

## Leadership Development On The College Campus: The Student Affairs Conundrum

Daniel P. Nadler  
Eastern Illinois University

Richard E. Newman  
Presbyterian College

Michael T. Miller  
University of Arkansas

A colleague recently joked that most doctoral dissertations in higher education administration begin by noting that higher education as an industry has changed dramatically. These observations are largely correct, as the higher education industry, the tenth largest in the United States, has changed more dramatically in the past 20 years than at few previous times in history. Unlike the change that embraced higher education in the 1940s or the 1960s, this change has been slow and subtle, arising from decisions by college and university leaders to adopt different types of decision-making and valuing different types of institutional assets. The result is a more commercial enterprise than in previous generations of higher education, a perspective that values independence, an entrepreneurial spirit, and financial independence. The later concern for fiscal solvency is particularly acute, as many public entities, especially state governments, are divided over funding and philosophical priorities, resulting in state institutions to grow increasingly independent of state coffers.

The philosophical operation of colleges and universities has been paralleled by changes in those students arriving on campuses. The mixture of students on campus changed dramatically in the 1960s as more middle class students arrived on campus, but in the 1970s and 1980s, the shift was focused more on individualism and individual welfare and personal gain, resulting in the rise of colleges and schools of business, law, and other professions. Additionally, the reliance on non-traditional aged students in the 1980s to offset declines in college enrollment has altered the expectations of who can and should be on campus. Today's college students are an eclectic combination of traditional college students expecting individual growth, those expecting purely occupational training, those with overly involved parents, and those returning to school to reap the rewards often associated with college degree attainment.

Against this backdrop are the leaders of colleges and universities, those with the responsibility and opportunity to frame the future of the industry and the education of the nation's future leaders of civic life and commerce. These leaders have the ability to create learning environments that value community engagement and full participation in democratic living, and they also have the ability to use their powers to continue the trends of commercializing American life in general and collegiate life in specific. The price for such responsibility has been a continuously decreasing tenure for senior college leaders, as the average length of time a typical college president is in office is about six years (Sibley, 1998). As with many political and bureaucratic institutions, the cascading effect of institutional change results in high turnover

among other leaders (Miller & Nelson, 2005), and the average tenure of deans and provosts is similarly five to seven years.

A host of other studies and explorations have described the leadership styles, attributes, and behaviors of college leaders, ranging from personal preferences and perceptions of leadership styles to full 360-degree assessments of leadership behaviors. Additionally, senior college leader actions have been studied to attempt the prediction of institutional success in a variety of areas, including academic program rankings, fund raising, athletic team prowess, and even retention. Fewer studies have dealt directly with those leading divisions of student affairs, yet this broad discussion has been central to membership associations such as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA). Both sponsor workshops, clinics, and seminars for those aspiring to assume senior leadership positions and for those who have recently assumed such positions.

Despite a relatively comprehensive understanding of the senior student affairs position, those in these positions have a wide range of individual philosophies and management styles. Played out on a daily basis, these actions influence staff members, establish direction for out-of-class learning, influence student activities, actions, and opportunities, and cast a culture across a college campus. More than organizing activities and arranging social events, divisions of student affairs provide the social infrastructure that enables college students to be successful in college. Despite this importance, there is little comprehensive discussion about how internal leadership on the part of the senior student affairs officer builds teams, develops professionals, and drafts the architectural plan for the future of the profession.

A major component for senior student affairs officers and others in senior administrative positions is the creation of the future. This means that individuals need to invest in both their own legacy and in the development of individuals to carry forward the responsibility and leadership of the profession. This requires a loyalty to the institution and the profession, but more importantly, a commitment to the individuals hired to implement certain jobs throughout divisions of student affairs. Typical divisions of student affairs at four-year colleges and universities have evolved into intricate silos responsible for a wide range of activities and services, ranging from housing and honors programs to student centers, activities, and admissions. This results in a doubling of the challenge for senior student affairs officers in creating a culture for immediate success with an eye toward the institution's success in the future and for the individuals who are carrying out the immediate work at hand.

The current discussion was designed to explore the changing world of leadership in student affairs, and especially, to examine how senior student affairs officers can invest efficiently in the future by preparing future leaders. This requires an understanding of the current state of higher education and the forces impinging on students and services directed at those students, changes facing the profession of student affairs administration, and an appreciation and understanding of human resources in higher education and how individuals can be trained for responsibilities beyond their immediate jobs.

*Factors Influencing 21st Century Higher Education*

Money Matters: higher education institutions have fundamentally changed their value and approach to generating revenue, spending this revenue, and investing. Over the past 50 years, as higher education has become more accessible, institutions have changed their reliance on public sources of funding. As budgets have grown and institutional responsibilities and aims have changed, the proportion of funding provided by public agencies has proportionately decreased. The result in many states has been the rise in tuition rates and the dramatic increase in student (user) fees in areas such as technology and facilities. The approach a growing number of boards of trustees have taken is to release academic units from overall tuition controls, resulting in a variation of tuition rates based on market forces. One of the pioneers in this area was the University of Virginia, where the board allowed the Graduate School of Business to separate its governance structure and charge variable tuition based upon what the market would pay for education.

Colleges and universities have grown incrementally in their approach to revenue production, relying on an increasingly diverse array of financial revenue streams. Prevalent among these are fund raising and commercial activities. Fund raising, as evidenced by the University of Arkansas' recent \$1 billion capital campaign and the University of Southern California's recently announced \$8 billion capital campaign, has taken center stage at many institutions and is even considered a key criterion for identifying higher education institution policy. Fund raising once was the mechanism to establish 'excellence' in higher education, and has grown to fully fund activities that would either not exist or would not exist without state funding. Commercial activities have similarly grown, and are seen in such activities as merchandising, contracted parking and transit services, the provision of services and goods to students on campus and in local communities, and in providing continuing education activities such as professional development that are consumed by business and industry.

On a practical level within divisions of student affairs, the treatment of money has changed from an allocation point of view, that is, a budget that is handed to the division for operations, to one that requires a combination of allocation and generation. Through housing, user fees, contractual arrangements, fund raising, and other entrepreneurial activities, divisions of student affairs are increasingly required to develop their own revenue streams.

Commercialization of Interests: As institutions have become less reliant on entitlement approaches to funding, they have taken on many of the characteristics of private industry, not limited to, but including behaving in a very commercial fashion. Broadly, this implies that colleges and universities and their sub-entities make decisions and enter into agreements based on the financial value of outcomes. In this environment, having Starbucks on campus or Barnes and Noble managing a bookstore have as much to do with generating revenue for the institution as they do about providing opportunities and choices for students. The financial incentives extend far beyond basic campus services and expand to entertainment (such as movie rentals and fee-based programming), clothing (including athletic logo merchandise), commercial approaches to academic presses, sub-contracted personnel benefits, computing resource management, and parking services, and even reliance on external providers of instruction. There are also many

applications of the commercial model on the academic enterprise, including how contracts are awarded, how patents and patent income are distributed, indirect cost sharing, and space utilization, where some campus buildings are closed during low use times.

This environment therefore produces a reliance on the mentality that the "bottom line" of money and budgets is matter. And although not all programs must break even or prove to be immediately profitable, divisions within higher education must find a strategic balance between programs, initiatives, and cost centers that result in a profitable overall balance. For divisions of student affairs, which rely on an assortment of student (user) fees, contract revenue (housing, food service, bookstores, etc.), direct allocations, external fund raising, and pay-for-use programs, the role of the senior student affairs officer becomes one of the balancing intentional priorities for the welfare of the student body with the fiscal welfare of the division. Despite a general desire to focus on student benefits, the SSAO challenges is a real one that entrails being torn between leadership that benefits student learning and their welfare and managing a substantial financial enterprise. This results in a changed expectation for the SSAO, and one that is all too often placed within the realm of on-the-job training, when in fact much of the technical expertise required for this type of challenge could be trained prior to assuming the senior leadership position within student affairs.

A secondary issue that comes with balancing a radically different approach to funding divisions of student affairs relates to who has the right to govern or make decisions about what happens within divisions. Traditionally, student affairs governance issues have been squarely within divisions with input granted to faculty and staff as appropriate. In this new model of commercial higher education, there is a tremendous push by vendors, such as food service and soft drink providers to separate their activities from others within divisions. This is not to imply that vendors somehow have an inherently unfavorable approach to student health, for example, but their primary motivation is financial and is based on their ability to penetrate student markets. This in turn places the SSAO again in unfamiliar territory.

*Outcomes and Assessment:* One of the key findings of the recent Spelling Commission was the need for higher education to be intentional in activities, particularly those that are instructional. This finding mirrors much of the recent work of institutional and discipline specific accrediting bodies who have asked that institutions spell out the learning outcomes for each course offered and how students are measured against each of those outcomes. Programs, similarly, are being assessed from the standpoint of their outcomes, and institutional programs such as the general education requirement are being examined yet again for the purpose of intentionality. Much of this work is reactionary, to the blurring of the mission of higher education. Hersh and Merrow (2006) argued that in the 1980s public thinking and expectation about higher education changed from a societal good to an individual good, and with that shift in thinking, institutions responded by focusing on user-fees and career placement; higher education became a means to a professional end.

There have been dual impacts to the recent assessment movement. First, institutions have become more cautious about implementing new programs and sustaining those that have low enrollments or might be viewed as not economically viable. The result is that instead of

expanding to embrace new disciplines and working for a broader societal understanding, institutions have generally constricted and become more focused in fewer areas, particularly those with high prestige and financial promise. One of the few exceptions has been in the community college sector, where program expansion has been substantial, particularly in technology and allied health disciplines, yet at the same time they have reduced traditional vocational education programming and attention to manual occupational training. The second impact of the assessment movement has been the re-direction of faculty work to a conceptualization of intentionality and purposefulness. In most institutions faculty members are being called upon to demonstrate that their students meet specific expectations or pre-determined outcomes at the end of each class or semester, essentially eradicating traditional conceptions of learning for the sake of learning. Additionally, faculty are torn between purposeful teaching and their own financial responsibilities, as in many research institutions faculty members are being increasingly called upon to generate financial revenue to fund their own positions.

This assessment and outcome movement impacts SSAOs in several ways, but particularly in the areas of beginning to justify programs, activities, and even the student affairs divisional mission or vision statement so that it represents tangible outcomes. What was once accepted as holding implied value is now openly being called into the open.

*Professionalization:* The evolution of higher education during the past two decades has focused largely on increased specialization both within academic affairs and the other areas within the university that support the academic enterprise. As institutions rapidly embrace a business model for self-sufficiency, they have diversified positions, expanded expectations, and have come to rely on a host of individuals who did not exist on campus 20 years ago. For example, institutions make regular use of endowment fund managers, real estate professionals, an expanded legal counsel to provide guidance for academic and business operations, facilities managers, an array of personnel who have expertise in state and federal budgeting practices, and even federal lobbyists. One of the fastest growing areas has been the professionalization of development personnel, as these offices have expanded to employ individuals to work with a wide variety of planned gifts, individuals who track the effectiveness of donor related cultivation activities, professionals whose sole job it is to provide donor gratitude, etc.

Professionalization in student affairs has similarly expanded to new levels of segmentation of responsibility. Some institutions employ legal counsel specifically for divisions of student affairs, the position of assistant to the vice president has become more commonplace, facilities and technology personnel are increasingly common, and at many institutions, professionals are employed specifically by divisions of student affairs to raise money.

The implications of an increased professionalism on campus are at least two-fold. First, the segmentation of responsibility results in more people being employed in administrative positions, and this can result in the necessity for increased efforts to communicate and collaborate. Although technology can be an effective tool for communicating and consulting with this broader group of individuals, it can also result in more interpretations of the same situation, slower response time, greater challenges to maintaining morale, and a higher cost burden on the institution. Second, with greater specialization there are fewer generalists who are able to

develop, maintain, and see a bigger vision or picture of an institution or office within an institution. The challenge is for senior leaders to keep this perspective in mind and to not get caught in the complex details of various offices.

The greater consequence to increased professionalism and segmentation of responsibilities is that institutions become less democratic and academically focused. The process of running the institution still ultimately values the educational experience of students, but there is a collusion to have more offices seeking input from and access to the academic enterprise, while other offices are involved in equally important activities that do not seek input from the academic community. The disparity can create more silos of decision making and interaction and result in a less cohesive campus community.

*State of Knowledge:* With an increasing number of academic specializations, the global connectedness of academic communities around the world, and the increasingly rapid pace of information exchange thanks largely to technology, the idea of what constitutes knowledge is changing. Due to the internet and other technologies, findings from research and inquiry can be shared with literally hundreds and thousands of others working the same field almost instantaneously, and access to once-remote documents, letters, and archives are now consistently available through technology. The result is that knowledge is changing faster, and this impacts the college and university setting in substantial ways. First, this requires and allows college faculty members to pursue more specific and dedicated lines of inquiry, result in less interconnectedness among campus offices and colleagues. Second, the traditional notion of all-encompassing textbooks and classes are becoming obsolete, resulting in a student population that needs a growing framework for lifelong learning rather than an expectation that they will learn all they need in a particular class. Third, there is a growing societal expectation that education, particularly formal education, has a tangible result, something more akin to training than empowerment. And fourth, colleges and universities must continue the battle to remain current and relevant in what they offer in addition to how they offer education.

Within the more specific framework of institutional relationships with students, there is a growing shift in thinking about what the expectation is from a college degree. An increasing number of students are concerned more with the outcome and training they receive to result in a specific job or career, rather than focusing on broad liberal learning. The result on many campuses has been to focus on 'value-added' approaches to the college experience, including the fairly recent service-learning and community-involvement movements. A by-product of this thinking, then, is that divisions of student affairs must find a way to connect with students in the areas that they have the greatest interest in and with the academic community in a way that responds to their value systems.

As the idea of knowledge becomes more fluid, institutional efforts will become focused on responding to student needs and desires, and divisions of student affairs need to understand how this impact their efforts at co-curricular experiences. Divisions will increasingly find that their activities reflect a notion of liberal learning not embraced (but perhaps globally valued) by the academic community, resulting in the maintenance of the historical divide between academic and student affairs. More specifically, divisions of student affairs will need to demonstrate the

leadership necessary to bring institutional fragments together to ensure the future of democratic education rather than specialized career training.

### *Student Affairs as a Renewed Frontier*

As higher education institutions respond to the growing complexity of the industry and the rapidly changing face of students, they must look to how they strategically link themselves as institutions to their consumers, in the case of this discussion, students. There are a multitude of descriptions of student characteristics, how they are changing, how they create expectations, and what they do and do not do to be successful. There is a relatively smaller, but equally compelling, discussion of student affairs as divisions within institutions. This research continues to indicate that divisions of student affairs (DSA) have a responsibility to ensure that each campus provides the infrastructure outside of the classroom to be successful. Dominant recent conversations have focused on multicultural and diversity aspects of this function, but there is an increasingly prevalent description of the profit-driven, business related behavior of DSAs. This proprietary mindset, in the coming decades, must revisit the notion of institutional support for student learning and role responsibility.

DSAs have embraced their function of providing support for students to be successful in their academic coursework and in their out-of-class opportunities for inclusion. Resources such as academic tutoring centers, disability student support centers, recreational and leisure opportunities to enhance social support networks, and even curricular programs related to transition to college and leadership have become commonplace. Yet, despite this rich offering of programming that in many cases draws students to an institution and provides the background for student degree completion and success, DSAs are finding less room to navigate with freedom on campus. The recent trend of moving DSAs under the umbrella of academic affairs suggests that the primary issue really is student learning. The price to be paid, however, is in the directing or funneling of activities, resources, and efforts solely to support academic learning, essentially diminishing DSAs efforts at holistic student growth and identity formation.

The extent that academic administrators and college faculty are fully vested in the individual growth of college students is largely undefined, or known. The politically correct conversation of embracing all student growth, academic programs have largely been the result of standard and outcome assessment with the academic interests of students as the driving force, rather than the reflective and spiritual journey many college students make while in college. The outcome assessment movement spurred by the regional accrediting bodies is one example of this, as classroom activities and curricular behaviors must be specifically linked to outcomes. In the process of framing these academic experiences, there is little to no room for individual growth by individual standards, a long-standing hallmark of the college experience.

The argument can be made that the movement to consolidate academic and student affairs is the result of the increasingly external function of the college president, and that the academic provost position has evolved into the senior campus officer position. And although the academic enterprise within the college or university is paramount to and the primary purpose of higher education, the developmental aspects of college cannot be lost. The historical framework for

establishing higher education in North America even goes as far as to define itself as being based on a destination where students grow and learn in and out of the classroom, and that the time during matriculation is fundamentally rooted in personal development.

Unfortunately, college students have not consistently helped themselves in maintaining a fulcrum for personal development. The high demand for residence halls that are akin to resorts, the growing number of maid service contracts for residence hall rooms, the expectation for recreational services and centers and entertainment all lead many college leaders to drift back to the notion of *in loco parentis* instead of prompting self-exploration and development.

The renewed challenge for DSAs, then, is to contribute to the academic function of the institution, while simultaneously working to add to this academic value. Many student affairs leaders have used this opportunity to build resources and provide services that enable students to add to their academic experience, with service learning initiatives certainly being one of the more recent and commonplace efforts. As DSAs have excelled in this regard, they have subsequently struggled to redefine their niche on campus and to promote personal development.

DSAs are also finding it difficult to recruit and maintain a staff that can fully appreciate and conceptualize a support industry within the larger higher education industry that can embrace the ideals of holistic learning. Staff are increasingly being recruited based on silos of specialization, with the assumption that exposure to multiple offices, initiatives, and students will ultimately result in a broader understanding of this conceptualization. However, little effort anywhere in the contemporary higher education institution has fully embraced the ideals of holistic learning, and the result is an industry that drifts increasingly toward the commercial model of business and industry.

The temptation on many college campuses, for senior leadership and for DSAs in particular is to look to the growing and often advocacy-based leadership literature and training modules. These programs and training modules often purport to create leaders in a particular mold, yet evidence does not suggest that this has created any meaningful change or shift in thinking about how colleges address the in- and out-of-class development, growth, and maturation of college students. Instead, these training opportunities have created a complex system of entrepreneurial thinking that for the lack of any other accountable outcome results in the growing interest and value of financial responsibility. Programs are increasingly linked with sponsorship without regard to developmental impact.

This growing fiscal thinking, while appreciated and to some extent necessary in contemporary higher education, both diminishes the ability of DSAs to focus on opportunities for growth and can create negative impressions with others on campus. As faculty and the academic enterprise focus on outcomes and financial independence, the work of DSAs increasingly is seen as tangential rather than a necessary part of the college experience.

The greatest impact for college students and subsequently DSAs is the renewed need for real leadership within the context of higher education as it is today and will be in the future. This leadership must relate to all aspects of the college experience, from recruitment to graduation,

and once again, leaders in student affairs often find themselves outside of the mainstream conversation looking in. One of the great temptations for senior student affairs officers is to embrace institutional goals and thinking about senior leadership issues rather than advocating for students and their maturation. Indeed, the reward structure, as alluded to here, is increasingly focused on non-student development thinking.

The most recent activity for many DSAs has been the exploration of *Learning Reconsidered* (see Keeling, 2004) an important work that identifies the importance of student learning in and out of the classroom. Yet, DSAs have been unable to bring that conversation to their academic counterparts or to demonstrate its importance to the campus community. This initiative reflects how the frontier of student affairs has indeed changed. As senior student affairs leaders now comprise the larges are of multi-ethnicity access to senior institutional leadership, as the student affairs profession and its training have become formalized, and as DSAs have come to often find financial independence, they have been unable to engage in real meaningful ways the academic community, and they are subsequently paying the price in terms of respect, independence, and influence. The future generation of student affairs leaders must find ways to connect with their academic counterparts, find ways to demonstrate the importance of personal growth and development, and find ways to bring the idea of student development to the real forefront of higher education. The inability of DSAs, and senior student affairs professionals in particular, will lead to the growing notion of higher education as occupational training.

#### *Commercialization and Student Affairs Challenges*

In addition to the conceptualization skills increasingly necessary for senior student affairs officers, there is a growing importance that DSAs are financially responsible stewards of their resources. This has been a consistent trend throughout the history of student affairs, but it has changed and evolved to a point where revenue generation is now a primary activity of senior student affairs officers. Revenue generation takes on many forms, including student unions and centers that provide retail space and rental income, textbook sales and rentals, housing rental revenue, user fees for programs, and within the past ten years increasingly, gift income.

For most public institutions, higher education funding has maintained a level of constant dollars, increasing modestly in years when states realize projected tax revenue. Rarely have these increases kept pace with inflation and institutions have increased in complexity and in offering a variety of services and resources, the proportion of state funding has consistently decreased. Increased direct cost areas, namely energy costs and health insurance costs, have also driven the growing resources necessary for institutions to maintain their current levels of operation. Challenges such as these are also true in private higher education institutions where there are smaller marginal cost perspectives for energy and health care, and, these institutions have the added difficulty of maintaining their unique characteristics, often demonstrated through increasingly expensive high-caliber faculty members. The result on many campuses is a perspective of internal competition for funding, and DSAs have struggled to maintain their share of direct appropriations. The result has been the search for, and reliance on, alternative revenue sources.

For many DSAs, revenue production has been linked to direct charges back to current students on campus in an attempt to capitalize on the restricted market of the college campus. In practical terms this means that DSAs turn around costs and expenses directly to students, typically in the form of increased charges for food services and housing rental, and student user fees. This idea of student user fees is often seen by boards of trustees as a way to side-step the often politically sensitive issue of increasing tuition. By shifting funding from tuition billing to student fee billing, institutions are able to maintain a competitive differential with other institutions, and in some cases, bill only students who actually use specific fee-related resources. Student fees have particularly increased to pay for such activities as technology on campus and athletics. Some institutions have taken a pay-as-you-go perspective, whereby only students who pay a certain fee, such as a student recreation center fee, can use the recreation center or participation in intramural sports. Similarly, students who pay a technology fee might have some added benefit to technology support or access. Generally, though, DSAs are unlikely to pursue the pay-as-you-go mentality, as it can restrict and undermine the broader need for increased revenue, and can impact the ability of an institution to garner revenue through issuing bonds.

Perhaps the most lucrative capitalistic area for DSAs are housing and residential life offerings. These facilities can provide massive amounts of revenue to an institution, and institutional policy can often dictate how much revenue is produced. For example, policies that require on campus housing for first and second year students can result in a substantial wind-fall for the institution. Such policies, however, have the potential to negatively relate to local rental housing markets and can cause town-gown related strains. The additional perspective for on-campus housing can be the tremendous living-learning benefits available to students, including the exposure to a broader variety of student cultures and thinking in an intensive manner.

Capitalizing on restricted campus markets has also been a motivation for many DSAs to make better use of space and facilities that can be rented to outside vendors to produce revenue. While fast-food providers have been commonplace for 25 years, there are an increasing number of services offered through out-sourcing by DSAs. For example, some institutions offer gourmet food and beverage services, high-end bookstores, video rentals, and even car maintenance and dry cleaning services. In many instances, these out-sourced vendors also provide services to faculty and staff, essentially broadening the scope of who is impacted by the behaviors and opportunities created by DSAs.

Another area that has grown substantially in the last 25 years is the practice of fund raisin by DSAs. Although early efforts at development were often aimed at program enhancement funds and scholarship support, these development efforts have now reached a full-fledged status where senior student affairs officers compete with academic colleges to raise millions of dollars for everything from endowed staff positions or graduate assistants to facilities, conference rooms, and buildings. This fund raising activities has given rise to the new position of development officer in student affairs, a unique perspective on traditional notions of philanthropic giving and fund raising. These positions rely in part on alumni networks and the good will of business and industry, but also are challenged by the need to bridge academic, academic support, and external constituencies. Further, grant writing has fallen into these categories, and DSAs are increasingly

commonplace in the competition for state and federal grants, particularly in the areas of health promotion and prevention, substance counseling, and alcohol awareness.

All of the financial pressures contribute to the re-conceptualization of student affairs in the 21st century and how professionals approach their jobs. No longer are DSAs focused solely on helping students succeed, but increasingly on facilitating staff members to be successful in helping students, in a financially viable manner. This perspective, then, leads to the need to explore how leaders are developed, how they grow into their jobs, and how they can help prepare others to excel in this important profession.

### *The Great Need for Leadership Development*

Leaders of divisions of student affairs are facing challenges never confronted before by their predecessors. In addition to the traditional challenges of changing student characteristics and populations, they must face critical financial management issues that drive entire institutions. These leaders are called upon to embrace the public face of the institution and represent it to the public as part of a senior leadership team that transcends disciplinary specific responsibilities. This means that these divisional leaders must be prepared to think bigger and more broadly about institutions and their social, commercial, and civic responsibilities and less specifically about direct divisional activities.

Leadership, at best, is difficult to conceptualize in a way that can be meaningfully applied to any one given situation or in one institution. Leadership is not a series of words, a way of speaking, or even a method of personnel evaluation. Leadership is a way of thinking that can transform the work of many, and this means that leaders must understand the interrelationships of offices, people, and missions. Further, it must appreciate competing goals and motivations, and be able to draw parallels to build synergy among initiatives and people.

Traditional approaches to leadership development in student affairs make use of informal in-house programs combined with a strong reliance on the dominant student affairs associations at work, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and the American College Personnel Association. These two bodies, with a combined membership of over 10,000, provide a comprehensive set of opportunities for new and mid-level professionals to learn about issues such as legal concerns, fund raising, conflict resolution, and space utilization. And while these associations have modestly famous career networking and job placement activities, they are perhaps most beneficial in developing networks of professionals who can share war stories and strategies for managing difficult situations.

The joining of the lack of in-house leadership development and the comprehensive national and regional leadership programs has helped to lead to an environment throughout student affairs that requires individuals to change institutions to move into positions of greater responsibility. Although there are exceptions to this pattern, it dominates much of the activity of the profession and often leads to situations where institutions must continually adapt to new individuals and simultaneously, individuals must adapt to new environments. This process can be healthy and actually good for an institution and professionals, but it can also lead to hostility, damaged

morale, turnover, and even the disintegration of inertia within divisions. So although it is not always good to recruit from the outside of an institution, it is good practice to invest in staff members and their future, providing the resources, opportunities, and development necessary for their future professional life.

As individuals transition to senior leadership positions, they are increasingly called upon to respond to institutionally-specific issues and policies, although not always within the domain of student affairs. As a senior institutional leader, perspectives, ideas, and participation in problem solving related to all aspects of the institution will be expected, requiring the new senior student affairs (SSA) professional to learn as much as possible about the entire organization and be proficient in a variety of topics and indecision making that will impact the entire institution.

An additional area for concern for new senior student affairs professionals are the processes and issues related to how governance is shared at a particular institution. The senior student affairs officer (SSAO) must find ways to reach out to faculty, staff, and students to retrieve input, suggestions, feedback, and reactions to what is happening both within the DSA and the institution. Another perspective on developing a sense of institutional uniqueness is the changed role of the individual in the SSAO position. Peers are no longer wholly committed to student success and driven by the developmental aspects of a DSA; colleagues become similarly titled senior institutional officers, all of whom have different agendas and outlooks on the campus environment. This can result in both the creation of silos at an institution and of a more personal nature, a changed perspective on who friends are and how to socialize. As an up-and-coming student affairs professional, there may be many individuals with a similar title (coordinator, director, assistant dean, etc.), but the number decreases the further up the organizational chart the professional climbs. Reaching the zenith, the SSAO position, changes those relationships and perspectives.

As suggested throughout this discussion, issues such as accountability (within the institution and the DSA), fund raising and financial management, shared governance (policy formation), and the evolving mission of the contemporary university are all in need for consideration for training. The student affairs profession must break the silo mentality and work to integrate activities that benefit students into the core activities of an institution. This means breaking away from territorialism and working for broader goals. Future leaders have the expertise at the departmental level, but they must learn, and must be taught by current SSAOs, how to think about the institution, broad goals of higher education, and the changing nature of student affairs work.

### *References*

Hersh, R. H., & Merrow, J. (2006). (Eds.). *Declining by degrees higher education at risk*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Keeling, R. P. (2004). *Learning reconsidered: A campus-wide focus on the student experience*. Washington: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Miller, M. T., & Nelson, G. M. (2005). Does a new broom sweep clean? The new provost and administrative turnover. *Journal of Research in Education, 15*(1), 24-35.

Sibley, W. A. (1998). *University management 2010 challenging choices and difficult decisions*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press.