals to develop information programs for parents of students. It is also beneficial for colleges and universities to establish good working relationships with the high school and community college counselors regarding student aid programs. Prospective students and their parents are demanding more information and services about student aid.

The overall purpose of the state and federal effort in financial aid programs is to improve access. In the past ten years, loans have become the dominant portion of aid packages, and there is widespread concern that heavy loan dependency is a negative incentive to attend colleges (Hansen, 1986). Students burdened with significant loans at a young age may change their academic majors and career choices because of anxiety about further debt. Student services professionals responsible for aid programs may find it necessary to seek additional financial resources from within their institutions to decrease student dependency on loans. This has become an important and difficult issue for colleges and universities in the administration of their student aid programs.

The following questions are among those faced by student services professionals on the issue of student financial assistance:

1. Who should participate in the establishment of the institutional policy on student aid?
2. What portion of institutional financial resources could be dedicated to student aid and how will this decision be reached?
3. What criteria will be established by the institution in the evaluation of the student aid program?

Learning and Physical Disabilities

Most colleges and universities have made considerable efforts in the past fifteen years to make their physical facilities, academic programs, and extracurricular activities more accessible (Sprandel & Schmidt, 1983). Much of the initial work was structurally corrective in nature, but now much of the emphasis has shifted to helping students with learning problems to overcome their limitations. Student services professionals are often charged with the institutional responsibility of implementing these programs. Despite the establishment of state and federal laws insuring the rights of persons with disabilities, it is still not uncommon to encounter some resistance on campuses to necessary changes. Student services staff in this area are usually strong advocates for additional resources, equipment, personnel, and facilities. These services (such as interpreters, readers, and computers) are not inexpensive, and compete with other institutional needs for support. Students with various types of learning disabilities often test the flexibility of institutional academic policies and practices. Student services staff responsible for these services frequently interact with faculty and other academic policy makers, seeking accommodation for the students affected.

Student services professionals responsible for learning and physical disability programs are likely to receive a wide diversity of opinions about how they are to be conducted. As a result, it has often been advisable to establish a policy council consisting of representatives of the major constituents on the campus. This mechanism can serve as an effective forum for the discussion of policy, and can also enhance the visibility of the programs.

Issues faced by student services professionals responsible for learning and physical disability programs are represented by the following questions:

1. How will institutional policy be established, and how flexible will academic regulations be in assisting students with special needs?
2. To what extent will institutional resources be available for the programs?
3. What criteria will be used in the evaluation of program effectiveness?

Legal and Liability Concerns

The national trend toward increased litigation has clearly not excluded higher education. Many colleges and universities now have extensive legal staffs to protect their interests, advise their officers, and respond to complaints and suits. Many of the

institutional activities assigned to student services have been subjected to increased litigation (Barr, 1983; Kaplin, 1985). Most of the court cases involving college students during the period 1961-1975 focused on student rights in disciplinary hearings and on students' freedom of expression. In the past ten years, there has been a shift to cases where the liability of institutions has been tested as a result of various injuries to students. Institutions may no longer legally serve in an "in loco parentis" relationship to their students, but it is evident that the courts are expecting institutions to assume considerable responsibility to protect students from injury.

Student services professionals in recent years have necessarily become more familiar with the growing legal literature in higher education, and must work closely with college attorneys in the development of procedures and policies affecting students. Higher education institutions have become increasingly liable for problems occurring in student alcohol abuse, recreation and activity programs, student health services, counseling and campus security. As a result, student services staff have found it advisable to develop detailed procedures that these services are required to follow before programs are conducted. Certain kinds of activities, where the likelihood of student injury is very high (such as recreational cave diving), or the likelihood that serious behavioral problems may occur (such as a fraternity party with fifty kegs of beer) have simply been prohibited by institutions.

Student services professionals have always encouraged students and student organizations to plan activities and assume responsibility for their actions. This is considered an important educational function. With the increased liability that institutions may now face, student services staff are finding it necessary to supervise and control more of these activities than in previous years. This protection for institutions may result in decreased responsibilities being assumed by students. While student services professionals need not be attorneys, they should be effective risk management administrators (Owens, 1984).

Questions faced by student services staff regarding the issues of legal liability concerns include the following:

1. Who should have responsibility for deciding what risks are tolerable?
2. To what extent should the institution officially affiliate with student organizations?
3. What personal liability may faculty and student services staff have as a function of their role as advisors to student organizations?

Substance Abuse Education

Responding to substance abuse problems presented by students, many colleges and universities have developed extensive education programs, geared primarily to prevention. This has been especially true with alcohol abuse education, as most institutions report that alcohol continues to be the most abused drug by a wide margin. Student services professionals are frequently caught in the middle on this issue, as they are expected to conduct effective education and prevention programs on the one hand, and on the other, to administer disciplinary sanctions against offenders of the law and campus policies.

Substance abuse education programs are usually the result of joint efforts among students, faculty, health officers, law enforcement personnel, and community service providers (Goodale, 1986). In many colleges and universities, it is the student services administrator who initiates, coordinates, and implements this effort. It is important to understand the priorities of the institution's president and governing board regarding the approach to substance abuse education. The programs and policies, of course, should reflect the educational and social purposes of the institution.

The student services administrator responsible for substance abuse education necessarily spends considerable time with campus student organizations in order to gain acceptability and credibility for the program. Some of the most effective programs have made extensive use of student peer counselors and advisors. These programs also offer many opportunities for student services professionals to work with academic departments to include substance abuse education in the curriculum.

An important component of a substance abuse education program is treatment and counseling. Student services administrators work closely with health centers to develop programs and policies that are supportive of these efforts. Confidentiality for students using these services is essential. Finally, the student health insurance program, often the responsibility of the student services staff to administer, can be written to include coverage for substance abuse treatment.

Issues faced by student services professionals in the area of substance abuse education include the following:

1. Who should determine institutional policy regarding substance abuse?
2. What should be the appropriate balance between education and law enforcement?
3. How extensive should the institution's treatment programs be?

Child Care

Student services professionals have always attempted to respond to changing student needs. There are many students who would be unable to attend colleges and universities unless child care services are available to them. Student services staff have often been the initiators of these programs and are usually administratively responsible for them.

Child care programs are expensive, require substantial personnel and facilities resources, and may subject the institution to extensive liability (Seaver, 1986). They are also an effective tool for affirmative action and may be viewed by many students as the most essential student service the college offers. Student services staff responsible for child care programs often have found it beneficial to establish policy boards that are broadly representative of the campus. Usually included are parents of center children, attorneys, faculty members from child development departments, accountants and students.

Student services professionals who have been advocates for child care programs have often encountered resistance among other institutional administrators, governing board members, and private child care providers from the local community. An ability to deal effectively with these groups is essential for any success to be realized.

Child care programs provide an excellent opportunity for student services staff to invite academic departments into full participation with the center. Educational research internships and practice teaching are among the academic support activities that are made possible by campus child care programs. Efforts can also be made to use the center as a focus for seminars on parenting and family issues.

Issues that student services administrators face regarding child care programs include the following:

1. How should such programs be funded?
2. What should be the link between the actual delivery of child care services and the institution's teaching and research programs?
3. What criteria should the institution use to evaluate the effectiveness of its child care program?

Counseling and Career Development

Other than the administration of campus discipline programs, perhaps the activity most traditionally associated with student services has been counseling and career development. Once seen as primarily preventative or corrective in nature, counseling and

career development has become a highly specialized developmental program with extensive links to academic departments, community service providers, government agencies, and corporations. Included are extensive assessment services, employee assistance programs, group counseling on a wide variety of personal needs, and computer assisted career planning techniques. Moreover, the services are often expected to provide campus leadership for student stress reduction programs, and the handling of students' personal emergencies.

The student services administrator responsible for the counseling and career development program is likely to find a wide and sometimes conflicting array of expectations from user groups. Some faculty may assume that the counseling and career center will primarily serve as referral agents for students in their classes who need advice about their future careers. Students may view the center as the one place on campus where they can receive help for their personal problems; corporations may see the center's role as providing them with well trained future employees; and the psychology department or the health center may see the center as a training clinic for their graduate students. While a variety of constituent groups can be served, the counseling and career development program needs thoughtful direction by student services administrators in order to define its priorities. Otherwise, it may become overly dispersed, and thus ineffective as a critical campus resource.

It is likely that student services administrators will be challenged about the funding resources for counseling and career development programs. Many institutions are seeking alternative ways to support various services, and such sources as user fees and corporate contributions are now being weighed carefully by student services staff.

Confidentiality for the counseling and career development program has always been a high priority, and those responsible for this service must insure this to students, faculty, community and corporate users if success is to be achieved. Student services administrators often become the chief institutional advocates for this essential confidentiality, and their ability to articulate its policies and procedures, especially at times of crisis, is very important. Finally, attention is increasingly being given to liability protection for the counseling staff itself. Student services administrators will find it beneficial to consult with attorneys, professional associations and others in developing institutional policy in this complicated area of potential liability.

Issues faced by student services professionals in the counseling and career development area include the following:

1. How extensive should the services provided by the institution be, and who should decide this matter?
2. How should these services be funded?
3. What criteria should be used to evaluate these services?

Health Concerns

The public's increased attention to health issues has been reflected on college campuses with more extensive services for students. Interest in physical fitness, concern over weight control, attention to sexual assault and abuse, concern about eating disorders, and fear of AIDS have all contributed to this situation (Keeling, 1986). As a result, the health services delivery system on college campuses has gained high visibility and is often the subject of considerable debate and discussion.

Student services professionals are usually assigned administrative responsibility for student health centers, and often find themselves as advocates for new services or change policies in this area. Many of these services are expensive, and the manner in which the health center is funded usually generates considerable controversy. Since health services touch the lives of so many students on sensitive subjects (for example, rape and AIDS), policies and practices are very likely to be viewed differently by various internal and external groups at the institution. The student services administrator may find it necessary to mediate and negotiate among these groups in order to maintain and enhance the health service program.

Coordination among various campus departments, such as counseling, residence halls, and security, is essential to the delivery of effective health services. Participation by key student organizations is also critical to gain acceptance and credibility for various programs. Often student services administrators find that a broad-based policy board is effective in accomplishing these goals.

Issues of concern to student services administrators in the area of health include the following:

1. Who should determine institutional policy for student health services?
2. How should the various health programs be funded?
3. What criteria should be used to evaluate student health services?

Residential Life and Student Activities

With the increased numbers of nontraditional students, a smaller percentage of the college population is living in institution-owned or controlled residences. Many student services programs have depended upon a full-time residence hall-based student body, and thus the presence of older, part-time commuting students has required considerable adjustment. It is much easier to communicate with a homogeneous student body housed in on-campus facilities, and services such as counseling, career advisement, and financial aid are often brought into the residence halls to assist students. Student services administrators have had to be creative in their efforts to deliver their programs to the "new" students, who may not spend more than three hours on the campus in any given day (Chickering, 1974).

For many colleges and universities, however, the residential program remains a key component of the total educational effort. Student services professionals understand the positive contribution residential life and campus activities can make to the overall climate for learning, as well as to student recruitment and retention. Several institutions are constructing new facilities, or are redesigning existing residence halls to link the student experience there more closely with classroom activity.

While there may be a desire on the part of the institution to build more student residences, high costs often make this very difficult. This is an issue for student services administrators, as they are usually charged with the responsibility of finding the resources while at the same time dealing with the increased requests for on-campus housing from students and their parents.

With residence halls and student activities comes much more frequent contact with students, a lively campus life, and inevitable conduct problems and conflicts. Opportunities to make a positive impact on the attitudes and values of students are clearly increased. Student services administrators working on such campuses have found it necessary for many years to develop extensive student judicial systems to handle violations of rules and to settle differences among conflicting groups.

Student services professionals face the following issues in the area of residential life and student activities:

1. To what extent does the institution as a whole support the goals and purposes of these programs?
2. Who should assume responsibility for the voluntary activities of student groups?
3. How should the institution pay for these services?

Recreation and Athletics

In terms of participation, the most popular out of class activity for students is campus recreation. There has been a considerable expansion of these programs at colleges and universities as interest in health and fitness has grown. A broad array of opportunities for students and faculty are now available. It is usually the responsibility of student services to administer these programs, which may range from aerobics and camping to club sports and foreign tours.

Recreation programs offer excellent opportunities for students to meet each other, learn new skills, develop positive health habits, and interact with faculty in informal settings (Kleindienst, 1978). They can also be relatively expensive, especially in climates that demand indoor facilities. One of the most difficult issues for student services administrators responsible for campus recreation is how to fund these programs. Facilities, operating costs, equipment and personnel are needed, and of course, this popular program competes with other institutional services for available resources.

With so many students and faculty interested in campus recreation (on some campuses, 90 percent of the students participate), conflicts inevitably arise about priority for facility use, costs, and types of activities offered. As a result, many student services administrators have established policy boards for recreation programs, with representatives from key campus student and faculty groups as members. This board can recommend policies while at the same time serve as an effective forum for the discussion of issues.

On many campuses, the student services division has administrative responsibility for the intercollegiate athletics program. The issues discussed above regarding campus recreation programs apply to athletics, as well, but additional concerns need to be mentioned. Often several external constituencies are interested in the athletics program, and their participation on a campus policy board for athletics may be beneficial. The detailed rules and procedures of the National Collegiate Athletic Association demand attention, and it may be the responsibility of the chief student services administrator to see that they are followed. Careful monitoring of athletic programs is now expected, and attention is being given to retention and graduation rates, college majors, and participation in campus life. Being administratively responsible for the athletics program may provide student services professionals excellent opportunities to affect students' education, establish sound policies with faculty participation, and earn the support of external groups.

The following are among the questions faced by student services administrators in charge of recreation and athletic programs:

1. How should programs in recreation and athletics be funded?
2. What should be the relationship between recreation and athletics regarding funding, use of facilities, and personnel support?
3. What steps should be taken to insure that the institution's academic standards and integrity are maintained in athletics?

Student-Oriented Issues

Stress in the Academic Environment

As the pace of living increases, and competition becomes more keen, pressures on college students seem to have become more intense. Most likely, the same kinds of strains experienced in the general society are also present on college and university campuses. This stress may be expressed in various ways: poor academic work, frayed personal relationships, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, disruptive behavior, depression, and suicide. Student services professionals are well aware of these difficulties among students and have initiated many programs to address them in recent years.

In addition to providing significantly expanded services to students, efforts have been made to involve faculty and administrators in programs to reduce stress (Whitman, Spendlove, & Clark, 1986). It is usually student services professionals who take the lead in such institutional efforts. There may be resistance, as some people may feel that increased competition is good even though it may result in students getting hurt, and others may feel it is not the institution's responsibility to concern itself with such matters.

As part of the campus approach to stress, student services administrators also have developed effective crisis response procedures. Having these procedures in place well in advance of attempted suicide and other personal crises is of critical importance. This requires coordination among several campus and community agencies, some of which may have overlapping roles and conflicting philosophies of service. It is the student services administrator who must bring these groups together for the purpose of assisting students.

Stress is a reality in contemporary life, and colleges and universities can teach students effective ways of coping with stress that may assist them throughout their lives.

This positive teaching role offers many opportunities for student services professionals to develop programs with academic departments, recreation specialists, religious leaders, and community agencies.

The following questions are faced by student services professionals regarding the issue of student stress:

1. To what extent should the institution concern itself with student stress, and who should decide that it will devote resources to it?
2. Should the major efforts be directed at the symptoms of stress (e.g., alcohol abuse) or at the causes (such as academic competition)?
3. What criteria should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of stress reduction programs?

Emphasis upon Job Preparation

With so many publications calling for reform in the curriculum, undergraduate education has become a major topic of debate. Indeed, a book describing the shortcomings and consequences of undergraduate education has been on the nonfiction best seller list for several months (Bloom, 1987). This may be an indication that there is widespread concern, even outside the academic community, about what students are taught.

Reflecting the increased specialization and emphasis upon technology in society, the undergraduate curriculum has become more narrowly vocational. Academic departments, wanting students majoring in their discipline to be competitive, insist on more required courses and fewer electives. Students themselves seem to be driven by a desire for high paying jobs upon graduation, and the most rapid and practical route to this goal is to major in a specific, vocationally oriented field. This unmistakable rush of students to academic programs aimed at job preparation concerns many faculty and higher education leaders, and it is the focus of most of the current debate about what undergraduates should be taught.

Student services professionals should be experts on career choice, counseling, and professional development. Because they have an understanding (and actual data on their graduates for several years) of how students' careers evolve, they should be active contributors to this important debate about undergraduate education. Student services personnel, especially those in counseling centers, understand the personal conflicts and pressures individual students face related to choice of major and career. This information can be very useful in discussions about curriculum reform of undergraduate education.

Student services professionals do not just provide support for ancillary functions; their concern is for the whole student, and they have helpful contributions to make to this most basic issue regarding what students are taught.

Questions of concern to student services professionals regarding the current emphasis on job preparation are:

1. What information about student career development contributes to effective curriculum reform?
2. What improvements in admissions, orientation, and academic advising can be made to assist students in making good academic and career choices?

Minorities

Student services professionals have always identified individual differences as an important aspect of their work. As a result, most of them have been very active in their institution's efforts to assist minority students. Because of their professional training and their close contacts with students, student services administrators are often the leaders in developing programs, from recruitment and retention to counseling and advising for minority students. Among the responsibilities of student services staff in their work with minorities is to help faculty, administrators, board members, alumni, and other students understand what the experiences of minorities on the campus may be. Minorities can be racial, religious, ethnic, or sexual and may be based on age or gender as well (Astin, 1982). Another responsibility is to make careful assessments of the needs and experiences of these students—in both formal and informal ways, so that policies and services established to assist them are based upon reality. A major task for student services staff is to find adequate resources for the programs and services needed to assist these students. This may be difficult, as there are some faculty and administrators who may not be convinced there is a need for special services or policies for certain minorities.

During the previous two decades, there was a clear federal commitment to equal opportunity and access and this was reflected in the policies and academic priorities of most colleges and universities. There was a passion for social justice evident in the work of leaders on many campuses. In the 1980s some of this zeal and commitment has decreased (Adolphus, 1984) and has been replaced with a new national priority, the quest for quality. As a result, student services professionals may frequently find themselves the primary institutional advocates for support of minority programs. Minority students may feel that

their interests, given so much attention a few short years ago, have now been abandoned in favor of academically gifted students. There are now strong undercurrents of unrest on many college and university campuses because of this tension. Student services professionals not only may be the most visible advocates of support programs for minorities, they also may be in charge of delivering the services to these students. Their high visibility may also make them the targets of criticism and frustration felt by some campus minorities. The most effective student services professionals will look beyond this criticism and concentrate on their major roles as advocates and teachers. All students can learn positive values when they see the actions their college leaders take in support of minorities and their rights in the academic community.

Among the questions faced by student services professionals in their work with minorities are the following:

1. What are the most effective ways to assess the experiences of minority students?
2. In designing services and programs for minority students, what kind of administrative model is most effective?
3. What criteria should be used to evaluate the success of programs for minority students, and who should decide the criteria?

Part-Time and Adult Learners

Of the 12 million students enrolled in all institutions of higher education, over 40 percent are part time. Most of these part-time students are over the age of 25, and over half of them are enrolled in two-year colleges ("Fact-File," 1986). Student services administrators have found it necessary to develop special programs, services, and policies for these students in order to help them succeed in the institution. This has been particularly true, of course, in colleges and universities where the majority of students are enrolled on a full-time basis and are of traditional age.

Older, part-time students, especially those who have not been enrolled in colleges for many years, are likely to experience some academic anxiety as they begin their studies (Shriberg, 1980). Special counseling and academic advising services have been offered as part of orientation programs for these students. Traditional approaches to financial aid may need to be altered, and the provision of child care services may be critical to the success of these students. Academic support services are likely to be heavily used by older and part-time students. Flexibility in scheduling classes and recognizing the work hours of part-

time students may also be important, and they are often among the most challenging problems faced in helping these students.

Many student services staff have initiated new student organizations for older and part-time students. These groups often can provide enjoyable social support and put students with similar problems and backgrounds in touch with each other. These organizations frequently become visible advocates for their own needs and effective recruiters for the institution as well.

The great majority of adult and part-time students commute to the campus, and may only spend 3-4 hours per day at the institution. Student services staff often seek ways to help these students feel more closely connected with the campus. These efforts may include such things as welcoming parties in commuter parking lots, a special office or lounge in the student union, or a small number of rooms in campus residence halls set aside for commuting students.

It is not unlikely for student services administrators to encounter resistance within the institution to their suggestions to accommodate the special needs of part-time and adult students. Faculty and staff who have grown accustomed to the schedules of full-time, traditional-age students may need to be informed about the needs of these new students. On some campuses, student services staff have established special policy committees on part-time and adult learners to increase visibility for the special needs of these students.

Issues faced by student services professionals in their efforts to assist part-time and older students include the following:

1. What are the most effective ways of convincing faculty and other campus staff that these students have special needs?
2. What criteria should be used to evaluate programs, services, and policies directed at these students?

Student Attitudes and Values

Student attitudes have been studied for many years in higher education, and student services professionals are especially interested in the changes that may occur in students' attitudes and values during their college years. A number of useful instruments designed to assist with these measures are available to colleges and universities (Pace, 1979). Obtaining such information, especially over a period of years, can provide critical feedback to colleges and universities about their academic program, the campus environment, and

services offered to students. This information can be used in planning, the design of curriculum, and the improvement of services.

Despite the excellent advances made in the area of student assessment in recent years, student services staff are likely to find skeptical attitudes among many faculty regarding the usefulness of these efforts. Such evaluative information can be threatening, especially when there may be policy or resource implications. As a result, most student services professionals who have achieved some success in the area of student assessment have gained the support of the chief academic officer before programs are introduced. A student assessment faculty policy committee also can be a way of gaining support and visibility for this effort. Such assessments may be critical to the survival of institutions experiencing enrollment problems, and may also be effective tools for improving retention.

Many student services professionals conduct values clarification programs, where students are encouraged to explore various alternatives on political, social, moral, and philosophical issues (Dalton, 1985). This interest in helping students think about their own values may be related to the impersonal nature of classroom instruction or the desire of many students to find connections between their academic work and their personal lives.

The teaching of values, of course, is always a topic of controversy. There are those who feel that the colleges should not be involved in such matters, and at the other end of the continuum, there are others who feel the colleges should try to shape students' attitudes and values in a very specific direction.

Student services professionals who choose to initiate programs in values development should not be intellectually naive and must secure the support of key faculty members before much success is achieved. If values programs are conducted in isolation from the campus mainstream, they are likely to be ineffective and largely unnoticed.

Questions faced by student services professionals on the issues of student attitudes and values include the following:

1. Is there an institutional commitment to assessing student attitudes and values and using the information for academic planning?
2. Who should decide the areas of academic and student life which should be assessed?
3. Who should decide if the institution should actively teach values to its students?

Profession-Based Issues

Professional Preparation

As the scope of student services has expanded, the issue of how to prepare professionals for the field has become more complex. Staff in financial aid, counseling, recreation, health programs, child care or admissions, all probably do not need the same kind of graduate work! There continues to be a debate on the generalist-specialist issue, and professional preparation programs may emphasize a counseling, administrative, or developmental approach to student services. Those who desire to serve as chief student services administrators may seek a different emphasis than those who plan to serve as counselors in academic support programs.

There continues to be a strong interest in attracting minorities to the student services field, and most of the best known graduate preparation programs commit special resources to this effort. On many campuses, the student services staff includes the largest number of minority professionals of any administrative or teaching unit.

Recent proposals have been advanced for the improvement of professional preparation programs (Delworth, Hanson, & Associates, 1980), and the topic is often discussed at regional and national conferences. As responsibilities of student services divisions have grown, a concern has been expressed that many staff working in student services have received little or no formal preparation for the field. This is especially true in admissions and financial aid. However, it appears increasingly difficult to find agreement about a standard preparation program with so much diversity among practitioners' responsibilities.

Questions for student services administrators regarding the issue of professional preparation include the following:

- What should the role of the major national professional associations be in setting preparation standards for the field?
2. Should individual institutions be free to establish new graduate professional preparation programs without regard to some minimum standard?

Staff Development

During higher education's rapid growth of the 1960s and 1970s, large numbers of new student services positions were created, and there was extensive mobility in the field. Now that enrollments have stabilized, few new positions are being established and mobility has decreased significantly. As a result, student services professionals are remaining in their existing positions longer, and many are worried about "mid-career burnout" and the longer period of time it may take to gain more extensive responsibilities. This has given rise to an unprecedented interest in staff development programs for student services professionals (Delworth, 1987).

Chief student services officers are well aware of the need for staff development programs for their personnel. Many have sought financial support from their institutions to improve opportunities both on and off the campus. However, the same diminished opportunities are occurring within many other academic disciplines and so there is vigorous competition within institutions for staff development resources. Some student services professionals have formed cooperative relationships with neighboring institutions to increase the quality and quantity of programs offered.

The professional associations have recognized the need for staff development programs, and have conducted seminars, conferences, retreats, and institutes in large numbers. These programs are being offered to student services professionals at every level, in all specialties, and at all types of institutions.

Questions for student services professionals on the issue of staff development include the following:

1. Should a staff development program be tailored to the entire student services staff, or should specific programs for individuals be established?
2. Should staff development programs be mandated for all student services staff, either by the institution or by a professional association?
3. Should individuals be expected to pay for their own professional development, or should their institution pay?

Accreditation

The student services division of a college or university is considered one of the major components for evaluation by the regional accrediting bodies in higher education. For most institutions, this means that an extensive self-study is carried out every ten years, and

visitors from peer institutions conduct an independent evaluation of the institution's programs, personnel, facilities, and services. While this process has often proved valuable for student services professionals, many feel that a more extensive, detailed process is needed to advance the profession's goals.

There has never been a single, prescribed curriculum for preparing professionals to enter the field of student services, and the several professional associations have stopped short of imposing any such requirements. However, a major six-year project has just been completed by a consortium of 22 professional student services associations, called the "CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Services Development Programs" (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 1986). Its purpose is to establish criteria to guide the practice and preparation of student services personnel. The document should assist institutions in their program development, self-study, staff development, and program evaluation. While it is not intended to prescribe program requirements for colleges, or to be used as an accrediting standard, it certainly can assist many institutions in their efforts to upgrade their student services programs. Chief student services administrators are now using this publication for this purpose.

There is a current effort to accredit professional preparation programs, through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs, an organization recently formed in conjunction with the American Association for Counseling and Development. Standards for preparation have been developed for "Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education" (Council for Accreditation, 1988), and a formal review procedure has been established.

Student services administrators need to study these developments in order to make informed decisions about hiring and staff development on their own campuses. These accreditation standards are likely to have an impact upon persons selecting graduate programs and upon the ability of various graduate preparation programs to survive.

Future Trends

While it is impossible to predict the future, the success of student services programs depends on how well the changing needs of students and institutions can be anticipated. Thus, it is important to consider current trends in order to plan for likely outcomes in future years. The following represents a brief summary of matters that student services professionals may anticipate in the next few years.

Society Sets the Agenda

If there is a war, an economic depression, or a major social change in the larger society, what happens on college and university campuses will reflect these events. The current student focus on job preparation and high paying careers is a clear reflection of society's values at this time. Thus, while it may not be very comforting to student services professionals, their priorities in the future with students will largely be determined by external conditions in the larger society. The most successful administrators will be those who are able to make the most effective adjustments to these conditions.

Increased Student Diversity

At some institutions in the 1990s, students currently classified as minority will constitute the majority of those enrolled. More and more students will be older, enrolled on a part-time basis, and will commute to the campus. It is also likely that there will be large numbers of academically underprepared students. Student services professionals will need to adjust their policies and programs to accommodate these students, and often shift resources from more traditional activities to assist them.

Identifying New Financial Resources

As concerns with college costs continue and budget pressures within institutions intensify, student services administrators may be forced to secure financial support in new ways. Increased fees, earmarked for specific services, user fees, or soliciting private funds are examples. It is increasingly unrealistic for student services administrators to assume that all financial support for the programs they need will come from the institutional budget. The most successful administrators in future years may be those who are skillful in securing external financial support.

Coordination with Academic Programs

Student services programs cannot succeed for long if they become isolated from the major activity on any campus—academic instruction. In virtually every responsibility assigned to student services, there are opportunities to involve faculty members and link the activity in some way to the academic program. The primary initiative for these efforts will come from student services professionals. There may be resistance from more traditional

staff who feel that "their programs" should stand alone and that coalitions with academic departments may result in too many compromises. With current budgetary and accountability pressures, and those certain to come in the future, it is wise for student services administrators to work closely with their academic colleagues.

Management Accountability Emphasis

Most student services professionals entered the field because of their interest in helping people grow and develop. This is still their most important role. However, many student services administrators now are clearly expected to be efficient financial managers of large enterprises, such as financial aid offices, housing programs, student unions, and child care centers. There is a clear accountability for those who are in charge of recruitment, admissions and retention programs, and student services administrators may be removed from such responsibilities when the desired numerical goals are not achieved. This management-accountability emphasis is difficult for some student services professionals, whose orientation to the field is strongly humanistic. This has created some tension within the profession regarding the appropriate role that student services should assume within the institution.

Summary

Student services administration has experienced dramatic growth in the last fifteen years, as student expectations for assistance have expanded, and as additional responsibilities have been assigned to student services professionals. The profession is still evolving, and many different philosophical approaches exist in the field as opposed to a single orthodoxy. The goals and purposes of individual institutions remain the dominant factors in deciding the role of student services programs.

While the priorities and problems addressed by student services professionals clearly reflect the current values of the larger society, the field has become sufficiently specialized that the profession itself generates many issues. The changing composition of students will likely be the most challenging aspect of student services administration in future years.

The student services profession is a dynamic one, constantly adapting to changes in higher education. Historically, it is undoubtedly in its most healthy condition now, as the services and programs it conducts are increasingly important to the success of institutions.

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