LEARNING RECONSIDERED: A CAMPUS-WIDE FOCUS ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATORS
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PURPOSE

Learning Reconsidered is an argument for the integrated use of all of higher education's resources in the education and preparation of the whole student. It is also an introduction to new ways of understanding and supporting learning and development as intertwined, inseparable elements of the student experience. It advocates for transformative education – a holistic process of learning that places the student at the center of the learning experience.

The purpose of this document is to re-examine some widely accepted ideas about conventional teaching and learning, and to question whether current organizational patterns in higher education support student learning and development in today's environment. The need to do so is clear: few of the social, economic, cultural, political, and pedagogical conditions and assumptions that framed the structures and methods of our modern universities remain unchanged.

Learning Reconsidered emphasizes the nature, characteristics, meaning, and application of the work of student affairs as a partner in the broader campus curriculum. It describes the ways in which student affairs affects student outcomes. *Learning Reconsidered* emerges in the context of important predecessors and contemporaries; it builds upon, but is different from, previous statements that focused primarily on student affairs as a profession, and it complements recently completed planning and strategic documents developed or being planned by other organizations in higher education. It is *not* yet another explication of the philosophy of student affairs; instead, it presents the current and future *praxis* of student affairs and affirms the commitments of student affairs to educating the whole student.

The authors acknowledge with respect the challenge of creating change in higher education. We recognize that it has been difficult for many institutions – and divisions of student affairs – to implement all of the excellent recommendations made in earlier documents. We also note with hope the initial successes of both student affairs educators and members of the academic faculty who have engaged the process of changing pedagogy. Regardless of our past accomplishments or disappointments, we are all, as colleagues and educators, now accountable to students and society for identifying and achieving essential student learning outcomes and for making transformative education possible and accessible for all students.

PREFACE

WHAT *LEARNING* MEANS

Learning Reconsidered defines *learning* as a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates *academic learning* and *student development*, processes that have often been considered separate, and even independent of each other. When we say *learning*, then, we do not mean exclusively or primarily academic instruction, the acquisition of disciplinary content, or classroom learning – though the rich definition of learning we use certainly incorporates and includes all of those things. We do *not* say *learning and development* because we do not want to suggest that learning and student development are fundamentally different things, or that one does, or could, occur without the other. Nor do we specify separate, distinct, or categorical learning (in the pure academic sense) and developmental objectives and outcomes. Here we work to bring our terminology, and our way of understanding what student affairs professionals contribute to student outcomes, in line with the findings of current learning research and with our own empirical observations about how learning (as a complex integrated process) occurs among today's students.

TOWARD A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENTS AND LEARNING

Over the past few decades, the profile of American college students has changed dramatically. A much higher proportion of American high school graduates now has access to post-secondary education. At the same time, students entering college today have a far greater variability in preparedness for college-level work than was true in the past. More women, students of color, students from diverse cultural origins, and economically disadvantaged students are now able to attend college; higher education is no longer primarily the privilege of the elite, and its predominant purpose is no longer mostly the preparation of students for the learned professions. Thousands of students from other countries now travel to the US to study, and thousands more US citizens now study abroad. There are more adult college students, some of them far older than traditional undergraduates, and students of all ages now live more complex lives, coping with the competing demands of work, family, classes, and other campus roles, organizations, and activities. More and more students are not just students anymore; many of their responsibilities, commitments, and communities are found off campus.

Knowledge is no longer a scarce – or stable – commodity. Especially in science, engineering, and technical fields, knowledge is changing so rapidly that specific information may become obsolete before a student graduates and has the opportunity to apply it. There are more providers and sources of knowledge, and the development of myriad educational offerings for learners of all ages (from library and museum programs to corporate training) has diversified the structures, purposes, and outcomes of education. Digital technologies and the Internet have made access to knowledge easy and inexpensive, while creating a broad space for competitive claims about the legitimacy and veracity of information.

Our understanding of the educational process, and of learning itself, has also changed. We no longer believe that learning is the passive corollary of teaching, or that students do, or should, simply absorb material presented in lectures and textbooks. The new concept of *learning* recognizes the essential integration of personal development with learning; it reflects the diverse ways through which students may engage, as whole people with multiple dimensions and unique personal histories, with the tasks and content of learning. Student learning produces both educational and developmental outcomes; as King and Baxter Magolda (1996) have asserted, "A successful educational experience simultaneously increases cognitive understanding and a sense of personal maturity and interpersonal effectiveness" (pp. 163-4). Baxter Magolda (1999) emphasizes that "Our vision of learning assumes that distinctions among terms such as personal development, student development, and learning are meaningless, if not destructive," and therefore proposes the "…integration of all domains of learning and involvement of all educators, regardless of their campus role" (p. 39).

Clearly, learning is far more rich and complicated than some of our predecessors realized when they distinguished and separated learning from student life. Seeing students as their component parts (body, mind, spirit), rather than as an integrated whole, supported the emergence of fragmented college systems and structures – academic affairs to cultivate the intellect, and student affairs to tend the body, emotions, and spirit.

Our society expects colleges and universities to graduate students who can get things done in the world and are prepared for effective and engaged citizenship. Both within the academy and among its observers and stakeholders, the need to identify the goals and effects of a college education has produced demands for, and commitments to, specific learning outcomes. *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA 1996), *Principles of Good Practice in Student Affairs* (ACPA and NASPA 1997), and *Powerful Partnerships* (Joint Task Force 1998) emphasized outcomes based on learning research. In *Greater Expectations (*AAC&U 2002)*,* the Association of American Colleges and Universities posits three key learning outcomes that are fundamental to the development of intentional, life long learners in the 21st century: Students should become <u>empowered</u> through the development of many intellectual and practical skills; students must take <u>responsibility</u> for their own learning and their participation in the civic processes of our democracy; and students must become <u>informed</u> about conditions that affect their lives in the US and as citizens of many wider communities. In a different formulation, Baxter Magolda (1999) identifies four dimensions of learning that specify desired outcomes: cognitive competence, intrapersonal competence, interpersonal competence, and practical competence. As we discuss later in this document, other scholars, teachers, and practitioners have developed various additional categorizations and classifications of learning outcomes that emphasize the wholeness of the college experience.

These and other conceptions of outcomes reflect the complexity of the modern process of student learning and can be used as a basis for addressing the two areas identified at the beginning of this preface: our ideas about teaching and learning, and our notions of how to organize and administer institutions of post-secondary education. A truly transformative education repeatedly exposes students to multiple opportunities for intentional learning through the formal academic curriculum, student life, collaborative co-curricular programming, community-based, and global experiences. The writers of

this report hope that we can reframe our collective ideas about learning to embrace both cognitive and non-cognitive processes, and to affirm the contributions of experiential and reflective methods; we encourage our learning institutions to transform their practices as necessary to focus on student learning for the 21st century.

THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION: RESPONDING TO CHANGE

Colleges and universities of all institutional types are challenged by the learning needs, preferences, requirements, styles, and methods of new generations and populations of students, and by the pace and extent of continuing change in the demographics, expectations, purposes, and patterns of those students. Across the broad scope of those differences, institutions must prepare people to become engaged, lifelong learners and effective citizens.

A remarkable number of social and cultural trends, economic forces, population changes, new and emerging technologies, and issues of public policy will have powerful and lasting effects on the ability of colleges and universities to fulfill the demands of their mission and the expectations of their students and constituencies. Consider:

- The "democratization" of higher education, and the effects and implications of nearly universal access (nearly every high school graduate who wishes to continue in, or return for, post-secondary education can find and be admitted to a college; whether every potential applicant can pay for college is a larger question, addressed below).

- Shifting expectations about the locus of responsibility for paying the costs of college education; the idea that one generation is responsible for educating the next is yielding to an assumption that students themselves must earn or locate the resources to pay for higher education.

- Diminishing financial support for college students and for institutions; the opening of access to higher education has not included a similar broadening of available financial resources to pay for the costs of college. Too many students who are eligible for admission cannot matriculate – or must leave school – because of financial limitations.

- The complex and unstabilizing effects of both temporary and long-term economic trends and responses to them in public policy – an uncertain job market, the establishment of state lotteries and funded scholarships, restructuring of federal student aid, changes in financial aid policy that favor students whose families own their own homes at the expense of students who must rent housing, cycles of limitation in state budgets, the performance of college endowments, and demands for the imposition of governmental controls on the rate or level of increases in college tuition and fees.

- The diversification of students (in demographic categories, socioeconomic status, degree of preparation for college work, needs for support services while in school, and motives for post-secondary education); note for example, rapid changes in the racial and ethnic identities of students, especially in states with large Hispanic and Asian populations.

- A growing emphasis on the unique needs of returning adult learners and of graduate and professional students

- The development of new kinds of post-secondary institutions and of novel programs and formats of study – for-profit universities, distance learning programs, and executive education, as examples – and the inevitability of competition among providers of knowledge.

- Changing expectations about the outcomes of a college education (from students, parents, trustees, legislators, employers, and others); progressively increasing expectations for accountability in the assessment of college outcomes by students and their families, for institutional accreditation, and in public funding.

- The increasing influence of governing boards and legislatures in the priorities and operations of institutions.

- A return to greater degrees of involvement by parents in their sons' and daughters' college experience, often coupled with more robust expectations for institutional flexibility, on the one hand, and enhanced services, on the other.

- The continuing evolution of information technologies and their broad and increasing application in campus administration, teaching, research, and student services; students' growing use of multiple digital technologies for communications, entertainment, and socialization, as well as for academic work.

- The implications of learning research (especially psychological and neurobiological studies) and of emerging empirical and theoretical conceptualizations of learning at various stages of the life cycle; more generally, trends in the place, role, and priority of conventional classroom learning – and the institution of new learning models in college courses (such as experiential education, service learning, and student research).

- The development of global economies, corporations, and citizenships, and, in parallel, the general recognition in society of the need for global and cultural competencies in college graduates.

- Changing patterns and commitments in the faculty – especially the disaggregation of faculty responsibilities (especially, the separation of teaching from research in research universities), greater use of part-time and adjunct professors, and the interest of many faculty in educational reforms, such as improving teaching and classroom

processes, fostering civic engagement, and exploring interactive, engaged pedagogies.

- Administrative and divisional restructuring within and between colleges and universities, including realignments, reorganizations, and mergers.

These factors do, and will, influence learning itself; they will affect the structure and content of college curricula, the nature of campus learning environments, and the methods, systems, and services colleges and universities develop to support student learning. Most important, they will continue to influence the ways in which post-secondary institutions define, produce, and measure learning outcomes across the growing range and diversity of student types, purposes, and expectations.

LEARNING ON CAMPUS YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Learning is a complex, holistic, multi-centric activity that occurs throughout and across the college experience. Student development, and the adaptation of learning to students' lives and needs, are fundamental parts of engaged learning and liberal education. True liberal education requires the engagement of the whole student – and the deployment of every resource in higher education.

THE DIVERSITY OF LEARNERS ON CAMPUS

Different institutions are experiencing change in the demographics and characteristics of student learners to different degrees. On certain campuses – some small, private liberal arts colleges, for example – students may be more like their predecessors than different from them, and some of the trends discussed earlier will have had relatively less influence. On the other hand, many two-year institutions have been adapting to changes in the nature of their student populations since their founding and continue to experience significant effects from the rapidly changing features, preferences, and needs of students.

Even in colleges that have student populations with more or less stable demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, there have been dramatic changes in the learning environment and in the ways, places, and times in which learning happens. Students who look like earlier generations in their demographic profiles are often very different from their predecessors in learning styles. The impact of digital technologies, for example, is felt as strongly in small, private liberal arts schools as in large state universities. Learning – and student outcomes – must be reconsidered everywhere, not just on campuses that enroll more diverse populations of students.

As noted earlier, student populations are becoming more obviously diverse with regard to age, ethnic and national origin, family configuration, socioeconomic status, reason for enrollment, level of pre-college preparation, and full or part time student status. The widening of educational opportunity has brought more first generation students to college. Given this diversity – and our new knowledge about learning – it has become increasingly important to balance our educational emphasis on *teaching* with an equal focus on *learning*. When college study was predominantly a full-time activity, a period

of preparation for adult responsibility, a focus on teaching in traditional classrooms and laboratories made more sense. Students learned in class and considered what their new knowledge meant to them personally outside of class in informal conversations and settings. But more of today's students in many kinds of institutions are increasingly working college into the rest of their very busy lives. For many of them, student status has shifted from a statement about personal identity to a simple specification of how a person spends a segment of his or her waking hours. While some of these observations and trends are not new, we have not yet fully recognized their significance – or responded to them effectively and systematically.

An increasing proportion of today's students are adults who have been learning all their lives. Many have significant life experience before college (such as marriage, divorce, blending families, work, unemployment, paying bills, caring for relatives, coping with loss, and travel abroad) – and their life experiences have taught and changed them. All of them continue to live lives outside of college itself. These trends, familiar in two-year institutions for decades, are now commonplace in four-year colleges and universities as well. Graduate and professional students have exhibited many of those characteristics all along – as older and returning students, their disciplinary preparation and their experiential learning as adults have always been integrated, whether or not our institutions recognized and responded to that reality – and our universities are just beginning to assess, understand, and address their needs as learners. As long as a systematic process exists for developing and communicating knowledge, critiquing knowledge and assessing what is learned, learning situated in their life experience can be – but too often is not – brought into the college experience.

OUR CURRENT PATTERNS OF ORGANIZING LEARNING

In the context of this increasing diversity of learners on campus, the typical fragmentation of college life, curriculum, and organization becomes problematic and the purpose of college attendance mostly instrumental. Typically, both undergraduate and graduate students attend colleges and universities to get a degree so that they can get better jobs. Increasingly, the time they spend on campus is directly related to the classroom hours required by the courses they are taking, how much information the library has on-line and how much has to be acquired in person, the availability of student parking, and the distance between parking lots and classrooms. These students' primary social networks may not be on campus, and, unless someone creates opportunities or mandates that they talk to each other or do projects together, most have no overriding motivation (and little time) to discuss what they are learning with each other, student affairs educators, or their teachers. In other parts of their lives there may be no one who is interested in discussing their studies with them. This kind of "learning" can easily become a matter of taking notes in a classroom but not looking at those notes or thinking about what was discussed until a paper or a test is scheduled. To the extent that such students and assumptions have become common on many of our campuses, the notion of education has been reified – and learning as a more abstract process has suffered and lost visibility as a process, because education is a "thing" that people can "get" and possession is signified by a piece of paper documenting that which has been acquired. Some kinds of education have in fact become commodified, and can now be purchased in units from entrepreneurs.

Currently, academic education is most often organized into general education requirements, major requirements and electives. The curriculum is usually structured around conventional categories that are meaningful to the academy, but it does not necessarily address issues that are meaningful to students in relation to their own self-described learning needs, learning styles, or interests. Most colleges and universities require their students to take a group of general education courses that are supposed to integrate knowledge from different disciplines and expand a student's understanding of the wider world. General education, while based on the philosophy of "the full and creative development of the whole person" (Crookston, 1973, p.50), has not consistently adopted pedagogical approaches by which its holistic purposes could be accomplished; many professors still use rationalist teaching methods and discipline based categories to sort out and communicate knowledge to students. There are, however, encouraging trends; general education reform is a major concern on many campuses, and several professional organizations offer regular programs and conferences to stimulate and support those efforts.

Too often, though, students perceive these mandated "gen ed" courses as puzzling obligations that should be "gotten out of the way" early on in order to get to the real program of study, the major, which prepares a student for a career. While they are often designed to expose students to diverse cultural perspectives and build critical thinking skills, if the content and meaning of such disparate courses make little practical and intuitive sense, and if students rarely have time or space in their lives to integrate the knowledge provided in them in ways that matter in their lives, it is no wonder that going to campus becomes very similar to a trip to the supermarket. You pick up the groceries you need, take them home and nobody but you and your family knows, or cares, how you put them together. Only the relatively scarce resources of academic advisors, faculty members who are able to teach in small seminars, dedicated teachers with an abiding interest in students as learners and people, career counselors, and graduate assistants – any of whom may help students integrate knowledge and inspire their efforts to make meaning – modify these utilitarian outcomes.

Experiences with out-of-classroom learning can, however, be as centrifugal as any general education sequence. On many campuses, students may perceive little coherence in the student affairs curriculum, and individual episodes of acquiring knowledge fragments (such as resume writing, developing group living agreements, or alcohol education) or developmental experiences like leadership in student organizations or volunteer service simply orbit the student's world with little sense of their relationship one to another or to academic courses.

In short, few of the assumptions on which our educational structures and processes were based remain intact in the world of today's students. The degree of this disconnection is profound and has serious implications for both teaching processes and the structures institutions use to help students learn. Today's growing emphasis on integrated learning structures, such as cluster courses and living-learning communities, may in some cases be an acknowledgement of the need to restore the missing holism.

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

Historically, then, our educational practice has emphasized information transfer from faculty to student without a great deal of thought given to the meaning, pertinence, or application of the information in the context of the student's life. Likewise, student affairs educators have often worked with student groups to produce concrete outcomes or good events, such as homecoming or a film series, but have not intentionally or systematically focused on abstract or transferable learning derived from those experiences.

Transformative education instead places the student's reflective processes at the core of the learning experience and asks the student to evaluate both new information and the frames of reference through which the information acquires meaning (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). People acquire their frames of reference through the various influences to which they are exposed as they mature (such as family, other significant adults, social institutions such as religion, school and peer groups) and from the messages, assumptions, and guidelines of their culture.

Frames of reference are also called stories (Parry & Doan, 1994). People compose their own stories about who they are, what life is about, what is going to happen to them and how they should respond to the various challenges life presents. Maturation or development occurs as people become more capable of articulating and critiquing personal stories, reframing them and reshaping their own lives. Kegan (1994) and Baxter Magolda (1999) describe this process as self-authorship and consider it one of the higher levels of the developmental process, a way of making meaning in which people reflect on their lives, their values and their behavior and consider whether or not previous choices remain useful or productive for them. Frames of reference – and, therefore, students' stories – change with growth, emerging or fading in a non-linear way. Mezirow (2000) describes this process as transformative learning, "liberating ourselves from reified forms of thought that are no longer dependable" (p. 27).

The idea of transformative learning reinforces the root meaning of liberal education itself – freeing oneself from the constraints of a lack of knowledge and an excess of simplicity. In the transformative educational paradigm, the purpose of educational involvement is the evolution of multidimensional identity, including but not limited to cognitive, affective, behavioral and spiritual development. *Therefore learning, as it has historically been understood, is included in a much larger context that requires consideration of what students know, who they are, what their values and behavior patterns are, and how they see themselves contributing to and participating in the world in which they live*. This approach to experiential and reflective learning was also described by Kolb (1984) and is exemplified in various service learning programs, learning communities, internships, outdoor education experiences, and volunteer programs that already exist on many college campuses. The holistic educational opportunity that such programs offer is, in most institutions, neither available to all students nor matched by similar approaches in the rest of the traditional curriculum.

To support today's learning outcomes, the focus of education must shift from information transfer to identity development (transformation). When the goals of education are to produce "*intentional learners* who can adapt to new environments, integrate knowledge from difference sources and continue learning throughout their lives" (AAC&U 2002, p.

xi), we must give priority to identity development and to changing the ways in which students conceive their roles, abilities and contributions in the larger society. When we, as educators, expect students to become "*empowered* through the mastery of intellectual and practical skills; *informed* by knowledge about the natural and social worlds and about forms of inquiry basic to these studies; and *responsible* for their personal actions and civic values" (p. xi) we seek identity transformation through reframing belief and value systems. Such an approach to teaching and learning must include the full scope of a student's life. It cannot be accomplished in the classroom alone. It cannot be accomplished out of the classroom alone, either.

In the early 1990s, educators in many community colleges began a series of institution-wide efforts to become *learning-centered.* The concept of "Learning Colleges" grew from these innovations; it emphasizes creating substantive change in individual learners and enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning (O'Banion, 1997). Many of the central assumptions and commitments of the Learning College project have informed and inspired educators in other kinds of institutions to work toward establishing and documenting learning outcomes.

The nature of learning has probably not changed, but our understanding of the learning process has changed significantly. Our previous map for post secondary learning described the terrain of courses, requirements, majors, credit hours, disciplines, workshops, guest speakers, and student activities, all considered more or less discretely. What is needed now is a new map, one that describes how learning occurs, where it occurs, how we can confirm that it is occurring, and what the outcomes of learning are. *In order to achieve this goal, every aspect of student life must be examined and a new configuration of learning processes and outcomes created. All of the resources of the campus must be brought to bear on the student's learning process and learning must be reconsidered.*

In other sections of this paper, we will address methods for creating transformative learning opportunities. The critical element of this section is to point out that *learning, development and identity formation can no longer be considered as separate from each other, but rather that they are interactive and shape each other as they evolve.*

AN INTEGRATED VISION OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
CONTEXT, PROCESS, AND CONTENT

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AS A LEARNING PROCESS

Wheatley (1999) describes knowledge "as a wave, rich in potential interpretation and completely dependent on observers to evoke different meanings" (p.67). The knowledge wave carries not just data, but also the energy of interpretation, application and reflection and reconstruction in much the same way that an ocean wave reshapes a shoreline and moves everything it carries. The shape of the wave and the patterns it leaves on the sand depend, to a certain degree, on the perspective of the observer. The entire system is in constant and dynamic flow. Student development, which is one interpretation of human

development in adulthood, can also be understood as a learning wave. Mezirow (2000) describes development in adulthood "as a learning process- a phased and often transformative process of meaning becoming clarified through expanded awareness, critical reflection, validating discourse, and reflective action as one moves toward a fuller realization of agency" (p. 25). Adults, some of whom are students, constantly acquire information, examine its implications, apply it to areas of understanding and action that are personally significant, and reframe their insights as circumstances evolve through a process of transformative learning.

In traditional student development approaches, this phenomenon has been described by two groups of theories: cognitive structural and psychosocial/identity. Cognitive structural development addresses the evolution of increasingly complex ways of thinking about information, organizing information, using information to justify arguments and ultimately learning to organize data, within particular contexts, to make defensible, but tentative decisions so that reasonable actions can take place (e.g., King & Kitchener, 1994). Psychosocial/identity theories describe the processes by which students think about who they are and how their own sense of self interfaces with the issues life places in their path (e.g., Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Although there was once an element of utility in separating these theories, distinctions between learning and development are no longer helpful and may be destructive (Baxter Magolda, 1999). Transformative learning provides a unified theory of learning and development that transcends outmoded ideas about learning and questions the structure of most institutions of higher education.

Since we know that learning involves the constant search for meaning by acquisition of information, reflection, emotional engagement and active application in multiple contexts, we might have a more helpful view of higher education if we thought of each institution as an integrated system. The purpose of that system is to support learning in various contexts throughout and in some cases beyond the confines of the campus. *Student affairs, in this conceptualization, is integral to the learning process because of the opportunities it provides students to learn through action, contemplation, reflection and emotional engagement as well as information acquisition.* For example, every student club or organization provides learning opportunities for its participants to develop and practice such skills as leadership, time management, collaboration, and goal setting; the specific focus of each organization further provides opportunities to learn new information and to develop recreational or practical skills, from skiing to carpentry.

Just as has been true of educators in community colleges participating in the Learning College movement (O'Banion, 1997), leaders in certain other post-secondary institutions and higher education organizations have become increasingly committed to helping students gain the knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to guide their own learning. Given the frequency with which students now transfer among institutions and the many local variations in the learning contexts of colleges and universities, it is increasingly important for students to become managers of their own learning processes, methods and goals. As the Association of American Colleges and Universities notes in *Greater Expectations* (AAC&U, 2002), answering this need requires that we help students themselves be more intentional learners – e.g., engaging large goals for their learning; exploring and setting expectations for their own accomplishments; acquiring, through guidance, greater capacity for self-reflection and the construction of meaning; developing

personal (sometimes electronic) learning portfolios to document their achievements; and working with advisors and faculty to design educational experiences, such as capstone courses, that integrate their learning activities. Both the preparation of students as intentional learners and the content of their personal learning should be holistic efforts that can be supported mutually by student affairs educators and members of the academic faculty. On each campus, all educators face the challenge of creating systems and structures that will make such preparation possible for all students.

The learning map presented later in this section describes a dynamic process for identifying places and circumstances within the institution where students can learn and make meaning, as they move through various academic, social and institutional activities in pursuit of their own purposes and goals. The map may provide a metaphor, and perhaps a structural guide, for tracking waves of student learning.

MAPPING LEARNING ON CAMPUS

Caine and Caine (1994, 1997), using a concept they call *brain based learning*, developed important new methodologies that serve as a foundation for the mapping approach to student learning. Their concepts have a neurobiological framework – the activation of neural processes that contribute to the deep transformation of cognition and patterning, or meaning making. For such transformative learning to occur, students must 1) enter a state of relaxed alertness, 2) participate in an orchestrated immersion in a complex experience that in some way illustrates phenomena that are connected to the subject and 3) engage in active processing or reflection on the experience. Traditional approaches to learning do not specifically address this integration of external information and internal reflection; new concepts of transformative learning attend closely to the receptivity of the student and the physical conditions in which the student learns.

This kind of transformative learning is what student affairs professionals understand as student development education. *The most important factor is that student development education always occurs in the active context of the students' lives*. Students learn what they need to know to accomplish a particular task such as resolving a conflict, confronting or counseling another student or taking leadership responsibility in a group. Students are in a state of relaxed alertness when they participate in student development education sessions because they know what they need to know and, while challenge may be present, the threat level is low. Although they may receive evaluation and feedback, grading is generally not involved. The complex experiences in which students engage are related to issues of concern to them and are generally enjoyable. These programs typically include opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss how they plan to use what they have learned.

Although incorporating such learning methodologies into the pedagogical approaches that are widely used in academic learning will be complex, the ability of colleges and universities to achieve desired student outcomes depends on it. Certainly changing teaching methods that have been widely used by generations of faculty will be challenging. But, in the interest of students, institutions of higher education must expect professors to move beyond their disciplinary training to focus specifically on the requirements and qualities of learning itself, and to adapt and transform traditional

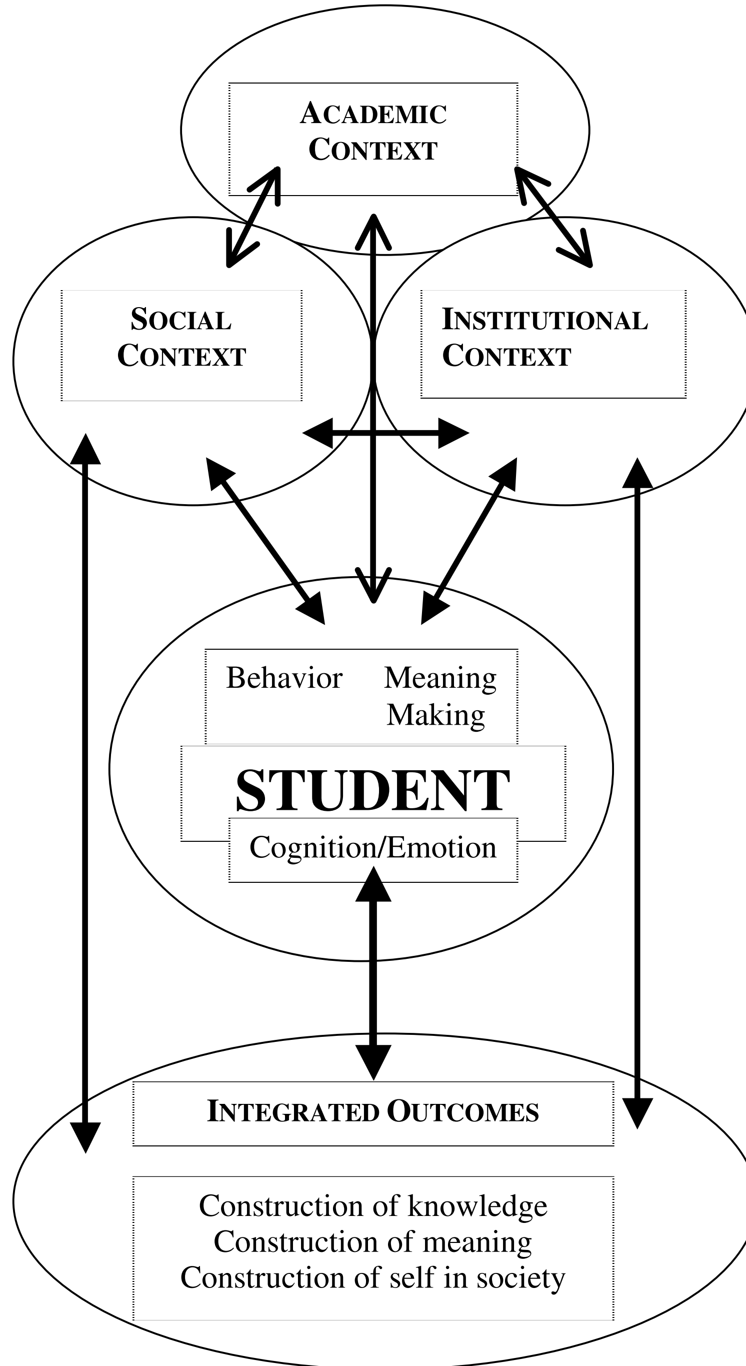
academic learning experiences to better address the needs of today's students. Although traditional approaches to pedagogy may not obviously and easily lend themselves to more engaged methods, some faculty members do use these techniques with great success in the classroom or laboratory. There are many encouraging examples of faculty leadership in transforming traditional pedagogy; new courses, innovative learning modules, and interdisciplinary efforts in colleges of all types prove that changing teaching is possible, and that the results are promising.

It will be essential to provide support for faculty as these good results and promising practices are brought to scale and applied throughout the curriculum. Following (and, perhaps, improving upon) the example of peers will lead other professors to participate in faculty development activities designed to help them learn to use new methods. Student affairs educators can be accessible and flexible consultants, advisors and resources for faculty members who are reconsidering academic learning. The demands on professors have only increased in today's context; more stringent requirements for tenure, higher teaching loads, and the hiring of more adjunct, rather than tenure track, faculty are just a few examples. In too many institutions, criteria for tenure do not recognize achievements in teaching or innovations in pedagogy. But our argument is less about changing tenure criteria – without doubt, a long-term process, awaiting the conclusion of which would unnecessarily and unreasonably delay pedagogical reform – than about changing expectations and accountability. Institutions must be accountable for providing support and resources that will enable all educators to meet new expectations about student learning and to contribute effectively and purposefully to achieving students' holistic learning outcomes. *Both members of the academic faculty and student affairs educators must be prepared to assess and change their work.*

It is quite realistic to consider the entire campus as a learning community in which student learning experiences can be mapped throughout the environment to deepen the quality of learning. Mapping the learning environment for sites in which learning can occur provides one approach to supporting transformative learning that identifies strength in collaboration – linking the best efforts of educators across the institution to support student learning.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF STUDENT LEARNING

(see next page for explanations of elements and domains)



INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF STUDENT LEARNING
EXPLANATION OF DOMAINS

SOCIAL CONTEXT

- Personal relationships
- Group memberships
- Inter-group connections

ACADEMIC CONTEXT

- Opportunities for reflective judgment and critical thinking
- Constructivist classroom teaching methods
- Brain based learning
- Interdisciplinary courses
- Experiential learning
- Integrative conversations with faculty in all domains

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- Opportunity/reward structure- leadership roles, work study positions, teaching and laboratory assistantships, off-campus connections to service and learning
- Campus culture- ethical codes, judicial processes; norms of behavior; annual rituals and celebrations, geographic and economic location

STUDENT

All of these processes are interactive and mutually shaping. We may divide them for purposes of discussion but they occur simultaneously and affect each other constantly.

- Self-referent organizational and developmental processes that support identity evolution and self-authorship
- Emotional elements of personality that respond to the demand for increasing coherence or integrity
- Cognitive elements that support the increasing development of cognitive complexity
- Behavioral elements that include development of enhanced interpersonal, intrapersonal and life-management skills traditionally addressed in student development programs
- Meaning making processes, including thoughts about core values, life goals, vocation, intimacy and, beliefs about the relationship between self and community

ARROWS

- Arrows indicate interactive processes and relationships
- Arrows can also be construed as suggesting an action/reflection cycle
- Arrows connect all phases of this map, signifying the infinite number of interactions which may occur between the student and the environment as well as interactions between various elements of the environment that affect students

The map identifies the potential learning sites students can use to make meaning in their lives through several separate but inherently integrated domains. Three phrases used in the map and its explanatory material may require further definition:

- *Self-referent organizational processes* that support identity formation include responses to external and internal challenges that students face as they evolve – such as issues of intimacy, vocation, and interpersonal competence within and between cultures.

- *Cognitive elements* involve the thought processes that people use to analyze and synthesize information in order to make meaning of a situation or to decide how to respond to it. Cognitive development builds the capacity for reflective judgment (King & Kitchener, 1994), which describes a person's increasing ability to take information and context into account when developing judgments or making decisions.

- *Meaning making processes* are central to holistic, transformative learning. Meaning making comprises students' efforts to comprehend the essence and significance of events, relationships, and learning; to gain a richer understanding of themselves in a larger context; and to experience a sense of wholeness. Meaning making arises in a reflective connection between a person or individual and the wider world.

  (Some scholars refer to *meaning making processes* as *spiritual development* [Parks, 2000], but there is as yet no clear consensus on this point. Other scholars and practitioners believe that meaning making need not be understood as fundamentally spiritual because spirituality conveys a sense of involvement with the supernatural. Spiritual development, also described as spiritual intelligence [Zohar & Marshall, 2000] is currently understood as the process of perceiving and creating a wider sense of meaning and purpose and finding patterns in one's understanding of the universe that help a person connect to a broader context [Fried, 2001]. Spiritual development does not require religious belief or affiliation, though religion provides the structure and frame of reference through which some students experience and express their spiritual development.)

Service learning programs are familiar initiatives that demonstrate the process of taking advantage of context and intentional design of learning experiences. Students are immersed in *community service*, either as volunteers or in conjunction with courses in a wide range of disciplines, through working at homeless shelters, youth support programs, HIV/AIDS community service organizations. welfare to work training sites, and many others. In any community service setting, bidirectional, transactional learning occurs – the clients learn and benefit from their relationship with students, and vice versa. But real *service learning* – which implies that transformation will occur – happens when a seminar or opportunity for reflection (through journaling, conversation with other students or with the people they serve, or additional reading) is part of the total service experience, while *community service* alone leaves the issue of transformation to chance. The contemplative or reflective process leads to insight about the origin of the circumstances in which the recipients of service find themselves. How did a person become homeless? What does the student have in common with the homeless person?

What are the wider social structures that have nudged one person toward homelessness and another toward privilege? Reflection on these profound questions provide an opportunity for collaboration between academic faculty and student affairs professionals because of the experience that these professionals have in helping students reflect on their life experience and derive meaning from the events of their daily lives.

Student affairs professionals can also help connect academic learning to student life if they are conscious of the courses their students are taking and what they are learning. For example, a very powerful conversation can occur about race among students of African descent from the Caribbean, the United States and modern Africa. The conversation becomes more powerful if the facilitator knows the history of some of the issues, what the students have been studying, and how to integrate this knowledge into their conversations about personal and group relations. These kinds of connections are represented on the map by the arrows. In addition, student affairs professionals have the skill to serve as faculty development resources in the areas of classroom dynamics, the design of experiential education, knowledge about student development processes and the process of academic and career advisement. On any particular campus, many more opportunities for student affairs professionals to serve as consultants to the faculty may exist because of issues specific to that campus. In every case initiation of collaborative efforts must be preceded by professional development activities designed to develop a common language and common goals among the people who are working together in a campus wide educational process. Every faculty member and student affairs professional who is involved in this approach to transformative education must have a sense of her or his role, or location on the map, and a broader sense of the roles of others and of the entire process. *Powerful Partnerships* (1998) contains numerous examples of such collaborations.

Making experiential connections from the academic environment to other domains of student life may follow a reverse course, but the consequences of integration are similar; they contribute to students' ability to make sense of the learning process and of new information and perspectives. Because of our typically empiricist and positivist approach to teaching and learning, many *classroom opportunities* for involvement in the construction of knowledge and meaning are lost (hooks, 1994). In a parallel process to the engagement of student affairs professionals in the cognitive domains of student conversations, members of the academic faculty can – and now often do – engage students in conversations about feelings, patterns of meaning, and exploration of personal consequences of the information they are studying. For example, an increasing emphasis on civic engagement in some undergraduate science courses helps students consider and address both the personal and civic meanings and implications of scientific thought, processes, and conclusions.

As the map also suggests, student affairs professionals have opportunities to integrate academic achievements into participation in collaborative co-curricular programming, through extended orientation courses (such as those required of resident assistants, peer counselors, and peer educators or given as a precondition for service learning experiences) and noncredit or credit training programs for student leaders, student employees, orientation guides, and others. Every institution can benefit from the joint participation of academic and student affairs in committees that deal with matters that

legitimately need the ideas and experience of "both sides of the house" such as academic integrity, health education, academic progress and retention, civil behavior on campus, and the oversight of student athletic programs. Creating structures that integrate all dimensions of campus life in focusing on a particular area demonstrates to students that they are seen as whole persons regarding the issues that each committee addresses. Finally, every group and constituency on campus has some pertinent interest in campus culture and the ethical climate of the institution. Student affairs professionals can lead efforts to assess, describe, or improve either of these elements as part of a long term campus conversation about the ways students learn that are not explicitly defined as teaching (Banning, 1997; Brown, 1987; Fried, 1995).

GOALS AND OUTCOMES OF A TRANSFORMATIVE LIBERAL EDUCATION

DEFINING INTEGRATED, INTERTWINED ACADEMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

As we consider the evolution of our understanding of learning as an integrated and transformative act, we must address a key question: Is there a consensus about identifiable competencies and skills that students who complete an undergraduate degree should have? Clearly identifying these competencies and skills, describing the context within which they can be acquired and demonstrated, mapping the process through which students will gain them, and specifying ways in which their incremental development will be tracked and evaluated, will help students make sense of the institution's curriculum and academic requirements and provide an important guide to the institution's goals and commitments.

Can our students think with sufficient complexity to understand the world they live in? Do our students have enough skill in evaluating evidence that they can make judgments and take action even though they may not be sure that there is a single "right" way to do things? Do our students know who they are, what they value, and how to relate to others who are different? Do they know how to resolve conflicts effectively? Can they compare the conditions and outcomes of working in a particular field with their own sense of values and their desire to contribute in a particular way to the community? Do they know how to learn? Can they manage their own learning?

Each college might choose to emphasize one or another of these to a greater degree but no institution concerned about the education of the whole student would exclude any of them. There will, however, inevitably be much greater variation in the content and context of institutions' ways of accomplishing associated developmental outcomes. Every campus has a particular set of values and principles that derive coherently from its mission, and that it hopes its graduates will manifest through the rest of their lives. Faith based institutions will have a different approach from secular institutions. Technical schools will emphasize different areas than liberal arts colleges. The population that an institution serves may influence its developmental goals and methods – first generation students, students with learning disabilities, women, men, or students from specific ethnic groups. But every campus should be ready to define and measure its desired student outcomes.

Student affairs – in every institutional context, and for every demographic group of students – works in partnership with the academic faculty to clarify or define and achieve satisfaction of broadly desirable, student-focused educational goals; the success of this work results both from the unique competencies, experiences, and expertise of student affairs and from ways in which student affairs supports the work of learning that is done everywhere in the institution.

Some of these educational goals include:

- Engaged citizenship; community service, social justice, and participatory involvement
- Career planning
- Ethical approaches to business, relationships, problem-solving, and conflict
- Practical leadership
- Emotional intelligence
- Critical thinking; evaluating sources of information
- Informed decision-making
- Working in teams and groups; conflict resolution
- Cultural competency and cross-cultural understanding
- Tolerance of ambiguity

There are several approaches to understanding and classifying these goals, as described in earlier sections. In Table I, we categorize them in relationship to 7 broad desired learning outcomes; each of those outcomes has associated content, experiences, or competencies.

TABLE I
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES*

STUDENT OUTCOMES*	DIMENSIONS OF OUTCOMES**	SAMPLE DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES FOR LEARNING	BODIES OF KNOWLEDGE FOR EDUCATORS
Cognitive complexity	Critical thinking, reflective thinking, effective reasoning, intellectual flexibility, emotion/cognition integration, identity/cognition integration	Classroom teaching, readings and discussions; campus speakers; problem based learning; action research; study abroad; learning communities; living-learning communities; campus newspaper and media; cultural advocacy groups; LGBT awareness programs; diversity programs; group work in diverse teams; judicial board involvement	Cognitive development, identity development, interpersonal sensitivity, neurolinguistics, epistemology, reflective judgment, orders of consciousness, pedagogy
Knowledge acquisition, integration, and application	Understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines (acquisition); connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences (integration); relate knowledge to daily life (application); pursuit of lifelong learning; career decidedness; technological competence	Majors, minors, general education requirements, certificate programs; laboratories; action research; research teams; service learning; group projects; internships; jobs (on/ off campus); career development courses and programs; living-learning communities; Web-based information search skills; activities programming boards (e.g. film, concerts); drama, arts, and music groups; literary magazines; special teams and activities (e.g. solar car, Model UN)	Experiential learning, Cognitive development, identity development, interpersonal sensitivity, neurolinguistics, epistemology, learning theory; career development
Humanitarianism	understanding and appreciation of human differences; cultural competency; social responsibility	diverse membership of student organizations; inter-group dialogue programs; service learning; community-based learning; cultural festivals; identity group programming (e.g. LGBT); ally programs; programs on world religions; study abroad; interdisciplinary courses; curriculum transformation	Racial identity development, multicultural competence, sexual/gender/ affectational identity development; campus climate; reflective judgment, orders of consciousness, moral development, cognitive development
Civic Engagement	sense of civic responsibility; commitment to public life through communities of practice; engage in principled dissent; effective in leadership	Involvement in student organizations; service learning; various student governance groups like student government/ resident hall government/ commuter student association; sports teams; community based organizations (e.g. PTA, neighborhood coalitions); emerging leader programs; leadership courses; open forums; teach-ins; activism and protest; community standards codes; student judicial boards; involvement in academic department/ major; identity	Leadership theory, socio-political theory, community development, group dynamics, organizational development and change theory, moral development, orders of consciousness

		with campus community	
Interpersonal and intrapersonal competence	Realistic self appraisal and self understanding; personal attributes such as identity, self esteem, confidence, ethics and integrity, spiritual awareness, personal goal setting; meaningful relationships; interdependence; collaboration; ability to work with people different from self	Identity based affinity groups; personal counseling; academic/life planning; roommate dialogues; individual advising; support groups; peer mentor programs; religious life programs and youth groups; student led judicial boards; paraprofessional roles (e.g. resident assistants, peer tutors, sexual assault advisors, peer mentor programs); disability support services; student employment; classroom project groups; classroom discussions	Psychosocial theory; identity development; interpersonal sensitivity; multiple intelligences; spiritual development, moral and ethical development
Practical competence	Effective communication; capacity to manage one's personal affairs; economic self-sufficiency and vocational competence; maintain personal health and wellness; prioritize leisure pursuits; living a purposeful and satisfying life	Campus recreation programs; food service and health center programs; drug and alcohol education; career development courses and programs; financial planning programs; club sports and recreation programs; senior council transition programs; personal counseling; academic/ personal advising; portfolios; senior capstone course	Psychosocial theory; self-efficacy; career development; spiritual development; self-authorship
Persistence and academic achievement	Manage the college experience to achieve academic and personal success; leading to academic goal success including degree attainment	Learning skills; bridge programs; peer mentoring; faculty and staff mentoring; supplemental instruction-tutoring; orientation programs; academic advising; financial aid; disability support services; parents' programs; child care services	Retention theory, person-environment fit, socialization, family systems

* *Learning Reconsidered* defines *learning* as a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates *academic learning* and *student development*, processes that have often been considered separate, and even independent of each other

** The outcomes and their dimensions are drawn from Baxter Magolda, 1999; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004); CAS, 2003; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002; Kuh, 1993; Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin-Gvurnek; McEwen, 2003; National Panel, AAC&U, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Schroeder, 2003; Schuh & Whitt, 1999; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996; and Whitt, 1999.

INTEGRATED LEARNING/DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES: WAYS AND MEANS

Transformative learning outcomes are accomplished through as many different pathways as there are students on campus. As illustrated in the Conceptual Map (Figure I), learning and developmental opportunities abound across campus, in the local and regional community, across the world, and in cyberspace. The most focused and coherent outcomes are accomplished when students design a plan (e.g., compose a life) that takes advantage of the learning experiences facilitated by peers and campus educators. Skilled educators (e.g., academic advisors, counselors, career development advisors, faculty, residence hall directors) help students develop a plan and build their experiences considering the challenge and support they need to succeed, and help them reflect and make meaning about the learning from those experiences. Older peers become guides and supports in these learning processes.

Transformative learning outcomes are complex and cumulative. These outcomes result from the knowledge, attitudes, and skills learned in the classroom, experiences across the campus community, interactions with peers, and off campus activities. Students' experiences, including orientation, core courses, sports teams, campus activities, peer tutoring, residence hall floor programs, service learning, internships, action research, and capstone courses all interact to help students achieve college learning outcomes.

A clear theme in this paper is that *no single arena of experience is solely responsible for producing these college outcomes*. All areas of college engagement provide opportunities for student learning and development. The following examples illustrate the concepts presented in the preceding section.

- Student affairs and academic affairs partnerships for learning and developmental opportunities: These "powerful partnerships," usually jointly planned, combine knowledge acquisition and experiential learning to promote more complex outcomes. They include, as examples, living-learning programs, career development, service learning, learning support programs, academic and personal advising, cultural identity development, internships, study abroad, film festivals, socio-political programs, honor code and campus integrity systems, campus media, culture festivals, teach-ins, and support services for students with disabilities.

- Student affairs learning and developmental opportunities: These opportunities are primarily the responsibility of student affairs professionals and include student leadership development, student governance, intramural and recreation programs, health and wellness programs, personal counseling, and co-curricular programming that builds a sense of community.

- Academic learning and developmental opportunities: These opportunities are primarily the responsibility of faculty and other academic affairs educators. They include classroom knowledge acquisition, laboratory and small group research, capstone integrative courses, literary magazines, art exhibits, drama, theater and

music productions, and academic clubs.

Table I outlines specific learning outcomes, provides a description of those outcomes, offers examples of how the institution can develop them, and suggests various bodies of knowledge that serve as foundations for the design of learning experiences that support the outcomes.

DESIGNING THE FUTURE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student affairs will have broad roles, both conceptually and practically, in implementing transformative, integrated liberal education. Those roles, taken together, might be considered student affairs educational programs and services. Achieving the potential of these services requires that we broaden and diversify the understanding of learning now held by many faculty members and administrators – and some student affairs practitioners. It is unlikely that current faculty reward systems (especially promotion and tenure) will change substantially or quickly; student affairs will find ways and means to work effectively with faculty colleagues within the constraints of those systems.

The areas of work and influence of student affairs identified earlier can also be understood as informing several cultures in student affairs – student learning, student development, student services, and student administration (Blimling, 2002); the relative strength and contributions of those cultures vary depending on institutional type and context. These cultures comprise a kind of continuum, in which each is an emphasis, rather than a unique and defined territory. Taken together, they address the various ways in which learning happens and the ways in which learning and learning environments can be created and supported.

Many issues, trends, and concerns will shape and influence the work of student affairs in the future. We note the following as examples – not as a list of best practices, and not necessarily as recommendations:

- New organizational structures in higher education – especially centers, programs, and experimental collaborations that incorporate innovative learning methods that do not reflect or reinforce the traditional dichotomies of student/academic affairs, inside/outside the classroom learning, and curriculum/co-curriculum. Student affairs educators will have the opportunity to collaborate with members of the academic faculty in designing and developing various versions of these new structures, each organized to fit the needs of a particular campus and its students.

- A greater diversity of administrative arrangements, including:

    - Traditional administrative structures (with a senior academic officer and senior student affairs officer each reporting to the president); the historical strengths and advantages of this arrangement can be supplemented by various innovative cross-campus educational programs, centers, and projects in a partnership model that provides collaborative learning

opportunities for students and establishes shared desired student outcomes.

  - New positions and roles, such as a Vice President for Educational Programs; the portfolio of such new positions may include the conscious and thoughtful integration of academic and developmental experiences. Both a senior student affairs officer and the senior academic officer, or provost, might report to such a position.

  - Intentional collaboration between the senior academic officer (provost, dean, or vice president for academic affairs) and the senior student affairs officer (dean or vice president). In some cases, this might lead to organizational rearrangements that place student affairs in the portfolio of the senior academic officer – and therefore also to the need to develop innovative and effective ways to maintain the voice and influence of students, and of student affairs, at the president's table in those circumstances. We caution, however, that such restructuring should be implemented only if truly transformative practices connecting the academic and student life areas are intended; otherwise such rearrangements are fraught with the dangers of further fragmentation and the disappearance of the voice of students and their holistic needs from the President's cabinet.

- New responsibilities of student affairs professionals as full partners in assessing and researching the student experience and college outcomes.

- The development of student affairs as a source of key information about students, students' lives, and student learning.

- Student affairs partnerships in coordinated knowledge networks across the institution to improve results in broad areas such as cultural competency, diversity, leadership, career planning, and retention.

- A new campus emphasis at comprehensive institutions on the graduate student experience; assessing and understanding graduate student needs, barriers to degree completion, and required pre-professional skills (e.g., leadership) for career success; creating graduate student affairs support systems.

- An expansion of the definition and responsibility of academic advising to include helping students design a college experience that will lead to the learning outcomes they and the institution seek; in parallel, providing additional training or preparation for academic advisors (many of whom are members of the faculty) for this expanded role.

- New roles for students, student governments, and student organizations in improving learning environments and outcomes.

- The linkage of broader and more diverse professional preparation in student affairs with new roles on campus; greater coordination of graduate preparation with practice through ongoing professional development activities.

- Greater roles – and new expectations – of student affairs in developing new sources of funding, including gifts, grants, contracts, and research awards.

- New ways of arranging and providing essential services (such as integrating all health-related programs and services in ways that respond to the needs of the whole student)

- Explicit expectations that the consumer service functions of student affairs will be managed according to best business practices

- Identifying and publishing best practices for outsourcing specific student services in ways that have retained their contributions to student learning.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

LEADERSHIP IN ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

Student affairs must lead broad, collaborative institutional efforts to assess overall student learning and to track, document, and evaluate the role of diverse learning experiences in achieving comprehensive college learning outcomes. Assessment should be a way of life – part of the institutional culture. Far too often, institutional assessment is motivated by external variables (e.g., accreditation review), rather than by staff and faculty's internal motivation to determine when, how, why, and where their students learn. As important partners in the development and support of students' learning and learning environments, student affairs professionals have a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead and participate in the comprehensive, systematic, and consistent assessment and evaluation of student learning in all domains. Such assessment, when properly planned, implemented, and evaluated, can help institutions set priorities, allocate resources, and work to enhance student learning. An institution's staff and faculty need to recognize the college's impact on learning, be committed to assessing and evaluating the various aspects of student learning, and then work together to make the best use of the information gained.

Faculty and student affairs administrators need to define together in explicit terms the student learning outcomes that their institution aspires to provide (Building Communities, 1988). An earlier section addresses the development of these outcomes, and Table I provides a summary of some of the most important ones. The institution's overall educational goals and desired student outcomes need to be clearly defined, simply stated, attainable, and meaningful. Student affairs staff should then ensure that their own departmental goals (including provisions for programs, activities, and services) articulate intended outcomes and assessment plans as they support the institution's overall

educational goals. This approach ensures that decisions are not completed in isolation and that the efforts of all campus educators are aligned.
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With the many factors contributing to student learning outcomes, it is critical that academic and student affairs staff use innovative methods to achieve effective assessment. It is also important that assessment methods focus primarily on *student learning* rather than on student satisfaction. Although satisfaction assessments provide data on a student's fulfillment, the evidence they produce does not inform others about how students learn and what they know.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND METHODS

Assessment tools should include – but not be limited to – formal written inventories, questionnaires and web surveys; faculty, staff, and mentors' observations of student behavior; peer assessments; information gained from individual interviews, presentations, journals, and portfolios; and data gathered from group work, focus groups, and case studies. Co-curricular transcripts can also provide a record of experiences designed to promote and assess various leadership skills. Particular consideration should be given to creating and using rubrics, which provide comprehensive, detailed descriptions of what students have or have not learned. They also help students understand what they are or are not learning. Rubrics challenge the user to determine the levels of growth and learning that would be assessed as well as the methods to assess student learning at various stages (Bresciani, 2003). Follow-up assessments such as graduate, employer, and alumni studies are also important, because they provide valuable information about how well students have retained and applied what they have learned. These direct and indirect methods outside the classroom, coupled with similar strategies within the classroom, can help give a clearer and richer understanding of learning that occurs at various stages and paces – resulting in information of interest and use to both internal and external constituencies.

As they help to design assessment plans, student affairs educators should recognize that some learning outcomes related to personal and social growth are difficult to measure – for example, understanding of diversity, self-understanding, and appreciation of human differences. But outcomes like those that are difficult to define and measure are at times more important in student learning than are some clearly stated, more easily measured ones. Innovative methods such as peer assessments can be helpful in these circumstances. In keeping with this attention to student development, student affairs professionals need to work closely with their faculty colleagues to help create classroom conditions that support and assess social and personal development as well as traditional learning. Such a partnership intentionally focuses on the creation of cooperative learning environments that have a greater unified institutional approach to student performance. It also challenges student affairs educators to reinforce factors that enhance learning outside the classroom and to integrate this information throughout the institution.

PARTNERSHIPS IN ASSESSMENT

As part of the assessment process, faculty and student affairs educators should also work together to complete conceptual mapping of student learning, collaboratively identifying

activities inside and outside the classroom that focus upon and contribute to specifically defined learning objectives (see Figure I for an example). This process increases faculty awareness of opportunities available throughout the institution that support and supplement learning objectives (Maki, 2002). As with learning communities, this mapping approach identifies and connects student learning with a variety of experiences and helps determine whether students are learning what the institution values. Based on the evidence collected, student affairs educators should continuously work to identify new and different ways to map learning opportunities.

Finally, it is essential that the processing of all assessment data not be completed in isolation. Student affairs and academic affairs educators must work in teams to evaluate and understand the actual outcomes. These data provide invaluable information not only on what students are learning but also on how programs, classroom instruction, activities, and services should be improved.

In order to facilitate continuous improvements, the assessment data must be used in a timely fashion. However, it is critical that time be allowed for discourse that focuses on findings, allows for reflection, and prompts innovative action. Results should be shared in order to encourage inquiry and discussion, creating an interactive assessment cycle that places value on faculty and staff efforts as well as on student feedback. Such a cycle engages academic and student affairs educators, empowers them to continue assessment, and closes the assessment loop. With such collaborative on-going efforts to assess student learning, student affairs professionals and their colleagues can move forward toward their shared goal of achieving student success.

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Implementation of the learning agenda outlined in this report will require that individuals responsible for student learning, including student affairs professionals, academic administrators, faculty, and academic advisors (who may be faculty members, academic administrators, or student affairs educators), have a common knowledge base upon which to build strong learning communities. While the educational preparation of student affairs professionals must focus on in-depth knowledge of these topics, it is equally important that members of the academic community be informed about the context of higher education, theories of student development and learning, factors that contribute to student success and retention, and characteristics and needs of diverse student populations. They must also possess multicultural sensitivity and skills to work with the increasingly diverse student population entering higher education. Since many academic administrators and advisors do not receive formal education in these areas, institutions of higher education must encourage and provide professional development to assist them in gaining this knowledge base and related skills. Higher education institutions might look to student affairs graduate preparation programs and faculty development offices for consultation regarding ongoing staff development for academic personnel. Individuals in these positions must also seek out opportunities for learning about students, the campus environment, and the context of higher education.

Clearly, student affairs professionals have a particular responsibility for ensuring that institutions of higher education become true learning communities committed to providing transformative educational experiences for all students. Colleges and universities must be assured that student affairs professionals are fully prepared to assume this role. To do so, student affairs professionals must first see themselves as educators who possess the knowledge and skills necessary to design, implement, and carry out learner-centered approaches in collaboration with faculty and students. Development of these attitudes, knowledge bases, and skills is the responsibility of graduate preparation programs in student affairs in conjunction with student affairs divisions and professional associations. Preparation programs must provide the foundational learning for student affairs educators but ongoing professional development is critical to insure that professionals remain current with regard to the needs of our constantly changing student population, the specific opportunities and challenges of two-year, four-year, and comprehensive institutions, and the higher education context. Student affairs divisions have a responsibility to support such staff development financially and through assigning high priority to staff development initiatives, and by rewarding staff who stay current in their field. Student affairs professional associations have a particular responsibility to develop cutting edge educational programs, conferences, and workshops to introduce student affairs professionals to new learning.

EDUCATING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

Student affairs professionals require a comprehensive education to accomplish the outcomes outlined in this report. The particular educational needs of student affairs professionals will of course vary depending on their position and level within the institution. Masters level preparation for individuals who will be working in entry level and midlevel student affairs positions must provide a broad introduction and foundation to the student affairs field and its required attitudes, knowledge bases, and skills while doctoral level education designed to prepare professionals for senior level administrative positions in student affairs must of necessity be more specialized, complex, and analytic.

Any professional working within a student affairs division, including those in specialty areas such as campus security, health service, or counseling services, must have an understanding of the higher education context, including the varieties and different histories, missions, and roles of all types of post-secondary educational institutions and the characteristics, needs, and developmental issues of students, and the role of their unit in enhancing student learning. *While professionals in specialty areas most likely will possess advanced degrees in their area of expertise, the expectation must be that they obtain a basic understanding of the environment in which they work, the students with whom they work, and the desired outcomes of their work.* Professional development opportunities must be provided for these specialists to learn about the higher education setting, constituencies, and purposes since it is unlikely that their formal education will provide this information.

A comprehensive education in student affairs will insure that professionals graduate with appropriate skills and attitudes as well as knowledge. Student affairs professionals must have a strong sense of agency (Mezirow, 2000) if they are to work in a proactive and collaborative manner with institutional partners to create the powerful learning

environments for which this report calls. To develop a sense of agency, student affairs professionals must possess cognitive, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and practical competence (Baxter Magolda, 1999). The Greater Expectations report (National Panel, 2002) suggests that students should leave higher education as empowered, responsible, and informed citizens. Student affairs professionals should leave graduate preparation programs with these same attributes.

The recently published Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education "Blue Book" (2003) now reflects an outcomes-based approach to 30 functional areas and the preparation of student affairs professionals. The "Blue Book" notes specific outcomes that students in our graduate programs should achieve related to *foundational studies*, including historical, philosophical, ethical, cultural, and research foundations; *professional studies* in the areas of student development theory, student characteristics and effects of college on students, individual and group interventions, organization and administration of student affairs, and assessment, evaluation, and research; and *supervised practice*. The CAS Standards, however, still focus heavily on content knowledge related to student affairs. As noted earlier, affective and behavioral outcomes are equally important.

Looking at the seven broad outcomes that we identified earlier for student learning provides guidance concerning the competencies that student affairs professionals should possess.

- To develop *cognitive complexity* in students' thinking, student affairs professionals must be able to think in complex ways. As Baxter Magolda (1999) noted, cognitive competence includes "critical thinking, complex meaning making, intellectual flexibility, reflective judgment and the ability to apply knowledge" (p. 39). In addition to possessing these skills, student affairs professionals must also be familiar with various learning theories (e.g., Mezirow, brain based approaches, Kolb, Gardner, and others), theories of cognitive development (e.g., Perry, Baxter Magolda, King & Kitchener), and development theories that foreground identity (e.g., psychosocial theories, typology theory, theories of social identity development, spiritual development theories) and be able to use them to guide student affairs practice designed to enhance cognitive complexity.

- To enhance *knowledge acquisition and application*, student affairs professionals must have a comprehensive understanding of the higher education environment, its organizational structure, and the issues and concerns facing various constituencies such as faculty, business administrators, and academic administrators. They must understand career development theory and be able to apply it to the design of career development interventions. They must be familiar with the knowledge bases (e.g. community development, conflict resolution) behind their professional practice.

- To advance *humanitarianism,* student affairs professionals must be sensitive to and appreciative of diversity. They must respect different ways of processing and learning information. They must be familiar with and able to apply theories of social justice, social identity development, group development, and interpersonal communication. They must be multi-culturally competent, possess programming skills, and be able to

work effectively with diverse groups. Finally, they must be able to understand and address the cultural context within which their students live and learn.

- Helping students to become *engaged citizens* will require that student affairs professionals have knowledge of student development theories, particularly focusing on the needs of students at various points in their development, leadership development approaches, intervention strategies, social contexts, and organizational theory. They will also need to be competent at advising and motivating students, at helping students to process information and experiential learning using critical thinking and reflective judgment. They must understand how to be advocates and change agents. They need skills in consultation and collaboration and should be able to convey these skills to students. Underlying these skills must be the ability to sensitively and effectively convey values of equity and social justice.

- Assisting students in the development of i*nterpersonal and intrapersonal competence* requires knowledge of basic counseling theories and skills and the ability to use them effectively. Student affairs professionals must be aware of identity, spiritual, and career development theories as well as general theories of the components of holistic development. They must be sensitive to cultural differences and have a respect for individuals who possess values and beliefs different from their own. Their work must have a strong ethical foundation and they must be able to work effectively with individuals from all backgrounds at various developmental levels, and with varying degrees of self-awareness.

- To assist students to develop *practical competence,* student affairs professionals must be familiar with wellness theory and approaches as well as psychosocial, lifespan, and career development theories. They must possess good communication skills and motivational techniques to work with students effectively and they must understand and be able to teach time management skills, life skills, and values development approaches. Knowledge of critical thinking and reflective judgment theories and the ability to design interventions to assist students to develop these skills are also important.

- Student p*ersistence and academic achievement* is the underlying goal of a learning based approach to student affairs work. Student affairs professionals must understand learning theory and must be knowledgeable about factors that contribute to persistence and academic success. They must be familiar with retention models, intervention strategies designed to enhance the campus environment, and counseling and advising strategies for working successfully with students individually and collectively. They must understand and be sensitive to the role of culture and background in the achievement of students and be able to work with students at all levels of development and from all backgrounds.

Underlying these specific competencies, student affairs professionals must also have a comprehensive understanding of the mission, goals, organizational structure, and impact of various types of higher education settings, including virtual campuses, distance learning programs, community colleges, and all other types of learning environments in order to work effectively in whatever type of institution they may find themselves. They

must also be familiar with the needs, goals, and concerns of a broad range of students, including adult students, commuters, graduate students, and students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Other important competencies include understanding of and ability to effectively use technology and in-depth skills in assessment and program evaluation.

Perhaps less tangible are the skills needed to provide leadership in a rapidly changing society. In order to respond to this challenge, student affairs professionals must be able to proactively identify needs and be agents of change, they must be advocates for the needs and concerns of students, they must be critical and reflective thinkers, and they must be skilled at facilitation, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Finally, to accomplish the goals outlined in this report, student affairs professionals must possess the following values: appreciation of difference, altruism, truth seeking, freedom with responsibility, equality and fairness, human dignity, justice, and community and empowerment (Young, 1997).

The changing context of higher education will require that student affairs educators look to other disciplines to augment traditional preparation. Historically we have looked beyond the field of education to psychology, human development, and sociology for knowledge of student development, learning, group dynamics, and organizational theory. These fields continue to be important sources of new knowledge. Other areas such as health education can provide information concerning the health and well-being of students. In addition, the growing field of leadership studies has much to offer as we develop leaders for higher education. Principles from business and public administration can be included to provide a foundation in sound business practices, contractual relationships, and public/private partnerships. A background in fund-raising and grants administration is also becoming increasingly important as we look to outside sources for financial support of educational services and programs.

The bottom line is that student affairs preparation must be broad based, interdisciplinary, grounded in theory, and designed to prepare forward-thinking, confident, and competent educators who will see the big picture and work effectively with other institutional agents to ensure that colleges and universities become learning communities in which students develop the skills they need to enter the rapidly changing world in which we now live. Such preparation requires in-depth education in well- designed outcomes-based student affairs graduate programs. However, such preparation is not enough to sustain currency. Student affairs divisions must provide ongoing staff development programs designed to introduce new learning in all areas of student affairs practice, to assist staff in the development of new skills, and to insure that they are fully prepared to meet the new challenges that will face them as we move forward in the twenty-first century.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Earlier sections of *Learning Reconsidered* offer important specific recommendations related directly to the content of each section. The recommendations listed here, which are intended for broad, campus-wide consideration and implementation, will support an

overall institutional commitment to developing and achieving excellence in student learning. They support institutional accountability in the assessment of college outcomes and will further enrich the student experience for the 21st century.

1. Colleges and universities of every type should commit to the intentional review and strengthening of every institutional structure and resource that can support transformative learning.

2. Every post-secondary institution should determine and specify its intended student outcomes and should commit resources to measuring, assessing, and documenting students' achievement of those outcomes.

3. All institutions should establish routine ways to hear students' voices, consult with them, explore their opinions, and document the nature and quality of their experience as learners.

4. Presidents, senior academic administrators, faculty, and student affairs professionals equally should acknowledge, support, and integrate the powerful opportunities for transformative learning found across the entire college environment.

5. Senior administrators in academic and student affairs, in partnership with the president of each institution, should review current administrative and organizational structures to determine whether they support the accomplishment of desired student outcomes, and should consider restructuring when necessary to support a strong emphasis on the education of the whole student.

6. Student affairs professionals and faculty must commit to assessing the campus environment for specific learning experiences in each of the overall student learning outcome categories.

7. Both academic and student affairs administrators should commit to holding all campus educators accountable for the contributions their learning experiences make to overall student learning outcomes.

8. Academic leaders and senior student affairs officers should commit to rewarding the development of experiences that combine knowledge acquisition and experiential learning, and should support faculty members and student affairs professionals in redesigning learning opportunities so that they include both cognitive and affective components.

9. Presidents and senior officers in both academic and student affairs must adopt a partnership model that expects and rewards collaborations among all campus educators for student learning.

10. Faculty members, student affairs professionals, and academic advisors in all settings should establish plans to create resources that help students find clear and

flexible pathways to the learning outcomes they seek to develop.

11. All campus educators should commit to identifying and integrating community-based learning experiences so commuters, adult learners, graduate students, and part time students can create a holistic experience by learning from their total environment.

12. All campus educators should ensure the establishment of reflection and other meaning making opportunities for students to examine the breadth of their learning (e.g., through portfolios, advising, journals, life planning, mentoring programs).

13. Faculty members, student affairs professionals, academic administrators, and representative graduate students should work together to define strategies and resources that will support the comprehensive, holistic learning of graduate students.

14. Administrators and members of the faculty in graduate programs preparing students for work in student affairs must ensure that their curricula will prepare forward-thinking, confident, and competent educators who will work effectively with other institutional agents to make colleges and universities learning communities in which students develop the knowledge and skills they need for today's rapidly changing world.

15. Each institution should provide ongoing professional development programs that address the changing nature of the student experience and student learning so that all campus educators can continuously assess and improve their efforts in enhancing the learning process.

CONCLUSION

This document asserts that learning must be reconsidered – that new research, changing times, and the needs of today’s emerging generations of students require that our traditionally distinct categories of academic learning and student development be fused in an integrated, comprehensive vision of learning as a transformative process that is centered in and responsive to the whole student. Every resource on every campus should be used to achieve transformative liberal education for all students, and all colleges and universities are accountable for establishing and assessing specific student outcomes that reflect this integrated view of learning. There will be extensive and appropriate variation in the specific student outcomes each institution emphasizes and in the administrative structures, division of responsibilities, and assessment methods used. But a common and central theme, regardless of institutional type, student demographics, or campus culture, will be the establishment of vibrant educational partnerships among members of the academic faculty and student affairs professionals in which all campus educators share broad responsibility for achieving defined student outcomes.

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EPILOGUE

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PROFESSION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student Affairs has a deep and rich history of self-examination and adaptation; leaders and scholars in the field have engaged in reflective consideration of the roles and responsibilities of the profession since its inception (Evans with Reason, 2001). Important statements addressing the philosophy and direction of student affairs have appeared on a regular basis, starting with the *Student Personnel Point of View,* published by the American Council on Education in 1937 (1983a). Later important statements include the revised *Student Personnel Point of View* (ACE, 1949/1983b), *Student Personnel Work as Deeper Learning* (Lloyd-Jones & Smith, 1954), *The Student in Higher Education* (Committee on the Student in Higher Education, Hazen Foundation, 1968), *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education – A Return to the Academy* (Brown, 1972), *Tomorrow's Higher Education Project* (American College Personnel Association, 1974; THE Project, 1975; Miller & Prince, 1977), *Student Development Services in Higher Education* (Council of Student Personnel Associations, 1975/1984), *A Perspective on Student Affairs* (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1987), *Reasonable Expectations* (Kuh, Lyons, Miller, & Trow, 1994), *The Student Learning Imperative* (American College Personnel Association, 1996), *Principles of Good Practice* (American College Personnel Association and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1997), *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning* (Joint Task Force on Student Learning, 1998), *Higher Education Trends for the Next Century: A Research Agenda for Student Success* (Johnson & Cheatham, 1999), and the *CAS General Standards and Guidelines* (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, revised 2003).

A critical analysis of these major philosophical statements identifies central themes regarding how students are viewed, the role of the campus environment in student development, how student affairs professionals carry out their work, and the responsibility of student affairs to the larger society (Evans with Reason, 2001). Student affairs scholars have consistently stressed the importance of the "whole" student – the need to consider affective as well as cognitive processes in the development of learning strategies. For instance, as early as 1937, the authors of the *Student Personnel Point of View* urged institutions to "consider the student as a whole…[and emphasize]…the development of the student as a person rather than…intellectual training alone" (ACE, 1937/1983a, p. 76). A second consistent theme is respect for differences and the need to treat each student as an individual. The 2003 *CAS General Standards and Guidelines* stress the important role that diversity plays on college campuses: "Diversity enriches the community and enhances the collegiate experience for all; therefore, programs and services must nurture environments where commonalities and differences among people are recognized and honored" (p. 13). Assisting students to develop a sense of agency (providing students with opportunities to increase self-awareness and self-direction) is a third related historical theme.

Considering the impact of the environment on student development and learning is another long-standing principle of student affairs practice (Evans with Reason, 2001). An

interactionist perspective is easily identified in the profession's historical documents, as is the importance of considering context when developing programs and interventions designed to enhance learning and development (see, for example, ACPA's *A Student Development Model of Student Affairs in Tomorrow's Higher Education* [1974]). And the profession's guiding documents emphasize certain qualities of the work of student affairs professionals: being intentional and proactive, grounding student affairs work in theory and research, focusing on student learning, and collaborating closely with other institutional agents, particularly faculty and academic administrators, to achieve learning outcomes.

Finally, these philosophical statements point out the important role that this profession plays in the development of democratic citizens, as well as its accountability to society. This focus is particularly noteworthy in the revised *Student Personnel Point of View* (ACE, 1949/1983b) and in the more recent statements, such as the *Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1996), *Powerful Partnerships* (Joint Task Force on Student Learning, 1998), and *The Trends Project* (Johnson & Cheatham, 1999). *Learning Reconsidered* echoes the observation made by the authors of the *Powerful Partnerships* statement (Joint Task Force on Student Learning, 1998), stressing that "only when everyone on campus – particularly academic affairs and student affairs staff – shares the responsibility for student learning will we be able to make significant progress in improving it" (p. 1).

LEARNING RECONSIDERED: A CAMPUS-WIDE FOCUS ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

EDITOR

Richard P. Keeling
Executive Consultant
Keeling & Associates, Inc.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Patrick Day
Assistant Vice President Student Affairs & Dean of Students
Johnson C. Smith University

Gwendolyn Jordan Dungy
Executive Director
NASPA

Nancy Evans
Professor
Iowa State University

Jane Fried
Professor
Central Connecticut State University

Susan Komives
Associate Professor
University of Maryland-College Park

William McDonald
Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students
Presbyterian College

Susan Salvador
Vice President, Student Services
Monroe Community College

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