

TITLE: Finding the Right Stuff in Chief Student Affairs Officers

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Doctoral Dissertation: May 2001

OBJECTIVE: To develop a profile of an effective chief student affairs officer (CSAO).

METHODOLOGY: The sample involved five recognized higher education institutions (all public state institutions that were classified as Research Universities I). CSAOs completed the LPI; their staffs and peers completed the LPI-Observer (68% response rate). A Q-sort procedure was used to examine the "general" characteristics of effective CSAOs, not necessarily related to these particular respondents. Each CSAO was also interviewed, along with 73% of their staff and/or peers. Four CSAOs were African-American (three men and one woman) and the fifth was a Caucasian male, and four of them were 56 years or older. Four held doctoral degrees. The CSAO at these institutions had an average of 26 years in the field and over 11 years at that institution.

KEY FINDINGS: CSAO LPI-Self scores were consistently higher than those provided by their observers, although the rank ordering was the same between the two groups. Enabling received the highest mean scores from both groups, followed by Modeling, Encouraging, Challenging and Inspiring.