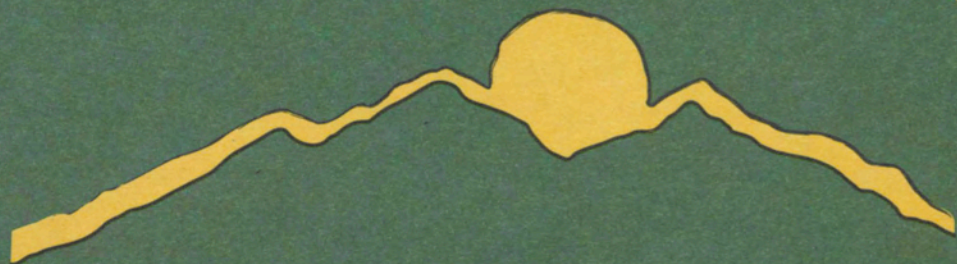


# JOURNAL OF STUDENT AFFAIRS



Colorado  
State  
University

*Knowledge to Go Places*

VOLUME XII, 2003

# **Colorado State University**

## *Journal of Student Affairs*

### Mission and Goal Statement

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs* is to develop and produce a scholarly publication that reflects current education issues and the professional interests of student affairs practitioners. Specifically, the *Journal* provides an opportunity for the publication of articles by current students, alumni, faculty, and associates of the Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate program at Colorado State University.

#### **Goals**

- The *Journal* will promote scholarly work, reflecting the importance of professional and academic writing in higher education.
- The Editorial Board of the *Journal* will offer opportunities for students to develop editorial skills, critical thinking, and writing skills while producing a professional publication.

The *Journal* will serve as a communication tool to alumni and other professionals regarding updates and the status of Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate program at Colorado State University.

# Colorado State University Journal of Student Affairs

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Volume XII, 2003

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*To contact the Editorial Board, please call or write:*

Student Affairs in Higher Education  
Colorado State University  
201 Administration  
Fort Collins, CO 80523  
970.491.3942

The *Journal* can be found on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://sahe.colostate.edu>

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## **Director's Perspective**

**Grant P. Sherwood**  
**Director**  
**Student Affairs in Higher Education**

Our SAHE family continues to grow as we added an additional 15 graduates this past year to our distinguished alumni. This Spring/Summer we anticipate that another 22 students will receive their degrees. We continue to have a team of 23 faculty teaching in our program in some capacity. We are very blessed as a program to have many additional professionals committed to supervising assistantships, practica and independent studies.

In the history of our program, we have attempted to review our curriculum in terms of both relevancy and quality. In 1990 and again in 1997 we made significant changes in our degree. We are again reviewing our expectations, attempting to relate professional competencies to program offerings. We also realize that the experiential piece of our program continues to be of significant value and thus, we are looking at adding a portfolio requirement that would tie to our theoretical teachings.

Finally, I would report we had a wonderful SAHE/CSPA reunion at Pingree Park in July. Around 30 graduates were able to attend in addition to Dr. Jim Kuder and his wife Linda who traveled all the way from Kentucky to join the group. Jim was Director of this program for thirteen years and had just retired from the University of Kentucky where he served as Vice President of Student Affairs. We look forward to another gathering in 2005 so mark your calendars.

## **Advisor's Perspective**

### **Paul Shang, Advisor**

Again this year, I have had the pleasure of serving as the faculty adviser to the Editorial Board of the Student Affairs in Higher Education *Journal of Student Affairs*. To me, this year's Editorial Board distinguishes itself from others in several ways. I am very impressed by how focused the Board members are—each meeting began and ended on time, everyone was always present or provided notification in advance of their anticipated absence, comments on content and style were accurate and made decisively. While respectful of previous practices and traditions, this Board was willing to do things its own way; for instance, there were two representatives from the first year class rather than one, the schedules were very different from those of previous years, and drafts with editorial suggestions to authors were sent and received exclusively via e-mail. Confident, dedicated, fun, bright, independent, I really enjoyed the members of this year's Editorial Board and found it a privilege to work with them.

## Note From the Editors

**Lea Hanson, Erin Cross, Jana Holstein, Jill Zambito  
Janelle Lane, Rustain Morgan, Annie Dawson**

This year marks the twelfth publication of the Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs*. A common theme among many of the decisions we have made this year circle around the idea of *Leading Change*; our main goal was to take the *Journal* to the next stage of professional and scholarly publications. Although there is a sense of tradition and continuity in this year's publication, we believe this volume of the *Journal* is especially exciting because of the changes we have implemented.

This year the decision to create a second position for a first-year student in the program led us to the definition of two specific roles: First-Year Liaison for Outreach and First-Year Liaison for Reader Board. The main goals of our First-Year Liaison for Outreach include maintaining ties with our alumni and associates and promoting the *Journal* at conferences, online, and among classmates. The First-Year Liaison for Reader Board works closely with the Content and Technical Editors in facilitating the editing process and coordinating the Reader Board. We have found this addition to be beneficial and hope that it will continue to enhance our publication.

We invited Florence Guido-DiBrito to be a featured guest author in this year's edition of the *Journal*. Florence Guido-DiBrito is an Associate Professor at the University of Northern Colorado, and chose to co-author the article with Alicia F. Chávez. We hope that this addition will not only enhance our publication through the addition of fine writing, but also aid us in taking a step toward a well-known and scholarly publication.

Although we have many reasons to be proud of our work and the work of our readers, we would also like to celebrate the work of our authors. Mercedes A. Benton, author of *Today's College Students: Challenges African American Students Face at Predominantly White Institutions* was recently approached regarding the republication of her article in *A Long Way to Go: Conversations About Race by African American Faculty and Graduate Students in Higher Education*, a monograph by Dr. Darrell Cleveland. Congratulations Mercedes, your accomplishments are commendable.

We hope you will enjoy the twelfth edition of the Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs* and find that our publication has continued to be, and will further become, a fine publication in the field of Student Affairs.

## **My Experience as ACPA President**

### **Paul Shang**

It seems so long ago when I was first notified of my nomination to run for President of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). Until then I had been an active ACPA member for 13 years; I had made numerous presentations, held various leadership positions, and served on a convention planning team or two, and I felt I understood the Association well. I knew and respected the leadership of the Association; I admired the most recent presidents and was familiar with their goals, and I had worked with the Executive Director, so I believed in the potential of my vision to further what I considered to be an established and progressive agenda. I considered it a welcomed obligation to contribute to an association which had been the source of so many enjoyable professional relationships and had helped me immeasurably as I became a more seasoned and knowledgeable student affairs professional. Finally, my supervisors, colleagues and family enthusiastically supported my candidacy. I felt ready to serve, and although I did not really expect to be elected the first time around, I did think I would serve as president sometime in my career.

When I received notification of my election, I was surprised and very honored. In ACPA there are really no campaigns, so election depends upon how well the candidate is known and what the candidate describes as his or her agenda. In addition to those who knew me well through association activities, newer and more youthful members are also a consideration because although they might not have had a great deal of experience with the Association, they have high expectations, a positive relationship with the Association, and a deep commitment. I was not certain that my agenda of continuing to make ACPA more diverse and open to the professional needs of all members would resonate well enough to be elected.

In January 2001, after being notified of my election, I began to take steps in preparation for the implementation of my agenda. I identified two outstanding interns, both accomplished newer professionals, who would assist with keeping track of very complicated association business regarding preparations for the national convention in March-April 2003 and the Executive Council which acts upon all Association business. I asked two valued colleagues with whom I had worked closely in the Association to serve as co-chairs of the convention planning team; in addition, I planned to rely heavily upon the Minnesota College Personnel Association, an established ACPA State and International Division, to contribute to the planning of the convention. Somewhat contrary to tradition, I decided on the co-chairs and the reliance upon the State and International Division because I knew that the convention planning had to be managed much more closely and that regional participation would prove to be very important. Since State and International Divisions have always been a very strong part of ACPA this was an opportunity to give one division a more central role.



Although things seemed to be proceeding smoothly, I began to realize that one of my responsibilities was to not only serve as a change agent for the Association but to respond to significant changes as well. As I began my year as the president-elect in July of 2001, I became much more aware of some of the challenges of leading a national association comprised of many very dedicated volunteers accustomed to exercising a great deal of responsibility and leadership and an established national office made up of competent professional staff. Not only were there very different perspectives and contexts to consider, but it was essential to serve as a bridge for disparate perspectives to pursue further Association objectives. Furthermore, dramatic changes were occurring in my own work environment. The leadership with whom I was accustomed to working with was changing and the state economy was becoming much less robust. Then came the tragic events of September 11, 2001; suddenly, at Colorado State University, just as across the country, we became even more unsettled by grief for the victims and their loved ones, concerns about personal safety and whether we could travel, our nation's standing in the world, and the possibility of war.

Although the original commitments made before I decided to seek election were honored and colleagues on campus and in the HELP/Success Center remained enthusiastic and supportive of my presidency, there were no resources for any additional support which had been briefly explored earlier. Thus, I found myself in the position along with everyone else, of having to work even harder than before and devoting more time to the University and office matters. I was also working very hard during this period to be an effective and knowledgeable president-elect and making plans for the June 2002 Summer Meeting, when I would become president. Significant personal time had to be devoted to work and to the presidency. Fortunately, my partner who is a student affairs professional too has always been supportive of my efforts; and, having been very active in association activities, she has been understanding, encouraging, and insistent that we balanced our time and allowed for relaxation and renew.

After the 2002 Summer Meeting where our Executive Director announced her retirement effective the following year, I began to focus more on the special characteristics of being an association president. For instance, in comparison to your professional responsibilities where you do have some authority for certain activities, as the association president there were very few things for which you have direct control. The president is certainly very influential, but then so too are the other volunteer leaders who make numerous sacrifices to contribute their time and energies in addition to what they do at their home institutions. Differences need to be resolved in a much different way, more carefully even than at a university. The national office staff is another very important constituency. They have more knowledge of the history of the association, its services, and are full-time paid staff. While most of them have been student affairs professionals, they rarely interact with students or are on campuses for very long as their profession is managing the association. Their perspectives too are extremely important and usually do not include the campus context which I cannot seem to overlook.

Currently, I am nearly half way through my presidency. The finishing touches are being finalized for the 2003 ACPA Annual Convention *Educating Students: One Purpose-10,000 Approaches*, which will take place in Minneapolis, March 29-April 2, 2003. The conversation about possibly forming one comprehensive student affairs association with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) which developed early in August is now well underway. I am planning to implement the remainder of my original agenda. It has been an outstanding professional development experience. If you are considering involvement in a professional association to the extent of being a leader, which I encourage you to do, then I make the following recommendations:

Enjoy the experience. Very few people ever get this opportunity. It will make you grow in unimaginable ways. Besides you volunteered to do it.

Be balanced in your efforts and your assessments of what you have accomplished. I think it is impossible to really anticipate and set aside the time necessary to be as effective a volunteer leader as you want to be, especially president. Given that, you must be reasonable about what you can accomplish and focus your attention on both the responsibilities you volunteered for and your job-related responsibilities. Your control over events is very limited so you have to be flexible.

Be adaptable. Opportunities and challenges will arise which are unanticipated and which must be managed well for the betterment of the association. Use your resources to respond; there are many former, current, and future association leaders whose perspectives and efforts will be of great value. You were elected to be a leader, not the sole decision maker.

Be gracious. Many people are contributing to your leadership opportunity. Whatever you accomplish has been made possible by the sacrifices of others at work or at home and the support of the national office staff.

## Acknowledgements

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*The 2003 Journal of Student Affairs Editorial Board wishes to thank the following individuals for their contributions:*

- Paul Shang, Director of the HELP/Success Center and SAHE faculty member. In Paul's third year as an advisor of the *Journal of Student Affairs*, he has provided our board with a sense of familiarity and tie to tradition, scholarly and professional input on decisions, and a fun and encouraging sense of humor.
- Grant Sherwood, Director of the SAHE program at Colorado State University, for his continued support of the *Journal*.
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- The Reader Boards, for their hard work and dedication to effective and timely editing.
- Those individuals who submitted articles for publication in the twelfth volume of the *Journal of Student Affairs*. We appreciate your research, dedication, and quality contribution.
- Clint and Jake, computer support staff in the HELP/Success Center, who were a great help to our Board in preparing the conference room and computer network needed for the production of the *Journal*.

## **Understanding the Ethnic Self: Learning and Teaching in a Multicultural World**

Florence Guido-DiBrito

Alicia F. Chávez

*A proliferation of theoretical and narrative literature related to ethnic identity development led the authors to examine the underlying assumptions and beliefs of a diversity of learners. In this article, we highlight a framework for understanding the ethnic self through five dimensional continua of cultural constructs, assumptions, and beliefs and tie them to various learning and teaching contexts. Appropriate educator action, (including student affairs initiatives, is recommended) to create effective multicultural learning environments responsive to diverse learning perspectives.*

*When someone, with the power, say, of a teacher, describes the world and you are not in it...*

*There is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in a mirror and saw nothing.*

- Bell Hooks –

The literature on ethnic identity in recent years has been nothing shy of an explosion. From theoretical perspectives (e.g., Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 2000; Clark & O'Donnell, 1999; Cross, 1991; Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Fanon, 1967; Gracia, 2000; Helms, 1993; Phinney, 1990; Tatum, 1997; Wijeyesinghe & Bailey, 2001) to personal narratives (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Bridwell-Bowles, 1998; Brown, 1994; Dublin, 1996; Garrod & Larimore, 1997; Lesage, Ferber, Storrs & Wong, 2002; Rhoads, 1997; Rochlin, 1997; Rodriguez, 1982; Schoem, 1995; Stalvey, 1989), the literature on ethnic development is focused on theoretically unexplored identities and previously untold life stories. Educational environments are socially, culturally, and operationally constructed primarily around specific ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, ideological and personal norms, values, assumptions and beliefs (Borrego & Guido-DiBrito, 2002; Ibarra, 2001; Hooks, 1994; Freire, 1974). To develop effective learning and teaching techniques for higher education's already diverse populations of learners, we must understand manifested aspects of ethnic identity as well as other types of identity. As educators, we are then better equipped to design and facilitate learning techniques and environments that, in practice, work for every student. The purpose of this paper is to describe a framework for understanding students' ethnic identity related to a continua of five cultural norms. Suggestions for educators, in and out of the classroom, on how to create meaningful learning opportunities for students with various cultural norms are woven throughout the manuscript.

## **The Ethnic Self as Cultural Lens: A Framework for Learning**

As we systematically reviewed existing models of ethnic and racial identity, searched personal narrative literature, and reflected on our own experiences and those of our students, we became aware that specific dynamics make up and trigger the consciousness of ethnic identity in individuals. From this review (Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999), and from a study of knowledge and educational environments among international and domestic graduate students of color (Chávez, 1995), we developed a framework for understanding ethnic identity applicable in both classroom and out-of-class learning. The framework outlined in Figure 1 includes five continua for which we found differential patterns. We map an ethnic identity framework composed of at least the following constructs: a sense of self in relation to others, sensing/interpreting/knowing, ethnic community responsibility, cultural imprinting, and ethnic/racial contrast.

See Figure 1.

We believe that much of the explanation for particular cultural groups' ability to negotiate traditional learning environments, and more importantly, educators' ability to promote learning for every student, is connected to an understanding of the concepts in Figure 1. Individuals and cultural groups manifest varying groupings of characteristics across these continua. In our experience, most formal and informal learning processes have at their foundation the assumptions and values represented on the extreme left of each construct in the continua. This end of the continua represents those ways of being steeped and grounded in Western European educational philosophy and practice. For individual learners and educators raised in cultures with these underlying constructs, this translates to an overall learning and teaching experience of normalcy, comfort, and conformity. For those raised in cultures with constructs in concert with the right side of the continua, traditional educational environments are likely to be confusing, uncomfortable, and often debilitating to deep learning. Various cultures exhibit different combinations of these continua, and the more characteristics a particular cultural group has on the right side of the continua, the more likely they will struggle to learn and be successful in traditional learning environments. It is not surprising that African American students learn more effectively in predominately Black Colleges (Fleming, 1981; Roebuck & Murty, 1993), women learn more effectively in all women's colleges (Horowitz, 1984), and Native Americans learn more effectively in Tribal Colleges (Boyer, 1989). In the pages that follow, each construct and its meaning within an individual's ethnic identity, as well as some implications for educators working with students, are explored.

### ***Sense of Self in Relation to Others***

The Sense-of-Self continuum is perhaps the most challenging and elusive aspect of ethnic identity to comprehend. Philosophical belief systems, found to varying degrees across cultural groups, influence the sense that an individual has of being separate from or connected to others. In some philosophies, such as those found in Native American, Latin, East Indian, and Buddhist cultures, the self is often

conceptualized as connected to other living beings or only temporarily separated from a collective “spirit” of being. In other cultures, such as those originating out of Northern Europe, the sense of self is more individuated, and persons are more likely to think of themselves as being separate and distinct entities.

The sense-of-self related to ethnic identity is likely to influence how students interpret knowledge and in what contexts they learn best. A highly connected student is likely to filter knowledge through their cultural or familial community to ascertain its validity (Deloria, 1999; Van Hamme, 1996). For example, an African American doctoral student expressed her frustration with the lack of a cultural lens in her educational experience in this manner:

I learned, but I just didn't buy it. It didn't fit with my cultural reality and I kept wondering, 'Is there something here for me?' Have I taken precious time away from the most important things in life for this? (Chávez, 1995, p. 15)

A Mexican American doctoral student echoes a similar understanding, “Relational knowing is the most foundational aspect of my knowing. If I do not examine everything through the lens of my community, my people, my self, how am I truly to understand or determine its relevance?” (Chávez, 1995, p. 15). For optimal learning, collective learners may need a balance of individual and communal learning activities as well as strong relationships with both academic and student affairs educators and peers. Time spent building relationships through communities engaged in mastering and interpreting subject matter may be essential in the learning process whether in or out of the classroom. In addition, educators need to diversify curricula and assist students in processing the practical relevance and application of knowledge for their community of origin. Distance learning, individual programs of study, and Internet sites may not meet the needs of students with a collective sense of self unless used as supplements to more relational processes, such as having a culturally sensitive group facilitator on site during distance education courses. In addition, life-skill learning arenas, including counseling services, need to be developed that assist students with a connected sense of self to process and develop skills through relational means.

### ***Sensing/Interpreting/Knowing***

The Sensing/Interpreting/Knowing of ethnic identity outlines a continuum of modes for validating and absorbing information. A student who uses the mind as the primary tool for gathering and interpreting knowledge is likely to do well in traditional learning environments. This type of learning is often validated and rewarded through test taking and step-by-step, additive learning processes. Students from cultures that value and teach the use of mind, body, and spirit as interactive tools for gathering and interpreting knowledge are likely to feel cut off and confused in these same learning environments. Gardner's (1993) work outlining seven intelligences (verbal, logical, musical, visual, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and physical) reinforces the need for understanding the many ways people make sense of the world around them. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) validates both people who use the five senses as well as their primary tools for

knowing, yet learning environments typically ask for more “concrete” proof. This can be problematic for many learners. For example, an East Indian law student in a study on knowledge shared that she felt “unable to express my intuitive knowing in scholarly environments because my sense of knowing isn’t considered proof, and ‘their way of proof’ is required” (Chávez, 1995, p. 6). For the learner who listens closely to intuition, bodily signals, dreams or spiritual guidance, this singular mode of learning is likely to be unfamiliar and constraining.

Students raised using more than the mind as guide are likely to need time for reflection, activities that broaden the exploration of knowledge such as the use of metaphor, drawing, or music to make sense of their ideas, understand theory, or solve problems. In addition, alternative sources of knowledge such as intuition and dreams must be considered as valid if we are to work with many of the world’s cultures (Deloria, 1999). Often, minority and international students are raised using more than the logical abilities of their mind as a guide for knowing. Educators need to create learning environments that encourage, use, and develop more than what we have traditionally defined as the mind in western societies.

Educational techniques using a wider sense of knowing can aid all learners by challenging and supporting different kinds of learning styles (Claxton & Murrell, 1987). For example, when educators create only test-taking contexts that are timed on a computer, and in a constrained environment, those students who have been taught to rely on reflection, movement, discussion, dreams, drawing, and other tools to solve problems are effectively debilitated. As result, learning is not adequately evaluated. A Hopi medical student expressed frustration at having to “translate the White man’s education into symbols that made sense” (Chávez, 1995, p. 10). This learner’s note-taking is primarily in the form of symbols and drawings rather than words. Using only the mind or limited parts of it also does little to broaden problem-solving skills of learners comfortable within this constraint and severely limits those who are accustomed to utilizing a wider collection of knowing tools. Educators will be more likely to appropriately evaluate student learning through the use of a variety of evaluation methods throughout a particular learning situation. By utilizing techniques from both ends of this continuum, students are challenged to learn from methods of evaluation that are comfortable and natural and from methods that are new to them and promote new skills.

### ***Ethnic Community Responsibility***

Ethnic Community Responsibility is a construct outlining the extent to which specific individuals feel personal responsibility for their own cultural community. Many cultural groups who have experienced long-term oppression have banded together for protection, support, and the retention of cultural traditions and values. These expectations are transmitted overtly through verbal direction and indirectly through oral histories, stories, and role modeling, and/or may be a result of seeing the plight of persons in their cultural group and feeling a responsibility to make things better. There are strong indicators that individuals from legally defined

minority groups often come to learning environments because of and with a strong responsibility for gaining education for the express purpose of creating a better world for *the people of their origins*. Their experience is a catalyst for a sense of responsibility for others within one's group as well as for human rights in general.

A sense of responsibility has direct implications for students' learning environments that often seem normed around the concepts of individuality, competitiveness, and abstraction rather than implications and applications of knowledge (Deloria, 1999). Educators must understand that students with tendencies on the right side of these continua are likely to live by concepts of success based in a priority of family and culture above work or even education. Many of these students are likely to be interested in education as the development of wisdom rather than knowledge; wisdom acquired specifically for the benefit of their cultural community. A Navajo student questions, "How do I live up to my responsibilities when I come to a university that imparts not wisdom or humanity but only facts, and many of them limited or harmful to future generations?" (Chávez, 1995, p. 12). This sense of cultural responsibility reaches across to other oppressed groups. Activist Cherrie Moraga (1983) wrote,

I think: what is responsibility to my roots: both white and brown, Spanish-speaking and English? I am a woman with a foot in both worlds. I refuse the split. I feel the necessity for dialogue. Sometimes I feel it urgently. But one voice is not enough, nor two, although this is where dialogue begins. (p. 58)

The Responsibility Construct is likely to influence the amount of time and type of priority a student places on formal learning outside their culture. Educators need to understand the balance that students with a strong sense of cultural responsibility or collectivity must walk daily. Similar to many working class learners, these students are not likely to have the luxury of placing non-interpretive education as their first priority, as they must maintain responsibilities to the culture in which they live or are grounded. In addition, these learners may wish to place knowledge in the context of their culture and may value that which can be directly applied. Educators can assist students by ensuring the inclusiveness of curricula, working with their needs on a case by case basis, facilitating consideration of the implications of knowledge gained to communities of origin, and developing highly flexible and diverse learning techniques and environments that respond to a wider variety of community and cultural expectations. Thomas (1992) urged us not to change the cultures of our people but rather to develop the operational cultures and practices of our organizations in multiculturally competent ways.

### ***Cultural Imprinting***

The Cultural Imprinting construct outlines the extent to which a particular individual is immersed in a specific and deeply lived cultural environment. To varying degrees, individuals are raised in environments where cultural imprinting of traditions, behaviors, social norms, values and expectations are overt, deeply held, and consistently transmitted. These imprinting environments can be limited to a family unit or can be as broad as an entire community and still have a strong ethnic/cultural



identity development influence. On the other hand, some individuals are raised in environments where cultural imprinting is done in invisible ways by teaching core principles, norms, and behaviors with an absence of identified connection to the cultural origins of these principles. Either of these processes can occur within extremely homogeneous or extremely multicultural communities and regardless of ethnic/cultural origin. For example, there are strong openly Norwegian and German communities in the Midwest as well as communities in which whole groups proudly proclaim they are American and not ethnic. In both types of communities and families, cultural transmission takes place; however, differences exist. In the first type of community, cultural transmission is overt and consciously embraced. In the latter, much cultural transmission still occurs, yet it is often unconscious and framed as voluntary choices of behavior and values rather than cultural transmission. Individuals from these two polar types of cultural communities, as well as those in-between, will all enter and negotiate learning environments differently.

When ethnic identity is unconscious, individuals are more likely to expect and even insist that their cultural norms and values are inherent in the educational environment. These individuals are often less able to negotiate multicultural environments than those who already have experience in dealing with culture overtly. For these students, creating an educational environment that disrupts these "invisible" norms will assist them to enhance learning, develop multicultural skills, and hone broader critical thinking abilities. By utilizing a wide variety of Gardner's intelligences and Myer's-Briggs personality norms in learning environments, educators are able to challenge culturally unconscious learners to develop a variety of ways of thinking, processing, and applying knowledge.

In contrast, those with conscious ethnic identity are more likely to be highly adept at negotiating multicultural environments, yet are also likely to struggle with a context that prioritizes only ways of doing and values inconsistent with their cultural norm. In addition, students culturally visible in some way (by accent, skin color, or last name) are likely to have their ethnic identity pointed out to them regularly, such as this Jewish student's high school experience, "I guess I understood what an oddity I was. My social studies teacher made me realize it. On the day classes began, he called my name from the attendance sheet... 'Goldman, eh? So you're Jewish?' 'I nodded'" (Goldman, 1991, p. 257). Educators must work to assist these students in feeling welcome and aware of the strength of the skills they bring naturally to learning as well as to challenge them to stretch into new areas and techniques. Educators benefit learners on all points of this continuum by assisting them in deconstructing the cultured nature of their identities, work environments, student clubs and organizations, academic majors, and group process, as well as the subject matter and its application.

### ***Ethnic/Racial Contrast***

The Ethnic/Racial Contrast construct outlines the most evident trigger or catalyst for a student's conscious sense of having an ethnic or racial identity. Living, learning and working in environments that are normed on a culture or cultures different from

one's own is likely to cause individuals to become aware and even hyper-aware of their own cultural identity. Ways of doing things, values, beliefs, and assumptions become painfully obvious when we are in contexts where we are the outsider or "foreigner." For individuals experiencing ethnic or racial privilege, or insider status, there is very little to trigger consciousness of an ethnic self (McIntosh, 1989). Norms and values remain unquestioned and even taken for granted in most contexts. For those who experience racial or ethnic oppression or outsider status, consciousness of an ethnic identity is almost unavoidable as an attempt is made to negotiate norms not their own. In some cases, the pressure to assimilate to values of a mainstream culture affects behavior within the personal culture itself as in this bi-racial family:

There was definitely a hierarchy of beauty, which was the main currency in our daughters-only family. It was not until years later, from the vantage point of this country and this education that I realized this hierarchy of beauty was dictated by our coloring. We were a progression of whitening, as if my mother were slowly bleaching the color out of her children. (Alvarez, 1998, p. 139)

Vontress (1996) wrote about the histories and emotions that individuals from outsider and oppressed cultures bring with them into formal relationships with educators and counselors. He suggested that persons interpret and experience every situation from a vantage point of privilege or oppression. Educators working with students must consider the real concerns and challenges students of color bring to any learning environment. Survival for many in this country means initially *not* placing trust in people from other racial and ethnic groups, crafting a strong radar for determining the sincerity of others, and experiencing a lack of cultural self-identification represented in most histories, ways of doing things, and values.

Triggers such as privilege or oppression, cultural messages, media portrayal, and educational inclusion affect the likelihood of ethnic consciousness. Many Caucasian European individuals in the United States do not have these triggers as catalysts for a consciousness of their ethnic identity (Chávez, Guido-DiBrito, & Mallory, 1996). It is important to understand that even without consciousness, these individuals often possess a strong ethnic identity built from familial, educational, and societal transmission of values, assumptions, behaviors, and priorities. Many minority individuals do have a conscious sense of ethnic identity because of the many triggers outlined previously and because of overt cultural messages within their communities. Educators can create effective learning environments by working with students who are cultural insiders and outsiders to create the most effective multicultural learning environments. Healthy learning climates are enriched by sustaining relationships long enough to build trusting rapport, by suspending judgment about students and constantly asking them about their needs, and by learning as much as possible about the histories of various cultural group experiences. By developing ways to draw from the multitudinous wisdom our students bring into a learning environment, educators benefit all students.

### **Challenges for Learning and Teaching in a Multicultural World**

It is difficult to understand the culturally constructed nature of educational environments and to develop an awareness of the effect of our own culturally defined sense of learning. Difficulties arise for many domestic and international students of color when they attempt to negotiate learning environments constructed by a different ethnic base of values, behaviors, beliefs, and assumptions. The unquestioned norms of individuality, competition, linear thinking, and compartmentalization of subject matter serve as foundations for the construction of United States learning environments. For a Native American, Laotian or Samoan learner, who is likely to have been socialized in a worldview based on collective rather than individual identity, where competition is appropriate only on the sporting or game field, where thinking is circular and life is conceptualized as interconnected rather than compartmentalized, most mainstream American learning environments are confusing and almost non-negotiable. If oppressive elements and isolation are added by peers and educators, learning is unlikely at best as the student becomes increasingly embattled within the learning environment. For students raised with these constructs as the norm, such as those from most Caucasian European American ethnic groups for which these learning environments were created, learning is often proven effective and comfortable. Although this may seem on the surface to be a good thing, this comfortable cultural environment is not likely to be enough of a catalyst to assist students with a monocultural lens in developing the critical thinking, multicultural skills, awareness, and knowledge necessary to negotiate the immense diversity in United States and global societies. In this learning environment, multiple perspectives are less likely to be explored making complexity and critical thinking more difficult to grasp and practice.

As educators, we have the wonderful challenge of creating multicultural learning environments that both empower and challenge each of our students to grow from wherever they begin their journeys toward a more culturally enlightened and adaptable educational perspective. However, we must also challenge ourselves. Educators must consider their own ethnic/cultural identity when constructing learning processes. As educators, we bring our own strongly imprinted sets of norms, values, behaviors, and assumptions into learning environments as well. Ongoing reflection and self-analysis of the daily influence of these cultural aspects is essential for higher education and student affairs educators to be effective in creating multiculturally competent learning environments. We recommend that educators utilize this set of continua as well as other tools to first consider their own cultured influence in the learning environment and then apply these tools to reengineer learning environments on an ongoing basis. By considering the impact of our own identities on our professional practice, we are better able to develop as multicultural educators, and thus, better able to effectively facilitate the development of all our students.

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Figure 1.

A Culturally Responsive Framework for Learning and Teaching in a Multicultural World

***Cultural Constructs***

Individual -----***Sense of Self in Relation to Others***-----  
 Collective, Connected

Mind as Guide -----***Sensing/Interpreting/Knowing***----- Mind, Body,  
 Spirit as Guide

For Self as Individual -----***Ethnic Community Responsibility***----- For Cultural  
 Community

Unconscious -----***Cultural Imprinting***-----  
 Conscious

Cultural Insider -----***Ethnic/Racial Contrast***-----  
 Cultural Outsider

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## **Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors of College Students**

Erin Cross     Rustain Morgan

*Sex seems to be everywhere—including the college campus. However, today's college students appear to have different sexual attitudes and behaviors than previous generations. Reviewing the history of the sexual revolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provides a clearer picture of why college students have their current attitudes and beliefs regarding sex. Students today have received more sex education than any other generation, as a result the college's need to reconsider whether their sex education programs are working for their students. Several colleges and universities are trying innovative approaches to sex education to meet the changing needs of college students.*

Jerry Springer's guests usually fight over it. Hugh Hefner has immortalized it. President Clinton was accused of doing it in the Oval Office. Viagra has helped many with it. What is it? S-E-X. The media is filled with stories, photos, and images about sex. It seems as if everyone is talking about it, but who is really doing it?

This article will provide a brief history of the sexual revolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of the United States, followed by current research on the sexual attitudes and behaviors of college students. Current programs, policies, and practices of higher education institutions will be examined and recommendations made as to how colleges and universities can best provide services to today's sexually active college students. For the purposes of this article, current college students are defined as traditional aged students who began college as early as 1997 or as late as 2002. This paper also focuses solely on heterosexual sexual behavior, as the unique attributes of each population do not allow for comparisons in this paper.

### **The Sexual Revolution**

In this era of great change—in manners and morals, science and technology, art and literature—America has been on the vanguard. Its attitudes toward sexuality has changed from a rigid propriety to an exhilarating celebration and, some believe excess (Hefner, 1999, p. ix).

“Many of the issues we debate today—sexual expression, sex education, birth control, abortion, disease, law—were first framed at the turn of the century” (Hefner, 1999, p. x). In order to fully understand the sexual behaviors and attitudes of current college students, an examination of history is necessary. History provides a context in order to best understand how sexuality has evolved throughout modern history.

In the early 1900s, “America believed in the purity of women, whether it was good for them or not. Men had sexual appetites, women did not” (Peterson, 1999, p. 10).

However, purity was stressed for both men and women, as parents could order pamphlets that included *What a Young Boy Ought to Know* or *What a Young Husband Ought to Know* all written by clergymen (1999). Sex education of the early 1900s focused on anti-masturbation and stressed that purity and sexual repression made a man of character (1999).

As hemlines of skirts rose in the 1920s, so did sexual behaviors of adolescents, “The twenties saw the abandonment of the Victorian women, that angelic being free from the taint of sexual desire” (Peterson, 1999, p. 77). The most significant impact came as a result of the change in courtship rules, “Instead of suitors and proper daughters, America now had created two new creatures: boyfriends and girlfriends” (p.76). Dating rituals and sexual activities and behaviors continued to evolve slowly over the next forty years until the explosion of the sexual revolution in the 1960s.

The Food and Drug Administration approval of the birth control pill in the 1960s changed sexual behaviors for women forever. “By the end of the decade, more than six million women would be on the Pill, performing a daily ritual once occupied by worry beads; its dispenser the badge of the new liberated woman” (Peterson, 1999, p. 261). The Pill was most readily embraced by college-aged women who wanted to have sex without the fear of pregnancy, while still pursuing their education (Peterson, 1999; White, 2000).

The impact of college-aged students on the sexual revolution was clearly demonstrated in a study entitled *Sexual Behavior in the Seventies* conducted by Morton Hunt in 1972. The single most important factor in this study was age. “Those under twenty five [college students] were growing into a lifestyle that was dramatically more pleasure-prone than their elders” (Peterson, 1999, p. 337). The 1970s also came with an increase in the percentage of young people engaging in premarital sex and an increase in the number of sexual partners (Peterson, 1999).

While the 1970s were an era of casual sex and spontaneous sex, the discovery of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in the 1980s led to a change in sexual attitudes and practices for many. Fear of AIDS caused many individuals to rediscover the traditional values of fidelity, obligation, and marriage (Peterson, 1999). In the 1980s, “caution” and “commitment” replaced the 1970s buzzword of “free love” (Peterson, 1999). All of these factors led to a current generation of what *Playboy* says are students who “incorporated caution and creativity” into their sex lives (Peterson, 1999, p. 457).

### **Current College Students**

Current college students have heard stories about the ‘free love’ of the 1960s and 1970s and have been taught the fear of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). As a result of hearing and learning from these two different generations, students are safer, but more experimental than previous generations (Peterson, 1999). This has resulted in a student unlike any higher education has encountered. The



unique characteristics of current college students' sexual attitudes and behaviors are discussed here.

A 1998 survey found that only 15 percent of college students chose to remain virgins throughout their college experience (Eschbacher, 2002). Similar findings were reported by Elliott and Brantley (1997) in the largest and most comprehensive study on college student sexuality to date. Even more shocking is the age at which teenagers are now losing their virginity. "A third of all freshmen [in highschool]--primarily 14 and 15 year olds--have had sex... By senior year, that number swells to nearly two-thirds" (2002, p. 2). As a result, many students are coming to college with pre-established sexual behaviors.

While there has been an increase in the number of students engaging in sexual activity, their age of the first sexual encounter is also decreasing, "Students set seventh grade as the starting point for oral sex" (Remez, 2000, p. 300). Deborah Roffman, a sexuality educator asserts that "girls sometimes look at oral sex as an absolute bargain--you don't get pregnant, they think you don't get diseases, you're still a virgin and you're in control since it's something that they can do to boys (whereas sex is almost always described as something boys do to girls)" (Remez, 2000, p. 301). Interviews with eleventh and twelfth graders reveal that they view oral sex as "something you can do with someone you're not as intimate with" (Remez, 2000, p. 301) and carry these beliefs with them as they enter the college environment. Many students do not consider oral sex to be 'sex', and as a result, many who classify themselves as virgins have engaged in this type of behavior. Traditional sex education has not focused on oral sex, or its potential dangers, as many teenagers seem to be especially misinformed about the STD risks of oral sex (Remez, 2000). While students have been encouraged to use a condom during sex to prevent the spread of AIDS and other STDs, the same message is not given regarding oral sex.

Living in the era of AIDS education, the lesson students learned was that sexual intercourse was accepted as long as they used a condom (Peterson, 1999). Despite these lessons taught, only 45% of college students are always having safe sex (Elliott & Brantley, 1997). Although, students have much more factual education about the dangers of sex than previous generations, they still choose to engage in high risk behavior. A study of students in a college human sexuality course showed that few students would abstain from sexual intercourse to prevent STDs and HIV (Feigenbaum & Weinstein, 1995). These results reinforce the notion that college students are still sexually active in spite of the high incidence of STDs and that few students are consistently practicing safe sex (Feigenbaum & Weinstein, 1995).

One of the most common reasons college students state for not practicing safe sex is the influence of alcohol or other drugs on the decision making process. MacDonald (1996) researched four studies that tested the hypothesis that alcohol decreases the likelihood of condom use during casual sex. The survey results provide strong evidence that alcohol use is associated with a decrease in condom use (MacDonald, 1996). According to Elliott and Brantley (1997), 76% of college students have had

sex with a partner who was drunk or high, and many of these students do not engage in safe sex.

Media has impacted today's college students' sexual attitudes and behaviors more than any previous generation (Fields, 2002). "Sexual expression has been a significant theme in youth culture for generations. Today, however, sexually explicit content is the cornerstone of youth-oriented music, their approach to style and fashion, radio, television and film, the music video culture, and cyberspace" (Fields, 2002, p. 18). The creation of the Internet has been particularly influential; "Sex is reported to be the most frequently searched topic on the Internet and the pursuit of sexual interests on the Internet or "cybersex" is a remarkably common activity for users" (Cooper, Delmonico, & Burg, 2000, p. 6). People believe the Internet provides them with a cloak of anonymity, making it safe to engage in these types of behaviors, without "getting caught." They are also able to search topics of interest without embarrassment. With high-speed internet connections in most residence halls, students are able to access sexually explicit material as well as participate in cybersex from the privacy of their own room.

### ***Sex Education in Higher Education***

The extent to which colleges and universities should be offering sex education is a debate that has existed for years. The discussion used to be about whether to teach abstinence or contraception. Although these topics continue today, the debate around sex education has also recently included whether controversial topics such as abortion, masturbation, sexual orientation, and sexual response and dysfunctions should be covered (Feigenbaum & Weinstein, 1995). The sex education topics becoming most prevalent in higher education include: (a) increasing the breadth of students' information about sexuality; (b) affecting their attitudes so that the likelihood of participation in safer sexual behaviors increases, especially in view of HIV and AIDS; (c) teaching students to accept their own sexual orientation and increasing their tolerance and understanding of a variety of sexual orientations; and (d) promoting an understanding of, and appreciation for, gender differences and similarities (Feigenbaum & Weinstein, 1995):

Most colleges and universities realize that some sort of sex education must be present. Contrary to the "don't do it, and if you do, don't get caught" days of old, when the bulk of sexual health resources on campus focused on pregnancy prevention or 'family planning', today's postsecondary institutions offer an array of student support services focusing on sexual health and sexual responsibility. (Fields, 2000, p. 18)

Typical educational efforts range from condom distribution and information on birth control to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and workshops on appropriate relationship behavior and protection against sexual assault. Experts in the field consider these types of services an essential part of ensuring the overall well-being of the campus community (Fields, 2002).

Current college students have been in sex education classes for years and are perhaps the most well-educated generation thus far. When it comes to sex, many college

students believe they have heard it all. Most students have been inundated with sex education throughout junior high and high school (Elliott & Brantley, 1997). How can colleges and universities continue to educate students and provide support services for these students? Student affairs professionals and sex educators across the country are developing new and innovative ways to continue to teach sex education to the students who believe that they know it all.

### **Innovative Programs for Teaching Sex Education**

An innovative sex education program at Coppin State involves covering sexual issues in the college's first year seminar course, which is a required course for graduation (Fields, 2002). Coppin State has integrated this into a required class, rather than an elective course on sexuality because administrators at the university believe that, "reaching students early with information about appropriate sexual behavior and maintaining their sexual health is key" (Fields, 2002, p. 18).

Other campuses are throwing away the textbook and lecture method of teaching sex education and utilizing a multimedia approach to sex education. Television and radio programs such as *Loveline* and *Dr. Laura* have generated interest in the use of popular media as an outlet for dealing with personal problems, including sexual problems and relationships. College radio, can also be used to inform listeners about topics such as relationship issues, AIDS, women's issues, crises, condom use, and other relevant student issues such as self-esteem, gender roles, and anger (Zwibelman & Rayfield, 1982). Outcome research has shown that such programs can have positive effects in multiple areas, including increasing condom use (Middlestadt, Fishbein, Albarracin, Francis, Eustace, Helquist, & Schneider, 1995) and increasing awareness of how to respond to critical incidents (White & Rubenstein, 1984). Kansas State University has taken to the air waves to broadcast sex education on the campus radio station. Their weekly show, *Lafaneline*, provides sexual education information to both university students and the surrounding community (Van Haveren, Blank, & Bentley, 2001).

Many college campuses are utilizing the multimedia approach through the use of the Internet. Colleges and universities have begun providing information on safe sex and STDs on their health center or wellness web pages. Princeton University operates a website on emergency contraception called "not-2-late.com" (<http://ec.princeton.edu/>). This allows students to access accurate, up-to-date information under the anonymity of the World Wide Web. Educators may soon provide on-line quizzes, similar to those in place with alcohol education, which allow a student to see if their activities put them 'at risk.' These types of quizzes are currently used to allow students to engage in self-assessment and to learn how to have safer sex.

Another innovative approach to sex education involves cultural competency among health educators. Cultural competency involves diversifying the health care and sex education staff, as well as sensitizing them to various cultural issues related to student health. In addition, cultural competency includes encouraging peer

involvement from diverse students to diverse students. Traditional sex education does not always include the unique perspectives of students of color, male students, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered individuals. By using cultural competency sex education the university is able to improve its quality of outreach and ongoing communication with these underserved populations (Fields, 2002).

One of the more radical suggestions from sex experts is to teach the “actual how-to of sex” (Elliott & Brantley, 1997, p. x). Psychologist and sex therapist Bernie Zillbergeld argued that educators who are demonstrating how to put on a condom, but not explaining what to do after the condom is on, are creating a great deal of unnecessary human suffering. “Being misinformed and unskillful in sex leads to horrible and widespread problems: in personalities, in relationships, and of course, in sex itself” (Elliot & Brantley, 1997, p. x). *Sex on Campus* (Elliot & Brantley, 1997) suggests humans should be educated on how to masturbate, perform oral sex, and act out other behaviors and understand what they should do if problems arise in these areas, in addition to knowing how to protect oneself and one’s partner from the risks of sex.

### Conclusion

The sexual attitudes and behaviors of college students have changed throughout the recent history, as has sex education. What has been created is a generation of college students who are more knowledgeable about sexual positions and protection than previous generations of students. This has resulted in a generation who engages in sexual experimentation earlier than ever before, dangerously mixes alcohol and sex, and can access sex or sex information 24 hours a day with just the click of a mouse. Consequently, sex educators are forced to find new ways to reach this population of students. Inundating students with information during their required classes, utilizing multimedia approaches, and increasing cultural competency among health educators are all innovative ways that educators are successfully bringing sex education to the college campus. However, the dangerous sexual behaviors that college students engage in are not likely to go away over night; educators must continue to be diligent and creative in their efforts to educate young adults.

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*Erin Cross ('03) currently works as a Program Advisor in Residence Life at Colorado State University and is a graduate student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education program.*

*Rustain Morgan ('04) currently works as a Coordinator for Central Programming and Leadership Development in Residence Life and is a graduate student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education program.*

## **Changing Demographics and Generational Shifts: Understanding and Working with the Families of Today's College Students**

Jody Donovan

*The changing demographics of today's college students are examined in this article with specific focus on the unique characteristics of the Millennial Generation, Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation. In addition, significant parental and familial influences on college students' enrollment, adjustment, and persistence are discussed. Based upon this literature review, a series of recommendations are offered, addressing the responsibility of student affairs and all higher education leaders to understand and meet the needs of the families of today's college students.*

Colleges and universities across the nation are experiencing dramatic changes in their student populations. As a new generation of students arrives on campus, they bring new expectations regarding the relationships between higher education institutions and their families. For the purposes of this article, family serves as an inclusive term for parents, guardians, siblings, grandparents, partners, and other relatives. The level of all types of familial involvement in students' lives has increased significantly over the past decade (Forbes, 2001), and higher education leaders' recognition of varying family structures is critical in working with today's diverse college students and their families.

This article examines the changing student demographics, the significant impact of the new "Millennial Generation," and their families' influence on four-year, primarily residential college and university campuses. Recommendations for higher education leaders are offered to address the needs of this new generation of students and their families.

### **Demographics**

What may have been considered a traditional student is no longer the majority on today's college campuses. Gone are the days of a majority student population described as white, male, middle-class, single, 18-22 years old, residing on campus and working less than 10 hours a week (Levine & Cureton, 1998). Today's college students are more likely to be racially and ethnically diverse, over 25 years of age, female, attending school part-time while working full-time, or commuting from off campus (College Board Online, 1999).

Higher education leaders pay attention to the U.S. Census projections regarding the number of 18-24 year olds in each state in order to anticipate and plan for enrollment increases and decreases (Keller, 2001). These higher education professionals note that the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the College Board anticipate significant increases in the enrollment of underrepresented populations in public, private, four-year, and community colleges. Utilizing the demographics of students

taking the college entry exams each year, ETS estimates an increase of over three million college students by 2015. Underrepresented students will make up two million of that increase (ets.org, 2000). For definitional purposes, underrepresented students in these reports are identified as African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and other diverse racial and ethnic groups (ets.org, 2000).

The ETS addressed the changes, challenges, and opportunities these new students bring to campuses across the nation, in a study entitled *Crossing the great divide: Can we achieve equity when generation Y goes to college?* (2000). This publication documents the anticipated increasing enrollments for each underrepresented population listed above. According to ETS estimates, Hispanic undergraduates will increase by one million students and will become 15.4 % of the college population by 2015. The Asian/Pacific Islander undergraduate population will experience the greatest percentage increase between 1995 and 2015, from 5.4% to 8.4%, with an anticipated increase of 600,000 students by 2015. Black undergraduate students will no longer be the second largest minority population on campus by 2006; the report estimates 400,000 more Black undergraduates by 2015 (ets.org, 2000).

Colleges and universities must recognize that many of these new students will be the first generation in their family to attend college. In 1999, approximately 36% of the students taking the SAT noted that their parents had not finished high school or had only achieved a high school diploma (College Board Online, 1999), whereas over 60% of the students reported that their parents attended some college. The levels of parental education has increased over the past ten years, with 58% of the students reporting that their parents attended some college in 1989 (College Board News, 2001). Interestingly, the students born in the late 1990s are more likely to have mothers who are better educated than their fathers (Howe & Strauss, 2000). This data presents a significant gap between those students who are first generation college students and those who have parents or family members who have navigated their way through higher education. An awareness and readiness to support first generation students and their families, as well as providing different services to those students and families who are familiar with higher education, is critical.

In addition to varying parental educational levels, there are other social differences to describe the family backgrounds of today's college students. These significant differences pose new challenges for colleges and universities. For example, today's college students are more likely to be raised in a single parent household (32%), to experience living below poverty-level (23.1%), and to have a mother who works outside of the home (89.4%), than previous generations of college students (AAHE-Bulletin, 1998). Students may be choosing to attend college part-time (43%) and work more than 20 hours each week (37%) as a direct result of their high school years at home, managing their time between work and school to provide income to support their families (1998). Language proficiency is also critical for college student success. Nineteen percent of students report being bilingual or identify English as their second language, compared with 16% of students ten years ago (College Board News, 2001).

In addition to the dramatic shift in student demographics, higher education is experiencing the arrival of a new generation of students and families to campus. Acknowledging the significant generational differences among this group is vital to understanding today's students.

### **Generational Shifts**

The various generations in the United States have been researched and well documented over time (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Generations “are defined by common tastes, attitudes, and experiences...particularly telling are a generation's defining moments...” (Zemke et. al, 2000, p. 16). Although these characteristics may appear as stereotypes, social demographers examine traits of numerous individuals within each age group to determine general descriptors of each cohort (2000).

Higher education leaders can identify such generational differences as the Millennial generation entering college in 2000 and colliding with the Generation X students (Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001). Accounts of demanding parents, extended long distance phone calls from families, and increasing familial interference have caused higher education leaders to examine the re-emergent influence and increased expectations placed on staff members by the families of the Millennial students (Forbes, 2001).

#### ***Millennial Generation***

The Millennial generation consists of individuals born 1982 – 2002 (Howe & Strauss, 2000). When abcnews.com posted an online survey to name this new generation, there were numerous suggestions: “Generation Y,” “Generation Whatever,” the “Boomlets,” the “Echo Boomers,” “Generation Next,” the “Oh-Ohs” (referring to the new decade), and “Generation Tech” (p. 6). Overwhelmingly, this generation prefers to be called the Millennials, signifying the technological, political and historical significance of this new generation and their distinct differences from Generation X (2000).

Howe and Strauss (2000) describe the Millennials as “special,” “sheltered,” “confident,” “team-oriented,” “achieving,” “pressured,” and “conventional” (p. 43-44). Millennials tend to respect their elders, follow the rules, and seek to create positive changes in their local communities. This generation has grown up with service-learning projects since elementary school. Rather than rebel against family values and beliefs, “most teens say they identify with their parents' values, and...‘trust’ and ‘feel close to’ their parents” (p. 8).

The Millennials can best be described with the use of a visual image of the “baby on board” placard in the back of the mini-van driven by the soccer mom, her children going to soccer practice with their shin-guards and mouth-guards already in place. The Millennial generation has always known seatbelts, car seats and bike helmets,



and is the most cared for and overprotected generation of children in U. S. history (Howe & Strauss, 2000). “Today’s parents are going to unprecedented lengths to avoid their worst fear--that harm will befall their child” (Forbes, 2001, p. 12), and thus, students are sheltered from the important learning that takes place when making mistakes.

The Millennial generation is accustomed to hypervigilance, in part because families are smaller. “The median number of siblings related to each child has fallen from two to one (meaning that over half of all kids today have one or no sibling)” (Howe & Strauss, 2000, p. 81). Children from large families learn how to share and resolve conflicts. However, because Millennials tend to be only children, they lack the familial experiences to learn how to share, as well as develop much needed conflict resolution skills within the family structure. Nonetheless, as previously mentioned the Millennials bring forth a number of exciting and positive characteristics which are welcomed by higher education leaders weary of the Generation X students on campus.

### ***Generation X***

The descriptors are significantly different for Generation X, who are viewed as “castaways,” “at risk,” “neglected,” “aggressive,” “slackers,” and “alienated” (Howe & Strauss, 2000, p. 44-50). Generation X students were born between 1961 and 1981, tended to be raised in day-care, and were set aside to make room for their parents’ fulfillment. They have excelled in underachievement according to all societal perceptions (2000). The lack of societal standards amidst the major political, social, economic, and cultural turmoil of the past twenty years is considered a major contributor to the demise of Generation X (2000). The authors of *Generations at Work* ask, “Breathes there a cohort group with a soul more dark or with such an edgy skepticism about them?” (Zemke, et al., 2000, p. 21). The Generation X students are characterized as selfish, apathetic, complaining, and alienated, hardly a population to celebrate on campus.

### ***Baby Boomers***

As the Millennials are characteristically different from the previous Generation X students, the Baby Boomer parents are radically dissimilar to parents of previous generations as well. Baby Boomers, the parents of the Millennials, were born between 1943 – 1960 (Zemke et. al., 2000). Baby Boomers are older parents, most having delayed starting a family until they achieved their own personal and professional accomplishments (or are still working on their personal and professional accomplishments). Planned parenting for later-born Baby Boomers meant using fertility drugs rather than contraception (Howe & Strauss, 2000). This delay in child rearing has numerous implications for the Baby Boomers as well as their Millennial children, not to mention higher education institutions.

Baby Boomer parents are now “sandwiched” between their children and their aging parents. Kingsmill and Schlesinger (1998) coined the term “cluttered nest” to

describe the phenomenon of adult children who return home, as well as aging parents taken into the home for additional care. Baby Boomer parents may have been prepared for the “empty nest syndrome,” only to be confronted with a “cluttered nest” that requires constant vigilance.

### ***The Silent Generation***

Growing numbers of the Silent Generation, born between 1925-1942, are serving as the heads of households in the place of the Baby Boomers who are single parents or unable to raise their children for other reasons (Howe & Strauss, 2000). One study determined that grandparents are raising an estimated 2.2 million grandchildren (Keller, 2001). Grandparents are more involved with their grandchildren, visiting each week, providing regular day care or are actually raising their grandchildren in their own home. Some hypothesize that the Silent Generation may harbor some guilt for their parenting style in raising the Baby Boomers, and thus are trying to reestablish ties by becoming more involved in their grandchildren’s lives (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Significantly, Millennials have demonstrated a return to the Silent Generation’s values and beliefs, identifying also with their grandparents’ generation (Zemke et al., 2000). Previously, higher education institutions considered grandparents only in terms of potential development or fundraising constituents rather than stakeholders in the academic lives of their students (Hill, personal communication, November 29, 2001).

These generational shifts are dramatically impacting today’s college campuses. Higher education leaders have been caught off guard by the changing demands of families of their enrolled and prospective students. Understanding and acknowledging these changes provides for a more proactive approach when working with the Millennial students and their families.

### **Familial Influences on Enrollment, Persistence, and Achievement**

Older, more financially stable, and focused on fewer children, the Baby Boomer parents of today’s college students are more involved college parents than ever before (Johnson & Schelhas-Miller, 2000). The 1980’s and 90’s concept of “letting go” as a popular mindset for parents sending their children to college has been replaced by a new attitude of ‘stay involved and protect our children from harm’ (Coburn & Treeger, 1992).

### ***In Loco Parentis***

The shift in parental involvement expectations may signal a pendulum swing back to the doctrine of *in loco parentis*, or “the idea that the university stands in for parents” (Boyer, 1997, p. 5). This framework for defining the relationship between the university and the student originated in the 1600s as universities closely monitored students’ behavior in and out of the classroom. *In loco parentis* was focused on the “power of the college or university to control and discipline students” (Forbes, 2001, p. 12). In the late 1960s students protested against curfews, dress codes, and other

forms of supervision, gaining independence and self-governance. Some researchers (Boyer, 1997; Forbes, 2001; Johnson & Schelhas-Miller, 2001; Nuss, 1998; Weeks, 2001) suggest that in this new millennium, colleges and universities are experiencing an adaptation of *in loco parentis*, best described as acting in the place of the uncle, *in loco avunculi*. An assumption is made that the uncle has the best interests of the student in mind, but has the benefit of familial distance for perspective (Nuss, 1998).

The irony of the well-fought battle for independence and the end of *in loco parentis* for the Baby Boomer college students of the 1960s is not lost when viewing these same Baby Boomers as parents, holding tightly to the reins of control over their college-age children (Johnson, personal communication, August 27, 2001). This phenomenon requires more exploration and awareness of the parents' motivations and behaviors.

### ***Changing Perspectives of Parents on Their Child's College Experience***

The dynamic of parents perceiving their college students as children rather than adults is well documented and discussed (Arnett, 2000; Conneely, Good, & Perryman, 2001; Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001; Elkind, 1994; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Johnson & Schelhas-Miller, 2000). Lengthening adolescence has enormous implications for the involvement of families and the willingness of the Millennial generation to allow their families to continue to make decisions and control their lives well into the college years. The return of *in loco parentis* may be more focused on "nurturing and protecting" students (Forbes, 2001, p. 12) and partnering with families, as the parents of today's students believe their children are less capable of self-regulation than in the past (2001).

The president of the Pennsylvania State University, Graham Spanier, speaks to the dilemma regarding parental communication about students, "We do not want to make them more childlike. But parents are constantly contacting us asking what is going on with their kids. They want *in loco parentis*" (Bonner, 1999, p. 1).

In a recent study, Arnett (2000) found that individuals in their early twenties did not identify themselves as adults because they did not believe they could be characterized as "taking responsibility for one's self, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent" (p. 474). These characteristics mark the transition to adulthood, according to those individuals studied. This new category of individuals, aged 18 to 25, has been coined "emerging adulthood" (p. 469).

The college experience is also perceived differently by Baby Boomer parents than the parents of previous generations of college students. Parents are no longer willing to allow their children to attend college in order to find themselves. The college experience is seen as an investment rather than a time for self-discovery and growth, even though the Baby Boomers were afforded this option in the 60s. Utilizing current rates, the tuition for a Millennial student's four-year degree may be second only to the family's investment in their home (Oluwasanmi, 2000). A consumermentality has led to increased accountability for higher education professionals to

deliver on the expectations of not only the enrolled students, but their families' as well (Scott & Daniel, 2001).

The Parent Project, a two-year research study, specifically asked parents about their hopes and goals for their students' college experiences (Turrentine, Schnure, & Ostroth, 2000). The study was conducted at one public and one private Southeastern university, utilizing an interactive webpage set up on two computer terminals in a residence hall lobby during the summer orientation programs at both institutions. Parents' most frequently mentioned goals for their children concerned career and job preparation, while the least mentioned goals related to developing a faith and clarifying values. Clearly, today's college students are expected to capitalize on their parents' educational investment and graduate with a job and/or specific career goals. Students may establish a clear set of values, ethics, and beliefs after career goals and a job offer are realized and if time avails.

### *Family Dynamics*

Respectful of their parents, the Millennial generation also demonstrates a return to strong attachments with their families (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Attachment theory posits "that the nature of children's relationships with their attachment figures (parents, other primary caregivers) shapes many aspects of their social-emotional and intellectual development" (Strage, 1998, p. 18).

Parenting style is another component influencing children's ability to adapt, self-regulate, and achieve. Through numerous research studies, Baumrind (1991) identified and categorized three parenting styles. Authoritative parents are "both demanding and responsive to their children" (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000, p. 11). Authoritative parents display high expectations as well as constant communication and feedback. Authoritarian parents are "demanding but unresponsive" (p. 11), holding their children to extremely high standards while withholding emotional support. Permissive or laissez-faire parents who "do not place high demands but are responsive" (p. 12) to their children, tend to delay their children's development and independence. Strage (1998) suggests that authoritative parenting "seems best for equipping students to meet the challenges of academic contexts" (p. 19). Further, authoritarian and laissez-faire parenting styles appear to fail to enable children to develop a range of self-directing, self-monitoring, and self-regulatory abilities undergirding success in academic contexts" (p. 19).

Identifying the significant adaptation skills required for students to successfully transition to college, one study examined the influence of parenting style, perception of mutual reciprocity, and several other measures and variables on college students' academic persistence and achievement (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). Mutual reciprocity is experienced when "individuals perceive each other as relative equals, respect each other's point of view, and are involved in ongoing and open communication" (p. 12). This study found a positive indirect effect of authoritative parenting style and student adjustment, suggesting that the transition for college students is eased when parents are both demanding of and responsive to their children. The study also demonstrated

a positive influence on adjustment when families exhibited mutual reciprocity and engaged in discussions regarding the university experience with their children. Finally, the study confirmed that men and women respond differently to the various factors related to the social adjustment and academic achievement processes.

Family composition may also play a significant role in college choice, enrollment, and persistence. Lillard and Gerner (1999) found that children from “disrupted families” (those families that experience divorce, death of a parent, or only one parent present in the household) are less likely to enroll in college, less likely to enroll in a selective college, and less likely to persist to graduation than those students from “intact” families. The researchers emphasized the lack of a direct cause and effect relationship, however, citing factors such as socioeconomic status, size of family, and the level of academic performance in the high school, as “a complex combination of factors, all of which are correlated with family disruption” (p. 721).

Some may point to the socioeconomic impact of being raised in single parent households as the determining factor in students’ enrollment, persistence, and achievement in college (Lillard & Gerner, 1999). However, good parenting continues to be the best indicator of success. Parents who teach and role model the important life lessons of “determination, diligence, healthy habits, and a respect for learning” give their children the greatest opportunity for collegiate success (Keller, 2001, p. 229).

The adjustment and transition experiences for students who are the first generation in their family to attend college are intensified by a lack of familial support systems that understand the nuances of higher education. Although many first-generation students initially feel support and pride from their families, they may also experience a fear of success or guilt stemming from leaving the familial culture to “sell out” to the educated, middle-class way of life. When first-generation students persist and obtain a degree, they have broken the cycle and create a path leading to higher education for other family members in the future (Hayes, 1997).

These findings support Tinto’s (1987) landmark research on college attrition and persistence factors. Tinto emphasized the necessity of acknowledging race, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds of students and their families, as well as identifying the social adaptation and academic achievement skills necessary in the first year of college. Predictors for persistence and achievement continue to be “the degree to which students become academically and socially integrated into their environment” (Strage, 1999, p. 198). Students’ families have a dramatic impact on their collegiate academic and social integration, through the families’ varying levels of support and willingness to allow their children to successfully meet the developmentally appropriate challenges on a college campus. Higher education leaders must recognize the significant influence of families on college students’ enrollment, persistence and achievement in order to develop programs and services that appropriately challenge and support today’s college students.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made with the caveat that higher education leaders must conduct ongoing assessments of enrolled students and their families in order to respond to the specific needs and expectations of both groups. These recommendations focus on changes needed in institutional culture, communicating with families, and programs and services for families of today's college students.

### ***Institutional Culture***

Institutions must determine the type of relationship they want to create with students and their families. Establishing a family friendly campus culture, with clearly articulated boundaries regarding institutional roles and responsibilities, supports the Millennial students and their families (Coburn & Woodward, 2001). Ensuring this consistent message across all offices and services prevents families from working the system to exert control over the institution or its processes (Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001).

Faculty must be educated regarding the changing demographics and generational shift occurring on college campuses today. Informing faculty of the return of the significant influence and on-going role families play in the lives of the students in their classrooms assists in creating a comprehensive institutional culture to work with students' families (Scott & Daniel, 2001).

### ***Communication with Families***

Admissions, financial aid, residence life, and other key offices must take additional time and care in working with families of first-generation college students. Intentional efforts to assess the "amount of college knowledge" (Lange & Stone, 2001, p. 24), followed by providing resources to help families play a supportive role with their college-bound and enrolled children, is crucial. Ensuring institutional publications and forms are translated into families' first language, as well as avoiding educational jargon, supports their need for information and ultimately leads to the admission and retention of first generation students. Providing staff members who can translate during orientation sessions and family programs also signals a willingness to build relationships with diverse ethnic families.

In every institutional publication and program, the varying definitions of family must be considered. Recognition of blended and stepfamilies, single parents, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered families, extended families, grandparents, and guardians provides a sense of inclusion for the Millennial student and their families (Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001).

Prospective students and their families are accessing information online now more than ever, and first impressions of the campus are often made through technology rather than the traditional campus tour (Ontiveros, personal communication, October 10, 2001). Websites, listservs, and email newsletters can communicate the

institution's values and principles, as well as provide ongoing support and resources for families while their students are enrolled.

### ***Programs***

It is crucial to acknowledge that all members of the family experience the college transition. Family orientation sessions must include an overview of the various transition stages family members may experience, in addition to the developmental processes of college students. Incorporating a component regarding separation issues and healthy adult interdependent relationships between parents and students is also helpful (Coburn & Woodward, 2001). An additional session assisting Baby Boomer parents in exploring and articulating the differences between their college experiences in the 60s and those of the current Millennial generation is also recommended (Conneely, et al., 2001). Recognizing that not all families can or will attend orientation sessions, providing literature and online resources regarding transition issues will be helpful in reaching a larger audience of students and families.

Higher education leaders must anticipate the increasing information and involvement needs of families, and therefore designate an office and/or staff person dedicated to serving families and developing family programs (Johnson & Schelhas-Miller, 2001). Intentional connections with families are more effective than relying on reactive, crisis-related interactions (Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001). Goodwill is communicated when the institution is proactive and thoughtful in the type and frequency of communication with students' families. Families are more likely to trust the institution if they feel that they have been treated with respect and are kept informed of the happenings on campus.

Arizona State University's distance education course entitled, "Student passages: A decision-making course for parents" encompasses many of the above recommendations. Parents of ASU students can log on once a week and dialogue with other parents of first year students and, with the assistance of trained professional staff members, can tackle the tough issues parents and students face on a daily basis in the college community (Carr, 2000).

### **Conclusion**

As the demographics of college students change and the influence of families on college students' enrollment and persistence increases, higher education leaders must be on the cutting edge of creating programs and services to meet the needs of students and their families. Institutions must first assess enrolled students and their families in order to know and understand their individual and subgroup needs and expectations. Institutions must also define the relationship they will have with parents and families of their students and communicate this message consistently. *In loco parentis* may have been replaced with a self-governance paradigm in the 60s, but colleges and universities must be prepared for the "*post in loco parentis*" (Boyer,

1990, p. 5) of the Millennial generation and develop their programs and services accordingly.

Higher education leaders must not be swayed from the historical values of delivering quality education and supporting students' personal development. Higher education leaders may get distracted from the core values of the institution when trying to respond to the overwhelming familial demands for increased technology, renovated facilities, convenience services, and student safety. Although families may exert a consumer mentality, it is crucial for leaders in higher education to maintain their allegiance to students' academic and personal success. If institutions articulate a consistent message of care for students first, families will develop a trusting relationship with the college or university and are more likely to become supportive partners in students' collegiate experiences.

Additional research is necessary to more clearly articulate the needs and expectations of today's college students and their families. Pinpointing the varying levels of parental and familial influence on majority and minority students' enrollment, adjustment, and persistence will also benefit leaders in higher education and student affairs as they design programs and services for the changing student and family populations on today's college campuses.

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*Jody Donovan is the Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs at Colorado State University.*

## College Students Beyond September 11<sup>th</sup>

Jennifer Frost

*On Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001, as news of the attacks on the United States spread on campuses across the nation, college students began responding to this tragedy. Despite the conflicting views of college students and the various responses from each community, educators must be aware of college students' experiences and those reactions they are still experiencing. Thus far, little research has been done exploring the effects of September 11<sup>th</sup>, yet personal testimonies and sociological studies project the impact that these events will leave on college students.*

December 7, 1941 marked the end of innocence for the United States' "Greatest Generation" (Roosevelt, 1941). For another generation, November 22, 1963 (the day of President Kennedy's assassination) holds similar significance (Zinner & Williams, 1999). Unfortunately today's college students have joined the previous generations and now have a date of their own to hold in infamy: September 11, 2001. As the world continues to come to grips with this tragedy, college students are experiencing a unique process of grieving and recovery, learning to live in the aftermath of the violent attacks made on the U.S. As the reality of this disaster sinks in, the developmental level of students impacts the ways in which they are coping with this tragedy.

Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, today's college students, like many American citizens had not experienced a situation crisis for decades. Karl Slaikeu (1990) states that a situational life crisis is one that has a sudden onset, contains a certain amount of surprise, is of emergency quality, maintains potential impact on entire communities, and includes danger. Because of their violent, calculated nature, studies have shown that crises resulting from negligence or intended harm often cause more long-term psychological damages than natural disasters (Slaikeu, 1990).

In addition, terrorist or war-like emergencies tend to be more psychologically damaging because of the inherent threat to one's national identity and way of life (Slaikeu, 1990). Incidents involving mass trauma and death are likely to lead to prolonged post-traumatic stress conditions (Sitterle, 1999). Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a grief reaction, takes on different forms in each individual and is impacted by a multitude of factors. September 11<sup>th</sup> encompassed many of these factors, such as calculated intent to harm, a threat to a nation's way of life, and the continued exposure to this tragedy in the media in the months following. Thus, these factors are likely to contribute to the student response to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

## **Contributors and Responses to the Impact of September 11<sup>th</sup>**

Based on the distinct experiences of the college lifestyle, college students have unique needs following the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Some responses to the impacts of disasters are emotional numbing, shock, disbelief, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, sadness, loss of concentration, fears of going crazy, survivor guilt, loss of security and trust, and minimization of the catastrophic incident (Wainrib & Block, 1998). Some consequences for these reactions are anger, irritability, increased substance abuse, social withdrawal, and sleep disturbance (1998). While these reactions are normal responses to tragedy, they must be continually observed to ensure students are recovering in a healthy manner.

In addition to the aforementioned factors that impact crisis response, Dunkel-Schetter (1990) offers a few stress factors that are specific to college students. First, college students inherently wrestle with pre-existing stressors as a result of concerns of academics, personal and social lives, finances, sexuality, and concerns at home (1990). In addition to the physical ramifications such stress levels create, pre-existing stressors also put students at great risk for vulnerability when faced with crises (Wainrib & Bloch, 1998).

As a result of their typically high stress levels and undeveloped coping skills, college students often deal with stressful situations by adopting self-destructive behaviors. Research shows that college students often cope with stress by abusing drugs and alcohol (Brown, 1990), acting out in violence (i.e. dating violence, hate crimes, physical assault) (Sorenson et al., 1990), and in drastic situations, suicide (Pruett, 1990).

For most individuals, the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> were a complete shock, and the disbelief continued for weeks, and for some it continues today. Research on past acts of terrorism suggest that students are struggling to cope with these events due to a lack of warning and because of the ongoing threats of terrorism following September 11<sup>th</sup> (Wainrib & Bloch, 1998). Students' physical and emotional proximity to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> may demonstrate differing impacts (Wainrib & Bloch, 1998). Those students who live near or have friends and family in close proximity of Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and New York City may naturally feel more vulnerable. Wainrib and Bloch (1998) cited another predictor of crisis response: the status of the family. Stress is intensified when a student is separated from his or her family, fears for the safety of his or her family, or experiences panic trying to locate them. The college experience celebrates the opportunity for students to begin separating from their parents. However, following September 11<sup>th</sup>, separation anxiety, especially for those students with family near the areas of attack, holds a lasting impact on the students' ability to cope with the tragedy.

### **Developmental Effect on Crisis Response**

Developmentally, college students are in a state of great transition, experiencing various conflicts and life crises, which impact their coping skills (Evans, Forney, &

Guido-DiBrito, 1998). According to Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito (1998) Chickering's theory of student development includes seven vectors, or topical areas, that a college student will experience may help in understanding how students cope with the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

A student's first stage of development according to Chickering is developing competence, which is characterized by a student who is working on physical, emotional, and interpersonal skills (Evans et al., 1998). College students generally have less advanced coping skills, which develop as a result of life experiences (Brown, 1990). As a result, they may resort to self-destructive behaviors, such as substance abuse and self-abuse, to deal with the crisis of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Also, students may begin to question their competence when they find they cannot cope with the loss of security they have experienced (Roy, 1986).

As students begin to recognize and accept their emotions, they enter stage two, managing emotions, during which they learn to express and control their emotions (Evans et al., 1998). In an unprecedented tragedy such as September 11<sup>th</sup>, many students are experiencing new and more extreme emotions than ever before. Some students find their old coping mechanisms do not work anymore and feel they are out of control from the intensity of their emotions. Following this stage, students move into the next stage, *moving through autonomy toward interdependence*. In this stage they begin understanding their emotions as individual experiences, they begin to function more independently, and they begin to gain an "awareness of their interconnectedness with others" (Evans et al., 1998, p. 39). While discovering this new sense of autonomy, a student's grieving process becomes more complicated when he or she loses a sense of security such as separated from the protection of home and family on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Next, students move towards *developing mature interpersonal relationships* in which they are developing the ability to have mature, close relationships and an appreciation and tolerance for difference (Evans et al., 1998). After September 11<sup>th</sup>, students in this stage may withdraw emotionally from new relationships in fear of future loss. Also, having developed a greater sense of selflessness, students can better empathize with the experiences of others, whether or not they themselves were directly impacted by the attacks (Roy, 1986). The *establishing identity* stage builds from all the previous stages in Chickering's theory. Developing an identity encompasses a renewed comfort with oneself, self-acceptance, and self-esteem (Evans, et al., 1998). Post-September 11<sup>th</sup>, it seems natural that students have begun to fear threats that question the stability of their lifestyle and have begun to evaluate the ethics of their culture's response to the attacks.

In later stages of their development, students are settling into career paths, solidifying their interests, and making strong life commitments as they enter the stage of *developing purpose* (Evans et al., 1998). As a result of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, students may begin to doubt the commitments they have made and abandon their purpose for one that gives back to society (Roy, 1986). Following September 11<sup>th</sup>, the media contributed to the idolization of the heroic service

professions and, as a result, students may reevaluate their contributions to the greater society (Roy). Chickering's final vector, *developing integrity*, culminates his theory by describing a student who creates a balance of one's own interests with the interests of others, develops his or her own core values while respecting the beliefs of others, and begins to balance his or her own self interests with his or her view of social responsibility (Evans, et al., 1998). As a result of September 11<sup>th</sup>, students may begin to struggle as they develop their personal value system apart from their friends and families. Students may also start to question their beliefs about terrorism and a society at war versus one at peace, and search for how that fits into their political, religious, and personal beliefs. While it may still be too early to observe the effects of September 11<sup>th</sup> on student development according to Chickering's theory, tragedies of the past suggest experiences college students will likely experience.

### **Lessons from Oklahoma City**

As student affairs professionals, it is important to recognize where students are developmentally in order to best meet their needs in coping with tragedy. To begin to prescribe a method for working with college students beyond September 11<sup>th</sup>, it may be useful to look at a past national tragedy, the national response, and the methods of healing. In 1995, Oklahoma City witnessed one of the worst terrorist attacks on the U.S. with the bombing of a nine-story government building, the death of 168 citizens, and the injuring of another 700 (Sitterle & Gurwitch, 1999). The experiences of those affected by the bombing in Oklahoma City were different from those of September 11<sup>th</sup>. However, lessons can be learned from the coping and healing of the Oklahoma City crisis and can help understand how to best help students.

People affected in the Oklahoma City attacks reported severe and long-term emotional impacts as a result of ongoing exposure to the crisis (i.e. smells, sights, sounds) and a great threat to the safety of oneself or one's family (Sitterle & Gurwitch, 1999). Further research may uncover the speculation that those students who personally witnessed the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> and those who had friends and loved ones involved in the events may undergo a lengthier recovery period.

Research from Oklahoma City referred to many of the crisis response factors discussed earlier in this article. The length of exposure to the tragedy prolonged the psychological effects of those in crisis (Sitterle & Gurwitch, 1999). In Oklahoma City, the recovery efforts continued for two weeks. After the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, it took almost a full year to complete the clean up in Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and New York City. Thus, it is important for helping professionals to consider the potentially damaging implications of the extensive coverage the events received from the media.

The final lesson learned from Oklahoma City is the importance of utilizing the first year anniversary as an opportunity for remembering. For the community of Oklahoma City, it was a day of erecting memorials, revisiting emotions of loss and helplessness, and at the same time, taking a very crucial step in the healing process

(Sitterle & Gurwitch, 1999). The strength of emotions throughout the first anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the memories brought back served as a reminder of how difficult it was to forget the crisis that occurred a year ago. The value of memorial events are immeasurable in allowing one to mourn a crisis, though the healing process will be different for every individual, in every individual crisis. Later, this article will discuss several events organized to commemorate the first anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Many of these events, typically coordinated by professionals in student affairs, offer insight as to how to meet the needs of students in crisis.

### **The Start of Research**

Though little in-depth research has been done in the past year regarding the actual impact of the events of September 11, 2001 on college students, articles and testimonials have begun to surface. Personal experiences cannot predict a generation's response, but they can project a glimpse into the future for what the long-term implications of September 11<sup>th</sup> will be on college students.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* devoted an issue on September 6, 2002 to the impact of September 11<sup>th</sup> on individuals and campus communities. The Chronicle showed how the impact of September 11<sup>th</sup> varied according to the students' experiences. Student reactions varied from no direct response to a desire or decision to leave school. A counselor from Manhattan Community College reported that as a result of September 11<sup>th</sup>, over 2,500 students withdrew from the school during the 2001-2002 academic year (Farrell, 2002). The counselor relayed that her students and colleagues continue to speak of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> as a method of coping and processing their emotions about the events (2002). This extreme example illustrates the profound impact the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> had on those in close proximity to the attacks and the importance of having outlets for students to process their emotions.

Another experience students have undergone involves the conflict of supporting or challenging the U.S. response to the terrorist attacks (Lowery, 2002). A student columnist from Minnesota experienced this when he wrote an article criticizing the U.S. policy on terrorism. In response, the writer received many heated replies condemning him for not supporting the U.S. (2002). As discussed earlier, college students are working on developing their own views and may not yet be able to understand how to handle conflicts surrounding issues about which they feel passionately.

Another serious issue affecting some students since September 11<sup>th</sup> is the increased hostility and prejudice experienced by international students from their host institutions (Morgan, 2002). The scrutiny by which international students are now being monitored creates an unwelcoming environment, and students report fearing for their safety. Some international students left the U.S. immediately after September 11<sup>th</sup> for their own protection (2002). Others remain in the U.S. but report instances of bigotry and hatred and often consider leaving (Del Castillo, 2002).

International students may begin feeling even more unwelcome when the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service starts their tracking system of all international students and faculty (Arnone, 2002). In a few short months, in over 74,000 institutions nationwide, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) plans to initiate its program to track international students and faculty who are accepted into U.S. institutions. The plan intends to monitor international students and faculty as they arrive and leave the U.S. and what they do while they are here (2002). Instituting the SEVIS program promises both financial and time intensive challenges for institutions. It is important that student affairs professionals realize that American students are not alone in their struggles surrounding September 11<sup>th</sup>. Students of all nationalities felt the impact of the violent attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> and continue to feel its reverberations (2002).

Many college students are feeling the painful effects of September 11<sup>th</sup>. At the same time, there are students across the country using this tragedy as an opportunity to commemorate those lost, and to help others heal. At the University of California, Santa Cruz, a dance company performed *Ragesties*, several numbers inspired by poems written about September 11<sup>th</sup> (Tully, 2002). This performance allowed those involved, as well as the audience members, to join together in an artistic expression of emotions (2002).

The University of Delaware (UD) art gallery organized the *Blue Sky Project*, along with university museums nationwide, for the one-year anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup> (Thomas, 2002). UD distributed blue postcards on which students were invited to share their thoughts and emotions. The postcards will be displayed on September 11, 2003. The *Blue Sky Project* was inspired by many who noticed the remarkably blue sky on September 11, 2001. Also at UD, there were performances of the play, *Ethan's People* (2002), a one-act play by a Delaware playwright. The university connected this play to the anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup> because the play concerns the realities of tragedy and loss (2002). While many students are struggling with strong emotions surrounding September 11<sup>th</sup>, fortunately, they are also finding avenues to express their emotions and support one another.

### **Conclusion**

In researching the college student response to September 11<sup>th</sup>, it is clear how much research still needs to be done in order to best meet the needs of today's college students. Having just witnessed history in the making, there has been little research conducted thus far on the impact of September 11, 2001 on college students. The projections of student response to September 11<sup>th</sup> are based solely on personal testimonies, historical lessons learned, adolescent crisis response, and the developmental theories of college students. It is too early to predict the impact the tragedy will have on today's college students, but additional time and research is needed to understand the effects of September 11<sup>th</sup> on college students as well as how student affairs professionals can best meet their needs.



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*Jen Frost ('04) currently works as a Residence Hall Director at Colorado State University and is a graduate student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education program.*

## The Troubling Issues Facing International Students Today

Lea Hanson

Jill Zambito

*As the number of international students study in the United States (U.S.) increase, it is important that college administrators become knowledgeable of laws and policies affecting this student population (Ward, 2002). International students studying in the U.S. are encountering stricter application and screening processes since the events of September 11, 2001 (2002). Due to these difficult procedures, both international students and their campus advisors may face challenging experiences both before and after the arrival of international students at U.S. institutions with the application process and during their study experience with national tracking systems.*

Today, international students face many obstacles when seeking opportunities to study in the U.S. Some of the most troubling issues are the difficulty obtaining student visas and the intense amount of tracking and monitoring of international students. According to Ward (2002):

Many of the policies and practices that have evolved over the last two decades have been the subject of careful examination and sustained discussion -- the process by which international students and exchange visitors enter the country and are monitored once they have arrived is no exception. (§ 10)

Although many of these policies have been in place for a number of years, guidelines have become stricter in the past decade with the conception of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a web based database and tracking system.

### History

Universities and colleges rely heavily on international students for income and as resources (Ward, 2002). Because these students have become such an integral part of U.S. campuses, it is essential that educators are informed about legislation regarding this student population. National associations exist with the mission to assist international students' educators in this process. International students and exchange visitor programs are enormously beneficial to our country, and their contribution to the American economy is not the only, nor the most impactful way that they are beneficial. According to Ward, "International students and visitors... bring knowledge and skills to U.S. classrooms, laboratories and businesses" (§ 3). International students also give campuses a unique level of diversity that cannot be simulated any other way, they create and promote long-term linkages between institutions in the U.S. and abroad, and they dramatically increase the knowledge and skills of domestic workforces (2002).

Terry Hartle, a Senior Vice President of the American Council on Education (2002), recently explained, "International students increase the knowledge and skills of the

U.S. workforce, boost appreciation for democracy and market based economics, give future world leaders a firsthand experience of Americans and America, and generate billions of dollars of income every year” (§ 1). Even President George W. Bush has said, “The United States benefits greatly from international students who study in our country” (Hartle, 2002, ¶ 7). Also, the government explained that half of the world leaders who agreed to support the war on terrorism first came to this country as an international student or exchange visitor (2002).

College educators are advised to have an understanding of countless laws. According to the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA), an Association of International Educators (1997), “It is naïve and dangerous to assume that education abroad, advising and program administration exist in a vacuum, apart from the legal context of U.S. higher education” (p. 351). For both U.S. students and international students, it is necessary to acknowledge that overseas programs and students who work with them are legally bound by the same guidelines as domestic programs (1997).

### **Legislation and Legal Issues Regarding International Students**

While administrators are aware of the risks and legal issues regarding international students, the subject has not been given much attention until recently. This neglect could have contributed to international educators elaborating about the positive aspects of academic exchange programs. Also, there have been few legal cases documented regarding international student issues due to institutional reasons (NAFSA, 1997), such as negative public relations and other experiences that administrators do not wish to advertise.

International student educators and administrators have demanding jobs when working with international students. According to NAFSA, international educators should keep abreast of the basic concepts dealing with numerous doctrines and statutes. Due to the lengthy number of laws and regulations international educators need to comprehend, their duty appears to be a difficult task. They must be aware of not only domestic rules, but also some international legislation; the laws of other countries (foreign laws) and international law have become increasingly important to postsecondary education (Kaplin & Lee, 1997). These understandings may come into play, for instance, when the institution sends faculty members or students on trips to foreign countries, or engages in business transactions with companies or institutions in foreign countries, or seeks to establish educational programs in foreign countries.

### **Visa Application and Acceptance**

Many U.S. institutions seek international student participation, yet it is becoming more difficult to apply and be accepted to participate at a U.S. university (Ward, 2002). The process of obtaining a student visa can be lengthy and strenuous, as explained in a press conference regarding immigration studies and foreign students (Borjas, 2002, June 25). An international student who wishes to study in the U.S.

begins the process by applying for admission to an institution. The student must then be admitted by an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)-approved university where he or she must enroll as a full-time student. When a school accepts the student, the institution must send him or her an I-20 Form, an INS required document consisting of demographical information; this form is needed in order for the student to be approved for a visa. Upon receiving the I-20, the student must take this form to a local consulate where it is reviewed and the student is interviewed. Here, the consulate ultimately decides whether or not to grant the student visa (Borjas, 2002).

Since the events of September 11, 2001, the student visa application process has become more strenuous and the likelihood of receiving a visa has decreased. Because one of the hijackers involved with the September 11th terrorists' attack was granted access to the U.S. through a student visa, it has become increasingly difficult for international students to obtain student visas to the U.S. (Toosi, 2002, August 21). Hence, many innocent students are being denied the opportunity to fulfill a dream of studying in the U.S. Some reasons for denial of an international student include the student's academic performance and preparation, as well as their ability to pay for the education, but the most frequent reason for students being denied is the perceived idea that international students have intentions of remaining in the United States indefinitely (Borjas, 2002, June 25).

Although it is sometimes just as difficult for an international person to get a tourist visa, it is usually less difficult for them to obtain a student visa. Student visas can appear quite attractive for terrorists and other mal-intended visitors because a student visa is a means for young, unmarried persons to enter into the U.S. fairly easy (Borjas, 2002, June 25). Upon entering the U.S., this same person would be in an environment where he or she would also have a good chance of finding an American spouse, which has been the case for many terrorists; this is due to the fact that there is a large population of unmarried, young people in the U.S (2002). Borjas (2002) stated that one of the objectives of the al Qaeda is "to recruit more terrorists who are American citizens, which gives the network easier access to the U.S. – more freedom of movement." In other words, marrying an American citizen guarantees the potential terrorist the opportunity to obtain a green card and ultimately citizenship (¶ 5).

### ***International Student Demographics***

Despite the recent difficulty in obtaining a visa, foreign students came to America post-September 11 in record numbers, according to an annual survey of international education (Borjas, 2002). These students came primarily to community colleges; in 1980, 155,000 student visas were granted. In 2000, that number soared to 315,000 Student visas granted (2002). Although international students benefit universities by paying out-of-state tuition, their presence is sometimes costly as schools must constantly adapt to the needs of this population.

Like domestic students, many international students rely on financial assistance for college; educational programs with high international student enrollment require increased resources including faculty and funding for assistantships, teaching and research assistantships, laboratory positions and facilities maintenance (Borjas, 2002). More specifically, changes have had to occur at the graduate level: in recent years, international students have earned 49% of all the PhD's in engineering, 35% in physical sciences, and 23% in social science (2002, June 25).

Students wishing to study in the U.S. have an even more difficult process depending on the country from which they apply. The U.S. is focusing on students from Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen with increased monitoring (Borjas, 2002). While these security concerns may be valid, it is important that admissions officers, international educators, and consulate representatives continue to allow qualified non-threatening students the opportunity to study in the U.S.

As illustrated by John Liebhardt in the Oregon Daily (2002, June 10, p. 12), "International educators and student groups fear a new set of proposed visa restrictions could be just the beginning of a harsher climate that makes it extremely difficult for the more than 500,000 international students who study in the U.S." Because of this heightened difficulty, international students who do obtain a student visa often receive approval at the last minute, therefore, administrators are sometimes left unsure of the number of international student enrollment until they show up for class. In addition to this difficult process, Students with B-1/B-2 visas, visitor visas that allow for minimal visitation periods, cannot enroll in a U.S. institution until their status is changed to an F-1 student visa.

The process of obtaining a student visa is also becoming much longer as a result of heightened security measures. Therefore, students are going elsewhere to receive an education including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Germany, and Canada (Hartle, 2002, September 9). This worries admissions officers because U.S. institutions depend on international students in numerous ways, including the important perspectives they bring about other cultures as well as their view on the American culture (Dunbar, 2002, September 16).

### ***The Tracking Process***

For many international students and their allies, the level to which they are tracked by the government is disturbing (Arnone, 2002). The government does this tracking via SEVIS; the goals of this Internet based system is for the government to "keep tabs on which applicants colleges accept, the dates on which they enter and leave the U.S., and what they are doing while in the country" (p. 33). Other information that must be reported to the INS through SEVIS includes whether or not a foreign student has arrived on campus and is actually attending classes, the student's major, and general directory information.

In reporting information to SEVIS, the institution is not only responsible for updating the student's profile each term or semester, but also every time the student

changes his or her major, changes or drops courses, transfers, drops out, or changes residences. If this information is not reported in a timely manner (generally 10 days after a change of information occurs) the student is considered to be "out of status and can face penalties including arrest and deportation" (Arnone, 2002, p. 33).

According to Ward (2002), "For as long as colleges and universities and exchange visitors' programs have been sponsoring international students and exchange visitors, we have collected information and maintained information about those individuals" (¶. 11). However, SEVIS will replace a paper-based system in which higher education institutions send carbon copies of forms to a contractor hired by the INS to enter data by hand into a computer database. In other words, the requirement to report the information is not new, but the way that educational institutions must report the information is. For the personnel on campuses, the frustrations lie in having to convert data from paper to online, or from a university database to SEVIS, which is time consuming.

There are two sides to the issue of tracking international students. On one side there are international students and their allies who feel as though this policy is a form of discrimination. On the other side are those who support the INS requirements who believe that because international students are visitors in this country and because terrorists have been found to be in the U.S. illegally via student visas, international students are not subject to the same privileges as U.S. citizens. Legally, the former concern might illustrate an unfair way of singling out individuals based solely on their ethnicity, which is discrimination and therefore a possible violation of international students' right to equal protection under Title VI. According to Kaplin and Lee (1997), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 declares, "No person in the U.S. shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded for participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (p. 545). Note that Title VI "reaches no further than the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause, which prohibits only intentional discrimination" (Kaplin & Lee, p. 576); the type of discrimination the SEVIS tracking system seems to create is indeed intentional.

Equal protection is also guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment (Kaplin & Lee, 1997). Although discrimination claims related to higher education most often come into play in regard to admissions procedures, these fundamental rights are important to consider in all arenas of higher education. Discrimination is not only the denial of a service to a person, such as the denial of admission to a university; it can also result when one has received supplementary treatment or attention, such as the extra supervision and tracking that an international student is given.

Any person who is legally in the U.S. is privileged to basic constitutional rights. Violating a person's constitutional rights of equal protection is also known as a breach of Section 1983 depending on the situation and the type of institution the student attends (public or private). In order for this alleged discrimination to not be a violation of due process, and therefore a Section 1983 claim, it would have to be

proven that there needs to be a reasonable basis for the action. In other words, there is a reasonable belief that any given international student might be a threat to the U.S.; this is something that policymakers have considered. Borjas (2002) indicated that tracking international students is not only appropriate but absolutely necessary. He stated, “[A] lack of supervision makes it very easy for foreign students to stay in the U.S. illegally after they complete their studies.” He further indicated, “Around ten percent of the three million people amnestied [in the 1980’s] were persons with temporary visas – many of them foreign students” (§ 20). People who support this viewpoint would generally believe that international students view a student visa as a “ticket in to the country” (Borjas, § 22). There appears to be a certain amount of paranoia that exists among these skeptics; many believe that in many countries there is a black market for visas to the U.S. which could jeopardize the safety of Americans.

Tancredo (2002) provided a rebuttal to Borjas’ argument inferring that the information was exaggerated. He stated, “Immigration is a good thing... for the nation, it provides a diversity that is healthy and that is economically beneficial to the nation” (§ 62). He proceeded to explain:

...when you get a better look at the true economics of immigration, general immigration, you come away with the same sort of feeling that there is a mistake [for the paranoid views of skeptics]; that we’ve been making a generalization that we have applied to immigration and specifically to the student visa part that is untrue. (§ 63)

In other words, making generalizations about our international students instills an amount of fear for little reason; it is too large an assumption. This question ultimately remains: is the tracking of international students reasonable?

According to Snow & Aurand (2002), The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) states that “any institution of post-secondary education which received funds under Department of Education programs may not disclose personally identifiable information [that was obtained from] a student’s *educational* records without the student’s prior written consent except under limited circumstances” (p. 4.3). Some of the information that is reported to SEVIS would be considered directory information. “Information contained in an educational record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed,” (p. 4.4) such as the student’s name, address, and major. Other information would not be considered directory information, such as which courses the student is enrolled in and the last time was that the student switched classes or changed majors. There are ten exceptions to FERPA; four of which are directly related to the government and/or its related officials, which include releasing information to:

...authorized representatives of (i) the Comptroller General of the U.S., (ii) the Secretary, (iii) an administrative head of an educational agency, or (iv) State educational authorities, ...state and local officials or authorities to whom such information is specifically required to be reported or disclosed, ...in connection with an emergency, to appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons, ...to



the entity of persons in a Federal grand jury subpoena or any other subpoena issued for a law enforcement purpose. (p. 4.5-4.6)

It may be easy to understand how the tracking of international students' records may fall under one or more of these categories, especially since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. It is conceivable that an international student may be a threat to the safety of others; however, it is also unfortunate that the actions of a few lead to a generalization about all international students. Overall, although the release of these records is most likely not a violation of FERPA, the reasoning behind why the policies are within the guidelines of the Act is most confusing to those that oppose the fact that the information is released.

Although the actual releasing of the records has been deemed to be within the law, the fact that "the new provisions permit a university to disclose education records, without the students' consent or knowledge, to the Attorney General or his/her designee in response to an ex parte court order" is what causes feelings of reservation in many higher education administrators and personnel (Jordan, 2002, p. 49). An ex parte order is one that is issued by the government with no consent from the party or person in question. Because the fundamental and constitutional right to procedural due process in the U.S. includes the right to receive adequate notification, the fact that international students' educational records are made accessible to others without their consent or knowledge is difficult for many to understand. The way the INS justifies the fact that these orders are ex parte is through their requirement of most foreign students to sign an I-20 form which "includes a consent provision allowing for the disclosure of information to the INS" (Snow & Aurand, 2002, p. 4.6). However, the Doctrine of Unconstitutional Conditions illustrates that no person can ask another to waive their constitutional rights. Some would argue that the requirement of a student to sign a form that also infers consent, such as that of an I-20 form, is the same as requiring the student to waive their right to give consent, which is unconstitutional.

### **Concerns for Student Affairs Professionals**

The individual student is not the only one who is at risk of having their rights violated; student affairs professionals and other university personnel must be aware of their rights to have fair warning. Representatives from a number of institutions stated that the time frame deemed by the INS is unreasonable (Arnone, 2002). Although the final version of the SEVIS program has yet to be released at this time, institutions were facing a deadline of January 30, 2003 to have all international students reported to the government. A number of institutions have reported that they may face dilemmas in meeting this deadline (2002). It is also believed by some that communication between the INS and higher education institutions is lacking. According to Arnone (2002), "Colleges blame many of the problems with SEVIS on a lack of information from the INS, particularly in communicating what it is they need to have ready for January 30" (p. 33). Finally, the training sessions the INS was planning to provide for schools have recently been eliminated, which has caused further frustration for the institutions.

Although many institutions would prefer to link their existing databases to SEVIS in order to input information, student information actually has to be put into the system one by one in order to avoid data processing problems. This is not only time-consuming, but it also requires funding. Many institutions are finding they must hire temporary staff in order to enter data fast enough.

### **Recommendations for the Government**

It is the authors' recommendation that while some of the heightened security measures remain, others should undergo modification. Effective ways to address these issues include the examination and possible modification of the visa application process; providing education to international students, their educators, and university administration; and examining whether or not the students are truly experiencing discrimination.

It is necessary that the U.S. maintain the difficult visa application process to ensure a sense of safety in the U.S., to encourage serious students to apply, and to discourage those who would abuse the student visa. Currently, student visas are granted to international students, and a renewal is not necessary for a number of years. Perhaps the student visa renewal process should be annual. A continual renewal process might provide visiting students with a greater sense of responsibility to the U.S. government as well as the institution they attend as these students would have to renew their visas in order to enroll each academic year. This way, in order to remain a student, international students would have to provide demographic information about themselves to receive their visa in the first place, as well as each time they renew it. Therefore, the student is providing the information rather than the university and the government is still able to monitor student activities.

Finally, it would be helpful to reexamine the guidelines that address the process of applying and receiving a student visa. For example, instead of receiving a visa before applying to attend a university, the international student could be given a temporary visa. For this recommendation, temporary is interpreted to be 90 days or less. Therefore, if the student enrolls in and actually attends a university, his or her visa is made active for one year. However, if the student chooses to enroll in school, but chooses not to attend classes, his or her temporary expires and they would not be permitted to stay in the U.S.

### ***Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals***

International administrators and educators need the support and financial backing from institutions to become knowledgeable of international and domestic laws and regulations. This is necessary in order to better serve international students and secure the safety of the institution. Because of the benefits international students bring to campus, institutions must provide special services for international students wishing to or currently participating in international study/exchange programs. This must be done in order to promote future international study and cultural exchanges.

It is essential that international students are not only educated on the policies of the U.S., but also that they are provided with networking and social opportunities that are aimed at making their experience in the U.S. a positive one. Many institutions require first year students to enroll in a seminar that introduces them to university policies, involvement opportunities, and college life in general. Having a similar opportunity for international students who plan on studying in the U.S. their entire college career would be wise to implement. These courses could include educational sessions, how to abide by domestic laws, obtaining a driver's license, and other practical skills as well. Today, most colleges and universities are extremely student focused and are increasingly concerned with the academic and emotional development of its students; offering a course that introduces international students to life in the U.S. as well as life on a particular college campus could be worthwhile and helpful.

### Conclusion

Since multiculturalism and global thinking are such important aspects of society and education, it is becoming increasingly popular to participate in study abroad and international partnership programs. Because of this, international administrators and educators find themselves needing to become aware of both international and domestic laws, a demanding and arduous task. Professionals working in the field of student affairs need to understand this complicated issue from all possible viewpoints; the process the international student goes through to obtain a student visa, the concerns of the government regarding terrorism and illegal aliens, and most importantly, the needs of the international students once they are on campus.

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*Lea Hanson ('03) currently works as a Graduate Advisor in the Office of Greek Life at Colorado State University and is a graduate student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education program.*

*Jill Zambito ('03) currently works as a Program Advisor in Campus Activities at Colorado State University and is a graduate student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education program.*

## Bridging the Competency Gap for New Professionals

Linda Kuk      Blanche Hughes

*In the field of student affairs, new professionals are increasingly coming from established graduate programs that emphasize a combination of theory and practice (Winston & Creamer, 1997; Snyder & McDonald, 2001). There is an increasing concern among practitioners that student affairs preparation programs are not adequately preparing students for the realities of student affairs work. At this time there is no consensus within the profession about what constitutes professional preparation within student affairs. Many seasoned practitioners also believe there is a considerable gap between what new professionals know and what they can do, and that this gap is becoming problematic to the career success of new professionals. Despite extensive training in theory and research, many new professionals are not well equipped to manage the demands of face-to-face work in the field. This article discusses the emerging concerns surrounding the issue of student affairs preparation programs, and offers some opinions about what student affairs preparation programs and the student affairs profession can do to address the perceived competency gap. A new focus on competency-based, quality assurance standards, curriculum, and outcomes may provide the key.*

“Human Capital is higher education’s principal resource, development of which is its *raison d’être*” (Winston & Creamer, 1997, p. 1). “The quality of educational practice is directly related to the creativity and quality of the performance of the people who conduct the work of the institution” (1997, p. 2). Higher education, and student affairs as the primary provider of student services within higher education, cannot achieve its goals without competent faculty and professionals who are educated and skilled to carry out the process of educating and developing students. In light of this, securing competent professionals who will continue to remain competent throughout their professional lives is one of the most important tasks facing higher education today and in the years to come.

The issue of professional competence is extremely critical for student affairs organizations. At a time when institutional demographics are changing and student enrollments are continuing to increase, students entering college are displaying greater and more complex needs than ever before. A number of recent reports and studies highlight the complex issues students bring with them to college and the escalating expectations being placed on student affairs staff to adequately address these needs (Saxon, 2001; Goldman & Malloy, 2002; Faenza & Satow, 2002). These issues and the resulting problems they present are often directly responsible for student attrition and for students not maximizing their full potential for success during their college experience. In light of these trends it is reasonable to conclude that the knowledge base and skill sets required to address these complex issues continue to change and require considerable ongoing enhancement.

Most student affairs divisions are currently struggling to deal with these issues in the midst of severe shortages in both fiscal and human resources. Given the downturn in the economy and shrinking institutional resources, student affairs organizations are experiencing enormous pressure to do more with less. In today's fiscal climate, there are little to no resources available to help student affairs staff acquire and enhance necessary skills and resources. In a study of student affairs staffing practices, Winston and Creamer (1997) found that only about half of the student affairs divisions they surveyed had a budget for staff development and about half devoted less than one percent of the divisions budget to staff development activities (p.116). The study also found that staff members are often left on their own to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be competent professionals (1997). In another study of institutional financial constraints and implications for student service programs, enhancing staff knowledge and providing staff training ranked relatively low on a list of productivity strategies (Rames, 2000). It is becoming apparent that senior student affairs officers and their directors do not have the means to ensure that each staff member receives the level of training and professional development required to ensure continued excellence in their practice.

The lack of professional development opportunities is especially problematic for new professionals. These individuals require socialization and integration into the culture of their new profession, and they are often uncertain about how to forge an appropriate staff development plan for themselves (Snyder & McDonald, 2002; Amey, 2002). New professionals may also discover barriers to their professional development such as costs of program attendance and lack of information about opportunities (Young, 1994). They are also the most vulnerable to performance expectations that are beyond their ability and confidence levels (Amey & Ressor, 2002).

### **The Role of Professional Preparation**

The transition from college life to the world of work has its share of difficulties and adjustments. This is true for students entering the work force directly from undergraduate and graduate school. Evers, Rush, and Berdrow (1998) describe this process as the "Humbling Effect." During this adjustment process, the reality of the world of work places the new employee in a humbling position of not knowing all they thought they knew. Considerable stress results from not being able to appropriately apply their knowledge in an essentially foreign culture. The results can be discouraging, and at times destructive to future career aspirations. Limited opportunities to grow professionally (Evans, 1988) has been reported as a significant factor related to attrition within the student affairs profession. The transition process can be especially problematic when the expectations from employers are considerably greater than the new employee's level of knowledge and skills (Evers, Rush, & Berdrow, 1998; Amey & Ressor, 2002).

Over the last twenty years, greater emphasis has been placed on hiring new professionals within student affairs with at least the master's level of graduate education. Winston and Creamer (1997) found that, "A combination of good

professional preparation, and experience plus good fit between staff members and institution is standard number one” for staff hiring (p. 88). Kretovics (2002) found that a master’s degree in Student Personnel/Student Affairs ranked second only to relevant assistantship experience in graduate school as the most important criteria used by hiring personnel for entry level student affairs positions.

One of the assumptions attributed to professional graduate education is that the stress and adjustment time frame is greatly reduced by the exposure graduate students have to practica and internships in work-like settings. During such an experience, the student is exposed to some of the cultural nuances and other unspoken expectations within the work world and they are directly exposed to the types of expectations they will encounter once they acquire their first job (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001; Evers, Rush, & Berdrow, 1998). These experiences are thought to level the humbling effect once the student acquires a full-time job (Evers, Rush, & Berdrow, 1998). The assumption has been that these experiences should place a graduate from a preparation program in a stronger position to be successful as a new professional.

Within student affairs, new master’s level professionals are generally hired with the understanding that they will “hit the ground running” (Winston & Creamer, 1997; Ambler, Amey & Reesor, 1994; Amey & Reesor, 2002). The assumption on the part of most college hiring personnel is that a new staff member is “qualified” for the position and therefore, should be able to perform according to expectations. However, there is often a gap between what the new student affairs graduates are supposed to know and what they actually can do. New inexperienced staff members often find themselves having to learn on the job and their success and/or failure largely depends on their ability to adjust and to learn quickly (Amey & Reesor, 2002). The new professional’s success or failure may be dependent on the size of the gap between what they have learned through their graduate program and the expectations of their new employer (Evers, Rush, & Berdrow, 1998; Amey & Reesor, 2002).

What makes for good professional preparation is becoming a serious question among many hiring practitioners within student affairs work. At this time, there is no consensus within the profession of student affairs as to what constitutes professional preparation. There is also growing concern among many practitioners that student affairs preparation programs are not adequately preparing students to face the changing demands of the student affairs profession. New master’s level professionals may be knowledgeable about theory and research, but many are not appropriately skilled in their ability to apply this theory and research to everyday practice (Amey & Reesor, 2002).

Others argue that student affairs preparation graduate programs are not effectively integrating all of the necessary components that provide a foundation for student affairs graduate students to become competent new professionals. While graduates may know student development theory and have a sound understanding of counseling techniques, seasoned practitioners see increasing disparity in these new professionals’ understanding of management theory, assessment skills, and their

ability to apply theory to practice (Amey, 2002). The experiential component of degree programs is particularly variable, however, most notably in the extent to which classroom skills and work experiences are mutually transferable” and adequately prepare students for professional practice (Amey, 2002; Ambler, Amey, & Reesor, 1994). There is also evidence that increasing numbers of graduates have not acquired the level of interpersonal and decision-making skills required to work in a diverse and multicultural campus environment (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Many new professionals also appear to know little about how organizations function and how change and political processes work within higher education settings (Amey, 2002). Informal conversations among employers of students who graduate from student affairs preparation programs reveals an increasing concern that these gaps are becoming more profound and are beginning to place their organizations at risk. If new student affairs professionals are not equipped to deal effectively with a wide spectrum of issues and they suffer dissonance from serious role ambiguity (Amey, 2002), they will not be able to meet the needs of students or address the multiple and complex demands from the university. This disparity may place new professionals at risk for errors and failures that can cause harm to students and the university. “New professionals will not likely find many quick fixes for eliminating the gap between expectations and realities as they survive and thrive in their organizations” (Amey, 2002, p.19). What can and should be done to address these issues?

### **Quality Assurance Among Graduate Programs**

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) (2001) has provided a set of standards and guidelines for master’s level student affairs administration programs. The leadership of the Student Affairs professional associations, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), have endorsed the CAS standards as a good start for addressing the expectations of graduate preparation programs, especially with regard to the specific professional knowledge component of the preparation. While the CAS standards give guidance to the curricular content of preparation programs there is no professional requirement that a graduate program must adhere to the standards. Graduate programs that wish to be listed through ACPA and NASPA are only asked to indicate whether they have done a self-study utilizing the CAS standards. There is no required outside evaluation process to verify that programs comply with the standards, nor is recognition given to those that do meet the standards. A second and closely related issue focuses on the content and the focus of graduate preparation programs. What does or should a graduate preparation program in student affairs look like? What should be taught in a preparation program and what type of professional practice experiences should programs provide for students?

There is no consistent approach to curriculum content among student affairs preparation programs. Some programs focus on counseling, some on student development, and others on management and administration. In fact, the curricular focus of programs is largely left to the expertise and prerogatives of the faculty providing the program and the history and focus of the program over time. Programs



labeled student affairs preparation programs are incredibly diverse in terms of content. If one were to examine the curriculum of the more than 175 student affairs preparation programs listed through ACPA and NASPA, one would find it difficult to identify more than a handful of programs with the same general core curriculum and with the same overall curricular orientation and performance expectations. While some variation in programs is to be expected and strongly encouraged, one should also expect to find some agreement regarding a core of professional knowledge content that would be accessible to all students within programs labeled as student affairs preparation.

While the curriculum is an essential element of professional preparation, it is the interaction of course content with a variety of carefully constructed experiential learning opportunities that provide the context for the development of professional competency. It is through work-like practica and internships that graduate students have an opportunity to learn how to apply theory to practice. The CAS standards set an expectation of a minimum of 300 hours of supervised practice, consisting of at least two distinct experiences. But once again, not all preparation programs require these types of experiences and there is no professional requirement or stated expectation that they do so. At present, there is no professional source that differentiates preparation programs that require practicum experiences from those that do not, and there are no consequences for not providing these experiences.

There are also no guidelines or standards that specify what should be included within a practicum or internship and there are no performance measures to help guide the expected outcome of a practical experience. As a result, there are no professional quality assurance standards for a practicum experience. While the number of hours associated with practical experiences is important, there should also be some professional guidelines that stipulate what constitutes a quality experience. There also should be guidelines as to how a student and the program supervisor or advisor might evaluate the quality of such an experience. Simply having 300 hours of practicum experience does not assure the student has had a skill building experience or that a student can adequately apply the theory they studied in the classroom to real world issues they will face in the field. Complying with these standards and guidelines should also be a requirement to be labeled as a student affairs preparation program.

In some programs where practicum and or internships are required, experienced and appropriately trained personnel are not always adequately supervising the experiences. As a result, these experiences may not provide students with in-depth, best practice opportunities to integrate with their classroom learning. One of the most important aspects of a practical experience is to have the opportunity to watch and model behavior and approaches under the supervision and guidance of a seasoned professional who is familiar with professional standards and competent to demonstrate best practices. It can be counterproductive and, at times, professionally damaging for students to have inappropriate supervision during a critical learning experience. Unsupervised or poorly supervised practical experiences do nothing to

ensure that students have the required and expected level of professional skill to survive in a professional role.

Even in many highly respected preparation programs, required practical experiences are not generally tied to competency-based outcomes. As a result, students are not always provided constructive ongoing feedback that will assure them of a realistic assessment of their skill level. They also may not have the opportunity to adequately reflect on how their particular experience integrates with the theory they have learned in the classroom. In such cases, students may graduate with a thorough understanding of theory but they may not always have the type and level of experience that enables them to integrate and apply theory to real life situations as new professionals in the field.

Developing tools and processes that enables students to tie their classroom and practical experience together in a reflective and integrated way will significantly strengthen graduate programs. Focusing such efforts on competency-based assessment and feedback will enable students to become better equipped to enter the changing expectations of student affairs work. They will have a clearer sense of what they know, what they can do, and what they still need to enhance through professional development and experience in the field. Although more student affairs professionals are being hired with master's level professional preparation, there is currently no professional assurance that institutions are competent new professionals. Since there are no consistent standards for professional preparation among student affairs preparation programs, there can be no level of quality assurance regarding professional competence within the student affairs profession. Presently, there is no guarantee that competent and consistent professionalism will be gained by hiring a new professional with a master's degree from a student affairs graduate program. This is problematic because higher education institutions have a need for competent professionals. New master's level professionals cannot be assured that they are adequately prepared to enter the field and meet the expectations of their employer. What does the profession of student affairs need to do now and in the future to be assured that graduate preparation programs are adequately preparing new professionals for their future role in student affairs?

### **A Competency Based Foundation for Professional Preparation**

As a profession, student affairs work has historically been based on the ability to apply theory and research to practice. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both theory and practice will continue to evolve and so will the expectation placed on student affairs practitioners. The authors believe it is safe to predict that student affairs work will likely continue to exist as long as we have students. However, what student affairs will look like and in what context it will be performed is likely to change significantly. Anticipating and adapting to change will continue to be an essential and a constant activity within most Student Affairs divisions. The future will likely require many of the same skill sets utilized today, but there are sure to be others that have not yet been envisioned or invented. How student affairs practitioners continue to prepare for the future is indeed a daunting task and one that will require keen

communication between practitioners and preparation faculty. A new focus on the questions and issues surrounding quality assurance within professional preparation and ongoing professional development of practitioners is paramount.

As the profession discusses staff development in today's higher education climate, it should be mindful that staff members need to be both specialists and generalists. They need to be able to apply the theory and skills of today to their specific applications, and they also need to be broad based enough to be able to adapt to the world of the future. The professional competencies that graduate students acquire have to be effective in the world today and expandable and adaptable in the world of tomorrow. Adapting a competency-based approach to professional development and professional preparation may be a way to address the challenges facing preparation programs. "Knowledge changes quickly. Skills can enable individuals and in turn, organizations to learn, critique, and use new knowledge" (Evers, Rush, & Berdrow, 1998, p. 4).

In their work, *The Base of Competence*, Evers, Rush, and Berdrow (1998) suggest there is a set of general skills that form a base of competencies that are needed to be able to thrive in the work place and serve as a foundation for life-long learning. This model provides a possible foundation from which to consider a competency-based model for student affairs preparation programs. The model (1998) suggests that there are four bases of professional competencies: 1) managing self, 2) communicating, 3) managing people and tasks, and 4) mobilizing innovation and change. The authors suggest that these four base competencies serve as the foundation for the acquisition of discipline-based knowledge and also provide the skill sets necessary to apply specific knowledge. These same four base competencies, along with the specific content knowledge components articulated within the CAS standards, might serve as a guide for the development of a set of core competencies required for new student affairs professionals. In fact, many of the questionable deficiencies attributed to new professionals are components of these four skill sets (Amey & Reesor, 2002).

These competencies could guide the development of the curriculum and pedagogy of preparation programs. A competency based model for graduate preparation might also include the curricular components outlined within the CAS standards, specific practical experience standards, supervisory guidelines for practical experiences, and competency outcome measurements. Through the use of these guidelines and standards, combined with a focus on specific skill development and supervised experience in skill application, the profession might be able to develop a common understanding of what constitutes a core for professional preparation within the field of student affairs.

### **Recommendations**

With dwindling resources within Student Affairs divisions, the profession's leadership has to become collectively visionary in its approach to providing staff development to professionals, especially new professionals. It must assume a leadership role in determining how preparation programs are to educate and develop

competent professionals. It is the responsibility of the profession, not individual graduate programs, to establish the expectations for professional graduate education. Leaders within the profession need to decide which skills should be taught through preparation programs and which skills can be augmented and enhanced through ongoing professional development activities. It is up to the leaders of the profession to ensure that there are measurable quality assurance standards for professional graduate programs as well as ongoing professional development activities. At the same time, preparation programs need to come together to develop a common understanding of what constitutes appropriate professional education and training for student affairs practitioners. They must find some level of agreement regarding what constitutes the core curricular and experiential requirements of student affairs preparation, and what can and should be varied within a program.

Preparation programs must collectively address the issues surrounding professional standards and quality assurance and how they should be regulated. Programs also must develop some collaborative mechanism for graduate program evaluations and feedback to ensure that the CAS standards and other quality assurance standards will be implemented and adhered to within preparation programs. Without a common core of knowledge and skill on which to build professional competence and assure quality within the profession, it will be difficult for the profession to maintain a stream of competent professionals to continue the work of student affairs.

The discourse around professional competence and quality assurance must begin. The future of the profession rests in its ability to provide competent professionals that ensure quality services and educational programs for students. Student affairs graduate programs are the foundation for providing the development of these competencies. It is critical that the professional practitioners, the professional associations' leadership, and graduate program faculty work closely together to close the competency gap. A new focus on competency-based, quality assurance standards, curriculum, and outcomes may provide the key.

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*Linda Kuk ('73) is the Vice President for Student Affairs at Colorado State University.*

*Blanche Hughes ('84) is an Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at Colorado State University.*

## **First Tracks: A Qualitative Assessment of a Freshman Adventure Based Orientation Program**

Patrick Rastall

Seth Webb

*The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of the participants in the inaugural "First Tracks" freshman adventure based orientation. The program took place in the summer of 2002 at the Pingree Park Mountain Campus of Colorado State University. Activities included a low and high ropes course, an ascent of a 12,148-ft. mountain, and rock climbing. Twelve students took part in the program. The researchers personally observed and participated in all adventure activities and administered daily reflective journals. An additional reflective journal was administered three months after the program. Qualitative analysis of the journals identified emergent themes which aided in understanding the experiences of the participants.*

The self-assured high school graduate becoming a college freshman undergoes a period of great expectation and adjustment to college life. For many high school seniors, the thought of starting college generates a litany of fears and anxieties – life in the residence hall, making new friends, tests, papers, and 8 a.m. classes. As part of the pre-collegiate experience, orientation programs serve as a means for overcoming the awkward transition between home and school, high school and college, parental authority and peer influence. Orientation programs can arouse loyalties, inspire self-exploration, and bind a diverse group of students to campus (Twale, 1989). These programs are a vital link in the process of equipping first-year students with the tools necessary to begin their collegiate learning journey and transition smoothly into the college environment.

A well-designed orientation program aids students in their initial social and academic integration into an unfamiliar college or university environment. Successful orientation programs can have a positive influence on students' first-year social and academic integration. In turn, this dualistic integration can have a dramatic effect on student persistence and educational attainment (Fox, Zakely, Morris, & Jundt, 1993). Yet typical orientation programs are often short in duration, classroom-based and seldom experiential in nature.

Alternatives to traditional educational approaches are becoming more common in higher education settings (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1996). One such alternative approach is the adventure based orientation. This type of program asks: What if incoming students were placed in an outdoor mountain setting as part of orientation? What would happen if students were challenged with individual and group tasks that provided an opportunity to test their physical and social limits? "First Tracks" is Colorado State University's attempt to offer such a challenge and opportunity.

## **Adventure Based Orientation**

An adventure based orientation model utilizes the theories of experiential learning and adventure education, combined with an outdoor setting to facilitate the process of acculturation into college life. Informal and relaxed, the outdoor experience bonds a group, aids in camaraderie and the formation of friendships, and facilitates an effective social adjustment to the campus (Twale, 1989). The use of adventure experiences in orientation provides an enhanced atmosphere in which to focus on the positive integration of students into the college environment (Gass, 1990).

### **Review of Literature**

The terms *adventure based orientation* and *wilderness orientation* are used synonymously in the review of literature. They both aim to accomplish the same outcomes, yet the chief difference is that wilderness orientation involves one or more nights spent in the wilderness. Despite the existence of wilderness and adventure based orientation programs since the 1960s, few articles have been published in the professional literature about these programs. A large portion of the literature on wilderness orientation programs is either unpublished or not published in refereed journals, limiting access to program information (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1996).

A review of wilderness orientation literature reveals a lack of cause-and-effect studies conducted to examine the impacts of wilderness orientation programs on factors such as student adjustment and retention. Until the 1990s, Gass (1987) was the leading researcher attempting to address the effects of adventure based orientation programming on college students. Conclusions drawn from later studies indicated that students who participated in outdoor orientation programs had better academic and social adjustment rates than students who did not participate (Gass, 1990; Devlin, 1996; Brown, 1998).

These studies were longitudinal in nature, and found that students who participated in a wilderness or adventure based orientation program had significantly higher rates of retention than those participating in an on-campus program for the first year, and showed higher scores in areas of both personal and interpersonal development (Gass, 1990; Devlin, 1996; Brown, 1998). As a result of these limited findings, the effectiveness of wilderness orientation programs on long-term retention and adjustment efforts is still in question.

### **The First Tracks Program**

“First Tracks” is a three-night, four-day adventure based orientation program. The Pingree Park Mountain Campus of Colorado State University served as the host site. Pingree is located in a valley on the northern border of Rocky Mountain National Park at an elevation of 9,000 ft. The 2002 “pilot program” took place from June 28 through July 1. The cost of the program was \$250. “First Tracks” was jointly administered by the Outdoor Adventure Program and the Preview Orientation Office. The program brochure in part read:

The college experience lies ahead as a vast, unexplored landscape...join fellow incoming freshman students as we make "First Tracks" in this new terrain...activities are designed to challenge you and set a course for your transition into university life.

Each day, "First Tracks" challenged the students in different ways. The first day was spent traveling to Pingree Park and getting to know each other. The second day saw participants on the ropes course improving teamwork and later building self-confidence attempting the high ropes elements. The summit of Stormy Peaks (12,148 ft.) was the goal of the third day. The final day was spent rock climbing at Fish Creek followed by a closing activity in which students exchanged ceremonial pins.

The program goals are based primarily upon the social integration of students, but also aim to enhance the academic integration that begins in the on-campus orientation. The goals include: personal growth, by challenging oneself physically and emotionally; enhance self-confidence; learn to work with others, while developing positive peer relationships; increase student retention; ease the transition into college life; exposure to the Rocky Mountain environment and Pingree Park; and have fun.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

A qualitative research design was used incorporating the personal observations of the researchers and individual reflective journals from the students. The researchers acted as instructors and were present throughout the program. All twelve participants signed consent forms and voluntarily agreed to take part in the study. Confidentiality was guaranteed through a code system where participants used the first letter of their mothers' name and the last two digits of their social security number. At the end of each day's activities, the students filled out a one page journal.

The daily reflective journals asked the following six questions: What was your high point of the day and why? What was your low point of the day and why? What surprised you about yourself today? What did you learn about yourself today? Describe how you feel toward the rest of the group? What are your thoughts and feelings about school in the fall?

### ***Data Source***

The volunteer participants who comprised the sample were all incoming freshmen scheduled to start school at Colorado State University in the Fall 2002 semester. Approximately half were non-residents of Colorado and all but one had attended the on-campus freshman orientation program prior to attending First Tracks. There were seven men and five women and all were 18 years of age at the time of the program.



### ***Data Analysis***

Reflective journals were transferred from the original form to typed word data files by the researchers. The information was coded in order to search for emergent themes, while retaining the original voices of the participants. The themes were compared and further analyzed seeking to understand the experience of the participants (Creswell, 1994). The constant comparative method (Patton, 1990) was used throughout this process to discover emerging themes. It should be noted that qualitative studies do not allow for generalizations to a larger population, although they do suggest comparisons to similar settings and contexts (Creswell, 1998).

### **Findings**

What follows are excerpts from daily participant journals used to discover emergent themes. These qualitative findings are presented in easy to read, chronological order. The Tuckman & Jensen (1977) group stage development model was used to explain group change throughout the program. One of the stages, forming, storming, norming, or performing represents each day.

It should be noted that the researchers took part in all the activities as facilitators/leaders. Personal observations and analysis of the daily participant journals were both used in attempting to better understand the experiences of the participants in the study.

#### ***First Tracks – Day One (Forming)***

The first day began at the Outdoor Adventure Program on Colorado State University's main campus. Prior to the van ride up to Pingree Park, icebreakers and group games aided students in getting to know each other. These activities continued throughout the afternoon. The evening slide show, a recent Mt. McKinley ascent by one of the program leaders, introduced the value of adventure and risk-taking. The reflective journals, filled out that night, covering the first day of the program contained several interesting themes; one being how individuals were perceived by others in the group. One participant wrote:

During the van ride up [to Pingree], I wasn't sure what to expect and what the other kids would be like. Not everyone was talking and I didn't know if they would accept me.

In answering the question "What surprised you about yourself today?" many wrote how they openly shared personal information attempting to form friendships early in the program:

I was surprised at how open I was with the group.

I was bolder than usual about my faith.

I was amazed at how real I was. I am not acting false.

The emergent theme of bonding reflects the first stage of the Group Stage Development Model (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). This process called "forming"

takes place as individuals feel out the group and how they fit in. It is often an ambiguous and insecure time. Each student attempted to find commonality with others. What kind of music do you like? What are your favorite sports? What residence hall are you going to be living in?

Journals also reflected an initial positive feeling toward the rest of the group:

The group is full of cool people, who represent diverse interests. By being in contact with others, it helps you learn about yourself.

I think this is a good bunch and I look forward to working with others. I learned how unique everyone is. It has been nice to meet people from different states.

Several individuals shared concerns about group dynamics:

We are getting to know each other better and becoming ourselves. Some people still have insecurities.

There are a couple of kids I don't like. I think they are show-offs. Other than those few kids, I think we will get along well.

Concerning classes and school in the fall, many shared fears about the transition to college:

I'm looking forward to learning and classes and meeting new friends. I'm also worried about losing old friends and hoping I can find a talent and excel in some way.

I am excited about college but I am also really nervous. It is going to be a test of my character. I think this [First Tracks] will help with college because I'll know people and I'll already have an experience with college people.

The first day of the program challenged individuals to make connections with people they had never met before. The beautiful mountain environment of Pingree Park, sleeping in the dormitory, eating in the dining hall, and forming new friendships was novel and exciting.

### ***First Tracks – Day Two (Storming)***

The second day of the program was spent on the challenge ropes course. The first half of the day consisted of low ropes and team building activities. The group was challenged to work on communication, trust, and leadership. It was discovered early on that certain participants were more process-oriented while others focused on the task. Multiple leaders surfaced at different times according to changing tasks and situations. Frustrations mounted as the challenges presented to the group became more involved. The group's low point was reflected in the journals that evening:

[My low point was] when the communication broke down during the Nitro Exercise.

The low point was when we were doing the low elements and everyone was getting mad at everyone else; no one was communicating.

[My low point was] when the group wasn't listening to each other. I didn't

get to share my feelings and ideas on what to do.

The low point was bickering with the group when trying to cross the cavern, not having my ideas heard.

Later that day, the high elements tested individual limits. Students were fitted into climbing harnesses and helmets and were safety belayed. Each element offered a different challenge, but all put the students at least 27 feet off the ground. Two classic high elements are the Catwalk and the Leap of Faith. The Catwalk is a narrow rounded log demanding good balance as one walks across. The Leap of Faith requires the participant to climb up a vertical pole, and then stand on top. After a moment to catch their breath and take in the view the participant counts to three and jumps for a trapeze six feet away.

The systems are safe, but that does little to alleviate the perceived danger. The challenge by choice rule is stressed, meaning no one is forced or coerced into attempting anything they do not want to do. There were many opportunities for the students to get outside their comfort zones. Encouraging words from those on the ground supported efforts above.

The students gained confidence that afternoon as they progressed through the high elements. According to Bandura (1997), successfully completing a difficult task or coping with a challenging situation increases individual self-efficacy. All of Bandura's techniques for raising efficacy expectations, such as success experiences, observational learning, verbal persuasion and emotional arousal come into play on the high elements (Bandura, 1977). Increased self-efficacy was evident among participants after the high elements. What emerged from their evening journals was a belief that anything is possible:

I was surprised by my courage in doing the high ropes elements, and by my faith in the people supporting me on the ground.

I learned that if you trust yourself and tell yourself you aren't scared, and think positive, you can do things you didn't think you could.

I did the trapeze jump after I knew how afraid I was. I confronted that fear.

The evening program topic was the academic reality of being a student at Colorado State University. Scenarios related to academic life were presented to the group and discussed. It was a wake up call for many as reflected in their journal entries:

I'm so excited, but I'm kind of nervous about the workload and what the classes and professors will be like.

I need to be more disciplined with time management to have as much success as I imagined.

I am worried about failure, but I know I can do it and I am relieved to have had this experience to ease my way into college life.

By the end of the second day the group was struggling to work as a team. Most individuals were experiencing the "storming" stage of the group development model. The short-lived "honeymoon" period that takes place during the forming stage of the model was evolving through the challenges of the low ropes. According to

Tuckman's model, storming is the stage where group conflict plays out. It is a time when personalities come into conflict often around leadership issues (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The journal entries for the day reflected the struggle:

I feel good toward most of them. One person in particular is very annoying, but that's about it.

They all seem to be taking this seriously. They are all going hardcore and I just want to have fun.

I was frustrated earlier when we were doing the [Nitro-Crossing] low element and everyone was saying that whatever was going wrong was somebody else's fault.

The challenge of developing as a functioning team while experiencing the storming period was apparent during and after the low ropes. Who were the leaders of the group? In what situations did the leadership role move between individuals? Personality differences and individual communication styles were now in direct conflict. Yet successes on the high ropes course elements had bolstered the self-efficacy of many of the students. They felt good about themselves, but as to how they worked as a team, questions remained. The next day would challenge the group to summit Stormy Peaks. It would require teamwork, effective communication, good judgment, and a major physical effort by each student.

### *First Tracks – Day Three (Norming)*

The group departed from the dining hall at 7:30 am for 12,148 ft. high Stormy Peaks. Throughout the morning students walked in small groups along the well-marked trail. Nearing the top, the group encountered large boulders that had to be negotiated before reaching the actual summit. The pace had been moderate and everyone made the summit. After signing the register and taking in the views, a group photo was taken before the long descent back to Pingree. It was a long day covering nine miles, going up 3,000 vertical feet, and taking nine hours to complete.

The journals that evening reflected the high spirits of the team. Three themes emerged from the day's peak ascent: pride in the accomplishment of making the summit, exceeding expectations and pushing physical limits.

[My high point] was the summit. I was impressed that everyone pulled through.

When we reached the summit I just felt so good after the hard climb.  
Reaching the top and having a sense of great accomplishment.

Many of the students exceeded their personal expectations:

[I was surprised that] I didn't get as tired as I thought I would.

I was in front almost the whole way. I was expecting to be in the back the entire time.

[Today I learned that] I can do more than I think I can.

If I push myself hard enough I can finish anything.

The physical pain of pushing one's body to the top of the mountain was also reflected in that night's journal entries:

[My low point was] the pain and soreness of muscles. Getting sunburned and having a headache.

Coming down the mountain with no water, blisters, basically just the dead tired feeling and having to keep moving.

The peak ascent allowed the group to move beyond their storming stage. During the long hike up students had a chance to reflect and talk about the lack of teamwork the day before. The "norming" stage is highlighted by the group agreeing on rules of behavior. These agreed upon rules or norms, allow for a greater sense of order and cohesion (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The first trackers had all made it to the top of the mountain. This success experience not only raised their individual self-efficacy, it gave them confidence as a group and a new focus. They were working as a team and functioning at a new level.

### ***First Tracks – Day Four (Performing)***

The final day of the program began with tired students organizing their belongings, cleaning their rooms and plodding to the dining hall for breakfast. From an observational standpoint, there was no doubt that the climb had taken its toll on everyone's energy level. The group left Pingree and drove down the road to the Fish Creek Rock Climbing Site. The main rock cliff is about 75 ft. high. All the climbs are top roped with anchors at the top, with the climber and belayer starting at the bottom. Three routes were set up, ranging from moderate to difficult. The students had climbing shoes, helmets, harnesses and some had climbing chalk. About a third of the group had climbed before.

It was obvious that the low energy was affecting the outcome, yet teamwork was evident through encouraging verbal support and many of the students made it to the top of a climb. Later, when writing in the journal, two students felt it was the high point of the day:

[My high point of the day was] when I reached the top of the climb and everyone was cheering for me. It made me feel so awesome.

When I was in the middle of my climb and I got stuck and wanted to stop. Somehow I kept going and made it to the top. It was an amazing feeling of accomplishment.

The most powerful emergent theme reflected in the final journals was the concept of feeling good through the success of others. This was another example of how the group was performing as a team. Prior to the last day, the focus was more on individual success and failure. Examples of this transformation included:

I was surprised at how I encouraged others and we accomplished things.

I learned that I can help and encourage others to success.

I learned that I love helping others do things I can do.

After climbing the students wrote a letter to themselves that would be returned to them in three months. The students were asked to reflect on the program for the purpose of transferring the lessons learned. The pin ceremony, modeled after Colorado Outward Bound, was the concluding event of First Tracks. Each student presented a CSU pin to another student. When presenting the pin, they shared what they thought were the best qualities of that student. This ceremony provided closure for the group process. For many it was the highlight of the day:

[High point] the pin ceremony. It was great to have everyone reflect and give positive feedback to each other.

The pin ceremony. I felt good about myself and loved seeing the group get along so well.

Everyone felt good about the group on the last day. The adventure activities had tested the new bonds and friendships:

I love this group. On the first day somebody said they felt that everyone was good deep inside. I believe this weekend proved that to be true.

I feel really good about the group. Everyone was supporting each other and I know this helped me.

Finally, participant feelings concerning school in the fall were positive:

I can't wait to move in and start cracking. I have some plans for myself. I also know that there will be tough challenging times and once I get through those everything is ok.

I am really excited now that I know some people. I think that is going to help. I'm looking forward to the pizza party and reunion in the fall.

The final day of the program was another chance to test individual limits. The climbs were difficult and most of the group was pushed outside their comfort zones. Yet they worked well together, as a cohesive, high-functioning unit. They had moved to the "performing" stage of the Tuckman & Jensen model on Stormy Peaks. They carried the success of the peak climb to the rock cliffs.

### ***First Tracks - Three Months Later***

Three months after the end of First Tracks the instructors hosted a gathering at the Outdoor Adventure Program Office on the main CSU campus. Ten of the twelve students attended. For some it was the first time seeing each other since Pingree. The group ate pizza, reflected, laughed, shared stories and watched a slide show of the four days in July. Afterwards each person filled out a final reflective journal. Three months had passed since the First Tracks program, but with all the excitement of starting college there was still a buzz in the group.

The high points of the whole program were the peak ascent, ropes course and getting to know the other students. Journal examples include:

[High point] the summit of the mountain and getting to meet so many people.

The peak ascent because it was such an accomplishment.

The ropes course because it was the most fun.

Accomplishing personal goals and “stepping outside the comfort zone.”

Students remembered the successes and value of risk taking:

Fear is all that limits me and holds me back.

Taking a risk is worth the small chance of failure.

I can do more than I think I can. I can keep going after I think I can't.

Keep pushing myself one step at a time and I will make the summit.

Positive feelings were strong within the group. Examples were:

They are a great bunch of people. They are a good bunch of friends.

We are all great friends. I know I can talk to them if I need to.

I have grown to be close friends with a few. The others I would probably know but didn't get to because of time and different schedules.

When prompted to write about how the program helped them transition into school in the fall the dominant theme was positive – that First Tracks was beneficial for preparing students for the academic and social stresses of the freshman year in college. They wrote:

It gave me the confidence to meet new people. It gave me friends that were going to school with me.

It helped me socially and gave me academic tips and it was fun.

It was cool when I saw people I knew before school started. I could say “yea, we go way back.”

I think it helped my perseverance, on wanting to keep going, when we were on the mountain.

### Summary

Adventure based orientation programs provide incoming students with the opportunity to cultivate peer group connections, positively interact with faculty and staff in an informal atmosphere, and challenge themselves to grow toward their full potential through immersion in adventure experiences. They offer the added benefit of extended social integration and community building that a short on-campus orientation cannot accomplish. A greater degree of social involvement can lead to an improved sense of satisfaction, and in turn contribute to an increase in student retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Adventure based orientation programs grant access to the ultimate setting to address, consider, and process the “college as adventure” metaphor.

The First Tracks adventure based orientation program presented students with unique challenges and opportunities. Throughout the four days the students confronted fears, tested physical limits, and had numerous opportunities to raise self-efficacy through rock climbing, mountain climbing and the challenge ropes course. During the four-day experience the group moved through the stages of the Tuckman & Jensen group development model. From forming to performing they never seemed to lose track of the reasons they had come to Pingree. They stepped out of their comfort zones, made friendships, had fun and took initial steps toward understanding college life and Colorado State University.

Among all the themes to emerge from this study, perhaps the most interesting was how these students turned their focus from personal to group success. As they grew to know each other they began to care about each other. By the end of the program students were supporting the risks, failures and achievements of others.

Only time will tell what roads the twelve students will take through their college careers. Four days in the Colorado Mountains taking on individual and group challenges will plant a seed for future growth. Making personal connections and new friendships at such an impressionable time is perhaps the greatest benefit of First Tracks. The twelve students took what they learned to campus where they will continue to be challenged throughout their university experience.

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*Pat Rastall ('76) currently works at Colorado State University as Associate Director of Pingree Park and as an Affiliate Faculty member in the Department of Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism.*

*Seth Webb ('02) currently works at Colorado State University as an Academic Advisor in the College of Business.*

## **Global and Domestic Nomads or Third Culture Kids: Who Are They and What the University Needs to Know**

Wendy Stultz

*This article, based on a professional paper of the same name, attempts to provide an overview of the needs and advantages of Global Nomads or Third Culture Kids, as well as applying these needs and advantages to the university setting. Student Affairs professionals, professors, and other support personnel can use a knowledge of this growing group to better support and utilize these individuals in their collegiate experience. Current practices and societal trends are briefly discussed as well as some general recommendations for implementing minor changes to university procedures to better identify and understand this often hidden population.*

“Few of us live any longer in a monocultural world. We work with people from other cultures, live next door to them, study in class with them, or teach them. They may be our customers, our competition, or our in-laws” (Storti, 1999, p. 1).

As United States (U.S.) and international universities continue to reflect this growing trend, it becomes vital that student affairs professionals understand the needs of the student population as it becomes increasingly culturally diverse (Storti, 1999). Many are coming to college as truly multicultural individuals, having developed a “third culture,” one not entirely like either their home or host culture. These individuals can be referred to as Third Culture Kids (TCKs) or Global Nomads. (Smith, 1991) Many other subgroups, such as “missionary kids,” “absentee Americans,” or “military brats” fit within these larger terms, and share many of the same experiences and challenges (Smith, 1991; McCaig, 1991). Another group that can also be said to share many of the same needs and challenges with TCKs are “domestic nomads,” those who have not traveled between different countries but who have lived among different cultures within one country. By the time an average global nomad TCK reaches adulthood, he or she has lived in six different countries, “his cultural identity becoming gradually unglued from that of his monocultural parents and forming into a new sensibility” (Killham, 1994, p. 56). A TCK’s life is a balance of challenges and benefits, some similar to those of domestic students, some more like those of international students, and some uniquely their own. As a result, TCKs need some of the same kind of support structures that are already in place in universities, but may also need some additional support structures that are as unique as they are.

### ***Culture and Identity***

Culture is one factor in the way a person identifies within society or within the world. It is “like an onion, with many overlapping layers. And when you peel an onion to get to the ‘core’, nothing is there” (Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996, p. 69). The inability to examine culture on all levels simultaneously reflects a person’s multiple identifications with society and with the different levels of culture. Becoming part of a culture, and identifying with it, means “depend[ing] on others around you, and on

their social system, for satisfying your basic needs” (p. 66). There are other factors that influence a person’s identity. Some are external to the person, shaping him or her through cultural tradition, custom, environment, atmosphere, location, or climate. Other factors are internally realized and less tangible. These factors can include comfort levels with difference or ambiguity, extroversion or introversion, cultural mediation skills, and adaptation skills, among others (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). It has been argued that both nature and nurture have roles in personal identity development. Whether it is the nature of these individuals or their families to take an active role in culture, or the nurturing of the children growing up between cultures or in many cultures, TCKs often combine the beneficial attributes of their many cultures in their later life dealings, often while remaining a marginal participant in any particular culture. (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001)

Global Nomads can be loosely defined as individuals who have spent at least a portion of their formative years living overseas, due to a parent’s career and life choices (McCaig, 1991). The benefits of this upbringing are unique and far-reaching. “In an era when global vision is imperative, where skills in intercultural communication, linguistic ability, mediation, diplomacy and the ability to manage diversity are critical, global nomads are probably better equipped than others” (McCaig, 1994, p. 33). Linked closely to Global Nomads is the concept of “Third Culture Kids” (TCKs). TCKs, who may be adults regardless of the name, have grown up between home and host cultures (Hill Useem & Downie, 1976). In another sense, a TCK is someone who has grown up in a culture other than his or her own, but who can relate to all cultures. This cultural difference allows the TCK to take parts of different host cultures, and combine them into his or her own unique value system and lifestyle (Pollock & Van Reken, 1987).

There are also individuals who have moved between cultures within one country, who may be called Domestic Nomads. There are several professions that logically connect to this concept of domestically mobile families, including hotel and resort management, oil exploration, or military training (Bruce LaBrack, personal communication, September 25, 2000). One can also include children of parents in aerospace engineering, forestry service, government, or entrepreneurs in this group. While global nomads may see the world in terms of larger cultural units like countries or regions in comparison to each other, “domestic nomads are more impacted by crossing distinctive internal regions which have easily identifiable speech patterns and vocabulary” (Bruce LaBrack, personal communication, March 14, 2002).

### **Cultural Adaptation and Integration**

Many nomads describe themselves as chameleons, able to quickly adapt to a new culture. “I am, by inmost nature, a chameleon, a sponge, a being of multiple selves. When I arrive anywhere I observe the mores and values of the place and then seek to mimic them, becoming in a sense, each time, someone new” (Mansfield Taber, 1994, p. 46). Others take a split sense of identity from their experiences, (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) meaning that they may feel as though they are different people in

different cultures. Still others hold tightly to their own personal definitions of who and what they are, even when these identities cross country lines (Smith, 1996). To feel more alien upon arriving in what is supposedly one's home culture than in a 'foreign country' is a common trend among TCKs (Smith, 1991). Some TCKs act out by making emotional gestures, or by "alternately repudiating and courting [...] peers" (Shames, 1997, p. 73). Bureaucracy and formal paperwork, requiring nationality or citizenship to be identified, often challenge this sense of identity. The idea that "I am who my Passport says I am" is a political reality, but doesn't necessarily address the personal identity questions that face a TCK (Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996).

It is the individual's experience that shapes the formation of the TCK life. "Although a precise profile of a global nomad cannot be developed without running the risk of stereotyping, there are some identifiable tendencies that provide a basis for self-evaluation, self-explanation, and self-esteem" (Pollock, 1994, p. 72). TCKs have two prevailing factors in common: they are raised in a genuinely cross-cultural world, and they are raised in a highly mobile world (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Other factors that are common to TCKs but not necessary within the TCK definition are an expected repatriation into the 'home' culture, a privileged lifestyle distinct within the host culture, and an identity with some overarching system, such as the military, or other expatriate community structures. (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) Since expatriate groups within a city or nation may include people who have moved to that area from their home country for work, school, family, or any other reason, these groups vary in size, organization, and purpose. Based on the two prevailing factors, children brought up within a domestically mobile family can also have true TCK characteristics. Domestically mobile groups or relatively isolated sections within the U.S. society, such as military or Native American reservation subcultures, are so unique within civilian U.S. society as to provide a similar cross-cultural experience, especially when the individual reenters the dominant culture on a full-time basis (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

A TCK may have an unclear sense of where exactly "home" is (Storti, 2001). Many do not feel a distinct link to any one place or set of traditions. So the concept of "home" is often described more as an emotional location than a geographical location (Pascoe, 2000). This type of marginality can prove to be both a benefit and a detriment, depending on the TCK's view of the situation. "One can be marginal in at least two ways: as 'alone-in-the-corner-sucking-my-thumb' marginality, or as 'let's see...my- daily-rate-as-an-international-consultant-is...' marginality" (Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996, p. 83). Questions like "where are you from?" place the nomad at a disadvantage in cultural situations. To ask the person to choose the quick answer requires that the nomad ignore the rest of his or her background. To give a longer answer may be boring to the listeners, or seemingly snobby of the nomad (Smith, 1991). Hiding the truth about one's childhood can be painful. Even more painful than hiding the truth is not being able to put the truth about one's experience into words. It is often difficult for the TCK who does not feel that he or she can be categorized, as well as for the host culture peers, in trying to understand how the

TCK fits into the host culture's understanding of the world (Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996).

### ***TCK Issues***

“When a tree is transplanted too often, its roots can never grow deep. So it is with these young people. Some TCKs refuse to get involved in a new place because they fear that liking this new place would mean betraying the friends and places they have known and loved before. Others don't settle in as a protection against being hurt again in a future move they know will inevitably come. If they refuse to make close friends, it won't matter when they have to say good-bye next time” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 71).

This tendency to protect oneself from hurt in saying goodbyes is held by many nomads, and includes the tendency to either remain aloof in social situations or to quickly establish new friendships. Approximately 40% of TCKs struggle with creating close friendships or intimacy (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). In fact, the nomad's greatest weakness may revolve around his or her difficulty in trusting others and in confiding in those whom the nomad has not known for a long time (Bell, 1997).

Part of the difficulty in connecting to peers in a host culture situation may be a lack of experience in social settings with people from that specific culture. Some difficulties may be related back to the sense of identity, or lack thereof. Many of these situations occur before TCKs “have completed the critical developmental task of forming a sense of their own personal or cultural identity” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 39). Regardless of the nomad's maturity, the new cultural setting may make him or her feel like a child (Piet-Pelon & Hornby, 1992). The TCK's broader worldview will be challenged when “sometime- for the first time- they meet peers who haven't moved, haven't had to make new friends, haven't learned how to adapt [...] when internationally mobile children come up against this situation, they tend to withdraw, retreat, marginalize” (Bell, 1997, p. 63).

### ***Higher Education***

TCKs attend colleges and universities at approximately four times that of domestic U.S. students, half of those going on to complete a graduate degree (Hill Useem & Baker Cotrell, 1993). A considerable number of these students take time off before completing a degree, or drop out to take advantage of other, usually international, opportunities (Hill Useem & Baker Cotrell, 1993). The average TCK will change colleges twice during his or her undergraduate education (Hill Useem & Baker Cotrell, 1993). Some leave the college because they never feel welcome, some because of the desire to travel, and some because they cannot connect to the institutional culture. They may come to college more mature or cosmopolitan, and with a far greater knowledge of the world than their domestic counterparts (Kohls, 2001), but also less proficient in dealing with their peers (Shames, 1997).

Welcoming the TCK student into the educational setting and providing necessary cultural information is often enough to assist the TCK in the adaptation process. The TCK may need support in the creation of a positive self-image, or in peer communication, in order to feel connected to the host culture (Harrell, 1986). One solution is to provide the TCK with a mentor, peer or professional (Gillies, 1998). The mentor may be able to vocalize impressions and cultural norms with the TCK, and provide basic survival skills within the new culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Understanding professionals or concerned individuals can help TCKs to accept the validity of their feelings and find the support and comfort that they need (Van Reken, 1988). Support structures that may help ease the transition include student clubs, faculty knowledge of the TCK profile, a multicultural curriculum, transition programs aimed at cultural identity, or other programming that will help to affirm their whole identity both culturally and as a TCK (Schaeppi, 1996; Pollock 1996). Student affairs professionals are logically in positions where they can provide both the mentoring role and many of the support structures to TCKs within the university.

As of 1988, there were over 2 million Americans living overseas, “with an estimated 230,000 of them American students attending overseas [primary and secondary] schools. About 10,000 students graduate from such schools each year” (Killham, 1994, p. 56). Many TCKs get their first opportunity to live within the United States and experience the culture for themselves when they enroll in college (Kohls, 2001). The TCK living overseas must prepare to function independently at college, even more so than the student who can drive home for the weekend. Some international schools are able to help with the process of adapting to a college setting by providing seminars, discussion groups, or workshops on cultural entry or re-entry, and on cultural orientation (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). TCKs may also find support from elsewhere in the expatriate community, including some resources available on the Internet, or in governmental or organizational publishers offering advice to the TCK “returning” to the United States (Roman, 2001; Planetexpat.com).

### ***Media Resources and Support***

Beverly Roman’s *Footsteps Around the World: Relocation Tips for Teens* (2001) provides lists of things to do before leaving the host culture, and tips for adjusting to the new culture. Alma Daugherty Gordon’s *Don’t Pig Out on Junk Food: The MK’s Guide to Survival in the U.S.* (1993) provides humor and tips from nomads, specifically “missionary kids” (MKs), who have experienced the same type of emotions. Ruth Van Reken’s *Letters Never Sent* (1988) is her own memoir describing many international moves and life changes. Written as a series of letters, this account may mirror what TCKs are feeling. Mainstream books, like Barbara Kingsolver’s *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998) also provide perspective for the TCK. Additionally, there are TV shows and movies that show both well adapted and developing TCKs, predominantly domestic, like the movie *Mermaids* or the television show *The Promised Land*.

It appears that the advent of the Internet has made a permanent “on-line home” a stable feature in the lives of many TCKs. Now, family members across the globe can keep in touch while avoiding lengthy waits for mail or the high costs of communication. Many websites have developed into extensive communities, tools to search for international school friends, or ways to provide advice to others in globally mobile situations (Planetexpat.com, Militarybrats.com). Many TCKs admit to relying on virtual communication to get their news, to keep up with their former host cultures, and to remain in touch with others (Roman, 2001). Finding a “home” online may provide many TCKs with more of a sense of belonging within the host culture.

### **University Systems**

Just as no one university or program will work the same for each domestic student, no cookie-cutter ideology will work for all TCKs. If a university wants to take advantage of the benefits of adaptation or cultural understanding that multicultural, and often multi-lingual individuals bring to the campus, support should be made available to these TCKs. For example, this may be allowing them to waive a foreign language requirement, or allowing TCKs to opt out of the freshman live-in requirement to live in University apartments. These accommodations may be more in depth, such as providing mentors, or training staff to understand the profile. Faculty training may also encourage the curriculum to change or adapt in order to better represent the students and the changing world population (Bruce LaBrack, personal communication, March 14, 2002).

### ***Recommendations for Higher Education***

Increasing awareness of the TCK profile will help higher education professionals to identify those students who may benefit from understanding more about their unique background. These benefits are not only in regard to the TCK profile, but in a more personal experience with a culture’s customs, and in a potential ally for cultures that may be underrepresented on the campus. As university student personnel staff become more familiar with the profile, the campus will likely begin to show respect for a different kind of diversity. By providing these students with choices appropriate to their experiences, the university should also be able to improve retention of this group that is so likely to transfer. (Hill Useem & Baker Cotrell, 1993) While no current resources deal specifically with recommendations for universities, the author has compiled a list of suggestions based on the expressed needs and concerns and challenges from the available resources.

Some specific examples follow from general recommendations below:

- *Allow for university flexibility in allowing nomads and TCKs to select the support services that are appropriate for their needs*

The two common factors of TCKs, those of high mobility and of a multicultural life, also lead to individuality of needs (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Perhaps more so than domestic students, each TCK needs to have an active role in determining what support services they will utilize, as well as a need to be provided with available options.

- *Allow for appropriate exceptions to rules to be made (i.e. required courses or housing accommodations)*

This would allow the unique background of the TCK to be acknowledged. For example, if the TCK already speaks a foreign language, but has not had formal instruction in the language, it may be appropriate to work with the individual to waive a foreign language requirement, or to substitute a course in American literature or something else that the individual has not covered.

- *Determine a way of tracking the retention and graduation rates of this population*

So little research has been done regarding this group, which makes it difficult to provide effective support. Through tracking TCKs, student affairs professionals may be more readily able to predict success, assist students, and lower the transfer rates. (Stultz, 2002)

- *Encourage TCKs to participate in programming and student organizations*

Both TCKs and traditional domestic student can benefit from a culturally diverse exchange of ideas through programming or in student organizations. Not only might this provide TCKs with U.S. peer support, it may also provide additional opportunities for both the TCK and the traditional domestic students to see the world from a different viewpoint.

- *Create a method for identifying potential global nomads before matriculation*

- Add a voluntary question to application materials

To reach the largest possible number of TCKs, Global Nomads, and others that would fit this profile, like Domestic Nomads, the question might be something general like “How many schools have you attended?” or might provide a check box for self-identification. Many people who fit the profile do not know of it, but can recognize the feelings and challenges associated with a mobile or nomadic lifestyle. (McCaig, 1991)

- Create a website link describing the TCK profile, and what the University does to support TCKs

Not only could this link explain the profile to anyone interested, but may show that the university welcomes TCKs. This is likely very cost effective, only requiring the creation of the page and the web designer’s time to maintain it.

- Train the admissions staff to recognize potential global nomad applicants

Train the admissions staff to recognize overseas addresses, or documents that might indicate a TCK experience, such as an international school transcript or boarding school records. Recognizing the importance of student privacy, the admissions staff could send a form letter to anyone that appeared to fit this profile, or to any prospective student that asked for this kind of information.

- *Use TCK or global nomad profile knowledge and other University resources to make these students feel welcome*



- Formalize a network of faculty, staff, and current students who may be able to assist nomads or TCKs with questions or special needs on campus

A student may approach a staff member because they feel they do not fit in or because of some difficulties or questions regarding aspects of the culture. An informal network may already be in place; guiding the TCK to staff members in different departments who may understand the TCK lifestyle. However, staff members frequently do not know which colleagues may have an interest in this topic, so formalizing a network will make this information more available to both students and staff members.

- Set up an email account that would be available for global nomad questions, and advertise it throughout international schools. Many TCKs overseas attend international schools, and word of mouth is an effective international recruitment tool (Roman, 2001). Students could use this email address to ask questions, which the person who would check this account could then forward on to the appropriate person.
- *Determine the priority of TCK support program implementation at a university level, and take actions accordingly*

- Establish a committee to determine university level support

Create a committee to determine what role the university will play in supporting, recruiting and retaining TCKs. This committee should include all of the offices which may interact with this population, such as Admissions, Housing and Food Services, the Office of International Programs, the Health Center, the Counseling Center, and any other office that has interested staff. Some immediate questions before this committee should be 1) Who will take the responsibility and spearhead the university efforts?, 2) What accommodations and support services are already available and what could easily be changed or accepted?, and 3) What cost effective, but useful items could be done quickly to begin showing this population that the institution respects them and is doing something for them? The responses from the university and from the students will then help to shape what future steps should be made. Again, since this profile is about people, it is constantly changing and shifting in needs, desires, and expectations.

### **Conclusion**

Higher education can benefit from supporting TCKs by the increased diversity, deeper cultural understanding, and international knowledge that they bring to campus. Higher education can also benefit from recruiting and retaining these individuals, who are likely to attend college and complete post-graduate degrees, particularly if the institution can lessen the likelihood of these students transferring to a different college through available support systems, an acknowledgment of the

special background of TCKs, and through helping the TCK adapt to the university setting. TCKs benefit greatly from having support systems in place when they arrive at a university, whether for orientation, mentoring, housing, or other needs (Ruhter McMillan, 2001).

The life of a Third Culture Kid involves a lot of personal commitment and change. The current understanding of TCKs is much more developed than it was when the United States Foreign Service began sending citizens and families overseas. There is still much to be learned about these individuals, and even more to be learned from them. In order to help TCKs continue to learn about themselves, society needs to encourage continued research, as well as show respect for the experiences brought by these individuals. TCKs should be able to ask for the support that they feel they need, whether from existing resources or in addition to them, and, with knowledge that they are supported and accepted, will share their experiences honestly and openly with other students.

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## Class of 2002

Each year, students of the graduating SAHE class conduct original research in the form of a thesis, or prepare a professional paper in order to meet graduation requirements.

The Editorial Board is pleased to share the research topics from the Class of 2002.

The following is a list of the current positions of the members of the Class of 2002, followed by the title of their research. Please feel free to contact the information about his or her research. A copy of each author's thesis or professional paper is also kept SAHE Library, located in the Palmer Center on the Colorado State University campus.

### **Portia Bacor**

Women's Leadership  
Mount Saint Mary's College

*The Climate of Higher Education: Exploring the Perceptions of Students of Color of the Campus Climate*

### **Jason Borges**

Residence Life  
Florida State University

*Interpersonal Safety & Security on College Campuses: An Evaluation of Colorado State University*

### **Heather Downs**

Center for Human Enrichment  
University of Northern Colorado

*The Deconversion Experience: A Qualitative Study of Students' Experience with Leaving a Belief in the Christian God and Taking Up Non-Belief*

### **Jody Jessup**

Office of Women's Programs and Studies  
Colorado State University

*Teaching and Facilitating Learning about Gender from a Transnational Perspective: An Approach for Student Affairs Professionals*

### **DaJuan Johnson**

Pursuing an acting career in California  
*When the Rainbow is Not Enough*

### **Nicole Kerber**

Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life  
Duke University

*Promising Students, Unclean States: Addressing University Admissions Policies Regarding Persons Convicted of Crimes*

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Law Student

University of Missouri

*How Many More Have to Die? A Qualitative Study to Determine the Factors Contributing to the Binge Drinking of Fraternity Men at Colorado State University*

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University of North Florida

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**Zane Reif**

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*Alternative Programming: Changing the Social Culture on Campuses*

**Jacqueline Sène**

International Programs

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*Third Culture Kids: Hidden Immigrants of the College Campus*

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Law Student

University of the Pacific

*Global and Domestic Nomads or Third Culture Kids: Who They are and What the University Needs to Know*

**Norman Wallace**

Residence Life

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*Students of Color Network: One Initiative to Assist the Recruitment & Retention Efforts of the Colorado State University Student Affairs in Higher Education Master's Program*

**Seth Webb**

College of Business

Colorado State University

*First Tracks Adventure Based Orientation:*

*Impelling Students into Meaningful Pre-Collegiate Learning Experiences*

**Andrea Zelinko**

Colorado Tobacco Project

The BACCHUS & GAMMA Peer Education Network

*The Marketing of Social Norms and Its Impact*

*on the High-Risk Consumption of Alcohol*

## **Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs* Guidelines for Manuscript Preparation\***

### **Purpose**

Manuscripts should be written for the Student Affairs generalist who has broad responsibility for educational leadership, policy, staff development, and management. Articles with specialized topics, such as harassment, should be written to provide the generalist with an understanding of the importance of the topic to Student Affairs; such an article should not take the form of one program specialist writing to another program specialist.

The Editorial Board invites submissions of the following types of articles:

- Quantitative, Qualitative, or Emancipatory Research Articles \*
- Editorial Articles
- Historical Articles
- Opinion/Position Pieces
- Book Reviews

*Research articles for the Journal should stress the underlying issues or problem that stimulated the research. Treat the methodology concisely; and most importantly, offer a full discussion of the results, implications, and conclusions.*

### **Procedure**

Manuscripts should not exceed 3,000 words (approximately 12 pages of double-spaced, typewritten copy, including references, tables, and figures) and should not be fewer than 1,000 words (approximately four pages). Exceptions should be discussed with the editors prior to submission.

### **Suggestions for writing**

1. Prepare the manuscript, including title page and reference page, in accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition.
2. Include an article abstract and brief description of the author. The abstract should clearly state the purpose of the article and be concise and specific, limited to 120 words. Refer to page 12 of the Publication Manual for assistance.
3. Double-space all portions of the manuscript, including references, tables, and figures.
4. Avoid bias in language; refer to page 61 of the Publication Manual for assistance.

5. Do not use footnotes; incorporate the information into the text.
6. Use the active voice as much as possible.
7. Check subject/verb agreement, singular/plural.
8. Use verb tense appropriately: past tense for the literature review and description of procedures, and present tense for the results and discussion.
9. Proofread and double-check all references/citations before submitting your draft.
10. Use Microsoft Word (7.0) or higher, PC version whenever possible.
11. Any article under consideration for publication in a nationally distributed journal may not be submitted to the Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs*.

*\*Adapted from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators*



## PAST EDITORS

As we produce the twelfth edition of the Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs*, we want to acknowledge those who have laid the foundation for our success.

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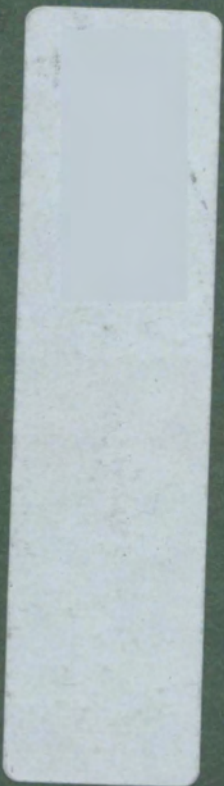
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