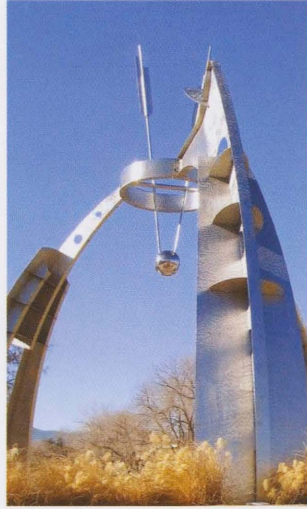
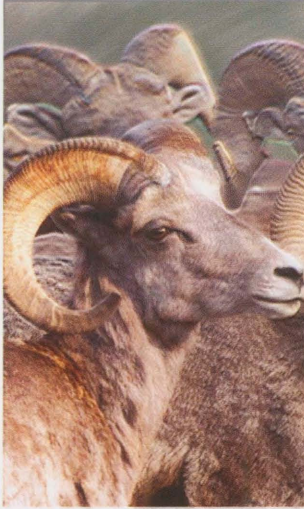
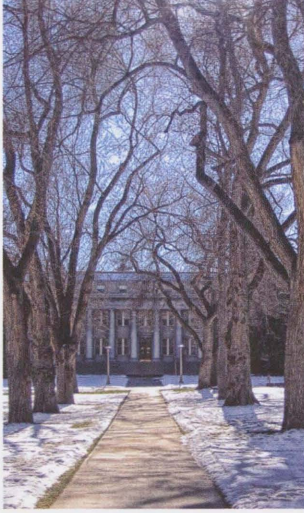


COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



JOURNAL OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Colorado  
State  
University

Volume 16 2007

# Colorado State University

## *Journal of Student Affairs*

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### **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 the Student Affairs in Higher Education graduate program at Colorado State University.

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## Managing Editors' Perspective

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Craig W. Beebe, Tim D. Cherney, and Yulisa I. Lin

Serving as a bridge between two worlds is not a new concept for the *Journal*. For 16 years, the *Journal* has bridged a practitioner-based program to the academic research taking place in the field. It has served as a connection between current students and alumni, and it has fostered the development of knowledge by merging the fresh ideas of graduate students and new professionals with the experience of seasoned practitioners.

As we began developing our vision for the *Journal* this year, we realized the crucial role it plays in connecting our current peers with potential mentors who have already embarked on their journey from CSU into the professional realm of student affairs. We wanted to emphasize the importance of this connection with the addition of an Alumni Profile, written this year by Mike Segawa.

The *Journal* also functions as a connection between best practices taking place in the profession and the fresh concepts of future leaders in the field. This dialogue is a vital component to the success of student affairs programs. In this *Journal*, you will find literature reviews and research that illuminate the experiences of student populations often overlooked. You will find critical discussions of current practices supported by insightful opinions and current and credible research. We, the young minds of student affairs, hope to engage our peers and our mentors in dialogues that will shape and transform our field. Yet we recognize that our ambition, unsupported by experience in the field, loses its ability to stand on its own. For this reason, we are honored to publish the reflection of Dr. Keith M. Miser. Approaching retirement, Dr. Miser compliments our student voices with the lessons he has learned serving as a student advocate for 40 years in Student Personnel Administration.

We hope that you find these dialogues insightful. We look forward to the further research they might inspire, and we are excited to continue these dialogues by publishing such research in future *Journals*.

## Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs*

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Volume XVI, 2007

### Editorial Board

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

## Past Leadership

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

### MANAGING EDITORS

2005-2006	Thomn Bell '06 & Kristen Harrell '06
2004-2005	Marci Colb '05 & Haley N. Richards '05
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1999-2000	Greg Kish '00
1998-1999	Kirsten Peterson '99
1997-1998	Beth Yohe '98
1996-1997	Ray Gasser '97 & Jocelyn Lowry '97
1995-1996	DeEtta Jones '96 & Michael Karpinski '96
1994-1995	Jeremy Eaves '95 & Alicia Vik '95
1993-1994	Mary Frank '94 & Keith Robinder '94
1992-1993	Jodi Berman '93 & Brad Lau '93
1991-1992	Marie E. Oamek '92

### FACULTY ADVISORS

2003-2006	David A. McKelfresh, Director of Staff Training and Assessment, Colorado State University, Jennifer Williams Molock, Director of Advocacy and Black Student Services, Colorado State University (2004-2006)
2000-2003	Paul Shang, former Director of HELP/Success Center, Colorado State University.
1996-2000	Martha Fosdick ('95), former Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs, Colorado State University.
1991-1998	Keith Miser, former Vice President for Student Affairs, Colorado State University

## Advisors' Perspective

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Jennifer Williams Molock and Oscar Felix, Advisors

What an honor and a privilege it has been to serve as the faculty advisors to the editorial board of the Student Affairs in Higher Education *Journal of Student Affairs*. The 2007 Sweet Sixteen Edition is truly a reflection of the hard-work, professionalism and integrity of a dynamic team of students who embrace the profession with enthusiasm, optimism, dedication and creativity. While remaining respectful of the *Journal's* past leadership and traditions, this board enhanced production efforts by establishing Managing Editors and Associate Editors for content, coordination and technical, as well as Associate Editors for development. In addition, an Alumni Profile recognizes the importance of connections, reflection, and life after the SAHE program.

The Board began meeting in the summer and were diligent throughout the year. Meetings were timely and productive, yet full of humor! All-in-all, this board has maintained the tradition of producing a high-quality professional communication tool for SAHE alumni and other Student Affairs professionals. We hope you enjoy reading this year's *Journal of Student Affairs* and that you will find it stimulating and thought-provoking.

## State of the Program

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Linda Kuk, Ph.D.  
SAHE Program Chair

The Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) Program at Colorado State University is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. The program has experienced many changes and has graduated over 600 students through these past four decades. Originally named the College Student Personnel Program, it graduated its first students in the spring of 1968, and in the spring of 2007 it will graduate over twenty students from across the United States and internationally. Today graduates of the program work at all levels of student affairs and college administration, and many are also employed in industry and government. The program has earned a nationally ranked reputation, annually receives approximately 100 applications, admits less than a quarter of them, and heralds a near 100% placement of its graduates.

Over the past year, the 45-hour, two-year program has fully implemented changes that keep it current with dynamic trends and professional standards within the field of Student Affairs. The program has become a competency-based program which focuses on preparing students to develop pre-determined professional competencies as the expected outcome of their preparation. This new focus is augmented by the creation of a professional competency portfolio that serves to integrate the learning, theory to practice, and the integration and reflection components of preparation into a comprehensive outcome experience. This integrated and comprehensive process has replaced the thesis or final paper as the culminating experience of the program. All of these changes have enhanced the program's ability to tailor the experience to meet the individual needs of students and to assist them in establishing professional goals and competencies that better prepare them to meet the challenges of work in the various areas of student affairs.

Over the years the SAHE program has been fortunate to have had strong and dynamic leadership through the efforts of primarily practitioner program chairs, beginning with Dr. Bob Hubble, Associate Dean of Students (1967-1970); Dr. James Kuder, Assistant Dean of Students, Associate Director of Student Relations, and Director of Student Relations (1970-1984); Dr. Rich Feller, Professor, School of Education (1983-1990); Dr. Grant Sherwood, Director of Housing and Food Service, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs (1990-2004) and since 2004, Dr. Linda Kuk, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Dr. Linda Ahuna-Hamill, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

In August of 2006, Dr. Kuk stepped aside from her role as Vice President to assume the role of SAHE Program Chair, full-time, as a member of the School of Education faculty. With this change the SAHE program attained its first full time faculty appointment, and the administration of the SAHE program was moved to the School of Education. One of the goals of this move was to enhance the program's relationship with the School of Education and the College of Applied Human Sciences. Dr. Ahuna-Hamill has continued to serve as the Student Affairs Coordinator and liaison to the program.

In addition to continuing to enhance the overall SAHE Masters Program, the addition of a full-time faculty program chair has enabled the development of a new Ph.D. program in College and University Administration. This program is in the final stages of the approval process, and is expected to begin in the summer of 2008. The program will be a distance



delivery program, focused at college and university administrators, primarily student affairs, who are employed full time. The program is expected to draw considerable interest from all over the United States.

Over the years, the Student Affairs in Higher Education Program has continued to evolve, and has emerged among the leading Masters programs in the country. It owes its success to the dedicated practitioner-faculty that have relentlessly taught, advised, and mentored hard working and dedicated students to be among the best graduates in the field, and to the countless alumni that have continued to stay connected and committed to helping to carry on the legacy of excellence that was instilled in them during their time at Colorado State. This *Journal* is a living reflection of this legacy of excellence passed down from one generation of students and faculty to the next. It portrays the continuing commitment of this program's pursuit of learning through practice, and commitment beyond expectations.

A heartfelt thank you is extended to the faculty, students, alumni, and friends who have been a part of this program over the years. You have made SAHE what it is today. It could not be as successful and accomplished without the contributions of each and every one of you. We trust you will stay invested in its commitment to continued growth, change, and excellence over the next 40 years!

## Acknowledgements

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Dr. Oscar Felix and Dr. Jennifer Williams Molock for their leadership, sense of humor, and flexibility. We thank them for their guidance throughout the publication process, and for always balancing our challenge with their support (Sanford, 1967).<sup>1</sup>

Dr. David McKelfresh for his continued support as we transitioned into new roles and further developed the vision for the *Journal*.

Dr. Linda Kuk for demonstrating a continued commitment to the success of the *Journal* in her new position as Director of the SAHE program.

Ashley Maloney '06 for acting as an ex-officio member of the editorial team as we embarked upon the adventure that has become this year's *Journal*.

Dr. Keith Miser, a founding force of the *Journal* 16 years ago, for returning to provide insights from his long and storied career in the field, finding one more way to share his wisdom and passion with new and seasoned professionals.

Cori Shaff, Shay Bright, and Tom Cavanagh for accepting our invitation to share their experience with a developing and powerful aspect of CSU's Division of Student Affairs.

Mike Segawa for writing our first Alumni Profile, sharing his journey in student affairs since graduating from the SAHE Program.

N.A. Hinkley and Karlen Suga for their commitment to development of the *Journal* and its future.

Travis Mears, Neal Oliver, and Gretchen Streiff for being the future of the *Journal*.

Reader Board for your commitment and diligence throughout this year's editorial process.

Authors for accepting the challenge of submitting manuscripts that you surely committed many hours to tweaking, for without you there would be no *Journal*.

Paul DiSalvo for producing this year's cover.

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<sup>1</sup> Sanford, N. (1962). Developmental status of the entering freshman. In N. Sanford (Ed.), *The American college: A psychological and social interpretation of higher learning* (pp. 253-282). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

## **Restorative Justice at Colorado State**

Cori Shaff, Shay Bright, Tom Cavanagh

### **Abstract**

*Restorative justice provides an alternative approach to wrongdoing. The central focus of restorative justice is to repair harm, restore relationships and heal the community. Restorative justice recognizes that wrongdoing violates people and relationships (Zehr, 1990) and is a process that brings together those that caused harm, those that experienced harm, and community members affected by the harm. The Restorative Justice Program at Colorado State University was initiated in 2003 to serve as an alternative sanction for student conduct hearings. This article discusses the principles and history of restorative justice and how restorative justice can be beneficial in a post-secondary education setting. Specifically, one restorative justice process, group conferencing, is outlined and proposed as a successful method for a college campus community.*

At Colorado State University (CSU), the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services (CRSCS) offers students, faculty, and staff numerous approaches that support the mission of the institution. The driving purposes of the office are to support students as they overcome mistakes; engage in character development with an emphasis on ethical decision-making and integrity; resolve conflict at the basic level possible through education, facilitation, and support; and to foster a safe and welcoming environment (Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services, n.d.). In recent years, CRSCS has developed a Restorative Justice Program as an alternative sanction in the student conduct process.

### **History and Principles of Restorative Justice**

Restorative justice is not a new practice. Practices of restorative justice exist in the Maori tradition and Native American healing circles and also existed in ancient Arab, Greek, and Roman civilizations (Braithwaite, 2002). Restorative justice is often contrasted to the traditional United States criminal justice system, which is referred to as retributive justice. The contrast is that retributive justice focuses on what law was broken and restorative justice focuses on harm caused to individuals (Zehr, 1990). Restorative justice has a central concern for the person(s) harmed and her or his needs and seeks to physically and symbolically repair the harm (Zehr, 2002). Harm can be anything identified by the person(s) harmed and the community, such as property or emotional damage. Restorative justice brings together all individuals who were impacted, allows each person the opportunity to ask questions and to share her or his unique perspective, and contribute to an agreement that helps to repair the harm caused.

Restorative justice affects behavior by engaging an individual's feeling of responsibility, rather than a focus on a fear of punishment and being caught (Tyler, 2006). Johnstone (2004) contrasts restorative justice and the traditional criminal justice system by noting the impact of empowering and including all stakeholders in a restorative justice conference.

Roche (2003) investigated five different restorative justice models that all maintain a focus on repairing harm. The first restorative justice practice is a conference program that involves the person(s) harmed, the person(s) who caused harm, and family or friends in a support role. The second restorative justice practice is typically called a circle program. There are

several similarities between the conference and circle program, but a circle program usually includes community members and incorporates a ritual. In this model, the person(s) harmed and the person(s) who caused harm sit in a circle along with the additional participants. One example of a ritual is the use of a physical talking piece that is passed among participants. A third restorative justice practice is a sentencing panel or accountability board that is made up of community volunteers that represent direct victims. The offender comes before the panel similar to the way an offender would approach a judge. Karp (2004) addresses the use of a board in a college setting and notes that the board uses restorative dialogue and collaborates with the person(s) who caused harm to create a restorative contract to repair that harm. The fourth model, victim-offender mediation (VOM), typically only includes the person(s) harmed, the person(s) who caused harm, and a facilitator. The fifth model is a combination of any of the aforementioned models depending on the circumstance, such as using a circle program and a sentencing panel to address a community incident.

### **Restorative Justice on the College Campus**

Restorative justice may have a positive impact on a college student's moral development as this practice engages the student, challenges the student to look beyond self, and increases awareness of actions and potential harm caused. According to Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development, growth occurs when an individual is stimulated to think and solve a problem. Kohlberg's stage model also suggests that an individual can reach a stage where he or she has a wider perspective and becomes more aware of how personal actions affect other people. Throughout the restorative justice process, the person who caused harm is challenged to think about how her or his actions affected and harmed others. Thus, when a person who caused harm works through the restorative justice process, he or she begins to think beyond her/himself and recognizes the impact of behavior on other people.

Restorative justice is still a relatively new approach to resolving conflict on the college campus in the United States. Currently, about a dozen colleges offer some type of restorative justice program for students. College campuses are effective locations for restorative justice programs due to the campus community and the available extracurricular and academic resources that can complement the values and principles of restorative justice (Warters, Sebok, & Goldblum, 2000). The prevalence of alcohol (DeJong, 2004) and student misbehavior (Karp, 2004) on a college campus may both be positively impacted through restorative justice strategies such as conferences and creative agreements.

### **Colorado State University and Restorative Justice**

Prior to the restorative justice program, CSU's primary approach for responding to student wrongdoing included primarily the offender. The CRSCS office, however, sought a more effective approach for influencing student behavior and was eager to implement restorative justice strategies.

Through a Restorative Justice Pilot Project in Spring 2003, CRSCS handled five conduct cases using a restorative justice process. The pilot project was reviewed, assessed, and found to be consistent with the mission and vision of CRSCS. Given the success of the pilot project, CRSCS chose to continue the restorative justice model and began to extend more resources in that direction. During the Fall of 2003, a full-time professional was appointed to coordinate the program.

#### ***Practice***

The restorative justice practice that CSU used during the pilot and continues to use is referred to as group conferencing and is similar to Roche's (2003) circle program. The majority of

restorative justice referrals come from conduct cases where students have broken a rule or regulation set forth by the Student Conduct Code. The Restorative Justice Program coordinator works closely with all hearing officers and provides case consultation and trainings on a regular basis to increase understanding of restorative justice and hence the amount of referrals. Typical referrals involve alcohol violations, academic dishonesty, minor theft, and bias incidents. The philosophy of the CSU program maintains that in order for a case to be appropriate for restorative justice, the person(s) who caused harm must take responsibility for her or his actions, express remorse, and be interested in meeting with those who have been harmed.

The Restorative Justice Program at CSU collaborates with the Fort Collins Restorative Justice Program to conduct facilitator training once a year. This training is open to undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff at CSU. The two-and-a-half day training consists of an introduction to the tenants and principles of restorative justice, facilitation skills, and implementation of the program on campus (the Fort Collins Restorative Justice Program, n.d.).

**Pre-conference.** Upon receiving a referral from a hearing officer, the first step in the restorative justice group conferencing process is a pre-conference. Facilitators conduct pre-conferences with any person who could potentially be involved. This includes the person(s) who caused harm, the person(s) harmed, community members, and support person(s).

During each pre-conference the facilitators describe the principles of restorative justice, explain group conferencing, and then ask individuals to discuss the incident from her or his perspective. The facilitators will ask questions to increase understanding of the incident and harm that was caused. Facilitators also discuss the importance of bringing support person(s) and ask the person(s) harmed and person(s) who caused harm to consider whom they would like to bring. The pre-conference allows the facilitators to screen for potential problematic attitudes or misinformation that could sabotage the restorative justice process. Conference ground rules are discussed during the pre-conference, and participants are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

During the pre-conference with the person who caused harm, the facilitator challenges her or him to think about what harm was caused and possible measures to repair the harm. The person(s) who caused harm is asked to bring a snack to share at the end of the conference for the ritual of "breaking bread." During the pre-conference with the person(s) harmed, she or he has the opportunity to share feelings regarding the incident and her or his perspective on the incident. Additionally, the person harmed is able to decide the order of sharing in the conference.

After the facilitators have met with all individuals in separate pre-conferences, they decide whether or not a restorative justice group conference is appropriate. Occasionally, the person(s) harmed are skeptical to meet with the person(s) that caused harm. Usually, more education, conversation, and addressing barriers help alleviate any fears surrounding the conference. If restorative justice is not appropriate for any reason, all parties are informed. Facilitators must be sensitive when informing each individual that restorative justice is not the appropriate next step for this particular incident and avoid assigning blame to a particular individual. If a conference does occur, it typically is very straightforward and runs smoothly as long as the pre-conferences were conducted thoroughly and appropriately.

**Conference.** In preparing for the conference, the facilitator must be mindful of the meeting location and seating arrangements. During the conference, the facilitator must be attentive to cultural diversity, self care, potential biases, active listening, impartiality, potential conflicts of interest, and confidentiality. The facilitator is not an active participant, but someone who keeps

the dialogue focused on the incident and ensures that ground rules are followed. The facilitator is responsible for emphasizing that the restorative justice process is completely voluntary as any participant may choose to excuse herself or himself at any point in the process.

The facilitator begins the conference with a short reminder of the purpose of restorative justice and reminds all individuals of the incident that will be addressed during the conference. The facilitator also reminds participants of the ground rules and confidentiality agreement. The person harmed has previously chosen her or his preference for the order of talking and thus the appropriate individual begins the conversation.

As each individual shares her or his story, their perspective on the situation, and feelings, other participants ultimately get their questions answered, gain understanding, and begin to move toward healing. As questions are answered, this conversation comes to fruition and the facilitator moves the conference to the agreement phase. An agreement consists of the future actions that the person(s) who caused harm will do to restore the harm. Agreements are most likely to be successful if they are written in a specific, measurable, and achievable manner. Any individual present can make a suggestion for the agreement, but the conditions are not final until every participant agrees. Once the agreement is finalized, individuals celebrate by eating the snack and engage in informal conversation.

**Post-conference.** Following the conference, the person who caused harm communicates with the Restorative Justice Program coordinator when the agreement has been met. The coordinator tracks all cases and conducts follow-up with students upon the agreement due date. Upon completion of an agreement, the Restorative Justice Program coordinator notifies all group conference participants, sends the person(s) who caused harm a certificate of completion, and informs the referring hearing officer.

### ***Findings at Colorado State University***

As of March 30, 2006, 56 persons harmed, 62 persons who caused harm, and 58 community members and support people had participated in the program. (See Table 1.) Of particular significance is the fact that 80% to 85% of those person(s) who caused harm who participated in conferences successfully completed the terms of the agreements reached at the conferences.

Table 1

### **Participation in Restorative Justice Program at Colorado State University, 2003-2006**

Academic Year	Pre-Conference			Conference			Completed
	Offender	Victim	Community	Offender	Victim	Community	
2003-2004	26	16	6	19	19	26	80%
2004-2005	21	24	7	15	17	26	85%
2005-March 2006	15	13	8	5	4	6	

*Note.* The completion rate for 2005-2006 is not calculated since the deadline for completion of terms of agreement was not reached at the time data was collected. Fewer offenders participated in the conference than pre-conference because the facilitators determined the case was not appropriate for conferencing.

To determine the level of conference participant satisfaction, a questionnaire for persons harmed, persons who caused harm, community members, and support people was developed. Persons harmed and persons who caused harm were asked to complete the questionnaire following the pre-conference and conference, while affected community members and support people were asked to complete the questionnaire only after the conference.

The datum that was available for this paper consisted of that collected up until March 30, 2006. Ninety-one people had completed questionnaires, including 30 persons who caused harm, 31 persons harmed, and 30 community members and support people. The data analyzed was a five-point Likert-type attitudinal response scale composed of the question: How satisfied were you with the way this case was handled? Restorative justice participants rated a response that ranged from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5).

Datum was analyzed for descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis revealed that all participants were *satisfied* to *very satisfied* with their participation in the pre-conference and conference. Analysis further revealed that satisfaction increased between the pre-conference and conference for both victims and offenders.

Table 2

### Means and Standard Deviations on Rating of Satisfaction

(1=Very Dissatisfied, 5=Very Satisfied)

		<i>n</i>	M	SD
Pre-Conference				
	Victim	8	4.00	.756
	Offender	27	4.26	.712
Conference				
	Victim	26	4.31	.788
	Offender	16	4.44	.512
	Community/Support	30	4.53	.730

*Note.* Data were collected more often from victims at conferences than at pre-conferences, while fewer offenders participated in conferences than pre-conferences. Affected community members and support people only participated in conferences.

Further results and findings from CSU will be available in the future as questionnaires are still being issued and collected for pre-conferences and conferences.

### Conclusion

The Restorative Justice Program coordinator also works closely with members of the Associated Students of Colorado State University's Supreme Court and members of the Greek Standards and Values Alignment Board in order to assist student leaders in using restorative sanctions for peer accountability. Recently, the Restorative Justice Program was extended to students involved in the Drugs, Alcohol, and You (DAY) IV Program, an intensive drug and alcohol treatment program for CSU students. These students were offered the opportunity to participate in a conference to repair any harm they might have caused – whether to family,

friends, or anyone involved in an incident with them – prior to receiving assistance for their substance use.

Ultimately, restorative justice offers student offenders a unique and powerful means to repair harm they caused to individuals and/or their community. The restorative justice program at CSU has allowed many students the opportunity to be a part of a conference and the results indicate a majority of these individuals had a satisfying and rewarding experience. Not only does the implementation of restorative justice offer a new approach to the traditional student conduct system, restorative justice provides students with the opportunity to morally develop and possibly change future behavior.

*Cori Shaff is a Graduate Assistant in the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at Colorado State University. She works closely with students as a hearing officer, restorative justice facilitator and mediator for on-campus conflicts. She will graduate this May from Colorado State University with a M.Ed. in Education and Human Resource Studies with a Career Counseling specialization.*

*Shay Bright is an Assistant Director in the office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services at Colorado State University. She assists students, staff, and faculty with conflicts; coordinates prevention and response activities to bias incidents; conducts conflict management and communication skills workshops; and coordinates the Restorative Justice Program. She has an M.S. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution.*

*Dr. Tom Cavanagh is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Waikato, School of Education. He first arrived in New Zealand in 2004 as a Fulbright Fellow. His major research interest is developing evidence-based restorative practices in schools. He is responsible for helping initiate the restorative justice program at Colorado State University.*

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## Student Affairs: A Reflection

Dr. Keith M. Miser

I am honored to be invited to write a reflection paper for the Colorado State University (CSU) *Journal of Student Affairs*. As I approach retirement from my role as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo in the summer of 2007, a cascade of thoughts, emotions, and reflections have flooded my mind over the past few weeks. At a time when professionals sometimes are unhappy with their career choices, I am lucky to have benefited from a gratifying lifetime career in Student Affairs. My life has been professionally stimulating, personally challenging, and has given me hundreds of life-long friends and colleagues. I could have done no better. My former students and professional associates have given me so much. I have learned much from them as well as from my mentors. We have weathered crises, celebrated victories, and experienced the joy of helping hundreds of students become successful and productive. In retrospect, if I had to plan my career all over again, I would have done nothing differently.

I have worked in education for 43 years: 40 years in Student Personnel Administration, including 32 years as a senior Student Affairs officer. I attended Indiana University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology, Master of Science in Counseling, and Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration. Upon graduation with my doctorate, I was appointed as the Director of Residence Halls at the University of Vermont and then served as the Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Administration for a total of 17 years. Following Vermont, I served for 12 years as the Vice President for Student Affairs at Colorado State University.

Both at Vermont and at Colorado State I was fortunate to teach in their graduate programs for Student Personnel Administration: Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA), and Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE), respectively. These teaching and advising assignments were some of the best years that I have had in my professional experience. The optimism, energy, intellectual curiosity, and excitement of graduate students make them one of the best groups I have had the privilege to teach. While working with bright, developing, new professionals, I was challenged to read more extensively, do critical research, and look at issues from a fresh perspective. Finally, working in these two nationally recognized professional preparation programs gave me the opportunity to develop hundreds of individuals that will lead our profession for years to come.

In 2000, Ann and I believed we needed one more adventure. I accepted the Vice Chancellor position at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, the sixth most diverse university in the United States and the most diverse county in the country. Our 3,500 students at University of Hawai'i at Hilo are 68% first generation students and 32% from families living below an income of \$32,000 for a family of four. These students and their quest for an education have provided an incredible experience for me. I am constantly amazed and renewed by their drive for excellence, their need for support, and their responsiveness to faculty and Student Affairs administrators. Their struggles and challenges are never-ending. They are so optimistic, brave, and motivated as they pursue their pathway to graduation from our campus.

During my career I made some mistakes and learned many lessons. Most importantly, I valued the opportunity to help build strong institutions, create and implement innovative and responsive Student Affairs programs, and marvel at how significant a difference an education can make in the lives of students. Here are a few of the important (seen from my own biased perspective) lessons that I have learned from working with students and colleges and universities over nearly four decades.

### ***Treat Students as Colleagues***

The best helping relationship to have with a student is to see her or him as a colleague that you respect and honor, thus offering help and support from that viewpoint. To use titles is to create barriers in establishing this precious relationship. Enough barriers to building effective and working relationships with students exist already – barriers of culture, age, gender, etc. – without adding an array of others, such as status and academic titles. I have always felt that I could learn a great deal from every student with whom I interacted, and that they could learn a lot from me. I was no more important than any student, although I might know more because I had lived longer, not because my title or position made me more important or more intelligent.

### ***Focus on Students***

In times of problems, issues, political challenges, and budget debates within the university, any Student Affairs professional can grow discouraged. The best and probably the only real solution to abating this discouragement is to go back to the basic reason all of us are working so hard in our institutions – the student. It is important for every administrator to work with at least a few students directly. This helps maintain a sense of hope, energy, insight, and the pleasure of helping and assisting a young (or not-so-young) adult to be academically and personally successful. To help a single student solve one problem or overcome one barrier makes all the institutional politics, competition, and petty arguing seem superficial.

### ***Fight Only the Battles You Can Win***

For any Student Affairs professional, there are many battles to be fought for programs, people, ideas, and activities in which we believe. There are far too many to take on in a lifetime. An effective Student Affairs professional identifies issues that are really important and addresses only these few, marshalling all of the commitment, energy, and heart that one can give. The battles over ideology, philosophy, and institutional direction are very important; they are a call for leadership in Student Affairs. The key is to limit the number of these battles so you have a chance of winning and being effective. Administrators that address too many issues too often will have trouble being heard and making their points as educational leaders. At worst, they could be identified as a university complainer who will not be taken seriously.

### ***Be Loyal to Your School***

Every Student Affairs professional is a part of a complex and sometimes fragile university organization. To make a university successful, the President, Vice President, Dean, or Program Director must be supported, at least publicly, by every member of the Student Affairs staff. Behind closed doors lie enough opportunities to disagree, to confront others, and to possibly be critical. It is in the public arena where the entire Division of Student Affairs or university must appear united. If this unity is not seen as important and Student Affairs professionals criticize their organization in public, the strength of the organization will be diminished. In the end their own programs will be damaged. The public at large and students in particular can easily lose faith in a university, a Student Affairs program, or a Division of Student Affairs if members of that very organization are publicly critical about the program's direction, leadership, priorities, or principles. Everyone in the organization is diminished if the organization loses the support of students, faculty, or other constituents.

### ***Have Mentors – Be a Mentor***

Every Student Affairs professional should have at least one mentor and, in turn, should be a mentor to less experienced professionals. Being a mentor is usually seen as helping the

mentee; being a mentor, however, also helps the mentor explore new ideas, think of new directions, take bold new steps, and reflect on relationships and learning. The mentee can gain the confidence to try new directions with the support and encouragement of a senior, more experienced professional. Many mentors have guided, supported, and made a world of difference to me as a professional. Hopefully, I have done the same for those undergraduate and graduate students for whom I have served as a mentor.

### ***Take Time to Listen (Not Email)***

In the busy world of higher education with appointments, emails, projects, and long work days, it is important that Student Affairs professionals take time to listen to students, staff members, faculty colleagues, and other constituents. Quiet time must be taken to respond to each person. This personal attention gives her or him an opportunity to be heard and to develop a base of understanding. This way a Student Affairs professional can effectively help others. Often, just listening thoughtfully helps the individual that has come to seek advice. Listening is an art that is being lost on our busy campuses. It is so critical for people to be heard so they can build self-confidence and a sense of understanding of the university and its priorities.

### ***Policies Are Not Rules***

Rules are designed to never be broken; no exceptions should be made to a *rule*. Policies are *guidelines* for decision making. If exceptions are warranted for a policy, and the decision-maker makes that exception, then the decision-maker and the policy are both effective. Many people treat policies as if they were rules and criticize decision-makers for not following the rules if an exception is made. We all are dealing with human beings on our campuses, whether they are students, faculty, or external constituents. In the broad array of the human experience it is not reasonable to think that every individual can fit into a policy. Policies are good most of the time, but some circumstances do not fit the policy. A strong, effective leader should make an exception to the policy to meet the needs of that individual. Some Student Affairs professionals are afraid to make exceptions for fear of appearing weak. In actuality, more strength is needed to make an exception to a policy than to say, "Sorry, there are no exceptions to be made."

### ***Always Be a Teacher***

Good Student Affairs professionals are great teachers; they are always marketing their program or their organization to everyone with whom they speak. An effective Student Affairs professional is able to tell the story of the organization and to articulate why it is important to students and to the campus in general. It is important to take every opportunity available to communicate to others about our program or activity. By teaching others, we build support across the campus for the programs that are vital to students' success. Student Affairs professionals sometimes think their programs are so obviously important that they do not need to be articulated to the rest of the campus. This belief, however, is a mistake. When no one on campus knows about the program, its principles, its successes, or its vital importance to students, then these programs are often challenged.

### ***Be Active in Professional Organizations***

A successful Student Affairs professional is active in at least one professional organization. These organizations provide opportunities for research, conference presentations, facilitation of workshops, or a myriad of activities that keep people current and fresh in their thinking. Being an active member of a professional organization allows us to meet other colleagues and to build professional bridges between our institution and others throughout the nation.

In addition to gaining new skills and information, active members of a professional organization build self-confidence, visibility, and pride in our profession. Often Student Affairs professionals who are not professionally active in organizations become isolated and eventually leave the profession out of personal frustration and ineffectiveness.

### ***Student Affairs Professionals as Advocates***

Student Affairs professionals must assume the role of advocates for students. To advocate means more than being responsive, treating students well, being fair, or being friends with or a mentor to students. Many of my faculty colleagues are wonderful at working with students, but they are not advocates. To be an effective advocate, I believe one must give generously the resources of time and commitment. Being an advocate often means meeting with a student at midnight, loaning a student \$100, or accompanying a student to the emergency room. Being a student advocate almost always means disrupting our personal and family time to help students through a crisis, emergency, or a very significant time in their lives. Sometimes being an advocate also means we must challenge the system, debate the campus police, or make a very big exception to an existing university policy. Not many members of the campus community are willing to put themselves on the line in this way, although almost everyone would say, "I'm a student advocate."

The rewards for being an advocate are immense. Advocates can make a significant difference in a student's life, especially if that student is struggling financially, a first generation student, or represents a minority group on campus. These types of students typically have little, if any, political or social power on campus or in the larger community. Student Affairs professionals, by virtue of their professional role on campus, must be advocates for these groups. If we are not, no one else on campus assumes this role. I receive more pleasure from the role of being an advocate for students than from any other role that I play. I know in my heart that without this help, many of these students would not be in college today.

### ***Communication Technology – Friend or Foe***

Student Affairs professionals on college and university campuses still meet on a one-on-one basis with students, but the trend is to use more electronic communication, including cell phones, email, MySpace, Facebook, and telephone communication. Many students are irritated if they have to take time to see an advisor, and cannot solve the problem via email or cell phone. Students frequently do not want to sit down with an academic advisor or take the time to build a relationship that could assist them in their future with personal and academic issues. Also, many faculty members would rather spend more time on research than with students, so cyber-advising and email are seen as the perfect solutions to saving time. It is true that email and other types of electronic communication are great tools to assist with administration and to foster efficiency in communication. I believe, however, that they should be seen as an extension to human interaction and relationship-building, not as a substitute for this important interaction opportunity.

Students love electronic communication and have "friended" many on Facebook, but these same students still search for meaningful relationships with other students, and some are seeking out faculty and Student Affairs professionals for support. Student Affairs has an emerging role in assisting students with managing their electronic communication. It is important to help students find ways to have genuine human interaction and at the same time use the new forms of communication to make their lives easier, extending themselves beyond the campus environment.

### *Diversity is Strength*

I have learned that the strongest organizations in higher education are most diverse in ideas, approaches, gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and age, to name a few of the many types of diversity. Diverse staff and students can together challenge group thinking and create innovative responses to individual differences. This way, diversity enhances the vitality and energy of the university. Over countless years I have appointed many diverse professionals to positions in Student Affairs and have gone to extraordinary lengths to recruit and appoint them to serve as colleagues, mentors, and professionals in Student Affairs programs. They have revitalized the organizations that were fortunate enough to have them as members. They have brought with them new ways of thinking, new approaches to education, and often have been able to serve as mentors and advocates for underrepresented, first generation, and low income students.

Diverse campuses are vital in our society today. As America becomes more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, campuses can be at the cutting edge of educational change. They can educate the leaders of tomorrow to communicate across, to learn about, and to appreciate cultures different from their own. I believe strongly that a college education for students is enhanced by attending a diverse campus committed to advancing programs that bring students from diverse backgrounds together to work, study, and participate in social activities.

At my current campus, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, students have an incredible opportunity to learn about many different cultures and to have friends representing students from other nations. They become skilled in cross-cultural communication, international understanding, and conflict resolution across cultures. They gain an appreciation for celebrating differences, fostering communication, and building respect for and with individuals different from themselves. This educational milieu at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo is vital to prepare future leaders to live in an America far more diverse than it is today.

In conclusion, I thank the *Journal of Student Affairs* for the opportunity to share these thoughts. Clearly the lessons I have learned over the past 40 years as a Student Affairs professional have been numerous. They also had a significant impact on my own development. Some lessons were learned easily; most, however, were learned during personal turmoil and sleepless nights. The rewards of such a rigorous and demanding career have far outweighed the frustrations. My journey has enriched my life immeasurably. It has generated in me an incredible respect for the human experience and for the role that higher education can play in creating better futures for thousands upon thousands of students. I feel eternally grateful to my mentors, colleagues, and students. They have changed me in ways I never could have anticipated. I hope this reflection will encourage those who read it to persist in the profession in the face of all obstacles. To do so will enrich their lives and will open doors for students where doors were closed before.

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# **Beyond Yellow Ribbons: Using the 2006 Colorado State University Deployment Assessment to Provide Support for College Students Affected by the Deployment of a Friend or Family Member**

N.A. Hinkley

## **Abstract**

*This article details the Colorado State University 2006 Deployment Assessment to identify that college students are emotionally, psychologically, and physically affected by the deployment of a friend or family member to a military combat zone. Results of the assessment are integrated with existing research on military deployments to provide a deeper understanding of the overall student experience. The insight garnered from this exploration also provides an opportunity to offer the field of higher education recommendations on how the needs of this unique student experience can be better met.*

In 2003 the United States of America entered into military conflict with the nation of Iraq. As of mid-November 2006, approximately 152,000 American military servicemen and women have been deployed to Iraq in order to carry out the mission of the United States in this conflict (Troop Numbers, 2006). The high levels of deployed servicemen and women began creating cause for concern among faculty and staff at Colorado State University. The specific concern of these individuals was for those students who were experiencing the deployment of a friend or family member. In an effort to discover if students were indeed being affected by this experience, the University Counseling Center (UCC) allowed the author to conduct an assessment. The findings of this assessment provide a preliminary understanding of the emotional, psychological, and physical affects of this unique experience. In addition this assessment provided an opportunity to create recommendations for any institution of higher education to help better meet the needs of this student population. The following discussion details the assessment and utilizes established research to better convey the impact of the assessment results.

## **Purpose of the Assessment**

Due to the current lack of scholarly or popular literature on the subject of college students experiencing the deployment of a friend or family member, the author conducted an assessment at Colorado State University (CSU), a large, four-year public research institution. The purpose of the assessment was two-fold: 1) explore how many students might be affected by the experience and, 2) better understand the issues, questions, or concerns expressed and experienced by this student population. The Deployment Assessment, an online electronic survey, was sent via e-mail to a random sample of 50% of the total currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate student population, approximately 13,500 students. All students randomly selected for participation in the survey received the e-mail on the same day and were given 17 days from the date of the e-mail to participate in the assessment. A total of 463 students participated in the assessment, identifying themselves as students that have been affected by the deployment of a friend or family member (Deployment Assessment, 2006).

Full results of the assessment included information on everything from the student's perceived ability to cope with their experience to contextual information about the student's physical proximity to family members. Each piece of information was viewed as significant in that it provided information that would have otherwise remained unknown. These results also created the opportunity for further interactions with this student population and provided the institution with a reason for conducting more intentional research. The following sections of this discussion provide more information about the experiences of this student population and delve further into ways institutions of higher education might assist students through this experience.

### **Understanding Military Deployments**

In order to fulfill the first purpose of the 2006 Deployment Assessment, exploring how many students might be affected by deployment of a friend or family member, it is necessary to have some understanding of military deployment itself. Military deployments, according to the United States Department of Education (2003), are defined as "the name given to the movement of an individual or military unit within the United States or to an overseas location to accomplish a task or mission" (p. 3). As part of their 1995 study, Wood and Scarville explained that, "data collected in the late 1980s indicate that over half (55%) of all soldiers in combat units spent a month or more away from home during a six month period" (p. 217), demonstrating the frequency of separation time between families and active-duty soldiers.

The cited frequency of separation as a result of deployment was of particular interest to the author when creating questions for the assessment. Specifically the author was curious if students were experiencing multiple deployments and if previous experiences would therefore enhance the student's ability to personally cope. Results of the 2006 Deployment Assessment demonstrate that frequency of deployment cycles is somewhat consistent with the previous data. Of 431 participant responses, 233 indicated having experienced the deployment of a friend or family member more than once (Deployment Assessment, 2006). While it was evident that some students have had more experiences with deployment, the assessment did not include a question that would have provided information about the amount of time between deployment cycles therefore better clarifying frequency.

The amount of previous experiences, however, did not appear to significantly alter the student's perceived ability to cope. The 2006 Deployment Assessment asked students to indicate their perceived level of preparedness in regard to the deployment of their friend or family member; 54% of survey participants responded that they were either not prepared at all or were only somewhat prepared for this experience. The results show little to no change when filtered to determine the responses of those students having indicated experiencing more than one deployment cycle. Kleigher, Kennedy, Becker, and Smith (1993) would argue that the cause of these students not feeling prepared would be "the sudden and unexpected nature of a national emergency requires timely deployment of military personnel. As such, there is often little time for the family to prepare for lengthy and difficult separations" (p. 240). Understanding that students are entering into the deployment experience feeling unprepared also helps to then understand the ways in which they are ultimately affected by the deployment itself.

### **Deployment Experiences**

An inherent aspect of military deployments and their subsequent affect upon the lives of family members or friends is stress. Dougall and Baum (2001) discuss the stress construct at length, theorizing, "stress is (or can be) adaptive, that it is associated with threatening or harmful



events, and that it is typically characterized by adverse or unpleasant feelings and mood” (Dougall & Baum, 2001, p. 321). While many college students experience stress because of the transition into, through, and out of college, the stress of experiencing the deployment of a friend or family member is considered drastically different. The difference is primarily based upon the nature of deployment itself. Not only is the experience something typically unexpected as previously cited, but it is also an experience with distinct phases. Understanding the phases of the deployment further informed the creation of the 2006 Deployment Assessment.

The United States Department of Education’s 2003 publication, *Educator’s Guide to the Military Child During Deployment*, was the primary source consulted for exploring these phases. In this publication, the department identifies that, “deployments have three phases: pre-deployment, deployment, and post deployment (which includes reunion)” (p. 3). Included within this study are examples of typical reactions that students or family members might demonstrate as they progress through each phase. The 2006 Deployment Assessment utilized this information to its fullest. Student participants were asked a series of five questions relating to the phases of deployment. Each question included a specific timeframe that reflected a given phase. For example, zero to six months represented a portion of the ‘deployment phase’. For each of the five questions, students were provided with the same list of questions and issues that they were able to select [students were able to select as many questions and issues as they felt necessary]. By selecting the question or issue, the student was indicating that this was something they were concerned about during that specific phase.

During the pre-deployment phase, students will often become irritable or exhibit nervous behaviors (United States Department of Education, 2003). These behaviors are mainly caused by an increasing fear of the unknown: what will happen during the actual deployment, whether or not the deployed individual will return, or if the friend or family member will be able to cope with the given situation. The results of the 2006 Deployment Assessment were very consistent with this information. Of 326 student responses, the top identified concerns for pre-deployment were safety of the service member [316 responses], frequency of being able to communicate [202 responses], and ability to relate to the service member upon his or her return [165 responses]. It is important to understand that students experiencing this phase have not yet identified the necessary coping skills to ease their transition into accepting the deployment (United States Department of Education, 2003).

Immediately following the actual deployment, students enter the deployment phase. In this phase students begin formulating coping skills to deal with their emotional and psychological instability, providing them with a regained sense of normalcy (United States Department of Education, 2003). A portion of the Deployment Assessment (2006) explored the concerns of students in relation to the deployment of their friend or family member. According to the responses of 367 students, the three most frequently cited concerns were: safety of the service member [318 responses], frequency of being able to communicate with the service member [207 responses], and being able to relate to the service member during his or her deployment [168 responses] (Deployment Assessment).

Reestablished normalcy will again be interrupted by the return of the friend or family member following their deployment. Students and soldiers alike will struggle to conceptualize the ways in which daily life has been altered and overcome the continual concern about the possibility of another deployment (United States Department of Education, 2003). Reunion or the experience of the student following the deployment was not an area ultimately included in the 2006 Deployment Assessment and therefore data is not available.

Although the reactions observed in each successive deployment phase are derived from overall family adjustment to the situation, it can be perceived that college students would have similar experiences. The following U.S. Department of Education's statement supports this assumption:

Although the emotional impact of each phase of the deployment cycle has been carefully documented and studied, it is important to remember that no two students will react the same way. Individual responses depend on a variety of factors such as age, maturity, gender, etc. (2003, p. 3)

This passage also helps to further explain why the experience of deployment creates stress for college students that is different from that of so-called normal transitional stress. The stress of deployment is further compounded when one realizes that students will still experience normal transitional stressors in addition to these new issues and concerns. Realizing the overall impact of the phases of deployment served the second purpose of the 2006 Deployment Assessment to better understand the issues, concerns, or questions expressed and experienced by this student population.

Realizing that college students experience the deployment of friends or family members unexpectedly, encounter new stressors, and subsequently must form healthy coping skills means that institutions of higher education and student affairs professionals must recognize both the complexity and uniqueness of these situations. At the current time there has been little scholarly or popular literature published on how these issues are being addressed within academic communities. This has also caused difficulty in determining whether or not any institutions of higher education are currently, or have in the past, offered any services or resources for this student population. It is also important to outline reasons institutions of higher education and student affairs professionals should identify how students are affected by this experience.

### **Recommendations for Institutions of Higher Education and Student Affairs Professionals**

An important aspect for practitioners on college campuses to keep in mind when helping students cope with the deployment of a friend or family member is an understanding of the available services and resources. Wood and Scarville (1995) point out that "family resources associated with adjustment to separation are informal and formal sources of support, such as a network of relatives and friends (both within and outside of the military community), employment, and Army-sponsored family support services" (p. 218). The sources of support identified by Wood and Scarville are viewed as appropriate for college students. However, it should be noted that such services and resources might not be readily available for these students. In most cases, the services and resources provided by military branches are only available to direct family members or spouses of deployed service members and exclusively hosted at military bases. The isolation of college students from family was evident in the 2006 Deployment Assessment where out of 403 responses, 160 indicated not being in close physical proximity to family. Due to this situation, it would be beneficial if institutions of higher education provided such services and resources for students affected.

One option for institutions of higher education would be to provide services and resources through a university counseling or wellness center. Institutions of higher education would be able to utilize previously established services such as individualized counseling or educational materials about coping skills and simply promote them to students affected by a deployment. Basing the services and resources out of a counseling or wellness center also

creates access to professionals that would be able to also help educate other faculty or staff members about ways to assist students through this experience.

If counseling services are not available within the campus community or the institution would like to provide an alternative, there is also the option of contracting or working with military personnel or professional psychologists specifically trained in the area of deployment counseling. Partnerships with these individuals could also have the additional benefit of providing credibility or inherent understanding to these services. Students that utilize the services and resources might feel that military personnel or psychologists with a background in deployment counseling can more easily relate to the experience and provide better assistance. Furthermore, utilizing military personnel would also supply the institution with access to literature and other resources that would enhance the institution's ability to support their students.

Institutions should also understand that counseling options, while important and supported by the United States Department of Education (2003), is not a service that all college students affected by this experience will view as helpful or would be comfortable accessing. One recommendation is to offer open forums or roundtable discussions. Institutions could invite military personnel, students willing to share about their experiences, or faculty and staff members to participate so that students are able to receive information from many different perspectives. This type of institutional support might also provide other members of the campus community with information about this student experience, thereby establishing a heightened awareness and sense of community support.

Many studies include references to how close proximity with family members helps to facilitate the development of coping skills for individuals affected by this experience (Blalsure & Arnold-Mann, 1992; Kleigher, et. al., 1993; McCubbin, 1979, 1984; United States Department of Education, 2003; Wood & Scarville, 1995). For those college students who do not live in close proximity during the time that a friend or family member is deployed, members of the college community might be viewed as substitutes for family members. This situation would be an excellent reason for institutions to establish meaningful social networks or support groups. Social support is primarily interactions with other people who are able to provide resources or emotional comfort that can translate into solutions for helping individuals cope with a problem (Willis & Fegan, 2001). Organized social support is professionally referred to as support groups.

Support group meetings typically involve trained leaders facilitating the exchange of relevant information and experiences between group members as a way of teaching coping skills (Helgeson & Gottlib, 2000). In addition to opportunities for skill training, support groups also offer individuals a sense of comfort that can be derived from belonging to a group that understands the intricacies of the issue (Helgeson & Gottlib). Such identification and understanding saves the student from continually explaining details or definitions about the deployment and allows the student to concentrate on attaining coping skills and processing their experience. Furthermore, these groups establish an environment of trust and understanding, thereby allowing students to freely express fear, anger, and frustration (Willis & Fegan, 2001).

The above recommendations are primarily services that an institution might offer. It is also important to realize that access to common resources can be beneficial for this student population. One example of this type of resource would be providing students with opportunities to communicate with friends or family members who are deployed. Continued communication with people at home was viewed as an essential aspect of establishing a

sense of stability (Blalsure & Arnold-Mann, 1992). Providing access to technology or financial supports to send care packages and letters will create ways for students to express connectedness with their deployed friend or family member. Additionally, institutions could also provide students with information about what items to send to their friend or family member or offer institutional merchandise that could be included within such packages.

A final recommendation would be a further exploration into this student experience by conducting assessments or other forms of research on individual college campuses. Such research would help to determine if this experience is common among college students or if it is unique to those attending Colorado State University. Research would also help individual institutions understand what services and resources are needed by students within their communities.

### **Conclusion**

Dealing with the deployment of a friend or family member to a military combat zone is a unique student experience. Although there has been little formal research in this area, the 2006 Deployment Assessment conducted at Colorado State University has begun to illuminate the emotional, psychological, and physical challenges endured by this student population. The results of the assessment also help to better clarify why this student population requires specific support services and resources. While the information itself is valuable to the field of higher education, without further exploration or evaluation of current services and resources, this already overlooked population will continue to be underserved by the profession.

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*Note: As a matter of process, the Journal of Student Affairs allows members of the Editorial and Reader Boards to submit manuscripts for consideration in the publication process. We understand the ethical concerns in publishing works produced by Board members, and actively take steps to ensure a fair and unbiased process for all contributors. We have attempted to stay true to the developmental mission of the Journal while continuing to publish works that speak to the quality and integrity of the Journal.*

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## Examining the Low College Graduation Rates of Black Students

Jimmy R. Ellis

### Abstract

*This paper explores the causes of low college graduation rates for Black students. In addition to several contributing factors, there exist two primary reasons Black students graduate at such low levels. The financial implications of attending and persisting in college create a burden that is too great to successfully graduate, and the campus climate of many higher education institutions do little to support Black students in transition. Suggestions for student affairs professionals to aid Black students' persistence to graduation conclude this paper.*

### Examining the Low College Graduation Rates of Black Students

More students are attending college soon after completing high school. In 1975, less than half of all high school graduates attended a two-year or four-year institution (U.S. Census Bureau, 1976). In comparison, about two-thirds of all high school graduates attended a higher education institution in 2003 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Although access to college has increased, there is a disconcerting trend regarding college students' six-year graduation rates. Berkner, He, and Cataldi (2002) reported that less than 65% of all college freshmen graduate within six years of college enrollment. Even more troubling is the disparity between the graduation rates of White students in comparison to those of Black students. Berkner et al. identified a 21 percentage point difference between the graduation rates of these respective populations, with 67% of White students graduating within six years compared to only 46% of Black students. This article discusses the importance of earning a college degree, identifies the major issues that lead to Black students' lower graduation rates, highlights other contributing issues present in the research, and suggests ways student affairs practice can affect Black students' graduation rates.

### The Importance of Earning a College Degree

Studies show the distinct economic benefit of a college education (Day & Newburger, 2002; Stoops, 2004; The Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998). Stoops identified that a worker with a high school degree in 2002 earned, on average, \$27,280. Meanwhile, a worker with a bachelor's degree could expect to earn, on average, \$51,194. Day and Newburger measured this disparity over a lifetime and concluded that an individual with a high school degree could expect to earn just over a million dollars over a lifetime, while an individual with a bachelor's degree could expect to earn just over two million dollars during the same amount of time.

There are also many other potential consequences of not earning a degree. Those with a college degree can expect to have an improved life expectancy and overall better health than those without (The Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998). In addition, an individual with a college degree can anticipate an improved quality of life for their offspring. The children of these individuals are more likely to go to college and have higher levels of critical thinking ability (Dawson, 1991; Fields & Smith, 1998). Finally, individuals with a college degree have more opportunities for hobbies and leisure activities ranging from visiting art museums to going to concerts (Dirks, 1999). The clear importance of earning a college

degree is evident. Given these benefits, it is important to determine what issues contribute to the low graduation rates of Black students. An analysis of the contributing issues regarding Black students' poor graduation rates follows.

### **Major Contributing Issues**

#### ***Financial Implications***

After reviewing the literature, two key issues arise focusing on Black students' lower graduation rates compared to that of White students. The first reason is the financial implications of attending a higher education institution. Porter (2002) found that it costs about \$9,000 to attend college annually when considering in-state tuition, room, and board. Research by Berkner et al. (2002) further documented the strain of finances when pursuing a degree, reporting that students coming from an income base of over \$70,000 have a graduation rate of over 77%, while those from an income base of \$25,000 to \$44,999 graduate at a rate just under 60%. DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Mills (2004) reported that Black households had the lowest median income as compared to Asian, White, and Hispanic households at about \$29,000. These findings indicate a strong connection between the family income level of a student and graduation rates. With Black students potentially coming from families with the lowest median income, they tend to have lower rates of graduation.

Black students willing to take the financial risk and pursue higher education often incur excessive debt while in college. A study by Baum and O'Malley (2003) reported that 43% of total respondents in a survey identified loans as being important in determining whether they were able to remain in school. When considering the views of Black students, 60% saw loans as a major burden in attending college and 40% of Black respondents stated the burden associated with repaying the loans was greater than anticipated. Carey (2004) determined that a major problem occurs when these students withdraw from higher education institutions with large amounts of student debt, but without the high earning potential afforded to those with a college degree.

#### ***Institutional Campus Climate***

The transition to a higher education institution can be especially difficult for Black students and several factors can affect whether these students graduate. Several articles identify campus climate as a major contributor as to why Black students experience low graduation levels. This climate can create general feelings of isolation, lack of representation, and racial tension at higher education institutions (Hurtado, 1992; Neville, Heppner, Ji, & Thye, 2004; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999; Sedlacek, 1999). These issues, added to the academic, financial, and social transitions that exist within every student's experience, are often enough to hinder Black students' persistence. In addition, Black students' direct perceptions of explicit racism from both individuals and the institution can impact their desire to remain at an institution (Sedlacek). The act of balancing educational goals and remaining socially conscious is often one with conflicting means and is a tremendous challenge for a college student.

Another issue regarding campus climate that affects Black students' graduation rates is the lack of a strong presence of Black students on campus (Hurtado, 1992; *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 2005). The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE) cites examples of institutions with low percentages of Black students that tend to also reflect low graduation rates for these students. This lack of representation causes major transitional issues for Black students in predominantly White institutions (JBHE). Furthermore, the lack of social or cultural events and organizations in this type of campus climate does little to retain Black

students. Research indicates that Black students attending college are more likely to get involved in Black student groups and organizations (Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). The urge for Black students to participate and engage in campus activities declines significantly when considering other student groups and organizations on campus (Sutton & Kimbrough).

Campus climate also includes interactions with faculty members and administrators. Unfortunately, Black students appear hesitant to approach their professors (Neville et al., 2004; Schwitzer et al., 1999; Sedlacek, 1999). Black students report that faculty and administrators do little to reach out to them, and in some instances, there is a perception that a student needs help not because of a lack of knowledge of the material or policy, but because the student is Black (Schwitzer et al.). The effects of this type of relationship cause great stress for college students (Schwitzer et al.). Another implication of this relationship that is of great concern to Black students is the lack of Black faculty and administrators. Schwitzer et al. identified that a sense of familiarity between faculty and students aids in developing a successful relationship. Sedlacek highlighted the importance of familiar authority figures for Black students and documented that role models add to students' development by providing a cultural perspective unique to those individuals. The absence of these figures only add to the feelings of remoteness and solitude Black students already feel as underrepresented members of the campus community.

### **Other Issues Affecting Black Student Graduation Rates**

#### ***K-12 Preparation***

The literature regarding the disparity between graduation rates of Black and White students identified several other contributing factors that affect Black student graduation rates. Some researchers recognized poor K-12 preparation of Black students as a factor affecting success and retention in college (Carey, 2004; JBHE, 2005). Furthermore, Carey found that minority students are more likely to go to K-12 schools that are not appropriately funded and expect little from their students.

#### ***Gender***

One key distinction of Black students' graduation rates is the graduation rates of Black men. Research shows a 10 percentage point difference between the graduation rates of Black women and men, with higher graduation rates for women (JBHE, 2005). This difference in graduation rates is attributed in part to the fact that fewer men attend college than women. Although performing at similar levels on high school coursework and standardized tests, Black women go to college at a rate three times that of their male counterparts (Roach, 2001). Once they are there, Black men struggle with finding and asking for help to aid in their transition. This difficulty adds to the reasons why so few Black men graduate from college. Research has shown that Black men have a harder time connecting socially on campus and are more hesitant to take part in organizations that aim to serve them and aid in their retention (Roach).

### **The Role of Student Affairs**

The pervasive theme arising from the literature regarding intervention strategies that affect Black students' persistence is for student affairs professionals to actively engage students, especially during the first few years when the risk of attrition is high (Carey, 2005; Devarics & Roach, 2000; Murtaugh, Burns, & Schuster, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1994; Tinto & Goodsell-Love, 1993; Wilson, 2000).



### ***Mentoring***

Mentors provide solid support and role modeling that Black students can trust to look out for their best interests and help them in their transition (Devarics & Roach, 2000; Sedlacek, 1999; Wilson, 2000). Wilson identified mentoring as an immediate solution to the problem of Black students not persisting towards graduation. Devarics and Roach focused on mentoring by faculty and student leaders, in addition to peer tutoring, as an appropriate strategy for improving the retention of minority students and those students from low income households.

### ***Orientation Programs***

Orientation programs are another student affairs function that can positively affect Black students' graduation rates. Studies have recognized participation in orientation programs as having a direct correlation to an increased persistence from the first to second year (Carey, 2005; Devarics & Roach, 2000; Murtaugh et al., 1999). Aside from the traditional freshmen orientation sessions, one study showed that the creation and implementation of an orientation program aimed to address the unique needs of minority students would help to increase Black students' graduation rates (Carey). Highlighting a program at Florida State University, Carey identified the value of bringing in a cohort-style class for a seven week program complete with a rigorous orientation week and six weeks of coursework to help acclimate students to college-level work. In addition to building a cohesive group of students that rely on each other, programs like this serve to better equip incoming students to handle fall classes. Florida State University acknowledged that this extra attention paid to students is a major contributor to their success at the university (Carey).

### ***Living and Learning Communities***

Creating and supporting living and learning communities that address the needs of Black students in their transition is another viable way to better engage students. Research shows that living and learning communities that are purposeful in their programming and are intentional in creating a socially and intellectually stimulating environment have the strongest impacts on persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1994; Tinto & Goodsell-Love, 1993). By creating small, supportive groups, students in living and learning communities are able to build meaningful relationships with each other. This group of students is better equipped to handle transitioning into the greater social context of a higher education institution (Tinto & Goodsell-Love). By creating a community focused on the needs of minority students, student affairs professionals can implement programming to improve the retention of minority students.

Colorado State University has a living and learning community called the Key Academic Community. Residing on a campus that is only 11% students of color, the Key Academic Community consists of a student population of which the majority of students are students of color (Nosaka, 2005a). Assessments of students of color within this community show that 91% of Key participants felt that their community was welcoming of people of their background and culture, 93% of students have interacted with students from backgrounds different from their own, and 88% of participants felt comfortable with their classes (Nosaka, 2005a). Although this example includes all students of color, one can use this assessment to gauge its applicability to Black students. A 2003 report examining the retention rate of the 1998 Key cohort showed that over 60% of the students of color from that cohort had graduated or were currently enrolled. In comparison to the national persistence rate of 46%, students of color in the Key Community persist at a significantly higher rate (Nosaka, 2005b). Living and

learning communities and their successful implementation had a great impact on graduation rates at Colorado State University.

### Conclusion

Several indicators point to why such large gaps exist between the graduation rates of Black students in comparison to White students. Factors associated with the financial commitment and accompanying burden of attending college significantly affect Black students. In fact, 43% of respondents indicated that loans were the primary reason why they were unable to complete their degree (Baum & O'Malley, 2003). The other major factor affecting Black students is the racial campus climate of their higher education institution. Issues regarding feelings of isolation, explicit examples of racism, and struggles relating to faculty and administrators contributed to low rates of Black students' graduation at institutions with a perceived campus climate not appreciative of diversity (Neville et al., 2004; Schwitzer et al., 1999; Sedlacek, 1999). To better understand this troubling issue of low Black student graduation rates, further research must be conducted to better describe incoming Black college students. By having a clear understanding of where the students are coming from, student affairs professionals can better prepare programs for their success. Student affairs professionals can improve the graduation rates of Black students by working diligently to engage them in the higher education institution. By creating, implementing, and supporting mentoring programs, orientation programs, and living and learning communities, student affairs professionals can help transition Black students into a university and positively impact the persistence of this group of students.

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## College Suicide and Wrongful Death: An Analysis of Institutional Self-Preservation Policies that Ignore Student Interests

Landy Douglas

### Abstract

*This paper reviews suicide and counseling trends on college campuses. Institutions possess a legal duty to prevent student suicides, and suicide protocols have been designed to address these institutional liability issues. An analysis of policy determines that many institutions favor self-preservation at the expense of student rights and needs. The Jed Foundation's "Framework for Developing Institutional Protocols for the Acutely Distressed or Suicidal College Student" is discussed, and recommendations to consider student interests are presented.*

In October of 2004, George Washington University (GWU) student, Jordan Nott, was feeling depressed (Appelbaum, 2006). Remembering a friend who had committed suicide the previous spring, Nott checked himself into GWU Hospital's psychiatric unit seeking treatment for depression (Appelbaum). The next day, Nott received a letter from the Dean of Students informing him that he was in violation of the school's Residential Community Conduct Guidelines, which states, "[b]ehavior of any kind that imperils or jeopardizes the health or safety of any person or persons is prohibited. This includes any actions that are endangering to self or others" (cited in Appelbaum, p. 914). As a result of Nott's alleged suicide threats (which Nott denies), he was suspended from school and banned from university property including his residence hall room with penalty of arrest (Appelbaum). A judicial hearing was scheduled for the following week and Nott was given two choices: to withdraw and have the charges deferred until he could prove he was symptom free and able to live independently for six months or to appear at the hearing where, as he was reportedly told by a university official, he would most likely be formally suspended or expelled (Appelbaum). Nott withdrew from GWU, waited in the car while his family packed up his belongings to avoid arrest, and enrolled in the University of Maryland. As of January 2007, he is still banned from the GWU campus (Appelbaum).

Although an extreme case, the above scenario illustrates an unfortunate situation facing college students today: policy development and enforcement stemming from a protective response to the rising frequency of suicide lawsuits against higher education institutions. Seven years ago, two wrongful death lawsuits were brought against colleges and universities at any moment; today that number has increased fivefold (Franke, 2004). Due to recent decisions such as *Schieszler v. Ferrum College* (2002) that have found institutions liable for suicide deaths, that number has the potential to continue to rise (Franke, 2004).

The prospect of increased lawsuits has caused some institutions to advance policies that sacrifice students' needs in an attempt to protect the institution from civil damages. This article will discuss these policies and how, in the face of the growing demand for student counseling and crises services, such policies are not only irresponsible but also unethical. The Jed Foundation's "Framework for Developing Institutional Protocols for the Acutely Distressed or Suicidal College Student" (2006) will be presented as an effective framework to guide administrators toward protocol that considers institutional interests without ignoring student rights and needs.

### ***Suicide on College Campuses***

As the second leading cause of death among American college students, suicide on college campuses is a significant problem (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2006; Haas, Hendin, & Mann, 2003; The Jed Foundation, 2006). Although exact numbers are difficult to track, estimates are as high as 1,100 college student suicide deaths a year (National Mental Health Association/The Jed Foundation, 2002, as cited in The Jed Foundation, 2006), or 7.5 out of every 100,000 students (Silverman, Meyer, Sloane, Raffel, & Pratt, 1997). Some researchers report that over 90% of youths whose deaths were declared suicide had at least one diagnosed psychiatric illness at the time of death (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2006). In 2005, 96% of directors of 366 college campus counseling centers nationwide reported an increase in the number of student clients with severe psychological problems, a potential indicator of suicide ideation, attempts, or completion (Gallagher, 2005).

Increased mental illness on campus coupled with a stressed and overwhelmed student population (UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, 2000) have contributed to a rapidly growing demand for crisis counseling at campus counseling centers nationwide (Gallagher, 2005). Admittedly, not all mentally ill students who seek crisis counseling are suicidal, but as 90% of suicide deaths are related to mental illness, students in the midst of a psychological crisis are a concern (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2006). According to a study conducted by Schwartz (2006), 25.1% of college student suicides from 1990-2004 were committed by clients of the university campus counseling center.

### ***A Changing Legal Climate***

Clearly, a significant need for effective suicide protocols exists on college campuses. In recent years, however, universities' desire to prevent student suicides has transformed into a legal duty to do so. Until a few years ago, courts had upheld the idea that suicide is "a deliberate, intentional and intervening act that precludes another's responsibility for the harm" (*Jain v Iowa*, 2000, ¶ 34), but recent cases have shown that this principle may be eroding (*Schieszler v. Ferrum College*, 2002; *Shin v. Massachusetts Institute of Technology*, 2005).

In the 2002 case of *Schieszler v. Ferrum College*, a district court in Virginia ruled that there was sufficient evidence to support Schieszler's claim that Ferrum College could be liable for the suicide death of student Michael Frentzel. A court of law can uphold the tort of negligence in suicide cases if it finds a "special relationship" that elicits an even greater duty to protect than that owed to the general public (Kaplin & Lee, 1997, p. 93). Generally, special relationships are taken in the context of custodial care, such as placing a suicidal student in the care of a university hospital (Lake & Tribbensee, 2002). However, in *Schieszler v. Ferrum*, the court found that a special relationship between the defendants and the student exists based on specific facts of a case. After reviewing "particular factual circumstances" (*Schieszler v. Ferrum College*, ¶ 10), the court determined that there was an "imminent probability" that Frentzel would cause himself harm and that the defendants "had notice of this specific harm," thus creating a special relationship (*Schieszler v. Ferrum College*, 2002, ¶17).

In the case of *Shin v. Massachusetts Institute of Technology* [MIT] (2005), the parents of Elizabeth Shin, a sophomore who set herself on fire in her residence hall room in April of 2000, filed a wrongful death suit against the institution, MIT medical professionals, and MIT administrators for failing to prevent their daughter's death. However, as noted in a discussion of the case background, administrators had worked closely with Elizabeth from February 1999 until the time of her death, meeting regularly for counseling sessions, contacting her parents during difficult periods, and even checking in on her in the middle of the night (*Shin v. MIT*). Despite these efforts, Elizabeth's parents argued that Elizabeth's treatment

team failed in both coordinating proper health care and securing her immediate safety after learning of her suicide plan on the morning of her death.

Ultimately the Massachusetts Superior Court dismissed the claims against MIT as an institution, but found that administrators and medical professionals involved with Elizabeth could, in fact, owe a duty to prevent her suicide. This duty was based on the fact that the administrators did not formulate an “immediate response to Elizabeth’s escalating threats to commit suicide” (*Shin v. MIT*, 2005, ¶ 48). In other words, despite the past year of successful treatment steps, those involved in Elizabeth’s care did not act quickly enough on the day of her suicide and could therefore be considered “grossly negligent” (¶ 66). The case was later settled out of court for an undisclosed amount, but the idea that colleges could be obligated to prevent a suicide has brought legal anxieties of campus administrators to new heights (Lake & Tribbensee, 2002).

### ***Institutional Responses: Self-Preservation Policies***

As colleges and universities can no longer rely on past decisions to protect them from wrongful death suits in suicide cases, many institutions are considering or have already begun to adopt suicide protocols that put an emphasis on avoiding liability risks.

On one end of the spectrum lie institutions that do nothing to address either suicidal or litigious concerns. These institutions provide no on-campus psychiatric services to their students, and Gallagher’s survey (2005) reported that 41.5% of the participating schools utilize this strategy. While it is likely that most of these occurrences are a result of insufficient resources, courts generally have not found institutions liable for failure to provide service, thus providing a legitimate reason for continuing this lack of services (Lake & Tribbensee, 2002).

On the opposite end of the spectrum lie institutions that go to extremes to avoid liability in the event of a suicide by imposing an involuntary medical withdrawal policy. This type of blanket policy, illustrated by the GWU example given in the introduction, mandates the dismissal of a student who threatens or attempts suicide because the student is deemed a threat to the safety of self or others and therefore in violation of conduct code. Such policies could allow an institution to escape liability by simply eliminating the possibility of any type of duty or special relationship owed to the student.

Another protocol under consideration is the use of Release of Information (ROI) waivers. In April of 2006, the House of Representatives in the state of Colorado passed the “Colorado Higher Education Student Suicide Prevention Act,” or Senate Bill 67, mandating Colorado institutions to provide students who express suicidal symptoms a waiver allowing the institution to notify a parent, professor, friend, or any other party (Capriccioso, 2006; *House Passes Measure*, 2006). Other institutions are considering waivers for counseling clients to allow counselors to share session information with university administrators (Capriccioso, 2005). The intent of these waivers is to alleviate the university’s litigious concerns by facilitating the flow of potentially essential information to avoid conflicts between concern for student safety and the student’s right to privacy.

Another policy designed to avoid legal risks involves online screening programs. The College Screening Project: A Program to Identify and Help Students with Significant Psychological Problems is an outreach effort developed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The program aims to shift the burden of seeking help from students to university administrators (Haas et al., 2003). Through this program, students receive emails inviting them to complete an online suicide-risk-assessing questionnaire that professionals will evaluate for evidence of psychopathology. The results are then sent back to students

along with recommendations for different types of treatment depending on the severity of the risk (Haas et al., 2003). Until a student voluntarily comes in for an in-person consultation, student identities are not revealed (Haas et al.). Instead, participants are identified by a log-in identification to gain access to the questionnaire and results (Haas et al.). If a student refuses treatment, administrators cannot be held accountable in the event of suicide, as there is no duty to provide reasonable care to an unidentified student (Haas et al.).

### ***Analysis of Policies: Student Impact***

Although recent developments in college and university suicide protocol address legal concerns, these strategies do not address the needs of those whom the protocols are designed to help: the students. Unfortunately, current solutions seem to emphasize institutional self-preservation at the expense of student interests.

In the case of non-existent psychiatric services, legal liability can be avoided. Yet this situation utterly ignores the needs of increasingly troubled students as reported by Gallagher (2005). If insufficient funding is the case for lack of services, a re-evaluation of priorities and a re-directing of resources should be considered. Student mental illness is a real issue with real consequences.

Involuntary medical withdrawals protect the institution from wrongful death risks, but in doing so, these policies trample students' rights, violate codes of ethics (Pavela, 2006), eradicate support networks (Silverman et al., 1997), inhibit recovery (Link, Struening, Neese-Todd, Asmussen, & Phelan, 2001), and discourage help-seeking behaviors (Appelbaum, 2006). Automatic dismissal policies are a direct violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requiring that "important administrative decisions about students must be made with due process and careful deliberation, based on individualized assessment...of any reasonable accommodation" (Pavela, p. 368). General ethical principles dictate that students are ends in themselves, not tools of an institution used to accomplish its goals (Pavela). Dismissing suicidal students from campus rips them from the easily-accessed support and health services, supportive peer networks, and trained personnel found on most college campuses which are all factors believed to account for the fact that the suicide rate of college students is half that of non-college students of the same age (Silverman et al.). The stigma associated with mental illness has been shown to have a negative effect on self-esteem and thus act as a barrier to recovery (Link et al.). Forcing a student to withdraw may foster feelings of fear and uncertainty toward depression and suicide, eroding a patient's self-esteem and constricting his or her social or support network even further (Link et al.). Finally, and most importantly, such strict policies may discourage troubled students from seeking help that they may desperately need by communicating the message that asking for help is wrong (Appelbaum).

Though waivers seem to be an easy solution to the question of whether or not to share information with other university administrators and parents, they can severely diminish a patient's confidence in confidentiality, a condition that influences the effectiveness of psychotherapy (Capriccioso, 2005). Many psychologists also believe that patients' knowledge of potential parental notification would likely discourage students from seeking help (Capriccioso, 2005).

Finally, while online screening programs are a well-intentioned protocol aimed at helping students, the non-identifying piece of the process allows administrators to avoid contact with students who most need their help. Interestingly, the original intent of this program was to give students the option of revealing their identities when returning the questionnaire, but solid opposition from administrators deterred the designers from pursuing that option

(Haas et al, 2003). Consciously avoiding greater steps to assist at-risk students solely to gain immunization from liability conflicts with the helping philosophy of the student affairs profession.

## **Recommendations**

### ***A Viable Framework***

The combination of a legitimate need for suicide prevention protocol and a changing legal climate demands creation of a policy that effectively balances student needs and rights with university interests. However, just as blanket involuntary withdrawal policies ignore the needs of individual students, a universal suicide protocol would ignore the intricacies and specific needs of individual institutions. In the absence of a single governmental source for developing protocols, colleges and universities must look elsewhere for guidance in designing their individual policies (Lake & Tribbensee, 2002).

The Jed Foundation is a non-profit agency dedicated to reducing the suicide rate of U.S. college students through a variety of public awareness, research, and collaborative strategies. In 2006, the foundation published a "Framework for Developing Institutional Protocols for the Acutely Distressed or Suicidal College Student," directed at higher education institutions, regardless of size, resources, or campus climate, providing a comprehensive list of issues to consider when developing student suicide protocols (The Jed Foundation, 2006). The Framework includes 38 questions, 131 sub-questions, and 9 case studies to help institutions address strategies for prevention, intervention, and postvention; develop safety, emergency contact notification, leave of absence, and re-entry protocols; and consider the interests of students, parents, administrators, medical professionals, and law enforcement entities (The Jed Foundation, 2006).

One of the greatest strengths of the Framework is its explicit identification of potential legal concerns in nearly all components of suicide protocol development and how to balance those concerns with student interests. Appendix B of the Framework is dedicated solely to summarizing legal issues that may arise when developing suicide policy (The Jed Foundation, 2006). The appendix includes specific directions on how to balance mandatory leave policies with the Americans with Disabilities Act stating, "compare procedures for involuntary leaves of absence as applied to students with disabilities and students without disabilities" (The Jed Foundation, p. 27). This approach is also apparent in the body of the document, where the framework suggests that if a leave policy is going to be established, then a student appeals process should be examined. The framework offers a step-by-step process to address institutional liability without losing sight of student needs.

Another strength of the Framework is its emphasis on suicide prevention. Appendix C of the Framework consists of a "Prescription for Prevention: Model for Comprehensive Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention for Colleges and Universities" that consists of numerous strategy suggestions. These tactics include social marketing, crisis management, life skills development, educational programs, and several other methods. The model even identifies appropriate officials to take the lead and specific target populations for each strategy (The Jed Foundation, 2006).

Developed by a roundtable of physicians, university administrators, attorneys, psychologists, and sponsored by reputable health, student affairs, and counseling associations, the Framework is a comprehensive approach to policy-making that places an emphasis on careful consideration of protocol *prior* to crisis situations, preventing ad-hoc decision making during an actual crisis. Adopting this framework enables administrators to be fully prepared



to handle any crisis situation, allows for individualized assessment of special cases, and establishes a “strong mental safety net” for everyone at an institution (The Jed Foundation, 2006, p. 4).

**Implementation**

To implement the Jed Foundation’s Framework, an institution would follow the guidelines presented at the beginning of the document that suggest identification of key stakeholders, creation of a task force or other decision-making body, referring back to the mission of the institution, and developing a review process (The Jed Foundation, 2006). The task force would consist of individuals who provide senior leadership in creating, revising, and enforcing policy decisions related to current suicide protocol (president, vice president, deans, counseling center directors, general counsel) as well as members of local community units who work with institutions in caring for suicidal students (campus law enforcement, community hospital leadership, etc.) (The Jed Foundation, 2006). The mission of the task force should be to examine current policies, systems, and rules relating to suicide protocol and evaluate which ones to create, modify, or abolish according to the Framework’s suggestions.

In order to organize discussions gathered during the task force’s evaluation, a two-axis matrix could be developed:

		CREATE	MODIFY	ABOLISH
POLICY	Current	N/A		
	Proposed			
SYSTEMS	Current	N/A		
	Proposed			
RULES	Current	N/A		
	Proposed			

The matrices could then be analyzed to identify appropriate action steps and key players to implement each proposed or revised protocol.

**Limitations**

To execute an overhaul or modification of current policy based on the Jed Foundation’s guidelines may be both time consuming and costly. An institution would need significant human and financial resources to evaluate current policy and implement new ideas. Just a few of the Framework’s prevention strategies such as training of personnel or publications for social marketing may strain the budgets of many smaller colleges. Furthermore, the timeline to apply changes would be extensive and require sustained energy and commitment.

However, college student suicide is a significant problem and no solution is going to be simple, quick, or cheap. Moreover, the costs of implementing comprehensive and protective protocol would be more cost-effective than the costs associated with a lawsuit.

**Conclusion**

As the second leading cause of death among college students, suicide is a very real problem in the higher education community. However, in response to courts finding administrators liable in particular suicide cases, many institutions have designed suicide policies that favor

institutional-preservation over student interests. Such protocols violate disability law, ignore student needs, and may discourage troubled students from seeking help.

As the Jed Foundation's "Framework for Developing Institutional Protocols for the Acutely Distressed or Suicidal College Student" succeeds in considering both student concerns and legal implications, implementing its comprehensive guidelines would enable an institution to be prepared against legal prosecution and well-equipped in the event of a suicide emergency.

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## Put Me In Coach: A Closer Look at Athletic Identity

Clint Galloway

### Abstract

*This paper identifies the Athlete Identity Model (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993) and examines the research related to it. This paper also describes the growth of the model from a one-dimensional to a multidimensional concept and discusses the benefits and risks to student athletes who identify strongly with the model. More specifically, aspects of transition and career identity development are identified and their impact on student affairs is addressed. Finally, recommendations are made for further research to be applied to the Athlete Identity Model.*

### Put Me In Coach: A Closer Look at Athletic Identity

What exactly defines a person as an athlete? Is the term *athlete* simply a label placed on an individual by others? Is an athlete characterized solely by their athletic ability? Perhaps an athlete is defined according to how many sports they play. Some individuals who identify as athletes attend college to play a sport after being scouted and recruited by college coaches. They are selected on the basis of their athletic ability and potential to bring recognition and success to an institution's athletic reputation. These people are labeled athletes and often are believed to represent the entire athlete segment of a campus. On occasion, these students receive full scholarships to attend a college with promises of attaining an education in return for their athletic talent.

College athletes sometimes are treated differently than other students when they receive special considerations from housing, faculty, and coaches. These considerations include moving in early to university housing, extensions on assignments, and pre-determined class schedules catered to fit their training regimen. These athletes comprise a segment of the student population that at times is stereotyped and labeled by faculty, staff, and fellow students. They are labeled as dumb jocks or not "real" students. According to the Athlete Identity Model developed by Brewer, Van Raalte, and Linder (1993), a person may identify as an athlete despite not being a varsity team member. They may identify as a recreational athlete, an intramural athlete, or not as an athlete at all. But what makes an individual an athlete and how is this identity determined? How does one become an athlete? What positive and negative implications accompany having a strong athlete identity? Why is this identity model important to student affairs practitioners? These questions are explored utilizing the Athlete Identity Model.

### *Athlete Identity*

In 1993, Brewer, Van Raalte, and Linder investigated the identity construct as it related to sport and athletics. They defined athletic identity as "the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role" (p. 237). The assessment tool used to develop this model was a ten-point questionnaire called the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS). Participants were asked to answer the questionnaire presented in Table 1. All ten items included a Likert scale anchored by *strongly agree* and *strongly disagree* (Brewer et al.). This assessment tool was administered over three individual studies and was found to be a reliable and valid instrument.

Table 1

*Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS)*

- 
1. I consider myself an athlete.
  2. I have many goals related to sport.
  3. Most of my friends are athletes.
  4. Sport is the most important part of my life.
  5. I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else.
  6. I need to participate in sport to feel good about myself.
  7. Other people see me mainly as an athlete.
  8. I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport.
  9. Sport is the only important thing in my life.
  10. I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport.
- 

The first study involved 243 students from Arizona State University. Of these students, 124 were female and 119 were male. All were enrolled in either an introductory psychology course or a sport psychology course. Results of this study indicated that males scored significantly higher on the AIMS than females, inferring a stronger athlete identity (Brewer et al., 1993). The second study involved 449 students attending Arizona State University. Once again, all participants were enrolled in an introductory psychology course. This particular study, however, compared the AIMS against a measurement tool for determining self-role. This study showed that the relationship between the two instruments was not significant enough to conclude that they measured the same construct. As a result, the utility of the AIMS as a measure of athletic identity was proven (Brewer et al.). The last study administered involved 90 members of the varsity football team at the University of California, Davis. This study concluded that “athletic identity is distinct from physical self-esteem, perceived importance of fitness, perceived importance of body attractiveness, perceived importance of strength, and coach-related football skill” (Brewer et al., p. 249). These findings provide evidence for the discriminant validity of the AIMS.

From the results of these studies, researchers postulated that individuals identify with one of four Athlete Identity constructs: non-athlete, recreational/fitness athlete, intramural/local athlete, intercollegiate/national athlete (Brewer et al., 1993). Interestingly, much of the discussion of the research focused on those individuals who related strongly to the athlete role. Few generalizations were made toward people who did not identify as athletes, or those that somewhat identified as athletes. In this paper, the term athlete will refer to those who identify strongly with the athlete role and are categorized by Brewer et al. as intercollegiate/national athletes.

After initial studies Brewer et al. (1993) determined Athlete Identity to be a one-dimensional construct. Being an athlete was a social definition that described how a person self-labeled as an athlete. This identity was influenced by such factors as family members, friends, coaches, teachers, and the media (Brewer et al., 1993). However, later research by Ryska (2002) slightly redefined this model and generated three conceptually unique dimensions of the Athletic Identity construct. Ryska’s research established Athlete Identity as a multidimensional three-factor measure. These three factors included Social Identity, Exclusivity, and Negative Affectivity. Referring to Table 1, the dimension of Social Identity represents the point to

which a person identifies as an athlete from a social perspective and includes such items as, “I consider myself an athlete,” and “Most of my friends are athletes.” The term Exclusivity refers to the degree that an individual’s self worth is determined solely on their success within the athlete role. It is measured by the items including, “I need to participate in sport in order to feel good about myself,” and “Sport is the only important thing in my life.” The last dimension, Negative Affectivity, reflects how an individual experiences adverse emotional reactions to negative outcomes in sport and includes items such as, “I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport,” and “I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport” (Ryska).

AIMS scores were negatively correlated with age, demonstrating that the Athletic Identity Model applies over a person’s lifetime (Brewer et al., 1993). “This may suggest that as college students mature and become exposed to a variety of activities and influences, their exclusive identification with the athlete role decreases” (Brewer et al., p. 250). If this model is indeed a lifespan model, one can predict that a person identifies at different levels at different points in his or her life depending on influencing factors such as athletic performance, time devoted to sports, physical fitness, and incidents of injury. Other researchers identified factors of influence such as parents, coaches, and self. “Athletic identity is typically formed early in one’s life. Athletic talent is often recognized in elementary school and ... developing that talent becomes a central preoccupation for both the child and the significant adults in his/her life” (Webb, Nasco, Riley, & Headrick, 1998, p. 339).

Children begin early in life to identify as athletes through participation in recreational and team sports. One college student interviewed by the author stated, “I have been playing sports pretty much my whole life. I started playing football and baseball when I was eleven years old” (J. Pfnister, personal communication, October 16, 2005). Pressures come from parents and coaches to excel in athletics. As a result, these children become committed to the role of athlete early to such a degree that by the time they reach college, highly successful athletes have internalized the athletic identity, usually at the expense of other potential social roles (Webb et al., 1998). Regardless, this model proves useful for coaches and student affairs professionals who work with student athletes because of the potential benefits and drawbacks identified by researchers in developing a strong athletic identity.

### ***Benefits and Risks***

Danish (1983) proposed that one potential benefit to becoming strongly committed to the athlete role was the positive effect it has on athletic performance (as cited in Brewer et al., 1993). Furthermore, Danish found that the demands of training and competition caused athletes to limit their activities outside of athletics in order to achieve optimal performance. Additional benefits included increased social interaction with other athletes, development of athletic skills, increased confidence, and increased physical health. As a Colorado State University student confirmed, “Staying active has allowed me to stay healthy. It allows me to relieve stress and stay fit” (M. Doerksen, personal communication, October 18, 2005).

Conversely, there are potential risks for individuals who identify strongly with the athlete role, of which student affairs professionals need to be aware. These risks include physical dangers such as over-commitment: “A strong athletic identity may prompt individuals to engage in a sport or exercise activity to the extent that their physical health is jeopardized” (Brewer et al., 1993, p. 241). Dangers and drawbacks may also be emotional or social challenges, such as difficulties in transitions and career identity development (Brewer et al.).

Transition-related difficulties include being cut from the team, dealing with injury, or losing eligibility status (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990). Research in the area of transition and Athlete Identity is extensive (Pearson & Petitpas; Webb et al., 1998; Wooten, 1994; Brewer, Selby, Linder, & Petitpas, 1999) and offers valuable information to student affairs personnel. It is imperative to understand the potential pitfalls athletes face concerning transitions in order to help athletes deal with the emotional and mental stress encountered because of these transitions.

As defined by Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (1995) a transition is “any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (p. 27). Athletes, like all other students, experience transition. However, much of what they experience is unique to their identity as an athlete. People who strongly identify with the athlete role experience transition at many points in their lives. As Schlossberg et al. state, these transitions may be anticipated or unexpected. An athlete’s loss of identity can be an extremely emotional experience. As pointed out by Wooten (1994), “In many cases, the sports identity, status, and preferential treatment create a seductive environment of entitlement, permissiveness, and dependence. Many young student-athletes hold the irrational belief that things ‘will get handled for me because I am special’” (p. 2). Student athletes may become dependent on others to make decisions for them such as choosing an academic major, creating a class schedule, and seeking summer employment. Consequently, when a student athlete’s status is removed because they become injured, fail to make the team, or do not meet eligibility requirements they experience difficulty with the aforementioned tasks (Wooten, 1994).

In addition to transitional concerns, a potential risk exists for students who strongly identify with the athlete role in regard to career identity development. Much research has utilized the Athlete Identity Model as it relates to career identity development in college student athletes (Brown & Hartley, 1998; Brown, Glastetter-Fender, & Shelton, 2000; Martens & Cox, 2000). The demands placed on student athletes related to training, competition, and travel generally compete with adequate career planning, which causes many student athletes to be unprepared for career choices outside the realm of sport (Brown et al., 2000). The amount of time, commitment, and dedication that is demanded of student athletes should be a concern for student affairs professionals. Good, Brewer, Petitpas, Van Raalte, & Mahar (1993) stated that such demands suggest that student athletes are at risk for identity foreclosure (as cited in Brown et al.). Athlete identity is closely related to this construct, and its relevance is important to understand the career decision-making process of student athletes: “It has been argued that individuals who identify strongly with their athletic role may be less likely to explore other career, educational, and lifestyle options because of their intensive involvement in sports” (Brown et al., p. 54).

### ***Impact on Student Affairs***

Knowing that student athletes are susceptible to highly emotional transitions and career identity development, student affairs professionals, particularly counselors, must keep these emotional transitions in mind when working with student athletes. One concept of particular relevance is *primary prevention*, defined by Pearson and Petitpas (1990) as an “approach to assisting individuals by preventing problems before they occur” (p. 7). This strategy identifies individuals, such as athletes, who are likely to experience emotional and cognitive difficulties in the future. Pearson and Petitpas (1990) predict that transitions would be the most difficult for athletes who strongly and exclusively base their identity on the athlete role. These prevention programs are designed to help individuals acquire resources (e.g. knowledge, skills, and attitudes) that can reduce the likelihood of becoming dysfunctional.

In response, many educational institutions offer career development programs focused on enhancing student athletes' knowledge of the range of their abilities and other opportunities available to them outside of athletics (Brown & Bohac, 1997). As reported by Brown et al. (2000), student athletes' ability to make career-related decisions depends on the extent to which they consider alternative life roles and explore other career options outside of their athletic role commitment. Brown et al. state:

In an attempt to understand the career behaviors of student-athletes and, more specifically, their confidence in their ability to make career decisions, career-counseling professionals must not ignore the amount of time student-athletes engage in their competitive sport. As these young men and women invest enormous amounts of time and energy in intercollegiate athletics, they will need assistance and, perhaps most important, permission to attend to their career and academic planning. Administrators, educators, and counseling professionals must assume a role in providing opportunities for student-athletes to create such a balance. (p. 59)

### ***Recommendations for Further Research***

Despite the studies involving the Athlete Identity Model, further research is still warranted. The Athlete Identity Model offered by Brewer et al. (1993) provides a basic method to assess how strongly an individual identifies with the athlete role. Unfortunately, the researchers did not specifically identify if or how people transition from one construct to the others. Further research is needed to determine how this model develops over time, to define the common characteristics for individuals at each construct, to determine if this model is linear or not, and to identify potential affects of ethnicity and gender on this model.

As stated previously, lacking from this model are definitions and guidelines for the athlete identity categories. What characteristics does an individual in each construct exhibit? Do non-athletes have any involvement in sport or athletics of any kind? Or are they simply non-active? Are recreational/fitness athletes involved in physical activities such as working out at the gym, or are they strictly involved at a recreational level of sport? Are those students classified as intramural/local athletes involved in more competitive pursuits such as sports clubs, or do they strictly participate in intramurals? Finally, perhaps those identifying as intercollegiate/national athletes are individuals involved in sports only at the college, amateur, and professional level. In short, better definitions need to be offered as there are number of different types of athletic pursuits that an individual can participate in that are not used as identifiers in any of the constructs.

Research reporting on the correlation of ethnicity and athlete identity is also needed. While Brewer et al. (1993) did break down their participants by ethnicity; there was not a large enough sample size to make significant generalizations in this area. Another study focused on athlete identity and cross-cultural implications (Hale, James, & Stambulova, 1999). Regardless, more study is needed in this area. Also, further research needs to be done to determine how athletes of various sports identify with the model and if there are any correlations that are sport specific. As an example, do football players identify more strongly as athletes than tennis or golf players? Another recommendation for future research would be to include participants from a broader scope of educational majors, as well as other institutions.

Finally, in interviewing students about their athlete identity and perspectives on sport, a contrasting attitude toward competition was observed. One participant indicated that he enjoyed playing sports but did not like being competitive. This student identified more with being a recreational/fitness athlete. The other student, identifying as an inter-collegiate



athlete, claimed that he loved the competitive nature of football. This observation opens a door. How does attitude toward competition relate to an individual's athlete identity? Do those that identify strongly with the athlete role have a greater tendency to be more competitive than those that identify at other levels? Again, more research is needed.

### Final Thoughts

The AIMS developed by Brewer et al. (1993) offers a framework to identify the different levels at which a person can identify being an athlete. Depending on external factors, individuals may identify as a non-athlete, a recreational/fitness athlete, an intramural/local athlete, or an intercollegiate/national athlete. Much of the research using the AIMS has focused primarily on those that strongly identify with the athlete role. This student is typically the intercollegiate/national athlete. The Athlete Identity Model identifies a number of benefits and risks to those who identify strongly as athletes. Knowing this model, coaches and student affairs professionals can prepare to help athletes through issues related to transition and career development. Regardless of the information gathered, further research is still needed to better define the different levels of identity, and to explore the Athlete Identity Model further. Correlations to ethnicity, gender, competitiveness, and specific sport fields still need to be analyzed further. Until someone decides to get in the game and explore this concept further, Athlete Identity will remain a multidimensional construct used only to determine how strongly someone identifies with the athlete role.

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## SAHE Alumni Profile

Mike Segawa

Can it be 25 years since I left Green Hall and headed east for my first professional job? It must have been a long time ago since some of you have never seen Green Hall as a residence hall! In any case, the opportunity to reflect on my professional journey and Colorado State's influence on my career is very much appreciated.

Driving away from Fort Collins, I headed east and landed at a place called Central Missouri State University (CMSU). Located in Warrensburg, the two years spent at CMSU proved to be invaluable to my learning and growth. We literally replaced House Mothers and began the first residential life program the institution had known. It was an exciting time to be in what was for me a foreign country! The culture of Missouri was very different from my home base of Southern California or my most recent home of Colorado. I learned more about multiculturalism at CMSU than any other place I have been. I began relationships there that have been some of the most important and enduring of my life. All this in the tiny town of Warrensburg, Missouri. Who would have believed it?

I learned another lesson at CMSU and that was the importance of the right lifestyle for my happiness. So, together with a new wife, we headed back west for a place that did not deal with wind chill factors or heat indexes! The beautiful Pacific Northwest became our new home as I began work at the University of Washington. I spent 12 years there, mostly as the senior residential life officer. I was at a big place with big responsibilities that helped me come to the realization that institutional fit was a critical consideration in my career plans. Research schools can be glamorous and resource rich, but the focus on student learning can be elusive.

This self-realization coincided with The Evergreen State College search for a Director of Housing – a smaller campus, student-centered environment, located in a smaller community close to the big city, and still in the Puget Sound area. What more could we ask for? So I accepted the position and worked at a college that has been the single largest institutional influence on my professional beliefs. Evergreen espouses the values of student-centered learning, teaching across significant differences, team taught collaborative learning, the importance of critical thinking, interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving, and a commitment to social justice. For a student affairs practitioner like me, it was a natural fit.

Perhaps most importantly, Evergreen is located in the city of Olympia which has been a wonderful place to raise our family. We have lived in Olympia for 12 years and it is truly home for our family. My wife found work that is satisfying and meaningful, our children received a public education that prepared them well for higher education and beyond, our son and daughter have thrived socially and athletically, and we have found nurturing faith communities. Never underestimate the importance of lifestyle in your career.

Three years ago I made the difficult decision to leave Evergreen and become the Associate Dean of Students at the University of Puget Sound (UPS), a national residential liberal arts institution only a 35 minute commute from Olympia. I reached a point in my career where I could choose between a future as an auxiliary enterprise manager or a student affairs generalist. The generalist path won out and I have since been learning about the world of independent, small colleges. Here, I have the opportunity to work with extremely talented students and equally talented student affairs professionals. Together, we are on track to

becoming a preeminent student affairs division and I have the chance to bring all I have learned over 25 years to bear on a place so ripe for this kind of adventure. It really makes for rewarding days.

It was at Colorado State University (CSU) that I was first exposed to professional associations and the role they play in professional development. I have been fortunate to have supervisors who shared that value and were always supportive of my involvement in the Association of College and University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I), the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). I have had the privilege of serving on executive boards, chairing regional and national conferences, writing for publications, and chairing committees. All of these opportunities, plus others, have been instrumental in increasing my skills and knowledge, and sharpening my sense of values. I would not be the professional I am today without my involvement in these associations.

This journey from CSU to UPS has been a gratifying one and is held together by the common thread of relationships. I do not so much remember the accomplishments or the work as much as I recall the people who have sustained my career. My learning has come from role models more than texts. Satisfaction and joy has come from colleagues and not from tasks. In many ways this dynamic began at CSU. Little did I appreciate at the time how important a Grant Sherwood and a Jim Kuder would be to my career. I do now. My classmates were a significant part of my learning and support in 1981 and continue to be today. Each stop along my professional path has been built on the foundation these people helped shape.

Mine has been a career of tremendous enjoyment, learning, and joy. This journey was first nurtured at my undergraduate institution, University of California, Irvine, but given its firmest roots at CSU. The lessons, values, and people I associate with this program have been instrumental in whatever successes and contributions I have achieved as a student affairs practitioner.

What does that mean for me from here? I am not sure, but then my career plans have never been well defined years in advance, much to the chagrin of my career planning colleagues! I have come to believe that opportunities will present themselves; we just have to be good at paying attention and being open to possibilities. That is another big lesson I took away from CSU. I am truly grateful for it. This lesson has served me well for 25 years.

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*Mike Segawa currently serves as the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. He graduated with his M.S.Ed. in College Student Personnel Administration from Colorado State University in 1981. Since then, Segawa has held positions at Central Missouri State University, University of Washington, and The Evergreen State College and has been active in a number of student affairs professional organizations.*

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

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### ***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 pages 61-76 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



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