The author explores the implications of increasing international involvement on the traditional responsibility of student affairs for defining and enforcing appropriate student conduct, developing the whole person, and providing support services to students.

An Expanded International Role for Student Affairs

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The internationalization of student affairs administration is a late-twentieth-century expansion of the educational role of student affairs. The tasks associated with this expansion have a distinct focus and require specialized knowledge and interest, but internationalization, as interpreted in this chapter, is an extension of the historical delegation to student affairs officers of responsibility for defining and enforcing appropriate conduct, developing the whole person through student life that complements curriculum, and providing services to students.

Development of an Educational Role

As the work of student affairs unfolded in the history of American colleges and universities, deans of students were active participants in the educational mission, charged first with campus discipline as an extension of the office of the president, then later with overcoming the damaging separation of nineteenth-century student life from the educational enterprise of the campus. Still later, as institutions grew larger and more complex, deans of students were charged with oversight of a range of services for students, such as campus housing, activities, recreation, health services, counseling, career placement, and other related services. These three charges—educational discipline, the joining of curriculum and student life, and student services—combined to define the American pattern for the administration of student affairs.
Internationalization

The opening of American campuses to the world continues and expands the traditional role of student affairs. Internationalization was a political and an economic fact long before it was recognized as an educational imperative on campus. As the authors of “The Port Huron Statement” asserted in their 1960 manifesto of the New Left, “Curriculums change more slowly than the living events of the world” (“The Port Huron Statement,” 1995, p. 64). Decades passed before American universities and colleges embraced the new global reality of interdependence and began to consciously struggle to internationalize student experience and the curriculum. A series of developments helped quicken this agenda. The Fulbright Scholar Program made student and faculty exchanges a prominent fact on campus. Technical assistance to newly independent and developing countries created a core of faculty with experience and scholarly interest in the emerging new world. In time, their return to campuses led to academic and personal involvement on the part of faculty and students in the developing world of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This interest was further strengthened by campus training for Peace Corps programs and the presence on campus of returned volunteers as graduate students and faculty. The communication and transportation revolution opened new possibilities for movement of people, information, ideas, and images. Finally, the emergence of a global economy brought an urgency to the educational task of internationalizing the campus.

International exchange transformed many American campuses. The trickle of students coming to the United States in the first decades after the Second World War became a flood by the 1970s. The countries of origin shifted from Europe to Asia, reflecting the new economic strength of that region. The response to the special and diverse needs of this expanding and changing population was largely delegated to student affairs staff. The initial charge was the integration of foreign students into educational programs and campus life. A second order of educational responsibility, less clearly defined and appreciated, was to use the international students on campus to educate American students to the new global reality. Student affairs administrators were to nurture campus programs and activities that contributed to cross-cultural understanding and empathy with others.

Internationalization as an Expanded Educational Responsibility

Although the educational responsibilities of student affairs expanded and changed with the diversity in the student population and expanded again with the influx of international students, the basic nature of the tasks remained very much the same. What the contemporary campus requires are patterns and structures that allow people to live together, to learn together, and to educate one another. With a population that is racially, ethnically, and nationally
diverse, the educational use of discipline is vital. The expanded challenges of the charge of wholeness to student affairs is to seek to educate the whole person to recognize, understand, and accept differences; to extend a global reality of cultural interaction into student organizations and activities; and to make the formal structures of course and degree programs and the pattern of campus life a compatible and reinforcing whole. The services to a diverse population reflect practical and immediate individual needs as well as the needs of organizations that express and help preserve racial, cultural, and religious identity. The challenge to the campus is to open individuals and groups to the interaction necessary to an interdependent world and to a more encompassing identity of being human.

**Discipline**

The two underlying premises of the argument made in this chapter are that the basic charge to student affairs is educational and that the internationalization of student affairs administration has expanded but not essentially changed the three major responsibilities assigned to student affairs. Discipline is the most difficult of the three to interpret and defend as an educational task, particularly as it relates to the internationalization of the campus. This is true in part because discipline, narrowly perceived, entails judgments on actions and the effort to contain or change behavior through supervision and punishment. More broadly conceived, discipline is also an affirmation of conduct, a definition of what is to be encouraged and nurtured through education.

Student affairs administration cannot escape a responsibility to define acceptable conduct. Student codes of conduct, for example, commonly limit the treatment of others by stating that abusive, threatening verbal or physical behavior, for instance, will not be tolerated on campus. Acceptable academic practices are defined in terms of prohibition of the submission of the work of others as one’s own, cheating on examinations, or plagiarism in written assignments. Student codes of conduct and the enforcement of discipline attempt to balance the rights of free speech with the need to control vicious patterns of verbal attack, to balance the acceptance of responsibility for individual work with the enforced honesty of proctored examinations, and to balance the educational goals of collaborative learning with misidentification of the work of others as one’s own.

Different societies hold to vastly divergent standards of student life and academic practice. The presence on campus of large numbers of students from other cultures can produce tension and clashes. Comfort with the familiar and fear of the different are deeply ingrained in all humans. Being different from is too easily equated with being better than. Difference produces clashes that result in a separation and a clustering of people into groups. Not uncommonly, the issue is how one group of international students treats other international students if, for example, ethnic or national or religious conflicts are transported to American campuses. In a similar fashion, attitudes and actions involving the
treatment of women can raise questions about patterns acceptable elsewhere but offensive on the American campus. Student efforts to control the behavior of subsets within national groups on campus can become conflict ridden, abrasive, and strident. The student conditioned to reproducing lecture material on examinations may find American patterns of frequent testing and expectations for intellectual independence bewildering. The task is first to determine the limits of acceptable conduct and then to ensure there is careful interpretation of codes of conduct and orientation of international students to these definitions. The task further is to assist them by explaining and interpreting expectations and, finally, to enforce standards consistently and fairly.

One of the very difficult educational assignments of student affairs is the maintenance of distinctions without presumptive judgments of worth on cultural, national, or racial groups, American or foreign. Regulations assume that there are limits to conduct and that an educational community has the right to control and punish conduct. At the same time, educational discipline teaches specific patterns of behavior through student codes of conduct reinforced by campus activities and organizations. Sensitively constructed and administered, campus codes and discipline teach a broad tolerance that limits specific behavior; discipline is administered with reference to the particular context of an American college campus. When well done, both codes and enforcement entail an acceptance of difference that reflects both empathy and understanding. Empathy in this context crosses racial or ethnic divisions to see and understand others; understanding includes sympathy as well as knowledge, an entering into and a comprehension of experiences and understandings that are dissimilar and diverse.

The question of the limits of the legitimate authority of the group over individual conduct is an oft-debated issue. John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century offered a classic statement about that limit, one that is grounded in a distinction between other-regarding and self-regarding conduct, a distinction that can be useful in describing campus discipline. With this as a guideline, conduct that interferes with the freedom of others is the legitimate subject of a campus code of conduct, whether it be noise in residence halls or verbal or physical abuse of others.

The far more difficult decision is what constitutes other-regarding education on campus. Sensitivity to dissimilarities and ambiguities, a broad set of interests, and an openness that replaces close-mindedness and parochialism are other-regarding values and are appropriately the content of education. Campus discipline carries the charge to nurture and to train students in such liberty of thought and life in other-regarding conduct.

**Wholeness**

Wholeness in collegiate education has two components, both part of the generally accepted tasks of student affairs. Student affairs administration is charged with the development of the whole person and with the integration of campus
life and curriculum into a consistent and complementary whole. Wholeness is impossible in the actual world of student activities, organizations, and programs, yet wholeness as an ideal remains relevant by virtue of its power to direct and measure the work of student affairs. The charge is to nurture the personal maturity of the individual student as a self-directed and independent person, to provide settings and occasions for the development of interpersonal skills, to encourage and to stimulate affective learning, and to enlarge capacities for appreciation.

Internationalization—both understanding and accepting human differences—is part of the content of this basic and primary task. The whole person knows both self and others, is engaged by different cultures and values, and can function in a multicultural environment. This is a very old educational ideal. Only through dialogue with others who hold different points of view, Socrates argued, can knowledge grow. What is new in the charge to student affairs administration is the richness of contrasts, the immediacy, the extent, the insistent presence of differences. Images from distant places and diverse peoples are everywhere. Human contact with people who are different is a daily rather than a rare experience. Wholeness in education is the ability to see contrast, to understand differences through personal engagement as well as through the study of languages and cultures; wholeness accepts difference as enriching the identity of the individual.

The contemporary American campus is a rich mix of American and international students. This national and international diversity opens the campus to a new global reality. Students, however, tend to cluster together in groups with similar interests: they join fraternities with like-minded members; they identify with people of the same color; and they group themselves together around shared activities in athletics, student publications, drama, music. All too frequently, international students separate themselves into groups that share the same nationality or language or religion or other common characteristics.

This joining of like-minded or same language or national groups is understandable and desirable as a base of support; it may even help nurture and strengthen identity in the midst of contrasts. However, when similarity becomes the primary or sole reason for contact with others, such gathering limits development. Part of the educational task of student affairs is to identify strategies that bring groups and individuals into contact with one another, that encourage interaction, and that modify the deep-seated human tendency to withdraw and cluster together, thus closing out otherness. The educational aim is to open and broaden the experience of all students, to strive toward the ideal of wholeness; the strategy is to constantly seek to stir the mix of campus life in order to bring diverse individuals and groups together in events, programs, organizations, and housing.

Perhaps the single greatest challenge to student affairs is the charge to draw together all facets of the curriculum and campus life—lecture halls, classrooms, laboratories, studios, living arrangements, activities, organizations, and
governance structures. Ideally, instruction and student life outside the classroom should complement each other and create a whole. Though the two often seem widely separated, academic values and campus life can and do serve common goals and, when well structured, can be part of an educational whole that is larger than the sum of its parts.

American universities and colleges assume a greater responsibility for student life than is true of institutions in much of the rest of the world. Whereas housing and dining facilities, student governments or unions, and student clubs are virtually universal elements of collegiate experience throughout the world, what is characteristically American is a conscious effort to bring them together on a campus and to define the educational mission not simply in terms of formal academic programs but in the much broader sense of a collegiate experience. This is an ambitious undertaking fraught with difficulties. Because the role of student affairs is so very different in America, there is an obvious need to carefully explain these goals to the students who come from abroad to study here.

The presence of international student groups presents a special opportunity to integrate learning and campus life. An Indian student association, an Islamic student center, or an African student union, for example, can reinforce and augment the effort to train people to think and function in a multicultural environment. The design of integrated housing arrangements, such as traditional-language houses or houses organized around common academic or career interests, can effectively join cognitive and experiential learning.

Internationalization cannot be defined as an add-on to the campus. It entails far more than area studies and multiple-language competency. Internationalization is certainly not defined by the fact that there are a large number of international students present on campus. Internationalization in a whole meaning is a radical transformation of academic disciplines, a freeing of both teaching and research from the dominance of the acceptance of and training in the intellectual traditions of a particular culture. Effective integration in student life with a curriculum grounded in diversity makes the collegiate experience a consistent whole. The virtual absence of diversity in some student groups, for example, social fraternities or sororities, illustrates how far the campus will have to move in order to be open to the world. On a more hopeful note, some recent developments on campuses—for example, the growing (though still small) number of foreign athletes on basketball, soccer, swimming, and track teams; and the increased participation of international students in governance structures—provide for interaction and interdependence. Theater, dance, and music shared across national and cultural aesthetic values offer yet more possibilities for increased appreciation of other cultures. The wholeness of the person and the wholeness of the educational experience are joined in such sharing.

The transformation of academic discipline to accommodate the new global reality has its counterpart in the campus recognition and, where appropriate, participation in the celebration of various religious or national holidays.
and rites, such as Ramadan, the Jewish High Holidays, the Chinese New Year, and Greek Orthodox Easter. This expansion of the cultural environment serves the same end of preserving and honoring diverse traditions. The goal is not the merging of differences in some sort of intellectual and cultural undifferentiated wholeness but rather the recognition, the honoring, the enjoyment, and the celebration of various traditions in an encompassing that embraces difference.

**Services**

The presence on campus of students from many countries brings to student affairs administration a whole new set of responsibilities for providing a range of services for international students and faculty. Far too many campuses fail to carefully count the cost of hosting international students and as a result do not provide adequate services for this population. The list of essential campus services is long—immigration assistance and counseling; orientation, both initial and continuing, to campus and community as well as to cultural values and practices; and programs that address barriers to successful academic and personal adjustment in a foreign environment, barriers as basic as food and living arrangements, health services, religious practices, social interaction, and mores. Instruction in English as a second language is required for any campus that truly welcomes international students. Many students come with years of English study but with limited spoken or colloquial language skills; they often are unprepared to use English at the intense level of university reading assignments as well as lectures and class discussions. Instruction in English as a second language is the responsibility of faculty, but encouraging acceptance and reinforcing the use of English language training can be, and perhaps should be, the work of student affairs. Personal counseling by trained staff, sensitive to the problems of students immersed in a foreign culture, is a very important dimension of the role of student affairs administration. International students have needs, frequently more urgent than they will acknowledge, for understanding and support. Academic advising is primarily the responsibility of degree-granting units and major advisers; however, the monitoring of progress toward the completion of studies in the nonthreatening arena of personal and academic counseling is a legitimate extension of student affairs services.

International student organizations present new challenges to student affairs administration. Organizations that separate students by religious or national identities can diminish the value of the international students to the campus and limit the educational experience of all students on campus. They can also play a lead role in a successful effort to internationalize a campus. The goals and interests of the groups need to be honored; at the same time, student affairs must find ways to keep the groups of students from becoming completely isolated from the rest of campus life.

International students and faculty are a largely untapped but invaluable resource of intellectual and cultural ambassadors. International students come with their own agendas; they want to complete degrees, increase their English
language competency, or pursue particular courses of study or research while in the United States. They also frequently come with an eagerness to share their culture, language, and national concerns. How to use their natural pride and interest in sharing, without interfering or offending, is a challenge. Given the natural points of contact with student affairs services, the appropriate balance—both using and supporting the agendas of international students—can best be determined by those who administer student affairs. Cultural shows using visual and performing arts, celebrations and practices associated with national holidays or religious rites, street fairs that offer everything from food to entertainment, presentations and debate on national or ethnic issues or controversies, and discussions of religious or social beliefs and practices can provide important moments for sharing and nurturing appreciation of a diverse world.

The broad range of student services has a role to play in the internationalization of the campus. Carefully designed arrangements for housing and campus life can contribute to an understanding of both difference and commonality. In general, campus interaction holds a promise of liberating encounters with people who represent other values, faiths, and social practices. The interaction also constantly presents a potential for conflict and therefore must be closely monitored by student affairs staff. When the contact, even though rooted in conflict, reflects genuine human interaction, the encounter with other people can reduce the tendency to make judgments of worth based primarily on differences. Advising and working with groups and helping various groups work together around common tasks and shared ends—all part of the everyday responsibilities of student affairs staff—increase the likelihood that collegiate education will prepare future graduates to function in a cross-cultural work environment. Career planning and placement can reinforce the importance of such skills. Student services offer an informal curriculum that can lead to increased contact and interdependence among students. In focusing on students’ needs and interests, student affairs administration provides settings and occasions for individual and group interaction. Activities complement and supplement the classroom study of international business, comparative arts, languages, peoples, and cultures by bringing students from different traditions together in the experiential learning that comes from living, working, and sharing together.

**Person and Preparation**

The need for student affairs administrators to have special qualities of mind and heart as well as to have the appropriate formal academic preparation is generally accepted, but too little attention has been given to the particular demands placed on student affairs that have been created by recent efforts to internationalize the campus. The preparation for this expanded role requires study, reflection, and, most critically, direct experience with other cultures.

The base for this preparation is an interest in the world and its diverse peoples, in geography, in global history, and in the contemporary political and
economic realities of various regions of the world. To seek to know other cultures is a never-ending quest, an exciting, demanding intellectual adventure. Cultural sensitivity, however, goes well beyond knowledge. The essential determinant of adequacy is a mature openness, an acceptance and appreciation of cultural differences. This level of understanding and appreciation is most often the product of direct, sustained exposure abroad to diverse people and cultures.

To lead effectively in the effort to internationalize the campus requires continual attention to the changes occurring with great rapidity throughout the world. The experiences of international students on campus are affected by the social upheaval, political chaos, armed conflict, and economic crises that engulf their homelands and their lives.

The tensions within and among groups of international students, the insecurity and uncertainty of individual students, and the economic problems that they face present specific challenges for those who administer student services.

The systematic effort to link diverse students in campus housing, in shared activities, in discussion and debate is part of the charge to student affairs. When the stress generated by such close contact is acute, the role also requires limiting threatening or abusive behavior. The student affairs staff must constantly deal with situations in which race, gender, or sexual patterns; perceived national interest; or cultural differences lead to conflict. The positive educational opportunity presented by such conflict is that it can be used in the setting of a campus to bridge differences with an understanding and acceptance of diverse interests and perspectives.

Above all else, leadership in this educational role requires a sensitive and open spirit and a developed capacity for empathy. Although such a willing spirit can be nurtured and even trained to a certain extent, this quality of person and life is largely a rare and wonderful gift, given to only a few, of a capacity to enter into the experience of others, to see the world and the self through the eyes of others.

Reference

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