I

STIMULATING AND SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING

Roger B. Winston Jr.

A TRUISM IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION is that colleges and universities exist to promote student learning and to advance or create knowledge. American higher education institutions are generally thought to have three crucial functions: teaching, research, and public service. Different types of institutions place varying degrees of emphasis on these three primary functions. Howard Bowen (1977) asserts that institutions can be categorized largely on the basis of their relative emphasis on these three functions. Community colleges focus principally on transmitting existing knowledge through instruction. Research-focused universities fundamentally emphasize the creation of new knowledge and its transmission to students, professionals, and the public. Other institutions, such as liberal arts colleges and comprehensive colleges and universities, fall somewhere between the other two in terms of relative emphasis. Most institutions of all types engage in all three functions but to widely varying degrees.

The principal goal of this chapter is to explore the concept of academic services and to identify the means of creating and delivering student services that will stimulate and support student learning. But first the chapter addresses the purposes of higher education, which are summarized here using Bowen's taxonomy of goals (1977) that can lead to the education of the whole person. These goals are then viewed within the context of a student-centric institution. A model of academic services is explored using examples of applications and considering possible ways it could be used

to create new academic services or evaluate existing services. Finally, some of the obstacles to creating student-centric institutions are identified.

Purposes of Higher Education

Before addressing the question of academic services, it is essential that we consider the purposes of higher education. Bowen (1977) characterizes the purposes of higher education by describing the desirable student outcomes that can be influenced or produced as a result of attendance at a college or university. He asserts that the "goals of higher education are concerned with the development of the full potentialities of human beings and of society" (p. 54). Bowen identifies goals for individual students in the areas of cognitive learning, emotional and moral development, and practical competence.

In the area of cognitive learning (Bowen, 1977, pp. 55–56), outcomes include development of

- ○ Verbal skills (the ability to speak and write clearly, correctly, and gracefully; may include the acquisition of a second language)
- ○ Quantitative skills (the ability to understand basic concepts of mathematics and perform elementary statistical analyses; may include understanding the rudiments of accounting)
- ○ Substantive knowledge (acquaintance with the cultural heritage of the West and knowledge of other cultures and traditions; "command of vocabulary, facts, and principles in one or more selected fields of knowledge")
- ○ Intellectual tolerance (openness to new ideas, willingness to challenge orthodoxy, intellectual curiosity, the ability to deal with ambiguity and complexity, and understanding of the limitations of knowledge and thought)
- ○ Aesthetic sensibility ("knowledge of, interest in, and responsiveness to literature, the fine arts, and natural beauty")
- ○ Creativeness ("imagination and originality in formulating new hypotheses and ideas and in producing new works of art")
- ○ Intellectual integrity (ability to understand "truth" and its contingent nature; conscientiousness of inquiry and accuracy in reporting findings)
- ○ Wisdom ("balanced perspective, judgment, and prudence")
- ○ Lifelong learning ("love of learning; sustained intellectual interests; learning how to learn")

Under the category of emotional and moral development, Bowen's goals (1977, pp. 56–57) include

- ○ Personal self-discovery ("knowledge of one's talents, interests, values, aspirations, and weaknesses"; discovery of one's uniqueness and personal identity)

- ○ Psychological well-being ("sensitivity to deeper feelings and emotions combined with emotional stability; ability to express emotions constructively; appropriate self-assertiveness, sense of security, self-confidence, decisiveness, spontaneity; acceptance of self and others")

- ○ Human understanding ("capacity for empathy, thoughtfulness, compassion, respect, tolerance, and cooperation toward others, including persons of different backgrounds; . . . skill in communication with others")

- ○ Values and morals ("a valid and internalized but not dogmatic set of values and moral principles . . . ; sense of social consciousness and social responsibility")

- ○ Religious interests ("serious and thoughtful exploration of purpose, values, and meaning")

Bowen (1977) calls the third category of student goals "practical competence." He asserts that "virtually all of the goals included under cognitive learning and emotional and moral development apply to practical affairs" (p. 37). Following are traits (pp. 57–58) that are more specific to the practical concerns of life:

- ○ Need for achievement ("motivation toward accomplishment; initiative . . . , persistence, self-discipline")

- ○ Future orientation (ability to plan carefully, be a prudent risk taker, and have a realistic outlook toward the future)

- ○ Adaptability (openness to change, tolerance of new ideas, versatility and resourcefulness, and capacity to learn from experience)

- ○ Leadership ("capacity to win the confidence of others; willingness to assume responsibility; organizational ability")

- ○ Citizenship ("understanding of and commitment to democracy; knowledge of government institutions and procedures; awareness of major social issues . . . ; disposition and ability to participate actively in civic, political, economic, professional, educational, and other voluntary organizations; orientation toward international understanding . . . ; disposition toward law observance")

○ Economic productivity ("knowledge and skills needed for first job and for growth in productivity; . . . adaptability and mobility; sound career decisions; capability to bring humanistic values to the workplace and to derive meaning from work")

○ Sound family life ("personal qualities making for stable families" and long-term relationships)

○ Consumer efficiency (ability to manage personal finances; "ability to recognize deceptive sales practices and to withstand high-pressure sales tactics")

○ Fruitful leisure ("wisdom in allocation of time among work, leisure, and other pursuits . . . ; lifelong education, formal and informal, as a productive use of leisure; resourcefulness in overcoming boredom, finding renewal, and discovering satisfying and rewarding use of leisure time") and

○ Health ("understanding of the basic principles for cultivating physical and mental health; knowledge of how and when to use the professional health care system")

In a similar but less detailed fashion, Baxter Magolda (1999b) specifies four dimensions of student learning: (1) cognitive competence, which includes "critical thinking, complex meaning-making, intellectual flexibility, reflective judgment, and the ability to apply knowledge," (2) intrapersonal competence, which encompasses "a coherent sense of identity; a self-authored belief system to organize one's values, ethics, spirituality and moral development; a capacity for self-awareness and reflection; and integrity," (3) interpersonal competence, which includes "the capacity for interdependence and collaboration; appreciation of diversity; communication, problem solving and conflict-management skills, humanitarianism and concern for the community," and (4) practical competence, which includes "managing one's daily life and tasks and career and personal decision making" (p. 39).

Educating the Whole Person

Bowen's and Baxter Magolda's taxonomies of goals (Baxter, 1977; Baxter Magolda, 1999b) are firmly based in a belief that higher education should address the education of the whole person, not just his or her intellect. Education involves much more than the acquisition of academic knowledge.

Students are complex beings. Certainly they are not, nor have they ever been, disembodied intellects presented to institutions of high learning for molding. For students, learning does not take place in an environment divorced from societal (and often parental) pressure, expectations, and influences, or from internal uncertainties about academic competence, future lives and careers, and interpersonal relationships. Traditional-aged college students are experiencing a period of their life cycle development that requires them to make many significant and far-reaching decisions that have major consequences for the remainder of their lives. For example, they must ask themselves such questions as Who am I?—as a man or woman, as a member of an ethnic, racial, or cultural group, as having a particular sexual orientation, as a worker or practitioner of a profession, and as an actual or potential husband, wife, or partner—to name only a few. What will I do with the remainder of my life? Who will I share my life with? How do I make meaning of what I hear in class, read, and observe? How do I reconcile conflicting information, methods of inquiry, value systems, religious teachings, political positions, and expert opinions?

Older students are frequently experiencing major life transitions, which may include stresses within the family and personal uncertainty about abilities and academic competence. They also often have many competing demands for their time and attention, including full-time work and familial obligations.

Few would argue that what happens to students in the classroom and laboratory is unaffected by what happens to them outside those settings. For example, if a college student is experiencing a health problem (whether a head cold or life-threatening disease), an emotion-laden breakup with a significant other, or indecision about career plans or class performance demands requiring background knowledge and skills that the student has not mastered, he or she is not likely to perform well in classes or be able to integrate or use the ideas and factual information presented in classes. As the *Powerful Partnerships* (American Association for Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1998) document asserts, "learning is *developmental,* a cumulative process involving the whole person, relating past and present, integrating the new with the old, starting from but transcending personal concerns and interests" (p. 8).

Central to the notion of educating the whole person are three essential postulates. First, students are unique individuals who respond to higher education and make meaning of their experiences in individualistic ways.

Effective educational practices must recognize and respect individual differences among students and make accommodations in instructional methods, institutional organization structures, and cocurricular initiatives. Second, "learning is done by individuals who are intrinsically tied to others as social beings, interacting as competitors or collaborators, constraining or supporting the learning process, and able to enhance learning through cooperation and sharing" (American Association for Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1998, p. 9). Third, the social and physical environments of an institution have significant influences on students' behavior and learning. Their in-class and out-of-class interactions with faculty and, staff members, as well as with student peers, contribute to or detract from learning.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) found in their analysis and synthesis of research on college outcomes that students learn more, are more likely to persist through graduation, and report greater satisfaction with their college experiences when they are involved in activities and experiences directly related to academic subjects and when the curricular and cocurricular experiences are meaningful and complementary. They also report that alumni who had substantial extracurricular involvement, especially through leadership experiences, reported "significantly enhanced interpersonal and leadership skills important to job success" (p. 624).

If one accepts the assertion that higher education has a responsibility to educate the whole person, then how an institution goes about addressing the plethora of goals must rest on a system of well-conceptualized, energetically delivered, and integrated academic services. Such an institution could be appropriately labeled a student-centric college or university.

Student-Centric Higher Education

Even though higher education generally asserts that the education of students is its raison d'être, most institutions are organized and administered to address the interests of many constituencies, such as faculty members, governing boards, legislatures, alumni, grant givers, commercial enterprises, accreditation bodies, and administrative leaders. Almost inevitably, these constituencies develop different, often conflicting, interests. Because of limited resources or myopic vision, institutional leaders are frequently forced to favor the interests of some groups over others. Ironically, undergraduate students' interests often come in near the bottom at many institutions, especially large universities.

If one defines the purposes of higher education as focused exclusively on the transmission of known facts, theories, and methods of inquiry, as well as the creation of new knowledge through research or creative and critical analysis, then academic services would tend to support faculty members as they perform these functions and relieve them from the burden of organizational maintenance activities. But if one defines the purposes of higher education more broadly—as being concerned with the development of the full potential of the participants (students, faculty members, and administrators) in the higher education undertaking, then academic services can become quite comprehensive and complex.

A student-centric institution is one where the most important constituents are the students and the ultimate criterion for success is the promotion of their learning. Because of their experiences at the institution, students should arrive at functioning at higher levels of intellectual, interpersonal, and practical competence than when they initially enrolled. As Sandel and Sydow (1997) note, students should not be viewed as dependent on the faculty and staff; rather, the faculty and staff depend on students' presence for their existence. "We are not doing them [the students] a favor by serving them. They are doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so" (p. 1). Within a student-centric institution, then, how should academic services be conceptualized?

What Are Academic Services?

Providing a concise definition of academic services is more complicated than it appears on the surface. For many, what first comes to mind when this term is used are programs and services that provide students with opportunities to practice or develop skills, such as tutoring, remedial courses in basic subjects, such as English or mathematics, or writing or language laboratories. Others may think of those functions that create and maintain an institution's academic infrastructure, such as administering financial aid programs, structuring class registration, maintaining academic transcripts, and soliciting and processing applications for admission. Yet another way to think of academic services (which are often referred to as student affairs programs) includes, for example, opportunities for students to receive leadership training, participate in service learning projects, receive psychotherapy to deal with anxiety or interpersonal conflicts, attend African American art exhibits, or serve on student judiciary panels. Traditionally, these conceptualizations of academic services have been associated with faculty members and student affairs professionals. The first conceptualization is closely tied to formal

instruction in traditional academic disciplines; the second is often viewed as necessary but, similar to parking services, educationally irrelevant; the third is associated primarily with out-of-class learning through the cocurriculum. *All* these "services" are crucial to the effective functioning of student-centric colleges and universities and have a direct effect on the quality and scope of students' educational experience.

A Model for Conceptualizing Academic Services

If one accepts Bowen's conceptualization of the purposes of higher education (1977), then all of these programs, services, and learning opportunities are academic services because they promote the achievement of the goals of higher education. Academic services are conceptualized by the model depicted in Figure 1.1—inspired by models developed by Morrill, Hurst, and Oetting (1980) and Hurst and Jacobson (1985).

Figure 1.1. Conceptual Model of Academic Services
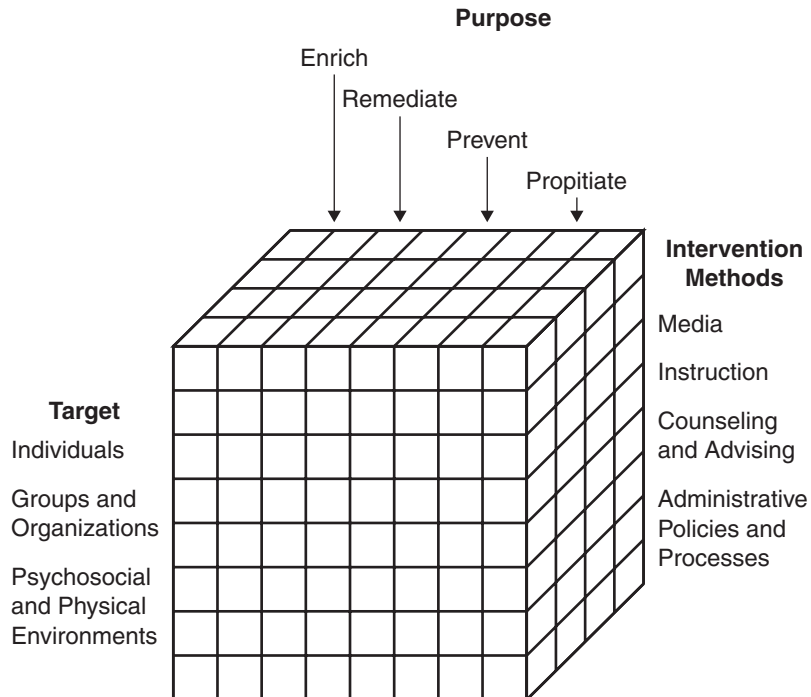
Note: *Based on and adapted from Morrill, Hurst, and Oetting (1980) and Hurst and Jacobson (1985). Reproduced by permission.*

Purpose

From the perspective of the student, academic services are institutional pro-
grams, services, learning opportunities, and interventions that (1) enrich or
supplement learning and personal development, (2) correct or ameliorate
academic or personal knowledge shortfalls, skill deficiencies, or maladap-
tive attitudes, (3) prevent the occurrence of foreseeable personal or academic
difficulties, or (4) make collegiate life more convenient or pleasant.

Probably the most important purpose of academic services is to enrich
the educational experiences and learning of all students. This includes
encouraging students to pursue advanced topics in a discipline, relate
classroom experiences and knowledge to their life, and integrate knowl-
edge, methods of inquiry, and means of sharing findings or discoveries.
Enrichment also relates to personal development, which may range from
self-exploration (for example, through community service, leadership
experience, or personal counseling) to career decision making (for exam-
ple, through a counseling group, internship experience, or part-time work
in areas of potential interests).

A second purpose of academic services is to assist students who need
help in overcoming identified deficiencies or behaviors that hamper their
success in the academic arena. This can range from instruction at a pre-
college level in areas such as English, mathematics, and reading (areas tra-
ditionally associated with "developmental education programs") to
dealing with individually identified problems, such as chronic test or pub-
lic speaking anxiety or poorly developed study or time management skills.
Remediation addresses the impediments to students' collegiate and life
success that, in most cases, existed prior to the students' enrollment in
higher education.

The third purpose of academic services is to prevent foreseeable prob-
lems from causing students to experience academic or personal difficul-
ties. For example, students who graduate from high schools that failed to
provide a demanding curriculum might be expected to experience diffi-
culties in meeting the academic demands of a large state university. For
instance, first-year programs (such as freshman year experience courses
or freshmen interest groups) can be designed to address issues and pro-
vide support to students who we can predict are likely to experience dif-
ficulties. Prevention proactively addresses areas of student life with the
aim to anticipate and prevent or lessen anticipated problems.

The fourth purpose of academic services (especially, services that
form the infrastructure of the institution) is to propitiate or cause students
to be favorably inclined toward the institution and the educational

experiences and opportunities offered. In a loose sense, this may be likened to customer satisfaction. Virtually all colleges and universities experience a certain amount of attrition due solely to students' adverse reactions to the physical appearance of the campus, the attitudes of staff and service employees, the lack of amenities (such as private rooms in residence halls or convenient and safe parking), or annoyances (such as difficulty in registering for classes or the low quality or variety of foods served in dining facilities). Even though none of these issues directly affect the quality of the education offered, these kinds of concerns are important to students and may cause them to abandon an institution, even when their classroom experience is satisfactory. This should not be taken to mean, however, that an institution should structure its programs, services, and curriculum based exclusively on "student satisfaction." But because convenience, speed, and accuracy of services are qualities that affect students' evaluation of an institution and possibly their decision to persist, these services deserve serious attention.

Target

Delivery of academic services may focus on different facets of the student population or the institution. Targets include (1) individuals, (2) groups and organizations, and (3) psychosocial and physical environments.

INDIVIDUALS. Traditionally, much of what is done in higher education focuses on educating individuals. Even when dealing with collections (as in classes) of students, frequently the intention is to stimulate behavior change in individuals. Classes have been the traditional means of organizing education in the United States. In classes, collections of individual students are brought together to address a delineated topic for a specified period of time. Even so, individuals are the primary targets of the academic services.

GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS. Potentially potent influences in students' lives are their assigned and associational groups. Groups of students are generally informally structured and are formed by students based on similarity or shared interests, attributes, or goals. Social attraction or physical proximity often serve as the primary motivators for groups' formation. Frequently, these groups are identified and based on friendships.

Voluntary associational groups of students may be formalized as organizations such as social fraternities and sororities, academic honoraries,

and clubs based in academic disciplines or in personal interests such as sailing, playing chess, or taking part in religious activities. It is through such avenues that students are socialized into various fields, given opportunities to explore possible careers and to have contact with practitioners and scholars, and form personal relationships and friendships with others who share common interests, beliefs, or values.

Student organizations can give many students opportunities to acquire or sharpen leadership skills and develop meaningful organizational competencies. Even though student organizations are ubiquitous on many campuses, perhaps approaching oversaturation on some, they hold great potential for contributing to accomplishing the goals of higher education, especially when the institutional representatives who work with them focus students' attentions on accomplishing educational objectives and developing practical competencies.

PSYCHOSOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS. Another target of academic services can be the environments of the institution. Arnold and Kuh (1999) point out that the various constituencies of higher education hold different mental models of what they consider important. For instance, faculty members perceive the core of the institution to be the curriculum, teaching, and scholarship. But for traditional-aged students, the core includes fitting in and making friends, having academic success (defined in terms of grades, progress toward a degree, and job credentials), and obtaining financial aid. Student affairs professionals value the means of promoting student involvement activities that foster student development. "Three intentionally designed learning sites—classrooms, student organizations and other co-curricular activities, and residence halls—are represented in the core" (p. 17). From this conceptualization, one can conclude that colleges and universities have multiple environments and that attempts to affect the psychosocial climate of an institution can produce important effects in students' educational experiences. Likewise, physical environments can be inviting, utilitarian, cold, hostile, or distracting, perhaps caused by confusing traffic patterns, echoing sound, or inappropriately sized rooms for the activities taking place within. Strange (1993) notes, "Although the physical environment may not directly cause specific behaviors or attitudes, its limitations present challenges that must be negotiated by those within" (p. 137).

Strange and Banning (2001) maintain that, for learning to take place, the institution must first have (create) an environment that is perceived to be safe, secure, and inclusive. Without a basic sense of belonging to the campus community, free from threat, fear, and anxiety, attempts to

activate higher learning are difficult at best. Once safety and inclusion needs have been addressed successfully, however, the environment can then promote participation and engagement. As Astin (1985) notes, "Students learn from becoming involved" (p. 133). For him, "student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to academic experience. A highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spending a lot of time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students" (p. 134). Thus, Strange and Banning (2001) argue that the third condition needed to promote learning is an institutional environment that offers students a sense of belonging and full membership in an academic community. They maintain that "communities seem to thrive when space is available for (or dedicated to) a group of individuals who share characteristics and interests, when organizational designs invite participation, role taking, and decision making, and when artifacts of culture express and support a common vision and purpose" (p. 168).

Intervention Methods

A variety of methods can be used to accomplish educational purposes that are focused or targeted on individuals, groups and organizations, and environments. These methods include media, instruction, counseling and advising, and administrative policies and procedures.

MEDIA. With ever changing technology, an increasingly varied range of media interventions is available to promote an institution's educational goals. For hundreds of years in higher education, the printed word in numerous formats was used to inform students and other members of the academic community. By the mid-twentieth century, radio and television expanded the options available for informing students and the general public. The advent of the Internet expanded the alternatives for communicating with students and removed much of the editorial control exercised in the print media. The Internet and e-mail also provide opportunities for consumers to give and receive almost immediate feedback to the individuals who post material. Internet sites can contain massive amounts of information and use powerful search engines to assist in locating information. The media therefore cover the gamut of communication formats—from newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and flyers to radio and television, as well as to the Internet and e-mail.

As Carroll (2002) notes, the traditional office conference between the student and the instructor is passé on many campuses, being replaced by the exchange of e-mail messages. Although some faculty members see the loss of face-to-face contact as depersonalizing the educational experience, Carroll (an adjunct faculty member) also points out that many "students feel as though they get 24/7 access to me, even though I protect my time and answer mail when it suits my daily schedule."

INSTRUCTION. For centuries in higher education, instruction was delivered primarily through face-to-face interaction between students and teachers. While this method of providing instruction still prevails, increasingly, formal classes are offered through asynchronous, computer-based instruction (which may include interactive communication between class members and the teacher). On many "traditional" campuses, face-to-face interaction between instructor and student is supplemented by use of the Internet and class listservs or bulletin boards. Informal instruction provided to students through their involvement in the cocurriculum remains principally face-to-face, although a variety of programs have been adapted for delivery over the Internet. For instance, the University of Minnesota has created a virtual town that is used to facilitate more active involvement by residential and commuter students (Elling and Brown, 2001).

COUNSELING AND ADVISING. When students encounter problems or experience difficult transitions in their personal or academic lives, an important means of providing assistance is through personal counseling and academic advising. Through interaction with a person who possesses well-developed helping skills and knowledge of higher education and institutional policies and procedures, students can be assisted in working through areas of concern—whether they be of an interpersonal nature, an academic nature, or a combination of the two (Ender, Winston, and Miller, 1984).

Counseling and academic advising in this model are appropriate interventions for helping students identify appropriate academic, life, and career goals, build or repair self-insight and self-esteem, broaden intellectual interests and curiosity, encourage the use of institutional resources and associated learning opportunities, establish meaningful interpersonal relationships with others, clarify personal values, examine the ethical implications of their behavior and beliefs, and enhance critical thinking and reasoning (Creamer and Creamer, 1994; Winston, 1996, 2003). These

services may be provided by mental health professionals, such as counseling psychologists, professional or trained allied professional academic advisers, student affairs professionals, or some combination thereof.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. It is through the development and implementation of policies and procedures that academic standards and integrity are codified and that much of an institution's social climate is shaped.

Hage and Aiken (1970) have identified factors that determine whether organizations are static or dynamic, resistant to change, or adaptive and efficacious. These factors may be viewed through the lens of an institution's polices and procedures. These include

○ Complexity (number of units within the organization and the number of codependent interrelations)

○ Degree of centralization (the extent to which power is distributed or shared among members of the organization)

○ Degree of formalization (number and complexity of enforced rules)

○ Degree of stratification (differential distribution of rewards)

○ Degree of emphasis on quantity and quality of services or products (such as academic credit hours)

○ Efficiency (relative emphasis on cost containment and high cost-benefit ratios)

Strange (1993) concludes that effective educational environments are those that exhibit the characteristics of a dynamic organization and where "individual differences are appreciated, participation is expected, interactions are personal rather than functional, and risk-taking is encouraged" (p. 173).

If an institution's leadership is primarily concerned about organizational efficiency, then it is most likely to adopt authoritarian policies that students (and faculty members as well) may perceive as being uniform but impersonal. If, however, the leadership is concerned about educational quality or maximizing individual development and learning—which frequently appears inefficient—then the policies and procedures will likely reflect a participative approach to policy development and are likely to be perceived as personalized and caring. In developing policies and procedures, leaders must be aware of both the goals of the policy and how those affected by the policy are likely to perceive its intent and means of implementation.

Use of the Model

This model is presented to help readers understand the scope and variety of academic services and to assist in developing and evaluating existing or proposed services. Many programs or services have multiple purposes, targets, and methods of intervention. This framework can be used as a template for viewing academic services. In my opinion, programs and services have a greater likelihood of being effective if the purpose is clearly conceptualized and unambiguously targeted and uses the intervention strategies that are best suited for the intended purpose and for the target population.

Baxter Magolda (1999a, 1999b, 2001) offers another approach to understanding the learning process and classroom instruction. She argues that the paramount goal of higher education should be to help students achieve self-authorship. This drive for self-authorship is founded on three core assumptions: (1) knowledge is complex and socially constructed (requiring contextual knowing in her model), (2) the self is central to knowledge construction (which reflects complex intrapersonal development), and (3) expertise and authority are shared in the mutual construction of knowledge among peers, which reflects complex interpersonal development and relationships (Baxter Magolda, 2001).

From these assumptions, Baxter Magolda (1999a) postulates three principles that should guide interventions that promote student learning, both inside and outside the formal classroom. First, *validate students as knowers,* by which she means "acknowledging their capacity to hold a point of view, recognizing their current understandings, and supporting them in explaining their current views. Validation as a knower helps students view themselves as capable of learning and knowing, heightening their engagement in learning" (p. 27). Second, *situate learning in students' own experience,* which means using students' previous experience and current knowledge as the starting point, which helps create a context that students can readily understand. Third, *define learning as mutually constructed meaning,* thereby making both the instructor and the students active players in the learning enterprise. "It suggests that the teacher and students put their understandings together by exploring students' experiences and views in the context of knowledge that the teacher introduces. Together they construct knowledge that takes experience and evidence into account" (1999a, p. 28).

Designing Academic Services

Generally, students are most vulnerable and therefore open to assistance from academic services during transition periods or while anticipating

transitions. Such times include when they are first entering college, selecting an academic major, seeking entry into the job market or admission to graduate school, and experiencing stress (from such situations as parental dissension, financial crises, romantic breakups, or poor academic performance). Likewise, research has clearly documented that students who are more fully involved in the college experience (inside and outside the classroom) gain greater educational benefits and are more satisfied with the collegiate experience (Astin, 1977, 1993; Kuh, Schuh, and Whitt, 1991). As Tinto's landmark research (1993) has demonstrated, students are much more likely to leave an institution prior to completing degree requirements if they fail to become integrated academically and socially into the fabric of the college or university. In other words, the more students interact and form meaningful relationships with other students and faculty and staff members, the more likely they are to persist (Mallette and Cabrera, 1991; Tinto, 1998). Stage (1989) has found that students are more likely to persist when they are either academically or socially integrated, and they are even more likely to persist when both forms of integration take place.

Integrated Approaches

Students view their institution holistically. To a large extent, they are unaware of the administrative structures of institutions, unless they run afoul of a policy or rule or if they want special treatment, such as an exception to standing policy. For many students, faculty members teach (and at some institutions do research) and everyone else does something else (exactly *what* is unclear). Consequently, distinctions between academic affairs and student affairs, assistant and full professors, or deans and vice presidents do not have much meaning for most undergraduates.

The most powerful learning environments are those that integrate the curricular and cocurricular in purposeful and meaningful ways. Terenzini, Pascarella, and Blimling (1999) have reviewed the literature on cognitive development and cocurricular involvements and have found the following:

○ Even when students' precollege academic achievement and cognitive ability levels were taken into account, academic learning was positively shaped by a number of out-of-class experiences.

○ Not all out-of-class activities, however, exerted a positive influence on students' learning. Living at home, being a member of a fraternity or sorority, working full-time, and participating in intercollegiate athletics were negatively related to cognitive gains after the first year of college.

❍ Living in residence halls does not in and of itself promote positive effects. Residential arrangements, however, that are built on the "living-learning" concept, such as residential colleges, shared interests halls (such as a foreign language), and service learning-focused units appear to have a substantially greater effect on resident students.

❍ "In virtually all cases where students' out-of-class experiences were found to enhance academic or cognitive learning, those experiences required, or at least afforded, opportunities for active student involvement" (p. 619).

❍ The most powerful influences on student learning appear to be students' interpersonal interactions with peers and with faculty and staff members. The more isolated a student is within the institutional environment, the fewer positive effects the collegiate experience seems to have.

❍ The impact of out-of-class activities appears to be cumulative rather than catalytic. That is, individual activities do not seem to have powerful influences on student learning, but, taken together, they have a substantially positive impact.

Terenzini, Pascarella, and Blimling (1999) add, "The cumulative impact . . . is even stronger when those experiences are part of coordinated and mutually supportive and reinforcing sets of programmatic and policy interventions" (p. 620).

Examples of Integrated Curricular-Cocurricular Interventions

There are many interventions that meet the criteria for promoting student learning. This section briefly describes four examples: first-year experience programs, senior year experience programs, living/learning centers, and service learning.

About twenty years ago, John Gardner, at the University of South Carolina, started what has become something of a grassroots movement to assist students entering higher education, which has become known as "first-year experience" programs. This program was designed to cut the often high rates of attrition during and following the freshman year. Barefoot (2000) summarizes the six most salient objectives shared by most first-year experience programs: "(1) increasing student-to-student interaction, (2) increasing faculty-to-student interaction, especially outside of class, (3) increasing student involvement and time on campus, (4) linking

the curriculum and co-curriculum, (5) increasing academic expectations and levels of academic engagement, and (6) assisting students who have insufficient academic preparation for college" (p. 14). A number of different formats have been used with some success, such as

❍ Using only experienced, senior faculty members to teach the seminar, team-teaching the seminar (faculty and student affairs staff) or faculty and trained undergraduate paraprofessionals—or some other combination of the three

❍ Making the seminar mandatory or voluntary

❍ Including participation in a service activity or attendance at one or more cultural events on campus

❍ Having students investigate institutional resources—such as counseling assistance, the academic advising process, or recreational facilities—and then informing classmates about them

❍ Having a topic such as oppression or civic responsibility as the integrating theme of the seminar

❍ Combining the seminar as part of a learning community (having a group of students share enrollment in at least two courses)

The possibilities are limitless. If the program focuses on the objectives outlined by Barefoot (2000), this intervention should qualify as an integrated curricular-cocurricular intervention for academic services.

A more recent kind of intervention on many campuses is the senior year experience. As Gardner and Van der Veer (1998) point out, the process of completing the undergraduate experience is a period of transition for most students. The senior year experience should facilitate the integration of students' total undergraduate academic experience, provide opportunities for reflection, assist students in finding closure to this phase of their lives, and aid in the postcollege transition to the world of work or graduate school. Gardner and Van der Veer (1998) promote programmatic themes for this experience, such as:

❍ A capstone experience designed to assist students in synthesizing what has been learned in the major and to establish connections between general education and the liberal arts (which may include internships, theses, recitals, or final projects)

❍ The linking of the liberal arts and the major in an effort to demonstrate coherence for the academic experience

- ❍ The provision of leadership education and the instilling of an understanding of educated citizens' responsibility to society
- ❍ Career planning
- ❍ Job search and transition planning or application to graduate school
- ❍ Alumni development
- ❍ The development of practical skills needs after college, such as an introduction to credit and financial management
- ❍ Preparation for adult life as a spouse, partner, parent, or community and political leader. One will recall that much of this experience is directly related to a number of items on Bowen's list (1977) of the goals of higher education.

Living-learning centers may take many forms. It may involve a group of volunteers who elect to live in a residence hall that focuses on developing academic skills through in-house workshops and programs. Or it may include a faculty member in residence who coordinates with a living unit to bring other faculty members to the residence hall for informal discussions of intellectual matters, perhaps focusing on a common theme. Other living-learning concepts include having all the residents (typically freshmen) take one or more courses together (either taught in the residence halls or elsewhere on campus). Other approaches include housing together student volunteers who share a common interest in a single topic, such as the culture and language of another country or protection of the environment. Centers may also be made up of majors in a single college (for example, education or agriculture) or a particular program, such as the honors program (Grimm, 1993).

Service learning is a much-used term in higher education that can mean anything—from requiring students as part of a class to devote a few hours of service to a community agency to including service as an integral part of a course or academic program. Engstrom and Tinto (1997) define service learning as a "pedagogical strategy that encourages students to make meaningful connections between content in the classroom and real-life experiences and that strives to increase students' level of civic responsibility and concern for social justice" (p. 10). The Wingspread Conference on service learning proposed ten principles of good practice for combining service and learning. An effective and sustained program that combines service and learning

- ❍ Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good

○ Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience

○ Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved

○ Allows for those with needs to define those needs

○ Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved

○ Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances

○ Expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment

○ Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals

○ Ensures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved

○ Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations (Porter, Honnet, and Poulsen, 1989, quoted in Engstrom and Tinto, 1997, p. 13)

Realizing the Student-Centric Institution

Institutions that subscribe to a mission of higher education that addresses all or most of Bowen's goals can only accomplish them if they create a "seamless" educational experience for their students. "The word seamless suggests that what was once believed to be separate, distinct parts (for example, in-class and out-of-class, academic and non academic, curricular and co-curricular, or on-campus and off-campus experiences) are now of one piece, bound together so as to appear whole or continuous. In seamless learning environments, students are encouraged to take advantage of learning resources that exist both inside and outside the classroom" (Kuh, 1996, p. 136). Within a student-centric institution, faculty members, academic administrators, student affairs professionals, and the top institutional leaders each have important contributions to make. If the primary goal of the institution is to ensure a high-quality learning experience for students, then all aspects of the institution must respect the others and cooperate. Otherwise, we will remain in our "functional silos" (Marchese, 1995), and students' educational experiences will remain fragmented. There are, however, obstacles to inplementing the goal of integrated learning on many campuses.

Obstacles to Student-Centric Academic Services

Despite the extensive research that supports the benefits of integrated approaches to student learning for students, there are powerful obstacles

on many campuses to the implementation of these ideas. Some of the factors weighing against this approach include

○ The general lack of recognition and reward for faculty members' involvement outside their disciplines or academic departments. For neophyte faculty members, initial promotion and tenure decisions are made within the academic department or division. Those who devote a good portion of their time to involvement with students outside the traditional classroom may have difficulty documenting their disciplinary credentials.

○ Many campuses rely heavily on part-time instructors to meet their undergraduate teaching responsibilities. These individuals (no matter how capable) are not expected to engage in extensive outside-of-class interaction with students. At institutions with a heavy reliance on a part-time faculty, a weighty burden is placed on the shoulders of a dwindling number of full-time faculty members and student affairs professionals to be involved in providing academic services to students.

○ Programs and services that cut across traditional organizational lines of authority are often suspect and vulnerable to budget cuts because they lack powerful "champions" or "patrons."

○ When financial resources become scarce, the tendency is to cut back to the "basics," which is frequently defined as offering as few courses as possible with as large an enrollment as institutional or accreditation standards permit. Involvement with integrated academic services can make a faculty member feel vulnerable.

○ Student-centric approaches are often viewed by some within the institution as coddling students and watering down academic standards. High failure or attrition rates to such individuals are evidence of academic rigor.

○ Administrators in areas such as student affairs are sometimes hesitant to become too enmeshed in areas outside their usual activities because of a fear that functional units may be transferred or that control of personnel or facilities will be redirected.

○ On many campuses, only a few high-level institutional leaders have a broad institution-wide perspective. Administrators at lower levels are generally rewarded for pursuing their somewhat narrow institutional responsibilities; moving to larger perspectives may be viewed as threatening by a variety of institutional constituencies.

These obstacles can be overcome. To do so, however, requires senior-level leadership to affirm the values of a student-centric institution, redundantly focus the institution on individual students' educational experiences, insist on both the conceptual and functional integration of curricular and cocurricular learning, establish reward systems for individuals who contribute to integrated academic services, require frequent systematic evaluations of academic services in terms of student outcomes and base decisions about allocation of resources on the evaluations, and reward collaboration across organizational boundaries. It is also important to institutionalize successful academic service programs that support the idea of a student-centric institution so that a change in leadership or financial fortunes will not wipe them out overnight.

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