ABSTRACT
        The significance of student activities in student
development is taken for granted even though activities represent the
core of institutional efforts to foster student development. In many
ways, student activities may be the most critical link with the
educational mission of the institution. Attention must be paid to the
quality of opportunities offered to students, the physical location
or accessibility of student activities offices and staff, and the
quality of role modeling on the part of students and staff at college
unions. These objectives can be used to guide programming policy
formation. 17 references. (Author/MSE)

Student activities:
A critical link to the educational mission

The significance of student activities in the development of students is often taken for granted even though activities represent the core of our efforts to foster development of students. In many ways, student activities may very well be our most critical link to the educational mission of our institutions. Thus, we must pay attention to the quality of opportunities that are made available to students, the physical location or accessibility of student activities offices and staff, and the quality of role modeling on the part of students and staff at our college unions.

If a relationship is to exist between student achievement and the college environment, then the campus must provide adequate facilities, stimulating intellectual characteristics, and challenging opportunities for students' growth. Student achievement then becomes a function of the individual, intellectual, and social benefits of a particular campus.

These benefits range from academic selectivity and curricular offerings to campus life and the basic organizational features of the institution. These factors combined with the level of student involvement best explains the overall potential for student development (Astin, 1984; Centra and Rock, 1971; Pascarella, 1984; Twale, 1985).

The campus activities office is a micro-environment of behavioral possibilities in which to study student growth processes. In fact, student activities programming posits three related objectives that can satisfy the need for development and intellectual stimulation via its "hidden curricular design." They are as follows:

1. To create a physical, emotional, social, psychological, and intellectual forum to facilitate the goals synonymous with student socialization, i.e., to be effective and comfortable in one's physical environment; to have means and opportunity for meaningful social interaction and exchange; to be accepted by and integrated into a social network; to spark emotional growth and acceptable behavior patterns; and to integrate adaptable skills useful now and in the future (Cotterell, 1984; Moos, 1979).
2. To identify cognitive skills and affective learning patterns as measurable goals with various feedback mechanisms (Snyder, 1971).
3. To motivate and develop competent personnel (advisers, staff, chairpersons) who are capable of fulfilling the first two objectives and who also set a positive example for students via personal and professional interaction (Hawley, Rosenholtz et al., 1984).

Growth through structural design

The importance of student activities may be a function of both its location in the total campus macrocosm as well as the intimate

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Student development

Part one

microcosmic attributes of the programming office (Moore, 1979). For instance, what is the general level of *organizational significance* given to activities programming by upper level administration? Is it highly respected or poorly regarded on campus by the student body, student affairs personnel, and university administration? Does the programming function have a positive or negative image? How is the role and the function of student activities promoted on campus? Does it have a sufficient budget to meet its stated objectives? Is student membership highly sought after? Do the students perceive membership as personally beneficial?

Secondly, what is the *visibility* of the programming structure? Is it a key stop in the major university traffic pattern (physically and socially)? Does it have a convenient, central location, accessible to residence halls and food service as well as to public transportation for commuters? In addition to the location of the college union, is the programming office itself highly accessible and visible to the university community? Does the programming function frequently experience positive exposure in the college newspaper (advertisements, features, and editorials), on the radio or television station, on campus bulletin boards, and through student informational networks? Does the office offer seminars, workshops, or orientation sessions of benefit to members and to the campus at large?

Finally, what are the *physical attributes* of the programming office? Does it have aesthetic appeal? Does it provide visual stimulation to visitors and passersby? Are there unique features that add to its appearance? Does it emphasize warmth and comfort? Is size sufficient to accommodate task accomplishment? Are facilities adequate and supplies ample to achieve goals?

Baum and Valins suggest "the architectural design of human environments can have an influence on mood and behavior" (1977, p. vii). According to Mead (1934), environment affects behavioral options and alternatives in terms of social and psychological dynamics. How well a student fits into the programming atmosphere may in turn affect perceptions, interaction, cohesiveness; reduce stress, tension, and frustration; or serve as an agent of social control. Mead describes the environment as being "determined by the character of the form" (p. 247), thereby addressing the reciprocity between ecological patterns and human response.

For example, office design combines physical components with social and psychological attributes. Physical design either motivates or discourages interaction, movement, and association. While pleasant surroundings draw the eye, they can eventually foster a warmth and an ambience that encourages identification and affiliation with the organization.

While office arrangements may nurture face-to-face interaction and encourage the formation of friendships and camaraderie, there must be mutual trust, respect, and dependence with fellows and advisers. Affinity for the physical and social benefits of the total programming environment must evoke pride among incumbents as should the fruits of their individual and collective labors.

By virtue of their attachment, students place controls on the use of office space as they perceive it to be their territorial base. In one sense, the programming board's space is personal and private; yet, on the other hand, it belongs to the university's bureaucracy to be relinquished upon termination of office. This belief holds true for the physical realm of the office, but students often discover it difficult to sever all social ties and psychological attachments to the office. In turn, when friendship, camaraderie, and support become manifest between members and advisers, the alloted physical space appears ample and comfortable, and

often becomes a welcome refuge on campus. Before, during, and after a term of office, a student's affinity for and positive attachment to the programming office may enhance frequency of visitation and sustain relationships that encourage maintained contact. Mead (1934) views this "interlocking interdependence of human individuals upon one another within the given organized social life-process in which they are all involved [as] becoming more and more intricate and closely knit" (p. 310).

By the same token, inappropriate structures may create dysfunction. For instance, social and psychological factors affect how people perceive the size of the physical environment. When tension is high and dissimilar personalities are expected to cooperate and share defensible space, the office may seem forbidding to a student experiencing stress (Baum & Valins, 1977; Cotterell, 1984; Moos, 1979; Zimring, 1981).

> *"The learning process in college is incomplete without the eventual byproduct of human association, i.e., role modeling."*

Growth through affective learning patterns

Many factors cognitively and affectively influence student learning processes during the college years. While student background is a critical factor in determining academic achievement, it can also serve as a significant thrust for student co-curricular involvement. Students' affective development may be directly or indirectly influenced by personal characteristics formulated prior to college entrance, but enmeshed with the total campus organizational environment, it contributes to the process of student socialization.

Underclassmen searching for support, acceptance, identity, parental surrogates, and integration into a strange environment gravitate to familiar surroundings and familiar faces. In fact, many perpetuate patterns established during high school. Frequently, networks of friends and acquaintances are found participating in the same extra-curricular activities (Ayres & Bennett, 1983; Pascarella, 1985; Twale, 1985).

College affords students prototypical opportunities to explore career choices, to experience the practicality of college to real life, to solve problems, to manage information, to undertake responsibility, to boost self-esteem and self-confidence, and to identify and form interpersonal networks within a supervised atmosphere. The extent to which the campus programming board provides unique settings for these objectives contributes to the overall developmental impact of the institution. For example, student activities in an experiential sense can motivate and stimulate incumbents to act upon conceptual knowledge by the subjective application of theoretical leadership principles to practical situations (Duley & Permaul, 1984; Pascarella, 1985).

But for Astin (1984), the degree of inculcation of acceptable behavior patterns, friendship formation, and affiliation is a direct function of involvement. Involvement is defined by how much physical and psychological energy a student invests in various projects of perceived personal interest. Therefore, it is crucial to structure environments that encourage active student involvement. In other words, offer students environments that encourage identity and affiliation, stimulate activity, and inspire growth and development. Achieving personal goals depends upon motivational characteristics and how much time and energy is expended on meaningful activity. In the long run, involvement and integral participation function as powerful retention factors as well as inculcators of affective learning patterns.

Growth through role modeling

The learning process in college is incomplete without the eventual byproduct of human association, i.e., role modeling. Students have the opportunity to inculcate congruous work and behavior patterns through the observation of others' behavior in both the formal office setting and informal gatherings. Reciprocity can occur among students and especially between students and advisers. The environment is a

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key component for interaction and exchange (Duley & Permaul, 1984; Twale, 1985; Ziegler, Boardman, & Thomas, 1985). Complementarity in learning and application in an amiable setting promotes mutual observation of student behavior, positive role modeling of leadership processes and lifestyle, and reflection upon personal growth and developmental patterns. Not only do student activities personnel model leadership skills, decision-making strategies, critical thinking and reasoning capacities, but they also set an example that includes mature choices on moral and ethical issues, cooperation, compromise, and the acceptance of responsibility for decision and action. More importantly, Mead (1934) contends that students exposed to the role modeling function within an environmental context will internalize to varying degrees the behavior of colleagues into their self-conscious mind. In fact, when students enter the newness of the programming office, they unconsciously take on attitudes of those already there and become different individuals in response to the mission of the organization and through sharing of the symbols and language of this campus subculture.

Effectiveness aggrandizes in an atmosphere of open communication, built-in flexibility, and mutual good will. College in general and the student activities office in the capacity of a "real world laboratory" also encourages student leaders to experiment with their new found adulthood. Ziegler et al. (1985) encourages student leaders and advisers to employ humor in situations to balance achievement with work satisfaction. Humor builds an esprit de corps and sustains a ⌐ se, comfortable association of peers. However, careful attention is necessary because humor can sometimes be intimidating if it is incongruent with student expectations or the situation.

Application in policy formulation

It is strongly recommended that campus programming boards develop and uphold some sort of constitution or policy statement (Twale, 1985). However, in light of the preceding three objectives, what should be addressed and explicated in terms of policy formulation?

Structurally, does the allotted office space fulfill the intended function? Does it permit the students opportunity to facilitate their function of programming as well as other objectives such as affective learning and role modeling? Does size and interior design accommodate the number of people who must work out of the office. To avoid population density, for instance, have students stagger schedules to maximize balance, independence, and interaction. Remember that "goodness-of-fit" hinges on the interplay of three crucial dimensions—physical proximity, social interaction, and psychological disposition (Baum & Valins, 1977).

Affectively, do the physical dimension and social interaction foster an unstressful psychological climate, one high in tangible and intangible reward systems? For example, competency acquired from completing vital tasks of the programming function gives a member a definite position within the group which can be realized by the individual and legitimized by fellow member: (Mead, 1934).

Does the friendship network satisfy the developmental need for identity and acceptance? Do lasting effects emerge from the relationships formed during the term of office? Have friendships extended into other areas of college life? Does the activities office schedule retreats or training workshops that facilitate the development of networks (Twale & Fogle, 1986)?

It is critical to establish a balance between involvement and membership. While creating an atmosphere that heightens involvement, determine a specific base and ceiling for the amount of time and degree of involvement expected from students on the programming board. Overparticipation or underparticipation is counterproductive. A student who spends ex-

cessive amounts of time in the office might have an affinity for the programming function or might be escaping from academics, family problems, or emotional difficulties. If possible, the adviser should monitor board members for warning signals that participation in the office is leading to lower grades, missed deadlines, unresolved conflicts, poorly mastered programming skills, or eventual burnout (Astin, 1984; Baum & Valins, 1977; Zimring, 1981).

Finally, do the normative standards of behavior set by the advisers and the students create an atmosphere of cooperation and compromise, competition and conflict, or misrepresentation and withdrawal (Baum & Valins, 1977)? If taken seriously, the roles that adviser and student accept becomes a mutual covenant-like relationship that ideally espouses respect, trust, and binding obligation. Therefore, all parties must honor an exclusive contract of service to self, to each other, to the board, and to the university. Thus, the strength of the board rests with the thoughtful selection of student members by conscientious advisers.

Summary

If student development is to benefit from the richness of the social and physical environment, a campus programming board can be evaluated in terms of its members' growth, its affective learning possibilities, and the patterns set forth through positive role modeling. Practical knowledge of these phenomena aids advisers in constructing a proper environment, implementing meaningful exercises and opportunities, and facilitating a process of student socialization. These goals properly translated serve as policy suggestions for program coordinators and other student affairs staff whose first priority is student growth and development.

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