

GROWTH

Dear Readers:

We are pleased to present the eighth issue of *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development*. In this, our largest issue ever, you will find five feature articles, a response letter, a review essay and ten reviews. We are convinced that the contents will be helpful to you in your own professional development as well as in the work that you do with your students and staff. As always, our purpose is to promote scholarship and support best practice among Christians serving in student development.

Needless to say, this “new and improved” product is the result of a great deal of work by a number of people. Of course we want to thank each of the authors for their hard work and willingness to share their knowledge with us. Additionally, we want to thank Steve Christensen for his continued good work as Layout and Design Editor. We also want to introduce you to a new member of the *Growth* team. Deb Austin, a graduate student in higher education and student development, has worked tirelessly to edit and attend to the numerous details necessary to produce the journal. It is not an exaggeration to say that we could not have done this without her.

As you will recall, the organizational structure has changed and the editorial staff has expanded considerably. We feel strongly that these changes have had a very positive impact on the final product. As a reminder, the following persons will be serving as content area editors:

- Foundations, Jason Morris, Abilene Christian University
- Leadership and Professional Development, Tim Herrmann, Taylor University
- Student Culture, Don Opitz, Geneva College
- Student Learning and Assessment, Anita Henck, Azusa Pacific University
- Spiritual Formation, Steve Beers, John Brown University
- Diversity and Globalization, Brad Lau, George Fox University

Please contact these individuals if you have interest in writing a piece related to any of their respective content areas.

Please know that we hope to promote and facilitate scholarship by assisting you in your research and writing. We especially want to encourage you to consider submitting manuscripts for inclusion for the next issue of *Growth*. Publication guidelines are included in this issue near the end of the journal. We are particularly interested in manuscripts presenting original or basic research and encourage anyone who has recently completed a graduate thesis or dissertation to submit a manuscript based on your work.

We thank you for your support for *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development*. We trust that you will be challenged by what you read.

Sincerely,

Skip Trudeau, Co-Editor
Tim Herrmann, Co-Editor



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The Moral Idea of a University: A Case Study

By Todd C. Ream and Perry L. Glanzer

Abstract

A common moral idea is necessary for not only providing shape to a particular college or university community but also for the cultivation of the virtues amongst students. However, what are the characteristics of an institution that models this type of approach? In order to answer this question, this article describes what we believe is the best exemplar from our study of 156 different Christian colleges and universities. Such a determination was made based upon an analysis of documents (academic catalogs, admissions view books, and student handbooks) gathered from all 156 institutions and then site visits made to nine institutions that demonstrated a significant level of investment in moral education. Ultimately, we argue that the moral idea of a university, particularly in the Christian sense, is viable if individual institutions are willing to establish practices that support the narratives afforded to them by their respective traditions.

Introduction

Standing as a prophet at the crossroads of modernity and postmodernity, Friedrich Nietzsche saw a world where the very notions of good and evil would become obsolete (1886/1966). Without belief in God and the story of Christianity which humanity in the West had derived from it, Nietzsche believed that the moral ideas guiding our existence would prove to be unworkable in both theory and practice. He worried that the West was heading into a crisis and that new ways of knowing were necessary. In the place of good and evil, Nietzsche envisioned his notion of the will to power (1901/1968). Instead of a dependence on what he viewed as Christianity's needlessly servile notion of the good, Nietzsche found moral significance in the beauty offered by individuals who faced life's challenges with only their force of will. Like Odysseus who strapped himself to the mast of his ship, moral significance for Nietzsche did not come through success or failure but through the exercise of one's will regardless of cost.

Although his notion of the will to power was never adopted on a large scale in the West, his initial prophecy about the crisis of moral knowledge appears to have come to fruition. More troubling than debates concerning matters such as abortion, capital punishment, and euthanasia is the reality that many communities lack a common moral idea by which they frame such debates. Education has not proven to be immune from such a dilemma. Julie Reuben (1996) ended her historical study of moral education in modern research universities by observing that "universities no longer have a basis from which to judge moral claims" (p. 269). The result is that moral education is often marginalized from the curriculum. For example, in *The Moral Collapse of the University* Bruce Wilshire (1990) claimed that despite his efforts in the university "to find a place to ask questions about goodness that seem so essential" he could not find it (p. xviii-xix). Certainly these authors would concur with Nietzsche's initial prophecy that knowledge

about good and evil is, in fact, in jeopardy. In particular, the education undertaken in most colleges and universities now lacks a common moral idea or framework.

We believe that we should not be surprised at this development. Since most liberal democratic nation-states have shed state churches, they have also shed the metaphysical narratives that provided a source of moral commonality and unity. We should not expect to find many state-sponsored universities with a common moral ideal in pluralistic liberal democracies (except perhaps at military academies). Instead, we would offer that such common moral ideas are best cultivated within educational communities keenly aware of and well defined by particular traditions. These common moral ideas are necessary for not only providing shape to a particular community but also for the cultivation of the virtues amongst students. A growing scholarly body of literature affirms this point (Lindholm et al., 2005; Kuh 2002; Hunter 2000).

What would be the characteristics of an institution that modeled this type of approach? In four parts, this article describes what we believe is the best exemplar from our study of 156 different Christian colleges and universities. The first part describes our study's theoretical framework—paying particular attention to what we mean by tradition and narrative. Second, we offer an overview of the literature concerning institutional efforts to embody particular moral ideas in their educational practices. Third, we describe the research methods employed in terms of both the document analysis and the interviews. Finally, we draw on both the documents and the interviews in the presentation of our case study to offer an overview of an institution that exemplifies what we would argue is the most comprehensive approach to Christian moral education. We conclude that in the face of Nietzsche's prophecy, we ultimately argue that the moral idea of a university, particularly in the Christian sense, is still viable if individual institutions are willing to establish practices that support the narratives afforded to them by their respective traditions.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding our study is drawn primarily from the work of Alasdair MacIntyre. Known most widely for revitalizing an interest in virtue as a moral idea, MacIntyre's work also touches on the larger social structures necessary for the cultivation of virtue. Like Nietzsche, MacIntyre saw how the intellectual trends of modernity relegated morality to the realm of the subjective by comparison to other forms of knowledge—such as modern science—which were deemed objective. Because the objective proved to be empirically verifiable, it proved to be of greater value. MacIntyre's way of eradicating a distinction such as the one separating the subjective from the objective was to return to a revised pre-modern understanding of moral knowledge and human functioning based upon Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas.

In *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (1990), MacIntyre argues that moral enquiry in the West has passed through what he calls the encyclopaedic and the genealogical phases. The encyclopaedic phase may most closely be associated with modernity and the compulsion to reduce and classify knowledge by empirical methods. The underlying assumption in place at this point is that one can know the whole by objectively organizing all of its parts. In contrast, the genealogical phase may most closely be associated with postmodernity and the compulsion to unveil our motives in relation

to our efforts to discover and set forth knowledge. The underlying assumption is that efforts to know the whole in any fashion are not neutral in nature but are driven by a deeper and more subjective desire for power. Ironically, MacIntyre argues that the common thread shared by both phases is that they assume that knowing is an individual capacity and, at best, only vaguely contingent upon one's membership in a larger community.

In contrast, MacIntyre asserts that moral reasoning and knowledge is necessarily connected to various social identities. Within the Thomistic understanding, one understands what a good person is by understanding a human being's function or end. Since each human being is connected to a variety of social roles and identities, one can only understand one's end in light of these social identities. For example, we may be children, parents, cousins, professors, Americans, Christians and so forth. We inherit from the past understanding about what it means to be a good parent, son or daughter, or American. Moreover, our understanding of what a good person is involves ordering the importance of these identities. In this respect an individual's narrative understanding of his or her identity cannot be separated from these social communities.

The same holds true for universities. Universities are defined by particular social practices and identities that have narrative histories (e.g., American, state, liberal arts, research, Christian). Thus, any university community is defined by its relationship to any number of narratives and thus any number of traditions. As MacIntyre states, a living tradition "is an historically extended socially embodied argument precisely about the goods which constitute that tradition" (1984, p. 222). Living traditions develop narratives. A narrative, which is aptly described by Postman (1996), is "not any kind of story, but one that tells of origins and envisions a future, a story that constructs ideals, prescribes rules of conduct, provides a source of authority, and, above all, gives a sense of continuity and purpose" (pp. 5-6). Traditions are formed by communities attempting to both live out and pass along a particular narrative.

These forms of tradition do not follow the common understanding, such as that found in the song in *Fiddler on the Roof* in which a tradition imposes order on a community based upon a complacent willingness to do things the way things were always done. In contrast, MacIntyre views a living tradition as a continual argument. Thus, a university aware of its narrative and associated tradition and more importantly, seeking to practice it, would be "a place of constrained disagreement, of imposed participation in conflict, in which the central responsibility of higher education would be to initiate students into conflict" (1990, pp. 230-231). In other words, curricular and co-curricular educators alike would not only advance thought from a particular point of view but would also demonstrate a willingness to critically engage rival points of view. Fear over competing perspectives proves irrelevant as a result of the confidence and depth of knowledge a community possesses in the narrative qualities defined by its respective tradition. A tradition not only provides an arena of debate but also a means by which one can enter into debate. Virtue, both intellectual and moral, is best cultivated when students are invited to participate in tradition-formed practices.

Background Research Literature

Much of the research concerning moral education during the 1970s and 1980s sought to speak about moral education and moral development in universal terms (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Kohlberg 1984). More recently, greater recognition was shown to the importance of particular identities and traditions for moral education. Discussions concerning moral education are currently dominated by individuals concerned with an individual's or institution's political identity. Various authors offer that our identity as members of the liberal democratic tradition can serve as a common basis for moral education in higher education (Keohane, 2006; Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005; Shapiro, 2005; Colby et al., 2003). Whether conscious or not, they approach the tradition of liberal democracy as one that "inculcates certain habits of reasoning, certain attitudes toward deference and authority in political discussion, and love for certain good and virtues, as well as a disposition to respond to certain types of events or persons with admiration, pity, or horror" (Stout, 2004, p. 3).

Perhaps the most pronounced example of this approach is the book by Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont and Jason Stephens, *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility* (2003). Colby et al. (2003) offer detailed examples of the perspectives and practices various schools use "when educating citizens is a priority" (pp. 49-95). In particular, they draw upon twelve case study campuses (Alverno College; California State University, Monterey Bay; the College of St. Catherine, Duke University, Kapi'olani Community College; Messiah College; Portland State University, Spelman College; Turtle Mountain Community College; Tusculum College; the United States Air Force Academy; and The University of Notre Dame). Although Colby et al. acknowledge the diverse identities of these institutions, they do not focus on the importance of their identities and associated moral traditions for moral and civic education. Colby et al. (2003) discuss the importance of moral and civic identity in one section (pp. 116-122), but their primary focus is on individual identity construction and formation.

However, if Alasdair MacIntyre is correct, we need to understand the fundamental importance of recognizing different institutional identities and traditions and the implications such recognition has for how colleges and universities approach moral education. When higher education institutions support more comprehensive forms of moral education, they do so by fostering commitment to a set of particular identities and traditions and then asking students to acquire virtues relevant to that commitment. For Christian colleges and universities, their respective religious traditions prove to be essential in this process. In essence, the moral idea of a university is best embodied by institutions where their respective pasts inform their current practices.

Study Design

We began our study of different visions of the moral idea of a university by undertaking an analysis of academic catalogs, admissions view books, and student handbooks among a group of 156 American Christian colleges and universities associated with two large partnerships—the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) and the Lilly Fellows Network (LFN). When we began our study in 2003, the largest group included the CCCU institutions (103) followed by the LFN

institutions (70). We excluded the three Canadian CCCU institutions. In addition, fourteen schools were part of both coalitions. We chose these partnerships for a couple of reasons. First, these partnerships represent the same schools at which Lindholm et al. (2005) and Sax et al. (1998) indicated significant faculty support for moral education and at which Kuh (2002) found significant success with moral education. Thirty of the 156 schools were also listed in the *Templeton Guide's Honor Role of Colleges that Encourage Character Development* (1999). An additional thirty-three were cited in *The Templeton Guide's Honor Role* as having particularly outstanding character education programs, including a senior year seminar or an academic honesty program. In all, sixty-four (41%) were recognized as having a noteworthy program related to character education.

Second, these partnerships provide a diverse sample of religious colleges and universities. The LFN contains schools from a wide range of Catholic and Protestant traditions. The Catholic schools were started by various orders, lay groups, or parishes while the Protestant schools are often affiliated with different mainline and evangelical traditions. The CCCU schools are largely evangelical Protestant schools but they also include schools from a variety of religious traditions (e.g., Wesleyan, Reformed, Nazarene, Baptist, Quaker, Mennonite, Presbyterian, etc.).

We started by collecting academic catalogs, view books and student handbooks from each one of the 156 institutions. We then examined the documents to identify the attention given to ethics in the curricular and co-curricular dimensions of the institutions. Based on our findings, we chose nine schools that demonstrate a comprehensive interest in moral education in both the curricular and co-curricular: Bethel University (MN); Calvin College; Eastern Mennonite University; George Fox University; St. Olaf College; Seattle Pacific University; the University of Dallas; the University of St. Thomas (MN); and Xavier University (OH). We then made site visits to each one of these institutions to interview leaders who could describe and articulate the specifics of their moral idea in more detail. Such leaders included the chief academic officer, the officer in charge of general education, the chief student development officer, the officer in charge of residence life, the officer in charge of student discipline and the officer in charge of religious life. Afterwards, we analyzed the interviews, field notes and other additional documents using the process of open coding associated with grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Thus, we analyzed the responses to find general patterns, themes and categories.

Out of all of the institutions we surveyed in terms of our document analysis and our interviews, Calvin College proved to possess the most comprehensive moral idea. The following case study demonstrates the nature of the idea in place at Calvin College and why it proves to be significant in comparison to the other institutions we considered.

The Case Study

Background

Calvin College is an institution of both liberal and applied disciplines in Grand Rapids, Michigan. With a current enrollment of approximately 4,000 students, Calvin College is one of the larger members of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). Calvin is also a member of the Lilly Fellows Network. Perhaps more important than these relationships which place Calvin as an institution within

the larger Christian tradition is the relationship it shares with the Reformed tradition. Finding its origins in the work of John Calvin and the Protestant Reformation as it took place in and around Geneva, Switzerland in the 1500s, the Reformed tradition, in brief, emphasizes the sovereignty of God, the depravity of humanity and the unconditional nature of the grace which God grants to particular individuals. In the United States, the Reformed tradition is reflected in a number of denominations: the Christian Reformed Church (CRC); the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC); the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA); the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA); the Reformed Christian Church in America (RCA) and the Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPC). In particular, Calvin College was established by members of what is referred to today as the CRC. Both the CRC and the RCA were initially established by Dutch immigrants to the United States. By comparison to the RCA, the CRC today continues to identify with more distinctiveness from its heritage while also participating in the larger community of evangelical Christianity.

Perhaps more important to the Calvin College community than the work of John Calvin is the work of Abraham Kuyper. A politician and an academic with an astute grasp of theology, Kuyper came to the United States in 1898 to offer the Stone Lectures at Princeton University in which he argued for the development of a Christian worldview that could compete with modernity. Following his delivery of these lectures, Kuyper visited a number of Reformed institutions in the United States, including Calvin College. Over time, his injunction translated into the calling to integrate faith and learning. In many ways, the following case study looks at how the integration of faith and ethical learning is lived out at Calvin College. However, the widespread influence of this injunction is evident via its presence in the documents generated by a number of institutions within the CCCU and the LFN. Any number of institutions, including institutions from the Baptist, Quaker, and Wesleyan traditions, now incorporate this phrase into materials such as mission statements, academic catalogs, admissions view books and student handbooks.

While Calvin College benefited greatly from the work of Abraham Kuyper, the institution has also benefited greatly from the willingness of its own faculty and administrators to explore what it means to integrate faith and learning. Although one could find such examples in a number of academic departments, Calvin's philosophy department has likely proven to be the most influential. What makes this department significant is the way a number of its members draw on the key tenets of the Reformed tradition as they practice their craft. Perhaps the most influential member of this department to date is Nicholas Wolterstorff. A professor at Calvin College and then at Yale University, one of Wolterstorff's initial contributions to the integration of faith and learning was the way he argued that beliefs make a difference in terms of how one encounters the world. For example, in *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion* (1999), Wolterstorff argued that Christian commitment "involves believing certain things—among others, those things taught in the creeds. Thus, though authentic Christian commitment is not to be identified with believing certain things, it does in fact have a belief content" (p. 74). If Wolterstorff's work represents the influence that the Reformed tradition is having on analytical philosophy, the work of James K. A. Smith has come to represent the influence that the Reformed tradition is having on Continental philosophy. For example, in *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*, Smith contends

that through the Church “we find that the role of Scripture is central, not just as the Text that mediates our understanding of the world but also as the Story that narrates our role in it” (p. 76).

The distinct nature of the way that the Reformed tradition has influenced the work of scholars at Calvin and the Calvin College community as a whole has drawn the interest of a number of other higher education scholars. For example, in *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions* (2001), Robert Benne argues that “It is hard to imagine a more religiously intense and theologically literate—or perhaps religiously literate and theologically intense—church tradition than that of the Christian Reformed Church” (p. 69). Benne goes on to note that part of what makes Calvin distinct is that “Calvin stresses that Christian claims cannot simply remain in the heart; they must also be active in the intellectual processes of the mind” (pp. 71-72). Echoing MacIntyre’s notion of constrained disagreement, Benne notes that “even the immigrant Dutch farmers of the CRC were versed enough to discuss and debate with other laity and challenge their local clergy” (p. 69). Given the theoretical framework we employed in this study, one question which emerges is what tradition gives rise to a narrative so important to scholars and administrators at a place such as Calvin? The answer resides in the Biblical narrative of creation, fall and redemption.

In *Engaging God’s World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* (2002), Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., the former Dean of the Chapel at Calvin and now president of Calvin Theological Seminary, argues that “learning is a spiritual calling; properly done, it attaches us to God” (p. xi). In his book designed for students enrolled in first-year seminar courses, Plantinga offers that “The point of all this learning is to prepare to add one’s own contribution to the supreme reformation project, which is God’s restoration of all things that have been corrupted by evil” (p. xii). As a result of human sin, creation fell from grace. However, redemption is made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The purpose of a Calvin education is to help students find their place in this story and then cultivate the virtues that will make it possible for them to faithfully participate in these redemptive efforts. Plantinga commits a chapter to each one of the components which come together to form this narrative. He also claims that within this narrative, “An education is something you have to achieve; it’s almost something you have to win. I mean that a seasoned Christian to the world and human life requires real struggle with real alternative approaches” (pp. 124-125). Creation’s place at the beginning of this narrative and redemption’s place at the end of this narrative emphasize God’s sovereignty. However, Plantinga wants to underscore that redemption makes demands that one engage all of God’s world. A college education is designed to prepare one for participation in such a sense of engagement.

Documents

The best place to begin with a review of key documents generated by members of the Calvin College community in relation to this narrative and the Reformed tradition is with the institution’s mission: “Calvin College is a comprehensive liberal arts college in the Reformed tradition of historic Christianity. Through our learning we seek to be agents of renewal in the academy, Church, and society. We pledge fidelity to Jesus Christ, offering our hearts and lives to do God’s work in God’s world (Calvin College,

2002b, p. 7). The mission statement adopted by Calvin College not only places this particular community within the context of the larger Christian tradition but also within the Reformed strand of the Christian tradition. In its *Expanded Statement of Mission*, the college acknowledges that “Calvin’s confessional identity arises from a specific community of faith, a particular people of God who continue to seek obedient discipleship in a confessional way” (2004a, p. 11). This reference to a specific community of faith not only points to the Reformed strand of the Christian tradition but also to the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), the denomination which “gave birth to the college out of its desire to practice Christian faith more effectively” (Calvin College, 2004a, p. 11). To the credit of the CRC, education was perceived to be an inextricable part of a faithful Christian life.

If the mission statement proves to be the most central document in an institution’s life, perhaps the most widely circulated document communicating such a message to future members of the community, particularly students, is the admissions view book. Each year, colleges and universities mail untold numbers of admissions view books to prospective students. Calvin College is no different in this case. Part of the packet sent to students indicating an interest in attending Calvin College includes a view book with the usual array of full-color pictures, lists of impressive offerings and a heartfelt invitation to visit the campus. What makes Calvin’s admissions view book unique is embedded in the text—a text which not only points to the Reformed tradition but also to the narrative of creation, fall and redemption. On the third page, students are introduced to this narrative via a set of propositions which read “The Reformed Tradition: God created *all things*, and they were good. *All things* have fallen from that original goodness. Christ, who has redeemed *all things*, eventually will restore them.” This section ends by offering that Calvin is a community which aids in “the [Holy] Spirit’s work of restoration by seeking to make all things better” (Calvin College, 2002a, p. 3). Prospective students are thus invited to think about themselves as participating in such efforts of renewal.

One can rightfully wonder whether such language informs the actual practices which take place on campus. The landscape of American higher education is littered with institutions which possess names indicating a religious identity. Some of these institutions even possess mission statements and admissions view books which also make reference to a religious heritage. However, such assertions concerning a tradition become present in an enlivened narrative when they appear in the requirements offered in an academic catalog and in a student handbook. Perhaps even more important is when this narrative reaches across both of these documents and thus even integrates both the curricular and the co-curricular efforts. At Calvin, the Reformed tradition as interpreted through the narrative of creation, fall and redemption proves to not only be a slogan but provides such an integrative force.

Echoing the title of Cornelius Plantinga’s book, the section on the core curriculum in the Calvin College Academic Catalog offers that “the core equips students for a life of informed service in contemporary society at large, for an engagement with God’s world” (Calvin College, 2002b, p. 33). To engage the world in such a manner is understood to participate as an agent of renewal. In order to do so, one will need “to cultivate such dispositions such as patience, diligence, honesty, charity, and hope that make for a life well-lived – of benefit to others and pleasing to God” (Calvin College, 2002b, p. 33).

As a result, one finds in the Calvin College catalog courses such as “CAS 352: Communication Ethics.” In this course, “Christian positions are reviewed and applied” while examining “the moral dimensions of human communication” (Calvin College, 2002b, p. 88). However, in order to take such a course as a communications major, one must first take Biblical Foundations I, Developing a Christian Mind, and Philosophical Foundations—all courses in the core curriculum.

In the Academic Catalog, the Student Development section makes reference to a similar aspiration where it acknowledges that “Calvin encourages students to apply a Christian worldview to all areas of life, including popular culture” (Calvin College, 2002b, p. 13). Such an understanding is communicated in greater detail in the student handbook. Echoing the emphasis on redemption, the welcome statement acknowledges that members of the Calvin community seek “to be agents of reclamation, reconciliation, and renewal.” (Calvin College, 2007, p. i).

Such an emphasis is present in a number of places throughout the student handbook but is perhaps most present in the section on “Building Community.” For Calvin, community is defined by an impulse “to weld its participants together around beliefs that all are made in God’s image and that members of Christ’s church need one another, such that their educational endeavors, interpersonal relationships, and personal actions might reflect the Lord’s provisions more closely” (Calvin College, 2007, p. 21). This understanding brings forward the reality that redemption is not an individual effort but one initiated by a group. Reflective of the conviction that Christians are called to live together as the body of Christ, Calvin recognizes that “Building community doesn’t occur automatically; it requires commitment and perseverance” (Calvin College, 2007, p. 33). Although curricular efforts such as the core curriculum and co-curricular efforts such as residence life ask students to participate in different sets of practices, at Calvin these practices are both shaped by the same narrative framework and tradition. At such a point, not only the integration of the curricular and the co-curricular become possible but such a relationship also has the possibility of providing a viable understanding of moral formation.

Finally, a number of the larger concerns educational communities are called to address demand such a sense of integration. To sequester such concerns into one realm or the other creates a truncated response that students are too often able to discern. One such concern facing both the Church and the larger society in our time is racial reconciliation. A student can take a philosophy class where justice proves to be a common theme. In the same sense, a student can live in a residence hall where justice also proves to be a common theme. However, such lessons may never meet and thus prove to have a real and formative level of impact unless they are defined by a larger tradition and a larger narrative framework. Again, for the Calvin community the Reformed tradition offers the narrative of creation, fall and redemption.

When it comes to racial reconciliation, the presence of this narrative gave the Calvin community the ability to develop a document entitled *From Every Nation*. This document offers both curricular and co-curricular educators a means of thinking through matters such as racial justice, reconciliation and cross-cultural engagement. In those contexts, the commitment to redemption is brought to life in terms of a commitment to “Restoration—the establishment of a genuinely multicultural community” (Calvin College, 2004b, p. 30). As a result, “The immediate challenge is to

create an environment in which this can become a living reality within the framework of a shared Reformed tradition” (Calvin College, 2004b, p. 11). A truncated narrative can only speak so much truth into situations where restoration is needed. However, a comprehensive understanding of a narrative such as creation, fall and redemption thus allows lessons from philosophy classes and residence halls to forge an integrated front in an effort to create a community called to live as the body of Christ.

Interviews

Many institutions can provide a comprehensive understanding of the moral idea of a university in their printed literature. However, the real challenge comes on two other fronts. First, does that idea found in print translate in terms of an idea held by members of the community, particularly key curricular and co-curricular leaders? Second, if that idea translates, do both curricular and co-curricular leaders hold that idea in common? The only way to explore whether such an idea holds true in these capacities is to conduct structured interviews with these leaders. Once again, we found that the Reformed tradition as embodied in the narrative of creation, fall and redemption provided a substantial foundation for the moral idea of a university as found in the Calvin College community.

One place to begin with an overview of the results of these interviews is to turn to the remarks of one co-curricular educator who referred to the Reformed tradition as embodied in the life of the CRC as a “Thinky People.” In essence, they are people who take the time to think deeply about how matters of doctrine shape and form their existence. This same administrator then offered that this “thinky” disposition translates in terms of how “creation, fall, redemption, restoration belief” is shared with students. Students at Calvin are invited to participate in a context of what is referred to as one of responsible freedom. Without a larger narrative framework, a concept such as responsible freedom can translate into any number of moral ideas. At Calvin, however, the narrative framework of creation, fall and redemption helps students to share in a common understanding. Referencing students, this same co-curricular administrator offered that “there are a lot of decision[s] in life that you may not agree with but because you have developed a sense of integrity and moral formation, you’re going to decide to abide by that and conform your behavior in a certain way.” When a student fails to exercise his or her freedom within the Calvin community in a responsible manner, this same co-curricular administrator offered that the student is asked to participate in any number of practices designed to facilitate restoration.

Mirroring these remarks, a curricular administrator offered that one expression of the moral idea of a university found at Calvin College stems from the narrative of creation, fall and redemption as found in Plantinga’s *Engaging God’s World*. As a result, this administrator offered that the standard ethics class where students read and write about various ethical propositions is proving to be insufficient. In contrast, this administrator offered that at Calvin they are attempting “to have students more actively engaged in learning. So, I mean just that . . . [the] idea is not enough . . . that people have to struggle with how they put [such ideas] into practice has been a really strong part of our work here.” In essence, he argued that Calvin is “working on seeing [how] theory and practice form [students] – both are related.” As a result, such an effort not only applies to curricular efforts but co-curricular efforts as well. In the end, this same curricular

administrator contended that particularly when it comes to efforts in relation to moral formation, this idea is not only at work in the core curriculum but “is being picked up by student life too.”

Finding a way of facilitating such efforts in a community which enrolls approximately 4,000 students does not prove to be an easy venture. Another curricular administrator offered that “it’s hard! We have to have campus wide conversations.” Fostering an appreciation for the tradition and thus a particular narrative framework comes through deliberate efforts in a number of areas. For example, this same administrator offered that “Right now . . . we have a whole lot of people working on care theory.” Various faculty members are seeking to integrate how care theory makes a difference in how they teach and write in their related fields. Such efforts are not limited to isolated academic disciplines “but in how we teach love and caring across the curriculum.”

This same curricular administrator offered that such efforts cannot end with just the curriculum but must also be woven into co-curricular efforts. One example of such an effort is found in the investment Calvin has made in service-learning. Service-learning at Calvin is viewed as a great aid in cultivating an engaged campus. In the end, this same curricular administrator wants to know “how are we an engaged campus? Not just by sending students out and using the community but again by partnering. So we work hard on that and we read a lot of articles about that too.” Such an effort leaves one with the impression that the boundaries between classroom experiences and out-of-class experiences are difficult to distinguish. In addition, the surrounding community of Grand Rapids is not simply a diminutive object in need of service but a valued partner in the larger effort of redemption.

Another area at Calvin reinforcing the notion that theory is not simply the domain of the classroom is orientation. One co-curricular administrator offered that “I spend time during orientation talking about Reformed kinds of ideas and it makes a difference in terms of the way we do our business here, our educating.” For this co-curricular administrator, these ideas then translate into how student activities are initiated on the campus. Although Calvin brings a host of films and musical artists to campus that express a wide variety of views, if Calvin students are going to learn how to serve as agents of redemption in the world, they need to learn to think through ideas and practices different from their own. Some of these ideas and practices may even offer evidence of the fallen nature of the world. This same co-curricular administrator offered the showing of the movie *Fahrenheit 9/11* as an example. Although many people had reservations about the film, Calvin chose to show it. This co-curricular administrator asked, “How do you think the average student here takes *Fahrenheit 9/11*? The Reformed worldview may or may not endorse some of the arguments they [the film’s director, Michael Moore, and his colleagues] make. It’s just a process of engagement and critique.”

Conclusion

To the credit of both the curricular and co-curricular administrators that serve the Calvin community, if one removed their references to particular programmatic efforts, it might prove difficult to make any distinctions between these two segments of Calvin administration. Facilitating such a common voice is a well-cultivated appreciation for

the Reformed tradition and its narrative of creation, fall and redemption. Regardless of whether one reads their printed materials, is in the classroom or in the residence hall, this framework provides a theological foundation for the moral idea embodied by the Calvin College community.

Further research efforts will need to subsequently assess whether a correlation exists between the strength of such an understanding and the moral formation exhibited by students. Our speculation is that such a correlation exists. Regardless, communities such as Calvin College offer evidence to the fact that good and evil are not obsolete. The moral idea of a university still exists even if such an idea is most appropriately plural and not singular—reflecting the traditions and narrative frameworks defining any number of campuses. The question for campuses that exist beyond the Reformed tradition and its narrative of creation, fall and redemption is whether they will also deliberately seek to draw on their traditions in the same way as the Calvin College community.

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Contributing Factors to Persistence among African-American and Hispanic Students in Higher Education: A Phenomenological Qualitative Study at a Diverse Small Institution on the East Coast

By W. Bernt King

Abstract

The purpose for this phenomenological study is to understand the persistence of academically successful African-American and Hispanic students in an ethnically diverse higher education context where services and support targeting minority students do not formally exist. The research for this study has been conducted on campuses where the student body demographics are largely mono-ethnic. It would seem that as institutions of higher education become increasingly diverse, contributing factors to success for students of color may change. Themes that emerged include having a spiritual perspective, having a sense of purpose or the big picture, having support from family, having support from the individuals within the institution, and having self-motivation.

With the increasingly competitive nature of higher education and the need for a higher education degree in the marketplace, there is an expectation that academic institutions will address student persistence as well as equal opportunity for success among all students. However, there remains in higher education a certain inequality, especially when considering student persistence and the unique needs of minority students in higher education (Jost, Whitfield, & Jost, 2005). While there may be a variety of reasons for such a reality, recent research and development addressing student persistence among minority students helps to address the issue.

Student Persistence

Student persistence among college students is not a new concept to the higher education community. Formational contributions to this field include Tinto's (1975; 1982) modeling of retention and Astin's (1984) work on the importance of the educational environment to academic persistence and achievement. Following such work, Chickering and Gamson (1987), Tinto (1993a, 1993b), and others further developed success principles for institutions of higher education that address needs related to student persistence (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004; Kuh, 2001; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005; Sulaiman & Mohezar, 2006). The most significant factor of student persistence according to Jost, Whitfield, & Jost (2005) is the role that a student's ethnic background has on their persistence in higher education.

When considering the effect that a person's ethnicity may have on their persistence in higher education, several key variables are involved (Renner & Moore, 2004). Allen, Epps, and Haniff (1991) performed groundbreaking research as they began to address the differences between persistence in Caucasian and African-American students. The research revealed a number of variables connecting ethnicity with student persistence. Further research revealed that "white cultural norms" (D'Souza, 1991), such as a greater

emphasis on the individual outcome rather than the collective (Ellison & Boykin, 1994), may produce hurdles for students of different ethnic backgrounds. In fact, ignoring this reality creates a kind of segregation, especially for African-American and Hispanic students (D'Souza, 1991; Kuo & Miller, 2004; Renner & Moore, 2004).

Obstacles for African-American Students

There are several factors that have been researched regarding the persistence of African-Americans in higher education. One factor has been described as a need for social support and well being (Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1992). Reasons for this may include the potential for greater self-esteem or self-confidence and an ethnic norm of cooperative rather than individualistic learning (Ellison & Boykin, 1994; Campbell & Fleming, 2000; Demo & Parker, 1987). Other factors include the years leading up to college (Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts, & Fulmore, 1994) and the financial burden involved (Fleming, 1978; Mason, 1998; St. John, Paulsen, & Carter, 2005; Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts, & Fulmore, 1994).

Consequently, specific challenges include experiences of discrimination, (Taylor et al., 1994), a "negative cognitive disadvantage" (Tinto, 1993) and the tensions between doing well academically and simply affording the opportunity (Upthegrove, Roscigno, & Charles, 1999). It has been demonstrated that high achieving African-American students rely on "multiple motivational factors such as intrinsic, extrinsic, present, future, and social goals" (Hwang, Echols, & Vrongistinos 2002, p.551) in order to succeed. Although not a new concept to those studying motivational theory, this does demonstrate that the current scenario in higher education reflects a certain level of hope for the motivated. Nevertheless, higher education maintains inequalities that must be overcome by African-American students (Flowers & Pascarella, 1999; Hwang et al., 2002).

Obstacles for Hispanic Students

Hispanic students also face obstacles in higher education. A 1945 court case in California (*Mendez v. Westminster School District*) was a groundbreaking case that opened the door for their access to schooling in the US, and eventually the formation of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) (Merisotis & McCarthy, 2005). Hispanic students share some of the same struggles as African-American students. One such example is the financial implications of going to college (Merisotis & McCarthy, 2005). Furthermore, financial constraints are closely associated with poor academic preparation before coming to college (Marwick, 2004).

However, academic success for Hispanic students is also closely associated with support from a very family oriented community and culture (Benitez & DeAro, 2004). Because leaving home and the family is not part of convention in Hispanic culture (Benitez & DeAro, 2004), Hispanic students tend to enroll at a community college because it fits their cultural context better. It is less expensive, more flexible, and more conducive to a family oriented support structure (Cejda & Rhodes, 2004; Gonzales Jovel, & Stoner, 2004; Martinez & Fernandez, 2004).

The Headway Made by Programs, Services and Centers

In light of the challenges facing African-American and Hispanic students in higher education, there have been some significant developments in programs, services and centers that help increase student persistence. These efforts include dealing with issues associated with being a first-generation college student (Bridges, Barbara, Kuh, & Leegwater, 2005), facilitating contact and support between faculty, staff, and students, and increased communication regarding shared responsibility for each student's success (Kinzie & Kuh, 2004). Other services include focused attention on the first year adjustment for minority students as they learn to adapt and succeed from within their own cultural context (Bridges *et al.*, 2005; Wycoff, 1996) and facilitating the transfer of minority students to four-year institutions to allow them to finish a bachelor's degree (Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, Morphew, & Sopcich, 2004).

Beyond such efforts, the initiatives have been centered around creating scholarship opportunities to help mitigate the cost of higher education (Merisotis & McCarthy, 2005). In addition, efforts have been made to create an environment that seeks to foster "confidence, motivation, high aspirations, and the ability to thrive in competition" (Bridges *et al.*, 2005). Services related to overcoming the educational gap for incoming students and programs that involve the whole family have also been an area of much growth (Benitez & DeAro, 2004; Bridges *et al.*, 2005; Hagedorn & Cepeda, 2004).

Method

The purpose for this study is to understand the persistence of African-American and Hispanic students in an ethnically diverse higher education context where services that target students of color, such as a multicultural services office or culture-specific centers or clubs, do not formally exist. The participants for this study are all students at a small four-year private religious college and seminary in the Washington D.C. area. The school is non-denominational and the enrollment is below 450 full-time equivalence (FTE). The diversity in the student body has become an important part of the schools identity; however, the diversity in the student body did not appear to happen due to an intentional effort.

In the spring of 2008, 44% of the college student body was African-American and 37% was Caucasian. Ten percent of the student body was identified as Asian and the Hispanic/Latino population, which has historically not been represented in the student body, has now grown to over 3%. While the student body is diverse, the institution does not offer any services specifically directed at minority students, nor are there any staff devoted to minority student affairs. Furthermore, the faculty and staff have traditionally been predominantly Caucasian. A shift towards a more diverse faculty and staff has begun within the last three to four years. Within this population there are numerous students who are persisting towards their educational goals, yet without the formal support that the literature suggests is critical.

In order to explore factors of success among minority students in such a context, a qualitative phenomenological study was conducted using a convenience sample (Creswell, 1998). This method was chosen in order to capture the students who classified themselves as either African-American or Hispanic, sustained a 3.5 GPA or higher, were actively involved in student life, and had schedules conducive to gathering

input through interviews. The research was passed through an Institutional Review Board and each participant signed an informed consent form prior to the interview.

The sample consists of four African-American and four Hispanic students. Four are male students, of which one is a resident student, and four are female, of whom all are resident students. One of the eight is a graduate student while the other seven are undergraduate students. Of the students interviewed, only two have exclusively attended the four-year college chosen for this study. Several of the students had experiences at HBCUs, HSIs, and various programs offered at other colleges and universities to help minority students. Pseudonyms were selected for all participants.

Female Participants

Maria is a Hispanic female and a resident student. She had previously attended a community college and is now a sophomore. She is single, intent on completing her degree and has studied at the four-year college chosen for this study for one semester.

Valerie is female and half African-American and half Mexican. She is in her early twenties and is single. She is classified as a junior and currently serves as a resident assistant in one of the residence halls. She has not attended any other institutions of higher education apart from the four-year college chosen for this study.

Anna is an African-American female who began her higher education experience at an HBCU. After a year she transferred to the four-year college chosen for this study. She is single, a resident student, and currently classified as a junior.

Dani is an African-American female who has solely attended the four-year college chosen for this study. She is currently a senior and also serves as the president of the student government association. She is single, in her early twenties, a resident student, and plans to graduate this coming May.

Male Participants

Chris is a male in his thirties, and a commuter student. He is African-American and had previously attended a community college. He is a husband and a father and currently considered a senior by his credit hours. He has studied at the four-year college in question for more than five semesters on a part-time basis.

Julio is a male commuter student in his twenties. He is Hispanic and he attended a community college for one year prior to transferring into the four-year college in this study. He is single, a full-time student and lives with his uncles not far from the campus.

Hugo is a male resident Hispanic student. His family lives in the Midwest and he has solely attended the four-year college chosen for this study. He is currently a senior and will be graduating in May. He is single and in his early twenties.

Denzel is a male commuter student in his mid-twenties. He is African-American, a graduate of the four-year college in this study and has continued on to graduate school at the same institution. His experience in higher education includes a year at a large state school in the Midwest. He is engaged to be married this coming spring and hopes to finish a master's degree and then go on for a doctorate.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol consisted of 10 questions that were developed from a review of the literature on minority student affairs. While seven questions were asked of all participants, the last three questions were different depending on whether the participant was African-American or Hispanic. This was done in an attempt to further probe the ethnic differences that the literature identifies. The questions asked were designed to gain an understanding of persistence in the absence of formalized minority services in higher education. The seven questions that were asked of all participants were as follows:

1. Racially inequality has been suggested by some as obvious and clear. Have you experienced inequality in higher education overall and here at this institution? Please explain.
2. Student success seems connected to the relationship between students and the faculty. Can you describe for me any key aspects of this connection that contribute to your persistence (or lack thereof if it applies)?
3. Do you sense that there are others that fight for your success here or do you feel left to your own in this process? (Respondents were asked for examples.)
4. Do you think our context here at [the school studied] offers you confidence, motivation, and/or high aspirations? Or have you found these components elsewhere during your study? Please explain.
5. Do you feel your ethnic background or race has been an issue in any of the following areas:
 - a. Cooperation among students?
 - b. Active learning?
 - c. Prompt feedback?
 - d. Time on task?
 - e. High expectations?
 - f. Respect for diverse talents and ways of learning (Chickering and Gamson, 1987)?

(Respondents were asked to give factors for persistence in areas that were identified as problematic.)

6. The literature suggests that factors such as lower income, being academically disadvantaged, or being a first-generation student are obstacles for minority students in higher education. What has been your experience in regard to these issues? (Respondents were asked for examples where appropriate and also asked for factors of persistence in overcoming any of the challenges mentioned.)
7. Do you consider your experience here at [the institution studied] to be monocultural, mainstream view or based on Eurocentric norms? What supports your persistence in such an environment?

After the seven core questions were asked, the following three questions were asked of African-American students:

8. Can you describe for me any pressure from your family to succeed or pull out?
9. Have you found that you benefit more from collaborative learning? Do you find your context here to be predominantly collaborative or individualistic?
10. Do you resonate with the concept of the “glass ceiling,” and if so, have you found it to affect your willingness to persist?

The final three questions that were asked of Hispanic students are as follows:

11. Can you name any mentors that you have relied upon during your time here?
12. What kind of support do you muster from family? If no support, what factors contribute to your persistence?
13. Several institutions have sought to support Hispanic students through programs such as Puente Projects or Clubs. In lieu of such programs or services, what factors lead to your persistence?

As the interviewer I have had personal contact with each of the participants over this past semester. I serve as the dean of students and adjunct professor at the institution chosen for this study and therefore hold a position of power on campus. My personal bias is further shaped by having grown up in Europe.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study. As a phenomenological qualitative project, the principles are not directly transferable to other institutions. The participants reflect a convenience sample, and not a sample that is necessarily a reflection of the make-up of the student body. For example, only one of the students interviewed reflects the average age of the student body. Finally, a Caucasian male with a position of power and personal bias conducted the interviews. Having an interviewer that reflected the ethnicity of the participants may have yielded further insights. Comparing the results with Caucasian students is a possible future project.

Results

Introduction

In searching for characteristics of persistence among African-American and Hispanic students at a diverse four-year educational institution where no formal office or staff members are devoted to minority student affairs, a series of personal one-on-one interviews were conducted at a small four-year private religious college and seminary in the Washington D.C. area. Following the eight student interviews, the information was transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes in regard to characteristics of student persistence. The coding and analyzing was done using QSR NVIVO Version 7.

The transcriptions were reviewed multiple times, with the coding process involved identifying main ideas and points related to the subject of interest. As some codes developed and became more common, they were labeled as themes. The themes that emerged included: having a spiritual perspective, having a sense of purpose or the big picture, having support from family, having support from the individuals within the institution, and having self-motivation.

Spiritual Perspective

In discussing factors that contribute to student persistence, the coding process revealed two aspects of the resulting theme. These factors, or sub-themes, reflect the topics that were explicitly mentioned by at least four different participants.

Faith in God and His work. When asked about student persistence in lieu of formal services and staff, all but one of the interviewees referenced a level of faith in God and His work. Denzel graduated from the undergraduate school and is currently attending the graduate school of the institution studied. He also had experiences as a student at a large state school in the Midwest. When asked about persistence, he noted:

Minorities at [this school] are going to persist because even though there are no minority services, they're going to persist because they want to know God. They want to study God's Word and what motivates them is bigger than race, it's bigger than being served.

Valerie, whose ethnic background is half African-American and half Mexican and whose experience is solely at the institution studied, described a similar perspective. When asked how she persisted through some of her challenges, she recalled:

Knowing that God would not have allowed me to get to this point if He didn't want me to complete it. And that is always what I have to remember myself. Remind myself, because higher education is a lot harder for me... each time I get to those points I just have to say: Why would God bring me to school? Why would I be in my Junior year of college if I wasn't made to finish it? So just suck it up, dry your tears, say a couple of prayers and get 15 minutes of sleep and get it done.

Maria, when asked of her persistence, quickly concluded: "I think it's really, really just God, because you really can't...nobody can help you more than God. That's the way I look at it."

Of the minority student studied, Hugo is the farthest from what he considers home. When thinking through tough times that he weathered at the institution, he was asked why he persisted. He responded: "What kept me here was, umm, just seeing the opportunities God opened up for me here, while being here...I think that's the main reason why I'm here and not like at [another school] or something." For these students, their reliance on God was a recurring factor to their persistence.

Sense of calling. Closely associated with faith in God was discussion that centered on a sense of calling. Four of the eight minority students interviewed talked about how important their sense of calling was to their persistence. Anna, an African-American undergraduate student who began her experience in higher education at an HBCU, is a student who leans heavily on her sense of calling. When asked about her confidence level, she quipped: "I knew I was supposed to be here, so the confidence was a given."

Julio, a Hispanic student who started his higher education experience at a community college in southern California, described how important his sense of calling is to his persistence. "There's a very specific calling that I feel, and I know I need training. And as my time has gone, as I've gone through this, my years here, I keep feeling that, yeah, I

am receiving the training. I'm getting what I really need."

Faith in God and a sense of calling were the contributors to the theme of having a spiritual perspective. This was the most dominant theme that emerged in this study.

Sense of Purpose and the Big Picture

While having a spiritual perspective was a key to persistence for the students interviewed, there was a close association to a sense of purpose and big picture as well. These were mentioned as a separate theme, yet discussions about purpose were always closely associated with a spiritual perspective, and frequently these themes were intermixed.

Sense of purpose. Julio, for example, described how important his purpose was, and yet in the context of his comments he closely associated his sense of purpose with his sense of calling. In regard to his purpose, and its role in his persistence, he noted:

So, like, I don't know, I talked to some people, and it's, you know, "What do you want to do with your degree?" You know? They just come 'cause that's what they were supposed to do after they finished high school. Where me, I made a very specific choice. I need to come here because I need training for this specific goal. So that's my constant motivation, that I want to go into the pastorate. So every year I feel, yeah, what I'm receiving here, it's preparing me for that. And that just affirms even more that this is where I need to be, and I need to be receiving what I'm learning... Well, just, like, I had said that, you know, that I had a purpose when I got here, and I felt the school has been training me, and so that's why I want to persist.

Chris echoed Julio's comments. He noted: "for me it's just personal goals that's keeping me driving." Later in the interview he clarified by adding: "And I guess my setting of why I'm doing it: for ministry to minister to inner city kids, I just need what I can get and you know, get it as fast as I can and go."

For Hugo, his sense of purpose and calling not only contribute to his persistence in higher education, but also to his career goals. When asked to explain his thoughts on these issues, he stated:

Just knowing that I want to get into journalism, sports journalism, and there aren't a lot of, the numbers aren't very high for you know Hispanic male you know sports writers, reporters and stuff like that. It's kind of like, you know, you want to do certain things for your own personal desires...

Having a sense of purpose was expressed frequently as an important factor of persistence to the students interviewed.

Sense of the big picture. Valerie and Hugo described the importance of "the big picture" in similar terms as others described their sense of purpose. When asked about persistence in the face of inequalities and division, Valerie gave one such example.

I guess I just realize that things aren't, it's just not that big of a deal. You know like, it's not going to cause me to not graduate or not be successful in my future, so just don't harp on it.

Interviewer: So the big picture becomes critical?

Valerie: Yeah.

Hugo, simply summed it up as: "...it's really a bigger picture, it's not just ourselves it's bigger."

Supporting Relationships

Having supporting relationships was found to be another theme that emerged. Minority students talked about such support in terms of two factors: support from family and being a role model. Within these factors, there is some overlap.

Support from family. Support from family members was a prominent theme related to student persistence. For some, it was a general reference to their upbringing and preparation for life and college. Denzel is one such example. When asked whether he ever felt like just giving up on overcoming the challenges, he said:

So, my mother instilled in us kind of an opposite to that sort of throw your hands up, instead of just throw your hands up, she said, "OK, you guys are just going to have to work harder in school because the perception is that it'll be harder for you," so she pushed us harder in school or she made us speak properly at home and that sort of thing, so I can't resonate with it and say that I'm just going to give up.

Dani shared a similar experience. She recalled: "I've always felt fairly optimistic because my parents, you know pretty much, you know your talents, develop them, always do your best...."

Others described the importance of family, but for other reasons. Julio described a much more active level of support from his family as is demonstrated from the following excerpt from his interview:

Interviewer: You mentioned earlier that you came here and you've got your uncle...

Julio: Yeah, and my grandfather.

Interviewer: How much of a part of this whole thing have they been, for you?

Julio: Yeah, they've been very huge.

Interviewer: Big pieces?

Julio: Yeah. Everything, I think my whole ministry and church, and maybe even what I want to do in life, has really been molded by them in these past, I don't know, three, four, maybe five years.

Interviewer: OK. Along that same line, do you feel a lot of support from them in your studies here?

Julio: Yeah, very much so.

Maria had a similar response: “My family has been very encouraging to me and there’s been a lot of support from my family.” She continued by describing the various aspects of support that she received from her family. These included details such as personal emotional support and help financially when possible.

Being a role model. The pressure of being a role model to other family or community members was also a theme that emerged from the Hispanic students interviewed. Julio, Hugo and Maria were the three that identified this sub-theme, and while it closely associates with support from family, it also stands as its own factor. Maria’s comment encapsulated the sentiment concisely. When talking about persistence in relation to family issues and why she has chosen to persist, she said:

Yeah. I think at this point, mostly, my sisters. I know that I have to be an example to them. I think without my sisters, I would be a little more relaxed, like I don’t have to, but I want them to succeed as well, so that’s a big motivator to me.

Hugo added that it isn’t just about the immediate family, but the community overall. He described a factor of his persistence as: “a broader mindset when I look at these things I need to show that there are opportunities for the next generation.”

Support From Within the Institution

While the institution studied does not provide any formal services or staff members in the area of minority affairs, the students interviewed identified some support from within the institution that served as a factor in their persistence.

Institutional size. Several of the students interviewed recognized that the small size of the institution lent itself to a supportive environment. Denzel, in his comparison to his previous experience at a large state school, was asked whether he found that people at the institution studied were fighting for his success. He recalled:

I definitely felt that people here were fighting for my success. I didn’t like at [the large state school] where I just felt like a name and a number on a sheet of paper. I guess it’s just the nature of going to a big school. But I felt like people, professors, faculty, or staff members here really cared.

In answering the same question, Hugo said: “I think people are kind of fighting for my success but I think, since it’s such a small community, people want to see everyone succeed.” In statements such as these, there is a clear link related to institutional size and the resulting support that positively impacts persistence.

Support from faculty and staff. One prominent sub-theme that emerged was faculty support. Julio, in comparing his previous experience in higher education in California said the following:

I don't know what the departments are doing, 'cause I'm not very exposed to that. But what I feel in the classroom, in all my classes, is a general desire for each student to succeed. And there's a general desire from one of my professors to do their part to help them succeed.

Similarly Anna, in her comparison regarding her previous experience at a historically black university, said:

I think the faculty is very kind hearted and they do reach out. At [my previous institution], they never did. I didn't even want to be there whether I was black or not. It was so difficult to connect to the faculty, but here it's way different.

Denzel was equally as clear on this subject:

Oh, my relationship to faculty has been a real key to my persistence. I mean, it's those professors and teachers going back all the way to high school that took like a genuine interest in me and challenged me the most that really kind of had me develop a love for school and a love for a particular school, or for me to want to stick around there.

Beyond the faculty, the staff is seen as critical. Chris recalls staff members fighting for his success more so than his professors.

Interviewer: Do you, since being a student here, do you sense that there are other people kind of fighting for your success or do you feel like you are on your own?

Chris: Believe it or not, those that I do think are fighting for my success are not coming necessarily from instructors. Its like receptionists and secretaries, and people [who care]. "Chris come on you can do it, I know you can." You know so it's from staff it's not necessarily from instructors.

Examples such as these indicate a connection between supporting relationships with faculty and staff at the institution studied and persistence among minority students in the absence of formal staffing or services.

Support from social setting. Social support from within the institution was also a strong sub-theme. The interviewees repeatedly referred to the social support that was found during their time as a student. For example, Anna indicated that the social setting is as important to her as the faculty in regard to motivation. She noted: "The motivation definitely comes from professors and my peers and just the environment that we're in." Maria had the same observation. "Even the students, I think even more the students because they've gone through a lot too so they can share and help." Some of the interviewees see the social support as greater than the faculty support. Valerie, for example, spent time describing friends that she stayed up crying with over various issues. As a result she found more support in the social setting than from faculty. She said: "I think it is actually more support from like other students than it is the faculty." As a

result of such comments, it is clear that the social setting at the institution studied is a factor contributing to persistence.

Self-Motivation

The final emerging theme is the need for self-motivation in minority student persistence. This theme is supported by frequent references to the students' own initiative and the students' sense that the task is doable.

Student initiative. The most dominant sub-theme in this study was the theme regarding student initiative. All but one of the interviewees described their need for initiative if they were to persist. In the absence of such initiative, persistence lacked. When asked what has contributed to persistence in an overall sense, Valerie said:

I think it's again independence. It's independent of whether you are a minority or not, it's what you as an individual want to do. What I as an individual want to do in higher education, I want to do well.

For Chris, his initiative is the backbone for his persistence.

It has to be something that you want to do for yourself, and not for nobody else, so regardless of what is surrounding you or trying to prevent you or bothers you. You know, you're not doing it for nobody else, you're doing it for yourself. And you are learning. You are learning something that no one can every take from you. So just look at it with that, and not worry about what everyone else is thinking. You know. Just keep going forward that's all.

Similarly Anna and Hugo both describe their drive or persistence as something that they had prior to coming. There is a sense of initiative that has to be present. Hugo stated, "I think I have that but I don't think anything here really contributes to that." He then went on to describe his need to adjust and lean on that initiative to succeed. Maria recognized that reality as well. She noted: "Of course they're going to help me, but it's only if I ask." Student initiative clearly emerged as a factor contributing to minority student persistence at the institution studied.

The task is doable. The last sub-theme that emerged from the interviews conducted was the need for a sense that the task is doable. Julio and Valerie needed that sense in order to be able to persist. In Valerie's interview, this theme emerged multiple times. The clearest excerpt is as follows:

Interviewer: In a place where there are no devoted staff members or centers, so to speak, what causes you to persist and keep plugging away and making those changes?

Valerie: Because it's doable. Because I know I can accomplish, I can accomplish being able to adapt or to adjust or to figure out how my interests and abilities can fit into this standard – its not impossible. I think that there are times when it can be harder, but it's not impossible.

Julio described a time in one of his classes where he realized how his motivation was affected by his ability to accomplish the task. He concluded:

When that happened I came out of that class thinking “Man, I can really do this! I can interact this way, with them, and at their level, to the point where it’s not just, whatever they say, that’s right. I can even change their mind.” And so that’s one of the first experiences that I had where I felt, you know, I can do this. This is within my grasp. And that just really gave me the motivation to aspire to be as good as any of them.

For both Julio and Valerie, the feeling that the expectations were obtainable was a factor in their persistence at an institution that does not formally address their needs as minority students.

Discussion

This study on persistence among minority students at a diverse institution where no formal office or staff are devoted to minority affairs, contributes to the literature by affirming support services researched in mono-ethnic contexts. The results suggest that the institution studied may be leaving the persistence of these students, in terms of overcoming the challenges identified in the literature, to their own abilities in establishing the various emerging themes. This study forms the foundation for actions that, if implemented, could positively affect persistence among minority students.

Five Implications

The implications suggested below are formed from the five themes that emerged in this study as well as the type of institution studied. For example, while forming a minority student affairs office or a series of ethnic centers on campus is ideal and a recommended long-term plan, the size and scope of the institution studied calls for more immediate and tangible implications.

In regard to the students who articulated a spiritual perspective, institutions such as the one studied ought to take action that pursues such a perspective through their current practice (Bridges *et al.*, 2005). The same could be said for the concept of establishing a sense of purpose or the big picture. Services and programming that encourage a perspective on purpose or how current classes fit into a larger picture would be beneficial in encouraging persistence among minority students.

Participants in this study also affirmed a connection between student motivation and support from people within the academic institution. In the case of the support from people, most of whom were family, the outcome was self-motivation to persist. In terms of support from the individuals within the institution, the students interviewed reported receiving that as a result of their own motivation, or as a result of the connections they chose to make. Therefore, the institution could address this by formally planning ways in which support is made more readily available, such as facilitating mentoring relationships on campus.

Conclusion

Educational institutions cannot afford to ignore the issue of the persistence of minority students. Addressing issues related to a spiritual perspective, a sense of calling or big picture, supporting relationships, support from individuals within the institution, and a student's self-motivation emerged as critical to the four-year private religious institution that was part of this study.

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The Church: A Salient Support System for African-American College Students

By Odelet Nance

Abstract

This article builds on a previous qualitative study examining the role of religion in the lives of five African-American college students at a Predominately White Institution (PWI). Through a constructivist lens, the stories of first-year students revealed how their church informed their college experiences. This article describes how churches provided support for students through the theoretical frameworks illustrated by Alexander Astin, Jacqueline Mattis, and Robert Jagers. Churches and Predominately White Institutions are encouraged to form partnerships to strengthen and enhance support systems for African-American college students.

Research has shown that having an effective support system affects social and academic integration and, in turn, a student's decision on whether to persist to graduation (Tinto, 1975). Although greater access to post-secondary education exists than ever before, retention of African-Americans remains especially low. According to one study, "the nationwide college graduation rate for Black students stands at an appallingly low rate of 42%. This figure is 20 percentage points below the 62% rate for White students" ("Black Student Graduation Rates," 2004, p. 88). Multiple studies suggest that many factors—financial, social, cultural, psychological, circumstantial, personal—combine in myriad ways to derail students from their educational tracks (Ervin, 2001; Neville, Heppner, & Wang, 1997). One fact seems clear, however; a strong social support system greatly enhances a student's chances of success.

Religion is an important source of social support for African-American students (Markstrom, 1999), and an important coping resource. In fact, church attendance and prayer play an essential role in the reduction of stress (Ellison, 1991). Research findings suggest that those students who attend religious services have a more positive college experience that may lead to better retention (Zern, 1997). Quantitative studies indicate that religious involvement helps to maximize a student's potential to excel academically (Zern, 1997, 1989). Steward and Jo (1998) found that students who self-identified as religious used their spirituality as a means of coping in college settings, and religious students tend to be better adjusted and have higher academic performance. Rather than focusing on explanations for African-American students' under-representation and under-achievement at PWIs, which much past research has covered, this article will examine how the affiliation with the Christian church influences the college experience and acts as a social network for five African-American students at a large, urban, public institution.

Theoretical Framework

Religion and Spirituality

The church has long represented a system of support and survival for African-Americans. Originally an extended family for slaves taken from their families, it later became a place for educational, social, and community meetings. The church became a safe haven for African-American members and their families, creating and maintaining outreach programs that played both a direct and indirect role (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Mattis & Jagers, 2001). In the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Black spirituality became a primary force of liberation. Many Black leaders of the movement were ministers and church members. Lincoln & Mamiya (1990) noted:

Perhaps one of the most important functions that Black churches performed for young people was to provide a place where they could meet older adults, men and women, who could serve as role models for them. Much of socialization for children and youth occur through the process of role modeling—observing, evaluating, emulating, and filing away for later use the behavior, examples, and values of others (pp. 312–313).

Consequently, it makes sense to explore what role Christian faith and church involvement, in particular the Black church, play in sustaining and stimulating educational pursuits.

The Black Church

While there is no official denomination known as the “Black church,” the term is used here to denote any Christian church in the United States that ministers predominantly to African-American congregations. According to C. F. Stewart (1999), spirituality has proven to be a “soul force” and liberating factor for African-Americans. He described spirituality as “a process by which people interpret, disclose, formulate, adapt, and innovate reality and their understandings of God within a specific context or culture” (p. 1). Religion is defined as a shared system of beliefs, mythology, and rituals associated with a supreme being (Mattis 2000; Mattis & Jagers, 2001).

Religion and spirituality have acted as sources of empowerment in the educational, political, and social arenas of the African-American community (Wilmore, 1998). Missionaries and freed slaves opened schools designed to cultivate morally responsible individuals while giving them literacy skills (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Wilberforce, Morris Brown, and Lane are examples of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) founded and operated by Black churches. The participants in this study reported that their churches encouraged them to go to college and that their churches provided them with opportunities to develop, grow, and cope socially, spiritually, and academically.

Student Development Theories

Student development theories seek to describe meaningfully “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her development capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education” (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 27). Although several student development models (Baxter-Magolda, 1992a, 1992b; Chickering

& Reisser, 1993; Fowler, 1981; Perry, 1970) have explored cognitive, psychosocial, moral, ethical, and faith development, these traditional student development theories have not fully addressed the needs and culture of African-American students by exploring the most salient factor in African-American life: the church. To provide a clearer theoretical understanding, two involvement theories are described from the lens of student development and African-American religion.

The first theory is Astin's (1993) Inputs-Environments-Outcomes (I-E-O) framework. His research on such variables formed the foundation of his work on student involvement. He defined student involvement theory as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 297). In general, student involvement theory is concerned with the amount of time a student spends on a given activity and its effect on retention. Astin (1993) examined several types of student involvement, such as social fraternities and sororities, student-faculty interactions, athletic endeavors, and religious associations.

The I-E-O model suggests that student outcomes are influenced by *inputs* (I), which include personal, family, religious, and academic background characteristics; college *environments* (E), which include circumstances that influence what and how much a student learns or changes (e.g., student participation in various programs, enrollment in specific colleges, perceptions in and out of class activities, church attendance); and *outcomes* (O), the effects of students' college attendance and their experiences (Astin, 1993). Social networks, such as family interactions, peer groups, on-campus student support programs, student organizations, and spiritual or religious affiliation would be considered non-academic elements of student involvement (Astin, 1993). During the college matriculation process, involvement in social networks assists in the "maintenance of individual self esteem and life satisfaction; increasing social and academic competence and environmental mastery and the management of stress and coping." (Davis, 1991, p. 145). Colleges that ignore the role of support networks in the lives of Black students may be ignoring factors that assist in the success and retention of those students.

In Astin's 1993 study, religious involvement was based solely on hours per week spent at religious services and religious meetings. Although Astin (1997) stated that college attendance strengthens "hedonism and religious apostasy" (quoting Astin, 1984, p. 205), he also found a positive relationship between a student's satisfaction at college and the hours spent attending religious services. Attending religious services positively affected a student's decision to re-enroll at the same college. Church involvement holds historical and contemporary significance for African-American students and is an important social support (Gilkes, 1980; Markstrom, 1999). However, there has been little research examining the role of the church in the lives of African-American college students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998).

The second theory to be examined is the relational framework (Mattis & Jagers, 2001). According to Mattis and Jagers (2001), African-American religion is both relational and communal. The latter refers to the historic tradition of Black churches being involved in all aspects of the lives of their members, including political, economic, educational, and social concerns (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Mattis (2000) described spirituality as a journey of self-reflection, self-criticism, and self-awareness that culminates in a greater understanding of the relationship between self, God, and the larger community. For many African-American believers, the spirit and religious engagement permeate all of life, and cannot be reviewed without pointing out the relational dimension (Mattis & Jagers, 2001).

The current study (Nance, 2005) focused on how religion functions in the everyday relationships of first-year students. Similar to Park's faith development theory, this framework examines an individual's interaction with God, self, and others. Mattis and Jagers (2001) wrote the following:

Our relational framework focuses attention on the process of religious and spiritual socialization. In that regard, it attends to the roles of socializing agents (e.g., mothers, fathers, extended family members, peers) in transmission and maintenance of religious and spiritual values within and across generations (p. 521).

The new movement in Black Christian worship and church attendance has been fueled and influenced by the influence of the hip-hop culture on Black sacred music (Williams & Dixie, 2003). Members of the hip-hop generation were reared in the Black church, but research shows that they lack loyalty to a specific denomination (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Williams & Dixie, 2003). As a matter of fact, according to a report in 2000 by the National Opinion Research Center, church attendance for 18- to 35-year-olds decreased (Kitwana, 2002, p. 22). The decrease in church attendance has caused the mainstream denominations (Baptist, Pentecostal, and Methodist) to structure worship services to cater to the needs and interests of the young adult, college age, hip-hop generation (Kitwana, 2002; Williams & Dixie, 2003).

Research Design and Methodology

Case Studies

According to Yin (2003), a case study "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" and "relies on multiple sources of evidence" (pp. 13–14).

A case study uses intensive descriptive methods to portray persons more fully within their environments (Stake, 2000). The qualitative tradition and methods within ethnographic studies provide rich data through individual interviews, observations, artifact collection, and data analysis. A comprehensive picture of five students' experiences at a predominantly White, urban campus through interviews and observations portrayed a holistic aspect of life that other methods may have neglected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

A small sample was chosen to retrieve rich, in-depth data from study participants (Yin, 1994). The participants of this study included five first-year, African-American self-identified Christian students living in the residence halls at one large PWI in the Midwest. This purposive subset of students was chosen to reflect the traditional, African-American Christian denominations of the student population (Baptist, Pentecostal, and Methodist). Qualitative study offered a way to present a full description of participants' experiences and understand cultural norms (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Triangulated data gathering methods (e.g., observations, interviews, and artifact collection) provided opportunities to identify meaning and to make recommendations for improving institutional policies, programming, recruitment strategies and the retention rate of African-American college first-year students (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The following

four data sources were employed to conduct this case study: interviews, observations, field notes, and the examination of artifacts.

Data Collection

Ethnographic interviews. After gaining institutional review board approval, six formal audio-taped interviews were conducted (three interviews per semester, 60 to 90 minutes each) with the five African-American Christian college students selected for the study. The interview protocol was based upon Astin's (1993) input-environment-outcome model. These interviews retrieved data concerning the students' pre-collegiate background, college experience, and religious involvement (Astin, 1993). Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the subjects in the study.

Participant observations. The field observations protocol provided insight about the meaning spirituality holds for many African-American first-year college students as well as the aspects of belonging to a religious organization or institution that seems to have a significant impact on their lives. Observations were undertaken at their home churches and organizations to observe religious activities (e.g., youth group meetings, concerts, and church services). The premise of the observations was to examine the participants in the environments in which they worshipped and to explore how those institutions supported educational goals.

Church artifacts. Church artifacts such as bulletins, flyers, and programs were collected from the observation sites. These artifacts assisted in providing a context for the students' college and spiritual experience over the nine-month study period. A critical reading of the materials was important in establishing the culture and description of Christian identification and its institutions of worship (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Data analysis. All interviews were transcribed into text documents, in view of the main analytic task of establishing patterns and regularities. Transcripts, field notes, recordings and other artifacts were analyzed for both concurrent themes and disconfirming instances. Multiple opportunities for triangulation in this study were utilized to obtain and compare information about phenomena and explore research questions (religious artifacts, observations, and interviews). The constant comparative method assisted in the coding, categorizing, and the theory development process. The study did not attempt to derive conclusive statements about all minority students and all PWIs; rather, it focused on the stories of five African-American Christian students.

Findings

Analysis of the information in narrative form revealed five common, recurring emergent themes: (1) All of the participants of the study stated that their educational and spiritual mentors were from their religious institutions; (2) The students were more involved in religious activities off campus than general activities on campus; (3) The students identified the gospel choir as a critical on-campus organization that did provide them with spiritual and personal support; (4) The students described themselves as being part of the "holy hip-hop generation" (consequently, the generational term "millennial" (Kitwana, 2002) did not adequately provide description of this population of college students); and (5) The students attributed their persistence in college to their spiritual beliefs and church involvement. The remainder of this article further discusses the final theme.

Mattis & Jagers (2001) stated that religious and spiritual experiences and socialization are manifested through affect, cognition, and behaviors, and the outcomes of those relationships were included here. The five students indicated that the church provided support in three areas: scholarships, academic assistance, and mentoring/personal counseling.

As one student in the study acknowledged, the scholarship he received from his church as a support factor helped him “make it through college,” compensating for the lack of financial support from his parents and family members. In terms of academic assistance, the churches also provided a number of initiatives for students enrolled in college that contributed to their confidence that they would continue their degree programs to completion. Many of the students in this study discussed the tutorial assistance and the awards they received for academic achievement from their churches. Finally, the students mentioned several ways in which their churches had helped them see college attendance as an attainable goal through college preparation workshops, college tours, and guest speakers. All of the students indicated that they preferred to speak to their mentors at church rather than speak to someone at the college when problems arose. One student admitted that it was easier to discuss issues with those who could “pray for you” than with those at the college. Forms of encouragement (phone or e-mail contact), care packages, and visits from church mentors were appreciated by students in this study.

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Schlossberg (1989) observed that students must feel as if they “matter” on a college campus and Fleming (1984) stated that a supportive community is essential in the development of successful African-American college students. In addition, Jacoby’s (1991) findings indicated that minority students who perceived their campuses as unfriendly were more likely to drop out than those who did not. Typically, HBCUs provide a more supportive environment for African-American students than PWIs, leading them to report more positive experiences there (Allen, 1991; Fleming, 1984). Based on the results of the National Study of Black College Students, Davis (1991) concluded that Black students on Black campuses are more satisfied with their college experiences than are their Black peers at PWIs, adding, “It is clear that on Black campuses Black students are exposed to caring and supportive institutional settings that foster psychological well-being and the positive direction necessary for learning” (p. 157).

Since there is a relative lack of Black role models and support systems on the typical PWI campus, the students in this study revealed the church as a critical factor in their success in college and holistic growth. The study’s specific findings affirmed the need for more research designed to acknowledge and understand the role of the church as a support system in the lives of first-year African-American college students. Such research could be extremely helpful in expanding emerging student development and retention theories and, in turn, making such changes might be necessary and practical to improve the retention and graduation rates.

Williams and Dixie (2003) described the new, hip-hop generation as wanting something more out of church; they believed that millennial college students sought “a worship experience that reflected their energy and vitality rather than what they

regarded as the often cold, lifeless congregations of their parents” (p. 291). Further, “the interests of today’s youth have crept into Black Christian worship” (p. 291). Evidence from the literature review and the findings of this study confirm that there is lack of denominational loyalty and a decrease in church attendance during the first-year students. However, participants find the church to be an invaluable resource. The participants in this study suggested the following attributes of churches that successfully supported and ministered to college students.

- A Bible class exclusively for college students, with a college-educated minister who makes the Word clear, and sound spiritual teachings so that I may be able to make it in college and in life.
- Mentors who have successfully completed college.
- A scholarship program for financial support.
- [A way to] make sure students are grounded in God before they leave for college by preparing them spiritually while they are in elementary school and high school growing up in the church.
- A van [that] will come to campus and pick students up.
- Special programs where college students can fellowship together.
- Don’t expect students to be in every service.
- Accept us the way we are [clothes, language, and music].
- If you can do anything, love. Embrace us. Be real with us.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations associated with this study. The purposeful sampling technique used for this research project limited generalizability. The intent here was to obtain in-depth information, or rich data in Denzin’s (2000) terms, on a particular group of five African-American Christian students at a predominantly White, urban, public institution. It is unknown whether the same findings could be found among African-American students at a predominantly Black institution, at a private college, in a rural setting, or at a religiously affiliated college. Another limitation was the fact that this study examined the role of religion and spirituality in the lives of first-year students without examining other students of the college population, such as students from the sophomore class, junior class, senior class, or graduate school.

Recommendations for Future Research

The participants’ responses suggest some additional avenues to explore in terms of examining social support systems that might retain (as well as attract) African-American students. Overall it seems prudent to explore the possibility that churches and ministers form partnerships with institutions of higher education to provide spiritual, personal, and financial support for first-year college students. Religious institutions and colleges should work together to support the educational endeavors of college students, regarding

each other as partners rather than adversaries. For example, community churches could be a great resource for recruitment and outreach.

Retention strategists believe that integrating a student into the life of the campus strengthens that student's commitment and involvement on campus, which, in turn, leads to retention (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993). Several noted researchers have found that the more academically and socially involved an individual is, and the more interaction there is with other students and faculty, the more likely that student is to persist (e.g., Astin, 1984; Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). This research study suggests that involvement for the African-American student is different from that of other students, in a way that makes it possible to improve retention percentages. Black spirituality and religious involvement, historically a survival and coping method for African-Americans, can be effectively encouraged throughout college (Herndon, 2003; D. L. Stewart, 2002) by recognizing that students who feel comfortable with a religious component in their college experiences find that this combination leads to powerful learning (Light, 2001).

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Residential Learning Communities: Facilitating Seamless Learning

By Polly Graham

Abstract

Research has shown that residential learning communities positively affect student outcomes. This study looked at the literature, finding a basis for this trend and uncovering the current impact residential learning communities are having on higher education. This study sought to challenge Christian higher education administrators and faculty to consider whether residential learning communities fit within their institution's mission and vision.

Introduction

The idea of learning communities is not a new one; in fact, it dates back almost 100 years to Alexander Meiklejohn and his "Experimental College" which began at the University of Wisconsin in the 1920s. The goal of the "Experimental College" was to create a seamless living and learning environment—an aspiration that continues for many of today's universities (Stassen, 2003). Meiklejohn's "Experimental College" was created as a reaction to the "increased disciplinary specialization and fragmentation of the undergraduate curriculum" and was designed to "facilitate faculty-student interaction" (Stassen, 2003, p. 581). The revival of Meiklejohn's initiative began in the 1980s when a series of reports surfaced criticizing American higher education. For example, the Involvement in Learning report called for more student involvement, and in 1987 the Carnegie Foundation lamented the "loss of community and common purpose in higher education" (Ebbers & Lenning, 1999, n.p.).

In part as a result of the criticism, the learning community movement was launched. As Larry Ebbers and Oscar Lenning (1999) testify, the movement was propelled by many other occurrences: the founding of the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education in 1985; the publication of a Jossey-Bass New Directions source book on learning communities in 1998; the research studies on learning communities conducted by Vincent Tinto and his colleagues at the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment in 1994; and the funding for development of learning communities provided by FIPSE in 1994. The nationwide attention to this issue prompted higher education to react. In the search for a response, higher education looked to the current research. Research from Tinto and Alexander Astin concluded that student success is linked (among many other factors) to social and academic integration (Stassen, 2003). Thus, the learning community emerged as one of the answers to higher education's problems.

Residential Learning Community Defined

Learning communities can take many different forms, one being residential. Residential learning environments bring academics into the residence halls. As Howard Schein explains, “These programs usually have a developmental underpinning, they frequently incorporate academic themes or courses, and they frequently are structured in response to their campus’s specific needs” (2005, p. 3). They also emphasize team (interdisciplinary) and thematic teaching. Social networking among students is an intended result of these communities which provide “mutually supportive learning environments, where friends can seek help from one another or encourage each other to go to classes” (Klein, 2000, p. 14).

A concrete definition of residential learning communities can be found in looking at specific examples. One such example is Chapman Community, which is housed on the campus of Bowling Green University in Ohio. It houses 300 students, four classrooms, 18 faculty offices, an art studio, recreation and study rooms, and a café and library (Klein, 2006). Each student enrolls in at least one general education course and a one-hour field experience course with a resident faculty member. “This structure... is designed to maximize collaborative relationships by offering ample opportunities for study groups and other forms of communal gatherings, support, and enrichment” (Klein, 2006, p.24). While the faculty do not live in the residence hall, they teach classes and have their offices on site (Klein, 2000).

Another example of a residential learning community can be found at Auburn University. At Auburn, first-year students who are enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts, the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, or the College of Sciences and Mathematics have the opportunity to live in the same residence hall and co-register for required classes. The students are housed in a co-ed residence hall where they have the opportunity to make friends and find study partners. However, unlike Chapman, faculty personnel do not have offices within the hall (Living and living-learning communities, 2007).

Further examples of residential learning communities can be found nationwide. While each institution tailors its learning community to fit its needs, the focus of each is to respond to the concern of student learning. Other institutions with commendable residential learning communities include Earlham, Stanford, Michigan State, and Maryland (Ebbers and Lenning, 1999).

Are Residential Learning Communities Really Needed?

Currently in higher education, the most prevalent model of teaching has its roots in Germany. As Thomas Klein (2000) explains, “The learning community, and especially its fullest realization in the residential variation, represents a change in kind, not just degree, from the standard cafeteria model of education inherited from the nineteenth-century German research university” (p. 13). The “cafeteria model” has its weaknesses, namely the lack of student involvement. As Tinto (2000) pinpoints, “The experience of learning in higher education is, for most students, still very much a spectator sport. In most learning situations, faculty talk dominates and there are few active student participants” (p. 1). Thus, lack of student participation in the learning process is one weakness of the prevailing learning model.

There is also a lack of cohesiveness in the current model—content is not connected between different courses nor are peers consistent in different courses (Tinto, 2000). As Ebbers and Lenning highlight, “Students often experience learning in an isolated, fragmented manner” (1999, n.p.). This is especially concerning since current research supports that students learn best when they are “interdependently engage[d] with the material to be learned, with each other and with lecturers” (Smith & Bath, 2006, p. 276). Therefore, research demonstrates that there is a need for the interconnectedness that residential learning communities can provide.

Residential Learning Communities in the Literature

Educational and Social Benefits

Ebbers and Lenning (1999) conducted a comprehensive assessment of the research on student learning communities. Their assessment did not only address residential learning communities, but also included other types of learning communities such as classroom and curriculum. They found that “well-designed learning communities emphasizing collaborative learning result[ed] in improved GPA, retention, and satisfaction for undergraduate students” (Ebbers & Lenning, 1999, n.p.). They also found that it was not only students who benefited from learning communities, but faculty as well. Faculty benefited from, among other things, viewing their disciplines in a more revealing light, an increase in collegial trust, a sense of satisfaction in their work, and an increase of continuity and integration in the curriculum (Ebbers & Lenning, 1999).

Calvin Smith and Debra Bath (2006) studied learning outcomes at a research university in Australia. Their research was done in response to the growing value that higher education is placing on developing graduate attributes. Their results demonstrated that student learning outcomes should not only be attributed to teaching and program quality. Rather, Smith and Bath (2006) found:

whilst it continues to be appropriate for universities to be concerned with the quality of their teaching and programs, the interactive, social and collaborative aspects of students’ learning experiences, captured in the notion of Learning Community, are also very important determinants of graduate outcomes, and so should be included in the focus of attempts at enhancing the quality of student learning (p. 259).

In other words, institutions should consider creating learning communities, for they have proven to increase the quality of student learning.

Judith Johnson and Stephen Romanoff evaluated a residential learning community at the University of Southern Maine. The program was assessed after its first year to determine how it influenced student satisfaction and learning. Like the previous research, the outcomes were positive (Johnson & Romanoff, 1999). In comparison to the control group, the students were more satisfied with the faculty and more willing to approach them with questions and concerns. The students also had higher grade point averages, earned more credits, and were more satisfied with their college experience than those in the control group. Additionally, the learning community residents appreciated the opportunity to easily make friends and were more likely to

be involved in organized campus activities (Johnson & Romanoff, 1999).

Astin (1993) studied student outcomes and how college environments affected them. While his study did not specifically focus on residential learning communities, his findings support their methods. Astin found that the peer group had the biggest impact on student learning and development, with the faculty influence following as the second most influential. In fact, student-faculty interaction significantly impacted college GPA, degree attainment, graduating with honors, and enrollment in graduate or professional school (Astin, 1993). Thus, according to the findings, the emphasis that many residential learning communities put on faculty-student interaction is a significant factor in student success.

Research has proven that it is not only student learning that is positively impacted by living in a residential learning community, but also social behaviors such as drinking. Caitilyn Allen, Aaron Brower, and Chris Golde (2003) found “a significant decrease in alcohol abuse and its associated problems among students in planned residential LCs” (p. 149). In this case, it was the learning communities’ culture that provided the stimulus for change. Students had positive expectations for their interaction with each other, causing responsibility for behavior to develop within the community. Most notably, this responsibility developed “even when there was no explicit programming to counter alcohol use or misuse” (Allen, Brower, & Golde, 2003, p. 149). They noted that the disconnect between in-class life and out-of-class life can cause students to feel lonely or insignificant. These feelings lead many students to bond through the misuse of alcohol. However, the residential learning communities provided an alternative that was both socially and academically satisfying.

Financial Restrictions

While the previously mentioned studies focus primarily on complex models of residential learning communities, the reality is that these are not financially viable options for many universities; thus, that begs the question—do less involved residential learning communities have positive impacts as well? Martha Stassen (2003) conducted research on three different models of residential learning communities, each with a different mission and structure. She found:

Even in the least coordinated, most basic, learning community model, students show more positive outcomes (first semester GPA, retention, first-year experience) than nonlearning community students. The fact that simple structures that facilitate student interaction around academic work (even without coordinated faculty involvement) have a positive effect for students of all preparation levels provides encouragement to campus leaders with limited resources who are working to develop methods for improving the undergraduate educational experience on their campuses (p. 581).

Hence, a simple model is better than no model at all.

Challenges and Questions

While much research supports the benefits of residential learning communities, there are still those who question its conclusive effectiveness. Stassen (2003) identifies one weakness of students living in learning communities is that they “report few opportunities to interact with peers of a different race or ethnicity” (p. 607). She notes that this is due to the lack of diversity in learning community enrollments, and institutions need to find a way to prevent this problem (Stassen, 2003). Deron Boyles and Susan Talburt (2005) also challenge learning communities by assessing them through three lenses: (1) nostalgic legacies providing historical justification, (2) normative assumptions, and (3) their and their students’ experiences living in an LC. They conclude with three warnings. First, institutions should carefully assess which students would best benefit from living in a learning community as opposed to marketing them to all. Second, institutions should carefully consider the viability of administrative centralization of learning communities (especially when considering courses offered and their requirements). Finally, institutions need to be aware of what historical traces are affecting their learning community (Boyles & Talburt, 2005). They conclude by cautioning, “If FLCs [freshman learning communities] are to continue to proliferate nationally, educators must attend to the nuances of the assumptions underlying them, their potential effects on faculty and students, and ultimately FLCs themselves as democratic learning communities” (Boyles & Talburt, 2005, p. 233).

Questions and Considerations for Christian Higher Education

1. *Does a residential learning community fit within the mission and culture of your university?* Adrianna Kezar and Peter Eckel (2002) noted that a university should consider its culture before implementing large-scale changes. This points to the need for administrators to consider if a residential learning community is congruent with their institution’s culture prior to implementation, and, if so, determining what type or form of a residential learning community would be the best fit.
2. *How can you best get faculty and other stakeholders on board?* Benjamin Kulpa from George Fox University noted the importance of the Provost in gaining faculty support (personal communication, January 16, 2008). Residential learning communities illustrate a seamless learning environment and require a high level of collaboration between academic and student affairs.
3. *What financial issues need to be considered?* Karla Cunningham from Butler University explained the increase financial commitment residential learning communities require (personal communication, January 17, 2008). There are many issues to be considered, such as facilities,—not only adjustments to structure but also losing potential revenue-generating space—programming, stipends for faculty, meal plans, etc.

Even with these issues to consider, it is clear that residential learning communities have the capacity to positively impact student learning. With the rise in accountability in higher education, institutions need to find answers as to how to improve students' learning. As the majority of the research testifies, residential learning communities are a favorable option. It has only taken a century, but Meiklejohn's idea is finally beginning to take hold.

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Assessment of Living-learning Communities: Models for Campus Collaboration

By Anita Henck and Jeff Jones

Introduction

Higher education – an environment renowned for autonomy and specialization – is increasingly becoming a culture of collaboration (Doz, 1996; Kezar, 2001; Kezar, 2005; Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). While campus collaborations have historically been interdisciplinary academic programs, present-day partnerships have expanded across academic and administrative lines. Today's campus collaborations often include the combined efforts of academic affairs and student affairs professionals in the development of student living-learning communities.

Historically, institutions of higher education prepared students by creating learning environments—classrooms and lecture halls—where information was passed from instructor to students who were in a passive mode; motivation for participation being provided through competition among students. That autonomous learning environment is no longer the ideal preparation for students who are preparing to function in the knowledge economy of the 21st century. Rather than being mere spectators, students must be able to work collaboratively with peers and faculty members.

Thus, the emphasis on both the student's learned body of knowledge and their acquired interpersonal collaborative skills presents important new assessment challenges for student affairs and academic affairs practitioners alike. This is complicated by the distinctly different cultures of academic affairs and student affairs and their varied approaches to assessment.

This paper will identify key theoretical components of campus living-learning communities, review assessment measures common to academic and student affairs arenas, and report on new approaches to the assessment of the impact living-learning communities have on student outcomes.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical basis for living-learning communities is rooted in Astin's (1996) work on the importance of student involvement in the learning process. Involvement theory takes a student-focused view, rather than a faculty- or curriculum-based view of learning. Astin (1996) conducted a longitudinal study that followed first-year students through four years of college to measure involvement. Measuring 57 characteristics of student involvement, the study found that the three most powerful variables were academic involvement, faculty involvement, and peer involvement—all of which living-learning programs attempt to increase. The study also found that a peer group was the strongest source of influence on students. Astin concluded that a student's interaction with peers involved him or her in the process of education more intensely than did other influences.

Involvement theory takes a student-focused view rather than a faculty- or curriculum-based view of learning. Astin contends that learning comes not so much from what is

taught, but the state of the student being taught. Astin (1984) encourages faculty to focus on “how motivated the student is and how much time and energy the student devotes to the process of learning” (p. 301). This view takes the focus off of the curriculum and onto the student’s learning.

In addition to Astin, Tinto (2000) finds particular significance in the interaction between the classroom and the out-of-classroom environment. Tinto (2000) calls for a seamless learning environment in which learning is constructed beyond the classroom. In these environments, “social and academic life are interwoven and social communities *emerge* out of academic activities that take place within the more limited academic sphere of the classroom, a sphere of activities that is necessarily also social in character” (p. 91). The importance of creating communities where students can integrate their social and academic lives is a key aspect of Tinto’s theory.

Tinto (1997) attempted to understand the effect of peer interaction within the classroom environment. By studying learning communities, Tinto measured the effect of peer interaction on student learning. The study found that learning communities helped integrate students into both the social and academic dimensions of college life. The role that peer support plays in that adjustment is important, both inside and outside of the classroom. The application of living-learning communities draws heavily on Tinto and Astin’s theories.

Living-learning communities have been found as an effective bridge to holistically connect the students to the rich social capital networks of peers and faculty. Through collaborative interaction, solid academic gains are often seen. For example, Pascarella, Terenzini, and Blimling (1994) found that students involved in living-learning communities had higher levels of persistence, academic performance, and engagement with faculty.

More recent research by Engstrom and Tinto (2007) of academically under-prepared students continues to validate these findings. A major conclusion from the study relates to the importance of clear connections between student services and the academic component of college. Engstrom and Tinto contend that providing students access to college without providing proper support is not adequate for student success. Instead, institutions must be willing to restructure in ways that proactively provide support services to students. The implementation of such a living-learning program requires a high degree of commitment from the organization and an exceptionally collaborative relationship among student affairs and academic affairs.

Assessment Methods

The continued call for assessment in higher education results in the need for measurable outcomes, as well as data to document these outcomes (Inkelas, Vogt, Longerbeam, Owen, & Johnson, 2006). The value of the program to the institution can be established through the assessment process. But the challenge is rooted in the distinctive differences between the cultures and assessment systems of academic affairs and student affairs. Typically, academic affairs focuses on learning outcomes and student affairs focuses on social outcomes and student satisfaction.

To determine the impact of living-learning communities, Stassen (2003) developed an instrument that measures the experience of students during their first semester

in learning communities. One component measures a student's social experiences at the institution; it questions the amount of institutional commitment the student experiences. This relates to whether the student feels a sense of community and has an overall positive experience at the institution. The social experiences instrument also considers a student's exposure to diversity during the program. These questions include exposure to ethnic diversity as well as contact with individuals with different values. Examining a student's social experiences helps clarify the extent to which learning communities increase persistence and challenge the student's deep-set and pre-existing notions about differing ethnicities and values.

Stassen's assessment instrument also looks at indicators that point to students becoming more integrated into the academic life of the institution. These measures include the extent to which students collaborate with their peers on academic work. Students are asked if they have had increased interaction with faculty, including deeper conversations about careers and course performance. Improvements in academic engagement and general academic behavior are also measured. These behaviors include being prepared for class, asking questions, participating in discussions outside of class, and displaying academic confidence. In addition, the overall learning environment is explored to understand if the student has mentor-like relationships with faculty and has found personal fulfillment at the institution.

Another assessment, developed for the National Study of Living-Learning Programs, can also be used to analyze living-learning programs (Inkelas *et al.*, 2006). This instrument is distinct in that it not only measures the experiences gained by students in the living-learning communities, but also examines the non-living-learning aspects as well. Inkelas *et al.* are proponents of Astin's (1993) view that other activities, besides those associated with a particular outcome, must also be measured in order to accurately understand the result of a specific program. As a result of this view, the assessment measure considers the effect of both living-learning experiences and non-living-learning experiences within two areas—environmental factors and learning outcomes.

In trying to understand how the college environment integrates into the life of students, the assessment instrument questions how often students discuss academic related topics and socio-cultural issues with peers. Stassen's approach also addresses this issue, but Inkelas *et al.* stress the depth of the conversations and the likelihood the students spoke about topics that are more common among close friends, such as religious and political views or different lifestyle choices. Similar questions are asked about student relationships with faculty, such as informal contact and deep discussions about ambitions.

The Inkelas *et al.* assessment also addresses the following factors:

- *Environments of residence halls.* These questions include whether the student has taken advantage of workshop, counseling sessions, and study groups.
- *Academic environment present in the residence hall.* This includes the overall value of studying, space available to study, and staff assistance to achieve academic goals.
- *Mixing of ethnically diverse groups.* This examines whether diversity is observed during meals, extracurricular activities, rooming, friendships, and

dating. General areas of trust and respect among different groups are also included.

- *Academic learning outcomes.* A section on critical thinking asks whether the student challenges the ideas presented in class or accepts the professor's views without question, as well as studying the student's ability to internalize the course material and whether the learning experience is enjoyable.
- *Student's deeper cognitive growth.* This relates to the developmental process of traditionally-aged college students with regard to individualization (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). These questions seek to understand whether the students have grown in their self-confidence and in their ability to appreciate differences.

Each of these assessment measures provides a way to show empirical evidence of the value of living-learning communities. The process of assessment can enable the whole institution to view the effectiveness of the program and provide validation. By considering the outcomes of the living-learning programs, student affairs is better able to show how they positively affect multiple aspects of the institution.

Conclusion

Living-learning communities have much to offer higher education and the students they serve. The research is becoming increasingly clear that these collaborative approaches are beneficial to students both academically and socially. The assessment measures presented can provide a means of bridging the dissimilar cultures of student affairs and academic affairs practitioners. Such collaborative ventures can be complicated, particularly because of different approaches of sub-cultures within the institution. Yet the shared goal of student learning and success make the collaboration worthwhile.

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Student Affairs Reconsidered: A Look Back, a response to Barry Loy

By David M. Johnstone

Abstract

On the tenth anniversary of David Guthrie's *Student Affairs: Reconsidered* (SAR), Barry Loy wrote an article entitled: "Student Affairs Reconsidered: A Look Back." He observed, after identifying a number of seminal works, that many in Christian Student Development have not really engaged or grappled with what it means to be an educator outside of the classroom. In letter format, I have chosen to interact with Barry in his observations with the hope that this is a conversation which is not ignored or forgotten by our colleagues. My purpose is not to disagree but continue the conversation which was started a decade ago.

Dear Barry,

Whenever I see you or your name, I am reminded of the time you took me for dinner at a small seafood restaurant near Gordon College some years ago. I greatly appreciated your hospitality. Even though you were interviewing me, the lessons I received from that time have been long-lasting. Subsequently, any time I see one of your articles, I have been intrigued and interested in your observations.

In your recent reflections on the tenth anniversary of David Guthrie's *Student Affairs: Reconsidered* (SAR), you implied (with what I guess was a little sadness) how Christian student development has not really engaged or grappled with what it means to be an educator outside of the classroom. While your lament resonates with me, I would like to provide a response to your observations in the hope that you will expand on your reflections and perhaps others will enter into the conversation as well. This is an exchange which should not be ignored or forgotten. From the tone of your article, I believe you would welcome interaction.

I am particularly intrigued with your concerns because I wonder if there may not be a slight difference (but many similarities) in perspective between the two of us. I have only been in the field for ten years, graduating the year after SAR was published. My relatively short career, in contrast to the veterans who have shaped the tone of student development at their institutions, might provide a place for conversation.

As mentioned before, I graduated from a student development program in 1998, the year after SAR was published. I saw my pursuit of student development as an outcome of God's calling, so I naturally linked it to the world of ministry. However, since those initial days, the notions behind Guthrie's book have increasingly permeated my thinking. In your article, "Student Affairs Reconsidered: A Look Back," you made a number of observations (Loy, 2007). Your purpose was to examine how SAR and other seminal works have been reflected upon by our colleagues. Your observations were drawn from other articles and, I imagine, from your own contacts, relationships and observations. At the end, you carefully put forth some "*speculative observations*" (Loy, 2007, p. 15). I would like to interact with each of your observations.

Ministry:

Your first observation was that many of those within Christian student development still perceive their role as one of “ministry” rather than one of engaging students in “learning.” I would agree that many of our colleagues are ministry-focused, but I would venture to suggest that these perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. I think many of our peers focus on ministry because a college campus requires tremendous pastoral care. I think of my own campus which recently experienced the death of a student in a horrible traffic accident. The care of the campus required the response of the entire student life division, faculty, and community members; not just campus ministries.

Admittedly, there are times we do neglect the educational mission of our campuses by overly focusing on discipleship (sometimes called mentorship). I don’t think ministry and educational imperatives are exclusive of one another. If we particularly broaden education to include experiences outside of the classroom (such as discipleship, wilderness experiences, etc.), learning and ministry come together in a mutually reinforcing way. Those paradigms that challenge us to help students make meaning of all their life experiences are particularly valuable; this is where student development can shine in the educational realm. I believe “meaning making” or giving experiences meaning is an area in which student development easily inhabits; it is an area where learning and ministry mesh together.

Literature:

You went on to mention that many of our colleagues, for a myriad of reasons, do not stay abreast of current literature in our field. I would echo that concern. It saddens me when veterans and rookies alike coast on their own knowledge, and don’t glean the wisdom of the research and reflections of others. If I read a particularly insightful and well-written article, I will pass it on to my colleagues (and vice-versa).

ACSD as an organization has three tools for disseminating information and resources: *Koinonia*, *Growth* and the list-serv. I wonder if the creation of online literature suggestions and reading lists might not be helpful; a short list of ten foundational and exceptional articles or books for those new to the field, with a similar list for those already in the field – particularly for those who desire to keep learning and growing. Beyond the information provided by book reviews found in the association’s journals, a recommended list could be valuable for our colleagues.

Along this same vein, when other websites of our secular counterparts are examined, they are full of resources placed there by their special interest groups, task forces and initiatives. I wonder if ACSD would consider posting the minutes, thoughts and findings of such organizational task forces and study groups which examine diversity, good practices, etc. We hear about these programs once a year, but I imagine many would find their observations helpful and insightful.

Hiring practices:

Your third observation, hiring practices, did cause me to pause. You indicated a concern that many searches place less emphasis “*on professional preparation*” [emphasis

mine] (Loy, 2007, p. 15) than on skills that were relational, spiritual, etc. This is a valid concern which should also be a challenge to those schools who offer graduate programs in student development. As a hiring manager for the past five years, I have had finalists in my pools that have had graduate degrees in student development. While I consider a graduate degree to be a tie breaker, I have also noticed that many of those whom I have hired without a degree demonstrated a greater aptitude to mentor, interact and train students than those candidates with degrees. I believe that those less formally educated can always learn educational paradigms and theories.

In some ways, I also link this concern with a failure to keep up with current literature in the field. I would love to see developed and posted (or printed), a curriculum for those entering the field; something similar to a standardized professional development plan for new professionals. Could a group of veterans in the field develop an informal (but intentional) semester-long curriculum which introduces rookies to foundational paradigms to student learning, community building, discipline and pastoral care? I think this would be helpful.

Attrition & retention:

Continuing, you indicated a concern regarding how many entry-level professionals do not continue in student affairs, but use it as a temporary position on their way to another pursuit. Referring to previous concerns, you truthfully ask the question, “why dig into the professional literature if you are just passing through...” (Loy, 2007, p. 15). In 2001, Skip Trudeau and others observed that there is a “bottleneck” in the world of student development field (p. 13). I believe this bottleneck affects our ability to place a diversity of folks in areas beyond the entrance-level position. It is a reality due to the limited number of open positions at the mid or higher levels. I think we lose many outstanding colleagues because there is no place for them in an institution; often they must move elsewhere or to another field in order to advance. I don’t think this is necessarily negative, but one of the realities that currently exists.

Practitioners & theorists:

“Student life folks are doers.” This is a mantra that is often repeated. We love to think, but we need action and purpose to our thinking. Most of us prefer to live in the bustle of the dining commons and the residence halls, rather than the quiet of our minds and books. I don’t believe this demonstrates a lack of intellectual discipline, merely a reflection of interest, aptitude or time.

I have also noticed that many of my colleagues (even those formally educated) do not really see themselves fitting into many learning, developmental, and faith theories. Taking time to reflect and envision the application of these theories, we may be surprisingly affirmed by what is being done in our areas. While we may not be intentionally aware of Chickering’s or Fowler’s theories, it is not too difficult to place many of our programs into those grids. The further challenge is that often these theories become part of their ethos or the lens by which we plan or design our approaches to the co-curriculum.

More and more, I find that simple (not simplistic) paradigms work the best for my higher education contexts. For example, Jim Mannoia's paedagogical paradigm of learning has a strong focus on the impact of models and community on college students (Mannoia, 2000, p. 81-90). His paradigm makes sense intuitively and intellectually (at least for me). It makes sense in what and how I engage in my role as an educator.

As an aside on this topic of educational and developmental theories, some years ago I was conversing with the provost of a leading Christian liberal arts university. She was cautioning me about assuming that faculty members were trained in paedagogical or developmental theories. While they were extremely well educated in their disciplines, they were not necessarily formally trained to be educators. This comment caught me off guard, but it was a helpful observation.

Some other observations:

While our colleagues might not necessarily acknowledge their indebtedness or recognize the literature you highlighted, I have observed our colleagues demonstrate (in literature, conversations, electronic discussions, program development) a sense that learning is and needs to be purposeful (Guthrie, 1997, p. 43). They have increasingly acknowledged that it should be seamless, integrated or wholistic (Guthrie, 1997, p. 46), and definitely needs to be multidimensional (Guthrie, 1997, pp. 43-44). I believe this might reflect the unacknowledged (and maybe unrecognized) impact of Guthrie's *SAR* and similar literature. The "under the radar" impact of these foundational works might be more present than we recognize.

I hear younger colleagues not only describing themselves as educators, but truly believing they have a role in the educational mission of their institution. I hope that this fact is encouraging. Yet, I have also noticed some confusion about the roles that they play within their own divisions and departments. Some years ago, an observation was made that certain student life divisions house departments with different focuses or missions. This can create incongruence when different areas seek to provide either a student learning focus, a service-oriented mission or a consumer-based approach to students. The writers of this observation identified that this created some dissonance in the divisions they observed (Smith, 2005, p. 472). I wonder if this is not a common concern with which we all struggle, particularly how those in student life define themselves in relationship to an institution's educational mission.

Final comments:

My purpose in responding to your article is not to counter your observations (because I agree with them), but to create a dialectic which will continue a conversation started ten years ago. Thank you for challenging me, our colleagues, and our peers. Reflections like yours motivate me to make assessments about my own way of pursuing student development.

I appreciate and would echo the final statement of your article; I also hope that—*Soli Deo Gloria*. Thanks Barry.

Sincerely, Dave Johnstone

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The First Year: A Journey of Meaning, Formation, and Substance

A Review Essay by Brad A. Lau

The following review essay examines the texts “Foundations of Christian Thought: Faith, Learning and the Christian Worldview” by Mark Cosgrove; “Gracious Christianity: Living the Love We Profess” by Douglas Jacobsen and Rodney J. Sawatsky; “The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness” by Don Opitz and Derek Melleby; “Str8t@lk: Clear Answers about Today’s Christianity” by Jerry Pattengale; and “Engaging God’s World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living” by Cornelius Plantinga.

We want you to find the deep satisfaction of pursuing your daily labors (for now, primarily attending classes and studying) as service to God. We want you to experience the unending challenge of exalting Christ as Lord of your thinking. We want you to begin now to imagine the application of your learning – your studies and plans and dreams – as an expression of love, or better yet, as a conduit for the love of God (Opitz & Melleby, 2007, p. 11).

These poignant words written to the first-year college student challenges new learners to press deeply into their college experience as a spiritual pursuit. Much has been written about the first-year experience for students. There is little doubt that this year is pivotal for students as they form friendships, develop study habits, learn about themselves, select a major, and develop a vision for the future. Critical questions are asked that begin to shape an individual’s future commitments, goals, and aspirations. What does it mean to live in community? How do I connect my interests and passions with meaningful work? What (or who) will give my life meaning and purpose? Questions such as these are compelling for students on all campuses, but carry a unique character and flavor on Christian campuses.

This essay seeks to examine the approaches taken in five books as they relate to the first year of college. While these books are not all written with the first-year experience in mind and while all are relevant beyond the first year, the focus of this essay will be planted in that early college experience. In particular, what are the unique issues that need to be reflected on by students at Christian colleges and universities? This important question is at the heart of what should draw students to a distinctly Christian educational experience.

Because of the consumer culture in which we live, students (and parents) are “shopping” for the right college and those institutions are certainly marketing themselves to students in a variety of ways. In a recent issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, there was an article about a college in North Carolina that seeks to attract students with ice cream trucks, valet parking, a concierge desk, and a large hot tub in the middle of

campus (Bartlett, 2008). Of course, all institutions hope that the attraction to their respective campus goes beyond the amenities they provide! This is particularly true of Christian campuses that hope to instill a Christ-centered vision that begins in the first year and carries throughout college and beyond.

While the five books reviewed for this essay are very unique in their individual approaches and emphases, there were eight clear themes that emerged (among others) as important and essential components of the student experience in a Christ-centered educational environment. These themes will be explored in the pages that follow as they relate to the first-year student experience.

Academic Engagement and Integration

Clearly, one of the most basic and fundamental challenges for students at any college or university is to be engaged in the learning process. On one level, this is assumed as the primary reason why a student is a student in the first place. However, there is growing concern that students arrive more disengaged than ever. There are multiple “distractions” that take many different forms. Opitz and Melleby (2007) make academic engagement the central theme of their work, *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness*, and an especially important theme for the Christian college student. Academic faithfulness, they argue, is not only possible, but an essential aspect of following Jesus.

In fact, the integration of faith and learning has been a key argument for Christ-centered education for a long time, as well as providing a connection between faith, learning, and *action*. Plantinga (2002) acknowledges this in *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* when he writes, “One way to love God is to know and love God's work. Learning is therefore a *spiritual* calling: properly done, it attaches us to God” (p. xi). Thus learning is attached to faith in strategic and important ways; however, it is also connected with action, a reality that will be discussed more fully later.

The first-year student at a Christian university should begin to develop an appreciation for the breadth and depth of learning as a spiritual activity. As such, academic life is not compartmentalized as a secular activity, but one that is consistent and necessary for the life of faith. Cosgrove (2006) spends a lot of time on issues pertaining to the integration of faith and learning, devoting a whole chapter to the topic and weaving it throughout his book, *Foundations of Christian Thought: Faith, Learning, and the Christian Worldview*. He argues that the Bible and “human, academic subject matter” (p. 38) are both important sources of knowledge and further asserts that “Faith without learning can never be tested for truth, and learning without faith assumptions tends to study the trivial” (p. 48).

In discussing academic engagement, all of the books reviewed noted the importance of reading and studying works with which one might not always agree. Faith and learning is not just about reading books written from a Christian or faith perspective. In fact, to paraphrase Augustine and quoting Arthur Holmes (1975) “all truth is God's truth” (p. 17). Pattengale (2004) in *Str8 T@lk: Clear Answers about Today's Christianity* has the most skeptical and cautionary attitude toward the life of the mind and its limits. He notes that “In many cases you will find that the greater the mind, the greater the possibility for error (embedded in skillful communication and deceptively attractive

falsehoods)” (p. 25). As such, there was a slightly anti-intellectual flavor in Pattengale that is reminiscent of old-style evangelicalism.

Clearly, a vibrant Christ-centered education will ask important questions and seek out truth where it can be found. This integrative work should be introduced in pivotal ways during the first year of college and modeled throughout the Christian university educational experience. The pursuit of truth should not be characterized by rigid dogmatism. Neither should a Christ-centered education deconstruct without a corresponding effort to reconstruct a framework that will lead to coherence between life, learning, and faith. It is to this important topic that we now turn.

A Christian Worldview

Another key theme in the books reviewed related to the formation of a worldview to frame all of life. This language was especially characteristic of those books written from a more Reformed perspective, including Cosgrove (2006), Plantinga (2002), and Opitz & Melleby (2007). Pattengale (2004), and Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) in their book *Gracious Christianity: Living the Love we Profess*, tend to use different language but express some of the same guiding principles. For example, Jacobsen and Sawatsky emphasize grace as the central theme of a Christian “worldview” without using the corresponding language. Their argument is that faith should be “fleshed out” in a spirit of graciousness expressed meaningfully in relationships. As such, “faith is a verb, not a noun. Faith is more relational than rational. Especially faith is incarnational” (p. 13).

A Christian worldview places Christ at the center of all of life by understanding and articulating clearly that “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17, TNIV). Opitz and Melleby (2007) acknowledge this when they write that “the yearning for deep meaning and for lasting purpose will never be discovered in the co-curriculum or even in the curriculum itself. The real answer is relational, personal, and more real than anything that can be imagined. The real answer is Jesus Christ” (p. 23). Thus, the framing reality for the first year of college and beyond is how a Christ-centered worldview interacts with and engages other worldviews and speaks meaningfully and holistically to the critical issues of our time, lives, and communities.

Plantinga (2002) offers a compelling discussion of the Christian worldview by organizing his comments around the great theological truths of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation (which he actually calls “vocation in the Kingdom of God”). Several of the books reviewed spend considerable time discussing the hope upon which the Christian worldview rests. Opitz and Melleby (2007) talk about the “already, not yet tension” recognizing that the kingdom of God is here in Christ, but that there is a much fuller reality that is still ahead. While this could have been developed more fully by them, it introduces an important component of worldview. Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) express this in a more nuanced way by stating that the Christian hope is “ultimately about long-term outcomes, not short-term optimism” (p. 115). Plantinga (2002) offers a similar perspective stating that “Christians live by faith in Jesus Christ, and when their faith leans forward toward the coming of the kingdom, they call it hope” (p. xiii).

A Christian Apologetic

A third theme relates to the role of apologetics in Christian higher education. This is connected closely to the previous discussions about academic engagement and the Christian worldview. It is developed to varying degrees in each of the books reviewed as the authors utilize a variety of approaches.

Cosgrove (2006) reads a little like a philosophy text and goes so far as to outline several “tests” of a worldview (and references those “tests” throughout his book). He writes, “By the time readers turn the last page of this book, they should have a well-built foundation for thinking ‘Christianly’ about their lives and culture. The Christian mind is needed in a world that tends to label people of faith as those who have kissed their brains good-bye” (p. 10). He goes on to state his apologetic even more clearly: “To defend our faith, we need to show that our worldview is superior rationally, morally, and existentially to any alternative system of belief” (p. 26).

Moving in a different direction than Cosgrove, Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) argue convincingly for a winsome faith that will be centered on Christ’s gracious work in our lives and lived out in grace toward others. Thus, our greatest apologetic is the way we live, and not solely what we believe. This truth is stressed by all the authors, though with different emphases.

One of the most interesting related themes played out in the various approaches had to do with one’s understanding of modernism and postmodernism. Pattengale’s (2004) emphasis is on *answers* as shown even through the title of his book, *Str8talk: Clear Answers about Today’s Christianity* (emphasis mine). The cover portrays a fairly postmodern look and feel as does his effective use of story throughout. However, the majority of the content is clearly written from a more rational, modern framework. In fact, Pattengale writes, “Years from now, when my personal stories are a bit dated, the key doctrines represented in this text will still be current. The Scriptures and their applications are solid for all generations” (p. 193). However, he goes on to affirm this truth that core doctrines don’t change “even if presented in the wrappings of the early ‘80s” (p. 193). While one may understand and agree with what he intends to communicate, it is difficult to comprehend why you would not seek to package Biblical material in a way that is culturally relevant and speaks to the student of today. Every missionary has to take this approach if he or she is to be effective in extending the Gospel message cross-culturally. These cross-cultural communication principles should be applied to college work as well.

While Cosgrove (2006) is less obvious in this regard and provides a helpful chapter on modernism and postmodernism, he is too dismissive of the latter and fails to recognize its contributions (while appropriately recognizing its limitations). Opitz and Melleby (2007) are more balanced in their approach, acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of both modernism and postmodernism as accounting for “aspects of reality, but not the whole of reality” (p. 63). First-year students at Christian colleges and universities need a Christian apologetic and worldview that is both relational and rational.

Social Justice and *Shalom*

A fourth significant theme has to do with the notion of *shalom* and social justice. Plantinga (2002) provides an excellent definition of Biblical *shalom* writing:

In the Bible, *shalom* means universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, all under the arch of God’s love. *Shalom*, in other words, is the way things are supposed to be (p. 15).

The clarion call for the Christian college student, then, is to work diligently toward the “ought.” The fact is that “Our imaginations need to be liberated from status quo aspirations and dreams of self-fulfillment. We need to look beyond the way things are toward the way things may be” (Opitz & Melleby, 2007, p. 93). Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) further affirm this by noting that “Christians are called to holy impatience in their efforts to promote peace, righteousness, and justice” (p. 119). Certainly, this call to social justice resonates strongly with today’s college students, whether Christian or not. However, framing this desire as an essential expression of genuine Christian faith and commitment is an important task for the Christ-centered institution.

Both Plantinga (2002) and Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) articulate a strong passion for social justice from very different theological traditions. The former writes convincingly for a Reformed perspective while the latter do so from their “Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan” roots. In fact, Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) affirm that it is out of their tradition that they “are committed to peace as a gospel imperative, to faith as necessarily lived in community, to the importance of a personal relationship with Christ, and to a spirituality that emphasizes justice and ethical decision making” (p. 25).

Further, a truly integrated approach to Christian education will ask important questions, open dialogue about significant societal issues, and express itself actively as Christ’s hands and feet in a fallen world. This means that our students should not blindly follow the prevailing notions of our culture or even the Christian community, but should seek to exercise what Opitz and Melleby (2007) call “third way thinking” (p. 88) which seeks simply to be faithful to God’s call on our lives and communities. They articulate this well by writing:

Instead, we live each day enjoying the blessings of the gospel and pursuing the hope that has been revealed. We live to see the international reach of the gospel, to imagine local economic development programs, to protect biodiversity from environmental contamination, to nurture loving families and churches, and to enjoy the arts in full bloom of color and sound and movement (p. 78).

A perspective informed by and centered in *shalom* will also have an appropriate humility that should characterize Christ followers as it did and does our Master Teacher. Each of the books reviewed noted the importance of this central Christian virtue in the life of faith. The first-year student will benefit greatly from seeing this modeled both inside and outside the classroom. While a little incongruous with some of his other remarks, Cosgrove (2006) goes so far as to say that “humility of knowing should be the trademark of true knowledge” (p. 164). This is an essential mark of those seeking to pattern their lives after Christ!

A Moral Compass

Another theme is grounded in living as morally responsible beings. The reality and pervasiveness of sin in our world is easily recognized and a person does not need to search too long before finding many examples to prove it! While a little cliché in discussing the topic, Pattengale (2004) dedicates an entire chapter to Christian morality and sexuality and encourages students (and others) to “live in a manner that promotes a consistency between what we do in private . . . and our public persona” (p. 83). Unfortunately, while providing many helpful insights, Pattengale tends to be too black and white in his presentation and some of the material may be better for a high school rather than college audience.

Jacobsen and Sawatsky’s (2006) emphasis, on the other hand, is on grace as the controlling paradigm for morality. At times, they do make clarifying statements so that they are not misunderstood as antinomians. For example, they acknowledge that “While the Spirit enhances life, the Spirit does not sanction everything we want to do. Yielding to the Spirit does involve putting some limits on our wants and desires” (p. 81).

It is a good thing that each writer goes beyond the obvious and external measures of morality (sexuality, for example) to discuss broader virtues and beliefs that define the Christian commitment (e.g., honesty, compassion, forgiveness). The Christian student has experienced the transforming work of Christ which should be “fleshed out” in tangible ways as they live out their faith commitments. This is a central and important conversation in the first year of college.

Vocation

A sixth theme has to do with one of the most significant discussions introduced during the first year of college. Seeking to know and understand one’s calling is a key developmental task that can be framed in a number of different ways. Frankly, the treatment of this topic by most of the books under consideration is more cursory than it should have been. Opitz and Melleby (2007) discuss the interplay between work and leisure and the pursuit of vocation, but only briefly. Cosgrove has a great discussion of worldviews, but fails to connect that discussion with relationship and passion. Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) touch on this theme periodically. However, they fail to do so in a holistic and consistent manner. While issues related to vocation were not intended as a key theme by any of these authors, they are certainly important to the first-year experience.

Pattengale (2004) offered some good insights into this area by writing that,

. . . a calling involves a clear sense of being commissioned by God for some task. It is your pursuit of the sovereignty of God over who you are and what you are doing with your life. It is the sense that God’s hand is on you and that he has a sense of genuine pleasure in what you are doing (Pattengale, p. 118).

Embedded in this statement are many notions that are helpful for the first-year student as he or she begins to identify passions and interests and identify how those intersect with life, relationships, career, and faith.

Plantinga (2002) provides the best discussion of vocation as it relates to God's Kingdom priorities by devoting an entire section to the topic. His treatment is fairly comprehensive and seeks to align personal priorities and passions with Kingdom priorities and passions, a fundamental alignment for the committed Christ follower. In fact, he offers the following illustration of a person with a genuine sense of calling:

In her best moods she longs not just for happiness, but for joy; not just for joy, but for God; not just for God, but also for the kingdom of God. Because of her enthusiasm for the kingdom, she doesn't merely endorse justice in the world; she hungers and works for it. She doesn't merely reject cruelty; she hates and fights it. She wants God to make things right in the world, and she wants to enroll in God's project as if it were her own. She 'strives first for the kingdom' in order to act on her passion (p. 108).

The Compelling Nature of "Story" and Community

A seventh theme relevant to the first-year experience has to do with the power of story and creating meaningful connections with others. The Christian story is presented in various ways as it undergirds the individual search for meaning and significance. Cosgrove (2006) writes, "Christianity says that life is not a series of disconnected moments but is a whole story and our lives and sufferings fit into the whole of the drama in an important way" (p. 173). Our lives are a part of "the Grand Story" of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation that was discussed previously. The heart of discipleship is loving God and loving others as we live out our lives. Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) repeat this core truth many times throughout their book as the defining principle for one's life and relationships. Opitz and Melleby (2007) provide numerous Biblical and personal stories and Pattengale (2004) begins each chapter with a poignant story to launch further conversation.

The notion of connection with others in community is also increasingly important in the "wired world" of college students and is noted frequently by these authors. According to Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006), this fundamental reality of love in community is rooted in the "doctrine of the Trinity [which is] the defining core of Christian ethics" (p. 36). The power of journeying in community as part of His Story is modeled throughout Scripture, weaving an intricate and complex struggle toward wholeness.

Practical Christian Discipleship

A final theme relevant to the first year has to do with the way the Christian student is encouraged to practice disciplines that are important for spiritual growth and maturation. *Str8t@lk* is clearly written with the goal of practical Christian discipleship covering topics such as evangelism, discipleship, sanctification, prayer, Bible reading, and sexual morality among others (Pattengale, 2004). While sounding a little cliché at times and not providing enough contemporary context and language, Pattengale's treatment of these core principles is helpful and necessary.

Ultimately, a significant part of the purpose of college is to encourage growth in wisdom, discernment, and insight as classes are meaningfully connected to the Christian life and experience. Thus, "[t]he Christian mind is connected to Christian character and action" and is expressed through service, Bible study, prayer and other core disciplines

(Opitz & Melleby, 2007, p. 72). This is a vital connection for college students to make and extends beyond merely “doing” to issues of “being.”

All of us are called to pursue a deeper walk with Christ and be formed “in Him.” A significant theme of the early college experience (and beyond) needs to focus on what this “growth” looks like. Equipping and preparing students for the life of faith needs to move beyond theory to practice in strategic and important ways. This is an essential component of what it means to live in Christian community as colleges facilitate this process of spiritual maturation and encourage spiritual disciplines as central to the life of faith.

Summary

Each of the books reviewed for this essay has unique features that would be particularly helpful tools in using the material with first-year college students. Pattengale (2004) begins each chapter with a story connected to the content for that chapter and also has a section with frequently asked questions and recommended reading and resources for that chapter’s topic. Especially helpful is the section in each chapter that has several questions for reaction and reflection as well as a substantial glossary of Christian terminology at the end of the book. Opitz and Melleby (2007) use very contemporary language and style to present their material and have excellent discussion questions and recommended reading at the end of each of their chapters. They also include a section at the end of the book that contains student responses to the topics under consideration.

While Jacobsen and Sawatsky (2006) do not include tools and supplemental materials in the book itself, they do point the readers to a website (www.graciouschristianity.org) that has ample resources for group study. Cosgrove (2006) includes gray boxes throughout each chapter with significant questions and answers related to the topics being discussed. There is also a section at the end of each chapter listing key terms and their corresponding definitions. At the end of his book, he includes a helpful annotated bibliography for further study and exploration. Plantinga (2002) has an exceptional writing style and includes gray boxes throughout each chapter that highlight significant quotes by notable Christians (and others) throughout history. At the end of the book is a very good section with talking points and questions for discussion.

While the themes presented are certainly not exhaustive, the five books reviewed in this essay contribute meaningfully to conversations that are important during a student’s first year of college. It must be noted again that not all of these books are written purposefully with a narrow “first-year college student” audience in mind. As such, some of the limitations and deficiencies, noted throughout this essay, are referenced from the vantage point of the first-year experience and should not be applied more broadly as pertaining to all audiences. Similarly, it should be noted that there are many other topics not dealt with by these authors that are absolutely essential to the first-year experience. Diversity and inclusion is just one significant example of a topic that could have been addressed more substantially. Ultimately, these authors provide excellent introductory material for the first year of college and a meaningful and significant lifelong journey of faith.

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The Schooled Heart: Moral Formation in American Higher Education

Douglas V. Henry and Michael D. Beaty (Editors); (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007).

Reviewed by D. Andrew Parker and Kimberly S. Parker

A review of the history of American higher education reveals the integral role moral education played in its mission. At the turn of the 20th century, a dichotomy was created between faith and knowledge. As a result, moral formation was marginalized and ultimately displaced from the modern university. As educators today examine the nature and purpose of higher education, many are faced with the question of whether moral education should be recovered and reinstated to the mission of the modern university.

The Schooled Heart: Moral Formation in American Higher Education is directed toward university educators with the purpose of presenting a realistic and intellectually defensible argument for moral formation within the contemporary university. The book is divided into eight chapters or essays, each written by different authors including notables such as Stanley Hauerwas, Warren A. Nord, and Robert C. Roberts. The first four chapters provide reflections on the role of moral education and critiques of current moral education malpractice. The remaining chapters address virtues essential to moral formation within higher education and provide pedagogical strategies that draw upon discipline-specific resources.

Chapter one provides general reasons for the marginalization and discrediting of moral education. The author discusses two historically influential conceptions of liberal education and argues that the study of religion is essential to liberal and moral education in both the public and private university.

Through a reflection on a passage from Plato's *Theaetetus*, chapter two contrasts two types of individuals produced by liberal and technical—or secular—education. Technical education is presented as haphazard while liberal education is lifted up as the standard for which universities should reach. It is claimed that the best vehicle for a liberal education is the Christian university. The author calls for an education that entails a coherent moral framework and the mentoring of students by faculty.

In chapter three, the case is submitted for a return to the capstone course in moral philosophy that was a standard feature in the nineteenth-century liberal arts college. The argument is made that, for moral formation to be recovered by higher education, such a requirement must be implemented in both Christian and secular institutions. In the midst of presenting this case, previous and current approaches to moral formation are critiqued and suggestions for implementing a capstone course are provided.

Chapter four begins with an explanation of how moral formation and the morals originally taught by the Church have been usurped by the state in its desire to create loyalty to itself. Furthermore, the author contends that the attempt by many universities to teach moral formation through ethics courses fails to produce the intended outcome and merely endorses the beliefs students have prior to taking such courses. It is suggested that if the university no longer served the state alone, but rather returned to its intended purpose of serving the church first and the state second, moral formation would occur organically.

Four educational desiderata (wisdom, community, freedom, and truth) are identified and reflected upon in the fifth chapter. Chapter six reverses direction and addresses the concept of *acedia*, its causes, and methods of confronting and overcoming it. *Acedia* is described as “an

expansive indifference toward moral and spiritual excellence due to the conviction that such excellence either does not matter or, even if it does, cannot possibly be attained” (p. 134). The three virtues deemed most important in surmounting *acedia* are hope, courage, and perseverance. Following an examination of these virtues, a proposal is made concerning what moral formation might look like, particularly in Christian colleges and universities.

Chapter seven introduces additional *deliberative virtues* (goodwill, cooperative inquiry, and respectful disagreement) that are best cultivated in an environment of democratic education. The author poses the question of whether a theological virtue, specifically humility, can also be considered a deliberative virtue. Objections to the concept are discussed and the argument is made that humility must not be limited to a theological virtue. Moreover, it is claimed that humility is necessary to foster and sustain the deliberative virtues listed above.

The final chapter continues along the same line of thought and underscores the need for humility in learning. The authors offer detailed accounts of pedagogical strategies used to cultivate humility in students within three specific disciplines: international studies, cognitive psychology, and theology.

The editors’ utilization of various authors, and their occasional differing viewpoints, brilliantly support the book’s concept of moral formation as it affirms critical thinking and opposes indoctrination. However, at the same time, the divergent viewpoints may cause readers difficulty in creating cohesive connections between the chapters. For example, chapter two states that secular institutions are not the right type of vehicle for moral education, while chapter three insists that moral education cannot occur only within Christian colleges due to the small percentage of U.S. students they enroll. Such incongruent ideas disrupt the momentum of the argument and fail to clarify whether moral formation can successfully be carried out within all types of American higher education.

Educators, regardless of their discipline, will find value in the practical strategies provided in chapters five through eight to assist in the moral formation of their students. Additionally, the discussion of *acedia* in chapter six sheds insight on an insidious vice affecting contemporary culture. This discourse allows educators to better understand where their students are coming from so that they can, in turn, be more effective in helping students nurture hope and the right desires in their lives.

As higher education is pushed to become more focused on training and less on education due to various economic and societal pressures, it is all the more imperative for educators to attend to the moral formation of their students. Moral formation assists in developing the whole person, critical thinking, and civic responsibility; three hallmarks of a college-educated person (American College Personnel Association, 1994). Education devoid of moral formation “is not a human education, for it does not fulfill us, does not put us in relation with good, does not give us the most important kind of knowledge, does not give us virtue” (p. 61). Educators have an obligation to create an environment that provides opportunities for such development.

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Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities have given up on the Meaning of Life

Anthony T. Kronman; (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2008).

Reviewed by Leslie C. Poe

What is the purpose of undergraduate education? For many students, education is synonymous with the acquisition of knowledge and skills that set the foundation for a specific vocation. This has not always been so. As Anthony T. Kronman outlines in *Education's End*, the original role of higher education was to prepare students for a life well-lived; a life centered on one thoughtfully answered question: what is meaning of life? While today's students seek their response to this question in sanctuaries and homes, their predecessors also wrestled with it in the classroom, guided by the wisdom of faculty members and the voices of a timeless curriculum. Why has this question disappeared from the lecture halls and conference rooms of our colleges and universities? What are the consequences of its absence? Is there any hope for its restoration?

Kronman answers these questions through five chapters outlining the historical and philosophical changes that have defined the nature of existential education. As professor of law and humanities at Yale University, Kronman's experience confirms his conviction that this epic question can be addressed in the university classroom. In addition, his position affords him the perspective of a faculty member in a devalued, so-called irrelevant discipline that has abdicated its responsibility for addressing this existential question concerning the meaning of life.

According to Kronman, "the lives we actually lead are the more-or-less well-thought-out answers we give to this question" (p. 9). It is a question that can only be answered personally, not suggested by a mentor or dictated by a parent or priest. It is illusive, dominating our thoughts in particular times of life but neglected in others. It is contextual, heavily influenced by where we have been and by the institutions that will outlive us. Our response to it shapes all other aspects of our lives. Kronman illustrates this idea as a reversed pyramid; a Maslow's hierarchy of needs turned upside-down. The foundation of life lies not in our many answers to everyday decisions but in the singular response to the question concerning the meaning of life.

Kronman argues that this question has long been the foundational subject of the college experience. From the early Age of Piety in which young men were guided through the classics by faculty whose ultimate duty was to God, through the attack on this dogmatic assurance in the mid-19th-century, this existential question remained central to the educational mission. Even as religious skepticism and scientific reason began to hold sway, the philosophy of secular humanism allowed the humanities to adapt this existential question—and its possible answers—into a pluralistic appreciation for the range of individuality, still rooted in the great conversation of the classics.

The efforts of secular humanism could not withstand two great threats to this existential question, and it is at this juncture that Kronman's argument becomes particularly interesting. First, he approaches the proliferation of research universities

and the ideals that belay them. Inspired by the German university, reinforced by a growing cultural priority on the sciences, and affirmed by federal actions like the Morrill Act, the American university quickly became a center for specialized discovery of new, applicable information. As quantifiable truth became the standard and progress became the goal, the idea of a great conversation with abstract thinkers of the past suddenly appeared silly, even unprofessional.

Kronman's second great threat, political correctness, found its origin in the mid-20th century. As the Civil Rights movement gained momentum, its demands for equality inevitably confronted an area of society that had traditionally placed minorities at a disadvantage: education. The resulting policy of affirmative action forced universities to recognize diversity as an essential asset to the educational experience. While Kronman does not deny the value of diversity and multiculturalism, he argues that their over-emphasis has hampered the fundamental goals of the liberal education. In his words:

The more a classroom resembles a gathering of delegates speaking on behalf of the groups they represent, the less congenial a place it becomes in which to explore questions of a personally meaningful kind including, above all, the question of what ultimately matters in life and why (p.151).

Kronman describes the diversity of today as a camouflaged return to the dogmatism of the Age of Piety; just as the way of God was the only viable option then, the way of political correctness is the only socially acceptable way of living today.

In addition, as technology dominates our lives and tempts us to deny our mortality and the urgency of life's greatest question, an emptiness results. While many attempt to fill it with family and friends, the church is the most common outlet for those seeking fulfillment. Churches enjoy a near monopoly on the meaning of life, largely because an answer lies at the heart of every religion. Yet Kronman argues that religions—tolerant though some of them may be—ultimately take a decisive stance on the meaning of life, a stance that denies individual choice and demands a "sacrifice of intellect" (p.198). As such, churches too fall short of Kronman's qualifications for guiding life's greatest question.

Kronman's conclusion is that our only hope for restoring the question to our colleges and universities is a return to secular humanism and the ancient conversation of the classics, guided by empowered professors of the humanities. Can this be done in the modern academy? Kronman believes that it can, not by the authority of college presidents or by the vote of faculty senates, but by change within individual teachers—a change in which the authority and sacred responsibility for broaching this existential subject is restored to the lecture, the syllabus, the classroom discussion, the one-on-one conversation. This is Kronman's challenge and hope: that colleges and universities be restored to their position as spiritual leaders in the search for life's meaning.

As a whole, Kronman's argument is well-developed and reminiscent of Parks (2000) and Holmes (1975). Though philosophically based, his style of writing is informal and personal (yet urgent and bold when necessary), making the book enjoyable for even the

most philosophobic reader. The most significant weaknesses in his argument lie in his reliance on anecdotal evidence and in his discussion of diversity (chapter four). Though the heart of his argument can be assumed by the end of the chapter, it is difficult to overlook what appears to be limited, out-of-date thinking. Nevertheless, Kronman should be commended for his boldness in making statements that most in this age of political correctness would shy away from.

The intensity of Kronman's crisis may differ between institutions. The Christian liberal arts university may even assume that it is doing well compared to its peers in secular higher education. That may be, yet Kronman's argument raises some thought-provoking ideas for us as well:

- Are Christian students predisposed to a limited view of life's meaning?
- How can we strike a balance between free exploration of the question and our obligation to our faith tradition?
- How does Scripture fit into the curriculum of the humanities?
- How can we give Godly counsel to our students without answering the question on their behalf?

These questions make *Education's End* a timely addition to the library of any member of the academy. It fortifies our work with students and spurs us on in our personal quests for the meaning of life.

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Excellence Without A Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education.

Harry R. Lewis; (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2006).

Reviewed by Rebecca A. Owen

In the midst of the demands of competing stakeholders, the mission of American higher education has been blurred, confused and redirected. Ivy League schools in all their prestige are no exception, including Harvard, home of Harry R. Lewis, faculty member and former dean. In *Excellence Without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*, Lewis shares his perspective as a faculty member and top level administrator through his thesis that higher education, essentially led by Harvard's example, has lost its sense of identity. Educational institutions are no longer held together by a common mission. They allow competition and consumerism to drive their direction. Such a flimsy state of educational leadership has proven disastrous in the face of challenge and struggle.

To situate his position, Lewis highlights how competition and consumerism have infiltrated the core curriculum. He shows this through assessing the following aspects of the institution: teaching, grading, personal responsibility, and money & students. In the course of serving the consumerism of students, parents, employers and/or the institution itself, each area has fallen from its initially focused purpose of ensuring the development of the undergraduate. Lewis (2006) worries that "Today's consumer culture, in which the college's job is to make its students happy rather than to educate them, threatens the old idea that the disciplinary system should make students into better people" (p. 161). Instead, this cultural perception has shifted systems in the process of higher education to function within parameters of advancement, security and reputation. This movement leaves character development, essential to any career, by the wayside. Naturally, the terrain of the university is lacking when any one area is given more or less attention than is due. This void of character development and other oversights have left institutions lopsided, making for a slippery slope for other schools to follow in an attempt to compensate for, or surrender to, the trends.

Although Lewis writes from the head of secular education in America, his reflections are not strange to the private, religious sector. Faith-based institutions have not been immune to this slippery slope, compromising Christian values in light of a competitive market in education. As focus is dedicated to improving the academic quality to attract students whose primary goal is to stay afloat financially in a tough market, faith development has been understated and separated from the classroom. This core of undergraduate development cannot afford to be limited to a nominal appearance in a mission statement, but must be an integral component of managing people and administering programs both curricular and co-curricular, specifically in the current "tough market" of postmodernism and pluralism.

Throughout his critique of the four areas listed above, Lewis shows how consumerism has driven the mission of teaching from developing the worldview of a student to preparing him or her for a specific career. Lewis cuts through the perception that students simply graduate and get jobs for the rest of their lives. Students need to think

critically about engaging their world and society on a higher level as they navigate diverse careers in an ever-changing market. He rightly believes colleges are training societal trendsetters when he asks, “Will graduates know what to do with their lives, and how to take responsibility for the society they will inherit?” (p. 149). College students are in training to be leaders in their chosen fields of study and will need a philosophical foundation that will hold up through change and innovation. They will need a core understanding of themselves and the world to be effective stewards of their influence in scholarship and society, recognizing that “True freedom is not the freedom to do what one wishes without consequence, but a balance between choice and responsibility, between self and society” (p. 153). As highly educated individuals, American college students have a high calling and tall responsibility to their fellow world citizens.

This noble philosophy of teaching has been distracted by the consumerism of the American society, entitling everyone with an advanced degree to a well-paying job, not a well-rounded perspective. Lewis laments that “This superimposition of economic motivations on ivory-tower themes has exposed a university without a larger sense of educational purpose or a connection to its principal constituents” (pp. 2-3). The university is to “help students understand what it means to be human” (p. 3), and if getting a better paying job is the goal students are allowed to maintain and pursue through their undergraduate education, this philosophy is quickly confused.

Lewis continues his argument that a school’s mission cannot be compromised at the mercy of consumerism—and competition—driven decision making regarding course content and grading. Here, again, Christian institutions need to take leadership in delivering a distinct education. Just as Lewis insists that science (general education) and philosophy (values) cannot be separated or each will surely lose the potential depth of meaning, religious faith and academic matters must be married for cohesive identity development *as well*. While the concept of integration is woven into the rhetoric of Christian institutions, the quality implementation is harder to assess.

This transformation of education becoming more connected demands more comprehensive teaching and honest, qualitative grading habits. Whereas grading was originally employed as a method of notifying a student of his or her progress throughout each term of study, the consumer mentality has progressively infiltrated grading trends because student satisfaction is tied to awarding tenure to faculty. Instead of accurately reporting how students are performing, faculty are more apt to give higher grades to please students and advance their personal teaching careers in the process, thereby diluting their course content and results. Strangely enough, this mentality does not begin in the classroom, but the home, given that “Because students – and their parents – struggle for flawlessness, we do not make them responsible for their mistakes,” (p. 147) which further complicates the matter of expectations. Grade inflation is difficult to cap as students want to see their achievements grow on a scale that is fixed. The result is an overwhelming majority of perceived exceptional students, thus losing the meaning of excellence. In addition, the quality judgments given by grading are compromised and students learn less in a reduced curriculum that further separates content from application. Ultimately, faculty model a lifestyle to students of pursuing promotion and job security rather than the integrity and integration of the educational process.

Although Lewis speaks at length to the problem of grade inflation, he seems to compromise attention to it for what he considers to be more important and influential

issues in higher education such as advising, class size, quality of teaching, and meaningful curriculum (p. 146). Although it is essential to focus on a manageable scope of solutions for a problem to be solved, Lewis largely discredits his entire argument against grade inflation when trying to bring perspective to the problem in his final paragraph in chapter six. Lewis reasons that by resolving grade inflation, the institution may still deliver a severely flawed curriculum using ineffective techniques and environments. For this reason, assessment and reform should be focused on other aspects of the educational process.

However, Lewis does propose a wealth of challenges and solutions in his brief conclusion, arguably the most essential and engaging pages of his book to read. As in most of his arguments, the responsibility of restoring institutions of higher education rests on the faculty. It is this group of stakeholders that needs to hold education to a stronger, higher standard, even and especially in the face of challenge. Imagine with him for a moment if every college syllabus and programming session echoed the centering question, “If we do this, then over the course of four years, what lessons will [students] learn, and will they become better educated?” (p. 263). This question is central to the integrity of the educational institution, but Christian colleges have a subsequent question to ask: How will this transform the way students engage people, institutions and the world for Christ? This question of Christian worldview development is critical for carrying out the mission of Christian higher education.

All in all, Lewis delivers an honest and accurate critique of the current state of higher education and presents fair suggestions to redirect the institution. Ironically, his title speaks of an excellence that has lost its soul. Although his critiques are true and solutions well intending, the trendsetters and world changers he intends to produce through higher education will still have no soul with his diploma. It is the Christian college and the Christian in the college that holds the answer to fully realize education’s potential and purpose. May we take this challenge seriously and lead the way from deeply ingrained dualisms to holistic development of our students.

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Campus Crisis Management: A Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Prevention, Response, and Recovery

Eugene L. Zdziarski II, Norbert W. Dunkel, J. Michael Rollo, & Associates; (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007).

Reviewed by S. Nicole Hoefle

As higher education professionals and faculty members, we are living in a time when our campuses are experiencing unimaginable and horrific criminal acts and natural disasters. These events are forcing us to make policy changes and create crisis management plans within short time periods. *Campus Crisis Management: A Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Prevention, Response, and Recovery* by Eugene L. Zdziarski, Norbert W. Dunkel, J. Michael Rollo, and associates provides guidance to professionals and faculty members as they consider or are in the process of developing a crisis management plan. Tom Ellett, Assistant Vice President of Residential Education at New York University and one of the authors for chapter 11, offers a comment which could serve as the foundational statement for the book: "Crises come in all shapes and sizes and we in student affairs need to be ready and prepared, because expecting the unexpected is now a reality in our society" (p. 272).

The book is sectioned into four parts. Part one defines the concept of crisis management, part two examines the practice of crisis management, part three provides lessons from actual campus crises, and part four offers final thoughts and ideas about the future of campus crisis management.

The authors set the tone of the book by describing a number of crises which have occurred across university campuses in the United States since 1966. From the shooting at the University of Texas in Austin in 1966, to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, real events are outlined to set a tone for what a crisis might look like on campus. These opening accounts allow the reader to expand a vision of a campus crisis beyond a school shooting or natural disaster. The authors describe an airplane crash that killed students who were studying abroad and a bacterial infection that claimed the lives of three university students. They offer a "Crisis Matrix," which is designed to help professionals determine the level of crisis, type of crisis, and the intentionality of the crisis. They describe a five-phase crisis management cycle: planning, prevention, response, recovery, and learning.

In section two, the authors provide a blueprint for coordinating and implementing a crisis management system on campus. Forming a crisis management team, developing a crisis management plan, managing levels of communication, working with emergency personnel and outside agencies, providing first aid, and training crisis team members are suggested activities presented for crisis team leaders. This section provides beneficial and insightful suggestions from faculty members and student affairs administrators who have experienced crisis management at varying levels. The authors detail the steps needed to formulate a crisis management team, develop a crisis management plan, and train crisis management personnel. They note certain skills and abilities that ought to be found within team leaders and team members. They suggest, "The existence of a written crisis management plan is perhaps the single most important crisis management tool a campus

can have” (Zdziarski *et al.*, p. 74). A step-by-step strategy for gathering information, delineating responsibility, maintaining, and distributing the crisis management plan is also included.

A potentially challenging and frustrating aspect of crisis management is identified as working with the local and national media. The various communication outlets that could be used by crisis team members to communicate important information during and after a campus crisis were discussed in chapter five, including siren systems, portable transmission towers, amateur radio emergency systems, and phone books. A four-step crisis communication process to assist team members in working with the local and national media is also presented. To ease the stress of working with the media, these authors suggest within this four-step plan that crisis team members build relationships with members of the media, identify key communication messages, develop a crisis communication team, communicate with community members during and after the crisis, and note lessons learned once the crisis is over.

In the latter part of section two, the chapter authors provide several strategies for working with emergency personnel and outside agencies, suggest ways to attend to the psychological needs of campus community members and crisis team members, and offer unique ideas for training crisis team members. Tips for working with local and federal agencies, a phase model for intervention services, and sample training activities and case study exercises can be found within these chapters as well.

The third section presents lessons learned from crisis management. Each chapter in this section looks at the varying types of crises that can impact a campus community. Environmental crises, crises involving campus facilities, and crises created by individuals are all extensively discussed. The authors of the chapters in this section present several campus crises and offer a brief description of the incident, the agencies and individuals involved, communication and public relations issues, implications, protocol revision, incident effects, and the author notes on the incident. Each chapter ends with questions for reflection and discussion which could serve as a useful training tool for crisis team members.

The fourth and final section of this book addresses some contemporary issues in campus crisis management such as fan behavior and celebratory violence, internet security, missing students, and acts of terrorism. The section ends with a discussion about where crisis team members ought to head in the future as they work to develop their crisis management plans. Debriefing a crisis is discussed in the closing appendix. The author provides a crisis debriefing checklist for crisis team members to utilize when reviewing and discussing an incident.

Faculty members and student affairs administrators are in need of a crisis management book, especially given the state of campus crises today. We live in a time when we must have a plan for addressing and processing campus crises. I believe the authors of this book provide campus administrators and faculty members such a useful tool as they refine, or begin to develop, and later implement their crisis management plans. Unfortunately, we do not have the luxury of time in developing these plans as they ought to have been developed yesterday. The information in this book is quite beneficial but it is presented in a 341-page format. There are a couple of approaches a crisis team leader could take when reading this book and sharing the material with others. He or she could read the entire book and then create a method for sharing the material, or, he

or she could assign sections of the book to be read by crisis team members. The crisis team members could then come together to share what they learned while reading the book. I think this latter approach would be the most beneficial to the individual team members. With this approach, they have the opportunity to review the material and further retain the material as they teach it to other team members.

I recommend that faculty members and campus administrators read this book. It contains actual scenarios, models, discussion questions, and training tips that could help crisis team leaders and members develop and implement a crisis management plan. This book is a needed and beneficial tool for all involved with managing crises on their respective campuses.

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The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens After High School

Tim Clydesdale; (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Reviewed by Donald D. Opitz

I have worked with adult students, graduate students, and undergraduate students, and the biggest challenge I have encountered is getting first-year students to engage in critical reflection about course material. I have redesigned syllabi and experimented with various teaching methods, but I still find it difficult to set the hook with most first-year students (okay, maybe I should not envision them as trout to be caught). To the chagrin of our admissions staff, I have been recommending to high school students and their parents that perhaps college should be postponed at least for a year. While this certainly is not the solution for everyone—and what one does in that “tweener” year is crucial—I have noticed time and time again that the student with some real work and real world experience is several steps ahead of the high school graduate who is simply taking the next step: college.

Tim Clydesdale's book, *The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens After High School*, describes students who are taking the next step. According to Clydesdale, only one out of every ten first-year students is really ready to take advantage of college, and yet most curricula are designed for that ready tenth. What should be done to prepare the other 90% for college and to ensure that they are able to glean some valuable lessons during their first year?

Clydesdale, a sociology professor at The College of New Jersey, conducted field research in a suburban New Jersey high school for a year. He conducted 125 in-depth interviews (90-120 minutes each) with 75 different students that graduated from high school between 1995 and 2003. Data was also collected using a focus group of 12 students discussing relationships and substance abuse and through an open-ended survey of 24 students to explore violence in the wake of the Columbine killings. Several interviews with students from other regions in the country were conducted, and these interviews suggest that the research findings are not unique to these Jersey teens.

Perhaps some of you who work with first-year students have observed the same things that Clydesdale has systematically captured and reported. I thought that I was paying attention, and that I understood student culture, but I was surprised by his findings, learned a great deal about first-year students, and was challenged to consider anew what I could do to respond to their needs. According to Clydesdale, typical first-year students:

- have been “schooled” so much that they are bored in the classroom.
- have been “consumerized” so much they are obsessed with image, fad and status.
- have learned not just suspicion regarding institutions, but cynicism and even contempt.
- believe that higher education is good for upward mobility (getting the good job) and little else (their parents happen to reinforce this same view).

- have locked their identity in a lockbox, so that there is little hope of deep reflection or personal transformation.
- spend their time managing relationships, personal resources, and daily life.
- expect to find fulfillment, satisfaction, and happiness, just like they have been promised by everyone who loves them and by millions of commercials.

College marketing materials announce that these critical years are a dynamic time of change, experimentation, and growth. Clydesdale suggests that this is a myth; at least during the first year. “The first year out, rather than being a time when behavior patterns and life priorities are reexamined and altered, is actually a time when prior patterns and priorities become more deeply habituated” (p. 15). These students focus on getting through the first year successfully: managing their time and money, connecting with their friends, and passing or getting good grades in the right courses. First-year students are not likely to wrestle with significant religious or social or political questions. Most of the students in the study “neither liberated themselves intellectually nor broadened themselves socially during their first year out” (p. 2). Clydesdale reports that “the overwhelming majority of teens [he] studied appeared culturally inoculated against intellectual curiosity and creative engagement” (p. 152).

We should not blame first-year students for their approach to life and learning. Clydesdale sees these patterns not so much as choices but rather as the fruit of a culture. What we are seeing is the fruit of the late-modern American worldview; the patchwork quilt of individualism, pragmatism, and consumerism. On this score, Clydesdale echoes Robert M. Bellah, Richard Marsden, William M. Sullivan, and Ann Swindler’s renowned *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (3rd edition, University of California Press, 2007). He also points out that these students are learning these values *from us*; from adults who embody the very same values (p. 6).

If these students are “culturally inoculated against intellectual curiosity and creative engagement” (p. 152), what is the antidote? Clydesdale does not express much hope for the success of the typical first-year program. Core courses that focus on worldview formation or a broad framework in the humanities may be of interest to the ready tenth, but the other 90% will take little away from such approaches, at least when they are scheduled early in the student’s college experience. Clydesdale suggests that working *with* students, giving attention to their culturally-shaped interests (life management, relationship networks, goal setting), is more likely to win trust, open the identity lockbox, and lay the groundwork for deeper reflection. While Clydesdale does not offer particular suggestions for successful first-year programs (his research is not designed to explore this), successes at various benchmark institutions suggest that these modes of student engagement may help: learning communities, service learning, hands-on field work, adventure and experiential education, gift discernment, and study abroad. Of course each institution will have to craft an approach that fits its own student body, mission, and program resources.

Those of us working in Christian higher education imagine that this first year is a crucial time for faith formation. We believe that faith is troubled and often lost in the secular academy, and that on campuses like ours faith is strengthened. Clydesdale reports that while college students do shun church at an alarming rate, and that this

defection may last for many years, the faith of most Christian students is maintained but at a rather paltry level. Christian students have generally not been disciplined or prepared to pursue faithfulness during the college years. Clydesdale commiserates with Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, authors of *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford University Press, 2005), that the perspective and attitude most consistently embraced even by Christian students can be described as “therapeutic moralistic deism.” Clydesdale has a hunch that Christian students and an intentional Christian approach to education (like his *alma mater* Wheaton College?) might fare better. “I argue that the more removed teens are from popular American moral culture, the less they use the identity lockbox and the more they avail themselves of educational opportunities” (p. 153). If Christian students were more thoroughly formed as disciples, it would stand to reason that they would contest the “patterns of the world” (even the ruts of higher education) and that they would earnestly pursue the “renewing of the mind” (Romans 12:2). Unfortunately, such discipleship is rare and most churches do precious little to help students develop a viable Christian perspective that will serve them well in the academy. Program planners at Christian colleges cannot ignore the obvious need for deep discipleship, and plans must be put in place to carry this work forward. Such plans may include chaplains, campus ministry programs, residence life staff, student-led Bible studies, a local church network, and ideally, a rich combination of these allies.

We cannot neglect the one in ten; the students who are eager and ready for academic engagement. Our colleges and universities should offer honors programs or other voluntary options for students who are ready to reflect, engage, and debate. But we cannot neglect the nine of ten. We cannot simply pass the buck: “if only parents would . . .” or “if only they had learned _____ in high school.” We must work hard to love the students that we have, with personal investment, with a curriculum that addresses (and collides with) their world, and with challenging programming. The implications of this provocative book have troubled me and made me a staunch advocate of curricular and co-curricular reform for first-year students at my own institution and elsewhere in the academy.

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Fostering Student Success in the Campus Community

Gary L. Kramer & Associates; (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007).

Reviewed by Mary Ann Searle

The first questions asked in this book are, “What? Another book about student services?” and “Who needs it?” Rather than simply being another book about how to create programs and services to improve student success, this book discusses the infrastructure and institutional values needed to support a “student-centered culture.” The authors suggest that higher education institutions need to put students first. As educators, we need to align the needs and expectations of students with the institution, identify how students are progressing towards graduation, show evidence of student learning outcomes in the classroom and outside the classroom, and work collaboratively to promote success for all students on our campuses. Since this is not just the responsibility of student development professionals, this book is also relevant for senior administrators and faculty.

“Part I: Communicating Expectations” examines and defines the responsibilities of policymakers, senior administrators, faculty, and student development professionals for creating campus environments that encourage students to succeed by understanding and meeting their expectations. A major premise of part I is that the demographics of college students are changing with increases in women, part-time students who work full-time, students of color (especially Hispanics), first generation, non-documented immigrants, adults over 25 years of age, and transfer students. Institutions need to examine their policies, procedures, and practices and “think outside the box” to promote success for all students (many of whom will be different than the generations of our senior administrators, faculty, and student development professionals).

In particular, the authors recommend that institutions can create student-centered campus cultures and meet students’ expectations through the following:

- a clear, coherent mission and philosophy
- language and traditions that support student success
- a focus on student learning inside the classroom and outside the classroom
- high performance expectations for all students
- utilization of effective educational practices (e.g. active, collaborative learning)
- human/small scale settings (e.g. living-learning communities)
- collaborative, improvement-oriented work ethic
- assessment to measure organizational responsibilities and manage change
- a talented faculty and student development professionals who understand the complexities of higher education in today’s marketplace

“Part II: Connecting Services” describes the student services that are essential for putting students first in the college community. Part II begins with the admissions process where enrollment management professionals are encouraged to put students first by demonstrating good ethical practices in recruitment and looking for strong “student-institution fit” that will enhance student retention to graduation. In particular, admissions counselors need to be honest about the institutional mission, values, and characteristics, so prospective students can make well-informed decisions that meet and exceed their expectations. Once students are enrolled, institutions are encouraged to develop one-stop service centers and/or self-service portals to help students and parents access important information about the institution and conduct business (e.g. orientation, registration, financial aid, student accounts, career services, parking, ID cards, transcript requests, graduation audits, online tutoring). In addition, institutions should invest in learning technologies that transform professional practice in ways that use technology to “foster connections” between students and the institution and “bridge the gap” between the curricular and the co-curricular.

The authors dedicate an entire chapter to creating academic advising programs and services that promote student success. Academic advising needs to be seen as more than “information giving” for the purpose of selection and scheduling of academic courses. Rather, academic advising should be a *process* characterized by a student-centered relationship that focuses on students’ potential; the belief that students are growing, maturing, responsible, and capable of self-direction; and shared responsibilities between the students and academic advisors. This relationship should focus on the students’ personal characteristics/strengths, personal and professional goals for the future, an action plan for achieving his or her goals, and assessment of progress/updating of goals. In addition, an entire chapter is dedicated to career advising, so institutions can understand the importance of assessing students’ career needs, providing excellent career services grounded in career development theory, and helping students develop a plan of action.

“Part III: Fostering Student Development” emphasizes student readiness, learning partnerships in higher education institutions, the organization of services for learning inside the classroom and outside the classroom, preparing service providers, and engaging faculty in fostering student success. The authors discuss how to train student development professionals to assess learning outcomes; partner with students to promote learning; and demonstrate the difference in goals, objectives, strategies, and learning outcomes from “service providers” to “educators.” Ultimately, the goal is to engage in “learning-centered practice” in the classroom and outside the classroom to promote holistic student development and partner with academic affairs to promote student success. They also suggest that college is a time to encourage students to explore meaning and purpose for their lives. Although this can be very challenging for non-faith-based institutions, students who engage in this level of self-exploration tend to experience greater satisfaction with themselves and their collegiate experience, study more and earn higher grades, engage in community service, and party less.

Traditional and progressive models for higher education are described in detail and “best practices” are showcased to demonstrate that higher education institutions need to create organizational structures that put students first and promote student success. Once the structures are agreed upon, institutions have a responsibility to provide

faculty and staff development programs that help everyone understand students' needs and institutional expectations, delineate shared roles and responsibilities, and link effectiveness to established faculty and staff reward systems. In particular, institutions that are concerned about promoting student success should create "best practices level" faculty advising programs that focus on "advising as teaching."

"Part IV: Achieving Success" describes interventions to retain students, especially during the first year at two-year colleges, and the importance of academic advising to foster student success. Although we have learned that there are individual student characteristics and institutional interventions that contribute to retention, degree completion rates did not significantly improve between 1975 – 2005. In fact, the "time to degree" has increased over time which suggests that more students are not taking the traditional "four year route to college graduation." The authors suggest that we need to change our "retention paradigm" to a "student success paradigm" which is characterized by students' expectations and needs (e.g. multiple institutions, stop-out, life transitions, online learning, credit for life experiences) rather than institutional needs (e.g. time to degree). The authors wrap up this book by focusing on six pathways to putting students first in the campus community:

- establish a living mission
- connect academic and career planning
- assess learning outcomes
- blend technology—high tech + high touch + high effect
- reward and recognize success
- deliver the goods and be accountable

The key questions addressed in this book are:

- What do good institutions do beyond the routine or expected to actually create and achieve a student-centered environment or culture of student success?
- What are the essential or common ingredients found in successful programs?
- What does the research suggest as the next steps that institutions should consider to promote student success?
- What do institutions and student services providers need to do better to align expectations, connect services, actively foster student development, and consistently achieve results through student-oriented services and programs?

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Deeper Learning in Leadership: Helping College Students Find the Potential Within

Dennis C. Roberts; (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007).

Reviewed by Kathryn A. Tuttle

With a multitude of leadership development books currently available, Dennis C. Roberts' work stands out for a number of reasons: It centers on the needs of undergraduate students, focuses attention toward institutional fit and collaborative program development, and provides an excellent framework without prescribed rigidity. Roberts defines leadership as "conviction in action." He is a proponent of a holistic focus on students and their experiences both inside and outside the classroom (p. 17). This work focuses both on theory and practical application, with the implied conviction that a synergistic mix of both elements proves most effective.

Roberts feels that deeper learning in leadership is not best facilitated in a vacuum but that the larger academic community plays a substantial role in the learning process. The author sees this community as an ongoing interplay between faculty, staff and students. At the end of chapter one, Roberts stresses the need to carefully examine the roles played by faculty, staff and students in the learning process. He calls for a new paradigm that embraces the purposeful integration of the curricular, the co-curricular and the extra-curricular, capitalizing on existing connections and forging new partnerships.

Chapter two sets an historical context for leadership learning, while chapter three explores six specific models of leadership development. While some may find these chapters pedantic, they provide a necessary foundation for the subsequent exploration and integration of new theories and models.

Chapter four reviews several key skills necessary for developing leaders for the future. These skills are discussed in light of the context of globalization and its effects on the employability of graduates. Here, Roberts discusses leadership development related to research from the workplace and draws connections regarding how this information might be used in the context of higher education.

One of the models Roberts discusses, soul leadership, is based on the work of Janet Hagberg (2003), and focuses on leadership development through the discovery of "meaning, passion, calling, courage, wholeness, vulnerability, spirituality and community" (p. 274). It certainly sounds noble and rings of integrity to be faithful to our purposes and to ourselves, rather than to be focused on success as an outcome. However, as Christian educators, we are quite well aware of the condition of the heart and are faced regularly with the reality that not all our passions and those of our students are necessarily of the godliest origins. While the framework is valuable, we need to advocate for biblically sound foundational content. It is not enough to simply be true to one's self within the context of community values.

In chapter five Roberts invites his readers to explore what he terms a "Deeper Leadership" model. It is here that he begins to form a more cohesive picture of the process of leadership development by beginning to outline what he terms three paths toward deeper leadership: presence, flow, and oscillation. With all the prior historical

perspectives and the review of multiple models, I expected to finish this chapter with a succinct understanding of the author's model. However, I was greeted with another preparatory chapter in which the author introduced several models outlining the learning process involved in developing leadership. At the end of chapter five, Roberts finally begins to focus his readers. He states that, "Presence allows for the discovery of something worth doing, flow encourages one to remain constant to the vision, and oscillation allows creativity and high performance" (p. 128).

One of our main challenges with college leadership programs is the short nature of the university experience. Creating and sustaining vision during a four-year experience is often daunting. The typical student may be an observer during his or her freshman year, enter some form of initial leadership position during his or her sophomore or junior year and then possibly move on toward an internship or form of job experience during the senior year. Creating continuity and connecting prior learning to the "next" experience can be extremely challenging. Getting students to see beyond "their" impact and see this year as a way to invest in their future and the future of programs and other participants is a challenge. The overarching goals for this year must be tied to the fundamental mission and purpose of the institution. The ultimate goal is bigger than "this year!"

There are a number of spiritual and theological connections latent within the concepts presented by Roberts. For example, effective leadership is not about personal power or impact. In contrast, it is about having a larger vision outside of ourselves. Experiential processes are highly valuable. We are renewed and changed through stretching experiences and by negotiating situations that cause us to think and act differently. However, these experiences will change us more completely as we reflect and analyze their meaning and value and apply newfound ideas to our current thinking and behavior. Retreat and reevaluation are vital in the process of deeper learning in leadership. Our foundational question could be, "How will what I am learning and what I am doing support and advance the purposes of God?" I will know this more completely as I know him more and practice these principles in my world.

In chapter six, Roberts begins movement toward concrete steps involved in design and assessment processes. For successful program development, he encourages a large vision with a modest, focused beginning and ongoing assessment. Program development within the context of institutional values is of utmost importance. Sustainability of leadership development programs also hinges on active faculty and administrative involvement. One of the most valuable portions of Roberts' book lies in this chapter. Between pages 143 and 163, the author provides some key areas of focus, a series of questions to guide development and some suggestions regarding assessment and renewal of programs. Once again, the necessity of broad university support and constituency buy-in is stressed. Roberts does not lay out a prescribed program, but recognizes the necessity of consideration of the centrality of an institution's mission in the development of an effective leadership development program. The framework provided for the process of development is extremely helpful while non-confining. In addition, Roberts acknowledges that hard work lies ahead and that leadership program development is not a light-hearted endeavor.

In chapter seven, Roberts brings his earlier discussion of presence, flow and oscillation into the creative discussion, as he discusses the integration of international travel, service learning, assessments such as the StrengthsQuest instrument, and mentoring

relationships, as well as the development and use of learning portfolios.

In his final chapter, Roberts reiterates the shared responsibility of faculty, staff and students in the leadership development process. He recognizes the difficulties in this shared venture and notes that, “The relationships on all campuses are complex and idiosyncratic” (p. 213). At smaller institutions, collaboration may be essential, due to limited financial resources, yet paradoxically difficult given the territorial nature of some colleagues.

Again, the need for broad institutional buy-in to leadership learning is essential. What efforts toward leadership development already exist on our campuses and how can we bridge and co-opt these resources? Roberts ends his journey with a plea for humility. He states, “Humility that envelopes us in every interaction is likely to be appealing to the many stakeholders who would otherwise delight in challenging our intellectual, legitimate, or otherwise authority” (p. 216).

Roberts’ open-ended, non-prescriptive approach is refreshing. Rather than present a static, one-size-fits-all solution, he offers a broad array of historical foundation, current theory, innovative models, and assessment framework, then invites the reader to, sift, integrate, and innovate. It is clear that the author has taken the vision for development of quality leadership learning to heart. His recognition of the necessity of consideration of the core values of the institution is commendable. His refusal to present a one-size-fits-all answer, yet not abdicate in favor of a shell-only framework, values the complexity of the matter. Roberts’ intellectual honesty is refreshing as well. The author’s admission of his own gaps and what he may have omitted is forthright.

Indeed, it is clear that a great deal of foundational work will be required for the development of effective and enduring leadership development programs. We must know our institutional culture and mission, actively study this current generation of college students, and be aware of global expectations for our future graduates, as well as actively foster collaborative efforts across multiple constituencies. This book not only outlines historical and theoretical perspectives related to leadership development, but it provides invaluable guidelines for the program development process.

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The State of the University: Academic Knowledges and the Knowledge of God

Stanley Hauerwas; (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

Reviewed by David S. Guthrie

Perhaps an important place to begin a brief review of Stanley Hauerwas' recent book, *The State of the University*, is to note that it is published within Blackwell's Illuminations: Theory and Religion series. This series is devoted to exploring the inextricable relationship between religion and theology, on the one hand, and human culture and social theory on the other. This may sound to the most regular readers of *Growth* quite like the most common shibboleth of Christian higher education, namely, the integration of faith and learning. Just so. Like in all of his writings, Hauerwas' intent is to think 'Christianly' from the wellspring of his particular religious traditions in analyzing both what is wrong with the contemporary university, and what might make the contemporary university better—at least such as it is.

If you like edited books, you may quite enjoy this book. To be clear, Hauerwas does not edit the works of other authors in compiling this book. Rather, he edits and compiles his own works, all written (and/or presented as lectures) with particular audiences in mind and at various times. As a result, the argument of the book does not necessarily develop *ad seriatum* as each chapter is read. This approach ostensibly provides considerable freedom in engaging the book since readers can select chapters that sound "interesting" irrespective of position in the text, and still be quite confident that they will catch clear, coherent glimpses of Hauerwas' perspectives. More specifically still, since a number of chapters are framed as Hauerwas' reflections on the contributions of authors who pique his thinking (e.g., John Henry Newman, David Burrell, Stanley Fish, Wendell Berry, John Howard Yoder, Sheldon Yolin, Saint Gregory of Nazianzus), readers may be drawn easily to those particular chapters without really losing much, if any, of Hauerwas' central concerns.

Notwithstanding the previous paragraph, may I suggest that this book is best read by starting at the beginning and reading the first four or five chapters. They provide a very useful framework to Hauerwas' approach and will be particularly helpful to those who may be altogether unfamiliar with this prolific author.

The most important point to offer about *The State of the University* is that this is not a book that reviews recent developments in contemporary American higher education. Instead, Hauerwas' argument throughout is that the university is the co-opted, powerful agent of what he calls "the modern nation state." This argument, reiterated throughout the text, is most succinctly stated in the introduction, and is worth quoting at length:

...the title is meant to indicate that universities as we know them, public and private, secular or religious, produce and reproduce knowledges that both reflect and serve the state. The university is the great institution of legitimation in modernity whose task is to convince us that the way things are is the way things have to be. The specialization, what some would describe

as fragmentation, of the knowledges that constitute the curriculums of the modern university is crucial for the formation of people to be faithful servants of the status quo... (p. 6).

For those interested in take-no-prisoners critiques of modernity in general and what Hauerwas calls the university's "epistemological conceits of the knowledges" in particular, this book delivers on almost every page. In my judgment, chapters one, three, five, and eight are especially powerful in this regard, as Hauerwas relies on contemporaries Alasdair MacIntyre in general and Stanley Fish in particular (chapter five) to help pinpoint his analysis and critique. Before Christians have time to inflate their chests proudly in support of Hauerwas' dismantling of the secularism of the academy, Hauerwas delivers a comparable blow to them. That is, Hauerwas laments that many churches, Christians, and Christian colleges have all too willingly and eagerly been fully duplicitous in preserving and furthering counterfeit knowledges in service to the state. That is, Hauerwas contends that Christian scholars have not worked diligently to consider "a knowledge that is formed by the Gospel" (p. 8). Further, Hauerwas wonders if Christian colleges, despite their extant catalog rhetoric, may be graduating "not only students who are unable to recognize when they are serving powers foreign to the Gospel but even more discouraging, the same students in fact desire to aid the rule of those powers" (p. 124).

Ah, now there is the rub. In Hauerwas' words, "...the challenge is whether any of us live lives as Christians that are sufficient to force us to think differently about what is and is not done..." in the academy (p. 32). Or, equally forceful, "If Christians are a people with an alternative history of judgments about what is true and good (i.e., a unique knowledge, emphasis mine) they cannot help but produce an alternative university" (p. 91). What readers may quickly and accurately note is that some of the key descriptors that Hauerwas may use to describe Christians are different, alternative, and counter-cultural. What readers may not as quickly cull is that Hauerwas takes pains to emphasize (particularly in chapters two, four, and seven) that Christians must not flee the world, but be Gospel-rooted, clear-minded "heralds" of another empire (namely, the coming kingdom of God, relying on John Howard Yoder's compelling work) as they labor in the current empire. More specifically, in chapter seven, Hauerwas artfully uses the image of stone carving. He suggests, in the same way that apprenticeship is absolutely critical to one becoming an expert stone carver, that Christians must not faint in apprenticing themselves to "the grammar" of religious traditions, of faithful people, and ultimately of Jesus.

Those interested in politics will find chapter 10 and the final appendix ("Ordinary time: A tribute to Rowan Williams") worth the read. And the concluding sections of chapters 11 and 12—respectively titled "Prayer as a form of resistance" and "A university of the poor"—are extremely valuable contributions to the book. The former section reminds me of a presentation I heard long ago in which the speaker suggested that prayer, rightly understood, was "a wrestling with the demonic." Hauerwas seems to echo that sentiment when he writes:

Prayer...presupposes a time that cannot help but challenge secular time... As a discipline of the church it may well mean that how Christians do history,

literature, politics, economics, physics, biology...maybe different than how those disciplines are recognized or practiced by those who are not shaped by a life of prayer (p. 183; pp. 185-186).

Stanley Hauerwas' book likely will not be a book many *Growth* readers will have already rushed out and purchased. May I suggest, however, that we must never faint in considering the ways that other "knowledges" (to use Hauerwas' term) unwittingly or knowingly show up, not only in what might be called our personal comings and goings, but also in the institutions in which we serve; in mission framing and execution, in curricular structures, in faculty governance systems, in course development and pedagogy, in athletics programs, and in all other out-of-class initiatives. How might we become more faithful heralds—apprenticed well in "the knowledge of God" through our faith traditions, guides, churches, and scriptures—as we muse about (with one another) and implement plans, processes, and practices in the rooms of God's house called colleges and universities? Hauerwas has some ideas worth considering and we have high callings worth pursuing to this end. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

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The Passionate Intellect: Incarnational Humanism and the Future of University Education

Norman Klassen and Jens Zimmermann; (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006).

Reviewed by David M. Johnstone

The world of philosophy has always been somewhat elusive, esoteric and puzzling to me. In college, discussions about philosophy would often turn to reflections on Kant, Locke, Sartre, Nietzsche or Russell. They would flow around the nature of knowledge, the implications of economics, and the struggle with defining a “prime reality.” Frequently, I would refer to my pocket dictionary in order to understand the words used by my friends and would then desperately struggle to comprehend what they were explaining. Now, many years later, I realize that many of these conversations were actually full of bluster. They were attempts by my classmates to bolster their image and confidence by articulating newfound vocabulary and knowledge. However, I need to confess that I still find some (many) philosophical conversations unassailable, particularly due to my strengths, training and interest.

This feeling that certain knowledge is inaccessible sometimes is translated into the view that those who do not understand are actually uneducated. An example of this was observed aired in the 2006 U.S. elections. In an interview with David Kuo on “60 minutes,” the author of *Tempting Faith* suggested, “I think that Christians need, particularly evangelical Christians, need to take a step back, to have a fast from politics. People are being manipulated” (Reinhard, B8). While there may have been a true concern expressed, there was also an underlying arrogance and belief that evangelical believers were uneducated, unsophisticated and easily duped. In discussing this interview, a newspaper editorialist reflected back on a 1993 *Washington Post* article that stated conservative Christians “are largely poor, uneducated and easy to command” (Reinhard, B8). This intellectual arrogance and disdain is reflected both in popular media and within secular academia.

In a solid attempt to teach young evangelicals how to engage and not fear the “world,” Norman Klassen and Jens Zimmermann have written *The Passionate Intellect*. In response to the disdain that suggests evangelicals in higher education are anti-intellectual or even childlike, the authors have sought to present an accessible survey of philosophical worldviews and a possible understanding of how to line up these views within a Christian worldview. Even more basically, they have tried to reflect on the implications of gaining knowledge and living as a follower of Jesus. They have responded by not only explaining the philosophical distinctive of each form of humanism explored, but have also discussed the “social dimension to the acquisition of knowledge” (p. 9). For the authors, gaining knowledge and growing in understanding is congruent with faith in Jesus.

Klassen and Zimmermann have taken the challenge of whether a person of faith can navigate through this world of humanist philosophy and the mind. They argue the case for faith-based humanism (*Incarnational Humanism*) as a legitimate intellectual and academic discipline. They also help the world of humanism become understandable and accessible to the uninitiated. Using language that is familiar and

unpretentious, they present the distinctive qualities and development of humanism over history.

Klassen and Zimmermann's intention is focused on providing a resource for undergraduate college students in both faith-based and secular institutions. They do not intend to provide an apologetic arsenal to fight secularism. They seek to provide knowledge and understanding which will reinforce a student's faith. The authors also affirm that it is possible to be a thinking follower of Jesus. They desire to augment a student's confidence in the face of the academic argument that Christianity is anti-intellectual. They are concerned that the force of these academic arguments may cause many believing students to question their own suitability for a university education (p. 185).

As they begin to trace the roots of humanism, they observe that "[d]isembodied truth, existing in a neutral nowhere, is not a biblical notion" (p. 31). The authors identify that within the Christian tradition, a "genuine self knowledge is impossible without an external measure of our humanity" (p. 33). They further identify a sense that the thought and intelligence necessary to understanding the human experience is common within Christianity. Therefore, they travel back to the thoughts of the medievalist Thomas Aquinas who, as a holistic thinker, was "able to balance respect for reason and for the mysteries of revealed religion" (p. 47). Beginning at this point, they survey the many forms of what became known as humanism as it developed through the centuries.

Even as late as the 16th century, scientists and philosophers "saw no conflict whatsoever between their scientific endeavors and the Christian faith" (p. 73). René Descartes (1596-1650), a seventeenth-century Christian thinker, began to separate sensory observation from deducing knowledge from reason. There became an increased emphasis on reason being the only legitimate means by which truth could be discerned. Therefore, "reason, freed from the trammels of tradition, history, and language, would discover the true ends of human existence" (p. 79). These ideas became the catalyst for the modern notion of separating faith and sensory observation from reason. Formally, this separation birthed dualism, which became one of the hallmarks of the Enlightenment humanism. This dualism was defined by a "great chasm open[ing] up between the realm of the Creator and the created order" (p. 86). God was perceived as removed and distant; certainly a creator but no longer active with his creation.

As the decades and centuries unfolded, humanism changed further until it was assaulted and undermined by the rise and development of post-modernism. However, Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) reminded the world "that humanism was founded on the concept of human dignity, essential for all human intellectual and social activity" (p. 130). Following this lead, Klassen and Zimmermann have suggested using humanism as a legitimate platform for the development of a discipline which is congruent and coherent with rigorous study, thought and faith. They call this discipline "Incarnational Humanism." They suggest that within this discipline the dualism previously found in humanism can come to an end. A holistic approach to knowledge is once again possible where "all knowledge is united...under the lordship of Christ because in him the divine and the human are firmly joined forever" (p. 149). While they are much more articulate and thorough in their explanation, they see this model of humanism "as the foundation of university education" (p. 149).

The authors then pointedly address the reader by writing, “Given the saga of the university, the way humanism has turned on Christians, and the crisis of the contemporary university, you may well wonder how you can thrive during the years you spend there” (p. 155). They go on by encouraging the reader by stating that “... since all truth is God’s truth, you can learn in the environment of any contemporary university. You can connect on the issues that concern many people today” (p. 155). The dualism which separates the spirit, emotions, relationships and community is no longer adequate. In Incarnational Humanism, reason is meshed with faith into a holistic view of the universe which is entirely congruent with being a follower of Jesus.

The authors begin to wrap up their observations with some counsel and reflections directed at future and current Christian university students. They challenge them by saying, “Never separate faith from learning” (p. 186). They note that a true liberal arts university “allows the student to integrate acquired skills toward a universally acknowledged goal of character formation and of growth into a greater understanding of what it means to be human” (p. 191). Klassen and Zimmermann caution that dualism leads to a separation of “academics from moral-spiritual development” (p. 192). In essence dualism stands in opposition to a holistic liberal arts education. Most significantly, the authors make the following assertion about education: “Only when our deepest assumptions are challenged will we be able to hold our faith with the kind of intelligent conviction that makes us credible witnesses of the new humanity instituted by Christ” (p. 194). Reason and faith must be linked in education.

Klassen and Zimmermann succeed in helping readers understand the many streams of humanism and how and where they might oppose, diverge or agree with a Christian worldview. For the novice philosophy student, of whom I would include myself, this volume provided plenty of insight and cause for reflection. However, more important than the analysis of humanism in its many forms was the challenge to readers to be wise and knowledgeable about the worldviews that drive academia. The authors’ thesis has articulately and with insight laid the challenge not to be fearful or disrespectful of academia or the educational enterprise.

As I sit contemplating my final words, my thoughts are regularly interrupted by conversation and reflections centered on a local tragedy which occurred this week. Five days ago an alum was killed in terrible car accident. My memories of him span his college career and his post-graduation work as one of the town’s most proficient baristas. Our many conversations revolved around botany, music, pop culture, faith and the meaning of life. My guess is that his depth of thought and character began before entering college. Yet the refining, sharpening and development of his intelligence, humor, faith and ability to extend grace occurred during his experience at college. At a very basic level, Klassen and Zimmermann are encouraging a synthesis of knowledge, relationships and things of the Spirit. The alum mentioned above reflected the life hoped for by the authors. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

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Reference:

David Reinhard (2006, October 19). Evangelical Christians, don’t forget to (not) vote. *The Oregonian*, p. B8.

The Small College Dean: New Directions for Student Services, No. 116

Sarah B. Westfall (Editor); (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass 2007).

Reviewed by Mark J. Troyer

I returned recently from a conference with fellow deans of students and realized how the role of senior student affairs officer (SSAO) continues to morph and change in today's small college environments. In reviewing *The Small College Dean*, edited by Sarah Westfall, I was pleased that the groups of authors writing the various chapters in this edited work seem to have a good sense of this role, even though positions vary significantly among different colleges. The authors address a wide variety of issues ranging from history of the position, to staffing, to future issues.

The Small College Dean is a book in the "New Directions for Student Services" series, published quarterly as part of the Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series. Sarah Westfall, the Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students at Kalamazoo College in Michigan, gathered a group of fellow deans to address issues related to leading in small colleges in this short, easy-to-read, six-chapter book.

The book starts out appropriately with a chapter by the editor on defining the small college setting and addresses from an historical perspective the work of a small college dean. She appropriately points out that the majority of deans of students and SSAOs in the country (77 percent) actually come from small colleges. For the purposes of this book, she defines small colleges as those having 5000 or fewer students which make up approximately 77 percent of colleges and universities in the U.S.

Throughout the book, a theme emerges in various ways, pointing out the expanding need for the dean to have a broad knowledge of changing federal law, be adept at dealing with a crisis, and have skills in staffing and organizing personnel to meet the changing needs of today's students. In the second chapter, the author engages in a helpful discussion on the variety of the functional areas that frequently come under the purview of the small college dean. She also gives a couple organizational charts that can be easily adapted to a variety of college settings.

Chapter three, written by Doug Oblander, Vice President for Student Development at Mount Union College in Ohio, focuses on staffing at a small college. He does an excellent job of identifying the unique challenges and opportunities that a small college affords compared to the larger universities. The recruitment, selection, orientation, training, and development of staff are rightly identified as constant pressures at the small college. With the prevalence of many "one person offices," the importance of hiring is even greater. Oblander points out that serving at a small college may allow one to jump to higher level of responsibilities quicker. He also stresses that a small college experience often gives a better opportunity to collaborate with faculty and to interact with higher level administration by having close contact with key decision makers. Oblander addresses the importance of understanding the unique nature of each small college, and gives good strategies for staffing and recruiting. Though the series is not necessarily intended for the faith-based institution, the strategies seem to be universal. Some issues in staffing and training in a faith-based small college, however, do have a level of

uniqueness and it would have been nice to see these addressed in some way. (The author does call for future research; maybe one of our budding professionals in ACSD could focus on this issue as a thesis or dissertation topic.)

In the fourth chapter entitled, "Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students: Is it possible to Do it All?" Janet Heeter Bass, Vice President of Student Affairs at Muskingum College, provides a fascinating discussion on the titles and roles of SSAOs. I found it particularly refreshing to mentally dialogue with the author on the issues that she presented. I also found it somewhat challenging to see on paper and to think about all the areas that a vice president or dean is responsible to keep track of on a small campus. This chapter served to even more support the importance of good staffing, and of hiring professionals that can be trusted with a variety of tasks. It was sobering to be reminded that deans are often on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and that their "futures could easily be determined by the way they responded (or failed to respond) to a single issue" (p. 51).

The content of the fifth chapter is one you could find at any large or small professional development conference in student affairs: the relationship between student affairs and academic affairs and the collaboration needed in these areas. Though much of this chapter discusses areas that are not new and are primarily reminders of the importance of this task, there was a section that was of particular interest—the discussion on the formal structures that naturally enhance the collaborative efforts on campus. In the light of the Virginia Tech tragedy and push for emergency response plans, many of us are putting together task forces and committees to address issues related to identifying struggling students or communicating better on possible high risk situations. Bruce Colwell, Senior Associate Dean of Students and Class Dean at Carleton College, gives some very specific examples throughout this chapter of collaborative programs and structures that enhance the overall persistence of students and add value to the college experience.

The final chapter by William Flanagan, Vice President and Dean of Students at Beloit College in Wisconsin, provides a future-oriented look at what SSAOs may face over the next decade. Flanagan synthesized his discussion to three primary realities that small college deans will face during the next decade. First, the increasingly complex nature of the profession was addressed. Statutory requirements such as the Cleary Act, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and other federal and state guidelines make it challenging to keep ahead of both good practice and mandated requirements. The demands on the dean continue to grow, and the importance of being able to think critically, write and assess well, and deal with the demands of both internal constituencies and external constituencies, will prove critical.

A second reality that the book concludes with is that assessment is here to stay. Accountability will continue to be a theme in higher education and accrediting bodies will continue to demand evidence that we are doing what we say we are.

Finally, Flanagan's last point in looking to the future is that change is inevitable. He rightly points out that issues such as the increase in the number of students with diagnosed mental health challenges, technology advances, increased parental involvement, and more inter-institutional competition will bring with them a demand that the SSAO is able to adapt and change, and lead their staff to do the same.

Though it is only 80 pages long, this book would be very beneficial for anyone

aspiring to be a vice president for student development or dean of students (or both). For those that are already in the position, it brings in many ways a helpful and ordered look at our positions and the issues and challenges relevant to what we should be thinking about and planning for. As an SSAO at a faith-based institution, I did not find the book to give me a particularly unique perspective on my role in a Christian college. In fairness, however, that was not the purpose of this book. A follow-up chapter or study on the small college dean in Christian colleges would be interesting and helpful. Overall, I would recommend this book as a unique addition to any student development staffer's library. The issues and discussions are relevant and important regardless of whether one is sitting presently in the dean's position, aspiring to the dean's position, or simply working on the team.

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Publications Policy

Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development

All articles should be consistent with the Doctrinal Statement, Article III of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Association for Christians in Student Development.

Material in the following categories will be considered for publication:

1. Research articles that have relevance to the field of Christian Student Development.
2. Theoretical or applied articles that have relevance to the field of Christian Student Development.
3. Research, theoretical or applied articles dealing with the integration of faith and learning within the field of Christian Student Development or within the broader field of Christian Higher Education as a whole.
4. Reviews of articles in other journals relevant to Christian Student Development.
5. Reviews of books relevant to Christian Student Development practice.
6. Reactions to current or past journal articles.

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Authors submitting a manuscript should:

1. Send an electronic copy (double-spaced) in either a PDF format or Word document only, to Skip Trudeau, Co-Editor of *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development*, Taylor University, 236 West Reade Ave., Upland, IN, 46989-1001.
2. Follow the guidelines on format, style and submission procedure provided in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.).
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 - 10-15 pages for original research articles
 - 7-10 pages for applied research articles
 - 3-4 pages for article reviews
 - 3-4 pages for book reviews
4. Avoid submitting manuscripts which have been previously published or that are being considered for publication in other journals. If an article has been rejected by another journal it may then be submitted to *Growth*.
5. Include an abstract of no more than 150 words on a separate sheet of paper.
6. Include the current vita information for each author: address, title, degree(s) and institutions where earned and specializations.
7. Include telephone number, fax number and electronic mail address.

All submitted manuscripts will be promptly acknowledged and processed in a timely fashion. The review process generally requires a minimum of three months.