

EDITORS' NOTES

The historical focus of student affairs has been on understanding and meeting the needs of traditional-aged undergraduate students. Although shifts in the demographic characteristics of enrolled students have broadened the definition of college students, student affairs practice has continued to emphasize undergraduate education. Student affairs professionals traditionally have viewed graduate and professional students and their needs as the responsibility of individual academic departments or the graduate college.

Only recently has the graduate student come to the attention of the student affairs profession. The desire on the part of student affairs professionals for information about working with graduate and professional students is evident in the increased number of presentations on the topic at national conferences over the past five years. In addition, both the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) have established new networks designed to serve the needs and interests of student affairs professionals who work with graduate and professional students. NASPA's Administrators in Graduate and Professional Student Services (AGAPSS) Knowledge Community and ACPA's Commission for Graduate and Professional School Educators call attention to the growing recognition of the needs of graduate and professional students.

Much of the available research on graduate education highlights the departmental role in supporting the academic experience. This volume instead focuses on the needs of graduate and professional students that can be addressed specifically by student affairs professionals. The education of graduate and professional students is labor intensive on the part of faculty, with an assumption made that academic departments support students academically, socially, and professionally. However, education within the academy can be a fragmented learning experience (Chickering and Gamson, 1991).

This fragmentation might be even more descriptive of the graduate experience where academic departments emphasize the cognitive intellectual development of a scholar rather than the psychosocial aspects of the graduate student experience. We know from research on undergraduate students and on nontraditional-aged learners that learning occurs holistically and within the context of a student's life experience (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, 2005). We also know that student development continues beyond the undergraduate experience and that graduate students continue to make

meaning of experiences with diversity and processes of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 1998; McEwen and Roper, 1994). The research on doctoral students in particular indicates a need for support beyond the academic experience with a role for student affairs professionals to play in the development of the whole graduate student (Golde and Dore, 2001; Fischer and Zigmond, 1998).

In our initial proposal for this volume, we suggested focusing on doctoral students, as much of the research on graduate students does. When asked to expand our focus to include the broader graduate and professional student population, we agreed. To the extent that it simplifies the issues and homogenizes the population, the broad term *graduate students* makes our task easier. Much of the research available refers to graduate students as a monolithic whole, encompassing master's students, doctoral students, and professional students. While simpler, this is much like studying elephants, polar bears, and lemurs as members of the animal kingdom to identify their common needs.

Graduate students in general are a heterogeneous group, more different than alike across programmatic types, disciplinary affiliations, and individual characteristics and experiences. One size does not fit all when it comes to services, but there are some strategic areas where departments and student affairs can have an effect (Fischer and Zigmond, 1998). Identified areas of need that hold specific interest for student affairs include orientation, advising and registration, financial aid and financial planning, community building, social interaction and activities, counseling, and professional development and career planning (Austin, 2002; Baird, 1993; Boyle and Boice, 1998; Lipschutz, 1993; Nerad and Cerny, 1993; Nyquist and others, 1999).

Because one size will not fit all master's, doctoral, and professional students, we advise professionals working with graduate students or institutions interested in better serving their graduate populations to learn who their students are and ask them about their specific needs. To this end, we begin this volume with a chapter on identifying the needs of graduate and professional students. Becki Elkins Nesheim, Melanie Guentzel, Ann Gansemer-Topf, Leah Ewing Ross, and Cathryn Turrentine discuss in Chapter One the role of assessment and provide examples of one research study and an assessment project designed to identify the needs and experiences of graduate and professional students. Suggestions for planning, implementing, and reporting the results of assessment efforts to improve graduate education are outlined.

The next three chapters provide some context for graduate education. In Chapter Two, Ann Gansemer-Topf, Leah Ewing Ross, and R. M. Johnson offer a brief review of the literature related to the psychological, social, and cognitive aspects of graduate and professional student development. This chapter provides a developmental framework with which to examine the proposed areas of intervention. Chris Peterson Brus, in Chapter Three, examines the changing graduate student population and explores the educational equity challenges created for nontraditional graduate students as they strive to balance academic rigor and lives outside the academy. In

Chapter Four, Jason Pontius and Shaun Harper identify principles for good practice for graduate student engagement.

The balance of the chapters explores programming and services designed to meet the needs of graduate and professional students. In Chapter Five, Linda McGuire and Julie Phye discuss the concept of professionalism as a common concern for the medical and legal professions and examine approaches taken within a college of medicine and a college of law to infuse professionalism into the student experience. Tom Lekher and Jennifer Furlong, in Chapter Six, highlight and offer strategies to meet the career development needs of graduate students. In Chapter Seven, Lisa Brandes looks at the movement to create graduate student centers and how these centers of people, space, and programming meet student needs.

In the final chapter, we synthesize the conclusions drawn across the chapters, identifying common themes. We conclude with recommendations for practice in graduate student services based on the identified themes.

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