

## EDITOR'S NOTES

The teaching role of student affairs professionals is increasing in importance as colleges and universities emphasize retention and graduation of undergraduates. Student affairs professionals play a crucial role in this process.

At Iowa State University, I have taught a very popular graduate course on college teaching with my former graduate assistant, Rebekah Marsh. Over time, we noticed growing enrollment among student affairs professionals. This pattern seemed to parallel the increased teaching roles of student affairs staff in the academy. As student affairs staff interest in our class grew, we became aware that many were finding themselves in more formalized teaching roles without sufficient expertise for their new and increasing responsibilities.

This volume reflects on the paradigm shift of student affairs staff from enablers to teachers. It addresses this phenomenon, beginning with a chapter framing the issues facing staff as they extend their informal teaching role outside the classroom into a more formal role inside the classroom.

In Chapter One, Rebekah S. Marsh and I examine the combination of the art and the act of teaching. We term this combination “teaching from near and far.” Understanding the emphasis on student success, colleges are broadening the role of student affairs professionals in formal learning experiences. This chapter provides readers with the keys to successful teaching.

Mimi Benjamin, Kurt Earnest, Doug Gruenewald, and Ginny Arthur in Chapter Two address the many options, decisions, interactions, and individual and group activities that students deal with during the first weeks of college life. They particularly focus on this critical transitional period as one in which more intentional in-class and out-of-class experiences can be developed to enhance student learning.

Chapter Three provides an insider view on the mission and development of the First-Year Experience movement. Mary Stuart Hunter and Kathleen A. Murray discuss the influence of access and retention on the development of the movement as well as the importance of effective teaching to the success of the program.

Learning communities are explored in Chapter Four by authors Shari Ellertson and Karla V. Thoennes. They discuss the collaboration of academic affairs and student affairs in facilitating student learning and development in the learning community forum.

Chapter Five examines the often-discussed interaction of academic affairs and student affairs in a small college. This is a place where unique opportunities exist for staff to interact without boundaries. This chapter was

written by a faculty member, Greta Degen, and a student affairs professional, Erin Sheldahl, who work together to create student-focused learning on their campus.

Chapter Six introduces student affairs professionals to their part in the transformation of higher education programs that promote student learning and cocurricular settings. J. Herman Blake and I—with a combined academic career of more than fifty years of service across the range of four-year and two-year colleges and universities—provide practical strategies and understandings on how to articulate, communicate, and disseminate as scholarly practitioners.

In the last chapter, J. Herman Blake describes his successful efforts to build lower-division units on residential and commuter campuses where the teaching and learning integrate student affairs professionals into the academic programs. He uses his vast knowledge and experience to project readers into the future as student affairs staff teaching increases in the academy. Last, he challenges student affairs professionals to consider the wisdom of the African proverb “You don’t build a house for yesterday’s rains” in relation to effective and creative professionals with student affairs responsibilities.

I am grateful to the authors who have contributed to this volume. They provided substance and knowledge based on their research and work in the academy. I am also very proud to acknowledge that five of the authors are my former graduate students, and two of them were also teaching assistants. I am particularly honored to call them “my colleagues,” and because of them my hope for the future soars.

I would also like to express special thanks to Thomas “Tony” King, executive assistant in the Office of the Provost at Dillard University, for his efforts in the completion of this volume.

I hope you find this sourcebook useful in your work.

Emily L. Moore  
Editor

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